

BELHELVIE BANTER

Balmedie : Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog



EDITION 45

DECEMBER 2021

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EDITORIAL

The Banter production team have been having long discussions and deliberations about future plans for our community magazine. For some time now, we have been struggling to keep up with producing four editions per year. Banter has improved and grown over the years as has the amount of work needed to sustain the high standard we are proud to have achieved. Lack of volunteers to support production has also played a part.

We've asked around, and it appears that people do still want Banter produced and delivered across the parish. For this reason, and because we really do not want our community magazine to disappear, we have made the decision to experiment and see how it goes with producing TWO editions of Banter each year: Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter.

This would affect all of us: advertisers, contributors, distributors as well as our readers. Banter seems to be used in different ways. Some profess to reading it from cover to cover. Some use it to keep up to date with community groups, while others keep each current edition to hand for contact details of local businesses and events. However it is used, if there is a demand, we would hate to see Banter disappear.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our readers, for the positive feedback you have given us about Banter. We are also eternally grateful to our advertisers, contributors and distributors for supporting Banter and enabling the production and distribution of our wee magazine across the communities of our parish. We are many small cogs in a big wheel!

Jess Petrie, Editor

The work involved in producing The Belhelvie Banter is all done voluntarily. At the time of going to press the information within this edition is understood to be correct but no responsibility can be accepted by the Banter Team for any errors. We do our best!

ADVERTISE WITH BANTER

If you would like to advertise with Banter, please email belhelviebanter@live.co.uk.

Help is available for advert design if necessary.

A5 PAGES	SINGLE EDITION	FOUR EDITIONS
Whole back page advert	£120	£100 each ed.
Whole page advert	£90	£80 each ed.
Half page advert	£45	£40 each ed.
Quarter page advert	£25	£20 each ed.
Small Ad	£13	£13 each ed.

2022 BANTER DEADLINES	SPRING/SUMMER (Ed 46)	AUTUMN/WINTER (Ed 47)
Articles & ads	Fri 22 April	Fri 23 Sept
Delivery begins	Sat 21 May	Sat 22 Oct

Our cover photo, taken by Banter editor, shows one of our local posties, Derek Shaw, who, like another man in red, will be at his busiest over the festive season. Thank you for your wonderful service, Derek - you and Santa make a great team!



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- NHS Medicines: Care & Review Service (previously CMS)
- Smoking cessation service
- Treatment of urinary tract infections in women
- Gluten-free scheme
- Impetigo treatment
- Emergency hormonal contraception
- Provision of compliance aids
- Offshore medical supplies
- Disposal of unwanted and expired medicines

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Find current and all 44 back copies of Banter on our website www.belhelviebanter.org
 Thanks to local IT expert Philip McHardy of 'Red Doodle' for keeping everything up to date.

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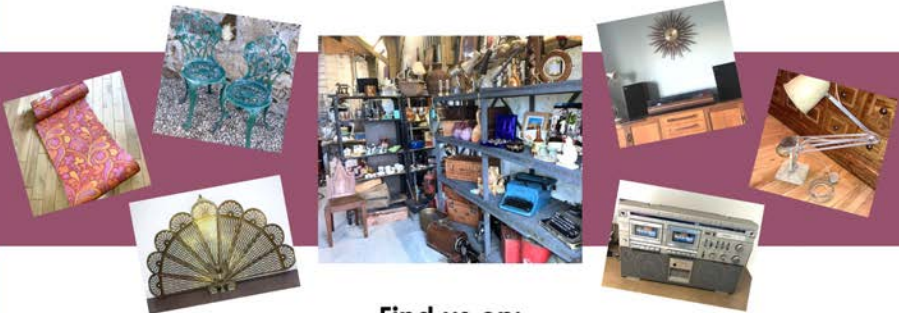
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OLD SCHOOL VINTAGE

Those of you who are avid followers of Drew Pritchard (with the bunnet) from 'Salvage Hunters', or those with longer memories who can identify with Lovejoy, will be delighted to know that we have our very own Drew/Lovejoy setting up business in Belhelvie parish. You will find Craig Lamont and his son Chris (pictured left) at 'Old School Vintage' at the old

mushroom farm near Balmedie beach. One look inside their large premises immediately transports one back into the past, full of memories associated with good quality furniture, antique china, ornate mirrors and so much more.

It's testament to their talent in sourcing quality vintage/antique items, that they have indeed had dealings with the afore-mentioned Drew Pritchard who bought from them a vintage toy monkey (featured in an episode of 'Salvage Hunters') and resold it at almost ten times the price he paid! Add to this the fact that this father-and-son team are regularly sought after by production companies sourcing items for TV programmes and films, and we can't quite believe that this service is now on our doorstep.

Selling all sorts of vintage and retro goods, 'Old School Vintage' provides a service for professional recyclers and hobbyists alike. Their premises is stacked high with a cornucopia of household items, chairs, tables, garden furniture, office equipment, electrical equipment (all PAT tested) - small items, huge items - you name it, they either have it or will source it for you - and always with the friendliest most efficient service. You must go and see it for yourselves!

The present set-up evolved when Craig's wife Gail, having reached the end of her tether, finally snapped, and told her husband that either he, or his mass of vintage items accumulated over his 20-year hobby, had to move out! Thankfully, Craig made the right decision and moved to business premises at the old mushroom farm. 'Old School Vintage' opened its doors to the public in November (open daily 10am-5pm or by appointment by phoning 07525 900884). They also do online sales and post up-to-date info on their Facebook page. Buying and selling, they also do house, garage, shed or loft clearances, aiming to promote recycling and reduce landfill. They are certified by SEPA for waste-carrying and have a link to charity shops which they regularly supply with free goods.

Do pay Craig and Chris a visit - you are certain of a friendly welcome and you won't be disappointed. It is so exciting to see a hobby that grew out of hand growing into a successful eco-aware business. It's a benefit to our community... and a big relief to Craig's wife, I'm sure.

Editor

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BALMEDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

We hope that everyone is safe and well in the Balmedie School and wider community. At this point in the year, it may be useful to share some feedback on school life in ongoing COVID times.

With so many things impacted not just in school but in general life and how we live it, there are likely more questions than answers - even now (and the answers still can change weekly!). Where once we were most comfortable with being planned well in advance, we continue to find ourselves in a place where it feels that we remain a step behind COVID and await guidance on the next set of adjustments to be taken, on a weekly updated basis.

We are fortunate to have an excellent NHS partnership and fantastic support network between our schools and education service during such challenging times. There is more certainty and stability in relation to the main organisation and functioning of our school - adversity brings out the best of us and no better example of this than the incredible response, efforts and flexibility of our entire school staff throughout this pandemic.

We are now in a place where we are getting very much 'back on track' and we continue to look forwards and taking significant steps towards re-establishing the many lost opportunities COVID has postponed for us all.

At the heart of school recovery has been a very firm focus on the health and wellbeing of the children and I am pleased to say that almost all children have settled back into school tremendously well - everything right now is about getting back to the basics positively and building a positive momentum in all classes; promoting high levels of involvement, participation and a feeling within each child that they are comfortable and have a sense of being 'back on track'.

A main focus during our first term has been to encourage achievement, safety and inclusion. Via 'online' assemblies, we are presently exploring what it takes to be an achiever e.g. effort, lots of practise, not giving up, supporting each other, addressing any barriers that children may feel prevent them from making progress etc.

For some children this has been welcomed very naturally, for others there may be new challenges now and we all are requiring some time, support and adjustment just to consider how some aspects of school life (and general life) may still require some ongoing change or review. We also very much enjoy taking little steps towards reintroducing the 'normal' things we may have been missing and look optimistically towards a gradual (and measured) phasing in of more familiar school activities/events as time will allow.

Finally, I would also like to express our thanks from the school and the children to our families, FOBs/PTA and school partners for their ongoing patience, understanding and support as we head into the winter where I am sure more unknown challenges await...

