



**Connect**

**August  
2018**

# ATTACK OF THE KILLER GARDEN TOOLS

**FEATURING:**

- DLITE'D GRADUATES
- CERTIFIED APPRENTICES
- GOLD FOR IT

**NEW SCHOOL:**

- MILNE'S ECO-PRIMARY

**moray**  
council

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### Editorial

Welcome to your August edition of *Connect*! Here's us thinking that summer editions will be slimmer versions, but before we can turn round it's another 16-pager!

Hope you enjoy Atholl's 'head's up' piece. He and his team have a hugely important role in the council, which must feel onerous and never-ending at times so it's good to see he's maintained his dry sense of humour.

Talking of excellent teams, well done to our colleagues working in ICT who've been working away to make the council as paperless as possible. They picked up a national award in July for the best programme of its kind in the UK. See [page 16](#).

And if we may blow our own trumpet for a moment, *Connect* has been shortlisted in the communication industry's awards for best publication. Judging happens in October and there's some stiff competition from private sector agencies, but we'll let you know how we get on.



■ Cover Image: Put it down, Kirsty! See story on page 4

### Team *Connect*



Peter Jones  
COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICER



Sharon Dunbar  
MEDIA &  
COMMUNICATIONS  
OFFICER



Angus McNicholl  
DESIGNER



# HeadsUp

Atholl Scott, Audit Manager

Dear Colleagues

**Forget the stories about internal auditors being bean counters; someone who's there to 'catch you out', or whose sole purpose in life is to move from service to service 'bayonetting the wounded'.**

If these ever were the roles of an auditor – and I very much doubt it – they have long since being consigned to the wheelie bin, along with the beloved green pens which at one time provided the principal evidence of where we auditors had been and what we'd checked.

Today, internal audit has developed rapidly as a profession in its own right, distinct from accountancy, and has a focus on governance (how things are managed); risks (and how the effects of these can be mitigated) and controls. Controls are the 'bread and butter' of our daily work, with a focus on the continuous assessment and evaluation of the checks and balances within the systems we all use in the course of our work.

One of the best things about the job is the breadth of exposure we get across all council services. My team here is small with just myself, a senior auditor, two auditors and an investigations officer but there are no areas 'off limits', which brings us into contact with elected members and colleagues in various disciplines right across the council and beyond.

In this role I have met many interesting people with different experiences, skills and backgrounds, and seen their commitment to their respective roles and enthusiasm for the public services they deliver. And for the most part, I'd like to think that internal audit has supported them on their journey, either providing assurance on what they do well or by asking them to consider changes where systems could be improved.

Of course, like everyone else, technology is increasingly aiding our work and much preparation work and more can be done without leaving our desks, but there is nothing like face-to-face contact to keep in touch with what is happening across services in these increasingly challenging times.

If I have any regrets, it is not keeping a more detailed record of 'incidents' that started out routinely but didn't quite go to plan. For example, checking caravan site income permits in monsoon conditions, identifying an intriguing way of suppressing income collected through a cash register, and getting locked in a council office (inadvertently, I think) by staff anxious to make it home for tea. None of these are recent I hasten to add; and there is a long list of others... if you are on it you will know who you are and why!

Away from work I turn my hand to a bit of gardening, mainly grass cutting and something of a continuous process at this time of year. I enjoy an eclectic mix of music from classical to pop, occasionally dusting down my singles collection from the seventies and eighties to relive those halcyon days. With my son now finishing his joinery apprenticeship I am finally getting jobs done in the house that have been pending for longer than I care to mention, and with him and his sister still at home and with their own cars a driveway extension is on my current to-do list. I also can't forget my silver wedding anniversary which is coming up before the end of the year. Must go and check the date!

**Best wishes**  
**Atholl**

# ATTACK OF THE KILLER GARDEN TOOLS

**I**t's been great weather to get out in the garden; cutting the grass, bit of pruning, cleaning the decking, etc. What could possibly go wrong?

Quite a lot actually, as our colleague Kirsty Boyle discovered.

Kirsty is our communications supremo for the Early Years and Childcare expansion programme (ELC), and has been doing a brilliant job at promoting the project and keeping everyone informed. Not so great when it comes to using garden machinery and equipment, it appears.

In the last six weeks she's made so many weekend visits to A&E we started to think she had a crush on one of the staff there. We've seen strimmed feet, cut hands, a cut from a mower, random burns and most spectacularly, taking the top off her thumb with a pressure washer.

*"I do seem to be a bit accident prone when it comes to machinery,"* she understates.

