

Connect

monthly

November
2019





NOVEMBER 2019

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Editorial

Welcome to your November *Connect*!

Once again this edition is full of examples of the great, often unsung work many of our colleagues deliver, day in and day out.

We were particularly impressed with the Criminal Justice team and the results they achieve with clients that have offended and been before the local sheriff. The sheer variety of tasks the team manages is impressive, along with the number of clients that are able to gain paid employment after their hours have been completed, is good reason to keep this service in the public sector. In other authorities where it has been privatised the only task provided is litter-picking, which hardly paves the way to gainful employment.

You'll see we are encouraging everyone to turn their engines off when idling. If the council and its contractors can start doing this we'll set a good example that will see other fleets – including taxis – doing the same. Since being made aware the *Connect* team have all stopped idling (not that we have ever been idle, of course!).

Lastly, a big thank you to Jim and George at the Keith recycling centre, whose swift action prevented a potentially terrible accident befalling someone further down the line in the waste process. Take a bow!



Peter Jones
Communications Officer



Sharon Dunbar
Media & Communications
Officer



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Designer



HeadsUp

Jo Lenihan, Moray and Highland's Armed Forces Covenant Project Officer

Moray and Highland's Armed Forces Covenant Project Officer, Jo Lenihan, comes to the end of her two-year project next month. She reflects here on what's been achieved between the two councils.

Dear Colleagues

I've been around the military environment for most of my life – as the daughter of an RAF engineer, as a serving RAF officer, and wife of an RAF navigator. When I saw the advert for the role of Armed Forces Covenant Project Officer for Highland and Moray Council I saw a great opportunity to bring my life experience to work! I must admit, however, to having limited awareness of the Covenant before taking up the role but two years on this has well and truly been rectified.

Funded by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund, The Highland Council, Moray Council and the Inverness Common Good Fund, the project was aimed at reviewing how both councils support their local Armed Forces communities in line with the principles of the Covenant, and identifying opportunities to improve support.

The increasing network of Armed Forces and Veterans

Champions is vital, but often they're extremely busy people. Having a project officer dedicated to support their work, whether within a single agency or across partners, is invaluable in keeping up-to-date with research, reports, policy changes and support services.

I've been the point of contact, a 'go to' for matters that relate to the Armed Forces community. Having the knowledge of local services, support and a network of contacts, I've been able to guide people in need appropriately. We've also created a dedicated website for the Armed Forces community in Moray and Highland which provides relevant advice, guidance and information.

What next?

This Covenant project was funded on a short-term basis to enable councils to improve their service provision for their Armed Forces community and embed this as far as possible in order to be sustainable. Since inception the role has evolved and shown the benefits of having a dedicated person in large organisations local to an Armed Forces population. It provides a point of contact at

an operational level to keep abreast of policy changes and research that affect the Armed Forces community, maintain an overview of the local community and support available, identify issues and drive collaborative work.

I feel privileged to have had this opportunity, and would like to thank all those who I've worked with during the last two years.

I leave with the feeling of having achieved much of what was expected in the project plan, but also so much more to do around raising awareness, reaching the 'hidden' Veterans, ensuring continuity of health and social care especially for serving personnel and their families, and improving outcomes in education, housing and employment for our military.

Best wishes

Jo



Moray's Criminal Justice Team deliver Payback



“It’s the first time a sheriff has visited the workshop. It’s important that our sheriffs understand the work that goes on in Moray.”

Tish Richford

We all hope we get through life without ever having appeared before the sheriff. For some individuals it can be a daunting experience never to be repeated, for others for others it's just an occupational hazard in the cycle of offending.

For those willing to take the opportunity to change their ways, our Criminal Justice team offers a way back from criminality that also contributes to the local community.

Since 2011 sheriffs have been empowered to offer Community Payback Orders instead of other disposals, such as prison or fines. Much depends on the person's suitability and the offence committed, but many of those who accepted a



“Repeat offenders turning their lives around, leaving here and enrolling into college to get trained in a trade skill. That’s really satisfying to see.”

Paul Borland

Community Payback sentence have seen their life changed for the better.

Last month, in a first for the team, they welcomed Elgin Sheriff, Olga Pasportnikof, to their workshop base on the Moycroft Estate, and demonstrated the variety of projects undertaken for the community.

Justice Service Manager, Tish Richford, said the visit by the sheriff was a huge boost to the team.

“We’ve delivered 22,000 hours of productive, unpaid work to the community through these orders,” she said.

“We were able to explain to the sheriff what happens to those



Peter Wilson, Paul Borland and Tish Richford, with Sheriff Olga Paspornikov

undertaking CPOs and any issues we have had in making sure the hours have been completed.

"It's the first time a sheriff has visited the workshop. It's important that our sheriffs understand the work that goes on in Moray, as they need to be satisfied that there are significant efforts made by criminal justice social work teams to successfully deliver the Community Payback Order at a local level.

"It was great to showcase what is achieved by those doing unpaid work, which the sheriff wanted to see for herself, that CPOs are making a difference both to the community and to those she has sentenced."