Dougie Ford
Head Teacher



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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS

We hope everyone is keeping well and safe. As you may be aware, at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, all Community First Responders were temporarily stood down by the Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS). However, in September 2020, we were issued with additional PPE and received specific Covid-19 CPR training which allowed us to start responding again which was fantastic news. We can be called upon by 999 despatchers to attend medical emergencies where we can help whilst an ambulance is on its way.



This year, First Responders Angela Cadger and Theresa Thomson were presented with a beautiful commemorative coin and a thank you card from the Scottish Ambulance Service. The coin represents a genuine thank you on behalf of SAS for their enduring commitment and support to their local community and the ambulance service in Scotland during the COVID pandemic.

We maintain the local public access defibrillators in Belhelvie, Potterton, Balmedie village and Balmedie country park, ensuring pads are in date and that the battery is working as it should, as well

as bearing the cost of insuring them against damage/theft. We receive no state funding, relying entirely on donations. If you would like to support us, we would be very grateful, and any donations can be made via the donate button on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityFirstResponders

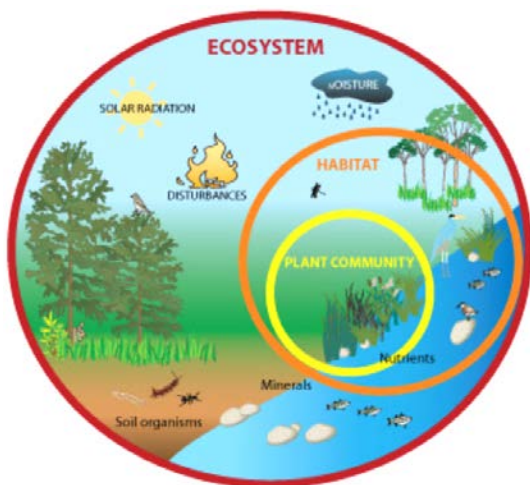
We are looking to do some extra fundraising in the new year so we can install more public access defibrillators in our community as we believe that you cannot have enough of these life saving devices around!

We are also looking for more volunteers to join our team. Unfortunately, SAS are not looking to carry out the training courses before April 2022 for new first responders. However, if you are interested in becoming a first responder in future, please let us know and we shall keep you updated once we hear from SAS that the courses are up and running again.

If you are interested in joining our team as a non-responder, perhaps helping with development, secretarial and financial/fundraising tasks, then we would love to hear from you. Please contact us via email on BelhelvieCFR@gmail.com. For current information, please see our Facebook Page.

Theresa Thomson

BIODIVERSITY - IN YOUR HANDS



When we think of ecosystems, we think of the environment, but people are part of ecosystems. We benefit from the services they provide, from clean water to the health benefits of a countryside or beach walk.

An ecosystem is a geographic area where plants, animals and other organisms, as well as weather and landscapes, work together to form a bubble of life.

A sense of responsibility for the environment and biodiversity is a core value in Scottish culture.

Children and adults experience more first-hand learning about biodiversity in the open spaces around them, and this reinforces the demand for action at all levels to enrich biodiversity, not only in our rural environments but in our parks and golf courses, sports fields, transport corridors, green and brown-field sites.

Although our environments are of good quality they are changing and we continue to lose biodiversity, albeit at a lower rate but the loss is continuing. For example, there may be a tipping point where pressure on an ecosystem leads to gradual change up to a threshold beyond which there is a sudden, perhaps irreversible change.

A key issue is the intensity of resource use. Intensive and unsustainable resource use lies at the heart of much biodiversity loss in both terrestrial (dry land) and marine environments, but these have also been important factors in our economic development. Sustainable development, and sustainable resource use, recognises the need to balance social, economic, and environmental interests to ensure that the drive for economic growth does not compromise the welfare and quality of life of current and future generations. The continuing loss of biodiversity suggests that we have not yet achieved this balance.

Both adults and children in our communities can take a leading role to increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity, by restoring biodiversity in our urban, rural, and marine environments by engaging more in the conservation and enhancement of our landscapes and ecosystems. Participating in citizen science through community projects or recording biodiversity, for example recording pollinators and plants, can all contribute to improving biodiversity in our local areas. These interactions with our environment may also inform better planning decisions that can affect our future environment and possible biodiversity loss.



Recording biodiversity has become easier and faster in our digital age with the use of mobile phones. Many free Apps are available that enable us to get outdoors and start recording plants, pollinators, birds, and other wildlife using recognition technology that make it a great activity for adults and children. Various Apps can even tell you what to look for in your area according to season, like the iRecord Butterflies App. Community projects are a key way to record biodiversity, not only using technology but taking a simple notebook out when exploring and recording any interesting finds. Why not try this in your neighbourhood or while visiting Balmedie Country Park, where there is lots to see and record.

Records can be logged as part of a community or school project on biodiversity and/or directly logged by individuals or communities with NESBREC (North East Scotland Biological Records Centre www.nesbrec.org.uk), who also want to understand biodiversity in our areas and its sustainability and resilience under human and environmental pressures. All records made to NESBREC are also taken into account as part of the planning process that may help aid better planning decisions regarding impacts on the environment and biodiversity.

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FAMILY FIRST

A Sense of Love for Christmas

Thinking about Christmas this year can be a difficult thought for many, with the last minute disappointment of 'Christmas is cancelled' last year due to Covid. Every day there seems to be a new depressing news report about Christmas:

- 'Glasgow Christmas market and lights switch on scrapped' - BBC 27.10.21
- 'Christmas tree prices skyrocket due to rising shipping costs' - Daily Mail 21.10.21
- 'Christmas toys: shops admit demand could outstrip supply' - iNews 21.09.21
- 'Families told to freeze Christmas dinner as festive shortages loom' - Evening Standard 1.10.21
- 'How to survive a(nother) Covid Christmas' - The Telegraph 29.10.21.

Recently I spoke to two generations from the opposite ends of time. The first, a wonderful lady in her 94th year who has celebrated 93 Christmases in very different and at times difficult circumstances. From her childhood in a house full of love and laughter to her time as a young adult during WWII, her adult life as a wife, as a mother, as a grandmother, as a widow and as a lady nearing the end of her days. When asked what her favourite thing about Christmas is, she replied, 'I love the singing. The hymns. My favourite is 'Good King Wenceslas'.

At the other end of the sands of time is the response from two young primary aged children aged 8 and 4 who haven't had nearly as many Christmases, but still know the wonder and excitement of this time of year. When asked what they see, hear, smell, taste and touch when they hear the word Christmas they responded with:

See: snowmen, Christmas trees, snowy forests, family - sometimes our whole family, Christmas crackers and reindeer.

Hear: Santa, Santa's sleigh bells, Christmas songs, family playing games, people being happy.

Taste: biscuits and Christmas pudding.

Smell: sweets, biscuits and snow.

Touch: snow, the Elf on the shelf, giving presents and cuddles.

Across the generations one thing is clear, the sense of love felt at Christmas is something that can't be taken away from us or cancelled at the last minute. So this Christmas, rather than thinking about the things that might happen to spoil Christmas, why don't we hold on to the sense of love that has been felt across the generations.

However you celebrate the winter festivals in your home, wishing you and your loved ones a Christmas full of love.

Emma



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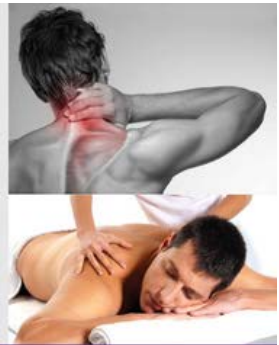
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At MISS we would like to ensure that our members feel supported at any time of day, evening, or holidays. Our support includes monthly support groups, next pregnancy support, phone service and social media pages. We work closely with the Bereavement Team at Aberdeen Maternity Hospital, so if there are any questions we cannot answer, or you would like additional advice, we can get in touch with them and receive a quick response.

Call the number below if you would like help. Calls are free, confidential, and not recorded. One of our MISS volunteers will be available to speak to you at any time of day. This could be speaking on the phone, Whatsapp or by message. We have a male and female volunteer available. We are open throughout all holidays and seasons, as we appreciate that every day can be a milestone or anniversary for you.

