

BELHELVIE BANTER

Balmedie : Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog



EDITION 44

SEPTEMBER 2021

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2021-22 BANTER DEADLINES	WINTER '21 (Ed 45)	SPRING '22 (Ed 46)	SUMMER '22 (Ed 47)
Articles & ads	Fri 29 th Oct	Fri 21 st Jan	Fri 22 nd April
Delivery begins	Sat 27 th Nov	Sat 19 th Feb	Sat 21 st May

This edition's cover photo is by Alan Neave and features Blackdog residents on their recent litter-pick around the village and beach (left to right) Elaine, Catherine, Russell, Ali, Hazel, Liana and Lulian.



EDITORIAL

As we move forwards into Autumn, we are hopefully becoming more relaxed, and relieved, at the thought of getting back to normal again as Covid restrictions ease. Despite the past lockdowns and isolation, so many of us are now determined to put a positive spin on this strange period we've just lived through.

On reflection, I'm wondering how many of us are actually dreading the return to some aspects of our pre-pandemic lives.

Has our Covid experience pulled us up short and made us question what we do want in our lives? Perhaps it's worth considering what we disliked and have not missed from our pre-pandemic life. Also, what did we like from our restrictive pandemic time that we will miss when normality fully returns?

Did you take up new hobbies, discover a love of gardening, reading, painting, cooking? Have you enjoyed working from home, going for walks, cycling, just being outside? This is an excellent opportunity to consider what we want to leave behind and what we would like to take forward.

There are so many positives about living in our parish, be it village or rural life. Our Covid experience certainly amplified the caring, sharing acts of kindness within our community, as folk looked out for one another. Simple things gained importance - people seemed friendlier when out walking - social interaction became something everyone sought out, not avoided. So many positive things to hang on to for our new 'normal'.

One thing that looks like it's getting more back to normal, is the re-emergence of volunteers in the parish. Where would we be without them? So many services, groups and events would not be possible, and our villages would certainly not look as beautiful as they do. Do you know, it is statistically proven that people who volunteer regularly are healthier both physically and mentally? Individuals who have volunteered in their lifetime typically live longer and have better psychological well-being. In addition to the health benefits, volunteering gives people a sense of purpose. The fulfilling feeling of giving back and contributing to society is unparalleled. Benefits all round then!

On a less positive note, it has been disappointing to witness the repeated 'vandalism' taking place in our local beauty spots. I'm referring to our perpetual litter problem - the debris left behind on the beach and, just as distasteful, the dog-fouling problems that never seem to go away. It really is abhorrent that a certain part of our society has no sense of responsibility or consideration for others and expects locals to clean up after them. Again, what would be do without our great band of volunteers?

Jess Petrie, Editor

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FAMILY FIRST

Through the Eyes of a Child

“Come, little leaves,” said the wind one day,
“Come o'er the meadows with me and play;
Put on your dresses of red and gold,
For summer is gone and the days grow cold.”

Soon as the leaves heard the wind's loud call,
Down they came fluttering, one and all.
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,
Singing the glad little songs they knew.

'An Autumn Greeting' by George Cooper

With Summer a distant memory, this poem beautifully describes the sight of the falling leaves, rich with reds and golds that we are able to enjoy each year.

We have become accustomed to living in a world of uncertainty. At the time of writing this article, there is no telling what restrictions, if any, will be in place this Autumn. Will we be allowed to celebrate the Autumn festivals with family and friends? Will children be allowed to go guising? Will we be able to host or attend Bonfire parties?

One thing that is certain however, is that in our small corner of the world, Autumn will follow on from Summer.



One of my favourite pieces of artwork brought home by my daughter is of a hedgehog. The hedgehog's spikes are made from gathered leaves which is so effective. But there's another thing I love about that particular piece of work and it's picturing her and her classmates excitedly going out on a wonderful, Autumnal walk in the Magic Woods to gather their leaves, and the thought and attention to detail that went into each leaf – is it the right colour, the right size, the right shape?

One thing that this past 18 months has taught me is the importance of taking time to slow down and appreciate what is around us. During lockdown we had the time and the need to go on daily walks and for many, that walk was a chance to reconnect with family away from the distractions of work, clubs, television, and iPads. Many people maximised the hour they had outside and really took time to investigate their surroundings. For us, we had the time to allow our youngest to stop and pick up and admire every stone he came across with no hurrying him along. We had the time to share his wonder and excitement. We had the time to take notice of our surroundings.



Hopefully this Autumn, the parties and fun of Halloween and Guy Fawkes night will be back, and we can enjoy our children, answering our own doors to excited little voices squealing ‘trick or treat?’

Hopefully this Autumn, our children will be enjoying class visits with their friends to the Magic Woods, or some other local area in our Parish, to carefully select materials for their artwork which they will excitedly and proudly bring home.

Hopefully this Autumn, we’ll have the time to go on those adventurous family walks and view our beautiful corner of the world through the eyes of a child.

Emma



Now that busy summer days are past, you may be finding that you have some extra time on your hands, or you may just feel that you’d like to get out and about and make new friends. We have so many different projects on the go and so many volunteering opportunities in Belhelvie Parish. Why not volunteer for one of the following groups? It’s a great way to meet new people and grab new opportunities.

Group	Contact	
Balmedie Leisure Centre	Bill Murray	01358 742003
Belhelvie Banter	Jess Petrie	07763 314579
Better Balmedie	Allan Jeffrey	01358 743851
The Sand Bothy	Joni Corbett	07522 987856
Potterton Community Group	Caroline Anderson	07920 280212
Christmas Lights	Diane Cassie	01358 743114
First Responders	Marc Wood	01358 743002
Scouts	Ian Thomson	07743 844040
Belhelvie Community Trust	Rosie Nicol	01358 742118
Belhelvie Community Council	David Wallace	07767 237644

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BLACKDOG NEWS

Since the last edition of the Banter, two community activities have taken place in Blackdog to enhance the look of the village and surroundings. On the 12th June, 14 volunteers from Blackdog completed a litter-pick of the village area and of Blackdog beach. In total, 24 sacks of rubbish were collected over two hours, along with a tyre, large plastic water containers, hawser ropes, and a large plastic crate. The weather was excellent for the activity and of course the craic was always going to be good!

