

**Connect**  
monthly

**August  
2017**

**PERFECT  FIT**  
KEEPING MORAY FITTER FOR LONGER

**moray**  
council



Rhona Gunn, Corporate Director

## Dear Colleagues

Since I last wrote about our [Growth Fund](#) bid in *Connect* (May 2017 Issue page 13), Moray Community Planning Partnership have approved the bid development and the launch of a public engagement programme.

This started on Friday 14 July with a survey and [video](#).

The home for all this upcoming activity is a website called [My Moray](#). Do go on to it and have a look, and become a follower. There will be lots on there that will help showcase Moray as a place to live, work and invest in, and to promote the growth bid to a wider audience. The site includes links to social media which we feel will help generate awareness of the developing bid, and keep everyone engaged.

The site will be used to host content, narrative and news about the bid, to manage feedback and provide engagement statistics that will help our case.

The My Moray concept builds on the 'I (Heart) Moray' identity which originated from the public campaign to save RAF Lossiemouth. We're hoping it has the same level of success as that campaign.

As residents of this area you have a role in this process, as the development and success of this bid will affect you and your family (in a good way!) for years to come. The more feedback and input from you into our bid process, the better chance we have of showing both governments that our communities are right behind the project.

Please go and take a look, and complete the survey.

Rhona



## EDITORIAL

Welcome to your August edition of *Connect*!

July and August are months when most of us take some time off, either for a re-charge in warmer weather or to spend quality time with family and friends. We've certainly noticed the exodus. With so many empty seats here in HQ there have been times when it's felt more like Trump's West Wing than the busy council building we're used to.

That said, we can certainly tell the difference when people have had the benefit of a break; colleagues are more refreshed and relaxed, able to deal with the day better without appearing frazzled. Never underestimate the value of some time off!

The *Connect* team welcomes to its fold our new media and communications officer, Sharon Dunbar. Sharon will be looking for your stories and pictures, and seeing if we can improve the magazine any further. If you've any suggestions on those lines don't be shy – [drop us an email!](#)

## TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Sharon Dunbar  
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Angus McNicholl  
DESIGNER





There's a team of people in Moray Council that are our front-line investment in the area's long-term health. They don't administer medicines, deliver meals or diagnose illness.

What they do is help people of all ages get involved in some sort of physical activity and/or sport. From encouraging young people into competitive sports to helping arrange gentle walks for the less able and helping rehabilitate people using physiotherapy, the Sports Development and Active Schools Teams are working across a huge range of ages and abilities to help keep our community mobile and healthy.

When the *Connect* magazine started in 2006, the Active Schools programme had just been created through sportscotland. Today's *Connect* writers sat down with three team managers to hear how far they've come and be told first-hand just how busy they and their colleagues all are.

Kim Paterson is the officer responsible for the Sports Development service. A keen sportswoman and a pretty good bagpipe player, she keeps her fingers on the pulse.

*"The title 'sports development' doesn't really give you a true picture of the breadth of our activities," she said.*

*"Obviously that's a big part of what we do, but we also help older generations stay active. Things like Jog Scotland groups, health walk sessions and games of walking football supports two of the council's priorities, that of healthier citizens and adults living healthier, sustainable and independent lives.*



*"Our remit is to provide school-age children more opportunities to get active before, during and after the school day."*

John McMilkin,  
Active Schools Manager







*"When I first went to Elgin Academy, I couldn't believe it when I saw the facilities available."*

Dimitris Chrysanthakopoulos,  
Community Sports Hub  
Officer



*"Keeping people in Moray active is what our team works hard to achieve."*

The team also help volunteers to establish clubs, providing guidance and hands-on support so that they are properly constituted, with those all-important written constitutions that ease the path to funding bodies such as the National Lottery and sportscotland.

Kim adds: *"We put a lot of effort into getting the set-ups right so that the clubs – which are nearly always run by unpaid volunteers who have day jobs and families – can become sustainable in the long term. So many times clubs rely on one or two enthusiastic individuals, and when they go so does the club."*

putting on events such as the annual Primary Schools Cross Country, the largest children's sporting event in Moray.

One member of the team, Tim Walters, has the specific role of arranging competitive sport in secondary schools. He's created league structures and held competitions that allow secondary children from across Moray to meet each other at friendly fixtures in a range of sports, from netball to rugby to indoor climbing, opportunities many schools have come to value highly.

