

Connect

monthly

October  
2017

TRANSFORMING  
WE ARE HERE  
WE ARE WAITING

*moray*  
council



Mark Atherton, Roads Maintenance Manager

## Dear Colleagues

After 32 years working in the north west of England, I joined the team here 16 months ago. I'd like to say a massive thanks to colleagues; both frontline and office-based who've made me feel very welcome, helping me and my family settle in to the wonderful surroundings that Moray offers.

Within the section, we've some upcoming challenges which we need to address. It will come as no surprise that some of these are financial but there are others, too.

We're well down the line of implementing a full staffing restructure within the two areas and are taking the opportunity to become more commercially focused, looking at opportunities to generate additional income.

I'm also responsible for delivering the LED 'invest to save' project you may have seen in an earlier edition of *Connect*.

We've accelerated the replacement of the old street lights with the new energy efficient white LED units. During the first year

of the project the team installed 1,000 units, last year we installed 3,000 and this year the target is to install 5,000. Simply put, the quicker we can replace the old units the quicker we can save our energy use, which on average has resulted in a 50 per cent decrease in energy use per lantern.

On a personal note, I recently celebrated a milestone birthday, turning 50 years young, and also 25 years of marriage.

Just recently, our only daughter embarked on the next stage of her life by leaving us to start university – and I'm sure there are lots of you going through the same emotions that my wife and I are currently going through. On one hand you're almost glad to see the little darlings fly the nest and, on the other, you're left with a massive void and need to start communicating to each other again – no easy feat!

Finally, please share a thought for the teams that support our out-of-hours arrangements throughout the year. Whilst the recent

floods have not been as challenging as years gone by it still involves a lot of time, hard work and commitment by the teams delivering these works and supporting local communities through these events.

As you will see later on, we're currently gearing up for our winter maintenance arrangements and the preparations for the season begin as early as May. From ensuring our vehicles are maintained and ready to go, reviewing our routes, ensuring we have adequate salt supplies and staff trained ready to go, this vital emergency service never stops for us.

If you listen to the farmers and some of the national press, we're in for a long, cold and white winter. Who knows what's in store? However, I can assure you that we're prepared and ready to go to keep our roads safe during the coming winter months – whatever Mother Nature throws our way.

Mark

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to your *Connect* for October. Autumn has clearly decided to roar in like a lion, giving some of our colleagues in the roads and other response sections an early taste of the usual winter activity.

Speaking of that, our main feature this month is showing just how much is done to prepare everything for the seasonal shift in operations. Our colleagues in Ashgrove have been working during the summer to ensure the gritters are ready to roll, and now that the season's upon us all the grass-cutting machinery is hauled in for servicing.

Of course, all this has to be done while keeping the huge council fleet routinely maintained.

Like the fleet, it runs like a well-oiled machine.

## TEAM CONNECT

Peter Jones  
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Sharon Dunbar  
MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Angus McNicholl  
DESIGNER





# TRANSFORMING

## GETTING READY TO ROLL OUT

If you know Transformers, you'll recall Optimus Prime making the declaration, *"We are here, we are waiting"*, to his Autobot allies. Now we're not calling any of our staff Autobots or Decepticons, but the statement still stands. Winter – we are here, we are waiting.

This is, however, the month when the pressure is on as our roads maintenance, fleet services and environmental protection teams based at Ashgrove work in sync to wrap up grass cutting season and roll out the winter roads maintenance programme.

Over the last few months the lands and parks staff have had their work cut out – literally. They've cut more than seven million square metres of grass in parks, play parks, cemeteries, playing fields, school playgrounds and other public spaces. That's the equivalent of 17,297 acres, or 11,531 football pitches.

In addition, they've carried out a whopping 9,000 cuts at the homes of over 600 council tenants who've requested (and paid for) grass cutting because they can't manage due to old age or ill health.

Grant Speed is an Assistant Lands and Parks Officer based at Ashgrove, and said grass cutting season lasts until the end of October and maybe even beyond, depending on the weather.

