

Connect

**August / September
2022**



**UKRAINIAN
RESETTLEMENT**





August / September 2022

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Meet the team



■ Sharon Dunbar MCIPR
■ Senior Communications Officer



■ Kirsty Craig MCIPR
■ Communications and Media Officer



■ Ryan Bell MCIPR
■ Communications and Engagement Officer (Learning Estate)



■ Angus McNicholl
■ Designer

Editorial

We hope staff have managed to get a well-earned break over the summer. For those of us who've had some time off during the holidays, we hope it was enjoyable. For the parents and carers among us, less than a week until the schools go back!

We've got another packed edition to bring us all up-to-speed with the latest news from across our services. We meet the newly formed resettlement team to find out how we're supporting families settling in Moray, particularly our most recent Ukrainian friends.

The recent opening of the Buckie Community Orchard marks the end of the developer obligations spend across the area so we've included an update on the projects from 2010 onwards. We've also been following our Head of Economic Growth and Development, Jim Grant, on his adventures as he committed to paddleboarding 160 miles over just eight days.

As we get closer to the beginning of another school year, we'll be welcoming our Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs) as they prepare to embark on their first year of teaching post-graduation. Good luck all, though we're sure you won't need it!

We've had some fantastic feedback since the return of Connect earlier in the year and, as always, we love hearing about what you've been up to (both in and out of work). If you'd like to share any achievements, stories or recommendations, drop us a line at connectnews@moray.gov.uk.



HeadsUp

Frances Garrow, Head of HR, ICT and OD

Dear Colleagues,

Things have changed a lot for me since I last wrote a Heads Up article in 2017. Becoming Head of HR, ICT and OD, welcoming Payroll and the Communications teams into our service, and of course navigating the most challenging times dealing with the impact of the pandemic.

Some of the changes for the Council as we emerge from the pandemic and begin to learn to live with Covid-19 are to do with the ways of working. Hybrid working is the new buzz word and we're currently working to incorporate hybrid working into the Council's flexible working approach, alongside reviews of the office estate, which consider the future requirements of the Council and workforce.

Wellbeing is another important area of focus, with many people adapting well to the challenges of working remotely or differently to reduce the risks of transmission to colleagues and service users. This has however been more challenging for some of us, particularly in relation to the risks of isolation, loneliness and feeling out of the loop within a team.

We conducted our first Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey in 2021 and with the recent follow up pulse

survey we will be regularly monitoring wellbeing in future.

All of our teams have been pivotal in the response and recovery phases, however the spotlight has often fallen on the ICT service. They've worked hard to respond to the significant and changing demands on their service, deal with global supply chain issues, manage cyber security risks and threats, work with services supporting modernisation and improvement projects and also keep the lights on.

Away from work I still love getting out on the water, mostly kayaking or paddle-boarding – actually my paddleboard is more like a mini-raft which helps stop me falling in! I would like to make time to go rowing regularly again but have also recently become a granny with the birth of our first grandchild, which adds a different and lovely dimension to our time off.

I hope everyone has managed to take time to relax and enjoy themselves, be that spending quality time with loved ones, or taking part in your favourite activities over the summer period and are coming back feeling refreshed and ready for what the second part of 2022 brings.

Employee Conference 2022

A date for your diary – the Employee Conference is confirmed for 10 November 2022 at Elgin Town Hall. Planning is now underway for the conference and invitations will be sent out soon, will you be one of the lucky people to receive one?

The conference is about 'New Horizons – Building Back Better' and will look forward to a brighter future and how every role plays a part in this.

Remember, this is your chance to talk to the Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service about

issues that are important to you, meeting colleagues from across the services and contributing to the discussion on the council's future plans, so look out for invitations arriving soon.

We look forward to seeing you there!

A man with short grey hair, wearing a light blue polo shirt and a colorful lanyard, stands with his arms crossed. He is positioned on the left side of the page. The background features a stylized map of Ukraine in blue and yellow, with a decorative border of small white stars. The title 'UKRAINIAN RESETTLEMENT' is written in large, bold, white serif capital letters across the center of the map.

UKRAINIAN RESETTLEMENT

Since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February, millions of Ukrainian civilians have been forced to flee their homes, livelihoods, friends and often even family members. Here in Moray, the council stands against the Russian atrocities and has flown the Ukrainian flag at headquarters to show solidarity with Ukrainians.

But there's much more tangible action happening here too. Alongside other local authorities, we're doing our bit to support Ukrainians who have travelled to Moray in a bid to resettle somewhere safe from harm. To date there have been 22,000 visas granted for Scotland, and nearly 8,000 displaced Ukrainians arriving in Scotland. In Moray so far we have 49 Ukrainians, including 18 children, across 23 families all being hosted under the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The resettlement work, originally led by Health and Social Care Moray's Rebecca McIntosh and Tracey Peden, and overseen by Carmen Gillies, is now progressing at pace after a dedicated team was recruited: Roy Geddes, Karen Birse and Sarah Anne Kielczewski.

Roy, our Refugee and Resettlement Project Officer, joined the council only a couple of months ago following 29 years of service in the Royal Air Force, specifically in the RAF Regiment. A decorated Veteran, he received the

Military Cross for his defence of Camp Bastion in Afghanistan, in 2012.

He's lived locally since 1994, and says his ability to support displaced people, such as the civilians he helped in Afghanistan and Iraq during combat operations, stems from his experience in long-term deployments.

"I know what it's like to be separated from family members, friends and loved ones. Often without contact for weeks at a time, it gave us insight into what it feels like to lose that connection and the impact of that on your wellbeing."

Although support for those resettling in Moray is strong, including community support, Roy says it's not uncommon for some nationalities to favour living in more culturally diverse areas such as larger cities, and this may impact the numbers of refugees we see settle here across the various schemes.

The Scottish Government, which is running a sponsorship programme to support displaced Ukrainians (different to the UK Government's scheme) is using local hotels as temporary accommodation in the area until support from the council can be put into place; currently there are a small number of Ukrainians in a local hotel, all of whom the resettlement team have met personally and have set up welfare facilities for, including access to laundry, and shuttle bus transport into Elgin.

All have received their welcome payment, information from the NHS and details of education and job opportunities. Importantly, they've received UK sim cards – a small but hugely meaningful action so they can keep in touch with family and friends they've been separated from.

Through the Scottish Government sponsorship scheme more than 400 households in Moray have expressed an interest in hosting Ukrainians, so the team is currently working through these to find any potential matches. This will allow them to transition from hotel

accommodation to host accommodation.

"Our position is quite unique in that we are purchasing properties from Defence Infrastructure Organisation – former married quarters for military families – which can be used for those resettling in Moray from Ukraine under the different UK and Scottish Government schemes, and Afghanistan under the Afghan Relations and Assistance Policy scheme."

Although this effort is being led at the council by Roy, Karen and Sarah, it relies on a network of support from within the council: education to support young people's education – who may not have English as their first

language; environmental health and housing for completing housing safety checks; benefits advice to ensure those settling in Moray have access to the financial support they are entitled to; and equalities support. Also, huge contributions from partner organisations including the NHS, Department for Work and Pensions, Social Security Scotland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Red Cross – the definition of a multi-agency response.

And the impact of this work is telling – all the children who have arrived in Moray are now in education, 90% of the Ukrainian refugees are signed up to learn English through Moray College UHI's accredited classes, and

60% are in employment.

It's been an intense start to Roy's new career in local government, and he spends his downtime restoring classic cars and bikes, and adventuring with his three rescue dogs. He says the biggest challenge remains learning the nuances of the numerous resettlement schemes.

"But I can't begin to tell you how rewarding it is to see people's faces light up at the smallest things which we all take for granted: food, shelter, warmth and education. It's particularly rewarding to see the Ukrainians enjoying the English classes as this will hugely support their integration.

