

Connect
monthly

**January
2019**



FIT *for* LIFE!

moray
council



January 2019

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Editorial

Welcome to the first Connect of 2019. Hope you've been able to kick back a little, and those that have had to work over the period didn't have too taxing a time.

It's going to be a tough year for the council as it faces the huge challenge of balancing its budget for 2019/20, and there will be few areas of the organisation not affected by service reductions or changes. There are two Full Council meetings where the future shape of this authority will be debated; 23 January and 27 February. You can watch the webcasts in real time or shortly afterwards on the council's website.

There will be a team brief circulated shortly after these meetings, and if you have any questions please talk to your line manager.



Peter Jones
Communications Officer



Sharon Dunbar
Media & Communications
Officer



Angus McNicholl
Designer



HeadsUp

Peter Jones, Communications Officer

Dear Colleagues

Penning this month's heads-up piece feels a little self-indulgent, but here goes.

Local government communications covers a lot these days, from press and media, social media, some internal comms, design work and assisting the web team, all the way to managing political/VIP visits to the area and helping councillors with media matters when required. That and just about everything else in between that needs a corporate edge to it. Each year the role develops; a decade ago you needed about 10 different skills to do the job, now you need more than two dozen.

It's a busy place.

We are a 'small but perfectly formed' team. My colleague, Sharon Dunbar and I are ex-newspaper people, so are naturally inquisitive (that's the polite version of nosy), have an interest in people and politics and are used to working to tight deadlines. And, as newsrooms can be the home of a certain black humour, it helps that we're from that same mould that gives us a laugh at the darker end of the scale. Sometimes – and even in straitened times like these – you just have to find something to laugh about.

Kirsty Boyle, who is part of the council's ELC delivery team, has had long experience as a team player at national level with politicians and the media, and has brought her communication and engagement skills to the roll-out of the nursery expansion programme with great success. I would say that most mums in Moray with young children will have heard from Kirsty by now!

Our hard-working designers, Angus McNicholl and Ishbel Ewen, bring our ideas to life through their creative work, producing eye-catching posters, leaflets, pop-up banners for events and virtual ones for the council's website and social media material. Their work includes designing this *Connect* publication. They don't only create great designs for the comms section, departments across the council have benefitted from their fabulous work.

Outside of work my family, boats, bikes (with engines), garden and house keep me busy. I've just become a grandad for the first time (finally!) so we can rest easy now that the Jones dynasty will continue.

Best wishes
Peter



Fit Like? FitLife! If you've bounded into 2019 looking to make healthier lifestyle choices, we've got you – and your wallet – covered.

The big news last year was that Moray Leisure Centre became part of the FitLife! family. Remember though, we've got swimming pools and fitness centres all over Moray and if you've a FitLife! membership you can access any one of them: Aberlour, Buckie, Dufftown, Elgin, Fochabers, Forres, Keith and Lossiemouth.

Because we're so close to the coast and the harbour that mums and dads see the pool as a great asset in helping their children learning to swim

In October and November 2018, more than 18,000 and 21,000 swims were recorded respectively, while in the fitness room more than 9,000 and 10,000 visits respectively were racked up.

Before the January crowds descended, brimming with resolution and ready to sweat out their festive indulgences clad in new workout gear, *Connect* visited Forres and Buckie leisure centres to have a chat with the teams there about the facilities on offer, and to find out what it's like working in leisure.

First up was Buckie, where we caught up with Sport & Leisure Supervisor, and ex-forces chap, Mark Bruce, who's worked in our leisure centres for 18 years.

"Here in Buckie just some of the services we offer are public swimming, aqua aerobics and children's swimming lessons. The pool is very well used and it always has been over the years."

"I think because we're so close to the coast and the harbour that mums and dads see the pool as a great asset in helping their children learning to swim,

making it safer for them when they're out playing."

The beauty of the FitLife! cards, aside from being excellent value for money, is that they offer more or less the same experiences across all centres, to ensure residents are enjoying a consistent service whichever venue they visit.

