

**Connect**

*monthly*

**June  
2019**

**Dressed for  
success**

**moray**  
council



# June 2019

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## Editorial

Welcome to your May *Connect*!

It's Sharon standing in for Peter this month, duly penning the editorial. By the time this is published, our roads team will be full steam ahead with their surface dressing programme.

Slowing down when we're trying to rush to work, or drop the kids off at one of their many clubs can be frustrating, but please follow the crews advice and drop your speed to avoid loose chippings hitting your windscreen, your car skidding on the newly-laid surface, and also for the safety of our colleagues carrying out the task in hand. Their advice is sound and can be found within the main feature. A big thanks to our colleague, Jess, for guest contributing this article!

In *Connect* we aim to raise awareness of national initiatives, but bring a local perspective. To that end we're covering drowning prevention week and Armed Forces Day from a Moray angle. Both are well worth a read. We're also showing our support for Pride month on the cover, with a rainbow-themed logo.

This month sees the return of the annual Bike Week initiative – have you taken advantage of our Cycle to Work scheme yet? Find out how you can make a tax saving on your next set of wheels on [page 22](#).



**Peter Jones**  
Communications Officer



**Sharon Dunbar**  
Media & Communications  
Officer



**Angus McNicholl**  
Designer





# HeadsUp

Mike Neary, Waste Manager

## Dear Colleagues

Ever feel like you're wasting your time at work? Well, I do... but for all the right reasons. Having spent more than one third of my life working for Environmental Protection, I can definitely say my time in waste has been well spent.

I joined Moray Council at the age of 17 as a Refuse Collector, which is a great job with pros and cons like everything else; the pros being the summer and the cons being the winter! You could say it's a job you pick up as you go along... [oh dear, Ed.]

After nine years on the front line and circa 2,240,000 collections in the bag, I decided it was time to give my legs a rest, and took the opportunity to move into the office as a Waste Monitoring Assistant. I later became the Waste Monitoring Officer, Waste Disposal Officer and recently secured the Waste Manager position.

Needless to say, I never expected to become the Waste Manager when I joined back in 2006. But my progression is evidence that opportunities are available for everyone – you've just got to be ready to take them!

The council has provided me with the opportunity to develop

my career. I've enhanced my workplace knowledge, but I've carried out hours of personal study during evenings and weekends to secure professional qualifications.

After a particularly busy four years, I've taken the reins of the department at a very interesting and challenging time. We've had some major service changes of late, from the introduction of three-weekly household waste collections and the garden waste collection permit. We're also five months into the re-development of our Moycroft Waste Transfer Station in Elgin.

The waste industry itself is also going through a significant period of change with the imminent landfill ban and the introduction of the Deposit Return Scheme.

To coincide with industry developments we've joined Aberdeen City & Aberdeenshire councils in a joint venture to procure a multi-million pound Energy from Waste facility, which will futureproof waste management operations in the North East.

We're a department that's driven by development and I'm lucky to have a committed team who are

determined to progress personally and professionally.

For me it's very important to promote internal development within the section, and I'm endeavouring to make sure these opportunities are still available for colleagues. We currently have team leaders nearing the end of their HNC in Waste Management and earlier this year, our Waste Operations Officer, Sharon, was awarded her Chartered Status with the CIWM.

It's not all work though. I enjoy a good old night out, which I'm pleased to say is an outlook shared by my colleagues! To ensure the team spirit is maintained we organise social events together and currently have a quiz night planned, which we're all looking forward to. I'm sure we'll also manage the customary summer BBQ too, so fingers crossed for another nice summer.

I was told at one point that golf was a good way to relax and unwind, but in my case (not actually being any good) it didn't seem to work! Therefore, I like to get out on my bike and try to cover a few miles each week with my running trainers on. If you see me walking – I needed a breather!

Best wishes  
Mike



**John and the crews will be visiting 85 locations across Moray this summer to repair sections of road**

**W**ith beautiful beaches, stunning riverside landscapes, and of course the heart of malt whisky country on our doorstep, Moray is a gem of a county and our roads maintenance crews are justifiably proud of their efforts to keep things looking – and moving – their best for tourists and residents alike.

Most recently we ranked fourth among Scottish local authorities for the quality of our roads, however budget decisions by councillors mean we're now proactively reducing our ranking in the league table of Scottish roads by reducing the maintenance we do and the amount we spend on it.