"I can't begin to tell you how rewarding it is to see people's faces light up at the smallest things which we all take for granted: food, shelter, warmth and education."

“The community response has been fantastic, from the Lord-Lieutenants emergency relief funding of £5,000 – which is helping to clothe, feed and provide summer activities for families, to local supermarkets providing refreshments for the welcome and drop-in sessions, and from residents who are offering to entertain children at these sessions so their parents can get the support they need.”

Former Paramedic, Karen, said: “Our aim is to empower individuals and families to become self-sufficient, build their own lives and integrate into their local communities.

“The Ukrainian families we have supported are very grateful and never accept more than they absolutely need. They are extremely pro-active and already 60% of adults are in employment, considering the first refugees arrived in April that is an achievement and a credit to who they are as people and a nation.”

The importance of the community-based English classes can't be understated, as it'll support professionals back into employment. Integration is key to help promote a feeling of community and safety, which they lost during their forced exit from Ukraine.

“The Ukrainian people are an absolute pleasure to work with and they emphasise to us that they want to contribute and play their part to their host country while they are here with us,” said Karen.

“The children are attending school or college, and beam when they tell you about their new school friends. Many children have already integrated into their communities, joining rugby clubs and the Moray Brass Band.”

Interim Strategy and Planning Lead, Carmen Gillies, has credited the contribution of the many involved in the project.

“The newly-formed team welcomes Ukrainian displaced people along with any other refugees to help them to rebuild their lives in Moray, should they wish to stay in the local area.

“The Ukrainian people are an absolute pleasure to work with and they emphasise to us that they want to contribute and play their part...”

“We can't do this alone, and I'm proud of the massive impact the team and wider operational team have made in such a rapid period of time to respond to the humanitarian crisis.

“To be effective, the team have focused on inspiring and mobilising not only our displaced persons in Moray but also our staff, volunteers, supporters and partners to work together to achieve more.”





Young People's Supported Lodgings Moray

Moray Council staff have opened their homes to provide supported lodgings to young unaccompanied asylum seekers this year. The Scottish Government and local authorities are working together to ensure that when young people under the age of 18 seek asylum they're provided with accommodation and support appropriate to their age.

Many of the young people arriving in the UK will have experienced difficult and traumatic living circumstances, including possible time in refugee camps and separation from their families. When they reach the UK

they need a safe and supportive environment and assistance with processing their

immigration claim as their right to remain is determined.

Our staff have stepped up to offer accommodation to two young people, giving them a safe space to live and begin to settle. As a supported lodgings provider they offer room in their home and help with all the practical aspects of life. Everything from cooking to assistance attending meetings and appointments, maintaining contact with family and space to relax.

The young people have different levels of English so google translate is a big help while the young person starts English language classes. It's also been a great opportunity for the

young person and the provider to learn about each other's favourite foods!

The team at Placement Services also support the young people in accessing legal support while helping them with to join with other care experienced young people on our summer activities programme.

We're going to be asked to provide accommodation for other young asylum seekers and if this is something you could offer or would like to explore the team would like to hear from you.

You would need to have a bedroom available and be able to provide practical and emotional support. The placement could last from six months to two years. Our team undertake checks and references while assessing suitability. There's also a payment for the duration of the placement.

To find out more email DutyPlacementServices@moray.gov.uk to ask for an appointment.



Buckie Comm

This orchard was created for the people of Buckie to enjoy. Help yourself to some fruit ready, but please leave some for other people and the wildlife!

Buckie Community Orchard was funded by Developer Obligations contributions received from Tesco, as part of financial contributions for the development of the Tesco store in Buckie.

How do I tell which trees are which?

Here is a map to show where the different kinds of trees are

What was here before?

The orchard was originally a green until 1991, when a path was created, rustic fences were erected and roses were planted to form a garden. In 1993 the Rose Garden was completed when a sculptured bird bath was installed. Buckie Community High School pupils worked on the bird bath under the sculptor's guidance. The unveiling of the sculpture was reported in The Banffshire Advertiser on 12 December 1993.

Some of the seating within the orchard has meaning. One of the benches is named after Isla St Clair in memory of her who lived at the entrance of the orchard.

The opening of new community orchard marks the end of the Buckie Developer Obligations projects.

Buckie residents can now enjoy a new community orchard, which officially opened on Saturday 6 August, following covid-19 pandemic related delays. Completion of the orchard comes after public consultation on the draft design and a drop-in session,

which drew supportive comments from local residents.

The orchard, located in Buckie's Queen Street Park, has been planted in the former rose garden, which had fallen into disrepair. The rose garden, originally planted in 1991, was completed in 1993 with the installation of a sculptured bird bath worked on by Buckie High School pupils.

Money for the community orchard has come from the developer obligations secured in 2010 to mitigate the impact of the new Tesco store in Buckie. More than £400,000 was received with £300,000 of this invested into the bus service; improved traffic signals and various town centre projects including Christmas lights; Buckie's Christmas Kracker; the Fishwives Path; and 'There But Not There' Tommy commemorative sculptures.

Funds have also been put towards 'Buckie's Darling', the new gateway feature for the town.

The trees were planted during the first covid-19 lockdown in March 2020 by Moray Council's Criminal Justice team who have been maintaining the site since. The remainder of the project was put on hold due to the pandemic but remaining works have been completed in 2022.



Community Orchard

and nuts from the trees when they are

What sort
and when

are planted. Can you spot all the different kinds of trees?

June to July



In April this year, a contractor was appointed to install a path for the orchard and works were complete by May. Wildflower planting along the edge of the orchard, where the climbing roses once stood, has also taken place. The orchard also includes a circular bench for the central tree and an interpretation panel to help educate and inform visitors about the environment around them.

Moray Council's Criminal Justice Team also repainted the Girl Guides bench, which is situated in the Queen Street Park near the entrance to the orchard. The bench was gifted to Buckie Town Council by the Buckie Guides and Brownies in 1953 to mark Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation.

We spoke with our Senior Task Supervisor, Peter Wilson, who said: "Unpaid Work were delighted to be involved in the Buckie Community Orchard project from the offset. Initially we were asked to plant the trees for the orchard before agreeing to maintain the area throughout the various covid-19 lockdowns.

"We also supported with the bench, which is the centre point of the orchard, and as for the guides seat this has been sandblasted and repainted by the team. The orchard will be an ongoing project for years

and clients will be able to say they were a part of this fantastic community space."

The spend of the Buckie Tesco developer obligations has spanned over the past 12 years and we'd like to thank all of our colleagues involved in the various projects for their involvement. You can find out more about the projects funded by these developer obligations here.



ve, Kidd's Orange Red,
on's Superb, Lord
bourne and Spartan





CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

This year we have felt the impacts of climate change here in Moray first hand. With the destructive storms last winter, the long dry spells and record breaking heatwaves we are increasingly living the effects of climate change.

Staff from across the council have recently started taking part in a new in house carbon literacy course, which empowers learners to talk about climate change and understand how they can reduce carbon emissions at work and at home. This is especially important for us as Moray Council staff because the public look to us for leadership, given climate change is one of the biggest threats we are facing.

Congratulations to these staff who are now Carbon Literate!

- Alex Florence, Payments Assistant
- Darren Westmacott, Planner
- Lee Philip, Leisure Assistant
- Lindsey Johnston, Procurement Officer
- Sonia Morrison, Procurement Officer
- Sonya Jordan, Housing Options Adviser

If you would like to know more about this course or would like to become certified as 'carbon literate', please contact Sophie at climatechange@moray.gov.uk



■ Lindsey Johnston [left] and Sonia Morrison [below]



Questions and Answers with Procurement Officers and Climate Literate colleagues, Sonia Morrison and Lindsey Johnson:

What is procurement about?

