

Connect
monthly

May
2019



CAREER
LADDER

moray
council



May 2019

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Editorial

Welcome to your May *Connect*!

The warmer weather we've been having is enticing many of us outside to get more active after the winter, and that's when we all appreciate living in such a fab part of the country. Beaches, hills and woodlands are all within easy reach for most, and even the tarmac has its attractions for the cyclists among us – including our Heads-up contributor for this month, Lindsey. There may be limitations to the entertainments and other facilities that are available in larger towns and cities, but the fresh air, safe environment and landscape we inhabit is in sharp contrast to those poor souls living in them.

Hope you enjoy the piece on our career grade people. It's good to see that the council is being proactive about bringing people on to take on senior roles to help future-proof the council's structure, especially when many of our senior staff will be at retirement age within the next decade.

Finally, the big chat is around the plan to start charging staff at HQ to park their cars. While this only affects HQ staff, it has caused a lot of debate across the council about the equality of charging just a small section of the workforce to park. The consultation on this measure closes on May 3, so if you have a view be sure to send it in. Details on [page 15](#).



Peter Jones
Communications Officer



Sharon Dunbar
Media & Communications
Officer



Angus McNicholl
Designer



HeadsUp

Lindsey Stanley, Business Support Team Manager

Photo by Jason Hedges

Dear Colleagues

Having just started taking part in Moray Council's Walking and Cycling Challenge this week, and I am taking the opportunity to sit down and write this whilst I still can! I have never cycled much further than to the corner shop and back before, so taking on 35 miles per week for the next month will be a challenge, right enough. I am far more comfortable supporting cycling events and can usually be seen with a high-viz vest on, marshalling or supporting at the feed stations. However, when my colleague, Nick Goodchild, started discussing the cycling event one lunchtime we both decided it would be a great idea and would compensate for our serious Haribo sweetie addiction!

Training has been going well – apart from a rather uncomfortable bicycle saddle – and we have been blessed with some beautiful spring weather giving me an opportunity to be fit & healthy before summer.

Health and well-being of staff has been a major focus of my work within Education and Social Care over the last 13 years. Although more well-known for my remit involving the allocation of newly qualified teachers, the advertising of all teaching

vacancies and the appointment process of promoted posts, it's supporting staff back to full health and work that gives me the greatest satisfaction.

My post within Moray Council has evolved alongside departmental changes over the years, most recently with the management of the Business Support Team a few years ago. This created many new challenges. My team work across the authority supporting administrative functions for schools, social work teams, libraries and central officers. Working with such an experienced and dedicated team gives me a great sense of pride as they manage their wide and varied roles and remits with knowledge, professionalism – and a much-needed sense of humour. Acknowledging their hard work at the end of each term with a wind-down quiz and cakes has become an enjoyable tradition, whilst the Racing Penguins have reached legendary status!


There are many similarities between my current role and my original post with the council as a teacher at Keith Primary School, where I started in 1992 after graduating from the Northern College of Education in Aberdeen. Working within the

junior primary, I enjoyed seven years in primary 1, 2 and the nursery before moving to Kinloss Primary School as a Depute Head Teacher. My work with and support for military families, reservists and veterans continues to this day with direct links to 39 Engineer Regiment and RAF Lossiemouth, also with Scottish Government colleagues on the Scottish Service Children's Strategic Working Group.

Married to cycling-mad husband Mervyn for 21 years and with one son at Elgin Academy, people may be surprised that I haven't been persuaded to take up cycling earlier. However it is the garden where I spend my free time, and I'm happiest when chopping bushes or cutting branches whilst always keeping a watchful eye out for the pheasants or deer that happily roam around the flowerbeds.

Wish me luck on my cycling challenge and give me a wave if you see me out on the bike!

Best wishes
Lindsey



CAREER LADDER

We all want to get on in life, and that includes our career. One of the most important ways we can do this is through training. Essential training and corporate training is still available, but it's no secret that diminishing budgets have impacted on wider training opportunities for some staff, so we're having to think of innovative ways to overcome this and ensure we've got the skills in-house to deliver essential public services.

We must push on with this because – apologies for the rather corporate interjection – workforce profiling showed that in 2017, 61% of our colleagues were aged 45 or older. A sobering thought that over the next 20 years, we'll lose a huge amount of talent, skill and experience.

So, in this edition we're shining a light on some of our colleagues who've grabbed the opportunity to learn at work through student / trainee

posts, career grade roles and apprenticeships.

And with Learning at Work week running from 13-19 May, focussing on 'Shaping the Future', there's never been a better time to show how important it is to invest in the workforce – to plug the gaps in hard-to-fill jobs in the here and now, and plan ahead. Hopefully you'll find it inspiring!

First up is former Committee Service Officer Darren Westmacott, who made a radical career change, swapping committees for local development plans when he joined the planning section in 2017 as a Planning Officer in a career grade post. For him, the opportunity to learn on the job gave him a career which he hadn't previously considered, and one which can be tricky to embark on without formal training and qualifications.

He's now been in the section for two years, has completed a number of Open University modules and training with organisations such as the Improvement Service and the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and is working towards becoming an RTPI Chartered Planning Officer.

"I'd built up an interest in planning having acted as the Clerk to the Planning & Regulatory Services Committee for a number of years," said Darren, "I always enjoyed the sessions related to the Local Development Plan and was intrigued by the process that the planning officers had to go through to promote and facilitate development."