John said: *"About two-thirds of our funding comes directly from sportscotland (the national sports council), the remainder from the council."*



Kim's direct team comprises three staff and 30 sports coaches and assistants. In addition the Active Schools programme, led by manager John McMulkin, has a team of 12 coordinators that work across all primary and secondary schools. They deliver after-school sports to youngsters such as JogScotland, Clubgolf and trampolining, which helps connect school to community. They arrange access to schools for sports clubs to promote their junior sections and work with PE staff to embed programmes of regular activities and exercise into and beyond the school day. This includes

*"Active Schools relies heavily on volunteers for the delivery of their programmes, and in school year 2016-17 the Active Schools Coordinators recruited, trained and deployed over 500 volunteers to get more children in Moray more active, more often. This included over 200 parents, over 100 teenage leaders, coaches and members of sports clubs, teachers and other school staff delivering in their own time outside the school day."*

*"Many of the volunteers are parents of children in a school, quite a few work for Moray Council, but all give up their time to support*







*the programme. It's great to work with such enthusiasm and we are always looking for ways to reward and support them. We offer training in generic skills such as child protection and first aid, as well as sport-specific training, and hold an annual volunteer-recognition event— we really do consider our volunteers part of the Active Schools team in Moray."*

Community Sports Hub officer and Active School Coordinator, Dimitris Chrysanthakopoulos, came to Moray from his native Greece via the Commonwealth Games and the completion of his Masters degree in Edinburgh. He said there's a huge amount of opportunity for young people to take part in some sport or activity in Moray.

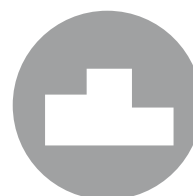
*"In Greece there is nothing like what we have here in Moray," he said.*

*"Over there the young people have to find their own ways of playing sport, there's no proper places like gyms, pitches or such like, kids just have to find a space and kick a ball around or something. When I first went to Elgin Academy for example, I couldn't believe it when I saw the facilities available."*



*"Sports and activities here in Moray and Scotland are more organised, there's a lot better access for everyone. I know the clubs often complain about lack of funding, but the opportunities for clubs to develop are better here than a lot of places."*

Much of Dimitris' work involves evenings and weekends, but it's no hardship as he says he's constantly meeting new people and gets a buzz seeing youngsters getting active. He admits struggling with some dialects though.



*"Meetings in Hopeman and Buckie are very 'distinctive', the accent is very strong and can be difficult for me as a non-native person to follow what they're saying. I'm getting more used to it though!"*

One of the challenges for the section in the straitened times is to ensure the sustainability of sporting clubs and activities. Kim said: *"We're well aware of our ageing population, and we're working a lot more with health boards to ensure people can remain fitter for longer."*

*"If we can do that, as people get older and stay active, they'll need less from the medical and care services, and will be able to remain independent for longer."*



*"Keeping people in Moray active is what our team works hard to achieve."*

Kim Patterson, Sports Development Officer





# HR Noticeboard

## TRANSFORMING TOGETHER

Invitations for this year's conference have been issued, so if you are one of the lucky ones who receive an invite we look forward to seeing you. Your attendance has been cleared with your service manager before sending your invitation, but please speak to them to confirm the details. Places are limited this year and we have a waiting list, so if for any reason you can't make it then please let us know.

This year's conference is about Transforming Together – looking at corporate and service responsibilities from our customer's perspective. Attendees will work with senior managers and colleagues on how to meet the needs of our customers and make Moray an even better place to work and live.

The conference is a chance to talk to the directors and heads of service about issues that are important to you as well as meeting colleagues from across council services.

Feedback from previous conferences has always been positive and has helped give a better understanding of the issues that matter at all levels within the organisation. Don't miss your chance to contribute to the ongoing challenges and changes we face. Make sure you come along to the conferences in September and October if you receive one of the invites.

## DO YOU KNOW A STAR?

Do you know a colleague or a team who stand out from the crowd? Someone who goes that extra mile or makes a difference at work and deserves to be recognised for it?

Then why not nominate them for a STAR Award?

Nomination forms and guidance will be available from early August and we will be accepting nominations from 21 August 2017 to 08 September 2017.

Look out for further information on the Interchange under Improving Workforce Culture, or you can call HR on 01343 563261 or [hr@moray.gov.uk](mailto:hr@moray.gov.uk), for further information. Admin teams within your section will also be able to assist with information on the awards scheme.

Nominees and winners will be notified later in the year following the Colleague's Choice vote and awards will be presented in conjunction with the Long Service Awards at a special ceremony in November. So get your thinking caps on now and let us know who you think deserves to be recognised!