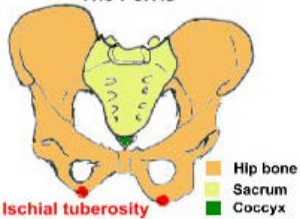
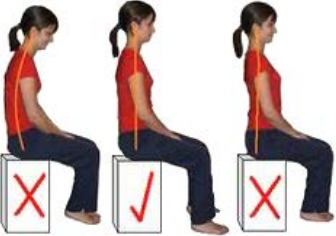
You can find all the information you need on our website www.miss-support.org.uk or email us at advice@miss-support.org.uk

Abi Clarke Chairperson/Founder MISS
Tel 07808 638428



CAN YOU WAG YOUR TAIL WHEN YOU SIT?

Try it! If you can, it means you are sitting the way you are designed to and not putting your back muscles, joints, and ligaments on strain!

<p>The Pelvis</p>  <p>The spine attaches to the top of the sacrum - where you sit are those bony bits you feel when you sit on your hands. As you see, your tailbone/coccyx attaches to the sacrum - if you had a tail, you should be able to wag it if you are sitting correctly! Don't sit on your tail!</p>	 <p>Sitting on those bony bits/ischial tuberosities is the safest position for your back. You don't want to slump and 'hang' on your ligaments and put pressure on your tailbone. Neither do you want to put your back on strain by sitting up too straight. This tense posture affects breathing and energy levels. You are aiming for the middle one!</p>
--	--

Your pelvis is the foundation for your body. If it is out of balance, then there will be strain. Add long hours of sitting, especially when working at computers at awkward heights, then this compounds any tension. Slumping and slouching in settees compounds the problem. Taking charge of posture is all important.

Your pelvis needs to be under you when you are sitting so you need your bottom behind you. That allows your tailbone to be free. If you sit with your bottom tucked underneath, you wouldn't be able to wag your tail!

We want the rounded bony sitting bones to roll forward. When they roll back, the trunk collapses. Our hip joints are the rotation points - not various parts of the spine!

How to sit

- **You want your bony bits - the sitting bones - to be on the chair.**
- **Your feet need to be on the ground.** If they don't reach, put a book under them!
- **Thus, your weight is on the sitting bones, with some support from your feet.**
- **Now you can use your hips to move forward and backward - no strain on the back.**

With this stable base it is easier to sit in a more relaxed way, breathing and letting the shoulders relax. Lengthening the spine right up to the neck is now the goal. This is difficult and sometimes impossible to achieve with very tight muscles - this is where massage can help. Increased awareness will help you to relax your neck muscles and keep your neck over the rest of your spine - no more thrusting the chin forward - keep the back of the neck long.

If this is difficult, ask your therapist for advice. You may need to see an osteopath to realign parts of your spine.


If you are working at a computer, then do try to use the above advice and take frequent breaks. A short stand up and shake with some focused breathing can be enough to prevent tension accumulating with the resultant headaches and discomfort.

Being at the right height for your computer and allowing the fingers to do the work without holding shoulders up to your ears, will help soo much.

Maggie Brooks-Carter DO, RN, SMTO

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WHITE HORSE UPDATE



Mario has been battling his way through red tape and restrictions to try and finalise his plans for the White Horse. Hopefully things will get going soon and we will all be able to enjoy dining and drinking at the White Horse again. We'll keep you posted.



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ALL CHANGE

There have been some changes at our local Police Station this year. We now have a new Community Beat Officer in Belhelvie Parish. PC Stacy Morrison was appointed to the role recently. She is working with communities and runs mobile surgeries throughout the Formartine area.

She is pictured below carrying out speed checks with school pupils who have been learning how the laser equipment works and asking drivers how they feel about speeding past their schools. This falls under



Operation Cedar which tackles speeding and antisocial driving across the north-east with a view in reducing casualties on our roads.

Based at Ellon Police Station, PC Morrison works on a shift basis, so can attend our area at various times during the day should there be a need.

Another relatively new addition to the Formartine area is Inspector Mark Young who has been settling into the role by meeting with residents, businesses, councillors and local groups. He has taken on the post after an extensive career in the police force. Through questioning locals and

reviewing incidents in the area, Inspector Young recognises that each community in Formartine has differing concerns, so the policing style for each community must be adaptable to their needs so the best service possible is delivered. He believes that police officers should be accessible, visible, and approachable and will endeavour to increase high visibility foot patrols across Formartine.

If you have any Belhelvie Parish issues that you would like to discuss, please call 101 and ask for PC Stacy Morrison at the Ellon Police office. You can also email Stacy at MidFormartineCPT@Scotland.pnn.police.uk

Of course, always call 999 in an emergency situation. 101 is for non-urgent cases.

Our nearest Police Station is at Bridge Street in Ellon AB41 9AX and is open 24 hours a day. More information can be found at: www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/call-handling



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BLACKDOG NEWS

The last three months have been a busy time for the village of Blackdog, with a number of activities and actions having been taken to improve the village services and to enhance the surrounding environment.

In September, we engaged East Grampian Coastal Partnership to host a Blackdog beach clean-up and with 14 volunteers we collected 163kg of waste off the beach and sand dunes. In October, 8 volunteers took part in a village tidy-up which resulted in 12 large bags of rubbish, wire-mesh fencing, tyres, wood and plastic waste etc. being collected, which filled the van we used to take the rubbish to a licensed waste facility. The amount of waste collected was testament to a great effort by our volunteers!

One thing that was disappointing, during the tidy-ups, was to see how much fly-tipping of waste there has been both in the village itself and in the surrounding areas. With licensed waste facilities and Council support available to remove larger items of waste streams, it is hard to comprehend why people continue to use the countryside and village communal areas to dispose of their waste.

Working with Aberdeenshire Council, the village has secured more communal bins within the community, which are dual purpose for both general and dog waste. These have been placed in areas where we feel will be the most benefit to keeping the village tidy and we hope that the added units will encourage both residents and visitors to dispose of their waste in a responsible manner.

The Council have also approved the siting of glass recycling units within the village, which are long overdue, and the three units should be available to our residents in the coming weeks.

A number of new park benches will be provided and sited within the village. These will be placed in regular walking areas and will benefit all our residents, especially those who may have age or mobility restrictions. We are also working with the Council to ensure that we have consistent adopted grass-cutting services within the village to support keeping Blackdog tidy.

Over the coming weeks we plan to engage the Council to ensure that everything is being done to educate and support the reduction of vehicle speeding within the village, which is a safety concern to all residents. The number of vehicles accessing/egressing the village has substantially increased over the last couple of years, with many of the vehicles not adhering to the speed limits. With the number of children and dogs residing within the village on the increase, this issue has become a serious safety concern.

Over the coming months, there will be an increase in heavy vehicles through the village as the deforestation of the North Woods takes place, prior to handing the land over to Kirkwood Homes. This is another safety concern and we will be working with the land-owner to ensure that vehicles are properly controlled during the operation.

As winter approaches we have been surveying the number of sand/grit bins that are in the village and feel that extra bins would benefit the local area during severe frost/ice conditions. We will engage the appropriate Council Department for their advice and support, and hope to be identified as one of the priority areas for the large gritter lorries to service, as we have had a number of incidents over the last two years, due to icy road conditions, occurring at the new entrance to and exit from the village.

Last but not least, we are looking to see if there is anyone in the village, or throughout the surrounding communities, who may have old newspaper cuttings/historical articles about Blackdog that we could share with the community. The aim is to generate more interest in the history of the village. If you have anything that you feel would be newsworthy then please feel free to send to Alan Neave at East Blackdog Steading bigneavey@aol.com, who will be looking to collate the information.

Many thanks!

Alan Neave



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A WORD FROM THE DOC...

A Super Pandemic Christmas

It hardly seems credible, but we are heading towards a second pandemic Christmas, although some seem to think that Covid is no longer an issue! In reality, things are on a knife edge and this winter is something that we are not really looking forward to from a medical point of view.