*"But I'm a do-er. We've just moved house and I just want to get things done. I should definitely take more care though and think through the task before I tackle it. It does mean I can sometimes sit with my feet up while my partner does the work... and he buys me ice cream to cheer me up!"*

Fortunately Kirsty's a true soldier and none of the accidents have stopped her from doing her job, thanks to sterling work by staff and surgeons at Dr Gray's.

But, as our health and safety manager, Doug Reid keeps telling us, most accidents can be avoided with basic precautions.

*"I've seen the pictures, and I must say that Kirsty took a lot of risks simply by not wearing some modest protective clothing,"* he said.

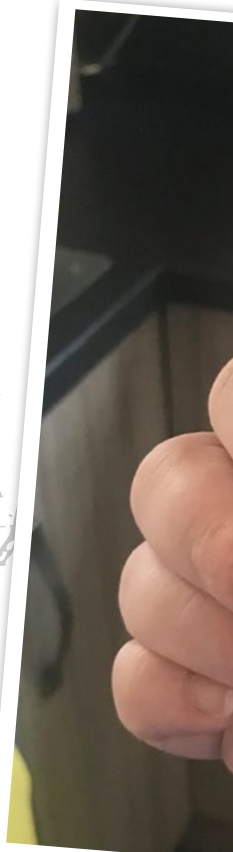
*"Boots, gloves and goggles I would say are the minimum for the sort of machinery she was using."*

*"She was fortunate not to sustain more permanent injuries."*

Our Lands and Parks section advised that they were more than happy to see Kirsty's skills restricted to her work with the ELC team.

Accidents at home can have a big knock-on effect to working life. According to ROSPA, 300,000 people needed hospital treatment last year after being injured while working on their gardens.

The council loses a significant number of working hours as a result of domestic mishaps, and unplanned absence puts more pressure on colleagues. Be careful in that garden!



## Cover Story





# career ready

**C**laire Wall, Employee Development Adviser for the council, explains what the Career Ready programme is and what you can do to help our young people take positive steps into work.

*"Can you remember your first job interview? Young people today face much greater competition than I did when I went for my first job. I've tried to remember how it felt, what my worries were, but it's all faded – so long ago!"*

*"But my dealings with Career Ready and the great interns we have supported over the years has brought this into sharp relief for me. There are so many opportunities for young people, so many paths they can take, but sometimes they don't think they can take them, or they see too many and can't figure out which is the right one."*

*"They haven't yet learnt that for most people there is no right path, just a path that you travel until you realise it's worked out for you. If it hasn't, you can change it."*

*"But that initial step into the working world can be so overwhelming; so many unwritten rules that we as adults follow that they haven't yet learnt."*

*"This is part of what Career Ready hopes to offer young people. It eases that journey from school to work through the support of mentors and an internship."*

*"Mentors meet their assigned student, talk to them, learn about their dreams and their reality. They also listen to their fears and any indecision, and guide them to finding their own answers. The interns will complete a four-week internship where they work on a project of real value to them and the council."*

*"Moray Council has signed up to this two-year programme and has pledged to supply eight mentors every year. The cohort starting this August is already full, but we always need more mentors. If you feel that you could support emerging talent in our young people, please get in touch."*

Contact Claire on 01343 563393 or email [claire.wall@moray.gov.uk](mailto:claire.wall@moray.gov.uk)

# Emily & Cara



## **R**ound of applause for our office's two modern apprentices, Emily Garrow and Cara Rollo!

They completed the coursework for the two-year programme in a record four months, and collected their Level 2 certificates of Modern Apprenticeship in Business and Administration from Moray College at the end of June.

Working in the office of the chief executive they've been exposed to so many different elements of what the council does and is responsible for, from handling complaint queries, letters from MP and MSPs, to managing holiday rotas and taking minutes from meetings. They've also managed diaries for senior managers, booked travel and accommodation, assisted with

events – pretty much all that an administrator needs to know about.

Emily is moving on soon to Aberdeen University to study Business Management and Information Systems, while Cara is staying on to complete her two years before deciding her next move.



# Let there be light!

**W**hat a sunny summer we've had so far! If you've got solar panels at home, you'll know why we're smiling about our latest installation at Milne's Primary. It's just had a £2 million refurb and extension added and we've added solar panels on the roof of the extension – just in time for one of the sunniest summers on record! The panels are producing electricity for use throughout the school which reduces the amount we are drawing and paying for from the national grid.

It's just one of the energy efficient measures we're introducing in our new building projects. Milne's also now has point-of-use water heaters, which means water is heated on


demand, rather than being stored hot all day. LED lighting has been used throughout the extension, with 'presence and absence' controls, so it switches off when there's no movement.

