

**Connect**

**October / November  
2022**

# Moray

Growth Deal



**REMEMBRANCE  
DAY**

11 NOVEMBER





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## Meet the team



■ Sharon Dunbar MCIPR  
■ Senior Communications Officer



■ Kirsty Craig MCIPR  
■ Communications and Media Officer



■ Angus McNicholl  
■ Designer

# October / November 2022

## Editorial

**We can't not acknowledge the most significant news story of the last two months: the passing of Her Majesty The Queen. It's hard to imagine anything else on this scale of such global significance, and I'm sure many of you – like us – watched the State Funeral on Monday 19 September as many council services halted due to the declaration of a bank holiday during the national period of mourning. Thanks, though, to those colleagues who continued their work in providing essential services on the day.**

You may not think we as a council would have much to do for the death of the Monarch but in fact our plans have been years in the making, and have been rehearsed many times over both internally and with agencies in the Local Resilience Partnership. From media statements, to flag lowering, organising and opening the Books of Condolence, attending The Proclamation, collecting the floral tributes ready to be composted for use on trees planted in memory of The Queen, it has been a team effort crossing many departments.

Whether you are a supporter of The Royal Family or not, it has given us time to pause and consider the grief and sense of loss which comes from losing a friend or family member. If you have been affected and need support, it is available. Time for Talking is our Employee Assistance Programme, and you can find details on the interchange.

On a happier note, it's feeling very autumnal of late. Favourite things to do at this time of year? Wrapping up warm and heading out for a walk in the crunchy leaves, counting down to Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night are up there – make sure to stay safe with the tips from local fire crews.

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](mailto:connectnews@moray.gov.uk).





# HeadsUp

Denise Whitworth

Depute Chief Exec. Education, Communities and Organisational Development

*Dear Colleagues,*

**I started work in a modern, open-plan office, not unlike the Council HQ Annexe building. My desk telephone was red hot (the number was very similar to the theatre box office!) and the office was filled with plumes of cigarette smoke. As a fresh HR trainee the introduction of a no smoking policy was one of my first big projects. The health and safety team dramatically circled with a black bin bag, removing all ashtrays and the office transformed to a smoke-free zone overnight.**

Sometimes change happens like that. We leap from one way of working to another – as we did during the pandemic when connecting with people remotely. It became the new norm that we all had to learn. But sometimes change is more gradual like that ringing phone, that became a mobile in every pocket and now our tickets for shows are often booked online and work calls are outweighed by emails. Changing the way we do things has become a normal part of life.

The council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme is driving forward change to help prepare our services for the future. The projects range from upgrading schools through the learning estate strategy; changing the way we work to reduce office space; improving the approach to additional support needs in schools; thinking about how we could use digital devices like laptops and i-pads in schools and making the processes we use as efficient as possible.

This is an exciting and challenging programme but just like the change to the way we use telephones, small steps to do things differently and lots of people making those small changes, add up to a big effect. So, if we all change what we can in our day to day work and lives: when we can do things online, make sure we recycle our waste, get involved with our community, it adds up to changing how the council can do business and helps to make sure services are sustainable, even with the financial challenges ahead.

On a personal note, with my children grown up and flown the nest, a dog seemed a good idea. My life was transformed! I now keep my shoes on the table to avoid them being stolen, have discovered that the childhood walks that took a pocketful of sweets and a couple of hours of "are we nearly there??" actually only take 20 minutes and a dog biscuit, and I can't work through lunch any more – so I guess healthier all-round and a change for the good.



## Innovation from Tradition



**UK  
Government**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

■ Supported by UK Government and  
Scottish Government

**B**ack at the end of 2021 we, alongside the UK and Scottish governments, signed the Moray Growth Deal, securing up to £100 million of investment in the area. It's a 10 year-plan so although there aren't spades in the ground as yet for council-led projects – there's a lot going on in the background.

### Partners and projects

**UHI Moray:** leading the Moray Aerospace, Advanced Technology and Innovation Campus (MAATIC) and Business Enterprise Hub.

**Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE):** leading the Manufacturing Innovation Centre for Moray (MICM).

**Digital Health Institute (DHI):** leading the Digital Health and Care Innovation Centre.

**UK Government:** funding contributing to MAATIC; Cultural Quarter; MICM; and Digital Health.

**Scottish Government:** funding contributing to Business Enterprise Hub; Cultural Quarter; Bus Revolution; Housing Mix Delivery; MICM; and Early Years STEM.

You can read up on the details of the Deal, including the projects, within the Full Deal itself.



<https://mymoray.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/MGD - Full Deal Document v9.1 Final with MS sig.pdf>

Here's a quick reminder of the council projects and level of investment.

**Cultural Quarter:** Refurbishment of Grant Lodge to create a high-quality heritage attraction; refurbishment, extension and rebranding of Elgin Town Hall; and provision of a high-quality hotel. It will create a vibrant space in the heart of Elgin that will support inclusive economic growth and cultural expansion within the city and wider region

Investment: £31.6 million – jointly funded through Scottish and UK Governments; private sector investment; Moray Council and Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

**Bus Revolution:** An on-demand bus service (along the lines of Uber) using low-carbon fleet to expand the operating hours and routes on offer. It'll be branded publically as m.connect – the same as our existing electric bus service – and will support the council's shift to net zero while opening up public transport opportunities for employment and leisure.

Investment: £4.3 million – jointly funded by the Scottish Government and ourselves.

**Housing Mix Delivery:** Delivering town centre regeneration, and affordable housing projects in our rural towns and villages to support rural regeneration, help retain young people and allow residents use technology in their homes to live independent lives.

Investment: £7.5 million – jointly funded by the Scottish Government and ourselves.

**Early Years Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM):** Providing specialist facilities and learning spaces across Moray to allow inter-generational learning to take place, and remove barriers from those living in rural areas to take part in STEM activities. We want to change the culture and perception of STEM so its application and relevance across genders is recognised from early years onwards.

Investment: £4.8 million – jointly funded by the Scottish Government and ourselves.

As many will vouch for, it's a tough recruitment market out there just now, so we're pleased to have landed a talented bunch to drive forward the Deal's progress on behalf of the council. Project Managers are leading the charge on behalf of SROs – Senior Responsible Officers – with updates reported monthly to the Moray Growth Deal Board.

We caught up with some of the team driving the Deal, including the programme delivery team, to learn more about their roles and hear in their own words the impact of the projects on the future of Moray. Sadly April, who has been leading the Bus Revolution Project, is departing soon for another opportunity but we hope to keep the wheels turning on that project to keep up the momentum.



## Expected impact of the Deal

- 3,500 jobs created;
- 50k more tourists;
- 450 businesses scaling up;
- 300 affordable new homes

### Michael Kelly, Programme Manager

"I don't think we can understate what £100m of Growth Deal funding can bring to the region. It will tackle immediate priorities such as helping people manage medical conditions virtually, and revolutionise bus transport, but over time it will create a legacy of developing high-value skills while helping businesses to grow and be more collaborative. We're also working to revitalise Elgin as a destination and expanding the number of affordable properties throughout the region.