*"It's a massive task. During the season we've 40 employees (including seasonal) working full-time hours to keep on top of the job. Unless there's torrential rain it's business as usual for us – we can't afford to be picky about the weather because we don't have any spare time to play with."*

October will also see the Lands and Parks team plant three tonnes of daffodil bulbs in grassed areas in Buckie, Forres, Elgin, Lossiemouth and Keith, plus 10,000 crocus bulbs in Buckie, ready for flowering in the early spring.

And, if there's a spare moment, next on the to-do list is leaf lifting, burn cleaning to reduce the risk of flooding over the winter, and maintenance of war memorials in time for Remembrance Sunday ceremonies. Phew! Of course there's still all the winter work, which includes cemetery maintenance in time for loved ones laying holly wreaths.





Paul Russell (back), Andrew Newcombe (left) John Gilbert (centre) & Sandy Wells (right) show off some of the gear that they use day-to-day in Lands & Parks, some of which can be transformed for winter duties.

Meanwhile, back at base camp (Ashgrove) fleet services have been servicing our gritters.

Leslie Thomson manages the Fleet Service section and the Vehicle Maintenance and Stores teams make sure that our winter maintenance fleet of gritters, snowploughs, snowblowers and other equipment – more than 200 in total – are overhauled (inspected, serviced, stripped back, repaired and sitting on the tarmac ready to go) from the start of October.

He said: *“Although the last few winters have been mild, our Roads Maintenance team play close attention to the forecasts and it’s vital that the vehicles, plant and other equipment are ready to be dispatched as soon as they’re needed.”*

*“After we’ve completed this for the winter maintenance fleet, we then have to keep them going throughout the winter, which can be challenging in extreme weather conditions. On top of this, we jump straight into overhauling the grounds maintenance kit for the next season. This can be up to 500 pieces, ranging from vans and pick-ups, ride-on and pedestrian mowers, large agricultural tractors and smaller compact units, to trimmers and trailers.”*

*“Although the last few winters have been mild, our Roads Maintenance team play close attention to the forecasts”*

Leslie Thomson  
Fleet Services Manager

Much of our vehicle and plant inventory is multi-purpose and can be used for summer and winter operations. Roads maintenance trucks can be used to clear snow or undertake gritting. We’ve tractors that can cut verges in the summer, and in the winter a snowblower and snowplough can be attached. The sheer size and variety of the fleet can mean having the right kit at the right time is a challenge in itself, with some parts being

sourced in Europe for delivery to Elgin as soon as possible to clear snow!

Speaking of snow, the winter rota for roads maintenance is due to kick in any day now, and Richard Adam, Network Asset Engineer within the team, has already begun routine weather surveying with his ‘winter’ head on.

*“We receive a detailed weather forecast around noon each day which we use, along with various other weather data such as thermal maps and radar imagery, to plan out gritting actions for the following 24 hours,” he says, “we’ve also got access to dozens of weather stations across Moray, Highlands and Aberdeenshire which gives us a bigger picture of what’s happening across the region.”*

But what’s he looking for? Well, if road surface temperatures are nearing zero degrees then he starts analysing other relevant data to see what action is required. If, for example, there’s a high level of residual salt on the road – which may have built up over a few



*"We receive a detailed weather forecast which we use, along with various other weather data such as thermal maps and radar imagery"*

Richard Adam  
Network Asset Engineer

days' previous salt spreading – that'll be taken into consideration, as well as other factors.

Of course all of this doesn't just happen; Richard and his colleagues have spent months preparing for the season ahead.

Salt is ordered in the summer to take advantage of lower prices to bring us up to our target of 16,000T, with more ordered as and when it's needed.

Over the last 10 years, we've experienced an annual salt consumption of around 16000T – although mild winters have seen as low as 9,400T used and harsher ones as high as 21,000T!

Richard's one of four duty officers on call 24/7 hours a day, for a week at a time during the winter, alongside colleagues Ian Cameron, Paul Barron and manager Mark Atherton.

*"We've finished reprioritising the gritting routes, dropping from 18 routes to 17 to improve efficiency," he says, "we've also increased the speed our gritters can travel at – now up to 25mph – so all the route timings have had to be recalculated before we upload these maps to the website. It's been a lot of work to do in time for the winter season starting!"*

*"Every year we also review our winter service operational plan – a large document which outlines what action could be taken over the winter, when it's necessary and what resources are required to service it."*

The switchover from the summer to winter rota takes place around 09 October. The main difference is the amount of staff on duty – in the summer there'll be

four operatives, but in the winter this goes up to 34 who'll be driving the gritters, operating the footpath ploughs, dealing with fallen trees – anything and everything that affects the roads.