In addition to Tish the team

comprises of a senior task supervisor, Peter Wilson; three task supervisors, Paul Borland, Scott Paton and Jordan Bowler; a Saturday relief task supervisor, Collin Hutchison and a Project officer Roz Carsewell. The clients all have to make their way to the workshop, are divided into squads and work a seven-hour day on projects chosen by the team. The variety of work taken on is one of the reasons for the service's success in the completion of work orders.

Paul, who is ex-army and police, trained as a tutor and has been with the service for two years. He said that all new clients fill out a form to declare what skills they have and any type of work they are unable to do.

"We generally tailor the jobs to the skills available," he said.

"And I never ask anyone do a job I wouldn't be prepared to do myself.

"We've taken on work in village halls, for schools and lots of other community-run places, and the squads frequently get letters and cards of thanks from them. That always means a lot to us all.

"I've seen a lot of successes since I've been here, repeat offenders turning their lives around, leaving here and enrolling into college to get trained in a trade skill. That's really satisfying to see."

The service has recently started working alongside the Job Centre and

I never ask anyone to do a job I wouldn't be prepared to do myself.

Lifeskills to provide the opportunity to undertake a CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) as part of the rehabilitation programme. Backed by all major developers, a CSCS card qualifies people to work on construction sites. The card enables Community Payback clients to find work at various trades in construction on the many large building developments under way in Moray.

One of the clients, who asked not to be named, spoke to *Connect* about his experience.

"I was in court for some silly prank," he said.

"When I was given a CPO I didn't realise what a difference it would make to me. It got me out of the house and I am re-focussed, have some routine about my day and enjoy the company of the squads."

"It's good to feel that sense of pride in the jobs we do. People don't realise we do this as unpaid work. We recently worked on a garden for an elderly gentleman he was really grateful."

Sheriff Paspornnikov said: *"It has been good to see this side of the CPO process and how the service operates."*

"Hearing from the supervisors has also really helped me appreciate some of the issues they face."

"Some see these orders as a soft option and I understand why they might hold that view, but the alternative – prison

– offers the community only a short respite to criminality. CPOs provide a tangible benefit and has real successes with those that choose to make the most of the opportunity to break the cycle of offending."

Funding for the operation is ring-fenced within the annual grant settlement from the Scottish Government, so the ongoing budget pressures felt elsewhere in the council are not likely to impact on the service for the foreseeable future.

And while someone undertaking unpaid work must never take away the place of the employment of paid staff, there are numerous benefits to the community by getting work done which would not have otherwise been undertaken due to cost.

Senior Supervisor, Peter Wilson, has been with the council for nearly 20 years, and is the first port of call for anyone seeking work to be done by the teams.

"We are trying to break the cycle of offending by supporting and encouraging those on community service to complete their hours within the time set down by the sheriff. Whatever they've done, everyone gets treated the same when they come through the door. There's a good variety of tasks we have them undertake, they have the chance to learn new skills and get certified training on equipment and operations through other agencies, all of which has helped many get into full-time employment."



“Hearing from the supervisors has also really helped me appreciate some of the issues they face.”
Sheriff Olga Paspornnikov

"We must be doing something right as there's generally good banter among the squads, and helps them get stuck into the tasks."

"It makes for a relaxing and productive workforce while they complete their sentences."

Organisations and individuals who may benefit from the service should contact Peter Wilson on 01343 557268, or email peter.wilson@moray.gov.uk

Community Payback

Community Payback Order - what's that?

It's where an offender is expected to attend a placement and undertake unpaid work for the specific number of hours and to the benefit of the community.

What Kind of placements?

Work Group – offenders under supervision work on a specific practical project, e.g. environmental projects or community projects such as beach cleaning, clearing pathways, putting up fences, gardening or home improvements for someone unfit to carry out the work themselves.

Workshop – projects which build on the skills of offenders to allow employment opportunities. These might be projects such as making or refurbishing plant boxes, picnic tables, benches, etc, for the benefit of the community or charitable groups.

Individual placements –

Offenders who are capable of working individually can often be a great benefit to an agency and gain much from the experience. Placements are always under the agency supervision and can be in charity shops, museums or recycling centres.

Does it work?

Unpaid work makes a valid contribution to the community – it is used as an alternative to custody and as such has a more rehabilitative value than a prison sentence. It is not a 'soft option'. Research has shown offenders who experience unpaid work as constructive and useful are less likely to offend again in the future.

The Community Payback Order can last for a period between six months and three years and is the main community-based sentence currently available to Scottish Courts.

A Community Payback Order may consist of a number of requirements. The Court can select one or more and requirements are tailored specifically to each individual based on the nature of their offending.

The Court can impose one or more of the following:

- Compensation requirement
- Offender supervision requirement
- Unpaid work or other activity requirement (previously known as Community Service)

- Programme requirement
- Residence requirement
- Mental health requirement
- Drug treatment requirement
- Alcohol treatment requirement
- Conduct requirement

In the event of an individual making highly positive progress during their Community Payback Order the Court can decide to discharge an Order early.