"Although the programme will last for 10 years, the associated benefits will be generated well beyond this timescale.

"Delivering large-scale change projects is difficult, but when you overlay inflation pushing up costs and supply chain issues the environment we are working in is very challenging.

"These difficult, knotty issues are uncomfortable, but I do enjoy working on risk management and seeking solutions to challenging situations.

"As the eight Growth Deal projects are staggered over the course of 10 years, there will be a pipeline of milestones that show 'on-the-ground delivery' and an associated gradual step-change in the benefits we can realise. Seeing this positive change steadily take place is one of my key motivations for taking the job."

Out of work Michael volunteers as a coach for his son's football team, and enjoys a spot of 'hunt the ball' – sorry, golf. Despite travelling extensively after his studies, the highlight of which he said was observing the political and societal differences between countries of South America, he admits "you can't escape the beauty of the Highlands and Islands!"





**Lindsay Lyon, Programme Officer**

“Partnership is everything with this programme; although the council leads on four of the eight projects, there are a variety of partnerships within all of the projects, from HIE, UHI, University of Strathclyde - and key is the engagement from local businesses and the wider community.

“Working with all the variety of projects is the most enjoyable part of what I do, and they are all at different stages. The challenge for me is working part-time and trying to cram everything into a short working week!

“The Growth Deal is an amazing opportunity for the residents of Moray and will deliver benefits across the generations, from Early Years with the STEM project, to new housing with the Housing Mix Development - both in town and country and DHI supporting improved health in later years. The projects are so diverse, however they all interlink to make Moray an exciting and dynamic place to live and work.”

If you're ever on a Teams call with Lindsay, be sure to keep an eye out for her senior rescued cat, Bruce. We hear he's particularly interested in finance meetings! Lindsay also has a passion for Highland Ponies which, together with her parents, she breeds and shows.



**Claire English, Cultural Quarter Project Manager**

“I've worked in the charitable sector for 16 years on a range of projects for culture, heritage and homelessness charities in Scotland and England. I've been very lucky to do varied roles in project development, fundraising, partnership working and project management across those sectors, for big national charities as well as small local ones.

“I really believe in the power of culture and heritage to connect people and communities, and that access to interesting and inspiring things to do, places to meet, relax, and socialise can provide huge individual and economic opportunity. Working with local partners and the community to enhance these important cultural buildings and the facilities they offer can help to create a vibrant, connected space in the heart of Elgin, and raise the profile of the region.

“To make sure we pull this off, we'll not only be working with the named partners as part of the Growth Deal, but engaging with the cultural and tourism sector and the wider public in Elgin and beyond to make sure what we deliver is connected, coherent, and meets the demands of local people and visitors alike.

“I'm sure there will be lots of challenges ahead, but the project is full of opportunity and it will be very exciting to work with the team and our partners to figure it out! Unsurprisingly, my favourite things to do in my spare time are going to gigs, the cinema, theatre and museums and galleries (and restaurants and cafes), so I am looking forward to all of the research I'll need to do as we develop the project in partnership with Moray's culture and tourism sector!”

Claire is the newest member of the Growth Deal team, joining us last month, and we're sure she'll enjoy exploring the current offering of cultural activities within Moray – all in the name of research, of course!



**Hilda Puskas, Housing Mix Delivery Project Manager**

“As a freshly-qualified town planner, adding to my economics qualification, I’m passionate about this project. It’s very exciting to make an exemplar development reality in Moray, find the ways to regenerate a very difficult town centre location, or bring forward homes in areas where development has not happened for many years.

“This project aims to provide up to 350 affordable homes and open up sites for up to 500 private homes by unlocking constrained sites, while exploring opportunities to provide a range of tenures to support young people getting onto the housing ladder. As well as creating an exemplar development in Forres, the project also focuses on areas such as Speyside and the Buckie coastal area, where development hasn’t been forthcoming due to various constraints.

“There is also an emphasis on town centre regeneration and redeveloping vacant/derelict buildings to revitalise town centres and provide quality town centre living opportunities.

“Of course doing this all within a set budget, especially in the current economic climate where inflation and constructions costs are rising, and within a set timescale while bringing all the partners together to ensure that their aspirations are also captured, is the most challenging part of the job!”

Hilda took up this latest role in June, but has been working with us for more than five years within the Strategic Planning and Development team. As well as being mum to her 2 and a half year-old daughter, she and her other half are due to welcome twins to the family. Huge congrats, Hilda!



**Sarah Barnes, Early Years STEM Project Manager**

“After eight years in the oil and gas industry, I made the decision to change roles after the birth of my daughter last year; knowing I wanted to live and work in Moray (the area I grew up in) and keen to contribute to the future prosperity of the region.

“I was drawn to the Early Years STEM Project in particular as I have spent most of my working life in a STEM profession and wanted to create opportunities for young people, particularly young girls, to experience STEM in an exciting and inspirational environment, and show that anyone can work in this field, regardless of ability, gender or background. These are the ideals I want to instil in my own daughter, as well as sons and daughters throughout Moray.

“This project has the potential to bring STEM to the forefront of education in Moray, not just for children but for the entire community. Developing STEM hubs across Moray will provide a nurturing and inspiring environment, a place for learning and professional development, and a space which promotes health and wellbeing. As these are facilities for the community and education alike, the challenge will be instilling a sense of ownership, of demonstrating the opportunities and encouraging people to take advantage of what is on offer. Changing perceptions is a daunting task but the rewards of success will be felt for generations.

“I also really enjoy a challenge! A fact my husband will confirm knowing I chose to have a baby, move house and start a new job all in the same year!”

Wow, if Sarah can handle the challenges of that all in one year we’re sure she’ll thrive in this fast-paced but hugely rewarding role, which will enable our young people to enter STEM-related occupations – taking advantage of the significant investments coming through the Moray Growth Deal!





## HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE MORAY

### Back to the floor – Care at Home Team

Chief Officer for Health and Social Care Moray, Simon Bokor-Ingram visited a few departments within the Care at Home team for a morning in July and even managed to see a couple of clients. Back-to-the-floor visits allow employees to engage directly with senior managers, sharing experiences of day to day front line roles and giving opportunities to show case best practice, efficiencies, technology, etc.

Simon said: “It was great to go out on a couple of visits with Tony to clients in Elgin, and hear direct from clients and their families on how they perceive our services. There was nothing but praise for Tony, and rightly so. I felt well looked after too and was safely deposited back to HQ.

“I then spent time with folk who manage the scheduling and management of teams- thank you Des and Laura. Kevin then spent time talking about the service, how the different components come together and aspirations for future developments.

“At a time when our services are really stretched, and we’re unable to meet all the needs, I was filled with hope that alongside really committed people working in the service we can find solutions, and we are not out of ideas on how to improve the service. The time was really invaluable, and I am looking forward to further back to the floor opportunities.”