There's still a lot to be getting on with though, including the annual surface dressing

programme, in which bitumen and stone chips are laid to repair road surfaces that have suffered wear and tear and to minimise deterioration. Although crews are busy with maintenance year-round, surface dressing is a summertime-only activity – but our lack of 'beautiful summer weather' lately has been holding things up!

This year's programme has already been affected by a stretch of cool, wet weather so the clock is ticking for our roads maintenance crews, who have 37 miles of roads to surface dress over the next seven weeks. John Jackson, Supervisor, Environmental Services, explains: *"The road temperature has to be more than 10°, and we can't do anything in the rain."*

"Surface dressing is a mobile process and several areas can be receiving pre- or post-treatment at a time, so the crews won't be slowed down for long. *"The boys are sweeping roads in front of us; they're sweeping roads behind us, and setting up signs,"* John says, pausing from his efforts to smooth down the emulsion on Muirfield Road in New Elgin, where his teams have managed to make a start during a break in the rain showers. A 37-year veteran of the roads crews, John began his career as a 'stop-go' man, using the familiar double-sided signs to control traffic through roadworks, before having *"a shot on everything. I've worked my way up to the supervisor role just now."*

John and the crews will be



visiting 85 locations across Moray this summer to repair sections of road that were deemed ready for a touch-up. Roads Maintenance Technicians constantly monitor the road surfaces, and an annual national survey of roads is also carried out by external contractors. Using specialist equipment to check skid resistance and surface texture, the contractors provide data to guide which areas of roads would benefit from a face-lift. Combining this information with the available budget, the programme is determined for which areas will receive the surface dressing treatment. *"The public has to understand, we can only work with the budget we have,"* says John. *"We can do almost 10 times the amount of roads with this surface dressing than with traditional surfacing. It puts a bit more life into the roads for roughly 5 to 10 years."*

To start the process, a tractor and mechanical sweeper plough along the verge for rural roads, to ensure road widths are maintained. Crew members patch road surfaces by hand where necessary to bring all areas to a standard condition. The junction markings and painted centre lines are then removed, and ironworks such as gratings are covered to protect them from being accidentally covered during the dressing. Traffic is controlled for the tankers, who spray the road surface with a bitumen emulsion, before a second machine follows behind to spread a layer of chippings over the top. A roller is then driven over to settle the chips into the bitumen,

Tips for driving on a recently surface-dressed road:

Follow all signage and crew instructions

Keep your speed down – 'twenty is plenty'

Maintain distance from the vehicle in front

Do not attempt to overtake a vehicle in front

Avoid sudden braking or acceleration

For info on where surface dressing will be taking place next, visit: [www.moray.gov.uk/sdress](http://www.moray.gov.uk/sdress)







with the crew filling in any bare spots by hand. After a few minutes to cure, the road is ready for slow speed traffic again. After approximately 24 hours a mechanical sweeper passes over to remove surplus chippings once the surface has stabilised, then after a second sweep the road markings are re-done.

It may sound simple enough but all of this is a team effort – as many as 20 people can be at work on each site. Drivers are needed for the tankers, lorries, road rollers and sweepers, plus ‘stop-go’ crew members who handle

traffic control, as well as those masking ironwork and setting up signs, in addition to a supervisor, general foreman, and a record-keeper. Jim Fraser, part of the team taking part in the surface dressing on Muirfield Road, has a wealth of experience in roads maintenance. *“I used to be a sweeper driver, for 15 years,”* he says. *“I’ve been 25 years with the Council. It’s a different place to work from 20 years ago.”*

With the team’s extensive experience, they are acutely aware of the frustrations experienced by motorists during the surface dressing







programme. All of the works take place as traffic is delayed – sometimes not so patiently – and the team members can unfortunately bear the brunt of this. *“It disheartens the boys, getting abuse from drivers. They don’t deserve it; they’re just doing their job,”* says John. *“It’s quite common for drivers to shout at us, especially at the ‘stop-go’ men. If we can keep them going there’s not much said, but sometimes we have to stop them for 10-15 minutes.”*

John is keen to stress the safety aspect of their roles. *“It can’t be helped. It has to*

*be done in a safe manner, for ourselves and the public. I’ve got a responsibility to my men – and to the public.”* By giving advance notice of where and when the surface dressing works will be taking place, and offering advice for driving correctly through works, our crews try to manage drivers’ expectations to help reduce their exasperation and make a safer environment, for working and for driving. See our top tips for driving safely through an area receiving surface dressing – and help spread the word to keep our colleagues safe as they dress Moray’s roads for success.





