

# WE'RE HIRED!

Also in this issue:  
our own Lord Sugar tells it like it is  
we go potty with Greenfingers  
and we take a peek at gritting

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### Editorial

Welcome to your March *Connect*!

Much debate amongst the *Connect* team this month about a theme for the front cover. For those steeped in popular culture, you'll see straight away the picture is reminiscent of the poster for the classic Tarantino film, *Reservoir Dogs*.



However, as they're all Mr Yellow and we're not Scottish Water, it was a bit tenuous. So *The Apprentice* it is.

It's great to feature our apprentices. That, and Mike's uplifting view on working for the council, the new colleagues we welcome aboard this month and Cllr Eagle's encouraging take on his new role, gives us all some reasons to be optimistic about the future.

More changes are undoubtedly in the pipeline as senior management and councillors get to grips with 2019's budget, but meantime it is business as usual with a hopeful eye to the future.

■ Cover Image: Apprentices at the DLO, Mosstodloch

### Team *Connect*



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OFFICER



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DESIGNER



# HeadsUp

Mike Rollo, Building Services Manager

## Dear Colleagues

Growing up in a 'Cooncil Hoose' in New Elgin, I never expected to one day manage Building Services DLO, which is responsible for maintaining and repairing our housing stock of just over 6,000 properties.

I joined Moray Council in December 2004 to become what was then called General Manager of Building Services DLO.

This came after a variety of roles ranging from a YTS electrician to stock controller, though my career break came at 19 when I became an Assistant Estimator and realised I wanted a mix of office and site life which motivated me to go on and study for a HND in Quantity Surveying.

I never looked back after this. I joined a local construction company in the early 90s and enjoyed a successful eight years using my newly-learned skills, progressing to Contracts Manager. I also spent a year in the Falkland Islands with the penguins (practice for Mosstodloch!) before five years with a large national contractor working all over Scotland as a Construction Manager for projects ranging in value from £5-£10m. I also continued my studying during this period and became a Chartered Builder in 2003.

I've been fortunate to have been married for 22 years to a Mosstodloch quine (the wife's words - not mine!) and have four

wonderful children. My wife Maggie and daughter Cara both work at the Council, after receiving glowing reports from me on the work/life balance that it offers. My other daughter, Eirinn, is at University in Edinburgh studying to be a drama teacher (another prospective council employee?) and my son Grant is an Apprentice Plumber. Our latest addition to the fleet – Katie - is now seven, and a pupil at New Elgin Primary.

Back to work, and the housing and property service, like most others, faces challenging times ahead as we try to increase the supply of affordable housing in Moray and, as a responsible social landlord, sustain our tenancies, reduce homelessness, waiting lists and offer best value to our tenants, whilst trying to keep our rents among the lowest in Scotland.

Pressures from homelessness, welfare reform, an ageing housing stock and a changing tenancy profile are all challenges that we face on a daily basis.

Building Services are well prepared to meet these challenges, and I take a lot of pride and comfort that in the group of 146 staff currently employed within our service, each and every one contributes and is as committed as I am to improve our local community and deliver quality services.

After my own humble beginnings, I'm also passionate about training and retaining our local youngsters and it's pleasing to see a feature in this edition highlighting the importance that apprentices play in our future.

The current crop of 12 apprentices within the DLO bodes well for the future, and I will do my utmost to ensure that these local youngsters successfully complete their apprenticeships and are retained by us for the future.

I feel honoured and privileged to give you my 'Heads Up' contribution and, having worked in both private and public sectors, cannot emphasise enough how highly I regard the Council as an excellent employer. I hope to see out my career here which, in all honesty, is something I never expected or considered when I joined...

Mike





# WE'RE HIRED!

**With no boardroom, Karen, Nick or Lord Sugar in sight, we certainly won't be competing for airtime against the BBC's 'The Apprentice' anytime soon. But we've said 'you're hired' to more than a dozen apprentices in the last couple of years who've now taken up posts within the council.**

As well as earning a living, they benefit from access to education and will gain a qualification while boosting our workforce – win, win!