If an individual breaches an Order the Court ultimately has the option of revoking it and imposing a custodial sentence, or any other sentence which it could have used at the start.





Happy Retirement!

It's been a real privilege to work alongside such a great group of people within the unit.

Work colleagues and friends held a party to mark the retirement of the council's corporate policy unit, Bridget Mustard, last month.

Bridget has worked for the council for almost 30 years, working within the chief executive's section heading up teams on policy formation, research, complaints, equal opportunities and communication and worked with every Chief Executive since Moray District days. She was also the point of contact for many elements of Scottish Government when

legislation changes were being implemented.

Many of her team members past and present gathered at 'Mustard Towers' for the party, and presented Bridget with lovely gifts and a 'retirement pack' to assist her and her husband John, who resigned as head of music instruction earlier this year, to adjust to their new life.

She said: *"It's been a real privilege to work alongside such a great group of people within the unit, and I wish all my teams the very best. I'm going to miss*

all of the engaging discussions which formed such a great part of our work."

The recent management restructure gave her an opportunity to consider other areas which she has wanted to pursue. *"It's the right time for me to take a new path, one I'm very excited about."*

During the party Bridget revealed she is now studying for a Masters degree in gender studies at Stirling University, and hopes to use this to further her policy-shaping career.

£1
per day

from
4 November

Parking at the Annexe or Greyfriars Street car parks?

The £1 per day parking charge for Greyfriars Street and the Annexe car parks comes into effect on Monday 4 November. Please remember to make sure you have change with you if you wish to park in these car parks, as the machines only accept coins.

The barriers will still be in operation 'as normal' to help reinforce that the car parks are for staff only. However, the spaces in the first half of the Annexe car park are also available for staff parking (with no two-hour restriction) – the exceptions to this are the blue badge parking bays, three reserved visitor parking spaces, and the pool car spaces.

If you're hosting a meeting and wish to book a parking space please contact facilities to reserve one of the three visitor spaces, in line with the previous arrangements. Otherwise, visitors need to make their own parking arrangements – there are other car parks very close to the building as well as limited waiting parking on Glover Street and High Street. Details of our other car parks can be found here: www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_58746.html

Please note that the pool car spaces in both car parks are only for vehicles that have been specifically allocated spaces – in Greyfriars Street car parks the spaces are marked by corresponding registration plates. The same arrangements will shortly be put in place in the Annexe car park to help make it clear. If you're bringing a vehicle from another location please make sure you pay and display, and recover the cost through an expense claim if it's in line with the Travel and Subsistence Policy: [interchange.moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_110741.html](http://moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_110741.html)

If you've used your own vehicle to pick up a pool car for a journey, please remember to make your own arrangements to park your car, and do not leave it in the pool car space. If the portion of your journey in your own vehicle is eligible for an expenses claim you'll also be able to recover the cost of parking your vehicle on the same expense claim.

PERSONAL DATA & DATA PROTECTION

Why is it important?

Under the data protection legislation that came into force last year, everyone in the Council has data protection responsibilities – even those who don't work with personal data directly. We're all under obligation by law to handle personal information correctly, and the potential penalties for getting it wrong have been hugely increased.

What is personal data?

Personal data is any information relating directly to a living individual. If the information tells you something about an individual, and there's a realistic prospect that this information can be used to identify the individual (including when it's combined with other information to work out who the individual is), then it's personal data. This can range from name and address, to social work records and any recorded opinions on the individual. Data protection laws apply no matter what form the personal data is in; it covers written documents, electronic documents and any other form that the personal data is shared, used or recorded in.

What do I need to do?

We've given the main bullet points of things you need to know and do below. You can find the full collection of data protection policy, guidance and related documents on the Intranet under [Information Security and Records Management](#). Please note this will be moved to interchange within the coming months. Also, any documents directly linked to below are the current versions, so please visit intranet/interchange to make sure you're viewing the latest version.

Main things to do and remember

In almost all cases, if a piece of personal data isn't absolutely necessary to carrying out your

core tasks or meeting legal obligations then do not use or collect it.

For example, if you're collecting information for a certain purpose and you don't need to know an individual's email address to carry out that purpose, then don't ask for their email address. As another example, if you're forwarding on an email that contains personal information and it's not necessary for your recipient to have this information, then redact any personal information or summarise what the recipient needs to know without identifying individuals.

If there is 'optional' data that you wish to collect (e.g. you have an optional mailing list that requires an email address) then this can only be legally collected under certain conditions. Contact info@moray.gov.uk before taking any action.

Collect and use personal data only in line with the privacy notice for that particular process.

When you're collecting information for a certain purpose, there should be a privacy notice specific to that purpose that must be provided to the individual whose data you're collecting at the point that you collect it. Among other things this notice will outline why the information is being collected and who it will be shared with. Privacy notices are created by the Data Protection Officer. If you're not aware of the privacy notice for a given process, consult your line manager.

If you suspect or know that a data breach has occurred, inform your line manager immediately. Line managers must immediately fill in the [data breach reporting form](#) and send this to databreach@moray.gov.uk.