If you are eligible, then please take up the offer of your Covid booster jab and please make sure you get your flu jab too. One important point about both Covid booster and flu jabs, please DO NOT contact your GP practice. The co-ordination and administration of these jabs has been taken away from GP practices, so PLEASE do not further affect the already overcrowded phone lines by calling your GP to enquire about them. You will receive a letter telling you when and where to go. You can also look on NHS Inform, the Scottish Health Service website for details of how to get vaccinated. If you are housebound, and unable to get to the vaccine centres, there are contact details provided to call to let the teams know, so that your vaccines can be administered at your home.

We remain hugely busy, and currently we are consulting with very high numbers of people suffering with what the media have dubbed the 'Super Cold'. This is another unintended consequence of the actions taken to limit Covid. Due to the rules imposed to stop one virus, we have had hardly any of the more usual viruses either. As a result, our immune systems have become somewhat unfit. Normally your immune system is working away protecting you, but the pandemic restrictions have effectively left our systems, to use a sporting phrase, lacking match practice!

Now as restrictions are easing and we are beginning to get out and about again to the cinema, the pub or meeting with larger groups of friends, the ordinary common cold viruses can take advantage of this, as has always happened in the winter. When the cold virus strikes, it will mean that you are likely to have more marked and more prolonged symptoms than usual. Hence the so called 'Super Cold'. It is still a virus and sadly there are still no cures for the common cold, and antibiotics DO NOT help. Please bear in mind, you still need to check that you are not affected by Covid - the ONLY way to know is to do a test.

So when (note I don't say "if") you are afflicted, please follow the usual symptom control advice, taking rest, fluids, Paracetamol and stay at home to avoid spreading it to others - and do, at least, a lateral flow test to check for Covid. If needed you can see a pharmacist for advice, and under the Pharmacy First scheme even get some remedies for free. As many of us have not had a cold for almost two years, it is no surprise that when you do get one you will feel absolutely awful and because of our lower than usual immunity it will take much longer to settle.

There also been significant media coverage about the supposed lack of face-to-face appointments. GP practices are required to work under the still existing emergency measures. We are obliged to ensure that we keep our surgeries Covid secure, as many patients who do attend are still vulnerable to the effects of the virus, despite the vaccine programme. Rest assured, if the clinical situation requires a face-to-face appointment, you will be seen. There are many situations where phone or other 'remote' consultations are safe, and indeed many patients have expressed a preference in terms of convenience and access. With COP-26 having happened in Glasgow, and the focus on the climate emergency, not making a journey (when it is clinically safe and appropriate) to a physical appointment is also better for the planet! It needs to be pointed out that hospital specialists in almost all fields are still doing much of their initial consultations in this way, with, it seems, hardly any criticism. The other gain is that some consultations, particularly around mental health issues, could be very long, and patients often grumbled about sitting for a long time in the waiting room when they were next. This happens far less now, so there are some positive aspects to this enforced change for everyone.

Practices are indeed open - they never closed - but entry is necessarily controlled to keep everyone safe. I only mention this again, as I am still amazed that many seem to believe the stories which have more to do with newspaper circulation than facts. A degree of festive good cheer and pleasantness would be very welcomed by GP staff, as the almost daily abuse and nastiness, fed by the continuing media misinformation, makes an already difficult job much harder.

All of us are heartily sick and tired of the pandemic and it is now, more than ever, that we need to try and take a little bit of time and try to be kind to one other. Please do not take out any frustrations you may feel on staff who only wish to help you. Much of these frustrations have been caused by the world-changing events inflicted by the nearly two years of pandemic we have endured so far. This goes for all areas of public service, not only GP surgeries.

Christmas is coming up very fast and I hope we can all have a fun, safe and enjoyable time and, who knows, in 2022 we just might see an end to the pandemic. I certainly hope so, and may I wish everyone a super, happy, healthy, Christmas time!

Dr Alasdair Forbes



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BETTER BALMEDIE

In the plant world, it would appear that the colourful blooms of summer have lasted longer than usual. Trees have changed from forty shades of green to all hues of yellow, gold brown to deep red. Swallows have flown, gaggles of noisy geese fly overhead, signalling autumn's end with winter on its way.

At the time of writing, bedding plants are being uplifted and replaced with bulbs and winter-blooming flowers. Thanks to a donation by our local business Lawrence of Kemnay, daffodil bulbs have been planted throughout the village.

Bays have been formed to store materials (topsoil, compost, slabs etc). Gutterings on shed roofs now drain to water butts. Grass has been cut. Vegetation and overhanging branches have been cut and paths cleared. Throughout winter, more planters will be built and we will complete features behind the Wee Kirk.

Many thanks to all who have helped to support our work. New volunteers are always welcome. Just come along with your enthusiasm to make Balmedie better. We meet at 10.00am on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Allan Jeffrey

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POTTERTON WALKING GROUP

The walking group usually meet every 3 weeks. Presently, we are staying local and using public transport where possible. Lately, we have been taking the 290 bus into Bridge of Don and walking round Perwinnes Moss, returning via Lochside. The last walk for 2021 is Tuesday 30th November and we will resume in March 2022.



If you wish to join in, contact me at
johnhutcheon1@gmail.com
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SCOUTING IN THE PARISH



Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorer Scouts are all meeting weekly now and enjoying a wide range of activities and experiences with their friends. We cater for girls and boys in all our sections.

Outdoor experiences are always welcome and treasured with smiles all round. Cubs went off to camp at Templars Park and Scouts had a slightly damp weekend under canvas at Daviot Campsite. Beavers have been meeting up in the woods, down the beach and at Seaton Park and have been having a great time. Most of our sections



have access to indoor accommodation now but will still try and get out when weather permits.

All sections have very strong memberships which is so pleasing to see. Our 22 Volunteer Leaders continue to deliver exciting programmes of activities to all sections and are to be commended for their dedication.

HELP NEEDED - whilst our leader numbers are good, movement of leaders from Beavers to other sections have left our team of 4 there in need of some help. Additional adult volunteers are needed now to support the team and allow more flexibility on a Wednesday evening. Please contact me if you'd like more info on helping us.

Thanks to generous funding from our local Co-op store, through their member programme, we were in the happy position of being able to buy 12 new hike tents for our Explorers and Scouts to enjoy. Whilst recent weather has been too inclement, they're looking forward to making full use of them in the next term.



With our Centenary of Scouting in the Parish almost upon us, 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 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 meet Wednesdays, Cubs for ages 8-10.5 meet Mondays and Tuesdays, Scouts for ages 10.5-14 meet Fridays, and Explorer Scouts for ages 14-18, various days. Please note for Beavers there can be a long waiting list. Please add your child's name from their 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



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2nd Belhelvie Brownies at Balmedie

How time flies when you are having fun! It seems no time since our last article was in the Banter. We have now been face-to-face since summer, and both the girls and the leaders are enjoying being able to be back face-to-face.

The girls have been working on their 'Skills for my future' theme and in particular have been looking at jobs that are more often thought of as jobs done by males. This was to make the girls aware that any job can be done by girls too. We have had some guest speakers in - a doctor, an engineer and KR Steel (construction). The girls really enjoyed their speeches and had lots of questions for them. They thoroughly enjoyed the task that KR Steel gave them which was to construct a building using marshmallows and cocktail sticks.

We also had a visit to the Science Centre where one girl was presented with her Gold Award (highest award in Brownies) and four girls got their Silver Award. They particularly enjoyed learning about robots at the Science Centre.

The girls also did some sewing and some 'taste testing' to see what the same type of food tasted like, i.e. Asda's own orange juice versus a known brand. It was quite an interesting outcome.