And with Scottish Apprenticeship Week at the start of this month, what better time to get to know some of our apprentices, and learn how starting off their career at Moray Council is helping them open up opportunities elsewhere.

We start with our Building Services section, which has a prolific history of employing apprentices. Currently boasting one apprentice for every nine tradesperson Building Services Manager, Mike Rollo (our very own



■ Some of this year's apprentices based at the DLO pictured with their mentor Davie (centre)



Lord Sugar), said they're vital in producing the craftsmen and women of the future.

*"Investing now in the skills we will need is an important part of our business planning – it also matches the council's priority of cultivating ambitious, confident children and young people in our community."*

*"We've a strong tradition of producing highly-skilled tradespeople, thanks to the quality of training available locally from providers like Moray College, which has seen a number of apprentices achieve local and national recognition."*

Accolades have gone to Apprentice Electrician, Daniel Begg, who was runner-up at the SECTT's National Electrical Apprentice of the Year competition, with his excellent practical ability praised. Meanwhile Graeme Ralph received 'Best Student' within the HNC Construction Management course at Moray College last year. Graeme has wasted no time putting his talents to good use, securing a Contracts Supervisor post with us, based in Mosstodloch.

With alumni of this calibre, *Connect* took a trip to the DLO to catch up with the current cohort.





**"I have the opportunity to stay on after I qualify"**

■ Forrest Watson  
Apprentice Electrician



We met 22 year-old former Milne's High pupil, Forrest Watson, who lives in Garmouth and started with us on 15 January as an Apprentice Electrician. He told us why he chose Moray Council to kick-start his career as a tradesman.

*"I know a couple of people that already work in the council and they've given me good reviews about what it's like to work here."*

*"I was also looking for somewhere I have the opportunity to stay on after I qualify, and I'm hoping I have that chance here."*

*"It's been a great start but there's a lot to take in. When I think back on my first day to now, I've learned so much already."*

Forrest, who worked in an IT role with Cap Gemini for four years before joining us at Moray Council, will learn on the job, but also undertake block release at Moray College.

*"It's rewarding when I learn something new," he said, "I'm still taking in all the technical aspects of the job and the fact that there are different ways to do the same task – but I'm learning!"*

For some apprentices, their job with us is their first since leaving school and making that leap can be challenging. Davie Kerr, Co-ordinator at the DLO, has recently taken up the role of mentoring new starts.

*"I go to the college to have a walk round and see how they're getting on with their projects, and a sit down with the lecturers," he said, "it's just making sure everyone is up to speed and they're happy with the pace of learning – I'm the go between the college and the apprentices."*

Katie Thornley is 19 years-old and is also based at Mosstodloch as an Apprentice Office Administrator. She started this role in August 2017 and is studying for her SVQ Level 2 in Business Administration, a field which she wants to pursue because of the variety of the work.

*"I've done different tasks like stock-taking, dealing with orders and invoices, and with suppliers," she said, "I enjoy interacting with our"*

## Cover Story



■ Emily Garrow and Cara Rollo enjoying the challenges of work in the council

*clients and suppliers, but minute-taking is difficult because I have to listen really carefully and write really fast."*

Apprentices support many areas of business within the council, and the opportunity is arming them with experience of the workplace and preparing them for the next step in their career. Just recently, Apprentice Copy Shop Assistant, Kirsty Smailes, completed her SVQ Level 2 in Business and Administration and has moved to take up a permanent Clerical Assistant post within the fostering and adoption team at Highland Council.

Speaking about the start of her apprenticeship here almost two years ago, she said: "Figuring out

*how all the machines worked was a bit daunting, in particular the folding machine and booklet maker – it took me several attempts to figure those out!*

*"What I liked best though was not doing the same thing day-in day-out; I really enjoyed the variety of the job. I got to meet a lot of people doing this job and everyone has been really nice."*

You'll hear from two of other Apprentice Office Administrators during Apprenticeship Week as they chat with MFR about their experience at the council.

Cara Rollo started with us in March 2017 because she wanted to experience a new, busy, working environment.