A data breach is any instance where personal data is known or suspected to have been compromised

through being shared with or accessed by someone who should not have access to it. This includes instances where personal data provided by the Council to a third party may have been breached by that third party.

Immediate reporting is essential as there are strict timescales around reporting on data breaches to supervising authorities and potentially huge penalties if we fail to act appropriately. Managers are also encouraged to take suitable immediate action to gain control of the breach.

Double check recipients' addresses when sending emails and letters.

The most common form of data breach that takes place in the Council is of emails and letters accidentally being sent to the wrong address. Always double check email addresses/postal addresses before you send.

Make sure you're using the CC and BCC fields correctly. In particular, make sure that you haven't entered a list of private email addresses (e.g. from a mailing list) into the CC field by accident. Even if the contents of the email aren't sensitive, the individual email addresses count as personal information.

When sending internal emails always use the address book to make sure the email address is accurate to the intended recipient.

If you receive a Subject Access Request, or a similar request for copies of/access to personal information, report it to info@moray.gov.uk.

Individuals have the right to make a Subject Access Request for their personal data. This is a request for a copy of any of their personal data the Council holds on them. These requests

must be handled by Records Management within a set timescale, and the clock starts ticking once *any* member of Council staff receives such a request. Requesters don't always call them "Subject Access Requests" – so if you receive a request for access to/copies of personal data, report it to info@moray.gov.uk regardless of what the requester is calling it.

Don't create unnecessary commentary about any individual. Remember, they may have a right to see it via a Subject Access Request!

Store information securely. Don't leave papers and files containing personal information unattended, and make sure that electronic information is stored correctly (e.g. if your department uses a shared drive or SharePoint then make sure this is used correctly – be aware of who else can access personal information held on there, and whether or not they strictly need to see this information).

Either dispose of or archive personal data according to the [retention schedule](#) and in line with [confidential waste policy](#).

Consideration of privacy must be at the forefront of any new project or initiative. This could be planning changes to an IT system; using a new app or piece of software; doing something new that requires personal information, whether that means gathering a new set of personal information or re-using a pre-existing data set in a different way; or any other change to working practice/operational infrastructure. **You must complete a Data Protection Impact Assessment before committing to any such change, especially if the initiative involves personal data in any way.** The DPIA form is available [here](#), and you can contact info@moray.gov.uk for more info.

Immediate reporting is essential as there are strict timescales around reporting on data breaches.

HR Noticeboard

Colleague's Choice

Voting for the Colleague's Choice award has begun and we need YOUR vote!

This is your opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the efforts of your colleagues and vote for who you would like to see win the award. Read more about who's shortlisted, and place your vote on the interchange.

For further help or information or if you/a colleague would like to vote but do not have the facility to do so, please contact HR on hr@moray.gov.uk or telephone 01343 563261 to lodge a vote on your behalf.

Voting closes on Friday 8 November. The winner will be announced and presented at the STAR Awards ceremony at the start of December and publicised soon after.

Holiday Buyback

Remember that holiday buyback applications need to be in by the end of this month.

Holiday buyback allows eligible staff to buy up to two extra weeks' annual leave. It's a salary sacrifice agreement, so equal instalments are deducted from your salary each month over the year. For every extra week you take, you'll sacrifice a week's pay.

Applications for 2020 requests will close on 29 November to allow payroll to process all applications in time for the January pay run.

Just so you know, holiday buyback won't have any impact on your pension contributions or entitlements.

You can look at the guidance and application form on interchange or ask your manager for a copy to see if it's right for you.

Children in Need

Have you planned anything with your colleagues?

Friday 18 November is Children in Need day. So there's still plenty of time to download a toolkit and persuade your colleagues to take part.

And don't forget we want to see all your silly selfies. Whether you're doing a sponsorship event, a bake off or you're dressing up or down – the sillier the selfies the better.

Send selfies to ConnectNews@moray.gov.uk



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

Carers Rights Day

Carers Rights Day 2019: Helping you find your way – Thursday 21 November

Every day 6,000 people in the United Kingdom become carers, something few have been able to plan for. From the start, they may find themselves needing to talk to health and social care providers; to negotiate with their employers on how to juggle work with caring; to deal with the intricacies of the benefits system or to consider how to fund future care costs. All of this while they are coming to terms with their new caring responsibilities. It's no wonder that caring can feel overwhelming, bewildering and stressful.

Carers Rights Day promotes information to:

- ensure carers are aware of their rights
- let carers know where to get help and support
- raise awareness of the needs of carers.

Further information is available at www.carersuk.org/news-and-campaigns/carers-rights-day

Flu Jab!

"As we gear up for winter, I would encourage all of you to get your flu jab. We know how busy things get during the winter time and in the run up to the festivities, please don't neglect your own health."

That's the advice from Pam Gowans, Chief Officer for Health and Social Care Moray.

For more about the vaccine, to find out if you're eligible for a free vaccination and where you can get it from if you're not eligible, visit www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/immunisation/vaccines/flu-vaccine.



Employee Conference 2019

The final conference for this year came to a close in Forres in October, following conferences in Keith and Elgin.