Sonia: As a team we support departments to buy services, goods and works from the planning stage right through to disposal or the end of a service.

What do you like most about your job?

Sonia: I enjoy supporting departments across the Council - the variety keeps it interesting. In one day I could be supporting the procurement of biomass fuel or the provision of a drug and alcohol support service and anything in between.

Lindsey: Previous local authorities and procurement jobs I have worked in have been much more focused but like Sonia says, here at Moray Council we can be working on procuring anything the council requires and no two days are the same.

You're both acting as climate change champions for procurement, what led you to take that role on?

Lindsey: Climate Change is high on the Scottish Government's agenda when it comes to procurement, so by sharing the role between us we're able to make a real change. It allows us to dedicate the amount of time to considering the implications for Moray.

Why is it important for the council to act sustainably in procurement?

Sonia: As a public sector organisation we can influence change both internally and with our external partners, the sooner this happens the better for all.

Lindsey: For financial year 2020/21 we put 177 contracts in place, if we can encourage these suppliers to think more sustainably and about their carbon footprint, we could see a real difference here in Moray.

You recently became certified as 'carbon literate' after taking part in a new course for Moray Council staff. How did you find the course??

Lindsey: The training was two half days and really eye opening. We've all heard about climate change and the effect it is having on the world, but seeing it with regard to Moray and how we stack up really showed where changes and improvements can be made.

Sonia: I found it really informative and enjoyable too.

How is that helping you do your job better?

Sonia: The course detailed how climate change is making an impact both globally and locally and provided opportunities to explore what can be done to reduce our carbon budget. It sounds technical but there are many actions we can take in our home and work lives, some small and some which need more time. There was the chance to plan what actions can be taken, this was in a group setting where ideas were flowing and there was lots of passion around what actions we can all take.

Lindsey: Since the training, the topic is much more at the forefront of my mind. Sonia and I are working together to ensure that our templates we work with daily include reminders to all procurement staff to consider the sustainable choices throughout the procurement process.

What is your biggest concern about climate change, and what helps you to feel optimistic about it?

Sonia: My biggest concern is the threat to life and habitat. Storm Arwen was a recent example of that.

Lindsey: As Sonia says, climate change is now causing threat to life and habitat. The recent heat wave also shows how much this can affect us all between sea levels rising and wild fires affecting animals as well as housing in London recently. This is an immediate issue that needs action.

What advice do you have for colleagues who might be interested in, or worried about climate change?

Sonia: I would whole heartedly recommend attending the Carbon Literacy course, I learned a lot and I am actioning changes in my working and home life.

Lindsey: I would also recommend the training, it was eye opening and educational. The break out rooms were a great place to share and pick up ideas that others have.

Have you made any changes in your life that have reduced your carbon footprint?

Lindsey: I've recently changed to a green energy supplier for my house and I've changed products I use often to more sustainable options, such as recyclable containers and cardboard packaging rather than plastic. I've never been a huge meat eater, but after seeing a documentary recently and attending the training, my meat consumption has reduced further. I try to avoid using the car where I can and I'm enjoying finding places to walk the dog closer to home rather than driving somewhere to walk him.

Sonia: My house is insulated, there's an air source heat pump providing heating and hot water. I've checked and my energy provider is green. I'm now trying to source local and in-season produce when food shopping. My sons are enjoying growing their own potatoes. We've reduced the amount of meat we eat and are increasing the pulses in our diet. When possible I'm trying to walk shorter distances rather than taking the car. As a family we choose to go on staycations now. I work from home and meet virtually rather than meeting in person where possible. I'm now more frequently speaking to friends, family and colleagues about climate change.

Cycle Chronicles #2 Mark...

Search



Mark Aldridge is cycling in Moray

Mark Aldridge, Senior PMO Administrator, has shared a song he has written which documents his own personal experiences whilst cycling across Moray. We asked Mark where the inspiration came from:

“I had been a fair weather cyclist but after encouragement from Carl Bennet, and after a team biking tribute he’d organised on Cycle to Work Day 2018 to our colleague Bob Ramsay, I started the daily commute across town to HQ through wind, rain or snow and managed 485 miles in 2019.

Then everything changed with the pandemic and lockdown hit, so I decided to use my bike as often as I could and get as fit as possible to try help mitigate any impact of the virus. My weekly Forres five a side games had fallen to Covid restrictions, and being outdoors was the safest place to be. The added benefits of getting out of the house regularly helped me deal mentally with this strange new “normal”, and also avoid becoming a couch potato.

Although I have grown up and lived my life in Moray, I never really explored and experienced the wonders of our countryside, especially my native Speyside. Cycling allows you to see so much more than driving around and I often stop and take pictures. So I gradually stepped up my mileage and tried to go out every day racking up over 2600 miles in 2020, and then 4480 in 2021! But despite the mileage and being fitter, I’m still a tad ‘big boned’ and will never be seen in lycra!

During lockdown I was also introduced to Iain Mutch via a mutual musical friend because of our obsession with The Beatles and music in general. Iain lives in Glasgow but is a fellow North East loon fae Macduff and is a prolific multitalented musician, songwriter and video maker. He saw my cycling photos on Facebook and asked me to write a song for his “Cycle Chronicles” project. Although I play bass with local band MacTa, I’ve only dabbled with song writing over the years, but was up for the challenge.

And cycling was my true inspiration as I came up with the song whilst out on the bike, recorded a basic demo version and sent it through to him. He then asked for some video footage of the area, so again I gave it a go with my mobile phone and sent him some ‘test’ footage and photos to see I was on the right track.

Within days he’d recorded the track and made up the video and posted on YouTube! I really could not believe the speed he works at and also the quality of the both the version of the song and the video. He’s done a superb job. This was all done remotely using technology, and I’ve not actually met Iain in the flesh!”

Check out the song, and view the video on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aISo0eKcx6w>.

Nice job, Mark!

Cycle Chronicles #2 Marks Song

492 views • 5 Jul 2021

14 DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

National Allotment Week

8-14 August 2022

National Allotment Week runs from 8-14 August and aims to raise awareness of allotments and the role they play in helping people live healthier lifestyles, grow their own food, develop friendships and bring communities together.

The theme this year is Bugs, Bees and Broccoli – acknowledging the importance of gardening with nature in mind.

What exactly is an allotment? The National Allotment Society define an allotment as:

“A complex web of plants, micro-organisms, fungi, insects and animals that not only produces food but also supports eco-system services such as pollination and offers a refuge for wildlife in urban areas.”

Allotments in Moray

Allotments can provide a number of benefits from producing good quality food, which contributes to food security planning; reducing carbon emission associated with importing foodstuffs; and help meet our ambitious aim of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.

www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file68216.pdf

Our Allotment Policy sets out our commitment to working with voluntary sector agencies, Community Management Groups, individuals and statutory organisations to deliver allotments which are:

- Community-led through Community Management Groups;
- Valued and valuable local green spaces, which protect and enhance the environment and promote improved biodiversity;
- Providing amenity;
- Easily accessible for all;
- Well maintained;
- Well used, with a high rate of occupancy;
- Fit for purpose, with appropriate facilities;
- Managed consistently and well, in collaboration with empowered community groups; and
- Economically sustainable

Allotments provide a healthy activity benefitting physical and mental wellbeing and the food produced can encourage healthy eating and help tackle obesity. Allotments also contribute to the partnership aim of **building strong and sustainable communities** by encouraging community engagement.

Allotments are closely linked with the Moray Food Growing Strategy, which aims to increase the number of food growing areas across Moray. These spaces include community orchards; community gardens; vegetable patches; raised beds; planters; and edible hedges.

www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file132750.pdf

While we don't own or manage any allotments, as a Council we have a statutory duty under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to take reasonable steps to provide them once the waiting list for allotments within any one community reaches 15 applicants.