*"Despite receiving offers, I was never really interested in going on to further education," she said, "full time employment is a more favourable option for me as I can pick up new skills which I can adapt to suit any workplace."*

Emily Garrow, who's just completed an SQV Level 2 in Business and Administration, said a Modern Apprentice suited her as it gave her the chance to work and learn at the same time.

*"Working full-time and attending college has been very motivating; I get to experience first-hand how the things I've learned transfer to the work environment."*

*"Working at Moray Council has been eye-opening, motivational, and it has also been integral in helping me decide on my educational direction after my apprenticeship."*



*"I can pick up new skills which I can adapt to suit any workplace"*

■ Cara Rollo  
Clerical Apprentice

Acting Head of Human Resources, Frances Garrow – Emily's mum – says developing our young workforce makes sound business sense, as it can help to ensure we have the necessary skills and workforce to meet future demands – and better reflect the age profile of the local community.

*"We have recruitment difficulties in a number of skill areas including ICT, HR, Direct Services, Design and Property, Teaching and Development Services. We're now looking at ways to address these gaps, which could include recruiting more apprentices, to provide more opportunity and scope for the employment of young people within the council."*





# SPRING IS

Spring is sprung, the grass is riz...but if you're looking for plants rather than poems there's a great deal on offer from a council-run initiative.

Based in Elgin's Cooper Park and part of the council's Employment Support and Training Service, Greenfingers provides support to a number of adults with learning disabilities, on the autistic spectrum and/or in the recovery of a mental health condition. It's a busy place all year round but the arrival of March heralds the start of a hectic time for the teams.

Right now they're preparing to receive the 20,000 plant 'plugs' to grow on in the shelter of the heated greenhouses and sow a variety of vegetable seeds. 5,000 plastic pots have been washed and stacked, the benches cleaned and a new mice-proof seedling bench is being completed.

All this activity is geared towards the project's open day on 19 May when the doors of the big greenhouses are thrown open to the public and a huge variety of flowers and vegetable plants are for sale. Hot drinks and cakes too!

Pam Lewis, training services officer with the Greenfingers project, said the team are prepared for the intense activity.

*"We have between eight and 10 trainees a day, guided by four of us support staff and some brilliant volunteers," she said.*

■ Pamela Lewis  
Training Services Manager





*"There's never nothing to do. Apart from getting the greenhouses prepared for the plant sales, we undertake garden work for various places and people in Moray. These include Dr Gray's, the Forestry Commission, and private gardens."*

*"But Spring is always a busy time as we prepare for the new plants and our open day."*

The key benefit for Greenfingers trainees is a confidence boost from learning a skill, doing a satisfying and worthwhile job, and having the routine of getting up and going to work with a team.

Part-funded by Moray Council, the paid contract work undertaken by the teams provides extra income to help the service be more sustainable.

In addition to the May open day, Greenfingers have regular pop-up plant sales at Elgin HQ Annexe and the St Giles Centre.

Acting Manager & Training Services Coordinator, Menita Roberts, said: *"We're delighted to be developing the service and will be offering our new 'Bushcraft Experiences' to Day Services, where we encourage people to embrace our local greenspaces and woodlands for the many health benefits gained from being active outdoors."*





# Noticeboard

## Defib!

The eagle eyed will have noticed that there is now a defibrillator located at the front of Moray Resource Centre.

Fundraising by clients, staff and donations from various individuals and groups who use the building totalled £850, with the remainder being donated by local charity 'Defibs for Moray'.

"This is great news for all of us in Elgin," said our colleague, Eleanor Devenney, who's based at Moray Resource Centre, "as far as we are aware this is the first 'outside' community defibrillator in Elgin. So well done one and all!"

Eleanor added that the fundraising efforts are ongoing.

"We'd like to raise the remaining £800 and donate this back to Defibs for Moray – supporting them the way they have supported us. Look out for further fundraising events!"



## Top Employer Awards?

Back in January we made it to the finals of the **Scottish Top Employers for Working Families Awards 2018**, the winner will be announced later this month

\*fingers crossed we'll have good news to share in the next edition of Connect!