*"Another addition is the new, highly-efficient gas boilers which serve an underfloor heating system which creates a comfortable warm internal environment at lower temperatures than normal heating systems,"* says our Energy Officer, Ronnie Macdonald.

*"The design of this building is a great demonstration of the integration of high energy efficiency with state-of-the-art teaching facilities."*

It follows significant savings made as a result of the refurbishment of four of our schools, which were all completed last year. St Gerardine, Millbank, Applegrove and Seafield primaries all underwent a major overhaul. At Seafield and Millbank their oil and electric heating systems were upgraded to gas.

Along with new lighting and improved ventilation, savings in electricity costs over the year for the four schools involved amounted to £36,000. Using less electricity also makes an environmental difference and our carbon dioxide emissions have been cut by 126 tonnes – enough to fill over 4,000,000 party balloons!

A little  makes a big difference



## DLITE'd Graduates

**C**ongrats to our DLITE teaching graduates! We look forward to them joining us later this month for the start of their probationary year.

If you're interested in teaching in Moray, and want to study part-time over 18 months for an online postgraduate diploma in education, visit [www.moray.gov.uk/dlite](http://www.moray.gov.uk/dlite) for more info. The closing date for applications is 22 August 2018.

Pictured are Gillian, Sophia, Mora, Kirsty and Michelle.



Raymond Fraser of our Forres depot was presented earlier this year with his long-service and retirement gift by foreman, Eddie Souter. Raymond had 46 years' service starting with Forres Town Council at the Forres golf club when it was under council management, before transferring to the lands and parks team.



David Henney, who was Health & Safety Liaison Officer at Ashgrove for Environmental Services also received his retirement presentation. Before joining the council he worked all over Europe while serving with the Royal Air Force.

# HR Noticeboard

## Employee Conference

Invitations for this year's employee conference have been sent out, so if you're one of the lucky ones who received an invite we look forward to seeing you; please remember to RSVP if you haven't already!

This year's conference is about 'The Power of You', focusing on ourselves as employees as we deliver our priorities and services as outlined in the Corporate Plan. We're all aware that there are challenges ahead and during the conference we'll determine what role we play as colleagues in addressing these.

During the conference we'll also look to increase our awareness of what we can do to look after our own fitness and wellbeing for work including our mental health.

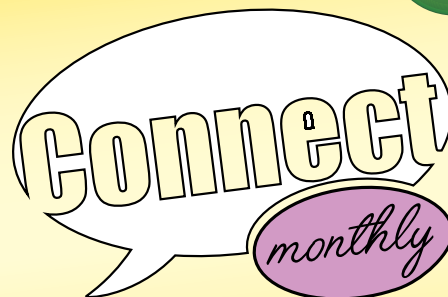
The conference is also a chance to talk to the directors and heads of service about issues that are important to you, as well as meeting colleagues from across council services.

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 if you received one of the invites.

If you didn't receive an invite but would like to come along, speak with your line manager in the first instance and then contact HR – we'll do our best to accommodate any requests.

We look forward to seeing you there!

<b>Buckie High School</b>	<b>14 Sept</b> <b>8.45am to 1.30pm</b>
<b>Forres Community Centre</b>	<b>19 Sept</b> <b>8.45am to 1.30pm</b>
<b>Elgin Bishopmill Hall</b>	<b>25 Sept</b> <b>8.45am to 1.30pm</b>



email [connectnews@moray.gov.uk](mailto:connectnews@moray.gov.uk)  
to get Connect emailed to your  
personal email address, every  
month.

## Grow your own

We launched a Grow Your Own challenge in the office/workplace where we challenged you to grow something edible on your office windowsill, or anywhere suitable! Have you tried growing baby tomatoes, herbs, strawberries, chilies or baby salad leaves...?

Remember to send any pics of produce (or disasters!) to [webmaster@moray.gov.uk](mailto:webmaster@moray.gov.uk)



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'll be accepting nominations from Monday 20 August 2018 to Friday 7 September.

Look out for more info on the interchange ([interchange.moray.gov.uk/int\\_standard/Page\\_116715.html](http://interchange.moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_116715.html)), or contact HR on 01343 563261 or by emailing [hr@moray.gov.uk](mailto:hr@moray.gov.uk). Departmental admin teams 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!