# CONNECT

## Smarter Working

**W**e've been taking stock of the changes the pandemic brought to our working lives, what opportunities it's brought and what needs further development.

As an organisation we're keen to embrace the positive changes the pandemic brought, including improvements in technology, new approaches to service delivery and in new ways of working.

Results from two staff surveys indicated that over 80% of employees whose jobs suit hybrid working would like to retain a combination of home and office working or prefer to remain at home on a regular basis. An increasing number of respondents (39% to 44%) felt working from home was continuing to have a positive impact on their mental health.

Two reports went to full council on 28 September outlining a review of the current flexible working policy to incorporate hybrid working as a norm, along with a separate report on office accommodation. It's the intention that wider implementation of flexible working, the review of office accommodation and digital solutions are brought together as the three strands that make up the Smarter Working project.

Some of us will know Jeanette Netherwood, who is managing the Smarter Working project, which will be about providing seamless access to workplaces that meet customer, staff, service and organisational needs.

Access that will support the council deliver quality services, thorough provision of effective and efficient modern office and functional spaces, that will also help reduce the council's carbon footprint. All of which is a big ask, but one Jeanette thinks we're all up to.

"We all know adopting the new ways of working on a more permanent basis requires a change in culture for the organisation and for us all personally. When we were thrown into home-working at the start of the pandemic nobody knew what was happening the week later, never mind almost three years later.

"But we coped and we adapted and many of us found a better work-life balance as a result. However, not everyone did, so we need to learn from our experiences and feed that into the design of the way we work in future. There are real opportunities here for us to not just modernise the council as a flexible employer, but help those who maybe still aren't as comfortable with these changes to find a way of working that suits them and the business need."

To assist with this, a toolkit, guidance, support and training is being developed and will be available to managers and staff to ensure the amended flexible working policy can be adopted as easily and efficiently as possible.

As part of the project, we're looking at how we could use space in offices differently by focussing on having the right types of space available to do what is needed for flexible service delivery. We'll be asking people to consider what they do and how they use the space when they come into the office, to ensure the space supports their function. This could include quiet spaces, hybrid collaborative meeting spaces, one-to-one options and more.

Any change to the way we work will be underpinned by digital solutions – from access to networks, wifi availability, telecommunications solutions and

implementation of Office365 through to the individual equipment that we use.

A project board has been established to provide the strategic oversight of the Smarter Working programme. A delivery group will work alongside the board to include the staff voice as the project progresses.

Discussions with trade unions and service managers have taken place around the flexible working policy and these conversations with staff will continue as the Smarter Working project progresses.

The next stage is to involve us all further in discussions about how services will work as the hybrid approach is developed, to capture learning from experiences so far.

Many employees are happy with their current arrangements, so there may be little change for them, however with the wide range of services across the Council, one size does not fit all and it's important to make sure arrangements are sustainable and ultimately improve the services we provide to the community.

Look out for a frequently asked questions document, which will be circulated in the coming weeks. This will help us to better understand where the project is at now and where we need to get to. Not all aspects have been considered yet so keep an eye out on Interchange and via email for your opportunity to contribute to the discussion.





# TRANSFORMATION

## WHAT IS IT, ACTUALLY?

**You've likely heard about transformation in one way or another – maybe you're already involved in one of the corporate projects, have read about the options for large-scale investment in our learning estate (more on that on [page 22](#)) or, outside of work, used the council's online services to sort out your life admin.**

Really, the scale of transformation over the few years is significant, with millions of pounds of investment earmarked so far, and it'll impact on a strategic and operation level.

Already colleagues across the council are working together to improve and modernise the services we offer, and how we offer them.

Projects included in the transformation programme are:

Office review (recent Team Brief issued on this and revised flexible working policy); service efficiency; Additional Support Needs; poverty; digital services; business admin review; learning estate; customer service (for example the recently-opened Elgin reception and info hubs based in our libraries); and climate change.

We'll be sharing more details about them in Connect and interchange as they progress.

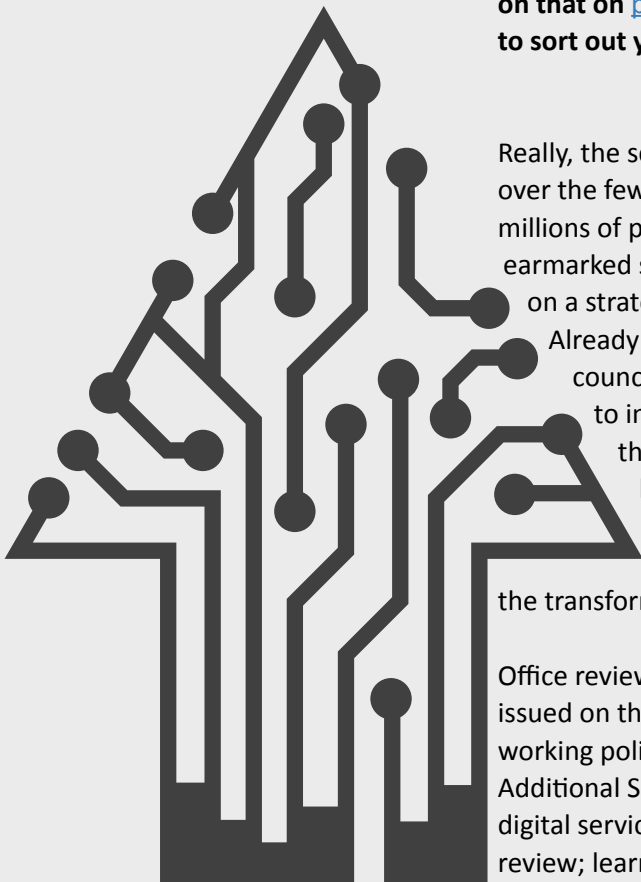
To support the transformation work and help us as council employees, Organisational Development is laying the foundations of a culture which allows us to think about change and the opportunities it offers in the longer-term.

It's no secret that the council remains under financial pressure, so there's a focus on work which will create savings and efficiencies. But that doesn't mean we can't invest in making these ideas come to life.

Conversations will be happening at all levels within the organisation, from elected members' development sessions, to leadership forums, and to those attending the employee conference – so inputs can be representative of the council and those who work here.

There'll also be the opportunity for colleagues' Bright Ideas to be heard. So if you've any thoughts about how a 'project could improve the work we do, and save the council money to help its financial sustainability, you'll be invited to share this (more info to come when it's ready to go live) to develop an innovation from those who know our organisation best – that's you!

Expect to see and speak more about transformation projects as the pace picks up over the coming months. We'll keep you posted.





## Star Awards Update

Thank you for all of your nominations for the STAR Awards. The nomination window closed on Friday 16 September.