The theme for all three events was 'Building for the Future', which focused on how we will deliver our priorities in the current challenging climate. This theme helped us to consider and reflect on the changes that the Improvement and Modernisation Programme will bring to Moray and to increase our awareness on where to focus our efforts moving forward, with a particular emphasis on how we drive service improvement.

The conferences helped us to consider how we become future focussed through supporting and embracing modernisation within the council.

Chief Executive, Roddy Burns, thanked everyone for their hard work and commitment over what has been another very challenging year. He said he was aware that we all know that the Council has to continue to change how it delivers services to achieve our priorities within a balanced budget and that he is confident we can work together to achieve our corporate and

service ambitions as the council continues its journey of transformation and modernisation.

Depute Chief Executives Denise Whitworth and Rhona Gunn provided an overview of the Improvement and Modernisation Programme at different conferences, raising awareness of the types of projects that were underway and sharing their vision for the future of Moray.

Interactive sessions saw the delegates involved in discussion groups, with the first session considering how changing the way that we do things could improve and modernise our services so that the council can be more sustainable in future. The discussions were around doing more with less, making better use of technology, streamlining procedures, making sure we focus on what adds value and ultimately reducing the costs of what we deliver.

Delegates then were asked during the second discussion group to consider how we might prioritise and change the services we deliver to the public. The groups explored what might need to stop

or change recognising that as finances continue to shrink we need to prioritise services whilst still satisfy the public in their demands and expectations. This interesting session demonstrated how difficult these decisions are.

Information stands were available during the breaks, and many attendees sought advice from our Occupational Health provider on stress management and mindfulness. The NHS health point had advice and literature, and there were information points on healthy eating and mental health services.

Leader of Moray Council, Graham Leadbitter, and Cllr Aaron McLean opened and closed the conferences between them.

Our thanks to all those who attended and took part in the event. The contributions from everyone were very welcome and will be considered by councillors and senior managers as work progresses on making the council more sustainable for the future. Feedback from the conferences will be published on the interchange and in *Connect* in due course.

Building for the Future

Needlestick Injuries



What to do!

Needlestick injuries usually occur where someone accidentally comes in to contact with a hypodermic needle and this results in blood being drawn when their skin is punctured. They don't happen very often but when they do it can be stressful for the injured person who will, fear they might be infected by a blood-borne virus such as Hepatitis B or HIV.

In theory anyone could come in to contact with an unguarded needle, but in practice workers in domestic environments, home carers, housing staff and DLO teams are probably most likely to encounter the problem. This was highlighted by an incident this summer. Staff in outdoor public spaces can come also across discarded needles during their work.

The issue in these services has been risk assessed, suitable procedures have been put in place to deal with the problem and staff have been informed of these measures. The priority must always be to avoid an incident from happening and that requires vigilance. That said, if they do come across a needle it needs to be dealt with according to their own service's guidance and procedures, both to remove the risk to them and to others who might come along afterwards.

The way to do this is to use one of the sharps kits available from Ashgrove stores. These contain tongs, gloves, a secure box and a disposal bag. Discarded needles must never be picked up or handled directly. Instead the needle should be lifted with the tongs and deposited in the box, which should then be secured, bagged and taken to Ashgrove stores for final disposal.

Any large find of needles must also be dealt with immediately but this will involve a call to our Environmental Protection colleagues who will arrange for a correct disposal.

If an injury does occur, it must never be dismissed. It may be known that the person in a property is an insulin user, for instance, but it should never be assumed that there is no risk from their mislaid needle. If an injury does occur, deal with it promptly:

- Allow the puncture to bleed (do not suck the wound)
- Wash the wound with soap and running water
- Cover it with a waterproof dressing
- Inform your manager

Our OH provider should be contacted directly to discuss the management of the incident and they operate a 24/7 helpline for such incidents: tel 0330 6600365.

It is reassuring to note that nationally only a small number of the many needlestick injuries each year go on to cause serious infections. Needlestick injuries are only one of the many ways that infection with blood-borne viruses can occur. The general approach to dealing with all of them is covered by the council's policy – 'Blood-Borne Virus Management'- which can be accessed on the interchange.

In theory anyone could come in to contact with an unguarded needle.

Greenfingers

Training Project



Our trainees enjoyed a two week break for the tattie holidays, a well-earned break after all their hard work during the growing season. It's now full steam ahead to Christmas!

Watch out for the popular Christmas wreath poster coming out very soon, orders have already started coming in and remember we sold out quite early last year.



Nursery

We have been potting on some of our perennial plants into larger pots for over the winter, and given our polytunnels a good clear-out to get rid of pests, dead leaves and weeds to keep the area disease free.

We have also taken the opportunity to lay new weed fabric flooring in our busiest glasshouse and in a couple

of our polytunnels. Our fab volunteers Keith and Brian supported Thomas, one of our trainees, to complete this job. Our volunteers also supported trainee Norman to develop an herb garden area, which he designed. Norman took five of his designs and asked the rest of the trainees to choose one, which he has created.



Moray Resource Centre

Follow-up planning meetings have taken place as we continue to move forwards with our public access sales area, garden maintenance and food growing projects.