Stephen Cooper heads up the Direct Services department, which includes all the sections we've talked about, and says most people don't realise the amount of teamwork and coordination involved.

*"Everyone has to work together to make sure our strict operational calendar goes off without a hitch."*

Stephen Cooper  
Head of Direct Services

*"A lot of folk think that the roads team look after the entire gritting operation, lands and parks are the only ones involved in grass cutting, but that's not the case. There wouldn't be any vehicles or machinery to use if it wasn't for the fleet team making sure they're roadworthy and safe to use. And, in extreme weather conditions, we'll see lands and parks staff helping with snow clearing. Everyone has to work together to make sure our strict operational calendar goes off without a hitch."*



# HR Noticeboard



Our staff suggestion scheme, Bright Ideas, closed for suggestions on 28 July and since then we have been considering each suggestion, sharing a sample of them at our Employee Conferences and hearing from you about what you think.

The outcome of all suggestions will be finalised by the end of October and all of the suggestions will be published soon after.

For now though, here's a sneak preview of some of the suggestions we have received:



Only put bins out for collection when they are full, or would be full before the next collection – less bins being emptied each week will save money and time



Create an internal mail collection for Cullen



Increase our FitLife? membership by 10 per cent to increase revenue



Have three 'waiting days' before sick pay is paid; this will reduce sickness absence and employees taking unnecessary days off



Create wildflower meadows within parks to reduce on grass cutting costs and benefit the environment



## Back to the FLOOR

You might remember from an earlier issue of *Connect* we spoke about a new event within our employee engagement programme, 'Back to the Floor'.

A senior manager spends time in a service, either taking a practical role in providing the service or shadowing colleagues during a typical working day – the purpose being that they can experience what it's like to deliver the service at first-hand. For example, they might spend time as a classroom assistant, a refuse collector or with the Access Point team – the opportunities are almost endless!

If you'd like to have a senior manager spend time working with you and your team then firstly discuss it with your line manager, then complete the request form on the interchange.



Corporate Director, Rhona Gunn, went back to the floor earlier this year

## Who? *is your STAR?*



We're struggling to contain our excitement over the launch of the Colleagues' Choice Award and we need YOUR vote!

This is your chance to celebrate the efforts of your colleagues by choosing who you would like to see pick up the accolade.

Once the voting opens on 23 October, you'll be able to make your selection on the 'poll' section on the interchange homepage – remember you can access this 24/7 from any internet-enabled device including smartphones.

There's also the option to vote via our HR department – you can email your vote to [hr@moray.gov.uk](mailto:hr@moray.gov.uk) or call 01343 563261.

Voting closes on 11 November, with the winner of the Colleagues Choice Award (along with the Chief Executive's Award for Excellence) being announced and presented at the STAR Awards later in the month.





## MORAY MAZE

As we go to press, the final employee conference for this year has drawn to a close.

Attendees played their part in 'Transforming Together', focusing on the financial priorities of the council and spotting where change is needed to deliver services in Moray in the future.

It came as no surprise to those at the conference that we have to change how we deliver services to the community – we need to prioritise on what we can deliver given the financial challenges we're all aware the council is faced with.

They also 'met' Bob, Zac and Mary – fictional customers with different needs – while playing 'Moray Maze – a walk in your shoes'. How we can deliver our services efficiently and meet their needs was discussed, and we'll post feedback from this on the interchange shortly.

Digital stories were also a hit, and featured council colleagues. Dion McLennan, Mailroom Assistant, shared her experience of what it's like working here as one of our younger members of staff; Kenna Warren, Consultancy Technician, talked about her experience working with schoolchildren on the flood alleviation schemes and encouraging future engineers; and last year's STAR Award winner, Secondary Teacher Amanda Tiddy, told of the work she's done within the Duke of Edinburgh scheme.

Look out for a full round up in next month's *Connect*.