*Amanda Tiddy, 2016  
STAR AWARD winner*





# YOUR VOICE

## SURVEY

A wee update since last month's news – our response rate is even better as we had some last minute paper and online responses. So thank you very much for taking part!

There were 1,961 returns giving a 42% response rate which is 10% increase on the previous survey in 2015.

The analysis of the information you have provided is underway and we will share this with you after the summer.

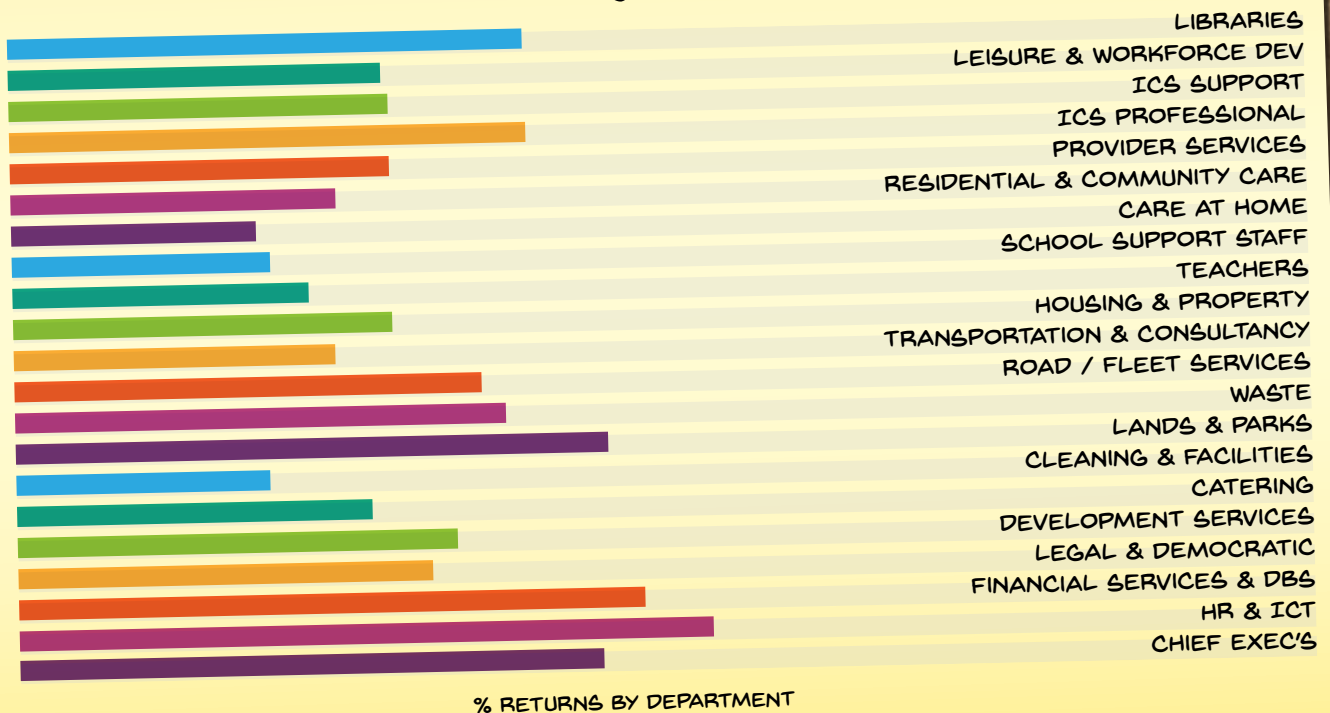


**42%**  
RESPONSE RATE

**+10%**  
FROM LAST SURVEY

**1,961**  
SURVEYS RETURNED

**+41.5%**  
**WASTE SERVICE**  
**BIGGEST**  
IMPROVEMENT SINCE  
LAST SURVEY





# Vintage Tea

Est. 2016

Vintage tea parties may sound like just a bit of fun, but they're just one of the ways of improving public health in Moray – yes, really!

While we're already in a good place (Moray has an overall health profile which outperforms the Scottish national average), a key priority within Moray 2026 – a plan for the future is 'Healthier Citizens'. This is basically about how we live our lives and the impact this has on our wellbeing. The overall population profile for Moray can mask a number of underlying issues relating to health and wellbeing, with inequalities evident across the area. In particular, children living in poverty are sitting at the same rate as Aberdeen City.