The following week 700+ plants were collected from Aberdeenshire Council and volunteers were again called upon to help support the planting of the shrubs throughout the communal areas of the village. Eleven volunteers took part in the activity and several planters were relocated to areas where they could be more easily managed. There was a great deal of interest in the activity so the Blackdog Residents Association (BRA) Committee may purchase more planters and identify best location sites – and get the committed support for maintaining the units.

Due to the success of the recent litter-pick we are working with the East Grampian Coastal Partnership (EGCP) to set up a community box of litter-picking equipment within the area, which villagers or visitors can access to do their own litter-pick.

We have also asked EGCP if they would be willing to lead a beach clean-up in the future, and they will be looking in the August timeframe for suitable dates/tides etc. to complete this activity with volunteers from the village and surroundings. Do keep an eye on the Blackdog facebook page for information.



Regarding the BRA, Gary Mann has had to stand down as Chairman of the Committee due to work commitments and the Committee are actively looking for a new Chairperson. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Gary for all his work in leading the Committee throughout his term, and for his commitment to furthering Blackdog activities.



Last but not least, we continue to have the ongoing issues with dog poop in the area. This issue is caused by both visitors walking their dogs in Blackdog, and by resident dog owners. Blackdog has plenty of dog poop bins, and there are numerous containers of dog poop bags around the village, so there is no excuse for leaving dog waste lying in the village or on grass walkways throughout the dog-walking areas of the village and beach. It is the owners' responsibility to ensure that they clean-up after their dogs and we ask for all dog-walkers to be more vigilant and responsible for their dogs.

Stephanie Dickson Mann



CRAFT CLUB

at Balmedie Congregational Church

Craft club restarted in June, and it's been great to be able to say that all spaces are full (it's been difficult recently). Since returning we have made chocolate truffles, dream catchers, mini hanging mirrors and so much more. We also held our pop-up craft mornings in the summer holidays and they were also very successful.

As restrictions gradually lessen, we hope to be able to have more free spaces on a Wednesday evening. If anyone would like to be added to the list, please get in touch.

Catherine & Diane 01358 743114

BABY & TODDLER GROUP

Finally, it's been great to be able to meet some new mums from Balmedie and surrounding areas as we opened our group again in June.

At the moment, we have two classes running each session. This is due to current restrictions where we must have limited numbers. Sessions are Wednesdays 9.30-11am and Fridays 10-11.30am in the Wee Kirk Hall. Spaces are available on Fridays.

We are a friendly small group of welcoming parents – and have a large variety of toys to suit babies and toddlers, giving parents the chance to enjoy adult company whilst the little ones play and interact. Call me on 07850 235215 for more information.



Diane

BELHELVE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCC)

AGM & COMMUNITY COUNCIL ELECTION

On 19 July we held our Annual General Meeting. Since our last AGM in 2020 we have developed our Constitution and updated the definition of our individual roles, continued to manage the Village Tidy Scheme on behalf of our communities, work with our community groups and other Community Councils and monitor progress on Aberdeenshire Council's Local Development Plan.

We have continued to run the Community Council with ten full members supported by our three elected Aberdeenshire Councillors and Aberdeenshire Council's Area Office team.

During the AGM we elected our Office Bearers as follows:

David Wallace - Chair

Alex McIntyre - Vice Chair

John Fletcher - Secretary

Ewan Phipps - Treasurer

Graham Middleton - Planning Reporter

Carolyne Wood - Communications Co-ordinator

Hilary Foxen and David McKendrick continue as Community Councillors and we are pleased to welcome new Community Councillors from Potterton, Adam Brown, Jenny Nicol and Stephen Nicol.

Mark Brown stood down during the year, we thank him for all his work, and for representing the Whitecairns area during his time on the Community Council.

Our Chairman's report, presented during the meeting, thanked all members of the Community Council for "giving up your precious free time and engaging in the effort to improve the living conditions and services within our Communities."

If you are interested in becoming a Community Councillor, please get in touch.

Find out more about your Community Councillors here:

www.belhelviecc.org.uk/members.html

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION – BCC & BCT

We're working with the Community Trust www.belhelviecommunitytrust.org.uk on a community consultation which will run this November.

Through the consultation the Trust and Community Council want to find out what facilities, services and activities you think our communities should have. You will be able to tell us about your ideas, find out how to get involved and send us feedback on the services we all receive.

The consultation follows the successful Balmedie Views consultation ten years ago and the Youth Survey in 2020. We will be combining the results of the latest surveys to find projects our communities can take forward.

VACCINATION APPOINTMENT - TAXIS

If you or one of your friends or neighbours are unable to make your own way to your vaccination appointment, we can co-ordinate and pay for taxis to help you attend.

We will need your name, pickup address, destination address and appointment time.

You can contact us to arrange transport through:

BCC Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil

Email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com

Phone for BCC vaccination transport help: 07733 322 244

Please note, we are only able to offer this to people living within the settlements of Belhelvie Parish (Balmedie, Belhelvie, Potterton, Whitecairns, Blackdog).

COVID HELP, ADVICE & SUPPORT

We have put together information on our website with links to local community support groups, foodbanks (Aberdeenshire North Foodbank in Ellon - 07562 914 986, Instant Neighbour in Aberdeen - 01224 489955), Government protection levels, and the Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Hub (0808 196 3384) who can answer questions about benefits, financial support, schools, testing and wellbeing.