<b>Nomination window opens</b>	<b>20 August</b>
<b>Nomination window closes</b>	<b>07 September</b>
<b>Judging takes place</b>	<b>mid-late September</b>
<b>STAR Awards finalists notified and invitations to Awards Ceremony issued</b>	<b>early-mid October</b>
<b>Colleagues Choice vote launches</b>	<b>22 October</b>
<b>Colleagues Choice vote closes</b>	<b>09 November</b>
<b>Awards Ceremony in conjunction with Long Service Awards Ceremony in Elgin Town Hall Announcement of Chief Executive's Award</b>	<b>28 November</b>



Our staff suggestion scheme, Bright Ideas!, is now live and we're ready for you to share your ideas and help shape the future of Moray Council. All ideas are welcomed, whether big or small, but we're particularly interested in those which will result in service efficiencies or financial savings.

We all talk about what we could do to make things more efficient at work or what changes we would make to save money if we were in charge, so now's your opportunity to speak up and share your thoughts. It may be that you have your own idea or perhaps your whole team has an idea - whatever it is, we would love to hear it.

Suggestions should be submitted electronically using the suggestion form on the interchange ([interchange.moray.gov.uk/int\\_standard/Page\\_107211.html](http://interchange.moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_107211.html)). Paper copies have also been provided within depots for those without PC access.

Here's the timeline:

<b>Launch of Bright Ideas</b>	<b>Wed 1 August</b>
<b>Deadline for submissions</b>	<b>Fri 31 August</b>
<b>Liaise with service managers and provide initial response</b>	<b>Fri 14 September</b>
<b>Refer variety of suggestions to the workforce</b>	<b>Mon 17 until Fri 28 September</b>
<b>Display suggestions at the Employee Conferences</b>	<b>Fri 14 September Wed 19 September Tues 25 September</b>
<b>Finalise outcomes with CMT</b>	<b>Fri 19 October</b>
<b>Respond to and publish Bright Ideas</b>	<b>Fri 2 November</b>

# Any Budget Ideas???

For as long as we can remember, councils up and down the country have needed to make savings. Every year there seems to have a push to find some cost-saving measures that will enable a service to continue to be delivered.

For us in Moray it's particularly tough; prior to the council tax freeze we had a period of inflation-level increases in Council Tax, leaving us with one of the lowest levels of Council Tax in Scotland. This was the mood of the Administration at the time and was popular with residents.

But as we started with such a low base at the beginning of the 10-year council tax freeze, we're having a big hill to climb to make ends meet now. The low starting point, annual inflation increases and the rising costs of raw materials and supplies have all created something of a perfect storm in our budget.

So, it's budget Groundhog Day for us – yet again we're going to need to find ways to afford the services we need to deliver.

Ways to reduce our annual spend come from different places: the Administration will have proposals to offer; senior management have already been working away at their own ideas; local residents have a few thoughts on the subject and we're sure you do too.

That's why we're promoting the Bright Ideas scheme, where your ideas on how the council can reduce costs can be looked at. Details are on the Notice Board ([page 11](#)). Even if you've submitted something before and it hasn't been taken further, now might be a good time to try again.



There have been a few personnel changes at the top of the council recently.

Following the departure of Laurence Findlay, Corporate Director (Education and Social Care) to Aberdeenshire Council, Head of Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport, Graham Jarvis, has been appointed in acting up capacity. Nick Goodchild is covering the school estate and new build programmes as partial acting Head of Lifelong Learning, Culture and Sport, while Early Learning and Childcare, Libraries and Information Services will continue to report to Graham Jarvis.

Head of Integrated Children's Services, Susan Maclaren, leaves this month and her post will be covered by Kathy Henwood, Continuing Support Service Manager, also in an acting-up capacity.

Denise Whitworth has been appointed Director of Corporate Services following a period of acting-up in the role. The post she vacates, Head of HR and ICT, will continue to be split between Phil Macdonald (ICT) and Frances Garrow (HR) on an acting-up basis.

# The Plan for Adults in Moray

Strategy  
Talk



Health and Social Care Moray, under the direction of the Moray Integration Joint Board (MIJB) are committed to changing the way services are delivered, with greater emphasis on supporting people in their own homes and communities and less inappropriate use of hospitals and care homes. The MIJB strategic plan 2016-19 set out the priorities and details of how we intend to meet the changing needs of all adults in Moray. There is a requirement to review the strategic plan every three years as a minimum.

Work is under way to review the strategic plan, led by the established Strategic Planning Group. This group includes representation from NHS Grampian, Moray Council, voluntary organisations and the independent sector, e.g. care homes. The group will work together to refresh the strategy for all adults in Moray to ensure they can enjoy better health, care and support when it is needed, within a context of decreasing budgets. The refreshed strategy will describe how this will be carried out.