# GIVE YOUR LITTER A LIFT

TAKE IT HOME



During last month's week of action against roadside litter, organised by Keep Scotland Beautiful, we shared on social media some of the sights which greet our waste crews on the side of Moray's roads.

From asbestos, white goods and pallets, to tyres, concrete slabs and even a gearbox – all dumped at the roadside for our waste crews to pick up, instead of being taken to the correct recycling centres and points in Moray.

Fly-tipping and littering are illegal activities and we raised significant awareness of this during the week-long campaign. On Facebook we reached a combined total of 34,283 people, and on Twitter our posts were viewed 7,260 times. But as well as raising awareness we all need to take action and make sure we dispose of our waste properly and responsibly.

Moray is beautiful – let's keep it that way!





# DROWNING: DON'T RISK IT

Stretches of coastline, bonnie lochs and fast-flowing rivers make our local landscape beautiful but also treacherous. Drowning prevention week takes place from June 14 – 24 and, while it's a year-round risk, we're being asked to raise awareness of the dangers of the water over these days.

It comes after we, along with the police, fire and rescue service, RAF, Forestry and Land Scotland and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, launched an initiative dedicated to public safety along the Moray coastline this summer. It will focus on coastal villages including Lossiemouth, Burghead, Hopeman and Garmouth, to highlight the risks of drink driving, antisocial behaviour, water safety such as when using boats and inflatables, littering, licencing offences and fire prevention.

Sergeant Neil Morrison said: *"We would urge people to think carefully about water safety. On a hot day, the sea or any other water course, can look inviting but it can be very easy to get into difficulty in water, especially if a person has been drinking. Our seas can be extremely unforgiving, conditions can change rapidly and the risks are high when entering the*

*water at any time of the day or night when you are not suitably prepared. I would therefore urge anyone thinking of entering any body of water whether you are swimming, sailing or even walking near the water's edge to make sure they have taken the necessary preparations and precautions to stay safe.*

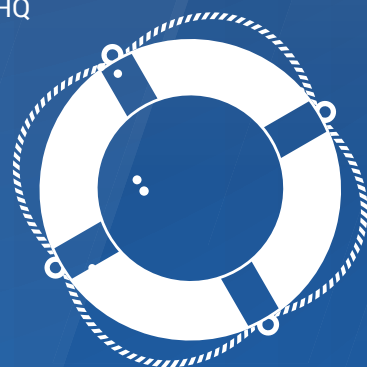
Ross Greenhill, area commander for HM Coastguard said: *"We love the coast and want everyone to experience it safely. There are a few simple things to bear in mind when you go to the coast for the day - which could be the difference between a great day out and a tragic one. Don't be tempted to swim or take a boat out if you've been drinking, even if you think it's only been a little. The sea and alcohol just do not mix. Alcohol is a contributory factor in a significant number of coastal drownings every year. Jumping into sea water from a great height often results in life-changing injuries or worse. Watch out for your mates.*

*"Check tide times, be careful to swim on life-guarded beaches, watch out for sudden changes in the weather and remember the sea is not consistent, it can catch out even the most experienced swimmers. If you see anyone in difficulty at the coast, call 999 and ask for the Coastguard."*

Denis Collins, who works in Facilities in the HQ campus, has been a member of the Coastguard in Moray for nine years. The team is led by Colin Wood, Senior Coastal Operations Officer for area 3, which covers Moray. Denis has seen it all, including harrowing sights of those who have lost their life to the water. He offers *Connect* readers this advice ahead of drowning prevention week.

*"Our team sees an increase in call-outs during the summer months, so it's important that we all know how to stay safe near the water. If you've got young kids, remember it only takes a moment for them to get into difficulty – so make sure you've got an eye on them at all times.*

*"Older kids who are spending the hot summer days with their mates should be aware of what to do if they get into trouble in the water – check with them before they head out – and please make sure they've got an In Case of Emergency (ICE) contact on their phone."*



**Watch out for sudden changes in the weather and remember the sea is not consistent.**





During Foster Care Fortnight in May we celebrated the long service of our foster carers.

Thank you isn't enough for Ronnie and Joyce Loveland who have fostered for 40 years, and Steve and Jenny Roy who have fostered for 10 years. They are an inspiration!





# #Change a #Future

If you are interested in Fostering in Moray, we're looking for homes for children of all ages, from babies to 18 year olds.

We work hard to try and keep children in their local community and maintain contact with their families.