Coronavirus help and advice page on the BCC website:

www.belhelviecc.org.uk/coronavirus.html

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Everyone is welcome at our monthly meetings. They are held **every third Monday, 7pm**. For meeting dates, what's going to be discussed and what we talked about last time see our website: www.belhelviecc.org.uk/meetings.html

STAYING IN TOUCH

Email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com

Phone for general BCC enquiries: 07767 237 644

Phone for BCC vaccination transport help: 07733 322 244

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil

Website: www.belhelviecc.org.uk

Carolyn Wood



BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Just a wee update before it's Christmas!

We had our first fundraising event in July - our Christmas Bazaar which was very successful and raised an amazing £289.61 which will go towards lighting up our village this Christmas. We plan to use these funds to create, make and buy some more Christmas lights and decorations to go around our lovely village. If anyone has any ideas they would like to share, do get in touch via our Facebook page. **Let's light up our village!**

Diane




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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY TRUST (BCT)

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We are happy to be able to give you some good news this time!

We re-opened both the Sand Bothy kiosk and Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs in April and both projects have had busy times and quiet times since, depending on the weather. It has been lovely to see our customers back in the Country Park, even with all the COVID regulations. We have also been very happy to recruit some new volunteers for both projects; you are all very welcome!

For the past 3 years we have been raising funds and working with the Council, our architect and builders to refurbish the disabled toilet in the Country Park North Toilet Block. After every possible hold up, including a part being stranded in the Suez Canal, the work is now complete and we can provide very good facilities for disabled people and their carers, with a ceiling hoist, an adult size changing table and a wheelchair accessible sink. These facilities will be a great addition to Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs so that more people can have a day out at our beach! Access to the disabled toilet is the same as it always was, with a RADAR key. Thanks go to our funders, Scottish Community Landfill Fund, Aberdeenshire Council and the YPI team of 2019 from Ellon Academy. Thanks too, to our architect George Douglas and builders Fitzbuild Ltd.

We have been raising funds to install an inclusive swing in the Play Park next to the Sand Bothy. A big thank-you to Ellie Thorburn for raising over £1000 with her Just Giving page, Arnold Clark for donating £1000 and Aberdeen & District Cerebral Palsy Association for donating £2000. Any contributions would be very welcome.

In April, BCT set up a litter squad via Facebook to clear litter from woods and paths down to Country Park. We have had 4 sessions so far and picked up loads of rubbish. We now have some regular volunteers and would welcome more helpers if you can spare a little time. The sessions are on the first Saturday of each month. We were very pleased to receive £3200 from the Co-op Community Fund to buy some more litter-pickers and bag hoops to add to our equipment.

Balmedie Community Sensory Garden continues to thrive and provide a peaceful place for walkers around the village. New helpers would be very welcome!

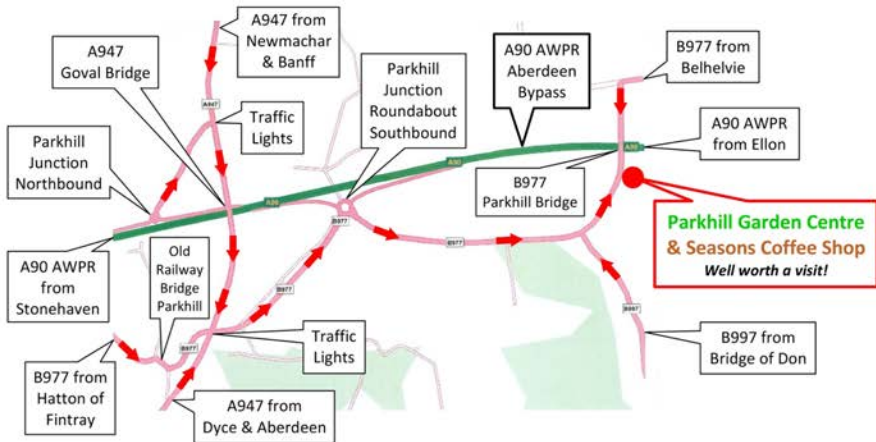
Well done to Better Balmedie folks for creating bonny planters once again around the village with plants supplied by Aberdeenshire Council.

Looking to the future, BCT is going to carry out a community consultation throughout the parish in the autumn when we will be asking everyone for their ideas for community facilities and projects. More information will follow in the next edition of Banter! Plans are afoot in Potterton to help alleviate flooding of the Play Park and Car Park and issues with the burn. BCT will be helping to find funds for this work.

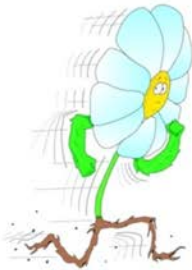
Look at our website to find out more about BCT: www.belhelviecommunitytrust.org.uk

Rosie Nicol

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BETTER BALMEDIE



At last Better Balmedie is back at work throughout the village. 1100 plants, received from Aberdeenshire Council, have been planted around Balmedie and are routinely watered by the bowser*. Materials have been bought to complete access into the Community Garden, beside the Wee Kirk at the Coop, for those with mobility problems. This was financed by a grant from Formartine Partnership which is a registered charity providing services to and for the communities of Formartine area.



Work will soon begin to construct a central feature in the garden. To enable us to complete this work sooner rather than later, additional volunteers would be most welcome. If anyone over the age of 16 would like to help us out, please come along to our base beside the Wee Kirk on a Wednesday or Saturday (10.00am - 12 noon). We'd love to see some new faces. If you need more information, you can phone me on 01358 793851. Together we can make things happen.

Our thanks are due to all our supporters who have made contributions, be it their time or financially. Let's hope that as the pandemic is contained, we will continue to meet on a permanent basis.

Allan Jeffrey

* Editor's Note: Had to check out what a "bowser" is - it's "a generic name for a tanker of various liquids", in this case, water. Imagine not knowing that!