Judging will take place in early October, with those shortlisted being put forward for a Colleagues' Choice Award. Details on how to vote in the Colleagues' Choice Awards will be available on the Interchange and Connect.

### STAR Awards 2022 Schedule

- \* Nomination window - 22 Aug to 16 Sept
- \* Judging - 3 Oct
- \* STAR Awards finalists notified and invitations to Awards Ceremony issued - Early-Mid October
- \* Colleagues Choice voting window - 24 Oct to 11 Nov
- \* Awards Ceremony in conjunction with Long Service Awards Ceremony at Elgin Academy
- \* Includes the announcement of Chief Executive's Award - December 2022



■ Left to right: Chief Executive, Roddy Burns; Moray Council Civic Leader, Cllr John Cowe; Leader of Moray Council, Cllr Kathleen Robertson

## Living Wage: we're accredited!

We have been formally recognised as a Living Wage employer but, although we have only just received this award, the council has actually been paying above the living wage since 2012!

The real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate calculated according to the costs of living. Employers choose to pay the real Living Wage on a voluntary basis, recognising the value of their workers and ensuring that a hard day's work receives a fair day's pay. The council processes the annual increases in April, following the announcement which usually comes in September to November of the previous year.

Moray Council's Chief Executive, Roddy Burns, said: "As one of the largest employers in the area, it's right that we lead by example and recognise the hard work our thousands of colleagues do, day in and day out, to provide the best possible standard of service to our communities.

"I'm pleased to see this accreditation awarded which demonstrates our commitment to paying the Living Wage to our much-valued staff."

Leader of Moray Council, Cllr Kathleen Robertson, said: "Achieving accreditation is a significant milestone and we proudly join the other Scottish councils with this mark of recognition.

"We know times are particularly challenging for many residents, and as a Living Wage employer we are playing our part in supporting our employees and valuing the work they do."



# HR Policy Spotlight



## Holiday Buy Back

### What is it?

Holiday Buy Back provides employees with the opportunity to 'buy' additional holidays. For each additional week's holiday 'bought', the employee will forfeit a week's salary. Holidays can only be bought by contractual weeks, not in additional days. Holiday Buy Back is available on a temporary basis (for one year) or permanent basis (every year), dependent on the individual's needs.

Holiday Buy Back is provided for within the Council's Flexible Working Policy. Any application for flexible working will be considered in line with the Flexible Working Policy requirements.

### Why do we have a policy?

The Council is committed to, and recognises the benefits of providing flexible working options. Benefits that can be achieved through flexible working in its broadest sense include improved motivation and morale, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and better employee commitment and loyalty. Holiday Buy Back can assist employees who require additional leave for one year or every year for special occasions, health issues, or who just want extra holiday to do what they want!

### Who can apply for Holiday Buy Back?

The opportunity to apply for Holiday Buy Back is available to all SJC employees.

### How do I apply?

A Holiday Buy Back form must be completed and submitted to your Line Manager. Applications to buy additional holidays for a particular year on either a permanent or temporary basis, must be completed no later than 30 November.

Your application will then be assessed to determine whether the request can be accommodated in line with service and team demands as well as in line with the Flexible Working Policy procedures. An increase in holidays impacts on working time available to the service and managers will have to take account of all applications received and the cumulative effect on the service as well as the particular merits of each case.



## How does it work?

For each additional week's holiday awarded, the employee will give up a week's salary. This additional holiday is added to the annual leave entitlement. The employee's salary is reduced to reflect the holiday buy back arrangement.

The employee's annual salary will be amended by the number of weeks awarded for holiday buy back. So, if an employee earns £240 per week, their salary would reduce by £240 for each additional week of holidays they buy back. Deductions will normally be taken from the employee salary over a 12 month period (January to December) before tax.

Arrangements must be finalised and notified to HR by mid-December so that salary payments from January onwards are correct.

## What happens if my application is successful?

Once the Line Manager has assessed the application, they will verbally confirm their decision to the employee. They will also email HR to confirm the arrangement and attach the relevant application form.

Holiday Buy Back is an amendment to your contract of employment and a letter will be issued to the employee by HR to confirm the change to terms and conditions of employment. HR will advise payments to process the deductions.

## What happens when Holiday Buy Back ends?

The employee's salary and holiday entitlement will return to their original form, if the Holiday Buy Back was of a temporary basis. The deduction from salary and extra holiday entitlement will continue annually, if the arrangement is on a permanent basis.

## Where can I get further information?



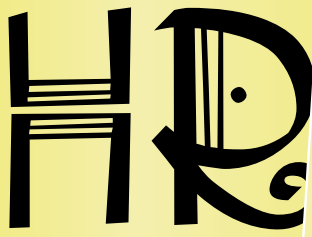
Flexible Working Policy

[interchange.moray.gov.uk/int\\_standard/Page\\_112699.html](https://interchange.moray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_112699.html)



Holiday buy back guidance and application form

[interchange.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file109572.doc](https://interchange.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file109572.doc)



# NOTICEBOARD

Remember the clocks go back!

The clocks go back one hour on 30 October 2022, so we have an extra hour to do whatever we want with!

Why do the clocks in the UK change? William Willett suggested the changing of the clocks in 1907. He wanted to stop the waste of early morning daylight and introduce brighter evenings during the summer months. British Summer Time was introduced in 1916 as an Act of Parliament.

Upcoming service learning and Back to the Floor visits

CMT and Senior Managers will soon be visiting ICT, Forres Leisure Centre, Lossiemouth High School, Buckie Harbour, Roads, Woodview, and more.

Visits are an excellent opportunity for staff to engage directly with CMT and Senior Managers. If you'd like a member of CMT to visit your team please email [karenbaker@moray.gov.uk](mailto:karenbaker@moray.gov.uk)



Service learning visit - Care at Home Team

Chief Executive, Roddy Burns, alongside Cllrs Robertson and McLennan, completed a Service Learning Visit with the Care at Home team on Wednesday 17 August 2022. Service Learning Visits allow employees across a range of services to engage directly with senior managers and give feedback with appropriate actions being taken where possible as a result of this.

The team were delighted that they took the time to come and meet them.



Service learning visit - Employability Team

Depute Chief Executive, Rhona Gunn, visited the Employability team for a visit in July, learning about what current activities are happening in the world of Employability!

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

### Pension courses

Another course has been added for this year due to the volume of responses, so if you would like to find out more about your retirement savings, how much income your pension savings may provide and how much you might need, then book your place asap!

Course Date	Location	Start	Finish	Pension
20 Oct 2022	Online	4:00pm	6:30pm	Teachers
26 Oct 2022	Online	9:30am	3:30pm	LGPS
2 Nov 2022	Face to Face	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](https://interchangemoray.gov.uk/int_standard/Page_116989.html)

### Carer positive engaged employer

The council have been recognised as a Carer Positive Engaged Employer and are supporting members of staff with caring responsibilities. If you would like to find out more please visit:

<https://www.carerpositive.org/>

### Mental health awareness training

Delivered by the Moray Wellbeing Hub, further mental health & awareness training dates have been confirmed for the rest of 2022.