If you think you could change a future, then please contact the Fostering and Adoption Team.

Use the link below to make contact with us or scan the QR code.

[https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/service\\_enquiry?enqSectionID=85](https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/service_enquiry?enqSectionID=85)



## Free SCHOOL UNIFORM?



Eligibility criteria for free school meals and school clothing grants have changed. You can make a claim if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Any income-related element of Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit but not Working Tax Credit, and your annual income, as assessed by HMRC, is below £16,105
- Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit with an income below the threshold for receipt of maximum Working Tax Credit, currently set by the Government at £6,900
- Support under Part VI - Immigration & Asylum Act 1999
- Universal Credit with a monthly earned income of not more than £610

Application forms and more information are available on our website: [www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_55486.html](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_55486.html).



# HR Noticeboard

## Employee conference

Plans are well under way for this year's employee conferences – and the invites will be out very soon.

As in recent years, we are holding three events:

- Wed 11 Sept – Keith Grammar
- Tues 8 Oct – Bishopmill Hall, Elgin
- Thurs 10 Oct – Forres Community Centre

If you receive an invite please remember to RSVP; your manager is aware that you have been invited but feel free to discuss your attendance with them.

The programme is in the final stages of planning and there will be more information to follow soon. 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 the issues that matter at all levels within the organisation.

Hope to see you there – remember if you've not received an invite but would like to attend you can speak with your line manager and we'll do our best to accommodate requests.



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

## Use your leave!

You may have time booked off to enjoy over the school break – but it's worthwhile mentioning how important it is for everyone to take regular breaks for their health and wellbeing, so perhaps a timely reminder to think about the rest of the year and book some time off over the summer and following months, if you haven't already, would be useful.

## Training calendar

We're nearly half way through the year already so remember to book some training in if there is anything you need – the calendar was published in the February edition of *Connect* and is available online: [interchange.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file117039.pdf](http://interchange.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file117039.pdf).

Our varied corporate training programme covers everything from customer service for frontline staff to coaching skills for managers.



# WHAT CAN WE DO FOR YOU?

ICT OPEN DAY 5 JUNE

## ICT open afternoon

Head along on Wednesday 5 June to see what's been going on in the digital world. Bring your ideas and questions and see what ICT can do for you.

Find out more about the new ICT Servicedesk and how to report faults, learn more about email security, see how they can help you use the service status page, and discuss online payment integration.

Open to all who have an interest in what ICT has been doing – see what they've been up to, what they can offer, and what they can do for your service!

**Join them in Meeting Room 2 in the Annexe from 1 – 3pm.**

For more info email [webmaster@moray.gov.uk](mailto:webmaster@moray.gov.uk).



Bright Ideas



Bright Ideas is back – and it's here to stay!

We recognise that the people who know our business best, and who have the greatest impact on what we do, are our staff. Our staff suggestion scheme 'Bright Ideas' provides a way to encourage every individual to put forward their ideas, and be recognised for their contribution, so that we create a culture of innovation and change that helps us adapt and deliver council services in the challenging times ahead.

As good ideas don't just happen once a year, and we want to get the most from our employee suggestions, the scheme will now be open year-round!

Suggestions should be submitted to HR using the form available on the interchange (through the 'Bright Ideas' link) or via a paper copy obtained from HR or your own admin department. Where this is not available, suggestions should be put in writing clearly headed 'Bright Ideas', signed and dated with contact details provided.

All ideas are welcomed whether big or small, but ideas that contribute to the council's priorities and help in delivering our services more efficiently where money is tight are really what we're looking for.

Why not have a look at the suggestions we received during 2016, 2017 and 2018 which are available on the interchange?







**In Moray the serving population and their families make up around 6 per cent of the population.**

Our Armed Forces operate 24/7, 365 days a year, but one special day in the calendar marks their vital contribution to the country.

June 29 is Armed Forces Day and, in honour of that, we're saying a huge thank you to the men and women who serve, particularly those based locally at RAF Lossiemouth and Kinloss Barracks, their families, reservists and veterans who all play an important role within the Armed Forces Community.

In Moray the serving population and their families make up around 6 per cent of the population; if you include the estimated number of veterans and their families, this rises to around 16 per cent. We also know that around 13 per cent of children in Moray schools are from a family with a parent who has, or is serving.

We're proud to be a supporter of the Armed Forces Covenant and, together with Highland Council, employ an Armed Forces Covenant Officer to support our local military community.