# Christmas Party

Join us on **24 November** to get dressed up, have a good dance with friends old and new and indulge in some early Christmas spirit.

The venue is **Elgin Town Hall** from 7.15pm. Tickets are **£15 each**, and for that you get a welcome drink, a great band and a seat at a table.

The music, provided by local band Diamond Skies, will get the party started properly at 8pm. A bar will operate throughout the evening with stovies being provided mid-way to ensure staying power till the end of the night at 12.30am!

One lucky member of staff will win a surprise raffle just for being there, so remember to give us all the staff names when booking your tickets. Of course, you can bring your partner too.

Places are limited so please book as soon as you can by emailing [christmasparty@moray.gov.uk](mailto:christmasparty@moray.gov.uk) with your details:

- \* Your name
- \* Department
- \* Location
- \* Number of tickets
- \* Transport home (and which bus, see below)

Confirmation and how to pay for your tickets will be sent via return email.

## Transport Home

To take the hassle out of transport home for those who live outside of Elgin, if there is sufficient interest we will arrange buses. The proposed routes are:

### Bus 1

Lossie, Duffus, Hopeman, Cummingston, Burghead, Kinloss, Forres

### Bus 2

Lhanbryde, Mosstodloch, Fochabers, Portgordon, Buckpool, Buckie, Portessie, Findochty, Cullen, Fife Keith, Keith Square

### Bus 3

Roths, Craigellachie, Aberlour and Dufftown

The buses will only stop if there is a need. When you book tell us you want transport home. The bus will be approx £5 per seat.



### Dress Code:

Make an effort – you know you want to! No jeans and trainers.





Chuffed with their medals.  
Nice to see James and  
Grahame rehydrating after  
the day's exertions!

# SUMMON THE BEASTS

Three hardy souls from ICT left their natural habitat in HQ to take on the Loch Ness Beast Race a few weeks ago – and won!

Senior ICT Officers **James Thomson**, **Peter Leeman** and **Grahame Davidson** pulled on their brave pants and 'beasted' the 10k obstacle course, conquering 30 hurdles including the Greasy Weasel, Beast Bog, Hurdle Gurdle, Mud Sucker and Tangle McFangle.

As expected, they ended up soaking wet and covered in mud within the first few obstacles. It was all for a worthy cause though, as more than £500 was raised for Chest, Heart and Stroke Scotland.

James said: *"It was a great day with good weather. We completed the course in two hours and five minutes – about the middle of the pack – which was what we were aiming for. It was tough going but great fun and we thoroughly enjoyed it."*

*"Next year we're aiming for a better time!"*

Kudos, gents!

Grahame gets his leg over,  
while James lowers himself  
and Pete looks on



Sodden and muddy, but thankful it's over. L-R:  
James, Grahame and Pete.





# CANNONBALL



Damien Rice she aint, but Shirley Feaks sure gave Cannonball a run for its money when she took part in the prime-time ITV game show.

Shirley, who's a Commissioning and Performance Officer for the Health and Social Care Partnership, made the trip to Malta in May to take part in the challenge of a lifetime.