This coming term we are going to be having a fundraising night for Children in Need. The theme for Girlguiding this year for Children in Need is 'Strictly Come Dancing'. The girls are going to be doing different dances for the night. Should anyone wish to contribute to this worthwhile cause, here is the link to use.

www.justgiving.com/fundraising/2ndbelhelviebrownies

You can also support us through 'Easy Fundraising' (Girlguiding Scotland - 2nd Belhelvie Brownie Unit) when you make purchases online and on Amazon through 'Amazon Smile', you can find us at <https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/SC035058>.

Brownies are for girls aged 7-10 and we are always looking for new girls or leaders in our area. If anyone is interested, please register your interest via the Girlguiding Scotland website www.girlguidingscotland.org.uk and click 'Get Involved'.

Feel free to contact me if you have any questions, on 01358 724231.

Marianne McIntosh

Brown Owl, 2nd Belhelvie Brownies

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It really has been wonderful to see the girls in person every week again. The Guides have done very well this term with one group earning their First Aid stage 4 badge, and the other their Camp stage 4 badge. In between, the Guides have had a go at some tennis skills, inventing their own games, making a windsock, and sharing positive

messages. Our last night of term was spent outside around a campfire with marshmallows and campfire songs. We've tried to make as much use of the nice weather as possible by playing all our games outside.

Next term the girls will be fundraising for Children in Need with a 'Strictly' theme night, carrying out a rainbow experiment, baking, and going to a Girlguiding-only screening of Disney's 'Encanto'. There's also a trip to Switzerland on offer to Guides and Leaders in 2023!

Hopefully all this sounds great fun, not just to girls aged 10-14 years, but also to adults, because we are really in need of some additional leaders. Guides now runs fortnightly to allow the current leaders to meet other commitments. Can you help our unit continue to meet weekly? The best experience, for both girls and leaders, happens when there is a big team of volunteers so we're not just looking for one person, we want to make the volunteering experience as easy and as rewarding as we can.

If you are interested in helping, please get in touch by either giving me a call on 01224 703335 or emailing 1stbelhelvi-guides@gmail.com. I'm happy to have an informal chat and there will never be any pressure to commit if you are unsure whether Girlguiding is for you. Come join the fun, make friends, and change girls' lives.

Susan Osbeck

The advertisement for mckenzieprint features a dark background with a vibrant, multi-colored abstract pattern of diagonal lines in shades of green, yellow, orange, and red. The company name 'mckenzieprint' is prominently displayed in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the tagline 'your comprehensive print partner' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. To the right, the contact information is listed: 'Unit 12 Wellheads Crescent', 'Wellheads Industrial Estate', 'Dyce, Aberdeen AB21 7GA', followed by the phone numbers '01224 774161' and '01224 775000'. At the bottom right, the email address 'sales@mckenzie-print.com' and the website 'www.mckenzie-print.com' are provided. Along the bottom edge, a series of services are listed in a small, white, sans-serif font, separated by vertical lines: 'Full Colour Litho Printing', 'Colour / Mono Digital Printing', 'Printed Stationery', 'Leaflets', 'Fliers', 'Brochures', 'Newsletters', 'Books', 'Printed Envelopes', 'Perfect binding', and 'Die Cutting & Creasing Laminating'.



Last term we were back to meeting in person every second week and have welcomed seven new Rangers to the unit. We've done tea-tasting, a tug of war to learn about tidal forces, played a game to discover the costs of independent living, and learned about personal awareness by sneaking pegs from each other. Next term we will

be working on our Lead Stage 5 badge where the girls will learn about being fair leaders, and to recognise each other's leadership skills. We'll also have an end of term celebration (hopefully with cake).

Rather excitingly, all the Rangers are off to a large international camp in Holland in 2023. If you are a young woman, aged 14 to 18, and want similar opportunities, why not come join us? Rangers have changed to a Monday night, fortnightly in Newburgh. Don't let the little bit of distance put you off. Let me know if you are interested but might struggle to get to Newburgh, and we can see what can be done.

For info, call 01224 703335, email 1stbelhelvierangers@gmail.com, or register online: <https://go.girlguiding.org.uk/join-us/join-as-member>

Susan Osbeck



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Real Christmas trees - grown in Scotland. A choice of Nordman, Noble and Fraser Firs, also Blue Spruce. In a range of sizes depending on type, from 2.5ft to 12ft high. 9ft plus must be ordered by early November.

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Holly wreaths - in addition to our usual wide choice there will be a return of the old-style mossed rings with tied bunched holly. Excellent choice of ready decorated wreaths, and a good selection of plain which can be decorated to your own taste by our skilful team.



Seasons Coffee Shop - why not have a nice coffee or tea with a freshly baked scone or even lunch while you are getting your Christmas tree.



Parkhill Garden Centre & Seasons Coffee Shop

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www.parkhillgardencentre.com



The year has raced by, and by the time Banter is published we will have left autumn and be entering winter. This autumn, the Council has not provided what has previously been a regular allocation of plants for the village. However, we have resolved this issue by using

saved and nurtured plants from last year plus some kind donations. We have also received a large donation of daffodil bulbs from BCT which we are trying to plant.

You will have noticed a big change and transformation of the burn between the garden area and children's play park. A long-term drainage issue in the village has been resolved in this area through the endeavors and hard work of Belhelvie Community Trust with funding from Scottish Community Landfill Fund. This will transform the area with a fence and planting to be completed. Funds are also available for creating a path around the garden area. This area has been difficult underfoot due to the drainage but the improvements to drainage and the path will make the area available for young and old to enjoy.

At the moment, the garden has suffered from some neglect and there are areas that would benefit from some TLC, e.g. the removal of tree bindings, seating areas weeded and made useable. All help will be of benefit to the area. The community garden is for everyone's use, to encourage outdoor activity and interest in nature.

Can you help to make these improvements? We need volunteers to help with planting around the village and to develop the community garden area and burn area. If you would like to get involved, please contact me by text on 07918 665114.

Hilary Foxen



BALMEDIE CRAFT CLUB

We continue to have fun and be creative at our Craft Club in the Wee Kirk hall on Wednesdays 6.30-7.30pm. Unfortunately, we are presently at full capacity, but if you would like to add a name to our waiting list, please get in touch. You can also keep an eye on our Facebook page.

BALMEDIE BABY and TODDLER GROUP

This group is on Wednesdays 9.30-11 am in the Wee Kirk hall. All parents are welcome to bring along babies and toddlers to play and have fun with the toys. Cake and a cuppa are provided - and a chance to have a blether. We have spaces available so get in touch if you'd like to come along.



Please contact **Diane Cassie** for both groups above - tel: **07850 235215**

BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCC)

New local Police Officer

We have a new Community Police Officer. In September, PC Stacy Morrison was appointed our Community Beat Officer. PC Morrison has been engaging with communities throughout Formartine and hosting mobile community surgeries across her beat.

If you need to contact the Police about a non-emergency issue, you should call 101, this is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 101 if you want to talk to your local police officer, get crime prevention advice, or report a crime that does not need an emergency response, for example:

- if your car has been stolen
- your property has been damaged
- you suspect drug use or dealing
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Information from Police Scotland:

www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/call-handling/non-emergencies/frequently-asked-questions

Community consultation - BCC & BCT

We're working with BCT www.belhelviecommunitytrust.org.uk on a community consultation which will now be run early next year. We have put back the date for the consultation to let Trust members concentrate on other projects. 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 appointments taxis

If you or one of your friends or neighbours are unable to make your own way to your vaccination appointment, we can still 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 the BCC Facebook page:

www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil

Email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com

For BCC vaccination transport help call: 07733 322244

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

Local help, advice and support

Foodbanks - Aberdeenshire North Foodbank in Ellon - 07562 914986

Instant Neighbour in Aberdeen - 01224 489955

Grampian Coronavirus Assistance Hub - 0808 196 3384 who can answer questions about benefits, financial support, schools, testing and wellbeing.

The Scarf home energy advice team offer support on understanding heating controls and energy bills, tariff switching, Warm Home Discount applications, grants and schemes, and checks for improvements to the property. The service is open to owner occupiers, private tenants and local authority and council tenants. Get in touch on 0808 129 0888 or email info@scarf.org.uk

More information on the BCC website:

<https://belhelviecc.org.uk/help-with-local-issues>

Local planning information

Aberdeenshire Council's website has lots of information available on planning applications and policies in our area.