Jo Lenihan, who took up this role in 2017, spoke to *Connect* ahead of Armed Forces Day.

*"The Armed Forces community are citizens just like the rest of us and as such experience many of the ups and downs in life that we do. However service life can exacerbate some issues and place other demands on families, for example having to move at short notice, or running the family as a single parent during the deployment of a partner.*

*"Having an understanding of how service life can affect some people could help you ensure that they are not disadvantaged as a result of their service."*

As part of her work, Jo has been improving the information available for the Armed Forces community locally.

*"A grant from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust enabled us to create a website for the Armed Forces in Moray and Highland, providing information and guidance on things like education, housing, health and well-being, finance, as well help for those moving to the area. The site went live in January and is being used not only by the Forces, but also staff signposting to sources of help. Take a tour of the site ([www.armedforcesmorayandhighland.co.uk](http://www.armedforcesmorayandhighland.co.uk)) and look through the directory of services – there may be information that could be useful in your role. If there is information you think would be useful to add, please get in touch."*

Jo's also been working on improving the awareness and understanding of the Armed Forces Covenant among staff delivering front line services.

As well as working with community groups, veterans' breakfast clubs have been started in a couple of locations. Cullen Community & Residential Centre hosted their first 'Tea and Medals Brunch' for veterans and their families/ carers earlier this year, which saw almost 50 veterans come together to share their stories and be entertained by musicians from Unforgotten Forces consortium.

*"I also want to thank the Veterans employed by Moray Council who took part in a consultation with the Scottish Defence Policy Unit on the newly launched Strategy for our Veterans.*

*"Engaging in such consultation can help to influence strategy in the future."*





If all that wasn't keeping Jo busy enough, she's also supported several organisations to submit bids to the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, which provides financial grants for projects that improve community integration or delivery of services to the community.

As well as the Covenant project we also support children in our schools who have a serving parent. We caught up with Angela Stuart, Depute Head Teacher at Seafield Primary, who attends MoD events Scotland-wide and speaks to the MoD's national transition officer, and serving personnel to ensure the support for pupils with military families is the best it can be.

As an RAF veteran, she understands the needs of the families and draws on her experience of 12 years serving in Scotland, England, Germany and the Falklands.

*"Here at Seafield around a quarter of the pupils are from a forces family. We have a military support group which runs weekly, a nurture room funded by the MoD and a home school link worker to support parents of serving spouses who are on deployment."*

*"We support pupils who have recently arrived in Moray, are due to leave on another posting, those who are perhaps struggling with making new friends, or needing a bit more support during a parent's deployment. This can be anything from sending 'e-blueys' to keep in touch with their parent to making scrapbooks of what they've been up to."*

*"We focus on building their resilience, increasing their self-confidence and friendships."*

## PROUDLY SUPPORTING THE ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY OF MORAY AND HIGHLAND



[www.armedforcesmorayandhighland.co.uk](http://www.armedforcesmorayandhighland.co.uk)



# EXTERNAL FUNDING

Our role in Economic Development is guided by the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy and priorities, as well as the United Kingdom Industrial Strategy.

The local core strategies include Moray Economic Strategy, Moray Growth Deal and Moray Employability Strategy. In partnership with organisations across all sectors, the Council is working on a strategic and operational level to maximise economic benefits through its plans, decision making,