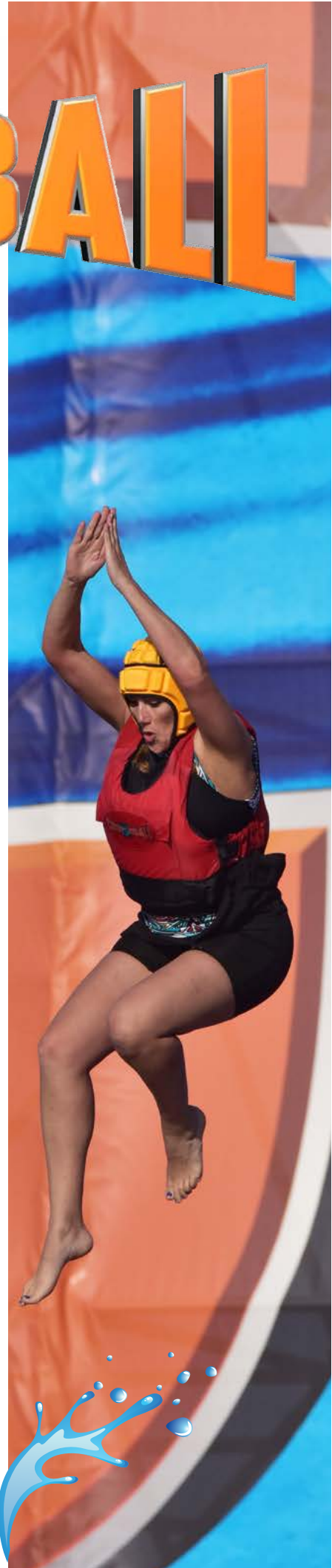


It's not everyone's idea of fun, but she had a great time being launched metres into the air from an enormous inflatable, throwing herself down a giant water slide and skimming on a bodyboard in a race against 24 other contestants.

*"The filming itself took around 14 hours," she said, "it was an emotional rollercoaster of a day – I was scared, nervous and happy all rolled into one."*



The show is hosted by Freddie Flintoff, which pleased Shirley, who added: *"I've never met anyone famous before, so that was quite exciting!"*





# PLANNING AHEAD

what's going to happen?!?

Our Corporate Plan can be viewed like a business plan. It sets out our vision, values and priorities and provides the context for the challenges we'll face.

Our last Corporate Plan ran from 2015-2017, but with new councillors it's time for the plan to be reviewed.

Everyone's familiar with the financial situation and the need to reduce spending. By looking at our budget alongside a Corporate Plan we'll be able to make sure that we match this with our priorities. We're now developing a single plan that covers priorities, budget and resourcing.

This is a real challenge. The budget is set in February each year, so proposals need to be nearing completion by the previous December.

For the Corporate Plan the new councillors need to set out future priorities for the council. This ensures we're investing our reducing resources in the right places. Along with Community Planning Partners, five priorities have already been identified for our joint action plan (Moray 2027), and these will influence our own priorities:

- 🗨 A growing diverse and sustainable economy
- 🗨 Building a future for our young people in Moray
- 🗨 Connections and access
- 🗨 Changing our relationship with alcohol
- 🗨 Supporting women and families to achieve their potential

Our current running costs are £7.6m more than our annual budget; to pay our way until the end of March 2018 we're funding this from reserves. Reduced government funding, inflation costs and service pressures will mean that by April 2018 this deficit will be £14m. We'll have some reserves left in the bank (around £14m by March 2018) and so the Council is likely to decide to use some of this to help bridge the gap while we develop longer term solutions to reducing our spending.

We all need to work together to build a council that is:

- 🗨 sustainable, with a realistic and flexible budget
- 🗨 customer focused, increasing capacity in our community and improve outcomes in areas of priority need
- 🗨 prioritising its resources by delivering services based on evidence and priorities

We'll do this by transforming, delivering of services differently, being more commercial in our approach; working in partnership with other organisations and communities; and making sure we are as efficient as possible in our processes, use of technology and assets.

The timetable is likely to be:

**Until December 2017:** councillors will be working on budget proposals with senior officers ensuring it is consistent with the council's longer term priorities

**December/January 2018:** telling you what's proposed and consulting with trade unions, getting feedback and reviewing proposals.

**February 2018:** approval of budget for 2018/19 and new Corporate Plan

**January to May 2018:** councillors working with senior officers on long-term budget options, including re-directing resources for the priorities in the corporate plan.

**March 2018:** regular communication with all our workforce, partners and public on future plans.

**June 2018:** review progress to determine the detailed next steps. This is the earliest point for consultation and engagement on longer term proposals.

For many of us this situation means we will continue to face significant change to our services and jobs for a number of years. The uncertainty this creates is difficult to live with. We'll make sure you will get regular updates, and that information is made available – even if the answers are not yet clear.

If you have any questions, please put these to your manager.





# Use it or lose it!

2017 is marching swiftly on, and we've even our first mention of the 'C'-word in this edition – that's Christmas, by the way!

Maybe you're completely organised and have all your holidays booked well in advance. For those of us that aren't quite as organised though, we're being reminded to book in our annual leave for the rest of the year, to avoid the mad rush in the last few weeks before Christmas.