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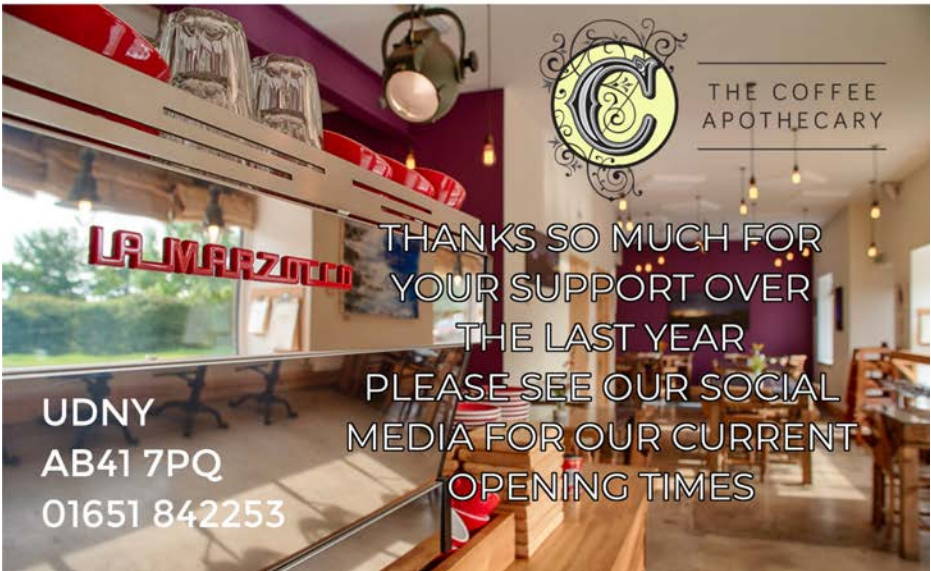
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THE COFFEE
APOTHECARY



It has been wonderful to be meeting everyone at the Bunker again. Old, young, new and regular visitors are all delighted to get back on the beach with their families.

Recently we met Jennifer who was on a mobility scooter and was determined to get on the beach. Unsurprisingly her scooter failed her on the sandy path. It was only by good luck we were in the vicinity and could offer her one of our chairs. With the help of her young son-in-law, Jennifer sat at the water's edge with her feet in the sea and she cried. It wasn't long before we were crying too!

We would like to thank our fabulous fundraisers, donors and also Abledeen abledeen.org.uk for supporting us to make all these trips to the beach possible by helping us with the equipment required. We are currently waiting with excitement for a few new items to arrive - an adapted walker for those who do not want to sit on a chair and a pram with beach wheels.

We are busy looking at electric wheelchairs which will require a little more fundraising effort (doesn't it always?) and we will let you know in the next edition of the Banter how we get on with that!

If you would like to volunteer with Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs, please get in touch. If you are curious and want to just come and see what we are about, then come and visit us down at the Bunker on the all-access pathway. We would be delighted to show you around. To book a wheelchair [phone me on 07864 350 989](tel:07864350989). You can also have a look at our website: www.balmediebeachwheelchairs.co.uk

Fiona Winstanley



Jennifer enjoying dipping her toes in the sea, thanks to Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs.



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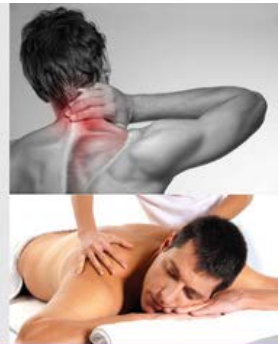
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The human body is a wonder of evolution developed from millennia of adaptation and restructuring of genetic materials passed down from species to species, generation to generation.



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In our body we have 206 bones, however when we are infants, we have closer to 300 that fuse as we grow, with over half of them in our feet and hands.

Bone itself is stronger than steel, a block of bone the size of a match box can support up to 18,000 pounds of weight (in old money that's 1,300 stone).

Helping to move and hold everything together we have 600+ skeletal muscles, ligaments, tendons, layers of connective tissue and other structures. Squished between it all carrying our blood and fluids we have 60,000 - 100,000 miles of blood vessels that if put end to end could wrap around the world 3 times!

The body is a miraculous organism that from day to day looks after itself and keeps us ticking! From time to time though things can go wrong, and we can need some help. Especially through the last year of lockdowns, we have had extra mental and physical stress. If you feel you need help, do seek out reputable skilled therapists who will be able to support your issues with acute and chronic pain or times of stress and strain.

Blair Gibb

DSM RMT HND DARM DIPMANIP

A WORD FROM THE DOC...

The New Normal



It is still difficult to think much beyond the current pandemic, with the third wave washing over us at present. We hope that the vaccines will continue to be effective at stopping severe illness and admissions to hospital, but each new variant does cause a bit of concern. With that said we still need to look past the current state of play and consider the future. The oft talked about phrase is "the new normal" and just as things were changed completely by World War Two, it is likely that the pandemic will also result in lasting changes.

Some of the changes that have happened were probably underway before Covid struck, the closure of shops on the high street and change to internet shopping for example, but others such as working from home are new. You have all been aware of the ways in which the health service has had to adapt to some changes, and there are likely to be some that will continue. The problem is that we may think that we know what changes to keep but predicting these will be quite a challenge.

Electronic consulting or video formats have appeal to some, and some patients enjoy the very direct access to advice. This is fine if you have good broadband and can afford this or the data on a smartphone contract, but less so if not. Some just cannot use these formats so there is a problem with equality of access. Phones are not much better as the number of lines into a surgery are limited and the need to take more information means that staff are now spending double the time speaking to patients compared to before the pandemic. What is most likely is that there will need to be a mix of options, but GPs are so stretched by the volume of work presenting there is real concern about the possible delayed presentations of various conditions caused by Covid.

The lack of GPs due to the sustained problems with recruitment and retention of older GPs is sadly not going to get better anytime soon. This is why it is important to try and make sure part of the 'new normal' is accepting that for some things you used to see a GP for, you may well not do so in the future. This is maybe not ideal, but GP numbers are effectively lower than before given the number working less than fulltime. There has also been a huge amount of work that used to be regarded as hospital based that has been transferred out to practices, usually with inadequate resourcing!