## Who will be involved?

The Strategic Planning Group is supported by a wider network of community groups, service users, service managers, carers, professionals such as GPs, nurses, social workers, voluntary organisations and external organisations i.e. care homes, elected members and Integrated Joint Board members as part of the Strategic Planning Reference Group which links to the wider public across Moray. The groups will work actively with the adult population of Moray to ensure their needs and expectations are being understood and responded to.

## What will the project look like?

There will be a range of workshops and other activities undertaken during the course of the project which aim to:

- Develop a joined-up approach to planning in Moray where health and social care partners share an understanding of:
- the health, care and support needs of local people
- what services do we need for the future and are they good quality
- what real changes do we want for the adult population
- what examples of improvements show good results elsewhere
- what our shared priorities are and our direction of travel

## When will this happen?

The project will take place from March 2018 – March 2019, with the Moray strategic plan due to be completed by April 2019.

## How do I find out more?

If you would like more information about this piece of work please contact:

Sandra Gracie  
Strategy Development Officer  
Health and Social Care Moray  
Unit 9c Southfield Drive  
Elgin  
IV30 6GR

01343 567184 or [sandra.gracie@nhs.net](mailto:sandra.gracie@nhs.net) or visit the Health and Social Care Moray website: [www.hscmoray.co.uk](http://www.hscmoray.co.uk)



■ Head of Direct Services, Stephen Cooper gets to grips with the recycling bins

# Back to the FI

As part of a series of 'back to the floor' days planned throughout the year, the director of Economic Development, Planning and Infrastructure, Rhona Gunn, and Head of Direct Services, Stephen Cooper, put in a shift on the bins.

The days provide managers with an insight into the working day of those on the front line, and promote a greater, mutual understanding of roles across the council.

Stephen was first out with a team from Brumley Brae, servicing recycling wheelie bins in the east of Elgin.

*"It was hard work," he said.*

*"The team starts at 7.30am prompt, but for short breaks it is full-on to about 3.30pm.*

*"It is full-on when you're in a street too. Because the wagon is frequently moving, I lost my bearings and had to keep checking that I had not put the empty bins at the wrong houses. And there's a real technique to placing two wheelie bins at the same time hooked on to the lift at the back of the truck – never quite managed to master that one.*

*"I now have a better appreciation of what the staff do, and it's not just putting the bins back in the right place, it is clearing up when debris falls from the back of the lorry and being courteous to the public. As one of the crew said, 'the public are our boss, you treat them right and you get respect back!'"*

Rhona said she was a little apprehensive, but was bowled over by the great work of the crew.



# oor

## part III

*"I was a bit nervous at the start of the day as bin wrangling is a pretty physical job, but the crew kept me right until I got into the swing of it," she said.*

*"I was really impressed with the crew's professionalism and the warm and appreciative way that many customers greeted us.*

*"You see some sights on the bin wagon – waving children, smiling grannies, stunning gardens and one lady who forgot it was bin day and ran out in her dressing gown!*

*"I learned a lot and am chuffed to have had a chance to walk a short distance in the crews' shoes, but a bit less chuffed with the bruises from wrestling the bins on and off the pavement then the lift. Think it will be trousers only in the office next week until the bruises fade!"*

Our waste crews collect wheelie bins from 45,028 households across Moray, on a complex network of routes devised by Waste Manager Steve Williamson and his team. For example, there are 55 routes serviced by four crews every three weeks for green bins and 60 routes serviced by six crews for recycling bins.

Appraising the efforts of the senior managers, Steve said: *"It's good to see senior managers making an effort to see what it's like for staff on the front line, and we're pleased with their feedback on our team's performance and professionalism."*

The crew were impressed at how well Stephen and Rhona carried out the duties on the day. Particularly with Rhona's ability to load two bins at a time, as Stephen struggled with this a bit!

■ Corporate Director, Rhona Gunn  
under the watchful eye of David  
'Ando' Anderson





Look! It's Hugh Dennis!



■ Collecting the award



## Huge congrats to our award-winning SharePoint team, who won a UK-wide accolade last month.

The Public Sector Paperless Awards took place in Manchester on 19 July, and Mhairi Reilly and Alison McCook made the trip to represent the team.

They won the industry's top prize for designing the best document management system, beating entries from Lewisham Council and East Kent NHS.

For those of you not familiar with the SharePoint project, it's been introduced because it allows staff to electronically create, file and store the documents created every day as part of their jobs. This has made many processes more efficient, slashed the amount of storage space required and enabled rapid searching of files – as well as reduce annual costs by £3million.

### Well done team:

Mhairi Reilly, Alison Morris, Andy Gordon, Roy Poulsen, Ross Urquhart, Duncan Holm, David Ross, Alex Thomson, Samantha Howard, Alison McCook.