How can we all contribute to making Moray a place where folks can flourish? We can influence our families and ensure we support healthy activities that will impact the following areas:

- ☞ Healthy weight and the need to reduce obesity
- ☞ Promoting smoking cessation activity and smoke-free environments
- ☞ Considering the way we and those around us use alcohol, preventing harm
- ☞ Improving mental wellbeing by ensuring people are connected into our communities by being active

By working in partnership across the public sector we can maximise on resources to plan, develop and evaluate local health improvement programmes, initiatives and training. We can support individuals and communities to support themselves in achieving good health and wellbeing. Here are some examples of successful programmes focussing on early intervention, prevention and building community resilience, again supporting people to take care of themselves and live well.

**Vintage tea parties:** like we said at the start, are helping us to engage with older people in their own communities. Through these, we can engage with local people and ensure they get alongside us in promoting

good health and wellbeing locally and that they have all the support and information required to be successful in achieving this. It certainly brings people out and about and gets them talking, sessions so far attract up to 100 people at any given time.

**Making every Opportunity Count (MeOC):** supports every person, system and service to each do a little to enable service providers to 'keep well'. This can happen through MeOC light touch conversations, which last between 30 seconds and three minutes and are suitable for use by all public and third sector services. These are structured conversations where you add value to the interaction by using the opportunity to influence how folks behave at a personal level in relation to maintaining good health.

**The Healthpoint:** is situated in the main foyer of Dr Gray's hospital in Elgin, and also provides an outreach service in community venues across Moray. Here you can receive free, confidential advice covering things like healthy eating, weight management, alcohol, stress and where to find local support groups. It's open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm (closed between 12.30pm and 1pm).

Staff training opportunities, delivered by the NHS, include alcohol brief intervention, helping people changing for health (level 1) and under-pressure training.

Public Health Departments, according to its own UK faculty, is both science and art. We say, as a partnership we're working to reduce the gap in health outcomes between the most and least disadvantaged in our communities.

The main goal for us all is to support the population to be as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

by Anne Griffin  
Area Public Health Coordinator



# BASE Support

Community services wellbeing and development worker, Carmen Gillies, was one of the first of 25 people to sign up to the RAF's new Base Support Group scheme. The programme offers ex-Royal Air Force personnel part-time employment as volunteer ex-regular reserves at participating RAF bases.

Carmen served in the regular Royal Air Force as an Air Traffic Control officer until she left the service six years ago.

*She said: "In my role within Moray Council I can see the wide range of skills and experience that people bring from their work. The Base Support Group scheme offers ex-service personnel like me an opportunity to bring their civilian skills into the RAF as well as regaining the fantastic camaraderie and drive that service life provides."*

At her 'passing out' day she was congratulated by Wing Commander Lunnon-Wood at RAF Lossiemouth.

*He said: "We are on the front line, both protecting UK airspace and on operations, so we greatly value the flexibility and professionalism the Base Support Group scheme brings."*

RAF Lossiemouth has received enquiries from almost 130 personnel from across Scotland in the four months since the trial was launched. Anyone interested in further information about the Base Support Group scheme should email Sgt Michelle Muir:

[los-fulmarflt@mod.gov.uk](mailto:los-fulmarflt@mod.gov.uk)

## Success is in the air for new flying officer

A SOUTH Shields officer is flying high after graduating from Royal Air Force College in Cranwell.

Carmen Cole, 23, now a Flying Officer, recently graduated from No. 193 Initial Officer Training Course, with Air Marshal J C French, Chief of Defence Intelligence, as the reviewing officer of the parade.

The course provides students with general service and character development training to enable them to occupy appropriate junior officer posts.

The demanding 24-week course included physical training, ground and defence training, leadership and management skills, adventurous training in Scotland, operational studies and air experience.

Carmen was a former pupil at St Anthony's Roman Catholic Girls' School, Sunderland, before graduating from the University of Hertfordshire with a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science.

But she knew the RAF was the right career path for her, and while



ON A HIGH ... Carmen Cole.

studying for her degree, she was a member of London University Air Squadron and achieved her first solo flight in a tutor aircraft.

Carmen joined the RAF in August last year and now that she has graduated as an officer she will continue with her professional training.

## Her career is very much up in the air

A SPORTS-MAD South Tyneside woman is winging her way to the career of her dreams.

Carmen Cole has just completed the first stage of her Royal Air Force training — one of the most disciplined training regimes in the country.

The 23-year-old has just graduated from the initial officer training courses at RAF College Cranwell.

is now on the last

to become an air traffic controller for the force in Shropshire.

Flying Officer Carmen Cole was brought up in South Shields and her parents, Anthony and Kathleen, still live in the town.