With all these issues what can we all do as part of the 'new normal'? The health service will be affected for many years by the pandemic, and recovery will likely be slow. It is therefore important, if not vital, that we all try to minimise the demands that we put on the service. This means being more serious than ever about looking at our lifestyles, activity and diet. The added benefit of us doing this is that we are likely to help the planet too, as the other inescapable part of the 'new normal' is the need to address our carbon output.

Using the car less, walking or cycling more are clearly good for all, but thinking about eating more locally produced food and what is in season would also bring benefits for health and the planet. Do you really need strawberries airfreighted to your supermarket in winter?

I feel that with a bit of careful consideration we can all manage to work together to help not only make things better for ourselves, but for the whole system. The 'new normal' will mean that we need to be more aware that what we do as an individual can and does have a wider impact, be it how we choose to shop, or what we expect and demand from the health service. The pandemic has certainly been a dreadful life-changing event which has caused enormous disruption, but we need to use the enforced changes to think a bit more about how we all lead our lives.

This is an opportunity none of us expected but now need to take, to try and make things better than they were in 2019. This is easier than you may think, as the steps to take are quite simple. Oh, and keep active as well, just in case you had thought I'd forgotten my usual nag!

Dr Alasdair Forbes

BELHELVIE BOWLING CLUB



Although it's been a short season, we have enjoyed some good bowling. There have been fewer competitions with other clubs but with some really good weather we have been able to spend time with our new members.

There is still time to get involved so come along on a Monday night at 6.30pm or Thursday afternoon at 1.30pm and enjoy a great pastime. We can supply bowls initially for you to have a go and all you need is flat shoes.

If you would like to know more, contact me on 07729 817718 or email marion.donald@btinternet.com

You can also get information on the website: www.belhelviebowlingclub.com

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SCOUTING IN THE PARISH



Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts have been enjoying face-to-face activities over the last term. Meeting up with friends, sometimes for the first time for a year, has been a very positive experience long overdue.

These outdoor experiences have been welcomed with smiles all round. We organised a Camp/Not Camp weekend where Beavers, Cubs and Scouts could participate in activities on the Saturday and choose if they wanted to camp in their garden (or in a dining room den) or not.



Beavers met up at Belhelvie and had a great time in the woods building a wonderful den they could all share whilst eating marshmallows cooked over a fire. Four of them were presented with their well-deserved Chief Scout's Bronze Awards. It had been a challenge for them all as most of the work they needed to do was completed at home as meetings were on Zoom only for so long. We also welcomed two new Beavers and took

the opportunity to get them invested in the Colony.

Cubs met together for activities at the wonderful Ellon Castle Gardens and thoroughly enjoyed themselves with many great activities. They built a fire in a tin can to cook their marshmallows in the woods. They also had fun with activities and puzzles contrived by cunning leaders. They had great fun and our thanks to our hosts. We can recommend a visit to this hidden gem in the middle of Ellon.

Cubs have enjoyed great activities over the term and enjoyed an evening cycle from Newmachar to Udney Station. They had previously practiced puncture repair using leaky space hoppers! Then even managed a space hopper race to check the repairs!



Scouts have been meeting outdoors regularly this term and had great activities. They punch decorated large metal cans and then were able to cook a meal on them whilst their decoration glowed through the tin.

On the weekend of Camp/Not Camp they hiked from Newburgh to Balmedie Beach where they had a BBQ, sang songs and performed skits. Well done all.

With our Centenary of Scouting in the Parish fast approaching your help is sought please. Finding a piece of land within the Parish to develop for Scouting and wider community use is high on our to-do list. Plenty open space and proximity to woodland is on our wish list but any land would be considered anywhere in the Parish of Belhelvie. Even a small plot with access where we could site two small storage containers would be a positive start. Anyone in a position to offer us suitable land under any terms and wishes to discuss further should get in touch soonest please.

Balmedie Scout Group is for girls and boys and caters for ages 6 through to 25. Beavers for ages 6-8, Cubs for ages 8-10.5, Scouts 10.5-14 and Explorer Scouts 14-18. Please note for Beavers there is a long waiting list. Add name from 5th Birthday.

If you would to find out more about volunteering with Scouting in the Parish, you are kindly invited to drop me an email at balmedie@gordondistrictscouts.org.uk or have a chat with one of our Leaders.

For all Scouting enquiries please call 07743 844040 or email as above.

Ian Thomson
Group Scout Leader



The return of plant allocation from Aberdeenshire Council for local villages provided us with an opportunity to decorate and brighten our village again. We now have two lovely new half barrels by the B999 bus stop to replace the old and broken ones, and we had some great colourful plants to fill them up.

The half barrels were very heavy, and Jenny and her father were a great help with their trailer. With help from Shuna and Jane, we cleared and re-established the flower bed. I must thank those residents who helped by watering the planter. It is quite a task to keep up with all the watering and any help is greatly appreciated. I hope that we can continue with the planters as they provide us with bright and cheerful displays.

Hilary Foxen



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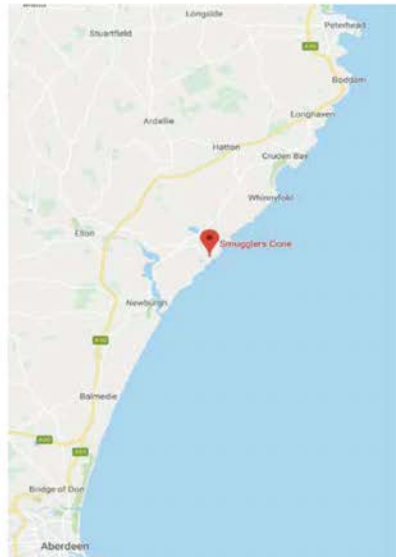
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2nd Belhelvie Brownies at Balmedie



The Brownies had a few weeks still virtually this last term but finally we are able to meet face to face again. The girls enjoyed the last few weeks face to face, and we were able to give out the badges that the girls have been working towards over the last several months. We gave out over 330 badges! Two girls were awarded their Gold Award, and 4 Silver awards and 12 Bronze awards were included in this presentation. The ice-cream van came for a visit that night as a surprise for the girls.