## Dates for your diary

Friday 30 March (Good Friday)

School holidays:

Friday 30 March – Friday 13 April

May Day 7 May

Don't forget your disc

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and cafes, t  
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standard/



# NEW Rights for Carers!

Are you a working unpaid carer?

Do you come into contact with unpaid carers during the course of your work?

New rights for unpaid carers come into effect from 1 April 2018 that could affect you.

## Carers (Scotland) Act 2016

New rights for unpaid carers and new duties for local authorities and health and social care partnerships come into effect from 1 April 2018.

The intention of the Act is to ensure unpaid carers are better supported so they can continue to care, if they wish, whilst maintaining their wellbeing and to have a life alongside caring.

A 'carer' is defined as someone who provides or intends to provide care for another person. There is no requirement for a carer to provide a substantial amount of care, on a regular basis.

### The Act means:

- Adult carers have a right to an 'Adult Carer Support Plan'.
- Young carers have a right to a 'young carer statement'.
- Carers have a right to support that help meet any 'eligible needs'.
- Carers have a right to be involved in services.
- Carers have a right to be involved in the hospital discharge process of the cared-for person.

### Information and advice for carers

There is a duty on the local authority to have access for carers to information and advice services, covering a range of mandatory areas, including emergency planning (for example, through Quarriers Carer Support Services).

In addition, the Scottish Government are preparing a Carers' Charter setting out the rights of carers in the Act.

Watch for specific staff briefings to tell you more.

get  
count!

reminder that the Council  
count at a number of shops  
the interchange has a  
the places you can access  
[change.moray.gov.uk/int-  
Page\\_107629.html](http://change.moray.gov.uk/int-Page_107629.html)

## Wee Winter Walks

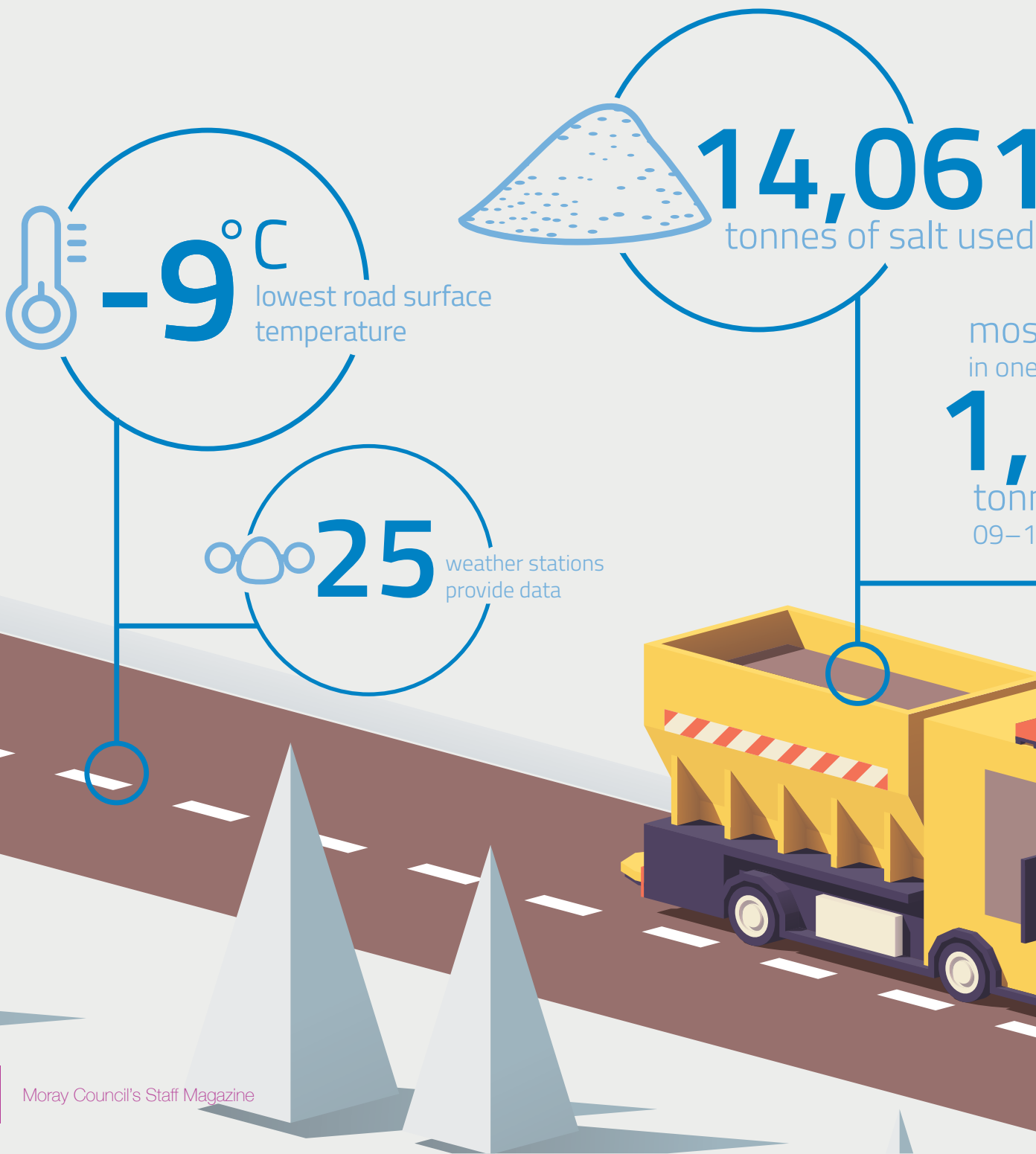
Coming up in April's edition, a full round-up of  
the Wee Winter Walk participants - including  
the winners!