This trigger point has been reached in Elgin, and land has been identified for lease to an established Community Management Group, which will be responsible for developing and managing the allotments.

You can find out more about allotments on our website:

www.moray.gov.uk/moray_services/page_68219.html



HR

NOTICEBOARD

Mental health awareness training

Delivered by the Moray Wellbeing Hub, further training dates have been confirmed for 2022. All courses: 9:30am to 4:45pm.

- * Course 2: 15 and 22 September
- * Course 3: 27 October and 3 November

If you would like to attend, please speak to your line manager in the first instance. Limited spaces are available and can be booked by contacting development@moray.gov.uk

Mandatory training - complaints handling (new module)

The revised Model Complaint Handling procedure was introduced on 1 April 2021. It requires all staff to know what to do if a customer complains about poor service provision. This module has been prepared to help staff deal with reported complaints. A more detailed article on complaint handling will be published in our October/November issue.

MacMillan Coffee Morning

Macmillan need all budding bakers, cake makers and anyone who fancies a go at making something nice for the coffee morning on Friday 30 September.

WORLD'S BIGGEST
**COFFEE
MORNING**
MACMILLAN
CANCER SUPPORT
RIGHT THERE WITH YOU

This is only half the challenge though, Macmillan also need connoisseurs of cake and coffee (and all variations of) to make the challenge a success, so if you're not baking, why not try eating cake?

This is the perfect opportunity for a get together with your colleagues and have a catch up and natter while eating something delicious, all whilst supporting a great cause. Whether you're in the office, onsite or working from home there are ways to contribute to this great cause.

One in two of us will face cancer, and the money raised at the world's biggest coffee morning will help everyone with cancer to live life as fully as they can.

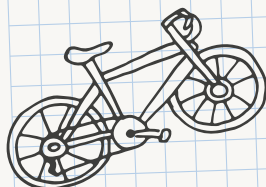
Get your aprons and coffee cups at the ready if you wish to take part in the world's biggest coffee morning.

Get on your bike and ride!

A lunchtime ride has been arranged for Wednesday 7 September 2022, starting at 12:30pm from the Annexe car park. Just turn up with your bike.

There will be e-bikes to try out, Bike Dr sessions and the opportunity to sign up for free cycle confidence sessions with our Cycling UK cycle coordinator.

E-bike try outs and Bike Dr sessions will run from 10am until 12:30pm at the Annexe car park.



Pension Courses

Are your retirement savings on track? Do you know how much income your pension savings may provide? Have you thought about how much income you might need when you retire?

Financial education specialists 'Affinity Connect' personally invite you to attend an interactive full day course around the key aspects of planning for a financially secure future.

Retirement might be up to 10 years away but it's never too soon to start planning. This course is perfect for anyone thinking about retirement or already at the planning stages.

During the course you'll learn how to:

- * Help you plan for the lifestyle changes ahead
- * Maximise the benefits of your State and workplace pensions
- * Make the most of your tax-free cash
- * Understand the income options available from your pension
- * Achieve your retirement goals

Course Date	Location	Start	Finish	Pension
6 Sep 22	Elgin	9:30am	3:30pm	LGPS
20 Oct 22	Online	4:00pm	6:30pm	Teachers
26 Oct 22	Online	9:30am	3:30pm	LGPS

You can find more information on how to join a course here - Planning for the Future: interchangemoray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_116989.html

Rhona commented: "I enjoyed meeting a really lovely and very engaged team with a passion for their work which was refreshing to see and hear about."

Service Learning Visit - Employability Team

Rhona Gunn completed the first Service Learning Visit since pre-Covid, starting with the Employability Team at the Inkwell on Tuesday 12 July 2022.

Visits are an excellent opportunity for staff to engage directly with Senior Managers. If you would like a member of CMT to visit your team please contact: karenbaker@moray.gov.uk.

Cycle Storage at HQ

The cycle2work scheme is now closed for this year and we hope those of you who entered into the scheme are enjoying using your bikes. For those of you working at HQ please be advised that the cycle storage review is now complete, and there are five available lockers at the Annexe and two at HQ.

Across Scotland with a paddleboard (the hard way!)

Nothing much gets passed the beady eyes of the comms team, and when we saw the stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) blog of Head of Economic Growth and Development, Jim Grant, on social media we asked him if he'd mind sharing his epic adventure with colleagues via Connect. Here are some excerpts from his inspiring Scottish staycation, paddling 160 miles over eight days, from Loch Etive to Spey Bay.



Day 1

Had a great night out on Friday in Oban with my lovely wife, Kathy, who was kind enough to drop me off at Loch Etive. It's stunning; dotted with salmon farms, but the further in you go the more the mountains dominate the skyline and the sense of remoteness grows.

I left Loch Etive at Glen Kinglass, camping the night just off the track 4 miles in. It's a beautiful glen, accompanied by the sound of cuckoos along its whole length. An enjoyable and relatively easy first day, starting just after low tide to get help from the rising tide in Loch Etive.

Day 2

Early start with sun rising up over Glen Kinglass. With blue skies and the morning light highlighting the mountains the first part of today continued on the same good quality estate road to Glen Kinglass lodge.

At that point the path, which is more suited for mountain bikes, turns into bog, boulders and rock. The moment the path started to rise out of the valley towards Loch Dochard the going got really tough and I had to resort to ferrying bags and board in stages up the hill in pouring rain, much to the amusement of the various walkers and a couple of cyclists I met on the way.

Nearing the top of the hill Mountain Rescue were out; they took one look at me coming up the hill with a paddleboard and turned and walked the other way.





Day 4

Waking up on Loch Ba was a nice start. The wind had changed to south westerly and dropped in strength, so keeping an eye out for boulders under the surface it was an easy paddle across the loch and turning right and down the river to Loch Laidon.

Loch Laidon is beautifully remote and gave me a gentle paddle along to Rannoch Station Tearoom for a great calorie boost with a toastie, and waffles, ice cream and caramel sauce - which was much needed.

Back on the board across the loch and down the Garbh Ghaoir river that's leads to Loch Eigheach. The last kilometre to the loch contains some grade four white water; I scouted it and decided the safe option for a solo paddler on a heavily-laden sup was portage, and that 1km meant an energy-sapping 3.5 mile trek backwards and forwards carrying boards, bags and equipment across the moor.

Loch Eigheach greeted me with a strong headwind but a short paddle and I was at the dam and time to get back on the road and tow the board as only parts of the River Gaur are passable. Once on its wheels and loaded up it was easier just to pull the board for the next 3.7 miles to Bridge of Gaur where I opted for bed and breakfast, and a decent evening meal.

Day 3

After a tough day dragging board and gear through Glen Kinglass the day before I was looking forward to starting the day on the water at Loch Dochard. That expectation was short-lived, with a strong easterly headwind making paddling an effort for a trip that lasted less than a mile as the river outlet was not passable. So it was off the water and back on the track, which by now was more of a rutted hill road, so carrying one bag and towing the other bag and equipment on the paddle board made it doable.

I got down to the footbridge where the path disappeared into bog and the river was the better option. I managed a couple of miles over a shallow rocky river bed where I spent as much time dragging as floating.

The West Highland Way was busy with walkers and fortunately a group I was chatting to offered to help drag the board to the top of the hill; only once they started pulling did they realise just how much weight was involved even though I was still carrying one bag. They stuck to it, giving me a welcome rest from dragging it and I was very grateful for the assistance given what was still to come.

The River Ba varies from dragging over shallow rocky river bed to floating down peaceful meandering stretches that emphasised the remoteness of the featureless moorland it winds through.