"A career in planning was never a serious consideration for me however, having a young family, I didn't have the option to quit my job and go to university to study for a degree in order to make such a career change."

"The career grade post therefore provided me with a perfect opportunity to make the move into planning as it meant that I could study towards a degree whilst being paid at the same time to work in the same field. Both as an apprentice and with the career grade post, I feel the opportunity to learn on the job has helped me develop my knowledge and skills quicker."

"There is no right or wrong way to qualify in a certain profession and schemes such as apprenticeships and career grade posts provides opportunities for people to make a change to their lives that might never happen otherwise."

Principal Building Standards Officer, Willie Clark, is an advocate of career grade opportunities and says they've worked so well for their section in the past that they're in the process of recruiting another.

"Nationally there are less people entering the building standards profession, which is having an effect on recruitment," he said. "There are limited further education opportunities locally for this sector, although I know efforts are being made to change this, and also fewer young people choosing this line of work."

"Around 26% of people in the industry are aged 55+. A recent workshop we attended focussed on addressing concerns such as succession planning; it's important for us to take this on board because although we've enjoyed a relatively stable workforce for many years, we will face recruitment issues as members of our team retire over the next 5-10 years, so we're doing all we can to bolster our team now to ensure continuity – offering career grade posts is one of the ways."

Those who join building standards in Moray Council in a career grade post benefit from professional and paid work, gaining valuable experience in their chosen field. They're monitored closely by experienced staff and, once they have demonstrated the relevant competencies, can move up a grade. As for keeping hold of this talent, it's also a promising initiative.

"We've actually had more

"There is no right or wrong way to qualify in a certain profession and schemes such as apprenticeships and career grade posts provides opportunities for people to make a change to their lives that might never happen otherwise."





I'm learning so much from colleagues who are experienced in building standards and are supporting me and encouraging me to strive for better every day.

success in retaining people we've brought in as a career grade employees than we have as fully-trained building standards officers," says Willie. "The only exception are the experienced staff who join us

who already have a connection with Moray; they've either visited or lived here previously and know what they're getting. Because of this, we're more likely to retain staff within this council compared to other local

authorities in the central belt."

It's not without its limitations though, and it can be a struggle to entice experienced professionals to move into building standards from a

related field.

"What we found during our latest round of recruitment is that experienced practitioners can find the move back down the pay scales to take up a career grade post off-putting," said Willie. "A reduced pay packet isn't much of an attraction unless they have some other driver to enter the building standards profession, which of course some do."

One such candidate was Callum Ord. Callum started with us as a Building Standards Officer in a career grade post in July 2016, having previously worked as an architectural technician in the private sector.

"I was drawing every day without having any real idea of why certain building regulations were in place that I had to conform to, so I was interested to learn more about building standards from the other side," he says. "You can't get a degree in building standards at university, and it requires so much on-the-job experience, so this has given me the perfect opportunity to get into building standards as a career. I now have a permanent job in the public sector, with better conditions and a better work / lifestyle balance than I had in the private sector."

Callum, who studied architectural technology at Robert Gordon University, said he was encouraged to apply for the role by his wife, not thinking he'd actually land the position.

"Within the next two or three years I'm hoping to complete a professional qualification to

become a Chartered Building Engineer and, in the meantime, I'm learning so much from colleagues who are experienced in building standards and are supporting me and encouraging me to strive for better every day.

"In my experience of working in private companies in Moray, there was never any real incentive to progress in your career and have goals, so you know you're working towards achieving something. In this job, my confidence and competencies are improving, I'm dealing with more complex applications and every day is different."

"We've actually had more success in retaining people we've brought in as a career grade employees than we have as fully-trained building standards officers,"





Judith Ormsby, was a Trainee Trading Standards Officer, but has completed her training over three years to become fully qualified. Previously working in an admin role, she saw the opportunity of a career grade post in Trading Standards as a chance to advance her career.

Despite having a criminology and psychology degree under her belt, Judith said the training was tough, but being able to learn while working and earning money has been invaluable.

"I've progressed through the career grades following the

criteria set out by the trade body for trading standards – the Chartered Trading Standards Institute," she said. "I had to pass three exams in the first year, before moving onto metrology, which included a legal, technical, practical and oral exam, as well as exams in fair trading criminal, intelligence and investigative principles.

"Quite often when you're working and learning, you're doing any job to support yourself, but this job has meant I've been able to gain relevant experience whilst training."

Environmental Health and

Trading Standards Manager, Karen Sievewright, said: *"The university education our career grade staff receive pays for itself through the difference in their salary – it doesn't cost the council any more to offer the training. The degree is not the end but allows entry into industry-relevant professional qualifications, which gives us the opportunity to create and retain qualified colleagues.*

"What's even better is that, in the last two years, we've been able to offer these student positions to two colleagues whose jobs were at risk through budget pressures."

The latest position has gone to former Community Warden, Tim Betts. His job was at risk, however thanks to his experience and previous qualifications, he's been accepted by Derby University and will begin his environmental health course later this month.

"I'm really grateful to have been given this opportunity," said Tim, "I'm excited to get started. After seven years as a community warden I'm versed in some of the legislation within environmental health, and I'm looking forward to broadening my skills while staying in the council."