# Winter Grit

09 October 2017 until  
18 February 2018

As the *Connect* team was putting together this edition of the mag, we were all recovering from the 'Beast from the East', which forecasters predicted would bring the heaviest snowfall in years. As if our winter maintenance crews haven't been busy enough!


Speaking of which, our colleagues at Ashgrove provided some stats to show just how hectic this winter season has been, so we handed it to our designer to do his thing – and here's the result...





the same as driving round the planet twice!

**2**

**56,000** 

miles of road treated

t salt used  
y week

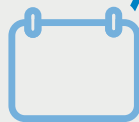
**964**

nes used  
6 December 2017



**4,600** 

hours of treatment



**2,394** 

winter actions carried out  
that's 55% up on last year



Priority 1 routes only

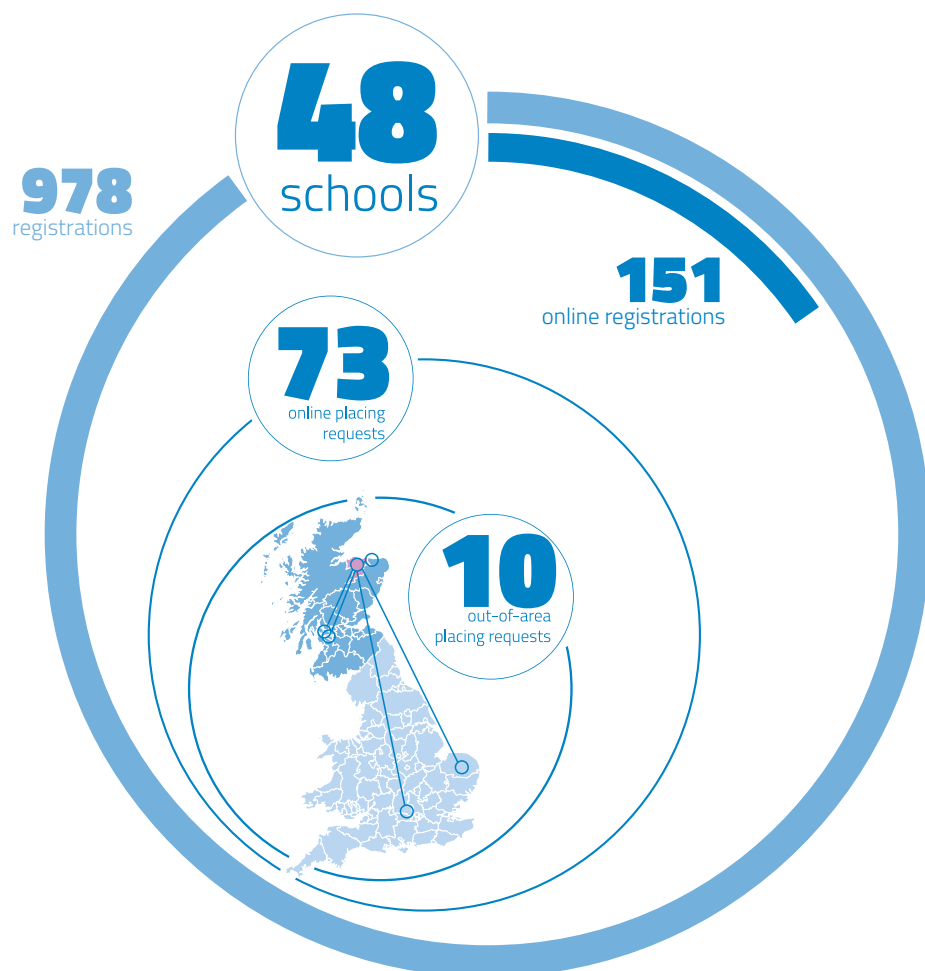
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**myaccount**