- \* 27 October and 3 November
- \* 17 November and 24 November
- \* 1 December and 8 December

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: [organisational.development@moray.gov.uk](mailto:organisational.development@moray.gov.uk)

### Colleagues Choice Launch

We are very excited to be launching the Colleague's Choice Award 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.

A link to vote will be available from Monday 24 October on the Interchange under Improving Workforce Culture.

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 OD at: [organisational.development@moray.gov.uk](mailto:organisational.development@moray.gov.uk) or phone the HR helpline 01343 563261 to lodge a vote on your behalf.

Voting will close on Friday 11 November. The winner of the Colleagues Choice Award (along with the Chief Executive's Award for Excellence) will be announced and presented at the Ceremony later in the year and publicised soon after.

**STAR  
AWARDS**  
2022







Time for Talking (TfT), the Council's Employee Assistance Provider, has recently revamped their website and created a Counselling and Psychological Wellbeing App to make counselling easier and more accessible.

The app is packed with resources on a number of topics including:

- Blogs on mental health and wellbeing, anxiety, depression and more
- Podcasts on depression and getting your mojo going
- Videos of time for top tips including practising wellbeing and how to improve your mood at work
- Questionnaires and downloadable planners

As well as being able to access the above resources, you're able to book a counselling session, selecting a date and time suitable to yourself. Availability for initial counselling sessions appears very good.

You can also contact them via their website: [www.timefortalking.co.uk](http://www.timefortalking.co.uk), by phone on 0800 970 3980 or chat online to a counsellor through their Live Chat using the password TfTnow

## M365 Project Update

Work is continuing behind the scenes as we continue to explore the capabilities of Microsoft 365 and how it might be safely implemented.

The project team are working on important aspects of the ICT infrastructure aspects, procuring backup software and investigating the impact of security/GDPR implications of recording meetings. And, we will soon be releasing a Microsoft Team site which will be dedicated to the M365 project and provider users with useful information and a chance to collaborate.

Watch out for more updates in the next edition of Connect.



# CAR SHARE AND SAVE



Did you know that Moray Council is signed up to a car sharing app?

As the cost of living increases what better way to save some money whilst also contributing to improving the environment.

HITRANS hosts [www.hittravel.liftshare.com](http://www.hittravel.liftshare.com) for those looking to car share across the region. Members of the car sharing site are saving on average £800 a year simply by sharing their journeys.

## What is car sharing?

When two or more people decide to travel to work together in one car rather than separately. It does not exclude people who would normally travel as a passenger on other transport, but is really aimed at getting vehicles off the roads by increasing the number of people in each car.

## How does car sharing work?

Once you have completed the registration form the details will be entered into the database. The [www.hittravel.liftshare.com](http://www.hittravel.liftshare.com) system will then produce a list of suitable sharers; people to pick up on the way or who live near you and who meet the criteria you have requested.

You do not have to over commit yourself at this stage. One option is to set a trial period and a date to review the feelings of all parties. This will enable you to stop sharing at this point if the arrangement doesn't suit any or some of the parties involved.

## Why should I consider car sharing?

Here are some of the many reasons:

- Reduce the mileage and everyday wear and tear on your vehicle.
- Reduce fuel costs [and parking charges] by sharing the day-to-day expenses.
- Reduce congestion and save valuable time, particularly at busy times of the day.
- Reduce traffic pollution.

Now's the time to start sharing and start saving!

# Safety first: HALLOWEEN AND BONFIRE NIGHT

**S**ooky season is here and to make sure your Hallowe'en is spooktacular, and Bonfire Night goes with a bang (in a good way!) we've teamed up with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to reinforce how you can make the most of the celebrations, safely.

Local Senior Officer, Michael Humphreys, is the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Area Commander for the Highlands – which includes Moray in its patch.

"This annual period of celebrations, that includes Diwali, Halloween and Bonfire Night, is fast approaching," he told us.

"We always recommend that people attend an organised event as it's safer. However, if you are considering hosting your own event then please be aware of the risks involved and take precautions, in particular with fireworks and lighting bonfires.

"By following all available safety guidance from ourselves and our partners, we can help reduce the risk of harm wherever possible.

"Read the fireworks code and information on our website and please do not take any risks because the consequences can be devastating.

"We welcome the continued support of our communities in Moray and our crews are well prepared to respond to any emergencies."

*The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's advice is to attend a safely organised bonfire and firework display.*

If you must have a bonfire at home make sure it is well away from buildings, vehicles, trees, hedges, fences, power lines, telecommunications equipment and sheds – and you must ensure that smoke does not cause a nuisance to neighbours or flying embers endanger neighbouring property.

- Never drink alcohol if you are tending a bonfire or setting off fireworks – remember it's an offence to consume alcohol in a public place.
- To reduce the emission of harmful smoke and combustion products bonfires should comprise of untreated wood and paper based materials only.
- There is a danger of explosion from pressurised containers or sealed vessels amongst bonfire material or irresponsibly thrown on burning bonfires.
- Never throw fireworks on bonfires.
- Never use flammable liquids to ignite bonfires – use proprietary fire lighters.
- Smoke from bonfires must not pose a public nuisance, affect visibility on roads or otherwise inconvenience vehicles.
- Sparks, flying embers or burning debris must not endanger nearby property.



- Never leave a burning/smouldering bonfire unsupervised – make sure it is completely extinguished.

Any bonfire failing to satisfy safety conditions or where people are behaving irresponsibly may be deemed dangerous and as such, subject to being either removed, extinguished or otherwise made safe.

Do not go near bonfires or fireworks whilst under the influence of alcohol.

Some individuals may be tempted to ignore local bye-laws and drink alcohol in public places. This could lead to Police issuing a fixed penalty ticket or a report being sent to the Procurator Fiscal.

## Bonfires and the Law

- It is an offence under Section 56 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 for any person to lay or light a fire in a public place so as to endanger any other person or give them reasonable cause for alarm or annoyance or so as to endanger any property.
- It is illegal for anyone under 18 years of age to possess fireworks.
- Throwing fireworks or setting them off in a public place (anywhere other than your own garden) is illegal.
- You are not permitted to use fireworks between the hours of 11pm and 7am on any day except on 5 November when the curfew extends to midnight.

If you know anything about fires that have been started deliberately in your area, you can call the Crimestoppers Scotland hotline on 0800 555 111. All calls are completely anonymous and do not require names or personal details and you will not be asked to give evidence in court.

Fly tipping during the Bonfire and Fireworks season is a major cause of fire and it is also a criminal offence. If you see fly tipping or know of an area where there is a build-up of refuse or combustible material, contact the council by using the reporting tab on our website.