We had a craft night where the girls could choose different crafts to do. We also did dancing in the rain night, a messy science night, and several games were played.

We have changed the venue where we meet which has increased the space that we have available, and the girls seem to be really enjoying the new venue.

Our unit has been chosen to be one of the charities that can be supported through Tesco. Please pop a blue token in for us. We will be in the Danestone Tesco, Pittodrie Express and the Great Northern Road Express.

One of our leaders has decided to leave the unit after several years with us. We wish Tracy all the best for the future and hope that she will come and visit us from time to time. If there is anyone interested in becoming a leader or being a unit helper we would love you to come and join us.

We have space in our unit at the moment for new members. Brownies is for girls aged between 7-10 years old so if you're interested in Brownies/Girlguiding, please register (to find out about being an adult volunteer, or for your daughter to join) via the Girlguiding Scotland website www.girlguidingscotland.org.uk and click on 'Get Involved'. Contact Brown Owl (Marianne McIntosh) if you have any questions, on 01358 724231.

You can also support us through 'Easy Fundraising' (Girlguiding Scotland - 2nd Belhelvie Brownie Unit) when you make purchases online and even on Amazon through 'Amazon Smile'; you can find us under

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC035058>

Marianne McIntosh

Brown Owl, 2nd Belhelvie Brownies

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GIRLGUIDING YTHAN

The Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Rangers, and Leaders in Girlguiding Ythan are all looking forward to getting back to regular in-person meetings soon. To make sure the experience is as enjoyable as possible for both girls and leaders we need extra volunteers.

Although we would welcome helpers for any of our units, we are currently urgently looking for two new leaders to help run 1st Belhelvie Guides on a Tuesday night. There are already two experienced leaders running the unit, but they are unable to help every week, and the aim would be to share the work between four so that each volunteer only needs to help on a fortnightly basis (unless they want to do more).


Volunteering with Girlguiding Ythan makes a difference to the lives of girls in our area and is open to anyone over 18 years old. Our volunteers receive training in a wide range of skills including accounting, risk assessment, first aid, safeguarding, and leadership skills. They also receive chocolate and home bakes on a surprisingly regular basis.

If you are interested in volunteering in any of our local units, or think you can help us recruit, please get in touch with me by phone on 01224 703335 or email dcythan@gmail.com.

Susan Osbeck

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Check our facebook page for dates of Friday evening opening times in the coffee shop where the bar is open until 10pm, bookings not necessary.

www.balmedieleisurecentre.com
or our facebook page **Balmedie Leisure Centre**



1st BELHELVE RANGERS

The Rangers had a busy end of term, finishing off interest badges, skills builders, and unit meeting activities. They completed a wide range of challenges from creating a campaign to increase voting numbers for their Voting badge, to inventing a new product line and business for their Entrepreneur badge. We managed an in-person meeting by taking part in Cancer Research's Race for Life 5K around Balmedie. However, all this activity means the Rangers have almost completed their Gold Awards and will be moving on to new things. So, we are looking for new members for next term to keep our group going.

Rangers is for any young women aged 14 to 18 years old with an interest in self-development. We welcome people who are crafty, or sporty, or enjoy the outdoors, or care about the environment, or just like hanging around with friends, or are all the above and more! You do not need to have been in Guiding before. We can even help you get your Duke of Edinburgh Award.

We currently meet fortnightly on a Tuesday, but this can be changed if a different night suits more girls. If you are interested, either give me a call on 01224 703335, email 1stbelhelvierangers@gmail.com, or register online:

<https://go.girlguiding.org.uk/join-us/join-as-member/>

Susan Osbeck

BALMEDIE LEISURE CENTRE

From the beginning it was clear Covid-19 would be a challenge for Balmedie Leisure Centre. Now, as our doors re-open after a tough year, we face a slow return to normal as our customers regain confidence.

During this recovery, it is vital that we invest for the future - a new outside community play area, fully accessible and inclusive, that allows kids with or without disabilities to access and use a variety of playground equipment would be such an investment, that should pay dividends for years to come. We have received lots of thumbs up and some great comments on Facebook, but sadly only two brilliant letters of support thus far. We would be incredibly grateful if you could please spare a few minutes of your time to write a simple letter/email of support. Just a few lines are all we ask, it could make all the difference.

As always, we have a range of fitness classes to suit all ages and abilities. Most classes can be attended on a pay as you go basis. You can also purchase a 10-class pass giving you discount for bulk purchase. The staff at reception are always happy to provide information on what's available. If you are new to the village or just haven't been to the Leisure Centre for a while, feel free to pop in and see what we have going on - or why not just chill out in the Beachside Coffee Shop with friends over a coffee, or grab a spot of lunch with the family alfresco if you like. Please keep an eye out on Facebook for our monthly Friday evenings where the Bar is open until 10pm.

Bill Murray

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Scrunch it - Scrunch it up tight - if it pings back, it's a useful indicator it's soft plastic.

Co-op it - Pop it into our soft plastics recycling unit at the Balmedie Co-op.



You can also challenge your friends and family with our online interactive quiz at the following link: <https://audience.ahaslides.com/42qmxoj4oo#1> Take part yourself, then share the link at the end of the quiz to see who emerges the recycling supremo!

The Co-op have also donated another **4,000 compostable bags** to be used for the **Click and Collect and Doorstep Delivery Services** provided in Libraries throughout Aberdeenshire.