## Subscription Service

Current subscription choices are committee updates, tenant information and online services. Reminders can include a committee meeting webcast; an update about online services, including new payment functions or online applications; or that the latest edition of Tenant's Voice is available online. More topics to be released in 2018 include library services and education updates.

This year's intake looks like this:





# rvices

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## Interchange Poll

You may have taken part in the digital poll on interchange. If you did – thank you; if you didn't – don't worry, there will be more! We'll be using your feedback to understand what services you would like to see online to help us prioritise what's coming online first. Have your say - get involved in the next poll.

## Website Updates

Work on our council website continues as we aim to improve the user experience. We're currently working with social care; child protection, children and families; and community life and leisure.

## Coming soon...

New online payment system for schools

From April, all primary and secondary parents will now be able to pay for their child's school meals online. We'll be introducing a new cashless catering system into ALL of our schools. A survey last year highlighted this as being one of the main online services that primary parents would like to use.

Plus, there are benefits with the new payment system that will even impress the secondary school parents. They can check their child's balance online, split single payments between more than one child and view what the money has been spent on.

We'll be taking a phased approach to rolling out the new system, more information will be released nearer the time on our social media channels, interchange and website.



We've mentioned before in *Connect* that Childcare Vouchers through the current salary sacrifice scheme will come to a stop as last year, the government began the roll out of a new scheme called Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) – which changes the package of financial support it offers to working parents.

Our childcare voucher provider, Edenred, has confirmed that the scheme will be closed to new entrants from 06 April 2018 (existing scheme members can remain).

You can still join the scheme before this date but you will need to be in receipt of your vouchers on or before the 5 April – this means it needs to be processed during the March payroll period.

To join the scheme, visit Edenred's childcare voucher website, then click the 'Parent' tab from the top of the homepage. Select 'Join now' and enter our unique scheme ID: MORA8512.

You'll then have to supply your payroll number (you can find this on your payslip) and choose a four digit PIN. Follow the steps then click submit. Important: Bear in mind this is a salary sacrifice agreement, so be sure you want to join before you click submit.

Before signing up you may wish to check whether Tax free childcare is more suitable for you and you can find out more at [childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk](https://childcare-support.tax.service.gov.uk).

# Welcome Aboard



Previously a Technician within Aberdeenshire Council, **James Ross** joined us as an Engineer within the flood management team in April 2016, but has just got round to undertaking his corporate induction.



**Leigh Moreton** started at Moray Council in January this year. She was an Administrator with NHS Grampian, but now works with us as a Technician in HQ.