Glad to reach Loch Ba I was greeted with a strong headwind to make my way across the loch to a campsite. Loch Ba lived up to its reputation even on a SUP I managed to ground myself on one of its boulders that are so difficult to see in the peaty water.

It was good to set up camp and get some food after a long day and a bit of a fire just to dry out my phone charging point.





Day 5

Started the day with a full Scottish breakfast to prepare for dragging the board and gear five miles up the hill to Loch Ericht. I hadn't been looking forward to this walk, but with the full breakfast on board and a mile of road to lead to the estate road up to Loch Ericht, the going wasn't too bad.

The estate road is tarred, not in the best state but better than most of the tracks I had been on.

So I began a slow, relentless and monotonous climb dragging the board uphill; it required head-down forward-lean, and one firmly-placed foot at time to continue momentum uphill. At one stage I put the sail on the board and every now and again got an additional push uphill from the tail wind.

Loch Ericht lived up to everything I hoped it would be. It's a 16-mile long, narrow loch running SW to NE, with steep mountainsides that plunge down into the loch on both sides. As a result when the wind is blowing SW or NE it channels up the loch causing big waves.

As you move away from the dam and round the corner with a strong tailwind you're struck by the truly remote nature and scale of this loch with its high mountain sides and, other than Ben Alder cottage there is no man-made structure adorning its boundaries, until at least halfway and you reach Loch Ericht castle.

The loch gave me everything from a gentle breeze and flat water for a short time, to 10-20 mph winds where I could use the sail, and 29-30 mph winds which meant taking the sail down and surfing down the loch as waves broke over the board, it was great to cover the distance quickly and with such variety of conditions in a short time.

Day 6

I set off walking past Dalwhinnie's distillery, along the five miles towards the A9 and the cycle track to the Spey; this road follows the Truim and although I looked longingly at the stretches I could've paddled, they were all relatively short and always turned back into very rocky impassable section which with all the gear on the board would have taken hours to negotiate.

It was a lovely day and the road was mostly level, reaching the A9 the cycle track starts its descent to the Spey, although I am sure they deliberately put troughs and hills in this path just to stop the cyclists getting bored!

Eventually reaching the farm track and underpass of the railway that would take me to the point where the Truim joins the Spey, I made my way across the fields and sat and had some well-deserved lunch.

It was early afternoon, bright sun and a gentle wind. Time to paddle with shorts and t-shirt, and it was a great way to spend the afternoon. The Spey at this point doesn't have the volume that you get after Loch Inch but is a lovely stretch of river.

Once past Kingussie the river meanders almost canal like working its way to Loch Inch. The wind was quite strong and cooling down at this point so I decided to stop and put on the dry suit before getting to Loch Inch. Round one corner I came across 10 wild swimmers and felt a bit overdressed in the dry suit as they enjoyed their swim in the evening sun.

I found a lovely camping spot just South of Aviemore for the night, and settled down with the intention of an early start the next day.





Day 8

The last day, and time to do the final 30km to Spey Bay from Craighellachie to Spey Bay. I'd left all the heavy bags at home and jumping on the board two things struck me: firstly, without the weight of the bags my board had its playfulness back; secondly, after a week of use my dry suit smelt like an ice hockey changing room. For those that haven't been in an ice hockey changing room, think of the worst stale sweat experience you've had and times it by 10.

I'd never paddled this section before. Below Fochabers the trees start piling up; most are harmlessly beached on shingle banks, but the size of the trees in the river increase all the way down.

It was on the last rapid before Spey Bay I took my second fall of the trip as the fin box hit a rock and I did the familiar catapult forward. The Spey is a fabulous journey that every paddleboarder is capable of with a bit of river experience.

I enjoyed the journey and pleased to have achieved it with no injuries. Even the worst day on the journey was still a thousand times better than spending the day in the office, and when you're physically exhausted and still got a few miles more uphill in the rain to go, just smile and put one foot in front of the other.

Day 7

An early start on the river and a nice paddle down to Aviemore before anyone else was up. Towards Grantown I met my first fisherman of the day, the first of 50+ I was to pass in the day. The value of fishing to the local economy and estates is obvious as you journey down the Spey, with a variety of grand fishing lodges, manicured river banks and numerous Range Rovers and Audis along the bank. I always knelt down to lower my profile and tried to choose a line that would disturb the fish and fisherman least gently floating through where I could, and in return was always met with a friendly wave or chat about my journey or the lack of fish or water.

The early morning start was catching up with me and I found myself yawning as I headed down several bits of white water, having wet my helmet several times to cool down and wake myself up.

I suddenly found myself bearing down on a stretch of the river known as the 'washing machine' and there's only one way through the wave train – straight down the middle and power through it. But the last big wave tipped me off for the first fall of the trip and I floated down the rest of the wave train with the board, laughing; it was just the wake up I needed and made the rest of the day more enjoyable.

Knockando rapids I know well, and I enjoyed the trip through familiar water, down to Aberlour and then onto Craighellachie. Forty-five miles and 10.5 hours paddling, I decided to call an end to the day.





"Hi, my name is Daniel Strong. I go to Elgin High School and am doing an internship with the consultancy team as part of the Career Ready programme. I am looking at coastal adaptations and hope to gain some office experience from my internship."



"My name is Daniel John Nicholson and I have left school but originally went to Speyside High School. I'm currently doing an internship at Moray Council in the consultancy department where I am currently designing a rain garden and learning how to use CAD and excel. I'm hoping to get a further understanding of how to use CAD and get some experience in the workplace and see if I enjoy the work I am doing as of now."



"I'm Dylan, I attend Milnes High School and will be returning to S6 after the summer holidays. I live in Lhanbryde and am interested in gaming design, mountain biking and walking my dog. I am looking for the internship to help me develop and improve my timekeeping, problem-solving, communication and team working skills. I am especially looking forward to developing all of these skills as I work on my internship project assignment – 'digital-enabled outdoor learning.'"

Ensuring our young people are Career Ready

Here at Moray Council, we're committed to ensuring that every young person, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to kickstart a rewarding future.

As part of our ongoing work with Career Ready, a UK-wide social mobility charity, we're delighted to be offering five young people a four-week paid internship this summer. As well as increasing their skillset and giving them insight into the services we offer, the interns receive ongoing mentoring as part of the programme of support.

The students from across Moray started on 27 June and will be working throughout the council to develop the skills and experience needed to kickstart their futures in the world of work.

We spoke to our Career Ready interns who introduced themselves and explained what they're hoping to get from their internships:



"Hi! I'm Matthew, I attend Milne's High School and will be returning to S6 after the summer holidays. I live in Elgin and I'm interested in reading, French and travelling. I hope that this internship will allow me to develop my punctuality, resilience and communication skills."



"My name is Emma Geddes and I will be returning to S6 after the summer holidays in August 2022. I live in Mosstodloch, I enjoy walking, drawing, going out with friends and spending time with my family. I am looking for the internship to help me develop people skills – communication and team work, also my personal ability to organise my time management – bus schedules, lunches and personal appearance. These skills will support me in my future development and my internship project assignment."

We're proud to be supporting young talent in this way, especially as the pandemic has seen a cut in the workplace opportunities available for young people, and it underlines our commitment to investing in the next generation of talent.

None of this would be possible without the hard work and commitment of our wonderful mentors. If you would like to become a mentor and support a young person, we would love to hear from you. In the first instance please contact glen.dunn@moray.gov.uk for further information.

Meantime, you can find out more about Career Ready here: www.careerready.org.uk.



We're going to pretend we weren't jealous at all of Alison and Moira's invitation to the Royal Garden Party at the Palace of Holyrood House in late June.