Local Community Fund Applications are being shortlisted in September 2021



The Co-op Local Community Fund supports projects across the UK that Co-op members care about. Six local causes have applied, and these causes will be shortlisted down to three chosen local causes this September by the Balmedie Co-op team.

Debbie Barclay

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BALMEDI CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

11am every Sunday at the Wee Kirk in Rowan Drive, Balmedie next to the Co-op. For details contact Rev Andy Cowie on 07715 279478

This last year has seen our Church Services stop and start. We have posted out services and held services on the telephone. It has made us all think of alternative ways of living, operating, and worshipping. A New Zealand minister friend of mine was always saying, 'Think outside the box.' We have all had to do that, this last year.

But the question is, now as we try to kick start our community, 'Will we simply climb back into our boxes?'

What did you miss when you were in lock down?

Who did you miss during lock down?

What lessons did we learn during lock down?

How many of you saved money during lock down?

I think most people missed community, face to face meetings, a chat, a hug from family and friends.

At the Wee Kirk, we have a building that is used for the Under 5's group, the Boys' Brigade (with girls), drama groups, Craft Club and coffee times. Better Balmedie also work out of the site. The community is always welcome to come and share the building, if you run a club or group or would like to see one start, do let Fiona Winstanley know, on 07541 112377. Maybe we can help.

But, as we start to regain our freedom again, let us do this carefully. We all know the virus is here to stay, but not everyone can get the vaccine. Some, because of health issues or allergies, are still as vulnerable as we all were a year ago. A caring community takes responsibility for all its members, especially its most vulnerable. Enjoy your freedom but do it wisely.

On Sunday I spoke about the parable, the pearl of great value. I asked a young boy, if he knew how they came about - the tiny particle of grit getting into the shell of an oyster or mussel and how it protects itself by forming a protective shield all around itself - similar to a stone in a shoe when it irritates and a blister forms to protect your foot. The oyster or mussel, because of irritations, produces beautiful valuable pearls.

The virus to most of us has been an irritation. Maybe we should try to copy the oyster or mussel and use the irritation to make us more 'beautiful' people - beauty being in the eye of the beholder or the community.

Great to be back! Keep Safe.

Rev. Andy Cowie



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ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL NEWS

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I write this column as the Council has just wound up for the summer recess, a summer in which I'm sure all of us will be keen to get out and about as much as possible considering last summer's necessary Covid restrictions. Through the first half of the year, your Councillors have remained busy and a number of notable matters for this ward have cropped up in Council meetings.

Meetings of Formartine Area Committee

In March we discussed a Community Council 'Boundary Request' - a resident asked for an area to be transferred from the Udney area to Belhelvie area. He had become aware that his house, outbuildings and two fields were within the Belhelvie area, however his third field was situated within the Udney area. The request was made that the third field be moved within the boundary of the Belhelvie area, so the entire property area sits within one Community Council zone. Both Community Councils were consulted, and the change thereafter agreed by Committee.

On the 18th May, we discussed the Formartine road and winter maintenance budget for the coming year, with £2,059,000 allocated to road maintenance projects (including slurry seal on the footway along Old Aberdeen Road, Balmedie), £1,056,000 to winter maintenance, £2,988,558 to capital works and lighting (including lantern replacements in Balmedie) and £913,000 to AWPR Works (including work at Blackdog). Reserve List projects (which may be carried out in the current year) include lighting column replacement on Forsyth Drive and Oldmill Crescent in Balmedie, and Laingseat Road and Denhead Crescent in Potterton. There may also be road resurfacing in Balmedie Country Park. Replacement of the swings at both Oldmill Crescent in Balmedie and Kirkhill Road in Potterton are also on the reserve list.

Meetings of Full Council

Items of note at meetings of Full Council were the review of polling places on the 17th March - in Belhelvie Parish these remain as Potterton CC and Balmedie Leisure Centre.

We also had a review of 'Virtual Meeting Arrangements' come forward for discussion at the meeting on the 29th April - the decision being made to continue with virtual meetings as the default position for meetings of Council until the 23rd September when a further review will be discussed. Work is on-going to develop an options appraisal for hybrid meetings.

Cllr Karen Adam has resigned her post and whilst Councillors Gifford, Johnston and I will all miss working with her, we also look forward to working with a new colleague whoever he or she will be.

In closing, may I remind Constituents that the Mid Formartine Councillors are always available to help you with any Council matter. Please feel free to get in touch at any time if you feel we may be able to assist.

Cllr. Andrew Hassan



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COFFEE, ZUMBA & FRIENDSHIP

At long last, with restrictions being eased and then hopefully lifted very soon, we hope to get Coffee Haven, the informal drop in coffee morning at the Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie Church open again this autumn. We still have lots of red tape to deal with, therefore no opening date yet but we are all so looking forward to welcoming back both old friends and new for a coffee or tea, fine piece and a good blether. It will be held on the first Tuesday of the month 10am - 12noon, so look out for further details of our opening. We are delighted to welcome two new members to the pastoral care committee, but we are also looking for volunteers to bake and help out at our monthly coffee mornings. If you could help, please let one of us know. Thanks in anticipation!



Great news that the Zumba class started again in the Forsyth Hall on a Monday morning. If you are interested in coming along, please contact one of us below and we can put you in touch with the teacher for further details.

Our sincere thanks goes to all the ladies who have continued to knit for Malawi during lockdown. If you have anything that needs uplifted, then please call one of us.



And as usual, if anyone is struggling with loneliness and needs a chat then please give one of us a call.

Fiona Miller

Pastoral Care Team

Fiona - 07816 657742

Marianne - 07779 447318

Janette - 01358 742100

More info at: www.belhelviechurch.com or on Belhelvie Church Facebook page.