**Chris Thomas** is a new Clerical Assistant within the housing team. She joined us in November 2017, following her previous job as an Energy & Sustainability Officer with Trident Housing Association.



Former Subsea Structures Engineer, **John Shephard**, took up his new role as Engineer (Structures) in October 2017.



**June Kavanagh** joined us at the end of last year, taking up the HR Adviser role with the Early Years Expansion Project. Her previous job was HR Manager with West College Scotland.





## Councillor's Spotlight



May 2017 seems some time ago now as I approach my 11<sup>th</sup> month as a councillor.

A bit like starting any new job, there are people to meet as well as learning the layout of buildings, sorting out IT and all manner of other things. Being a councillor is certainly diverse; from helping groups with grant applications, aiding with housing issues and responding to sudden flooding to engaging with officers across the council to look at our governance, our policies & procedures and importantly our finance.

I never expected it to be easy of course. As I handed my form in to stand as a councillor I was aware of the difficulties Moray was facing, but felt it important that in order to move forward with optimism Moray needed to ensure a good cross-section of society was elected. As I look across all the elected members I am pleased to see a good mix.

In truth, I am a stay at home dad. Prior to being a councillor I worked around my wife (a local GP) to look after the kids, sort out the house and try to run a small farm and sheep flock we have near Buckie.

I have long been involved in the church and other community groups, and when given the opportunity to stand as a councillor thought I might have something to offer. To be in the administration group now, helping to lead the council forward is amazing but also humbling.

Despite some of the press we get I really believe that we have 26 councillors who will work towards making Moray the great place it should and can be. Of course we are just a tiny part of the plan and we depend upon all staff across the authority to make the priorities of the council come to life.

I feel very blessed with the positions I have been given in Moray. It is a huge role to chair the Children & Young People's Services committee and to be leader of the Conservative party group on the administration. I work closely with the leader of the council and with the corporate and senior management teams to develop about our options for the future.

This is the core of what we as councillors do. It is not our place to get involved in the day-to-day management of the council,

but to provide leadership on the direction we should travel in. The new corporate plan identifies our schools, our economy and the need for our communities to be caring and healthy as major priorities for us all. We desperately want to achieve them but it won't be easy; we will need to ensure elected members work closely with senior officers, and in turn senior officers must work with each and every member of staff to bring about the change we need.

We are fortunate in Moray that many of us, whether elected members, senior officers or staff choose to live and work here. That is not always true of councils in the central belt. That means we have a genuine passion in our workforce to improve our communities because – after all – we are our communities.

The future looks tough but for me it also looks bright. Whilst it would be foolish to think there are not some tough conversations to have and big decisions to make, I think together we will get there.

**Cllr Tim Eagle**  
**Ward 3 Buckie**

# WORKING ON A PROJECT?

Working on a project at the moment? Then you need the Project Management Office's (PMO) bitesize peer discussion sessions.

These 45-minute sessions are informal and a great way to network with other project managers and colleagues. The sessions centre on a 15-minute presentation followed by Q&A and peer discussion. If you would like to attend either of these sessions then please book a place using CLIVE.

If you want to talk to someone before booking then get in touch with [david.moreton@moray.gov.uk](mailto:david.moreton@moray.gov.uk) (3605) or [david.morris@moray.gov.uk](mailto:david.morris@moray.gov.uk) (3801) or call Mark (3810) or Shona (3691).

**Project Lifecycle**  
07 March @ 10am in Meeting Room 3

The Project Life Cycle refers to a series of activities which are necessary to fulfil the project objectives.

**Project Governance**  
21 March @ 10am in Meeting Room 3

Governance refers to the set of policies, regulations, functions, processes, procedures and responsibilities that define the establishment, management and control of projects.

# PLANNING ROADSHOWS

Our planning team have been on tour, taking their planning exhibition all over Moray to engage with residents about the main issues facing Moray – from a planning perspective – in the upcoming years.

So far they've had around 580 people through the doors at locations like Elgin, Lossiemouth and Buckie, but with Forres, Cullen and another Elgin date still to take place, that number is sure to rise.