Aberdeenshire Council Planning Services – their web pages include links to planning applications search, building warrants, development plans (LDP), master plans, built heritage, planning enforcement, natural heritage, archaeology and property enquiries.

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning

Aberdeenshire Council Planning Applications - these web pages include a search for planning applications, the ability to save searches, track applications and set up notifications.

<https://upa.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/online-applications>

Aberdeenshire Council Plans and Policies - these web pages include the local development plans (LDP) for 2017 and 2022, the main issues report and the strategic development plan.

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/Plans-and-Policies

Monthly meetings

Everyone is welcome at our monthly meetings. They are held **every third Monday at 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

Staying in touch

Email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com

For general BCC enquiries call: 07767 237644

For BCC vaccination transport help call: 07733 322244

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil

Website: www.belhelviecc.org.uk

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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY TRUST (BCT)

Serving our five villages & rural areas in the Parish

LOOKING BACK ON 2021

Belhelvie Community Trust (SC045563) has continued to operate during the Covid pandemic in 2021. It's been difficult to keep going, but let's look at the positives + + +

The Sand Bothy

+ + + We have carried out essential repairs, thanks to Graeme Isaac and Graham Parley and our volunteer painters Wishart and Andy.

+ + + Our wonderful volunteers 'old' and new have done lots of training and kept the Bothy kiosk going throughout the summer, supported by Joni.

Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs

+ + + We have been open during the spring and summer months, thanks to our team of dedicated volunteers and supporters, co-ordinated by Fiona. Our chairs have enabled many disabled people, their families and carers to enjoy our wonderful beach.

Balmedie Country Park Changing Places Facility

+ + + We have at long last, thanks to our architect George and our builder Dave Fitzpatrick and his team, opened our Changing Places loo in the park. It is accessed with a RADAR key and has a ceiling hoist, changing table and wheelchair accessible sink.

Balmedie Country Park Inclusive Play Equipment

+ + + Thanks to our generous funders and donors, we have installed an inclusive roundabout in the playpark and have now ordered a swing with 2 supportive seats.

Balmedie Sensory Garden

+ + + We have kept the garden going throughout spring and summer, keeping the grass cut and the beds full of colour and scents. After a covid-imposed wait of 18 months, we have now at last taken delivery of tables and benches to be installed soon. Thanks to our lovely team of volunteers, co-ordinated by Joni.

Potterton Burn Project

+ + + We have successfully carried out work to the burn in Potterton to alleviate flooding of the play park, car park and community park area. Many thanks to Neil Burr and Willie Stratton for their hard work, and to our generous funders.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

The Sand Bothy and Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs will re-open in the spring, and we will be looking at new ways of using the Sand Bothy, running events and classes and renewing our contacts with Balmedie and other schools. We will maintain and promote our Changing Places facility and inclusive play equipment. We will continue to maintain the Sensory Garden, promote its use and hold events there. The next stage of the Potterton Project is to install a fence and path along the side of the cleared part of the burn, and plant hedge trees and burnside plants. Apart from developing our community projects in 2022, we will be sending out a community questionnaire to every household in the parish to ask what community facilities you would like to see developed or created. Look out for the questionnaire in the spring of 2022!

To keep all of the above going we need volunteers to help us in all sorts of ways. If you can help in any way, or in any particular project, don't wait until 2022, get in touch and we can arrange any training so that you are ready to get involved when things open up again!

Rosie Nicol BCT Secretary



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Beachside Coffee Shop

Egie Road, Balmedie AB23 8YF Tel: 01358 742003

A warm welcome awaits you at Beachside Coffee Shop. Why not come along and enjoy from our menu of soups, paninis and sandwiches... not forgetting the lovely homebakes. We are a licensed premises stocking a range of beer, wine, cider and spirits. Please remember our **Afternoon Teas** are available **Monday to Friday 12noon & 2.00pm**, so why not add a cheeky glass of prosecco with this. ***We look forward to seeing you!***



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





I am delighted to announce that Balmedie Leisure Centre's Voluntary Management Committee has successfully secured funding from EB Scotland (Landfill Tax), Aberdeenshire Council's Positive Action Grant, and Formartine's Area Top Up fund

to install our inclusive play area and erect a covered gazebo, adjacent to the Beachside Coffee shop. We have also been accepted for the Co-op's local community fund, and the Tesco community fund currently running at Ellon Tesco until 31st December. Please support our cause and thank you to everyone who sent in letters of support for our play park application - you made such a difference.

Staff and committee have been extremely busy organising some great activities and events leading up to Christmas and beyond. There are lots planned and something for everyone, including new Spin classes on Wednesday and Thursday 10.45-11.30 and 18.45-19.30, Future Fit academy for 5 to 15-year-olds, plus Mana Life Pilates for kids. Please contact the Leisure Centre to book - telephone 01358 743725.

Bouncy Castle and Soft Play Birthday parties are now available, please book via 'It's Showtime Castles' at wayneclarke949@btinternet.com or check out the Facebook page. We will also host our pensioners' Christmas Bingo party, and not forgetting our very special Family Christmas Eve Service, at 16:00 organised by Reverend Paul McKeown of Belhelvie Parish Church. *Do please come along and support these community events - we'd love to see you!*


Bill Murray
Chairperson



Co-op Membership helps our local community. Every time members buy selected Co-op branded products and services, 2p for every pound spent goes to you and the same goes to support local projects and groups in the Belhelvie area.

The cost of a membership card is £1. Ask at the Balmedie Co-op store if you would like one.

Local groups can apply for funding if they are planning to deliver a project that enables people to access food and cooperate to feed everyone. Groups that help to improve people's mental well-being, and groups that can offer young people opportunities to develop new skills and make a difference in their community can also apply. For further information about how to apply, contact Debbie at debbie.jobson@coop.co.uk



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BELHELVIE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

There's an old saying that if you want to make God laugh, you should tell him your plans.

The past 18 months have seen all of us having to rethink or occasionally tear up the plans we've made, but as Paul says in Romans 5, *hardship produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope*. So it's in the hope that we can have a more normal Christmas this year that we are planning as many of our usual events as we can. We'd love to see you along at some of them over the festive season, and we wish you every blessing for a good Christmas and New Year.

Mondays 29 Nov, 6, 13, 20 Dec 'SoulSpace' - Church will be open for quiet reflection from 7-9pm each Monday in Advent, just come as you are.

Sunday 14 November Remembrance Service (10:50am)

Sunday 28 November Advent 1 (11am) and Christingle Service (6.30pm)
A lighthearted, evening service aimed for kids where we tell Christmas stories, light Christingles and get to walk around the church by candlelight. Beautiful and fun.

Sunday 5 December Advent 2 - Bon Accord Service (11am)
The Bon Accord Silver Band lead us in a service of traditional Carols and Christmas Songs. Guaranteed to get you in the festive mood!

Friday 3 December Right Christmas Charity Quiz Night (7:30pm)
Annual Charity quiz held in the Forsyth Hall/Annexe. Teams of 8 max. (£5 adults, £3 concessions). BYOB.

Sunday 12 December Advent 3 - Communion (11am)
Blue Christmas Service - (7.30pm)
Everybody's been carrying a lot of stuff this past year - grief at the loss of loved ones, but also other sadnesses we've lived through. Blue Christmas is a service where we can own those feelings and sit with them safely in the context of the Christmas story, remembering that in our losses we are not alone, and we can find hope.

Sunday 19 December Advent 4 - Nativity Service (11am)

Friday 24 December Balmedie Leisure Centre Service (4pm - a fun rammy!), Watchnight (11pm at church - traditional carols)

Saturday 25 December Short Christmas Morning Service (11am) - kids, bring a new present to show us!