Forestry & Land Scotland

Greenfingers continued working at Roseisle Forest to ensure the pathway around the toilet and car parking area is in good order. We have edged the paths and disposed of the overgrown turf, then laid grey chippings to get a level and even surface, making it accessible for all forest users.



Maintenance

We have been working at Dr Gray's hospital doing additional works and maintaining the popular sensory garden. The weather was kind to us when we spent four days trimming back hedges and weeding, then laying down bark as a mulch to prevent regrowth. This was a really satisfying job and we will be continuing our work there as we head into November and into the New Year.

In your garden this month

Autumn tidying continues, including sweeping up leaves – they make great compost and mulch, so don't waste them! Clearing, tidying, fumigating and ventilating the greenhouse. As the nights become frosty put tender plants growing in containers in the green house for winter, and

protect half-hardy plants with fleece or straw. Think about planting bulbs for the spring, this is the last few weeks you can get them in and have a good show next year. There may be a final mow of the lawn if necessary and the weather is mild.

In another of our 'meet the team' pieces, we're delighted to introduce you to our training support worker and driver, Michael Innes (pictured left).

Michael comes from a background of maintenance within Health and Social Care Moray. He says he has always been interested in gardening, and supporting people to train and enhance their life skills is hugely satisfying.

"I have found the Greenfingers training project an ideal

opportunity to work with and support trainees in a horticultural environment. I work supporting trainees through a horticultural seasonal calendar covering many aspects of nursery work.

"We are blessed to live in such a beautiful part of Moray. This was brought home to me as my team and I recently completed a trail check at Quarrelwood near Elgin on behalf of Forestry and Land Scotland.

"I'm an avid mountain biker and cycle the many Moray trails of Culbin, Winding Walks and Quarrelwood to name but a few. Having spent time maintaining these trails I now appreciate the substantial work that goes in to keeping the paths open for walkers and bikers alike."

Good gardening!

Watch out for the popular Christmas wreath poster coming out very soon!



NEW Pool car booking system

Our pool car scheme has successfully created savings for the authority year on year since its inception in 2010.

Some of you will remember the launch of pool cars in 2010 as part of a drive to reduce increasing costs and create long-term savings.

Our pool car scheme has successfully created savings for the authority year on year since its inception in 2010. Here are some key facts and outcomes of the pool car scheme:

- Travel bill slashed by pool car scheme – annual savings averaging £197,000 per annum. In total, over £1.5 million saved over an 8 year period.
- Grey fleet (personal mileage claims) halved.
- Emissions cut thanks to low emission vehicles. Our fleet is made up of 119 vehicles including 5 full electric and 2 plug in hybrids.
- Cars currently located in 14 locations throughout Moray
- Over 30,000 bookings made via Outlook last year.

The current system has clearly served us well over the years. However, we must always look for improvements, and recent analysis of car bookings, personal mileage claims and trends have highlighted some issues. These include cars being block-booked for longer periods than required, cars being used for very short journeys, and the current system is limited in providing car booking information and journey details to managers.

It was identified that better use could be made of our fleet by increasing the mileage of pool cars and reducing the amount of 'grey' fleet mileage claims. Having the correct booking system is essential to achieve this. Tranman, our existing fleet management system supplier, was tasked to develop a pool car booking process to mitigate these issues.

Key benefits of the new booking system are:

- The ability to provide enhanced reports and that allow management to make more informed decisions on car location, performance and compliance.
- Capable of automatically allocating cars by lowest mileage first to achieve a better average mileage for residual value.
- Improves the efficiency of managing the booking process, by providing drivers with online access to pool car availability at their preferred location or locations nearby.
- System prompts the driver to enter their details including name, employee number and highlights date of last licence check. This ensures driving licence checks are completed and up to date.
- Pool car searching by areas – available cars can be searched for in up to three areas at once.
- Manage staff in respect of any driver related infringements or traffic violations e.g. speeding/driver behaviour.
- Evidence from other users suggests a reduction in vehicle down time and reduction in grey fleet mileage claims.

What will be different when you book a pool car?

Being able to book cars via the current outlook booking system will cease in the next few weeks. To start the new process, staff will require completing a consent form on the employee portal. Following this, users will be added to our Tranman system and cars will be booked by using this. Once on the Tranman system, there are a number of pages to navigate but after booking a car for the first time most of the requested information will be autofilled.

- Step 1: Complete staff consent form
- Step 2: Tranman booking system

So, what happens next?

A series of briefing sessions have been given to managers advising of the planned system changes. A communication roll out of the planned changes will take place to all staff via; email with user guides attached, information will be made available on the intranet/interchange.

To ensure minimum disruption there will be a transition period between the two booking systems.

Staff are asked to be patient during the system changeover period, as in any other change we may experience teething problems. Bear in mind the additional savings that are possible by making this switch, how it will help the council make better use of its current fleet and allow you better access to a vehicle.

Further information will be available in due course both here in *Connect* and on the interchange.

Users will be added to our Tranman system and cars will be booked by using this.