If you've not had the chance to attend one of the drop in exhibitions yet, make sure you head along to one of the remaining dates:

**Cullen**  
Tuesday 06 March @ Cullen Town Hall,  
from 4–8pm

**Forres**  
Thursday 8 March @ Forres Town Hall,  
from 2–8pm

**Keith**  
Tuesday 13 March @ Longmore Hall,  
from 2–8pm

**Elgin**  
Saturday 17 March @ St Giles Church,  
from 9.30am – 4pm





# FIT LIFE?

Get to work on that beach body ready for summer at the new Elgin High Sports Centre

A brand new fitness facility is open for business, and will currently be the only one in Elgin where you can use your Fit Life membership.

Adjoining the new Elgin High School, the sports centre is available in the evenings and Saturday mornings, perfect for those after-work sessions.

Although part of the school during the day, once 5pm comes the centre is available to the public to get the most use from the facility.

Nicky Gerrard, the council's sport and leisure supervisor, said: *"The fitness suite is fully equipped with top-of-the-range Pulse training equipment, including resistance and cardiovascular machines, full racks of free-weights, together with Olympic Staging, Bars and Discs.*

*It's an ideal venue for those who enjoy working out.*

*"The suite is staffed by our fully qualified sport and leisure team, Tracey Carrington and Aaron Hamilton. Tracey is a fitness specialist – Level 4 on the Register of Exercise Professionals, and Aaron is qualified in sports coaching, development, and management. These are the guys that will help even the most inexperienced gym users to be confident in their training and get the most from their session, or help with specific training requests.*

*"There's also a large games hall that can be used for activities such as badminton, football, netball, and a variety of classes. A smaller room – called the Gym – has a full-sized court, perfect for hosting groups and clubs such as dance, fitness and martial arts classes."*

Once you have completed the 90-minute induction course you can use the fitness suite at any of the open sessions. Alternatively you can undertake a self-induction and start using the fitness suite immediately. Inductions and self-inductions are free with FitLife membership.



## Moray's newest sports and leisure facility

Everything at the centre can be booked outside of school times for sessions, the details are:

Open:

Monday – Friday  
5.00pm – 9.00pm

Saturday  
9.00am – 12:30pm

Your Fit Life membership gives you unlimited access to the fitness suite:

- Individual membership at £19 per month
- Family membership at £27 per month.

For details on getting a Fit Life membership go to the council's website.

If you've no membership you can also pay hourly:

- Fitness suite – £4.45
- Large hall – £36
- Small hall – £18

To enquire about the facilities or to book please contact:

Elgin Sports & Community Centre  
[ecec@moray.gov.uk](mailto:ecec@moray.gov.uk)  
[01343 543736](tel:01343543736)

Or Elgin High Sports Centre  
[elginhighsc@moray.gov.uk](mailto:elginhighsc@moray.gov.uk)

# we're going, going **GR3EN**

From June 2018 we'll be emptying green bins every three weeks instead of every fortnight. Collection of your recyclable waste, including your brown bin, won't change – this will still be every fortnight.

We're among the top local authorities in Scotland for recycling, but we've ambitious recycling targets to hit and we must send less to landfill. Recent waste audits have shown that more than 50 per cent of the rubbish in the average green bin could have been recycled, but instead ended up in landfill.

If we recycle more, it's better for the environment – and we'll save money. Making this change to three-weekly green bin collections will save us £100,000 each year in operating costs alone and, if less waste goes to landfill, we'll be taxed less too. For example, we estimate that each year 4,400 tonnes of green and food waste is put in the wrong bin (green) and goes to landfill instead of being recycled in the brown bin – costing almost £400,000 in landfill tax.

We'll be doing more promotion in the run up to the change in June, but in the meantime we've put information on our website, and answered some of the questions we've been asked on social media and through the contact centre:

[www.moray.gov.uk/waste](http://www.moray.gov.uk/waste).

We'll have updated bin collection calendars available online from 01 May and the change to three-weekly collections will come into effect in June.



want to know more?  
[www.moray.gov.uk/waste](http://www.moray.gov.uk/waste)