But you don't have to be an apprentice or a career grade colleague to benefit from learning opportunities to enhance your career prospects – just ask Mike Neary. In 2015 he was working on the front line, as a member of our busy bin crews who empty six million bins per year. He took up the opportunity of a post as a waste monitoring assistant, later becoming the waste monitoring officer, then acting waste disposal officer – and has just been appointed as waste manager. Learning on the job, as well as putting in study time outwith working hours, has secured this position for Mike – a respectable feat in just four years. We'll not give away any more spoilers though, as we've asked him to pen a 'Heads Up' piece for *Connect* – you'll have to wait until next month for the full story!



Get walking

*a step
in the right direction*

It's good for your heart, helps you lose weight, can lower your risk of dementia, gives you energy, it increases your vitamin D intake and makes you happy.

Are you taking part in our Spring Challenge? If you are, chances are you're going to nail National Walking Month. If you're not, don't worry, we've got tips on how you can introduce more walking into your day. Why? Well, walking has a whole host of different health benefits that you can use to motivate you to introduce walking into your daily lives.

It's good for your heart, helps you lose weight, can lower your risk of dementia, gives you energy, it increases your vitamin D intake and makes you happy. On top of all that walking is fun, flexible and free. For tips on how to get walking into your everyday work routine this May, take a look at: www.livingstreets.org.uk/get-involved/try20-tips

Why not encourage the kids to walk to school if they don't already? There'll be extra focus on this between 20-24 May, as part of 'Walk to School Week'. It's the 90th anniversary of the event this year, and a new challenge is being launched to encourage kids and their grown-ups to walk to school.

Walking to school creates, happier children, less congestion and cleaner air for everyone. Our schools already feature regularly on the Living Streets walk of fame, so let's see if we can do even better this month. To get involved, check out: www.livingstreets.org.uk/walk-to-school

PS – it's also a great way of warming up for the Moray Walking and Outdoor Festival next month!



Go Forth, Dimitris!

One of our Active Schools coordinators is attempting to cure his fear of heights – by abseiling from the Forth Bridge.

Dimitris Chrysanthakopoulos is taking up the challenge of a free-fall style from the bridge to raise money for local charity Outfit Moray.

He is part of a team of 10 people who are all looking at ways to do something different in aid of the community. Dropping 165ft from one of the country's most recognisable and iconic landmarks seems a little extreme; why not just go for a safe sponsored run?

Dimitris said that would be an easy option.

"It is a memorable thing to do and it is probably my biggest challenge as I am scared of heights, but I am doing this for a good cause and to help kids in Moray access activities through Outfit Moray."

"I've been scared of heights my whole life and this is an attempt to conquer my fears, and afterwards I may even take up climbing."

All 10 participants have been set a fundraising target of £185, with all the money going towards Outfit Moray to help maintain their services.

Outfit Moray is an outdoor learning and adventure charity which supports vulnerable and disadvantaged young people in Moray by offering activities such as rock climbing, kayaking, abseiling, mountain biking, canoeing, coasteering, archery and much more. It also provides holiday and respite weeks for local vulnerable groups, as well as activity days for local schools and youth groups.

The event takes place on June 9 and you can donate at

www.mydonate.bt.com/fundraisers/dimchris

ACCIDENTS *can* HAPPEN...

... but that doesn't mean that we should see accidents as inevitable or that we should accept that it might be us one day. We all need to be aware of what's happening around us and learn when things go wrong so that we can change what might happen in the future.

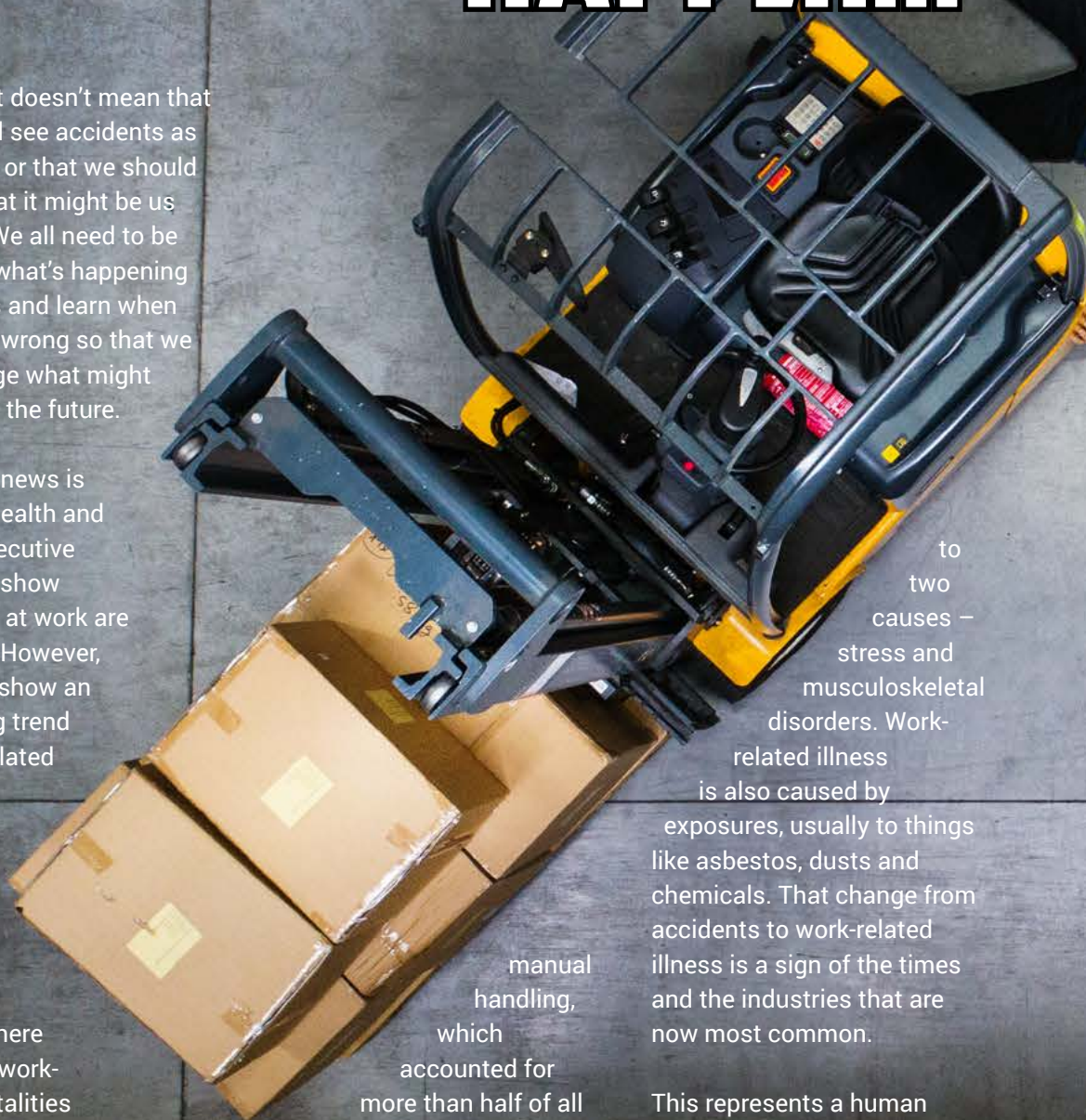
The good news is that the Health and Safety Executive statistics show accidents at work are reducing. However, they also show an increasing trend in work-related illnesses – the modern safety risk at work.