SCHOOL HOLIDAY DATES

Aug - Dec 2021

Aug Tues 17th	First day of Autumn term	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon
Sept Fri 24th	Local holiday	BoDA
Sept Mon 27th	Local holiday	BoDA
Oct Fri 8th	Last day of Autumn term	BoDA
Oct Fri 15th	Last day of Autumn term	Balmedie, Ellon
Oct Mon 25th	First day of Winter term	BoDA
Nov Mon 1st	First Day of Winter term	Balmedie, Ellon
Nov Thurs 18th	In-service day	Balmedie, Ellon
Nov Fri 19th	In-service day	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon
Dec Tues 21st	Last day of Winter term	Balmedie, BoDA, Ellon

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Ambulance/ Police/ Fire Brig.	emergency	999
Police Scotland	non-emergencies	101
Community Policeman	Douglas Donald	101
Fire Brigade	non-emergencies	01224 696666
NHS 24	(18.00 to 7.00)	0800 111 999
Scottish Gas	emergency line	0845 6008855
Scottish & Southern Energy	emergency line	0800 300 999
Scottish Water	emergency line	0845 6008855
ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL:	HQ, Gordon House, Inverurie	01467 628011
	CLlr Paul Johnston	07799 582879
	CLlr Jim Gifford	07766 497856
	CLlr Andrew Hassan	07388 956123
	Dog Warden	01467 628195
	Environmental Health	08456 081207
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS:		
Beavers (Balmedie)	} All enquiries to Ian Thomson balmedie@gordondistrictscouts.org.uk	07743 844040
Cubs (Potterton)		
Scouts, Explorer Scouts		
Rainbows (Balmedie)		Claire via website www.girlguiding.org.uk
Rainbows (Potterton)	Pauline Wood	01358 743002
Brownies (Balmedie)	Marianne McIntosh	01358 724231
Brownies (Potterton)	Katherine Hebron Scott	01330 833448
Guides (Balmedie)	Christine Coldwells	07766 050457
Rangers (Potterton)	Susan Osbeck	01224 703335
CHURCHES:		
Belhelvie Ch. of Scotland	Rev Paul McKeown	01358 742227
Balmedie Congregational Church	Rev Andy Cowie	01224 703248
Catholic Church BoD & Ellon	Fr Patrick	01358 724580
MEDICAL CENTRES:		
Scotstown, Bridge of Don	Cairfold Rd AB22 8LD	0345 1897070
Udny Station	Woodside Terr AB41 6PJ	0345 1897070
Danestone, Bridge of Don	Fairview St AB22 8ZP	01224 822866
Oldmachar, Bridge of Don	Jesmond Dr AB22 8UR	0345 3370510
Oldmachar, King Street	526 King St AB24 5RS	0345 3370510
Ellon	Schoolhill, Ellon AB41 9JH	0345 3371150
DENTISTS:		
Bridge of Don Practice	2 Balgownie Rd AB23 8JP	01224 703010
Grandholm Practice	Grandholm AB22 8BH	01224 701890
Kingseat Practice	Kingseat Business Park AB21 0AZ	01651 260200
Oldmachar Dental Care	Jesmond Drive AB22 8UR	01224 827095

SCHOOLS:

Balmedie Primary School	HT Douglas Ford	01358 742474
Bridge of Don Academy	HT Daphne McWilliam	01224 707583
Ellon Academy	HT Pauline Buchan	01358 720715

COMMUNITY CENTRES:

Balmedie Leisure Centre	Bill Murray	01358 743725
Potterton Community Centre	Joanne Murray	01358 727910
Belhelvie CC (Green Hut)	Joanne Murray	01358 727910

POST OFFICES:

Balmedie PO	Eigie Road, Balmedie	01358 742556
Potterton PO	Potterton AB23 8UY	01358 742670
Balmedie Pharmacy	Dickies, 3 Rowan Drive	01358 741226
First Responders	Marc Wood	07789 965236
Belhelvie Community Council	David Wallace	01358 743595
Belhelvie Community Trust	Rosie Nicol	01358 742557
Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs	Fiona Winstanley	07864 350988
Balmedie Health Walks	Dan Wood	07851 733096
Belhelvie Banter	Jess Petrie	07763 314579
Balmedie Out of School Club	Lynne Fyfe	07920 295508
Balmedie House Eventide Home	Ann Reid, Service Manager	01358 742244
Balmedie Library	Debbie Barclay	01358 742045
Potterton Community Group	Caroline Anderson	07920 280212
Better Balmedie	Allan Jeffrey	01358 743851
Neighbourhood Watch	Paul Collier (Belhelvie)	07825 216233
Belhelvie Bowling Club	Marion Donald	07729 817718
Scottish Women's Institute (SWI)	Elaine Strachan	01358 743173
The Sand Bothy Project	Rosie Nicol	01358 742557
The Sensory Garden	Joni Corbett	07522 987856

KIDS' STUFF

Please check current status of groups as arrangements may vary due to current restrictions

Kindergym	}	Phone the Leisure Centre to check details of these first 6 groups.	01358 743114
Messy Monkeys			
Bouncy Tots			
Gymnastics			
Twos Group			
Baby Clinic			
Soo Yang Do		Danny Collins	01651 869005
Danz Creations		Miss Simpson	01358 743661
Balmedie Out of School Club		Lynne Fyfe	07920 295508
Mainly Music, Forsyth Hall		Jeanette Lamb	01358 742684
Balmedie Craft Club		Catherine Cassie	01358 743114
Under 5s Rhymetime (monthly)		Library	01358 742045
Baby & Toddlers/ Messy Play		Diane Cassie	07850 235215
Links Nursery, Balmedie		Lyndsay Fleming	01358 743094



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pharm.balmedie4338@nhs.scot

Opening Hours

Monday to Friday:
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Saturday:
9.00 - 12.30

Sunday: CLOSED

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- Scotstown Medical Group
- Danestone Medical Practice
- Old Machar Medical Practice (Jesmond and King St Practices)

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- Impetigo treatment
- Emergency hormonal contraception
- Provision of compliance aids
- Offshore medical supplies
- Disposal of unwanted and expired medicines

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