Report flytipping

[https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb\\_ext](https://online.moray.gov.uk/form/auto/asb_ext)

## Fireworks and the law

It is now ILLEGAL for the general public to set fireworks off before 6pm and after 11pm in the evening (this extends to midnight on 5 November and 1am on New Year's Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali).

If you are unable to attend an organised display, we would ask you to consider the impact of fireworks on people and animals. It is often children rather than adults who are injured by fireworks.

The noise and lights that fireworks emit can also be overwhelming for people with a sensory impairment and those with neurological differences such as autism. Animals can also find fireworks particularly distressing.

# Moray Learning Estate Update

**We spoke to our Learning Estate Programme Manager, Andy Hall, about what's been happening with this transformational project recently.**

"It's been a busy few months for the Learning Estate team as various programmes of work begin to gather momentum.

"Recently we've embarked on the statutory consultation process on the proposal to close Inveravon Primary School; assisted planning colleagues with the pre planning application consultation for the new Findrassie Primary School in Elgin; addressed the need for temporary accommodation at Elgin High School; made decisions on Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP) Phase 3 funding bids.

"As well as the programmes of work detailed above, we've sought approval from elected members on the refreshed Learning Estate Strategy and the new corporate mothballing policy. Not sure what the term mothballing means? Then you'll want to carry on reading..."

## Inveravon Primary School

On Wednesday 24 August members of the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee agreed for a statutory consultation on the proposal to close Inveravon Primary School to commence.

The council is proposing to discontinue education at Inveravon, which is currently mothballed, and reassign its catchment area to either Aberlour, Glenlivet and/or Knockando Primary School(s).

The consultation started on Monday 29 August and will run until Friday 7 October. We held two public meetings on Tuesday 27 September – one at Inveravon Parish Church and the other at Speyside High School – for the community to share their views on the proposal.

A report outlining responses to the statutory consultation will be considered by the Education, Children's and Leisure Services Committee at its meeting in January 2023. To find out more about the proposal, view the closure of Inveravon Primary School consultation documents.



Consultation documents

[www.moray.gov.uk/moray\\_standard/page\\_98109.html#Closure%20of%20Inveravon%20Primary%20School](http://www.moray.gov.uk/moray_standard/page_98109.html#Closure%20of%20Inveravon%20Primary%20School)





### New Mothballing Policy

At full council on Wednesday 28 September, elected members agreed to a new mothballing policy for schools.

The term mothballing refers to the temporary closure of a school where the school roll has fallen to very low pupil numbers, and in some cases zero. Mothballing allows for a school to reopen should circumstances change, meaning that if appropriate numbers of primary-aged pupils moved into the area in the future the school could re-open.

To undertake formal closure of a school, we as a local authority are required under the terms of the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010 to carry out a statutory public consultation – similar to the one currently being undertaken for Inveravon Primary School.

Councillors also agreed that the Head of Education would consider mothballing primary schools in future when the roll reaches 15 or fewer pupils.

### Buckie High School and Forres Academy

At the special meeting of the full council on Wednesday 28 September, elected members agreed to submit a bid for funding to the Scottish Government Learning Directorate Learning Estate Investment Programme (LEIP) Phase 3 for both the Forres and Buckie areas.

Due to the pre-election period now in place for the by-election in the Buckie ward on 3 November it's inappropriate to comment further on specifics of any bid until after that time. A decision on prioritisation will be made following this election.

The Learning Estate Improvement Programme (LEIP) is a joint £2bn investment programme between Scottish and local government designed to improve the condition of the school estate and benefit 50,000 pupils to learn in condition A/B schools.





**S**torms Arwen, Malik, Barra and Corrie hit in quick succession at the end of last year and earlier this year. They might seem like a distant memory for some people, but for those affected the arrival of autumn and winter signals a season of risk.

Although a storm or adverse weather can appear at any time, we're a bit more concerned over the winter months and our emergency planning steps up a gear during this time.

Regular weather checks are undertaken by our roads team as well as our Emergency Planning Officer, Ross Ferguson, who keep an eye on short and long-range forecasts.

Ross has also been working closely with the Community Support Unit to establish community resilience teams who are ready, willing and able to step up in an emergency. This could be a wide-scale power outage, similar to the one we experienced in Keith last year. Or it could be a flooding event or other disruption to normal life. This group of people are local residents who each offer a skill or resources to help others in their community. It may be a local hall-keeper who can open a hall with a generator to

provide shelter for displaced people during a power outage.

It may be someone who can provide hot food or someone with a suitable vehicle to transport residents.

Every week throughout winter we share key gritting stats from our roads team on social media. Fellow stats fans rejoice as we'll be back sharing these soon – so you'll know exactly how much salt we've used, how many km our drivers have travelled and how many hours our gritters clocked up each week.

It's not just our dedicated teams who can prepare for emergencies though. Oh no, YOU can get in on the act as well. Head to ready.scot to find out more about preparing, responding and getting involved with personal and community emergency resilience. There are tips on the small steps you can take to prepare your home and family for the unexpected. Everything from what you need in an emergency kit if you have to evacuate your home to protecting yourself from cybercrime.



Ready Scot

<https://ready.scot/>

If that whets your appetite, you might want to consider joining your local community resilience team.



Contact Ross for more details by emailing:

[EmergencyPlanning@moray.gov.uk](mailto:EmergencyPlanning@moray.gov.uk)

Ross also recommends downloading the Met Office weather app and setting alerts for weather warnings in your area – so you can be prepared for all eventualities!

As we approach the winter months it's also a timely reminder for the drivers amongst us to start our preparations and plan our journeys.

You might also want to put some items in your car:

- A first aid kit;
- Battery jump leads;
- A torch and spare batteries;
- A map for unplanned diversions;
- A blanket
- A reflective warning sign.

In cold weather, you should also take:

- An ice scraper and de-icer;
- A shovel for snow;
- Warm clothes and boots;
- Some food, and a warm drink in a flask.

Pack an Emergency Kit (from ready.scot)

You should keep enough food and water and other essentials at home for at least three days.

Whether you have to stay in or get out, packing a small emergency kit will help you get through. Keep it in a safe place at home where you can reach it easily. Your kit should be kept in a waterproof bag and the top ten things to include are:

- Radio with spare batteries, or a wind up radio
- Torch with spare batteries, or a wind-up torch
- First aid kit
- Important documents like birth certificates and insurance policies
- Bottled water and ready-to-eat food that won't go off. Pack a can opener if needed
- Spare keys to your home and car
- Spare glasses or contact lenses
- Toiletries and details of important medicines
- Pencil and paper, penknife, whistle
- Pet supplies

Always prioritise **people over possessions**. However, if you have to leave your home, and there's time to gather them safely, you could also think about taking:

- Essential medicines
- Pets
- Mobile phone and charger
- Cash and credit cards
- Spare clothes and blankets
- Games, books, a child's special toy
- What else is important to you and your family?

Find out how to turn off your gas, electricity and water supplies to your home.