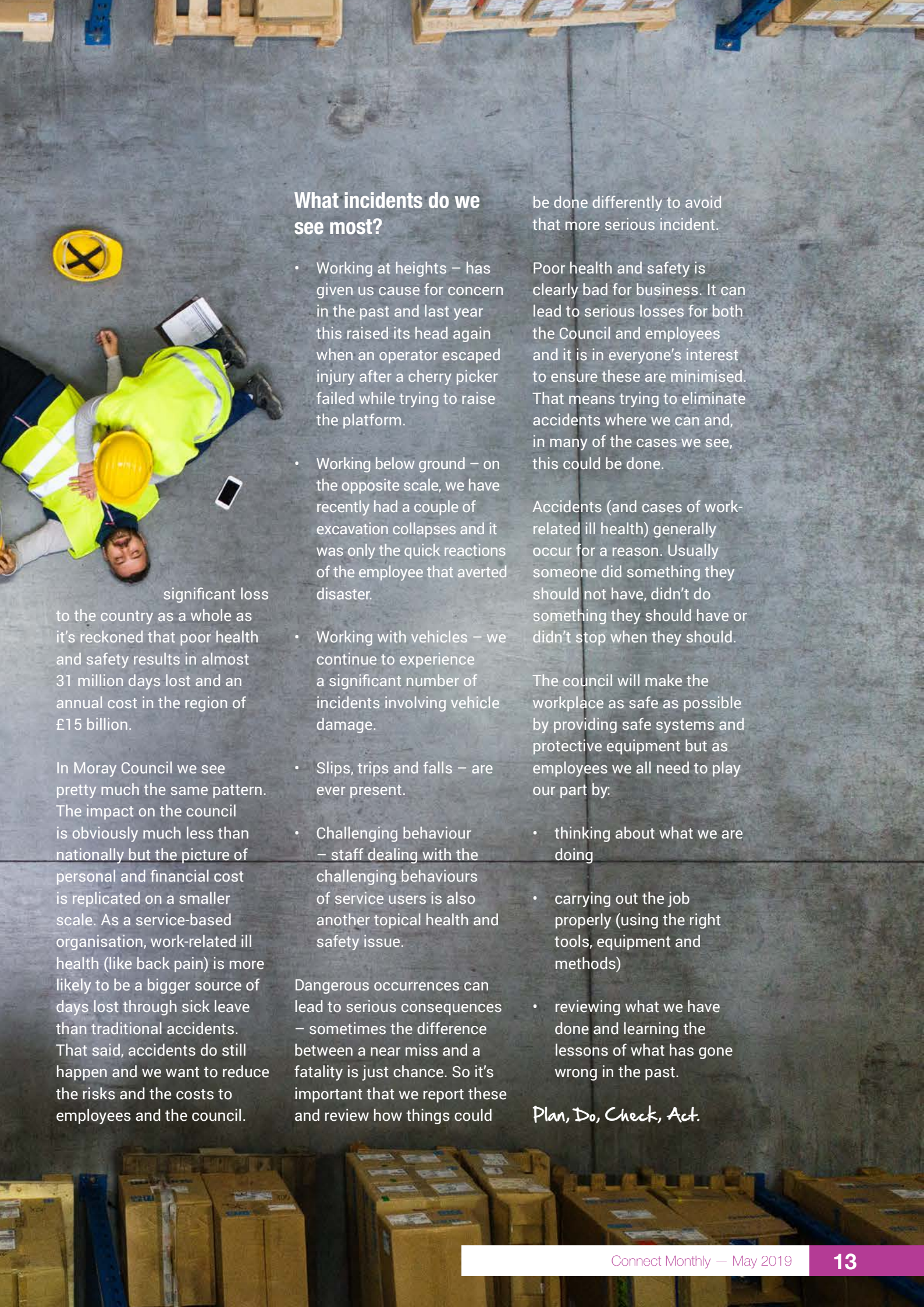
UK-wide there were 144 work-related fatalities and over half a million non-fatal accidents during 2017/18. The main causes were slips, trips & falls and

manual handling, which accounted for more than half of all accidents. This compares with an estimated 1.4 million work-related ill health cases, of which almost 80% were down

to two causes – stress and musculoskeletal disorders. Work-related illness is also caused by exposures, usually to things like asbestos, dusts and chemicals. That change from accidents to work-related illness is a sign of the times and the industries that are now most common.