*"It's the same every year," says Acting Head of HR, Frances Garrow, "staff are so busy with the 'day job' that booking time off, and spreading it out evenly over the year, isn't always a priority. But we have to maintain service provision within each department all year round, so it's impossible for managers to approve all the holiday requests usually received for December."*

*"My advice is to take some time to look at your holiday entitlement and, if you've got days left to take, pencil in some dates between now and the end of the year. Remember that annual leave can't be carried over to the next year – so use it or lose it!"*



Struggling to get the balance right between work and home life? Our holiday buyback scheme could help you even things out.

It allows eligible members of staff to buy up to two extra weeks' annual leave – although we can consider applications for longer periods. It's a salary sacrifice agreement, so equal instalments are deducted from your pay packet each month over the year. For every extra week you take, you'll sacrifice a week's pay.

Maybe you're planning on moving house next year, going on honeymoon or an extended holiday – holiday buyback could help you strike the right balance and give your life outside of work the time it deserves.

Applications are being taken just now for this scheme, but will close on 30 November to allow Payroll to process all applications in time for the January pay run.

Just so you know, holiday buyback won't have any impact on your pension contributions or entitlements. It's also taken off your salary before tax is applied, so it costs you even less.

You can look at the guidance and application form on the interchange, to see if it's right for you.

One person it is right for is Amanda Kingham, who works at HQ in our Accounts section. She says the scheme gave her annual leave a welcome boost before she hit her five years of service and gained the extra annual leave entitlement.

*"I've used holiday buyback for the last three years, buying an extra week each time to give me more flexibility. I don't notice the money coming off my wages every month and it gives me the time I need to meet family commitments – like orthodontist appointments for my children!"*



# **Welcome** Aboard



Clerical Assistant, **Nicola Mone**, started with us in July. A former police officer, she's now works with the team at the DLO in Mosstodloch.



There's a new Quantity Surveying Assistant on the team at HQ – **Mark Kidd** started his new role in August after his previous role as a Travis Perkins' Customer Sales Expert.



We've welcomed **Jane Claase** to our HR department as Assistant HR Admin Team Leader. She joins us from Baxters Food Group, where she was a HR Assistant.



**Jessica Howard** started with us earlier this year as a Foundation Apprentice. She's come straight from school and is working in HQ.



**Sarah Allanson** also joins the HR team at HQ as a Clerical Assistant. She was a Trainee Recruitment Specialist before taking up her new role here at the end of August.



**Dionne McLennon** started working here in April as a Mailroom Assistant. You'll recognise her if you've been to an employee conference this year! She joins us at HQ following her stint at Thomas Cook.



**Maya Jacques** is a former Customer Assistant for B&Q, but started here last month as an Apprentice Copy Shop Assistant.



Elgin Academy has a new ICT/AV Technician. **Tayne Campbell**, previously a Technical Support Engineer at Gordonstoun, has started at the school.



**Callum Clark**'s been with us for a while but has just completed his induction. He's been a Residential Childcare Worker at Cala since November 2015.





## Celebrations



A 60<sup>th</sup> birthday was celebrated last month. **Ros Fraser**, who works in customer services at Auchernack in Forres, hit the milestone birthday on 17 September. Congrats!

John Collison, who worked as a Technical Assistant for Environmental Protection, has left us after 11 years' service.

He was the liaison officer for the maintenance of play equipment, funfairs and circus visits to Moray, and has now moved to Cumbria with wife, Sarah, and sons, Adam and Alistair.



**Eleanor Cantlay**, who works in Business Support for Placement Services, harboured a not-so-secret desire to meet Enviroman after seeing the photographs in *Connect*.

As her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday was approaching, it was up to her colleague, Gil, to track him down. Like all superheroes he lives a double life - but a source passed on her details to Enviroman headquarters and told them of a woman who needed help to make her birthday memorable.

They summoned Enviroman from his secret hideout and he saved the day by presenting Eleanor with her birthday cake. She was absolutely delighted with her surprise visitor and is now even more of a fan.

If there is a requirement for Envirogirl, you know who to call.





# Congratulations & Celebrations

What's better than one celebration? 125, of course! Last week the success of our Community Care colleagues was celebrated as they received awards for completing accredited training courses.