You can contact me on 01358 742227 pmckeown1@btconnect.com

Rev Paul McKeown

Pawz Pet Supplies

We are a small, passionate, independent company who has taken the pet store to the road, supplying local communities with all their pet desires. We supply a good range of pet accessories, natural snacks, foods and toys. We are at **Belhelvie Church** on a **Friday at 3pm**, please come along and say hi!

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BALMEDIE 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

The clocks have gone back, the nights have drawn in and the weather - well it's Scotland, we expect it to be cold, and wet. When we expect that we are never let down! Winter is here, and thankfully our organisations are up and running. We have been busy. Up and running are our Under 5's groups, Kids' Craft Club, Boys' Brigade, Drama Group, Pilates Group. We are also busy welcoming new members to our church.

We have a Coffee time from 2-3pm on Wednesdays so do feel free to drop in. Advent starts on Sunday 28th November, and we are busy planning our Christmas Eve worship - a Special Midnight Service which will start at 11pm.

The older I get, the more I realise that people can have different opinions to me. That does not mean that I am right, and they are wrong, or they are right, and I am wrong. I also step back and realise what is important. When we are young, our understanding of life is that what we want is important, be it material or physical or opinion, that our needs are most important and take priority over everyone else.

Having the privilege of sharing bereaved families' experiences, I am aware that they realise that no argument, no disagreement is important. What *is* important is people, and many wish they had avoided previous disagreements. Our loved ones are precious. Let them know, while you can.

We in the Northeast tend to be introverted, we do not show our emotions. Scotland is known around the world for being very welcoming and hospitable - but how do we love our neighbours, how do we show caring, compassion, to them?

How do we encourage and ensure love is part of the ethos of our community, Balmedie, the Parish of Belhelvie? This community is special. Why? Because YOU live here and perhaps your family lives here. Be proud to live here.

Rev. Andy Cowie



BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Just a little update before the festive period begins - I am delighted to tell everyone that BCT has donated a new real living Christmas tree to replace the old one. It is small at the moment but we will be able to watch it grow along with our lovely village. We intend having a switch-on event so check our Facebook page for details.

Diane Cassie



ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL NEWS

Aberdeenshire Council - General Enquiries 03456 08 12 08

Councillor Andrew Hassan shares some news:

The second half of 2021 has again been a busy time for your elected representatives on Aberdeenshire Council, with most meetings remaining 'virtual', in line with the guidance we adhere to. Our meetings are webcast on the Council's website, and the recordings left for public viewing following the meetings. Back in August, Jim Gifford, Paul Johnston and I were joined by our new colleague Sheila Powell, who was successful in the by-election held following Karen Adam's resignation. I cannot imagine what it must be like taking up our post mid-term, but there is much going on and much to do - and having a full complement of Councillors again helps the Ward greatly. As an aside, we all thank the many officials who participated in the running of the By-election. They will (I suspect) all be called upon again in the Full Council election coming up on the 5th May next year.

Meetings of Formartine Area Committee

At the August meeting, members were presented with an application for funding from the Area Committee Budget from Balmedie Leisure Centre for a grant of £5,000 towards their planned accessible and inclusive play area and outdoor space to provide the community with a play space with equipment for children with disabilities. The grant provided 7.2% of the project cost.

At the September meeting we authorised the statutory procedure for the 2021 Disabled Street Parking Order. There are planned spaces on Forsyth Drive and Forsyth Road in Balmedie, and Laingseat Road, Potterton. We also discussed reports covering Flood Risk, Built Heritage, and the Outdoor Access Strategy.

In October we had a number of notable items for Belhelvie parish. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Report for April to June was reported - with notably 'unwanted fire alarm signals' in Mid Formartine showing at a five year high in this ward. These are most common in non-residential properties.

We also received a report we had asked for on the Litter Issues at our Country Parks, including Balmedie. We were advised that the most common type of littering at the Country Parks is at 'honeypot sites' which are specific areas attractive to tourists. The report advised that these sites will be more closely monitored with currently under-utilised existing bins potentially being relocated to try and resolve the issues.

Most notably at this meeting, we received an update on the 'South Formartine Schools Options Appraisal'. It is well known that our Education Officers are keeping a keen eye on the capacity pressures of our existing schools at both Balmedie and up at Foveran, with increased housing identified in the Local Development Plan which is currently with the Scottish Government Reporter for examination. The appraisal will address the roll and capacities within several schools as well as housing pressures from the sites in the South Formartine corridor. Officers have promised a robust review of the factors to ensure an informed decision is reached at the appropriate time.

We expect the Local Development Plan to be sent to Scottish Ministers in early 2022, and thereafter hope to have a more detailed paper on this matter to elected members as soon as possible, to ensure our education estate is fit for the area going forward.

Meetings of Full Council

There have been three meetings of Full Council since the summer. Back in September, the notable paper of discussion was on the subject of how Council meetings are held - with a transition to a choice base (hybrid) model being proposed. It is notable that during the covid period, Councillor costs reduced by 92%. It was further noted that some Councillors now prefer the 'working at home' arrangement, not least as it helps the Council meet its Climate Change Declaration and Carbon Budget. However, there was also recognition that the online meeting format does not suit all - and my own personal opinion is that we must remain 'public' as there are residents in our constituencies that would like to see and hear their representatives that may not be 'IT-informed' meaning they could only do so by turning up in person to hear us in a public venue, and we have an equalities duty to ensure their needs are taken into account. A trial has now begun where some committees will work to the proposed hybrid model, with a report back on this initial trial expected at the January meeting of Full Council.

The second meeting was held on the same day - with a one-item agenda to discuss the Scheme for the establishment of Community Councils. This acknowledged the consultation period, approved the revised scheme and agreed that it would commence in January 2022.

Finally, we had a meeting on the 6th October with another one-item agenda, this time to discuss the Council's response to the Scottish Government's National Care Service Consultation - which was a pretty mixed one with both positives and negatives highlighted. The draft can be read in full on the Aberdeenshire Council website.

Away from formal meetings, your local Councillors continue to get lobbied on several matters locally in all the settlements that make up Belhelvie Parish - and are happy to hear from constituents at any time. We also regularly attend BCC meetings and can answer questions.

Please feel free to get in touch at any time if you feel we may be able to assist.

Our new Formartine Councillor Sheila Powell introduces herself:

I can hardly believe it is two months since I was elected as your new Councillor for Mid Formartine. It has been an extremely busy time, I have had such a lot to learn but have received a tremendous amount of support from all the Aberdeenshire Councillors, as well as Council Officers. I made a promise when elected that I would do my best to protect our area and work hard for the benefit of all our residents.

One issue I have been involved in was the use of Potterton Community Centre for all. The restrictions of Covid had made it impossible for the senior members of our community to return to the hall. However, the Bowling Group have now returned on a Thursday afternoon. If any other groups in the area wish to use the hall, it is available on the other weekday afternoons, 3pm until 5pm.

Unfortunately, the upstairs floor of the Centre cannot be used by the public at this time, due to the results from a recent health and safety inspection on the external escape route metal stair. Repairs may be authorised in due course to enable the residents to use the upper floor once again if required.

Please remember that your Mid Formartine Councillors are here for you, do not hesitate to make contact if you need us. Winter is upon us, so take care and keep safe.

Don

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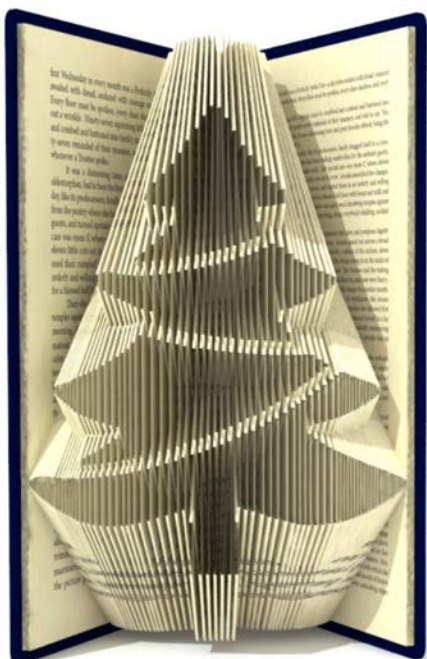
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BALMEDIE LIBRARY

I just wanted to introduce myself to Banter readers - my name is Jane Geddes and I am a Senior Library Administrator. I have just recently taken over the running of Balmedie Library. I also run Newmachar Library. I have worked for Aberdeenshire Libraries for over 6 years.