This represents a human cost in the form of lost loved ones, disabling injury or ill health, pain and distress and lost income. There is also a





What incidents do we see most?

- Working at heights – has given us cause for concern in the past and last year this raised its head again when an operator escaped injury after a cherry picker failed while trying to raise the platform.
- Working below ground – on the opposite scale, we have recently had a couple of excavation collapses and it was only the quick reactions of the employee that averted disaster.
- Working with vehicles – we continue to experience a significant number of incidents involving vehicle damage.
- Slips, trips and falls – are ever present.
- Challenging behaviour – staff dealing with the challenging behaviours of service users is also another topical health and safety issue.

Dangerous occurrences can lead to serious consequences – sometimes the difference between a near miss and a fatality is just chance. So it's important that we report these and review how things could

be done differently to avoid that more serious incident.

Poor health and safety is clearly bad for business. It can lead to serious losses for both the Council and employees and it is in everyone's interest to ensure these are minimised. That means trying to eliminate accidents where we can and, in many of the cases we see, this could be done.

Accidents (and cases of work-related ill health) generally occur for a reason. Usually someone did something they should not have, didn't do something they should have or didn't stop when they should.

The council will make the workplace as safe as possible by providing safe systems and protective equipment but as employees we all need to play our part by:

- thinking about what we are doing
- carrying out the job properly (using the right tools, equipment and methods)
- reviewing what we have done and learning the lessons of what has gone wrong in the past.

Plan, Do, Check, Act.

significant loss to the country as a whole as it's reckoned that poor health and safety results in almost 31 million days lost and an annual cost in the region of £15 billion.

In Moray Council we see pretty much the same pattern. The impact on the council is obviously much less than nationally but the picture of personal and financial cost is replicated on a smaller scale. As a service-based organisation, work-related ill health (like back pain) is more likely to be a bigger source of days lost through sick leave than traditional accidents. That said, accidents do still happen and we want to reduce the risks and the costs to employees and the council.

HR Noticeboard

Moray Walking and Outdoor Festival

Whether you like a big challenge or just getting out for gentle walk the Moray and Outdoor Walking Festival is worth a look.

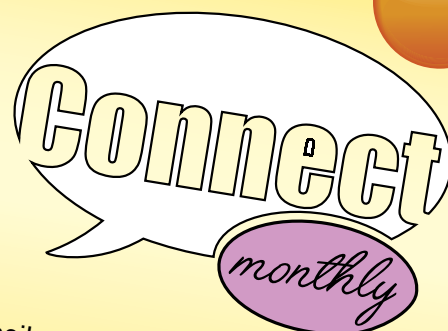
The website says "Walks vary from very gentle strolls to challenging endurance events. Other activities vary from year to year but recently have included cycling, kayaking, skiff rowing, surfing, bird watching, storytelling, hill skills, bush craft, white water rafting, wild swimming, heritage events and wild life watching and indoor talks. It is now one of Scotland's premier Outdoor Activity Festivals. Anyone looking for active things to do outdoors is likely to find something to suit their interests here in Moray".

The festival runs from 14 June to 23 June 2019 offering 10 days of events with different choices every day and an opportunity to explore the lovely scenery.

Events need to be booked and there is lots of information on the website, [here](#).

Be sun aware!

If you work outdoors, be sure to take our sun awareness challenge on the council's interchange site – week commencing 6 May.



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

Employee Conference 2019

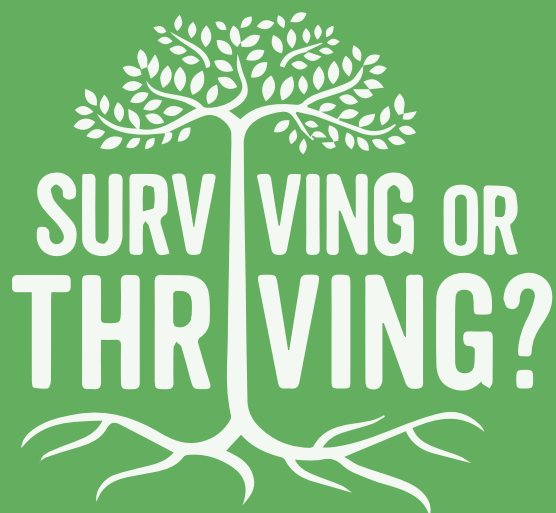
Invitations for this year's conference will be in the post shortly, so if you are one of the lucky ones who receive an invite we look forward to seeing you there. Your attendance will have been cleared with your service manager before sending your invitation, but please speak to them to confirm the details.

Places will be limited this year and we have a waiting list so if for any reason you won't be able to make it then please let us know.