You could also consider moving (and securing) important possessions to the upper levels of your home or to higher ground if you are at risk of flooding e.g. your essential documentation, photos, jewellery medicines, or your vehicles.



# Near Me

appointment service  
launches from  
Elgin Library



## Did you know you can now use Elgin Library to attend Near Me appointments?

Launched in August, the 'NearMe in Libraries' scheme builds on the existing 'NearMe' video consulting service that allows people to attend appointments remotely, wherever is convenient and appropriate for them.

'Near Me' will be available for individual and group appointments and will be an option offered at the time of making your appointment. Although it's not a walk-in service, you can request the dedicated, private space in the library for pre-booked 'NearMe' appointments by phoning 01343 562600.

The 'NearMe' service is already widely used across Scotland for health, social care and other appointments with around 45,000 consultations being held every month. Now, Elgin library gives access to the technology needed to attend remote appointments.

Our Principal Librarian, David Hayden, recognises not everyone has access to the technology needed.

"Introducing the option of NearMe appointments through the library service is a great leap forward for people in Moray who may not have access to the technology required or be confident in its use.

"Our team are ready and waiting to help those who wish to make use of the confidential set-up in Elgin library as we trial this option. We know there can often be a fair journey for people in Moray to access appointments so if we can ease that pressure on both residents and healthcare services then we'll consider this initiative a success."

The NearMe option will:

- Make accessing health and social care services more convenient
- Make appointments easier to attend (if you usually need someone to take you to appointments)

- Enable people to have someone with them for support at the appointment (either at the 'Near Me in Libraries' setting, or by joining the consultation via video link from another location – even from abroad)
- Be better for the environment by reducing travel
- Reduce the risk of spread of infectious diseases
- Reduce time and cost
- Reduce time away from work, school or home

The pilot results will set the groundwork to inform further rollouts for libraries across Scotland to begin delivering 'NearMe' access as part of their core services.





## SCOTIA MEDICAL GROUP

**W**hen you're at a local event and first aid is needed, who do you think is around to provide it? If you're lucky there will be someone there with experience. Perhaps you're first aid trained yourself. Often there will be volunteers on hand.

Scotia Medical Group is a charity that has a primary focus on saving lives by providing free first aid training to community groups and members of the public. The charity was established in 2020 following the withdrawal of a major provider from the Moray area.

A course for members of the public was held at the end of July and the charity aims to hold more courses in the future.

In addition to free first aid training, the charity's volunteers also provide first aid cover to events throughout Moray as well as further afield. Recent events where volunteers have deployed include MacMoray festival, Party at the Palace, Burghead in Bloom, Highland Cross and AFFA Fine Market to name just a few.

Our very own Housing Needs Officer, Jane Pirie, volunteers with Scotia Medical Group and has recently taken on the role of Lead Fundraising Officer for the organisation.

Jane says: "In my time with the team I've really enjoyed seeing the work they do to support the local community. This is something that is close to my heart with the work I do as a Housing Needs Officer here at Moray Council.

"When I first started at Scotia Medical Group I was invited to a training night on spinal injuries which I was looking forward to attending and watching. Little did I know that by the end of the two hour training session I would have participated in and left feeling empowered in the knowledge that I had actually gained some knowledge on how to assist in the treatment of a spinal injury."



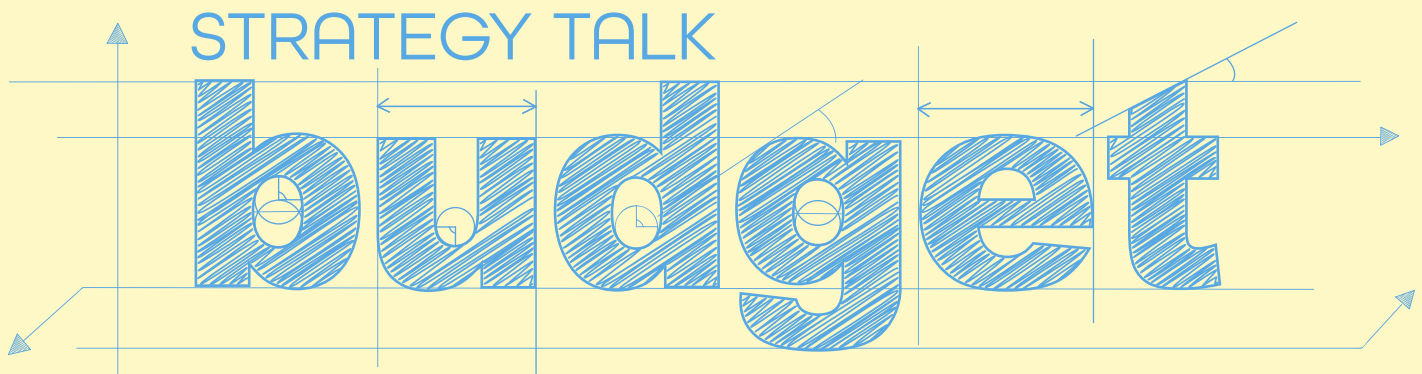
We know how rewarding many of our staff find volunteering and it's great to see Jane adding to her already impressive skillset in her own time. Jane is also looking for colleagues' assistance as she develops her fundraising role.

"I feel very privileged to be part of Scotia Medical Group. The public are very lucky to have such a dedicated and experienced team of volunteers.

"As a small charity we're reliant on funds from the public and events in order to continue providing free first aid training to the public. We would welcome fundraising ideas to support our charity and we are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers to join our team. You don't need to have any experience of fundraising or first aid as full training is provided."



If you can help Jane and Scotia Medical Group you can contact them directly by emailing: [contactus@scotiamedicalgroup.org.uk](mailto:contactus@scotiamedicalgroup.org.uk)



**The Council sets Council Tax for the following year in February/beginning of March each year. When the budget for 2022/23 was set we anticipated that the Council would need to make savings of £19 million across 2023/24 and 2024/25. That's a significant savings target, so we started planning for the 2023/24 shortly after the 2022/23 budget was set.**

Ideally, we would make these savings without cutting the range and level of services. Elected Members have approved a preference to find savings by transforming service delivery. In other words, making efficiencies to do the same at less cost or do more at the same cost in areas of increasing demand.

Transforming services isn't easy, it takes time and we recognise that is unlikely to deliver the level of savings we need at the pace required. We have set aside money to invest in the transformation of services and that is the route which the Council wants to prioritise, developing and building on the approved Improvement and Modernisation Programme.

The next preferred option is to generate additional income, and there are a number of proposals for income generation which have been made as part of the budget process. Significant increases in income are likely to come only from service developments, so increased income is a very positive sign of growth.

However, if all else fails then we will need to consider cuts in services (or stopping services altogether) or reduction in services standards. That is clearly the least favoured option. Over the last 10 years the Council has been making efficiency savings and service cuts and no-one underestimates the difficulties in continuing to find further savings.