The Library Service is currently looking at when Balmedie Library is open and for 'click and collect'. Any changes will be made in the next few weeks. Keep an eye on our Facebook page and in the library for updates. Although we are not yet back to normal opening, I am looking forward to getting groups back into the library and to getting to know everyone.

Printing News

We have installed Princh, a new printing solution in our libraries. With Princh it is now possible to print from any mobile device, tablet, or laptop from home or in one of our participating libraries. Just print, pay online, and pick up your items. You can send your print jobs at any time from any place and what's more, you no longer have to wait in line at the printer.

www.livelifeberdeenshire.org.uk/libraries/princh-printing

Just to let you know that all our Aberdeenshire Libraries will be closed for 2 weeks over the festive period. I hope that everyone stays safe and well and finds time to read a good book.

Tel: 01358 281070

Email: balmedie.library@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries

Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/balmedielibrary

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Jane Geddes

Library Administrator



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This is the time of year and a great opportunity to THANK all our wonderful volunteers who have made this project possible - a great group of folk who happily spend time at the Bunker helping people to get onto the beach. They have washed, brushed, chatted, drunk coffee, smiled, encouraged, shifted sand and dished out leaflets and without these guys sharing their time, this project simply would not have worked.

Another group of amazing people are those who have very kindly donated money to Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs either directly or through fundraisers. We will be showcasing all these amazing people on our Facebook page in the coming months as things get quieter so look out for some photos!

The great news is that as a result of all this hard work, we have been able to purchase a Magic Mobility X8. This electric wheelchair will provide the one thing we could not - independence. It will arrive in 2022 and we are really looking forward to it joining the Baby Buggy and two Beach Walkers that arrived in August.

So if you know someone who wants to get on the sand but doesn't want a wheelchair, or if you have a baby and you can't get the pram beyond the boardwalk, then give us a call. These are all free to rent and just require a call (24 hrs notice please). Hopefully 2022 will be the year we can expand our opening times in the summer.

If you would like to join our great band of volunteers in 2022, then please get in touch. Call for a chat and see if this could be something you would like to be involved in - phone me on 07864 350989 or have a look at www.balmediebeachwheelchairs.co.uk

Fiona Winstanley

SCHOOL DATES		
December Tues 23 2021	End of Winter term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
2022		
January Thurs 6	First day of Spring term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
February Thurs 10 & Fri 11	Local Holiday	Balmedie Ellon
February Mon 14	May Day Holiday	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
February Tues 15 & Wed 16	Mid Term Holiday	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
April Fri 1	Last day of Spring term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
April Mon 18	First day of Summer term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
May Mon 2	May Day Holiday	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
May Tues 3	In Service Day	BoDA
July Fri 1	Last day of Summer term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
August Tues 23	First day of Autumn term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
September Fri 23 & Mon 26	Local Holiday	BoDA
October Fri 14	Last day of Autumn term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon
October Mon 31	First day of Winter term	Balmedie BoDA Ellon

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Weekly			
Mon	Quiet reflections Nov 29; 6, 13, 20 Dec	Belhelvie Church	19.00-21.00
Wed	Baby & Toddler Group	Balmedie Congreg. Church	09.30-11.00
Wed	Better Balmedie	Beside Balmedie Cong. Church	10.00-12.00
Wed	Ladies Group	Balmedie Congreg. Church	14.00-15.00
Wed, Sat & Sun	Catholic Mass	Bridge of Don Church	T: 01224 825653
Thurs	Indoor Bowling	Potterton CEC	15.00-17.00
Sat & Sun	Catholic Mass	Ellon Catholic Church	T: 01358 724580
Sat	Better Balmedie	Beside Balmedie Cong. Church	10.00-12.00
Sun	Belhelvie Church Service	Belhelvie Church	11.00
Sun	Balmedie Congregational Church	Balmedie Congreg. Church	11.00
Every 3 Weeks			
Tues	Potterton Walking Group (see article)	Contact John Hutcheon	12.00
Monthly			
1 st Tues	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	10.00-12.00
3 rd Mon	Belhelvie Community Council	Zoom meetings	19.30
Term Time Groups for Children / Young Adults			
Mon	Cubs	Potterton CEC	18.30-20.00
Mon	Ranger Guides (fortnightly)	Foveran Church Hall	19.30-21.00
Tues	Rainbows	Balmedie School	18.00-19.00
Tues	Cubs	Potterton CEC	18.30-20.00
Tues	Guides (fortnightly)	Balmedie School	19.00-20.30
Tues	Explorer Scouts	Potterton CEC	19.30-21.30
Wed	Beavers	Balmedie School	18.00-19.15
Wed	Balmedie Kids' Craft Club	Balmedie Congreg. Church	18.30-19.30
Thurs	Rainbows	Potterton CEC	17.30-18.30
Thurs	Brownies	Potterton CEC	18.00-19.45
Thurs	Brownies	Forsyth Hall	18.30-20.00
Fri	Boys' Brigade with Girls	Balmedie Congreg. Church	15.30-16.30
Fri	Scouts	Potterton CEC	19.00-21.30

Individual Dates

NOVEMBER 2021			
Sun 28	Christingle Service	Belhelvie Church	18.30
DECEMBER 2021			
Sun 5	Advent Bon Accord Service	Belhelvie Church	11.00
Fri 8	Right Christmas Charity Quiz	Forsyth Hall	19.30
Sun 12	Blue Christmas Service	Belhelvie Church	19.30
Fri 24	Family Christmas Eve Service	Balmedie Leisure Centre	16.00
Fri 24	Watchnight Service	Belhelvie Church	23.00
Fri 24	Special Midnight Service	Balmedie Congreg. Church	23.00

If you have an event or group you wish added to this page please contact Banter.

WHO'S WHO

Ambulance/ Police/ Fire Brig.	emergency	999
Police Scotland	non-emergencies	101
Community Police	Stacy Morrison	101
Fire Brigade	non-emergencies	01224 696666
NHS 24	non-emergencies	111
Scottish Gas	emergency line	0800 111 999
Scottish & Southern Energy	emergency line	0800 300 999
Scottish Water	emergency line	0800 077 8778
ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL:	HQ, Gordon House, Inverurie	01467 628011
	ClIr Paul Johnston	07799 582879
	ClIr Jim Gifford	07766 497856
	ClIr Andrew Hassan	07388 956123
	ClIr Sheila Powell	07503 492480
	Dog Warden	01467 628195
	Environmental Health	08456 081207
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS:		
Beavers (Balmedie)	}	All enquiries to Ian Thomson balmedie@gordondistrictscouts.org.uk
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)		Sophie Thornton via email 1stbelhelvi-guides@gmail.com
Rangers (Potterton)		Susan Osbeck 01224 703335
CHURCHES:		
Belhelvie Church of Scotland	Rev Paul McKeown	01358 742227
Balmedie Congregational Church	(The Wee Kirk) Rev Andy Cowie	01224 703248
Ellon Catholic Church	3 Union St, Ellon AB41 9BA	01358 724580
Baptist Church Bridge of Don	Dubford Road, Bridge of Don AB23 8GS	01224 826256
St Columba's Catholic Church	Braehead Way, Bridge of Don AB22 8RR	01224 825653
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	Egie 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	Jane Geddes	01358 281070
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.

Twos Group	}	Leisure Centre, Balmedie	01358 743725
Tae Kwon Do			
Abricabeats			
Kindergym			
Future Fit Academy			
Mana Life Pilates			
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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email: belhelviebanter@live.co.uk

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Sleeping Beauty

Hopefully, December 2021
Inverurie Town Hall

For updates sign up to our newsletter at
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