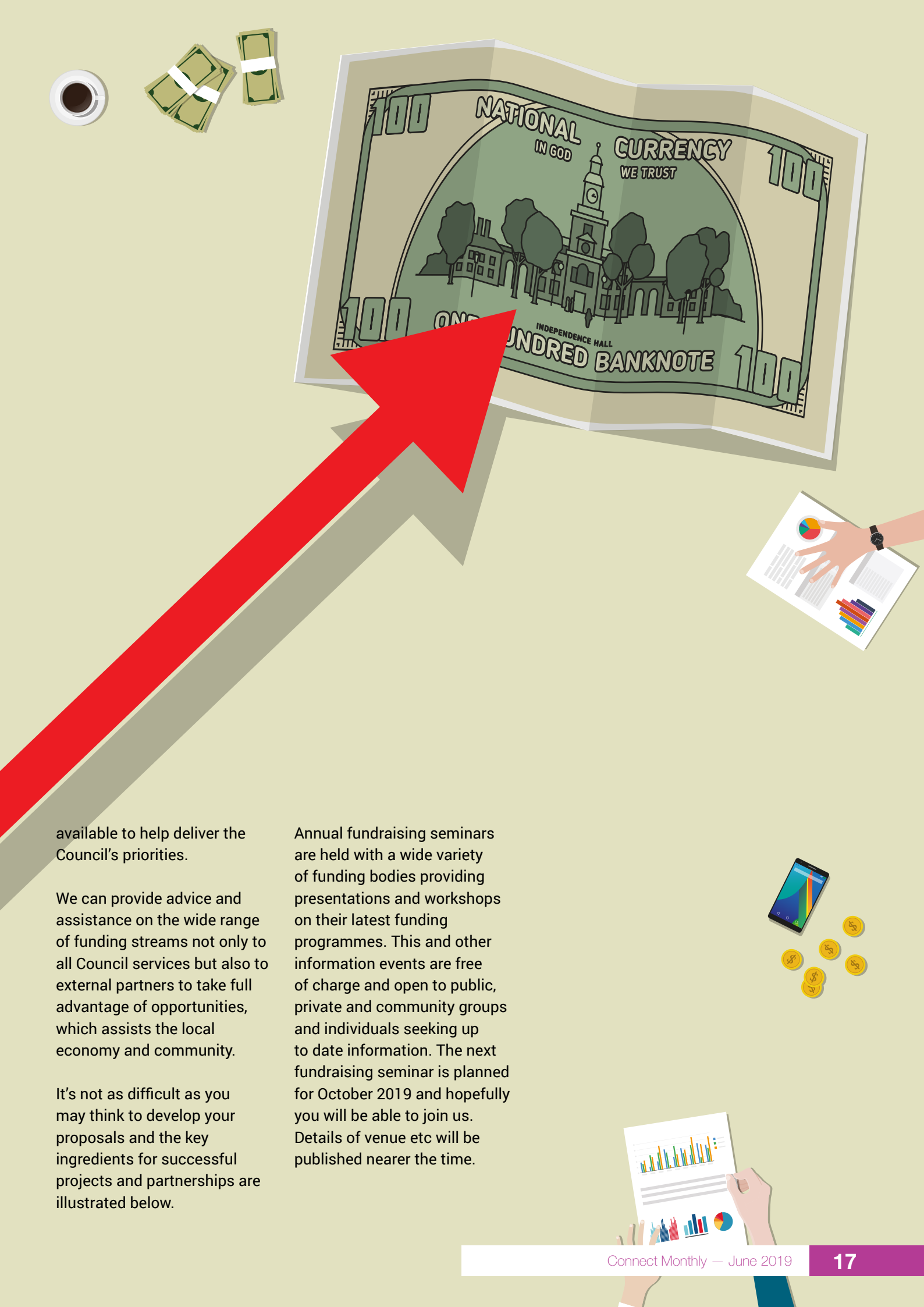
investment and services. Economic development activities are closely supported by various services across the Council including finance, industrial estates, roads and harbours, housing, education, environmental health, trading and building standards and economic development and planning.

The small economic growth and regeneration team focuses on regeneration, business support and external funding for various projects and programmes from the EU, Scottish Government, lottery and trust funding. Current initiatives include EU funding for employability, poverty and social inclusion, various projects supported by the European Fisheries Fund, lottery and EU LEADER

funded Discover Moray's Great Places scheme, and the Scottish Government Town Centre Fund with several other proposals pending with funders. The team will also work to leverage in funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (intended to replace EU funding) as more detail on this emerges.

As the Council is facing ongoing financial pressures, it's increasingly important across all departments to explore if external funding is





available to help deliver the Council's priorities.

We can provide advice and assistance on the wide range of funding streams not only to all Council services but also to external partners to take full advantage of opportunities, which assists the local economy and community.

It's not as difficult as you may think to develop your proposals and the key ingredients for successful projects and partnerships are illustrated below.

Annual fundraising seminars are held with a wide variety of funding bodies providing presentations and workshops on their latest funding programmes. This and other information events are free of charge and open to public, private and community groups and individuals seeking up to date information. The next fundraising seminar is planned for October 2019 and hopefully you will be able to join us. Details of venue etc will be published nearer the time.



# Greenfingers

## Training Project



For this month's 'meet the team' we introduce Pam Lewis, our Training Officer. Pam oversees the day-to-day operational duties within Greenfingers.

Pam said she feels very lucky to say that she loves her job.