Since the budget for 2022/23 was set, we have seen a number of significant changes to the economic landscape, with inflation rising rapidly, interest rates going up and pay awards expected to be well above what we had budgeted for. We're all well aware of the cost of living crisis and it affects the Council as well as us as individuals. These are

all unexpected challenges and add to the complexities we face in achieving a balanced budget.

However, the recent pandemic has proven how as an organisation we can rise to unexpected challenges and overcome them. Many of the solutions to how we continued to deliver services during lockdown are proving to be part of the solution to finding service efficiencies post lockdown. New ways of using buildings and technology are to the forefront of people's thinking. Long-standing aims of reducing paper consumption now seem more realisable – with a reduction in cost of stationery and printing.

We're all much more aware of effective use of video conferencing and other ways of sharing information. There will be other examples where working practices have changed and savings are achievable as an incidental result – and possibilities for change which maybe only now are becoming apparent as we get used to the new tools available to us to do our jobs.

The other factor in the mix is our response to climate change. Reducing carbon emissions does not of itself mean financial savings – but this can be a useful side effect of actions primarily designed to reduce our carbon footprint. So the challenge is for us to build on the response to the pandemic in redesigning how we deliver our services, and to reduce our carbon footprint into the bargain!

The Council still holds reserves which can be used to balance the budget as an interim measure – reserves can only be used once, so this is a temporary stopgap. The Scottish Government is allowing some 'financial flexibilities' – one-off measures which can be taken to help balance the budget for 2023/24. We've identified some savings and proposals will be brought to Council. A combination of these factors will be used to balance the budget for 2023/24 and allow us to concentrate on developing transformation proposals. So come on, let's see what proposals we can come up with - feed through your line managers as we look to develop Council services which are financially and environmentally sustainable.





**A**s part of our commitment to encouraging active travel across the region, we hosted our first 'Bike Dr' session for colleagues on Wednesday 14 September at the Annexe in Elgin. The sessions offer a full health check of your bike with a trained mechanic assessing your wheels; brakes; gears; tyre pressure; lights; racks; pedals; saddles; and much more.

Any minor adjustments required can usually be done there and then. For more complex repairs, the mechanic will let you know exactly what needs doing and a rough guide to what it should cost at a bike shop.

Colleagues were also able to try out various e-bikes and had the opportunity to sign up for free cycle confidence sessions (in groups or one-to-one) with our Cycling UK Cycle Coordinator.

Following the Bike Dr session, colleagues took to the road on a staff-led lunchtime ride from the Annexe, using the extensive network of cycle paths towards Lhanbryde.

We're looking at hosting Bike Dr sessions a couple of times throughout the year for colleagues to ensure their bikes remain as safe as possible. Details of upcoming sessions will be shared on Interchange.

Active Travel, what's the background on our work so far?

- Our draft Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan (2022-27) was approved by councillors on 7 December 2021 and aims to make active travel an attractive and realistic choice for short journeys across Moray.
- Feedback from local communities was gathered throughout the 12 week consultation period and used to inform the final version of the plan which will be presented to members of the Economic Development and Infrastructure Services Committee in November.
- Active travel is becoming increasingly more important in society today and has a major role in encouraging physical activity compared to other forms of exercise. There have been notable increases in cycling and walking since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, with almost all fixed cycle and pedestrian counters across Moray measuring increases in journey numbers.



## Employee Conference 2022 – Invitations are out!

Invitations have now been distributed for the Employee Conference on 10 November 2022!

Are you one of the lucky employees that have received one? Don't worry, your line manager knows that you have been invited so you will be released from your normal duties. If you're unable to attend please advise [organisational.development@moray.gov.uk](mailto:organisational.development@moray.gov.uk) by 5 October 2022.

This year's conference theme is 'New Horizons – Building Back Better'. As we continue to recover from the pandemic we're looking forward to a brighter future and will consider how we build a sustainable council, your role in this, and how the council will continue its journey of transformation.

The conference is also a chance to talk to the Corporate Management Team and Heads of Service about issues that are important to you, as well as meeting colleagues from across council services.

All invitees will receive a letter closer to the date with further information about what to expect on the day and this will be your chance to let us know of any dietary or special requirements.

If you haven't received an invite but would like to be added to the waiting list, speak with your line manager in the first instance and then contact Organisational Development – we'll do our best to accommodate any requests.

We look forward to seeing you there!



## Flu Jabs

As we get closer to the winter months we thought it would be a good time for information on this year's flu vaccination programme. Flu (influenza) is a common infectious respiratory virus with symptoms including a fever, cough, headache or tiredness.

The flu can be extremely serious, even if you're healthy, and the annual flu vaccine is the safest and most effective way to help protect yourself against the virus. The vaccine is offered every year for free by the NHS if you're in one of the eligible groups.

The NHS have started to invite those eligible for their free flu vaccine from September and will continue to do so throughout the coming months. This may be combined with the Covid-19 vaccine if you're in the eligible groups for that. It's recommended that you get the vaccines as soon as it's offered to you to help protect yourself before flu viruses start to circulate (which is usually in winter).



More information, and a full list of those eligible for the flu vaccine, can be found here: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/winter-vaccines/the-flu-vaccine/flu-vaccine>

As well as prioritising your own health, getting flu jab gives us the best chance in providing continuity of service for our residents.

The cost to the council of all cold and flu absence was £236,340 in 2019-20, which is 5.35% of all absence costs and equates to 2,129 days lost.





## Remembrance wreaths

We drive, cycle or walk past them regularly, but how much attention do we pay to the many war memorials within our communities? More so at this time of year, perhaps, as Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day approach.

Each year our Members Support and Print Services teams work together to ensure those who served and sacrificed are remembered through the laying of poppy wreaths at war memorials in towns and villages across Moray.

Mandy Tough from Members Support, who has been organising the ordering and distributing of poppy wreaths on behalf of the council for around nine years, told us: "More than 100 wreaths are ordered as early as August and delivered to HQ in late September. Our print room colleagues then begin production of the 'inserts', with logos and text to represent the 50+ council wreaths, 50+ wreaths for the Lieutenancies of Moray and Banffshire, and those for the MSP and MP.

"I then liaise with various contacts including churches, community councils, British Legions, Councillors and Lieutenancies to make sure the poppy wreaths are taken to the respective Remembrance Sunday services, as well as placing a notice in the paper and the council website to let residents know of the dates and times so they can pay their respects.

"It's a lot of organisation, but starting early means everything is sorted ahead of time – it's stressful though sorting out any last minute changes!"

- A national two-minute silence will be held at 11am on Armistice Day, Friday 11 November. Lest We Forget.



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We will mail the gift card to direct to your door, or directly to the recipient

#### **SPEND**

They will hit the high street and spend their gift card at their favourite local businesses

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Money that is spent local stays local for longer, meaning everyone benefits!

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With over 110 local businesses in Moray, from Health and Beauty to Food and Drink, this makes the Moray Loves Local Gift Card the perfect present for all celebrations!



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