"You shouldn't have to do another induction when visiting a different Moray Council gym as all our fitness equipment is the same," says Mark.

"We think this is an important feature. That, and the programmes are similar at each facility."

He added: *"Making sure we stand out from the competition is important, as well as offering unbeatable value."*

While we all have our good and bad days in the office – wherever that may be – Mark says by and large the team have a swimmingly good time at work.

"It's a good place to work, the majority of the staff enjoy working here – we wouldn't be here for 18 or 20 years if we didn't!"

Dave Chapman, Leisure Supervisor at Forres Swimming Pool and Leisure Centre, has worked in the industry for more than 20 years, with the last 11 years spent at Forres.

He said the introduction of FitLife has transformed the service they're able to offer and has brought more

customers through the door.

"The main selling point of the FitLife scheme is convenience. One card gets the customer into all the facilities, the whole family can get involved and, most importantly, there's no need for cash. It's certainly brought more people through the door."

He said the centre is well-used and an important part of the community.

"Although we're not a community centre, we provide important services to people that live here, and we are very, very busy. We have a great relationship with the school next door, who use the fitness room and swimming pool and we use their halls in the evening – it's good to have that reciprocal partnership."

The fitness room is the most popular feature within the building, which is staffed by four full-time staff and four part-time staff. Almost all the equipment within the gym was replaced last year, including bikes, treadmills, stairmasters and cross trainers, which Dave said is a big draw.

The building itself has undergone a radical transformation, with refurbishment works completed in 2017.

"Basically everything that you can't see was replaced," said Dave, *"the plant equipment, we put solar panels on the roof, the boiler was replaced. In fact one of the only things that remained was the pool; it's still the same 1972 pool, even with the original tiles!"*



In Forres, Debbie gives her all in a festive spin class, dressed as Santa

The fitness room is the most popular feature

He added: *"The best part of the job is looking after all the people who use the facilities. We get everyone from young kids learning how to swim, to older people taking part in classes. The great thing is that, for most of the activities, people can just turn up and join in."*

FIT LIFE?

Here's a round-up of the exercise classes and facilities available at each centre. Remember to check timetables online as they are subject to seasonal changes!

Forres

Forres swimming pool and fitness centre

- spin cycle classes
- insanity
- boxerfit
- metafit
- circuit class
- abs attack
- kettlebells
- fitness room with a range of training equipment
- sauna and steam room
- sports halls
- public swimming
- adult only swimming
- fun session swimming

Lossiemouth

Lossiemouth swimming pool and fitness centre

- spin cycle classes
- HIIT class
- circuit class
- funky aerobics
- parent and child swimming
- family circuits
- fitness room with a range of training equipment
- sports halls
- aqua aerobics
- adult only swimming
- public swimming
- fun session

Elgin

Elgin High sports centre

- fitness suite
- games hall
- gymnasium
- synthetic pitch

Moray Leisure Centre – see

their website at: mlc-elgin.co.uk



Dufftown

Dufftown fitness room

- spin cycle classes
- fitness room with a range of training equipment
- circuits



Buckie

Buckie swimming pool and fitness centre

- fitness room with a range of training equipment
- spin cycle studio
- sauna and steam room
- sports halls
- aqua aerobics
- body blitz
- swimming lessons
- parent and child swimming
- public swimming
- adult only swimming
- fun session swimming

Fochabers

Milne's fitness suite

- fitness suite
- metafit
- spin cycle classes
- kettlebells
- circuit classes
- HIIT class
- boot camp
- badminton
- stretch and tone
- legs, bums and tums

Keith

Keith sports and community centre

- spin cycle classes
- aqua fit
- express workout
- PowerJog
- fitness room with a range of training equipment
- sauna and steam room
- sports hall
- public swimming
- fun session swimming
- parent and child swimming

Aberlour

Speyside sports and community centre

- climbing wall
- aquacise
- powerjog
- circuit class
- fitness suite
- games hall
- public swimming
- adult only swimming
- parent and toddler swimming
- fun sessions swimming
- kayaking
- aqua run

Christmas Jumpers





HR Noticeboard

Winter Walks

The Healthy Working Lives (HWL) group holds a 'Wee Winter Walk challenge' every year. The idea is to encourage a little more activity and try to achieve 10,000 steps per day – which is maybe easier than you think as you can include everyday activity: for example, doing the housework, going to the gym or whatever your daily routine entails. You'll probably be surprised at how quickly it all adds up.