While studying environmental science at Hertfordshire University, she was a member of London University Air Squadron and achieved her first solo flight in a tutor aircraft.

The 24-week course aims to prepare people for life in the RAF and boost their personal skills.

Carmen had to complete ground, defence exercises, show leadership and management skills and gain air experience.

But the tough physical test, which included adventurous training in Scotland, was no problem for Carmen, as her love of hockey and circuit training helped her prepare.



FLYING HIGH: Carmen Cole



# WELCOME ABOARD

Hello all!

No induction this month, but plenty of other things happening.

Each month we feature our new starts, colleagues who are leaving us, birthdays and other special events, so keep your news and photos coming in to:

[connectnews@moray.gov.uk](mailto:connectnews@moray.gov.uk).

## GREAT START TO CAREERS!



Vivienne Cross with interns: Owen Walker, Declan Gordon, Heather Welsh, Rachel Hay, Chloe Reid and Kiara Ross

## MANY HAPPY RETURNS!

Our transport engineer, Elaine Penny, was brave enough to share her 50th birthday celebrations with colleagues last month. Instead of one big cake she was presented with an 'engineered solution' of cupcakes in the shape of a figure 50 with candles – but due to health and safety concerns and the risk of fire alarms going off in the heat – they weren't lit.

Happy birthday Elaine!





So long, farewell! We've waved off seven interns who were with us for work experience over the summer holidays.

Owen, Rachel, Kiara, Declan, Heather, Chloe and Gabriel joined us from secondary schools across the whole of Moray and are half way through their Career Ready programme.

Under the watchful eyes of their mentors, they helped deliver services like social care, trading standards and design.

Mentor Karen Delaney was supporting 16 year-old Declan Gordon from Lossiemouth High School, but said she was impressed by all the interns.

*"It's a pleasure seeing a group of shy, sometimes awkward, teenagers come into work, grow their skills and blossom. They've all done themselves proud."*

Declan said that he couldn't have asked for a better mentor:

*"Karen has been so supportive and has pushed me out of my comfort zone, which I've really benefitted from."*

Meanwhile we've managed to sway sixth year student Owen Walters' entire career choice – which he assures us is a good thing! Currently at Forres Academy, he was set on pursuing a career in sound engineering. But after spending time in our design section working alongside graphic designer Angus McNicholl, he says a career in design is definitely on the cards.

So with boosted confidence our interns have gone on their merry way, but not before we insisted they deliver a presentation within council chambers to share their experience of working here.

It's not all bad though, as we've opened up their eyes to the scale and scope of the council and everything that goes on here.

Just ask Chloe Reid (16), from Elgin Academy. She said: *"Before I arrived I thought the council was just community centres and schools, now I know how all the services work with each other."*

All round a job well done, we say.



## CONGRATS!

This fun selfie was taken on Area Housing Officer Fiona Shand's last day before she married Mike Nicoll on Saturday 08 July.

Colleagues wishing her well are (L to R): Pauline Rennie, bride to be Fiona, Anne Thomson, Donnie Riggs (honorary bridesmaid), and Mark Ritchie.





## STEM AWARD FOR RACHEL

Congratulations Rachel! Our depute head of Hythehill Primary in Lossiemouth was in London at the end of July for a glittering awards ceremony.

Rachel picked up the ENTHUSE Award for Excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering & Maths (STEM) teaching at the event at the House of Commons.

After beating off stiff competition from other finalists to land the coveted prize, she said she was *“thrilled, delighted, stunned and incredibly proud”*.

Vivienne Cross, head of schools and curriculum development, said receiving the accolade was nothing less than Rachel deserved.

*“I am delighted that Rachel has been recognised for the continuous work she does to promote STEM learning not only in her own school but across Moray, providing vital professional development for staff for a number of years. This accolade is well deserved and she should be justifiably proud of her achievement-as we all are.”*



## RISKY BUSINESS

Risk assessments – the very word is enough to send some people to sleep. They are a necessary task however, a useful process to discipline ourselves to look at all the risks in any given scenario.

For a recent coasteering event with P7 children in Portknockie, our colleague Gail Buckley naturally undertook a detailed risk assessment of the planned activities. What were the conditions likely to be, was the company undertaking the event fully insured, etc. After all, coasteering can be a risky business.

*“One thing I didn’t factor in was how many naked swimmers were likely to be there,”* she said.

*“Imagine my shock when we all turned up at Portknockie harbour to find a middle-aged man getting out of the water in just his birthday suit!”*

Thankfully he quickly put his shorts on, dignity was restored and the students appeared unfazed by the, er... exposure.