Although only two dozen could attend the awards ceremony, a special mention was given to all those who've worked hard to complete courses including SVQs in Administration of Medication, Level 4 Learning and Development and PDA Health & Social Care: Supervision.

Chief Officer of Health and Social Care Moray, Pam Gowans, was there to hand out the accolades and praise staff for their commitment to learning.



Assessor Maureen and candidate Kenny chose a less formal setting to acknowledge Kenny's training triumph, by climbing aboard a tandem for a celebratory cycle.





# WE ARE MACMILLAN. CANCER SUPPORT



Is there ever a wrong time for tea, coffee and cake? Not when you're raising money for Macmillan!

Cedarwood Day Centre raised **£488.08** at their coffee afternoon, featuring a bottle stall, guess the number of sweets, guess the height of the cake and a home bake stall.



Environmental Protection's admin team, based at Ashgrove, baked up a storm and raised over **£760!** A special shout out to Janice, who made the 'guess my birthday minion'!

Finally, there was a massive queue of hungry colleagues waiting to load their plates with cake for a good cause at HQ Annexe – **£837.20** was raised through donations and the raffle.

Thanks to local businesses who made raffle donations including Starbucks, Costa Coffee, Johnstons of Elgin, Walkers Shortbread, Boots, Salon Services, Jimmy Chung's, M&S and Carlton Bingo.







Oh, and to justify their elevenses, a total of 35 million calories (yes, you read that right!) was burned by the riders.

# WORKING ON A PROJECT?

If you want to talk to someone from the PMO before booking then get in touch with [david.moreton@moray.gov.uk](mailto:david.moreton@moray.gov.uk) (x3605), [david.morris@moray.gov.uk](mailto:david.morris@moray.gov.uk) (x3801) or call either Mark (x3810) or Shona (x3691).





There are at least 120 staff members working here who provide care to a family member, friend or neighbour, on top of holding down their 'day job', so this article may affect you, or at least someone you know.

The Carer (Scotland) Act 2016 comes into effect next April and focuses on health and wellbeing outcomes for unpaid carers. For staff who're unpaid carers, or support carers as part of their professional role, here's a summary of the main points of the Act:

New definition of a carer – *“an individual who provides or intends to provide care for another individual”*

A focus on the impact the caring role has on the individual and acknowledges the carers own needs are separated from those of the cared-for person

The reference to a carer's ability to provide care will be removed. Instead it will refer to a carer being 'able and willing' to provide care

Replace the current carer assessment with an Adult Carer Support Plan and a Young Carer Statement. A carer can request one and the local authority can offer one

The local authority (us) will agree and publicise the eligibility criteria it will use for adult carer access to

services. This will take place later this year and details will be shared on the intranet. Local Authorities will have a duty to support carers who meet eligibility criteria

To waive charges to carers for support provide to them

To provide an information and advice service for carers (this is already in place locally via Quarriers on [01343 556031](tel:01343556031))

To prepare and publish a short breaks statement

Carer involvement in developing carer services

Support carers with emergency or future planning

Involvement of carers in hospital discharge of the cared-for person and to take account as far as is practical, of the carer's views in discharge decision making

A duty to prepare a local carer strategy. This is already in place for adult carers and is on our website. A young carers' strategy is to be developed in consultation with young carers.

Further awareness sessions about the Carer Act for staff who support unpaid adult carers will take place in the New Year, we'll keep you posted.



# NO NEGATIVES

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

John Ferguson, our Community Planning and Development Manager, will be hoping there are 'no negatives' when his photography goes under the spotlight during an exhibition this month.

No Negatives – a collection of pieces by group f/63 – is being held in the Long Room at Logie Steading from 15 – 22 October, between 10am and 5pm.

Speaking to *Connect*, he said: *"I've always had a camera but on the whole took 'snaps'. During a serious bout of illness three years ago I acquired a decent camera and began to take pictures. I've been a member of Moray Camera Club and another north-based photography group for a few years and have managed to win a few club competitions."*

*"I've done weddings, some portraits and have been selling prints but for this exhibition I am exploring a more abstract and conceptual approach to photography exploring memory through images."*