The HWL group will be launching the next walking challenge soon so look out for that. Don't wait for that though – why not take advantage of clear frosty days (hopefully!) and start increasing your steps now? Moray has some lovely areas to walk on a nice, crisp winter day.

There's the Winding Walks in Fochabers, or lovely beaches, walks through woodland or maybe just a short stroll through a park – whatever you choose, enjoy being out in the fresh air and we hope you take up the HWL challenge.

Employee Survey

It doesn't seem nearly two years ago since we had the last employee survey and it's almost time to have another one! The previous survey was in June 2017 and we asked you to use 'Your Voice' and tell us how things were for you at work – there was significant response rate of 42%.

Keep a look out for information on this year's one which will be issued just before summer – but we will give you plenty notice of when it's coming. It would be great to have a bigger response than in 2017 so make sure you use 'Your Voice' – it's your chance to speak up.



email connectnews@moray.gov.uk to get Connect emailed to your personal email address, every month.



MOVE MORE MORAY

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

Volunteers who've freely given their time to a Macmillan initiative in 2017 have been thanked.

A celebration event was held at The Oaks in Elgin, organised by Moray Council in partnership with Macmillan, as part of the Move More Moray project.

More than a dozen locals currently volunteer with Move More Moray, helping to lead gentle movement classes, lead walks and help instructors deliver circuits. Participants are those living with cancer in Moray, who benefit from a 12-week programme of activities, free of charge.

They give their time freely to help those affected by cancer

Volunteers were awarded with a certificate of appreciation and a goody bag of Macmillan merchandise. After the celebration, which premiered a video showcasing the great work done by volunteers and the benefits of Move More Moray to those living with cancer, volunteers were treated to afternoon tea.

Move More Development Officer, Caroline Van Der Heiden, said the event was a chance to thank those who had volunteered during the year.

"They give their time freely to help those affected by cancer and this celebration event gave our new volunteers and our

more experienced volunteers an opportunity to get together.

"The positives of volunteering, aside from helping others, are that by taking part our volunteers are keeping active themselves, are offered training and it's a great boost to any CV. Our current volunteers say it's a great experience because they get so much out of it."

Anyone interested in volunteering can email movemoray@moray.gov.uk or call [01343 563642](tel:01343563642) to find out more. A typical commitment is two hours per week.



CHARITABLE COLLEAGUES

“It would be really good if more people got involved next year”

Fiona Grant

Kudos to all our colleagues who've been very generous over the festive season. We've seen toy collections, food donations, Christmas jumper fundraising and more besides.

Fiona Grant, a project officer in education, organised a reverse advent calendar collection in HQ offices, with seven of her colleagues taking part.

They donated seven boxes of goods including toiletries, pasta sauce, toilet rolls, and tinned food.

“I saw a post on Facebook about it and thought what a simple idea. When we discussed it in the office we decided to spread the joy down the corridor which is why there are so many of us.”

“It would be really good if more people got involved next year as it's only a couple of items each and it's really simple to fill a box with 24 items.”

Meanwhile Dionne, who organised a Mission Christmas present drop-off, said she was overwhelmed with the response.

“I'm just really, really surprised,” she said, “I didn't expect the response at all, and I'm just really happy knowing it will make a difference to so many people. A massive thank you goes out to everyone who donated a gift”.