Democratic Services Manager, Moira, and Elections Officer, Alison, have a combined 37 years of service in elections and were nominated to attend the garden party back in 2020 'in recognition of services to electoral administration'. Due to the pandemic restrictions, it's taken until now for that party to happen.

With members of the Royal family in attendance (HRH The Prince of Wales, HRH The Princess Royal, HRH The Earl of Wessex and Forfar, and HRH The Countess of Wessex and Forfar), our elections colleagues made the most of the cucumber sandwiches and an opportunity to get their gladrags on.

You can read more about what the team does, particularly in the run up to, and during, an election, in a previous edition of Connect.

Will you take up the Speyside Challenge?

A new challenge is encouraging users of the Speyside Way to take up the Speyside Challenge this September.

The challenge is to log the most distance covered, or the most journeys, by foot or bike, on the popular route that is now part of the Speyside Low Carbon Hub. www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_128861.html

Speyside Way users are being challenged to use the newly-refurbished pathways to commute and travel with the chance of winning one of 10 prizes for taking part.

The upgraded path runs from Craigellachie, through Aberlour and Carron to Cragganmore.

Challengers will be able to sign up via the Speyside Challenge website to log their active travel journeys on the path. At the end of September those with the most journey logged and the most distance covered will win one of three Moray Loves Local gift cards. There's a prize for first, second and third placed participants up to the value of £35.

There's also a joint workplace prize with a £100 donation to a charity of your choice up for grabs. Schools and school staff are eligible for the workplace prize too!

Our Sustainable Travel Officer, Janet MacDonald, encourages us all to take up the challenge. "We're excited to see the completion of the upgrade to the Speyside Way, which includes the Speyside Low Carbon Hub charging points, way markers, path refurbishments and more.

"Taking part in the Speyside Challenge throughout September will give everyone who uses the Speyside Way regularly the chance to try out the new facilities and experience the upgraded paths for themselves.

"We hope this is the start of a long-term shift for people to use the Speyside Way to commute, to get to school and for leisure. Making Speyside more accessible from Craigellachie to Cragganmore for active travel is an achievement to be proud of and we're sure locals will relish this safe option for walking and wheeling."



Prizes for the Speyside Challenge are:

- Early bird sign-up (before 1 September): 3 x £20 Moray Loves Local gift card
- Most journeys logged: first (£35 gift card), second (£25 gift card), third (£15 gift card)
- Most distance covered: first (£35 gift card), second (£25 gift card), third (£15 gift card)
- Winning workplace – £100 charity donation

The 'Speyside Low Carbon hub' project was awarded funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Low Carbon Travel and Transport Challenge Fund, and Transport Scotland. The project received £810,000 for the first phase of the project, between Criagellachie and Carron, and £635,000 for the second phase between Carron and Cragganmore.



Following a two-day induction we welcome 78 teachers, who are all in their probationary year, and ready to head to their primary and secondary schools across Moray.

The new teaching staff come from a variety of places and backgrounds and start in their schools on Monday 15 August.

The 2022/23 cohort will spread out with 49 in primary schools and 29 in secondary schools, teaching everything from art, chemistry and maths to English, music and P.E.

Many newly qualified teachers choose to stay in Moray once they complete their probationary period. This year, 47 of our 72 newly qualified teachers from the 2021/22 session have stayed in Moray. They've taken up various roles from supply teaching in primary and secondary, to part-time temporary positions and full-time permanent positions.

Welcoming our NQTs to Moray

Our Chief Education Officer, Vivienne Cross, said: "We welcome our new teachers to Moray and wish them all the best for their career. Having spent time with our new colleagues during their induction I can honestly say the future of teaching looks very bright indeed.

"It's especially rewarding to see people who may be new to Moray

grow and develop in their profession while getting to know their pupils and discovering all the wonders Moray has to offer. It's great to see so many of last year's newly qualified teachers remain with us and I know they'll also make this year's new staff feel welcome."

We welcome you all and hope you'll settle in with us in no time.

Communities CLD Team

Meet the Adult and Family Learning Team

Earlier in the year we spoke with our Communities CLD Service Manager, Kevin McDermott, who explained what the Communities Team does and introduced you to our fantastic Community Support Unit.

As promised, this time we're introducing you to our Adult and Family Learning team which is headed up by Moira Strathdee.

Over to you, Moira!



"I'm Moira Strathdee and I'm an Adult and Family Learning Officer within the Communities CLD Team. I first started working with Moray Council in 1993 with a two-hour per week clerical post supporting Adult Learning. Since then I have worked in a number of different posts, in different locations which finally led me to my current role, Adult and Family Learning Officer.

"Previously known as the Essential Skills team, the Adult and Family Learning team was created just over a year ago when the Communities CLD Service was introduced. We're

a small team responsible for community-based adult learning, family learning and adult literacies. We said farewell to long established team members, Louise Dalziel and Arlene Milne, who decided to retire and have welcomed new team members to help us take forward our exciting new role.

"Our offer to the community of Moray is very varied. Adult learning is for everyone and we offer one-to-one support as well as group work. Our recent local history sessions have been very popular with some participants deciding to work towards the Heritage Heroes Award from Archaeology Scotland.

"Accreditation is important for many and we offer qualifications in SQA Core Skills up to and including SCQF 4. For anyone thinking about getting into work but doesn't have qualifications, these can be a great way to get something to add to your CV. If improving your employment options is a priority, we can help with working towards the driving theory test too. We currently have a number of driving theory courses on offer in different locations across Moray.

"We'll help anyone to access the learning they need to make a difference in their life e.g. budgeting, helping with children's homework, filling in forms, you name it and we will give it a go. If we can't help, we will find someone who can. Working in partnership helps us to extend our offer and helps to make it easier for learners to access the support which best suits their needs.

"We believe that learning is important across all ages and our family learning sessions encourage families to spend time together, share new learning experiences, make new social connections and have fun. Look out for the Family Learning Festival programme in October!

"We have exciting things happening over the next few months. We're looking forward to Maths Week Scotland when there will be eight amazing sessions on offer linking science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) with a bit of magic.

"There is a national campaign called Multiply starting in October which aims to boost people's ability to use maths in their daily life, at home and work – and enable adults to achieve formal qualifications that can open doors for them (such as career progression, or progression to further study).

"Adults who need to improve their numeracy (up to and including Level 2/SCQF Level 5) will be able to access free flexible courses that fit around their lives – whether that be in person or online, at work or in the evening, part time or intensive.

"I get to meet some amazing people who work hard to achieve their goals and it is a privilege to join them on their journey.

"If you would like to learn more about the work we do, or would like to make a referral, you just need to get in touch adult.learning@moray.gov.uk or call **07966 120572**.



I'm enjoying meeting new people and making valuable connections for the learners and families we work with.

■ Gail Duncan

Gail Duncan – Adult and Family Learning Coordinator

"I joined Moray Council just six weeks ago and am based at Buckie Library. As an Adult and Family Learning Coordinator I offer person-centred learning and am enjoying getting to grips with everything the team offers, such as support with literacy; numeracy; core skills; driving theory tests; core skills; money management; and much more.

"I'm excited about the forthcoming Summer Family Sessions – an exciting six-week programme including Drum Fun, Active Sports, and Art with a healthy eating theme. As well as this, I'm enjoying meeting new people and making valuable connections for the learners and families we work with.

"I have worked in education for the last 19 years and had been craving a change for a while. I saw this post and thought, it's worth a try. The job sounded really interesting and luckily I was offered the post. I can see this role is going to be very rewarding and I am loving the challenge. It's never too late to learn new skills."

Lisa Morrison – Adult and Family Learning Coordinator

"I cover the Elgin and Milnes area for Adult and Family Learning Service, working to ensure there are learning opportunities for adults and families across all areas of Moray.