SAFETY FIRST

The trends are positive; our latest Road Safety Plan reports the number of cycle and pedestrian casualties reducing by 43% and 46% respectively.

We all know the green cross code and, for the drivers and riders among us, your highway code should be well-thumbed. But as we look to increase the number of folk undertaking active travel in Moray – walking and cycling – it's important to have safe routes so we can get about with confidence.

That's where our traffic team comes in; our colleagues are skilled engineers and technicians, and work to improve road safety with safer crossings and junctions for all road users.

The trends are positive; our latest Road Safety Plan reports the number of cycle and pedestrian casualties reducing by 43% and 46% respectively, between 2004-2008 and 2012-2016. But as the population of Moray

increases, and we look to reduce the vehicles on the road by promoting active travel, the work for our traffic team continues.

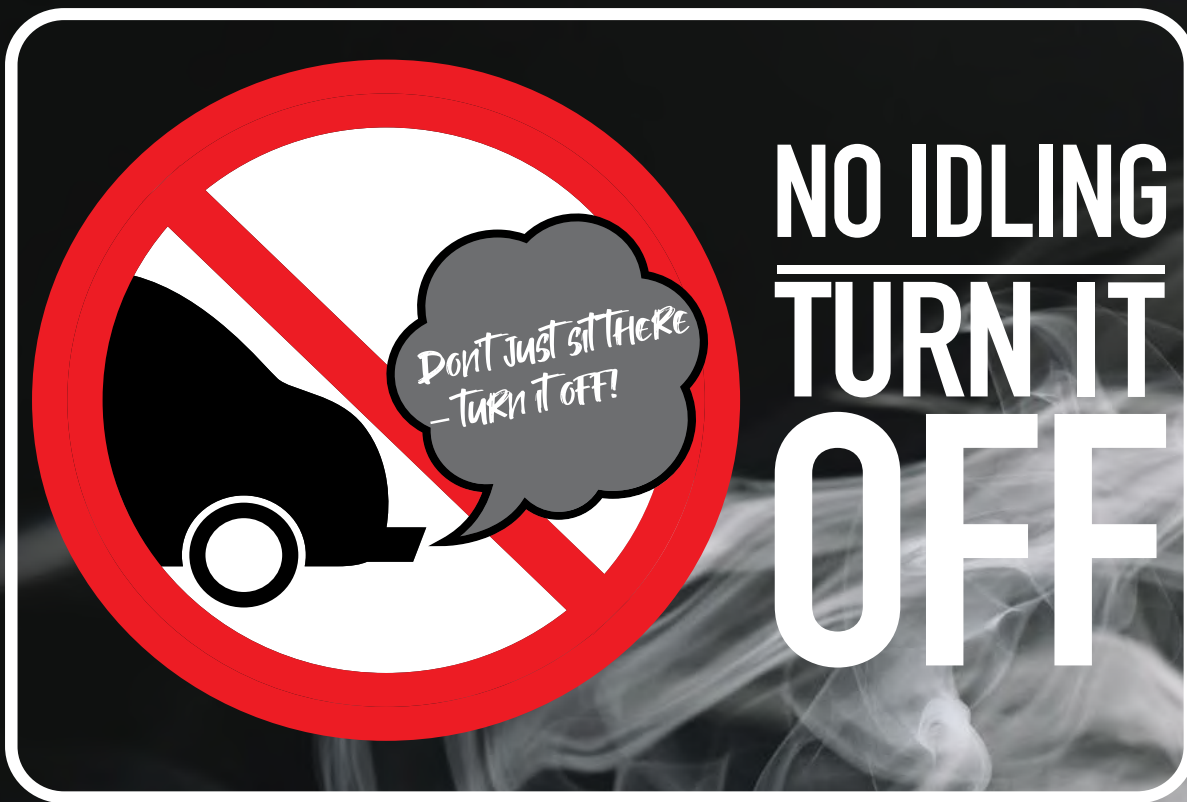
Take the removal of the mini roundabout at Hay Street/ Northfield Terrace/South Street in Elgin last year. When crossing the mini roundabout pedestrians used to rely on drivers stopping to let them cross. Cyclists in general don't like roundabouts and they are often difficult to see in the stream of traffic.

Now pedestrians have priority with a dedicated 'green man' time to cross while vehicles are stopped, and cyclists have the opportunity to get in front of vehicles, so they're easier to see as they pass through the junction.

Right now, works are under way in Lossiemouth to widen the pavement at Clifton Road, by School Brae, and install traffic lights at the junction of Clifton Road and School Brae, another difficult crossing for pedestrians. The cul-de-sac at the end of Coularbank Road is being opened up for cyclists to use, so they don't have to navigate the main junction.

Road Safety Week takes place from 18-24 November, with the theme 'step up for safe streets', which remains a priority for us.

This junction will also have a dedicated 'green man' time for pedestrian and cyclist will have their first cycle 'filter' in Moray. This will be a new type of facility and we hope it'll encourage more people to walk and cycle around Lossiemouth.



A recent RAC survey found that seven in 10 motorists think drivers who leave their engines idling while parked should be fined.