Christmas jumpers were the order of the day on 14 December as all who took part made the world better with a sweater and raised money for

L-R: Suzanne Wilson, Shirley Feaks, Fiona Grant, Chris Page, Susan Walker, Anne Pendery, Anne-Marie Ballantyne.

Save the Children.

And, at Ashgrove, fundraising was an all-year effort, with almost £800 raised for Scottish Huntington's Association through the Christmas craft fayre, coffee mornings, bake sales, dress down days and a summer planking challenge!

Anne Taylor, who was recognised at this year's STAR awards for her attitude to going above and beyond, boosting morale for staff and raising money for charity, said that colleagues had selected Alzheimer's Scotland as their charity for 2019.

LDP LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

What does the future of Moray look like? Come along to an exhibition next month to find out!

The (STAR Award-winning!) Development Plans team will be showcasing the Proposed Plan, another milestone in the preparation of the Local Development 2020.

The plan represents the 'settled' view of the council, which essentially means we don't expect the final plan's content to differ much, if at all. There's now a 10-week consultation period, with all comments or objections to be received by 15 March. In the last round of consultation more than 400 responses were received, and these helped create the policies within this Proposed Plan.

But why is this plan so important? Well, in Scotland we work in what is known as a 'plan-led system' – in that planning decisions are made in accordance with the Local Development Plan. The plan sets out where development should – or shouldn't – take place. It sets out the best locations for new homes and businesses, describes how any new facilities such as roads, schools and parks will

be provided. It also protects places of value to people or wildlife.

This maybe sounds very remote from your own life, perhaps your only experience of planning has been when you or your neighbour wants to build an extension, but planning decisions will probably have impacted on your daily life. How you travel, where you live, shop, work or spend your leisure time are often influenced by planning. Therefore, ensuring the LDP delivers places that people want to live, work and invest in is important.

Throughout February a series of drop in information events will be held to explain the plan (see locations and dates below). Alternatively more information can be found at www.moray.gov.uk/ProposedPlan2019

What does the future of Moray look like?

Find out at one of the events below.

Settlement	Venue	Date	Drop in Times
Aberlour	Fleming Hall	7 February	4pm -7pm
Buckie	Fishermans' Hall	12 February	4pm -7pm
Elgin	Elgin Town Hall	20 February	4pm- 8pm
Forres	Forres Town Hall	25 February	4pm- 8pm
Keith	Longmore Hall	28 February	4pm -7pm

Keeping the Council safe from fraud and corruption:

a few tips from the Corporate Integrity Group

If you see an unfamiliar face without a badge, don't be afraid to ask

Officers from a number of different departments sit on the council's Corporate Integrity Group. The group tries to improve the council's resilience to crime, fraud and corruption by keeping an overview of current threats, and the councils policies and procedures designed to combat them. Here are some tips from the group:

Be wary of telephone or email scams

There have been a few cases recently where staff have been tricked into fraudulent phishing (email) or vishing (phone) scams.

You could receive an email, which on the face of it looks genuine, asking you to open an attachment which could compromise the Council's IT system. Something may not quite look right about an email. So be vigilant.

You could be asked by a supplier to change the bank account details which we pay them through. But it may not be the real supplier who has made the request. If in doubt phone them up to check it is them. There is further guidance from our payments section.

Payments to others

Make sure that you have a system of checks and balances for payments to others, and that more than one person is involved in a process.

Receiving unsolicited gifts and conflicts of interest.

Be wary if a supplier, contractor, business acquaintance or applicant offers you a gift, reduction or special terms. This could be anything from a bottle of whisky to covering attendance costs at an event. They may be trying to influence future decisions or a regulatory process. If you are in doubt about whether you can accept a gift, speak to your manager. Make sure any gifts are declared in line with the Council's policy:

interchange.moray.gov.uk/int-standard/Page_112699.html

Good housekeeping with confidential information

Keep a tidy desk, an organised filing system and make sure confidential information is secure.

As a general rule, only people who need to know information should have access to it.