*"Being outdoors, in the gorgeous setting of our nursery in the walled garden and working with our team of trainees, volunteers and staff. One of the best parts of the job for me is seeing the difference in our trainees as their confidence grows and they work through our training plan and putting into practice what they've learnt."*

*"On a personal level, I'm passionate about plant propagation, especially growing beautiful plants from seed, nurturing them to produce a beautiful plant, I never thought I could get so excited about this topic but I do!"*

*"When I'm not at work, I'm propagating or experimenting with cuttings or seed sowing at home; it's taken over all the space in my garden. I spend as much time outdoors as I can, especially cycling and walking and I've just began to dabble in wild swimming, I'll see how that goes!"*

### Open Day Celebrations!

The sun shone on Saturday 11 May as Greenfingers opened its doors to the public, friends and family for the annual plant sale and open day event.

The day was deemed as "the best yet", with a lot of new and returning customers. Sales increased by over a third which is great news, and will support the increase in stock and plant varieties for 2020.

A wonderful selection of refreshments were provided by Moray Wellbeing Hub who held a 'Conversation café' whilst people enjoyed their hot drinks and cakes.



Visitors included those from SSAFA, and our planning officer, Emma, to talk about the Moray Food Growing Strategy.

Greenfingers had a full board of displays which highlighted the exciting opportunities and experiences that they have been involved in over the past 12 months. This clearly showed the changing seasons of Greenfingers and varied work experiences that people have been able to gain. This was a perfect way to celebrate Learning Disability Awareness Week and Mental Health Awareness week – both of which took place in May.

The feedback from the open day has been very positive with lots of ideas and suggestions that will be taken forward. The top three topics covered “quality plants”, “great customer service” and “fab cake” – what more can we ask for?

Thank you to everyone that has shared pictures of their plants in situ on Facebook, we’ve been delighted to see some lovely displays and colour schemes.

## In the garden this month

Hopefully we should be clear of frosts now so you can prepare to plant out your bedding and veg/salad plants. Remember to sow more salad seeds for a regular supply of home grown produce. You can also prepare for winter plants and veg sowing.

Make sure you have plenty feed and water on hand for your tomatoes and courgettes – especially once they flower!

Now is also the time to plant up your hanging baskets displays.

**Lawns:** weed, feed, water and cut when needed, remember to keep the edges trimmed and tidied.

**Weeding:** keeping on top of the weeds is an endless but essential job - or you could embrace the weeds and develop a ‘wild garden’ area, which the local wildlife will thank you for.

The Greenfingers Team hard at work laying a new path at the Moray Resource Centre

## Anne’s quirky fact

**Armeria:** Know as Thrift or Sea Pink is truly native to the coastal regions of our country and a firm favourite for rock gardens. It has a tolerance of salty conditions and can often be found along roadside verges due to the practice of salting our roads in winter.

Pre-1700s Thrift was traditionally used in the Orkney Islands as a herbal treatment for tuberculosis and has also been used in the management of obesity and urinary infections.

Thrift has been the plant badge of the Clan Hunter since the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Between the 1930s and 1950s Thrift was depicted on the back of the pre-decimal three pence coin; was this a deliberate double meaning in the name?



**Thrift was traditionally used in the Orkney Islands as a herbal treatment for tuberculosis**



## Coming up in the next edition:

Updates on exciting new projects and advice from our very own bee keeper, Emma, on the best bee-friendly plants to have in your garden!



# MAD HATTERS

Burnie Day Centre in Buckie hosted a Mad Hatters tea party last month, to celebrate Learning Disability Awareness Week.

This year's theme was 'community' – so the staff and service users were delighted to be joined by Buckie Yarns, part of the Moray Reach Out charity.

Throughout the week folk at the centre were busy making hats to wear at the party, and decorating the place – great job!



**I**t's almost time to welcome our latest cohort of career ready interns for their work placement. And we're already on the lookout for prospective mentors for the new intake.

We've signed up to provide eight mentors this year, so if you're interested in supporting a Moray student through the Career Ready programme, get in touch with Claire Wall, who will be happy to sign you up!

**career  
ready**

**preparing young  
people for the  
world of work**





# Cycle2Work Scheme



**O**n yer bike – especially between 8 – 16 June. It's bike week, which aims to get many more people to give cycling a try. Any outing on a bike counts – whether out and about with friends, popping to the shop or travelling to work. If that's not enough to inspire you then read about our Spring Challenge and the teams that took up cycling at least 35k per week...

If that's motivated you, why not join our Cycle2Work Scheme? Select a bicycle and safety accessories, taking advantage of the savings available from tax benefits, from 3 to 28 June (the Cycle2Work Scheme is not solely for personal use – The Department of Transport and HMRC guidelines states that the cycle must be used to cycle primarily to and from work, this should be around 50% of the usage).