"Being involved in recent driving theory groups is a great example of our community learning approach, learning the needs of community members and working to bring that opportunity to their starting point. Taking the course to a variety of locations and times has opened up this opportunity to many Moray community members.



Being involved in recent driving theory groups is a great example of our community learning approach...

■ Lisa Morrison



I work with groups on financial literacy skills and have been busy with family learning events over the summer.

■ Ian Bailey

Ian Bailey – Adult and Family Learning Coordinator

"I'm an Adult and Family Learning Coordinator working mainly from Forbes House Community Centre. I've been in this role since 2009 and was a volunteer for the adult literacy service beforehand.

"I cover Forbes and Lossiemouth and work 1:1 with adult learners on reading, writing and numbers. I also work on driving theory with learners.

"I work with groups on financial literacy skills and have been busy with family learning events over the summer. I've helped put on other family learning events such as orienteering (with Active Schools) and map reading and making with the outdoor learning officers. I've also organised health walks for adult learners and nature walks for families. Any activity can be an opportunity for families to learn together.

"I see adult learning as an equality issue. A community setting can provide learner-centred

opportunities that formal education can't always provide. Many of our learners experience barriers to learning, whether it's something like dyslexia or negative learning experiences in the past. It's amazing watching people gain skills and confidence – you're working with people to change their view of themselves and what they can achieve.

"As a Kate Bush fan of many decades standing, I was very excited to be able to drum along to Running Up That Hill at a recent family learning Drum Fun session."

Joanne Addison – Adult and Family Learning Coordinator

"I joined the team as an Adult and Family Learning Coordinator in January this year. I'm based in Keith and cover the Keith and Speyside areas. I previously worked for Moray Libraries and Aberdeenshire Libraries.

"I work with adults on a 1:1 basis, as well as offering community-based adult learning. We offer family learning opportunities, which are a great way of supporting children and adults together. I've been involved in the successful delivery of the Driving Theory Course in Aberlour and I'm looking forward to delivering this in Keith in August.

"Local history walks in Keith have been very well received with a request for more. Other learning workshops have included yoga, art, and mobile phone photography which have been well attended.

"I enjoy the fact we're helping people develop their skills, get back into the community, try and enjoy new activities, and connect again with other people. The job can vary week to week and it can be challenging, but the reward is seeing people benefit from what we can offer and progress."



I enjoy the fact we're helping people develop their skills...

■ Lisa Morrison

Leadership changes

A couple of changes to the council leadership were made at full council on 10 August.

There will now be a sole position of Council Leader, rather than Co-leaders, who will be the political leader, Chair of Moray Council and attend COSLA. This role will be taken up by Cllr Kathleen Robertson for the Conservative group.

The creation of a Depute Leader sees Cllr Donald Gatt fill the position to deputise for the Council Leader when required. The role of Convener changes to Civic Leader and is a largely ceremonial and civic one, which will be fulfilled by Independent Councillor John Cowe in this session.

Read more in the newsroom on our website: <https://newsroom.moray.gov.uk/news>



■ Cllr Kathleen Robertson,
Council Leader



Reni retires

Former Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager, Reni Millburn, has waved goodbye to working life, retiring after a long career working for the council.

She first joined us as a self-employed contractor in the early 90s, before being employed as a Development Officer and Training Co-ordinator in community services, and was promoted to Assistant Development Manager in 1997 in community services. In 2001 she took on the role of European Officer and was promoted to Principal Officer Economic Development in 2004, eventually being promoted to Economic Growth and Regeneration Manager.

Speaking at Reni's retirement presentation, line manager and Head of Economic Growth and Development, Jim Grant, said:

"Reni has led a relatively small team of very dedicated staff developing regeneration projects and funding bids, monitoring and controlling spend and projects bringing significant sums of money into the Moray economy over the last decade.

"She has been a delight to work with over the last decade. She has always had an infectious level of enthusiasm, creativity, persistence and resilience in her approach to work, turning round impossible deadlines and juggling projects and funding streams across her team who inevitably deliver thanks to the leadership, guidance and work ethic Reni has instilled in them.

"Reni you will be a great miss to the Council and myself, I know the work ethic you have instilled in your team will still be there and we can only hope that we have a new generation of creative mavericks coming through, that will continue to challenge mediocrity, go the extra mile to deliver what they believe to be right and provide creative solutions to the challenges we face with the tenacity to overcome the obstacles we create."

World Photo Day 2022

Friday 19 August is World Photo Day.

Never heard of it?

World Photography Day is an annual, worldwide celebration of the art, craft, science and history of photography.

We're all encouraged to get involved on social media by searching for World Photography Day, submitting pictures or sharing the photos that resonate most with us. Be sure to share your best photos on social media and tag using #WorldPhotographyDay.

Each year the World Press Photo exhibition also comes to Scotland during August. You can catch the Scottish leg of the worldwide tour at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh until 27 August. The tour showcases the stories that matter with photography from the 65th annual World Press Photo Contest.

The winners were chosen by an independent jury that reviewed more than 64,820 photographs entered by 4,066 photographers from 130 countries.

But we don't need to be in a worldwide exhibition to enjoy some stunning photos of Moray – we asked you to submit some of your favourites and you did not disappoint! We've now realised what a talented bunch of photographers we have in our midst.

Take a look and see what our colleagues have been photographing recently.



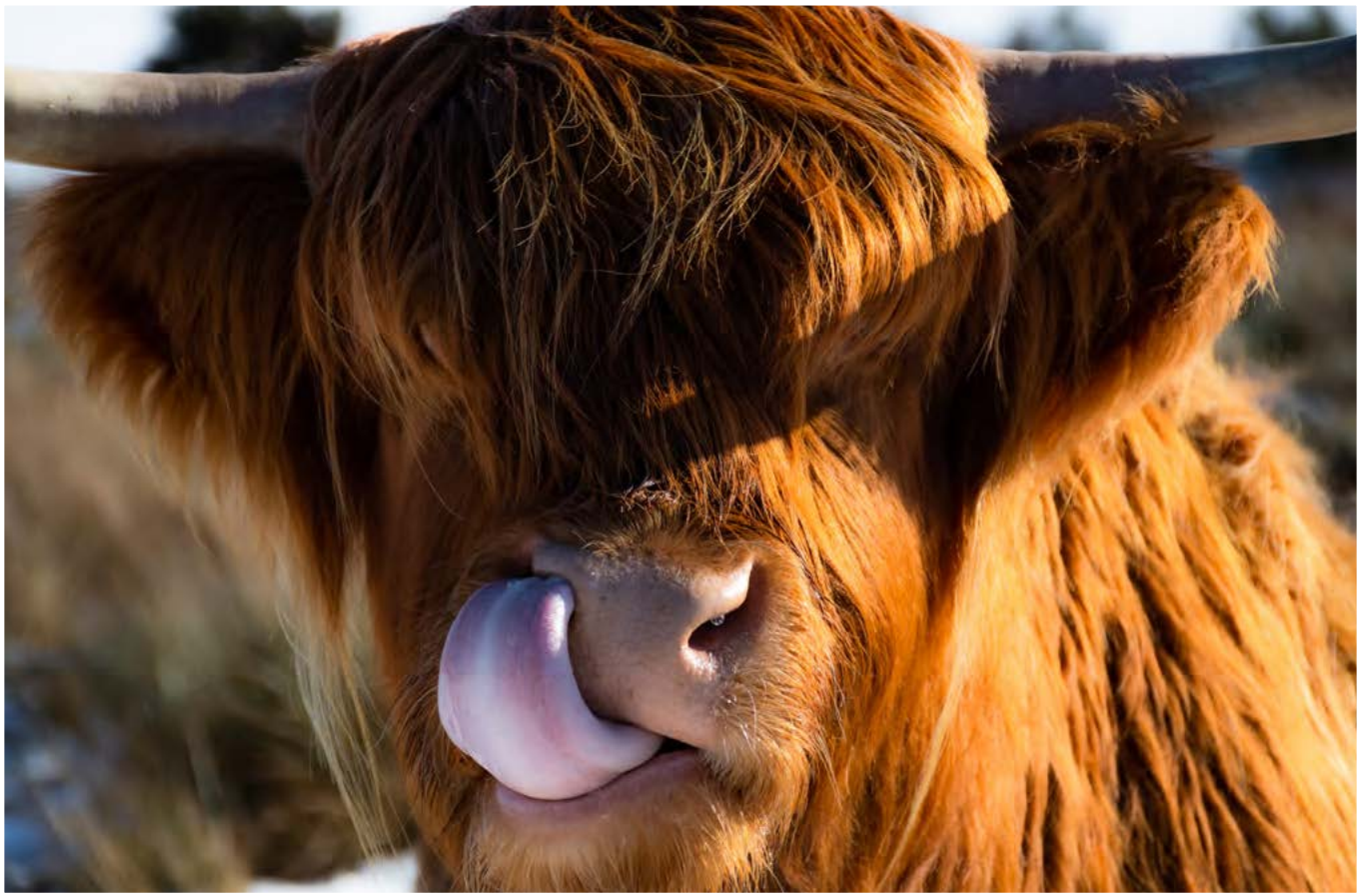
■ Roseisle Beach 2021
Andy Warman, Occupational Therapist, Housing and Property