The programme is in the final stages of planning and there will be more information to follow soon – keep an eye out! We anticipate holding three events in Moray during September and October.

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

Feedback from previous conferences has always been positive and has helped give a better understanding of the issues that matter at all levels within the organisation. Don't miss your chance to contribute to the ongoing challenges and changes we face. We look forward to welcoming you to the conferences in September or October.



Mental Health Awareness Week

As we approach Mental Health Awareness Week, during 13-19 May, it's a good time to reflect on our own mental well-being.

This year's theme is 'body image', which includes many factors such as how you feel when you see or think about your own body and appearance, and how you feel in your body. This can affect people of all ages, genders and cultures and is important because a negative body image can lead to low self-esteem and put you at higher risk of mental health conditions such as depression.

Body image can affect our mental health at various points in our lives from when we are children, through puberty, as adults and in later life. It can be a struggle to keep fit and healthy and look after ourselves especially when work, kids and other demands take up a lot of our time. This can have an effect on our mental health as much as stress, relationships and other factors and can spill into our working environment, affecting both us and the interactions

with our colleagues.

Many of us may have started the New Year with intentions of regular gym visits, healthy eating and generally trying to look after our bodies inside and out, but with all the best intentions this can plateau as the year goes on.

As an organisation we encourage healthy and active choices for our employees in a number of ways, by encouraging participation in active or sporting events with our links to the Healthy Working Lives group and other associated activities. We encourage active and sustainable forms of travel e.g. we provide a Cycle 2 Work scheme. We also provide mental health awareness training internally, which provides insight and guidance into dealing with mental health in the workplace. There's also 24/7 access to our employee assistance programme (Time for Talking) which can provide in-the-moment and structured support. However, there's still more we can do and we are currently updating our Mental Health

and Wellbeing policy and, as part of the Culture Working Group activity to improve workforce culture, we're developing a mental health action plan for Moray Council. This will also recognise the recommendations from the Stevenson-Farmer report, which gives advice on how employers can support mental health in the workplace.

Mental Health Awareness Week this year should serve as a reminder that we all deserve the care and attention to look after ourselves and make time for things that promote a happy self-image. That may mean taking a walk during our lunch break, participating in employee engagement events, making that commitment to do a fitness class once a week, buying some new clothes, booking a pampering session or simply a fresh haircut. Whatever makes you happy!

This year's theme is 'body image' which includes many factors such as how you feel when you see or think about your own body.

EARLY LEARNING & CHILDCARE

ELC IN MORAY



There's always an update in the early learning and childcare (ELC) expansion – things are moving quickly with our project team, who are increasing their own numbers too. Interviews for a new Early Years Continuous Improvement Officer and three new Nursery Managers take place over the first weeks of May with a view to them starting in post before the summer break.

Adverts for 10 new nursery posts, a mixture of support worker and practitioner roles, have been just published too.

The team will also be offering parents and carers the chance to ask them anything* in a Facebook Live stream Q&A on the early years expansion – giving the opportunity to put

questions directly to the early years staff. From registration to lunches and careers advice to split placements the team will answer all your early years queries. We'll let you know when this is being held.

Seafield Nursery kindly let their lunchtime routine become the subject of a [short infomercial](#) to help parents understand how funded lunches work in nurseries and other settings. The film shows just how smoothly it runs at Seafield. You can see for yourself how much the children and staff enjoy this time of the nursery day.

(*anything early years related – they're not qualified to answer questions about brain surgery or rocket science!)



Greenfingers

Training Project



Welcome to Greenfingers!

In the second of her monthly columns for *Connect*, Greenfingers Training Projects Coordinator, Menita Roberts, takes a look at what the team's been doing and offers some tips for the month ahead.

What lovely weather we had in April!

After enjoying that over our Easter break we were straight back to work, this time alongside volunteers from RAF Lossie, laying a pathway extension in Moray Resource Centre's garden as part of the public sales area development.

A big thank you to Brian and Keith, two of our volunteers that shared their valuable knowledge, our trainees, staff, Anne from Moray Resource Centre, for the amazing catering and RAF Lossiemouth's SAC Danny Dickson for arranging assistance from the Logistic Support Squadron.

The first 'pop-up' sale will be on May 28, 11am-2.30pm as part of Moray Resource

Centre's Open Day event. Visitors can see what MRC has to offer and buy plants from the Greenfingers new sales area.

The nursery has been a hive of activity in April as plant 'plugs' have arrived and are potted on. Our own seedlings have been potted on and have been in the outdoor cold frames to get used to a cooler temperature – or 'hardened off' as it's called.

We held a successful veggie plant sale outside the council's Annexe on Friday 26 April. If you missed it you can still contact us or come along to our Open Day sale on 11 May (10am to 3pm) to see if we have any veggie plants left. Be quick though, they don't hang around for long!

We are selling raffle tickets to support our work, which will be drawn at the end of the open day. First prize is a beautiful hanging basket, second prize is a flower planter and third prize is a grow-your-own veg pack. Only £1 per strip, so contact a staff member on 01343 540032 to get some.

The maintenance squad has been out and about checking, dead-heading and tidying areas that we maintain in the local area. These are the sensory garden at Dr Grays, Logan's rainbow garden and the planters outside council HQ. Did you know that these planters are funded anonymously by a generous staff member?



Introducing the team... (L-R) Menita Roberts, Anne Chadwich, Michael Innes, Emma Ritchie and Pam Lewis

The nursery has been a hive of activity in April.