Be careful with names, addresses and sensitive records. If you are sending out a letter, double check that you have the right addressee.

Keep a record of what IT/records systems each staff member has access to. When you recruit make sure that adequate data protection training is given and when staff leave, make sure that you recover all equipment, ID badges and remove all system permissions and passwords.

Be mindful of building security

And a final one – try and keep your ID badge visible when you are in a council building. If you see an unfamiliar face without a badge, don't be afraid to ask them if they need help.

Make sure visitors to the building are escorted at all times, otherwise get a temporary ID badge for them.

ELC IN MORAY

Strategy
Talk

We talked about Early Learning and Childcare expansion last year in Connect – as a reminder this expansion is a fully-funded Scottish Government policy to increase the number of funded hours of ELC for three and four year-olds, and eligible two year-olds, from 600 hours to 1,140 hours per annum by August 2020.

The policy also requires local authorities to ensure the funded hours are available for families to use across the full calendar year, and for extended hours each day (i.e. a full working day). 1,140 hours of funded ELC is 30 hours per week if the hours are used term-time only, and 23.5 hours per week if they are used across the full year.

Since April 2017 a project team has been working on the Moray ELC expansion programme, which is being phased across a two-year period, with phase one having commenced in August 2018.

Logo for new nursery



Lady Cathcart Nursery have their new logo and brand identity. Designed by Amy Smith, it gives a vibrant look to the new facility.

Phase 1

We have four Moray Council nurseries (Lady Cathcart, Millbank, Lhanbryde and Seafeld) offering extended hours, two of which are open across the full calendar year. All four nurseries are now managed by Nursery Managers who report into a new central Early Years team, rather than the head teacher at the school. A number of partner nurseries (private and third sector) are also offering the additional hours.

Approximately 200 families were offered the extended hours during phase one, based on their home postcode (linked to Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation), with priority given to those living in our most

deprived areas. Most of these families chose to use the additional hours and/or use the hours in a more flexible way, for example using their hours over three days rather than five. We've started with a small group of families in phase one so that we can learn what works well, and where we might want to adapt our approach as we move into phase two.

Since April 2017 a project team has been working on the Moray ELC expansion

Phase 2

Will start in August 2019 with a further nine Moray Council nurseries offering additional hours and a more flexible service model. The majority of our partner providers will also be offering the new model from phase two. Three of the 13 Moray Council nurseries will be offering extended hours, year-round service. The other 10 nurseries will be initially be offering term-time only provision. Approximately 1,000 children will become eligible for the extended hours in 2019, with all children (approximately 2,000 in the relevant age groups) becoming eligible from August 2020.

The team are currently focussing on preparations

for phase two registration, which happens in mid-January, and the actions we need to take following registration, which includes establishing the numbers of staff required in each nursery and starting recruitment as early as possible to ensure we can meet demand for the service.

The team are also working on the capital programme for the project, with new nurseries being built in Cullen and Forres during 2019, and a number of refurbishment projects also taking place. They'll also be taking forward the development of a family centre on the upper floors of the Lady Cathcart building; engaging with childminders to

ensure they can be included in the service offer for three and four year-olds, and making preparations for the new National Standard for ELC.

From August 2020 all funded providers of ELC (including local authority nurseries) will be required to meet the national standard if they wish to offer the funded hours. We need to work with all nurseries in Moray to ensure they are able to meet the standard (and do even better) from August 2020 onwards –exciting times for Early Learning and Childcare in Moray.



Moycroft recycled



“This project is essential to future-proof Moycroft.”

Colin Bell

Moray’s depot at Moycroft is going to become the hub for all waste and recycling in the area, thanks to a multi-million pound investment.

The council currently houses the recycling team at a leased depot in Brumley Brae, Elgin, and a Waste Watchers facility at Lossiemouth, as well as the main recycling operations centre at Moycroft.

Merging all three into the one, modernised depot at Moycroft will make for more efficient processes, save over £130,000 a year and provide modern office and rest facilities for all the teams.

The budget for the transformation is £3.3m. Brumley Brae depot currently costs the council £42,000 a year in rent, and needs over £150,000 of maintenance work in the next couple of years to keep it operational. The Waste Watchers facility in Lossiemouth is far from ideal, given its proximity to residential areas. In addition, new legislation concerning the processing of waste comes into force, with big fines for authorities that don’t comply.

The merged depot will make a huge difference to the way the section operates. It will also pave the way for processed

waste to go to the new energy-from-waste plant, funded by Aberdeen City, Shire and Moray councils and due to open in Aberdeen in 2020.

The council’s Environmental Protection Manager, Colin Bell, said the upgraded site will provide better facilities for staff and trade customers.

“This project is essential to future-proof Moycroft and cope with the increasing population in Moray,” he said.

“The upgraded facility will have all waste storage areas – with the exception of glass – covered, which will reduce contamination in the immediate vicinity and cut down the instances of vermin.

“Most importantly, it will be a much better place to work for our waste teams”.

Work on de-canting the site will start in early January with waste operations operating from Nether Dallachy while building work takes place. The use of landfill sites to dispose of residual waste will be outlawed from the end of 2020, by which time it is expected Moycroft will be fully operational and the energy-from-waste plant will be completed.



Chilly Night Out



Care at Home Officer, Gordon Middleton, braved the December weather with his family to take part in Sleep in the Park.

It's an outdoor sleepover held in various locations across Scotland, organised by charity Social Bite, with the funds raised going towards ending homelessness.

This year more than 12,000 people took part, raising more than £3 million. Gordon took part in the Aberdeen sleep-out at Duthie Park, with his mum, Marie, sister-in-law, Leigh, and brother, Stuart.

"Thank you very much for everyone who sponsored Team Middleton for the sleep in the park we did on Saturday night in Aberdeen at Duthie Park, We raised a total of £600", he said

"I'm not going to lie – it was the worst experience of my life and something I do not wish to revisit. I came away home very emotional about the whole thing.

"There were 1,100 people at the Aberdeen sleep-out and included in that number there had been 400 tickets given to genuine homeless people from the Aberdeen area who had been invited to come and stay the night with us.

"I spoke with a few of them and their stories were truly heart-breaking; I was fortunate enough to know at the end of the night I would be going home to a warm bed but for them this was not the case.

"It got really cold (3C), the wind picked up and it rained from 1.30am until we left at 6am. Lying there in the middle of the night with nothing but the clothes I was wearing, a sleeping bag and a plastic bag that had been provided to try and keep us dry really made me appreciate even the basic things in life I own such as warm clothing and my health."

"I'm not going to lie – it was the worst experience of my life."

Gordon Middleton



Neil Stables, Angus McNicholl, Catriona Campbell, Carl Bennett, Iain Sneddon, Jo Lenihan and Louise Marshall

Few teams get to fly as high as this lot. Based in a not-so-secret attic at HQ these guys and gals do important work, but are rarely seen.

Christmas came early for this crew, made up of our Research and Information Officers (RIO), Graphic Designer and Armed Forces Covenant Officer, when they got the experience of a lifetime in December.

Our Armed Forces Covenant Officer, Jo, took full advantage of her connections with the Typhoon trainers at RAF Lossiemouth (she's married to one!) and arranged

for the team to take control of a multi-million pound aircraft – kind of.

Many of the RIO team are former RAF and were keen to get back on base. Taking over two of the £35m simulators for 'synthetic training', they tried their hand at take-off, air-to-air refuelling and landing.

"Great fun," said Neil Stables, RIO, laughing as he 'parked' his Typhoon nose-first in grass at the side of the runway.

Special thanks go to Paul Lenihan and Laxo, who gave up their time to school some newbies through the most expensive flight simulator any of them will ever get to experience!

Taking over two of the £35m simulators for 'synthetic training', they tried their hand at take-off, air-to-air refuelling and landing.



Flying High