■ Aurora at Cullen beach
Fiona McKechnie, EU compliance officer



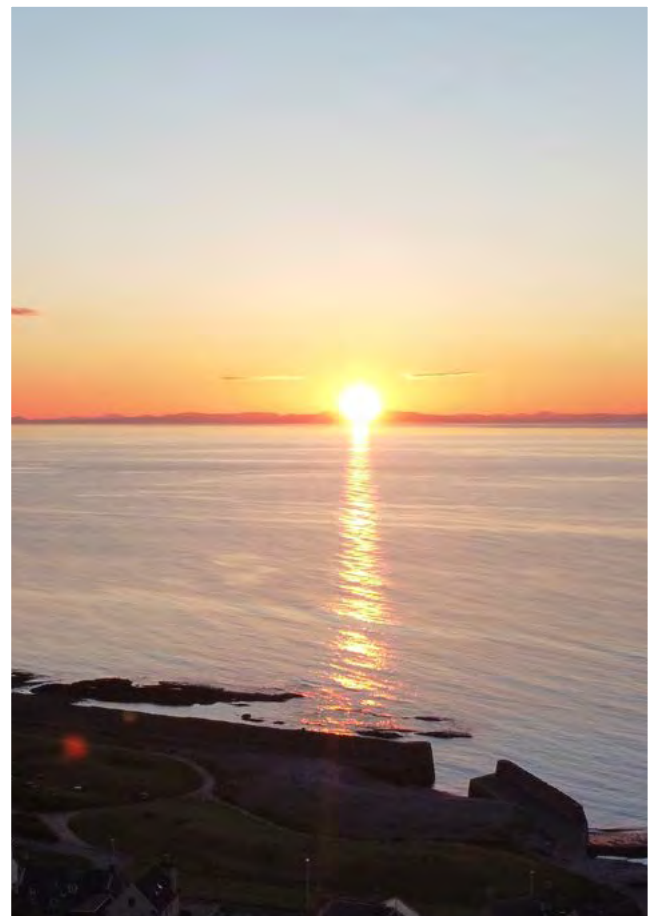
■ Jez Allum, Maintenance Assistant, Property, Burghead



■ Highland cow in snow
Gemma Drew, Environmental Health



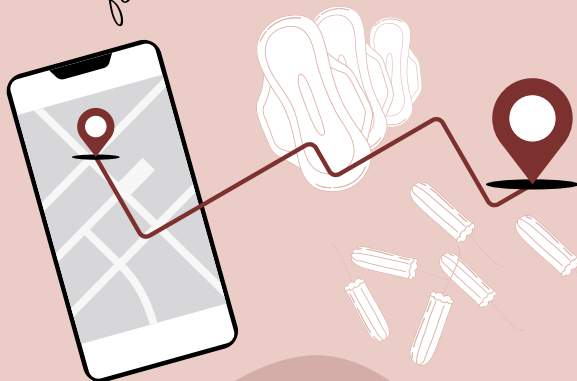
■ Muddy Marvellous, Poppy, 3 visiting Brodieshill Farm
Anne Taylor, Environmental Services



■ Mike Reid, Clerk of Works, Buckpool and Buckie Harbours

Free period products

for all who need them!



Following a public consultation in July, the council has drawn up an action plan to get the free period products people in Moray need, in the places they want.

New legislation requires local authorities to make period products freely available to anyone who menstruates. A reasonable range of products must be easily accessible and comfortable for individuals to access, without embarrassment, and in a way that respects a person's dignity.

The council currently supplies free period products to all council schools and, in partnership with Moray Food Plus+, around 100 other publicly accessible premises including; community facilities; publicly accessible toilets; GP surgeries; and numerous independent community and voluntary group facilities. These will now be added to using feedback from the recent survey.

Moray will also soon be included on the PickUpMyPeriod app and website so anyone who needs period products can easily find where they are available nearby.

<https://myperiodlive.azurewebsites.net/>



From time to time, we might need a bit of extra support, guidance or advice. We may look to family, friends or colleagues for this, but there may be times when someone independent or professional is preferred.

Time for Talking (TfT) is the councils Employee Assistance Provider and they offer psychological, emotional and practical support, which can be accessed by any employee when they need it.

Services they offer include:

- Structured telephone counselling
- Video conferencing / Face to Face counselling (dependant on Covid-19)
- Telephone support (24/7, 365 days a year)
- Live Chat
- Information & resources including links, podcasts, templates and exercises

The benefits of speaking with TfT are:

- It's confidential – no one at the council will know that you have called, unless you choose to disclose this.
- It's completely free of charge – the service is paid for by the council.
- You can have unlimited access to all of the support and resources.

Their website www.timefortalking.co.uk offers a wealth of information on a variety of topics including depression, managing stress, harassment & bullying, managing anger, dealing with change, financial wellbeing, work life balance, exercise and self-harm.

You can contact Time for Talking on **0800 970 3980** or chat online to a counsellor through their Live Chat using the password TfTnow.

Do you know how to **stay gas safe?**

Only a Gas Safe registered engineer has the superpower to fit, fix or service your gas appliances safely and legally.

Get in the know, visit
[GasSafetyWeek.co.uk](https://www.gasafetyweek.co.uk)

Gas Safe Register is the official list of gas engineers who are qualified to work safely and legally on gas appliances.

Unsafe gas appliances can put you at risk from carbon monoxide poisoning, gas leaks, fires and explosions.

If you have gas appliances, there are some checks you can do to help make sure you protect your home and your family.

You can find and check an engineer at:
[GasSafetyWeek.co.uk](https://www.gasafetyweek.co.uk)
0800 408 5500



Look for tell-tale signs

Be aware of dark, sooty stains or lazy yellow flames. It may mean your appliance isn't working properly.



Don't block vents

Your gas appliance will need ventilation to work safely. Blocking vents could prevent this.



Get a gas safety check

Have your appliances safety checked once a year. Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer. Tenants, make sure your landlord arranges this.



**Recycle Week
19th - 25th
September**

**"WE DON'T JUST LET
ANYTHING IN THE
GENERAL WASTE BIN."**

Use our new Recycling Sorter to check before you chuck at

recyclingsorter.scot

It's time to get recycling sorted