During this period, if you\* want to opt into the scheme you should either:

Phone Halfords on 03455 046444, or Log on to [www.cycle2work.info](http://www.cycle2work.info) – use the employer code: MORAYCOUNCILC2W

\* conditions apply

What to do:

- have a look at the bicycles and safety accessories available at either the Halfords store, Elgin or online at [www.halfords.com](http://www.halfords.com)
- decide how much you need to spend
- complete the Halfords Hire Agreement by logging on to [www.cycle2work.info](http://www.cycle2work.info)
- 'sign' an electronic version and payroll and HR will be alerted that you have applied
- after processing the Hire Agreement it will be countersigned by Human Resources and you will receive a letter of collection via email
- once you receive your Letter of Collection go to Halfords (or the store you have chosen) and place your order

The Halfords website has a list of the shops they work with which includes local ones – if you cannot see the shop you wish to get bike from let Halfords know and they will approach the shop and find out if they want to join the scheme if they are not already in partnership with Halfords.

If you cannot access the scheme online or have any questions, you can phone Halfords on 03455 046444.

Please note – before you sign up to a Hire Agreement you must read the information available on the Halfords website and the terms and conditions of the Hire Agreement thoroughly as this is a contractual document that is binding. The FAQ section of the website is also useful for answering questions and providing good advice.



# Results

## Spring Walk & Cycling Challenge

To encourage Healthy Working Lives the group set their yearly walk challenge at the beginning of the year – with a cycle challenge also thrown in for good measure!

Teams of four collated their steps weekly in a bid to reach the target first - to walk 1,120,000 steps over 4 weeks. Cyclists were in teams of two and were challenged to cycle 448km over four weeks.

Each stepper needed to walk 10,000 steps per day a weekly total per team of 280,000 that's the equivalent of Moray Council to Wick! Cyclists had to cycle 56km per week each, reaching a weekly total 112km between each pair.

13 walking teams took part and the winners were Sole Survivors – Rhoda Banfro, Angusina Higgins, Joanne Larsen and Aileen Scott – who walked a total of 3,065,531 steps.

There were six cycling teams in the challenge and the winners were Shut Up Legs – Kevin Belton and Marc Roberts – who cycled a total of 2596.4km.

Well done to the winners and thank you to all who took part, especially on those rainy days!

Congrats to Rachel Wilson (née Devine) who celebrated her marriage to hubby Ally at the Stotfield Hotel in Lossiemoth last month.

Here's a snap of current and former colleagues before they hit the dancefloor. (L-R): Louise Marshall, Abbie Johnson, Cara Rollo, Rachel Wilson and Maya Jacques.





# here comes the Sun



**W**e're all looking forward to the summer and getting out in the sun, but it's important to stay sun safe and look after our health in the hot weather.

As we all know, sunburn increases your risk of skin cancer and sunburn doesn't just happen on holiday – you can burn in the UK even if it's cloudy.

So how can you prevent sunburn and stay 'sun safe'? The NHS guidance recommends that you:

- Cover up with suitable clothing and sunglasses
- Take extra care with children
- Use at least factor 15 sunscreen – if you are concerned you might not be applying enough go for a strong SPF30 sunscreen. Remember to reapply.
- Protect your eyes
- Stay hydrated

With all good intentions we can sometimes unintentionally get burned and the NHS recommends these steps if you do:

- Sponge sore skin with cool water, then apply aftersun or calamine lotion – stay out of the sun
- If you can take them – paracetamol or ibuprofen can ease any pain
- Pharmacists can offer advice on sunburn treatments and whether you should seek medical advice
- If you're concerned about any symptoms seek medical help

We tested your sun awareness in a recent quiz on the interchange. Let's see how you got on...

- 98% knew that you can get sunburn on a cloudy day
- 98% knew that a tan doesn't protect your skin from further sun damage
- More than a quarter didn't realise that the sun is at its strongest between 11am – 3pm
- 38% said you only have to apply sunscreen once before going out (then reapplying later on). In fact guidance says you should apply sunscreen 30 minutes before you go out, and again just before going out, then reapply later on!
- 95% knew that sunscreen should be reapplied after you've been in water, even if it is water resistant
- 20% of you didn't believe your risk of getting skin cancer is higher than average if you've got lots of moles or freckles. It is, in fact, true.