Garden jobs for May

Pam and Anne from our team admit it's tempting to plant out summer bedding as the weather gets milder, but it's best to wait until the end of May – or even the beginning of June – as late frosts can strike and decimate displays.

Right now you should be keeping on top of weeds by regularly hoeing, and watch out for those bugs and slugs as they will munch all the lovely, fresh shoots.

Veggies

May is the last chance to sow brassica seeds, which would include broccoli, cauliflower, sprouts, summer cabbage and kale. But you could always buy these from Greenfingers!

If you have access to growing areas that are under cover or you live in milder areas you could sow some salad seeds, such as cut-and-come-again lettuce.

If you have a greenhouse or polytunnel, now's the time to get in some tomato plants, cucumber, chillis and anything else you fancy that needs extra protection and heat. Try a courgette indoors, but give it plenty of space!

Perennials

May is the month of the 'Chelsea Chop' – when herbaceous perennials can be cut back to boost their performance for the coming season. It is so-called because it coincides with the Chelsea Flower Show at the end of May.

Some examples:

- Campanulas – best known for their bell-shaped flowers – cutting back encourages more blooms.
- Sedum can become leggy and irregular in shape, cut back to maintain shape.
- Rudbeckia – these grow tall and could flop over, so cut back to restrict height.

- Phlox – cut back to encourage greater production of the richly scented blooms

Anne's Plant of the Month - quirky fact:

In Scotland, Yarrow (*Achillea*) was said to help capture future loves. It's use varied between regions, but the idea was to pull some Yarrow on Mayday morning with your eyes closed, then place it under your pillow whilst reciting a verse (preferably a love poem).

The first person you saw next morning would be your sweetheart...

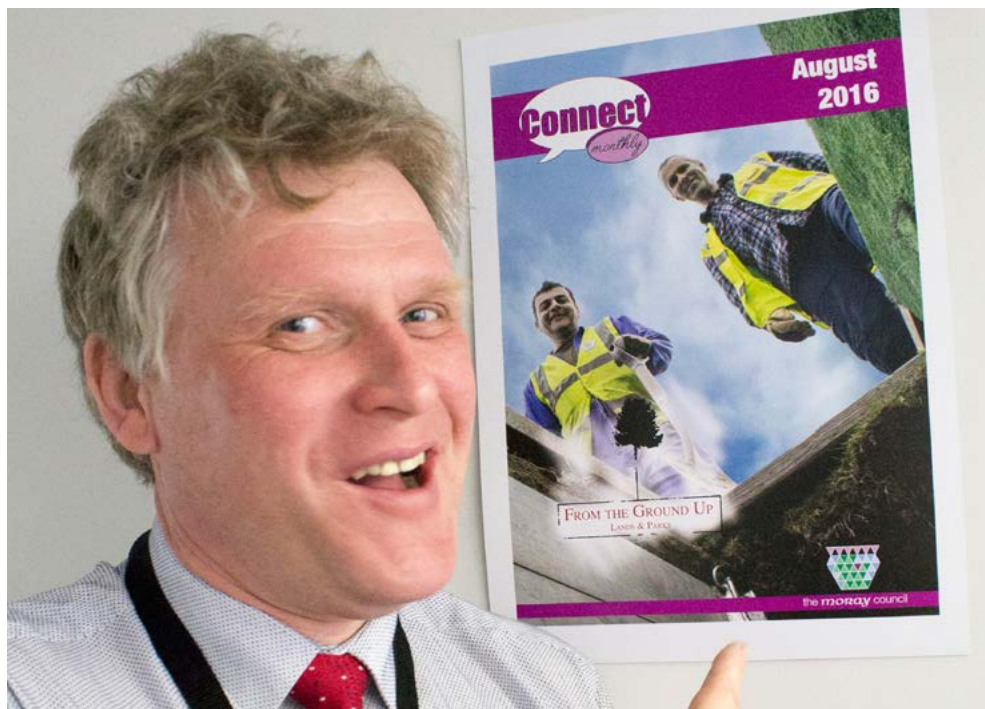
Yarrow will be on sale at Greenfingers and you look up Greenfingers-Moray on Facebook for a picture of what Yarrow looks like – Good luck!

Have a happy May in the garden!

We got it covered!

Being a big fan of *Connect*, and in need of a way to brighten up the Environmental Protection offices at Ashgrove Depot, the team there asked for back copies of our cover art to hang on the walls, and we were only too happy to oblige.

Of course this sparked some debate among the Ashgrove staff as to which was the best cover. Here are just a few nominations...



Colin Bell, Environmental Protection Manager

My favourite thing about Connect is: It's easy to read, well laid out and interesting. It doesn't take itself too seriously and I like the light-touch approach.

This is my favourite Connect cover because: It's a dead good photo...!



Rick Cooper, Facilities Officer; Neil Munro, Assistant Resources Officer; Susan Urquhart, Supervisor

My favourite thing about Connect is: Keeps us in the loop of what's happening throughout the council in a clear and concise way.

This is my favourite Connect cover because: Showcases an element of our team as we're often overlooked when we have over 300 staff members working away in the background.



Gayle Beck, Clerical Assistant

My favourite thing about Connect is: July 2018 edition – swings and roundabouts!

This is my favourite Connect cover because: I like to see kids out enjoying the parks, and I also have a little boy who enjoys playing in them.



Debbie Ritchie, Clerical Assistant

My favourite thing about Connect is: It gives you information on other employees that work within the council.