There are existing powers we have to levy fines, but inevitably we don't have the resources to implement them. That said, we prefer to go down an education route to explain the damage idling engines do to the environment and to people.

Engine fumes and airborne particulates damage our health. This is particularly bad for children who are at a lower level and inhale more. In fact, children are more vulnerable to traffic fumes as they breathe 50% more air per pound of body weight than adults.

Along with other councils we plan to start a public information campaign to raise awareness of the damage being done by unnecessary idling. Given the size of the council's fleet we think that setting an example first would be a great start. Many of our newer vehicles have automatic stop/start mechanisms built in, but HGVs and older ones rely on the driver to turn it off.

It takes less energy to start the engine than keeping it idling, so please think about where you're stopped and how long that could be for. If you're going to be parked for more than 30 seconds – turn it off.

Look out for posters and social media messages, and we'll be putting press releases out for the local media highlighting what all council drivers will be doing. We'll also be seeking support from our contractors and school transport services to embed the no-idling practice across their fleets.

Did you know?

- For every 1 litre of fuel used by a diesel engine, 2.64 kg of CO₂ is released into the atmosphere.
- An idling car produces enough exhaust emissions to fill 150 balloons with harmful chemicals, including cyanide, nitric oxide and air-borne particulates every minute.
- With modern vehicles, the cost of switching off the engine and starting up again after a minute or more will be less than the cost of leaving the engine idling.
- Excessive idling lets water condense in the vehicle's exhaust system, which speeds up corrosion. Idling causes spark plugs to become dirtier more quickly, increasing fuel consumption by up to 5%.
- Putting a stop to idling is an easy way to drive down dangerously high levels of pollution, reducing its impact on the environment and our health.

Budding poet, and driver for our Public Transport Unit, Duncan Brown has shared a poem he penned as a thanks to his colleagues.

This Year's Love was written by Duncan to show his gratitude to colleagues who have helped him settle into his new job, and new life, in Moray.

Duncan is passionate about poetry, owns 80 poetry books, and is currently reading the works of Elgin-born poet, Andrew Young.

"I've been writing poetry for more than 20 years; I started writing seriously again at the start of this year and I'm considering entering a competition."

"The reason behind the poem is to thank my colleagues for the support through the year. It makes work much more enjoyable, and you can connect with colleagues better when you all get on – it makes the job easier."

"I've had some ups and downs over the last few years and I've found it a struggle to settle, though I finally feel I'm managing it now. The people who have supported me have also inspired me, and I now want to inspire them."

Duncan, who previously worked for North Yorkshire County Council, saw the PTU driver vacancy and, after changes in his personal circumstances, decided to make the move north to Moray. Having been here for just over a year now, he doesn't regret the move and is enjoying getting to know folk.

"What I like about my colleagues is they show an interest. Even if they don't like poetry, they're asking how it's going, and that's important to me."

This Year's Love

It is my anniversary
One I share with you
A bond I could only dream about
Until I found a love so true

Picture postcard memories
What a year it has been
Made special by the many people I've met
And all the places that I've seen

It's been a great start to an amazing story
I hope that there's many more chapters to come
As who would have thought with all your
support

That a poet again I would become

I have at last found a healthy rhythm
I'm having a wonderful time
With the support of inspiring colleagues
Who give me a reason to rhyme

As in the last year I've met my guardian angel
And many others I've taken to heart
So let us cherish many more years together
And let nothing cause us to part

So thank you for your support
It is much appreciated
Along with all your kindness
And the friendship we have created

Duncan Brown





EXPLOSIVE FIND

Sharp-eyed staff at the council's recycling centre at Keith averted a potentially life-threatening accident last month.

At lunchtime on Wednesday 30 October, site attendant George Burgess noticed two unusual metal boxes in one of the recycling sheds where small electrical items are usually put. He had a quick look at them and was concerned to see there were several wires hanging out of one of the boxes so he called his colleague Jim Durkin to check.

Jim's family background is in open-cast mining, and as soon as he opened the boxes he knew he was looking at explosive detonators. One box had approximately 60 of these volatile charges in bundles of 12 and the other had a small hand plunger and detonator cords.

Jim immediately called the police, who summoned the MoD's Bomb Disposal Unit in Edinburgh.

Jim, 51, has been with Moray Council for 14 years. He said: "These are very sensitive small

explosives that require a tiny electric current – or a spark – to set them off. If these had been processed as usual the people handling them could easily set them off, with devastating consequences. Even if they'd ended up in landfill the machinery involved there would have easily triggered an explosion."

The Recycling Centre was immediately closed to the public until the detonators were removed and safely disposed of by the bomb squad.

The council's waste manager, Mike Neary, praised the quick action by his two colleagues. "George has been with us for 10 years and no doubt has seen many strange things being put to the recycling centre," he said.

"So when he thinks there is something odd about an item, we take notice."

"We are so lucky to have such experienced people on the ground like Jim and George, I've no doubt they averted a potential tragedy further down the waste process."

Site attendant George Burgess noticed two unusual metal boxes in one of the recycling sheds.



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