This is my favourite Connect cover because: It's a very bright and cheerful, and highlights the variety of food available through school meals.

Jackie Greig, Clerical Assistant

My favourite thing about Connect is: You get to see what other departments are up to, both social activities and work-related.

This is my favourite Connect cover because: It caught my attention and made me laugh!



Natalie Tompsett, Clerical Assistant

My favourite thing about Connect is: It lets you know what's going on throughout the council.

This is my favourite Connect cover because: It's colourful and impacts its message about Moray.



Anne Taylor, Systems Coordinator

My favourite thing about Connect is: You get to read about colleagues you've never met, but you get inspiration from their achievements.

This is my favourite Connect cover because: It's colourful and to the point.



arking Charges

If you're working at headquarters or the annexe in Elgin from this summer it's likely you'll need to pay to park at the two closest car parks.

A public consultation is currently under way and once the responses have been considered it's anticipated that the plans to introduce parking charges for staff will progress, subject to committee approval in June.

Both Greyfriars Street and the Annexe car parks are set to be turned into chargeable car parks. Spaces will be available for permit holders only, with permits costing £20

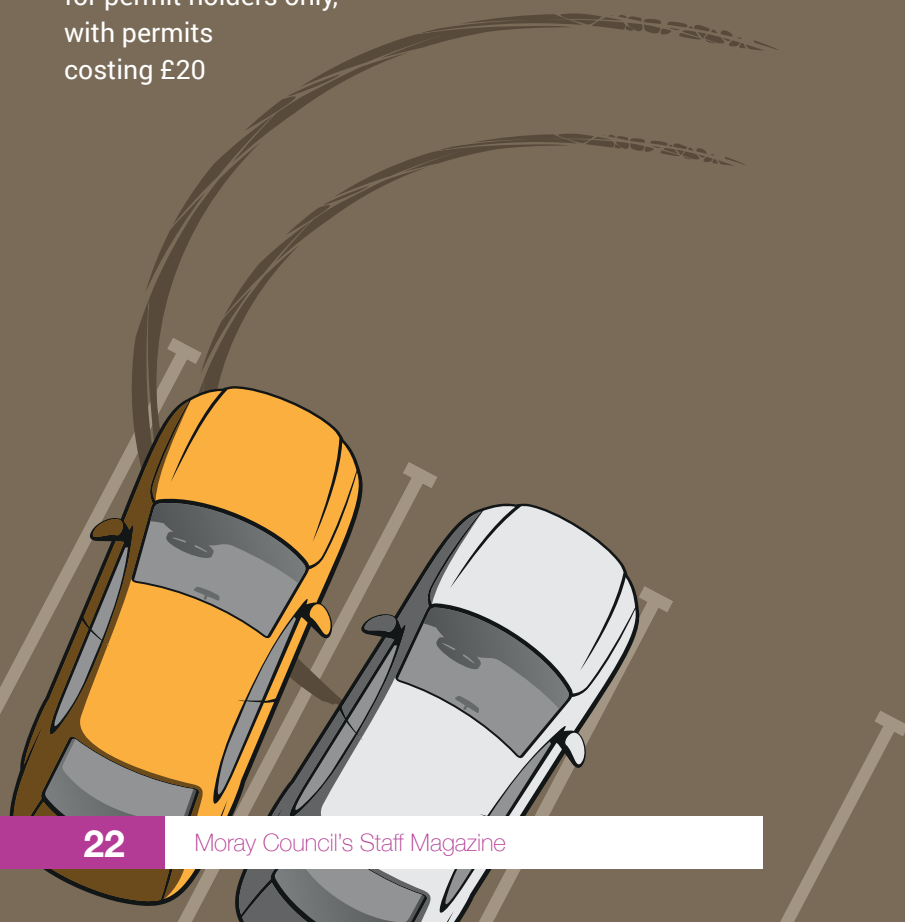
per calendar month via payroll deduction. There will be no option to pay daily.

If you park in these car parks without displaying a valid permit, you risk being issued a fine by our parking attendants. On-street parking is available in the surrounding streets, though please be mindful of residents and stick to parking rules or you may find yourself with a police-issued fine.

Other pay and display car parks are situated within walking distance, details of charges are available

at: www.tellmesotland.gov.uk/notices/moray/traffic/00000204666.html. You will not be able to use your parking permit for Greyfriars/Annexe car parks at other pay and display car parks.

Instructions on how to apply for a permit will be available on the interchange in the coming weeks, and in next month's edition of *Connect*. We'll also be providing answers to the frequently asked questions during the consultation.





Retiring

Mike Fox retired from the East Community Care Social Work Team at the end of March. He received his long service award for 30 years with Moray Council last year, and has worked with both the Learning Disability and Community Care teams across the years. Mike is looking forward to spending more time playing his beloved cricket and golf, and having the opportunity to do a bit more travelling! His unique humour and wit will be missed by his colleagues.

A SIMPLE REQUEST

In many council office buildings, particularly HQ, there is a shortage of places to eat our lunch. This means that many of us have to use our desks as a dining table.

If you see someone is eating their lunch at their desk, it means they are on their lunch break. Please respect this and give them the space from work to have their lunch in peace. They are not available for work, they are at lunch. Mixing the two is bad for their health, and means that they have no break away from their job.

If you're fed up getting bugged, here are some handy graphics you can print off and put on your desk or bluetac to the side of your monitor at lunchtimes:

