

BELHELVIE BANTER

Balmedie : Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog



EDITION 49

AUTUMN-WINTER 2023

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EDITORIAL

Who else remembers those long summer school holidays of childhood when every day was warm and sunny, and skies were forever blue and cloudless? Am I the only one with such selective memory? I hope you are managing to remember the handful of hot days we had this summer as we prepare for the cooler weather to come.

Autumn sees pupils settled back into new terms, some quite relieved to have the routine and structure back again, as, dare I say, are many parents. It's an exciting time coming up though - Hallowe'en, bonfire nights, all the Christmas activities. We are fortunate that there is so much going on in our communities. Many of these activities are dependent on volunteers of which we have a core band across our parish.

However, there is always a need for more individuals to come forward and help out. It's a two-way thing - volunteers report an expanded friendship group and a feeling of belonging. Obviously, some folk have lives that are jam-packed with commitments and although they might love to volunteer, they just don't have the time. However, if you do feel you could spare a couple of hours working with others on a community project, do get in touch. Contact details can be found in our articles.

On that note, we are still looking for help with putting Banter together (see page 41 for details). We are delighted though that we now have a new Accounts Manager (thank you Claire Daniel!). Do get in touch if you think you can help us.

Wishing all Banter readers plenty food, warmth and friendship in the coming months.

Jess Petrie, Editor

SOME EVENTS COMING UP			
October	Tues 24	Alzheimer's Pop-up Café	Beachside Coffee Shop 10.30 - 11.30
November	Wed 1	ABERDAM Smash Van	Balmedie Leisure Centre 17.00 - 20.30
November	Fri 3	Race Night	Balmedie Leisure Centre 19.00 - 23.30
November	Sun 12	ASN Sensory Play Session	Balmedie Leisure Centre 10.30 - 11.30
November	Sun 12	ASN Sensory Play Session	Balmedie Leisure Centre 11.30 - 12.30
November	Sat 18	Christmas Fayre	Forsyth Hall 10.00 - 12.00
November	Sun 26	Christmas Shopping Fayre	Balmedie Leisure Centre 11.00 - 16.00
December	Sat 2	Family Fun Day and Fayre	White Horse Function Suite 10.00 - 15.00
December	Sat 2	Wreath Making	Forsyth Hall 14.00 - 16.00
December	Sun 3	ABERDAM Smash Van	Balmedie Leisure Centre 17.00 - 20.30
December	Sun 24	Christmas Service	Balmedie Leisure Centre 16.00
December	Sun 24	Watchnight Service	Belhelvie Church 23.00
December	Mon 25	Christmas Service	Belhelvie Church 11.00

Our edition 49 cover shows how brave and resilient Scouts have to be as they take part in fund-raising activities at the Belhelvie Church Forsyth Hall Fun Day in September.

cards crafts clothes food jewellery cards crafts

clothes food jewellery cards crafts

clothes food jewellery cards crafts

Fair Trade



30th Annual Open House

Welcome to Bonnyton Farmhouse, Pitmedden

7th - 12th November
Tuesday to Sunday
10 am - 10 pm

Bonnyton Farmhouse
AB41 7QA

Refreshments
Bread and soup lunch!



cards crafts clothes food jewellery cards crafts



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ADVERTISE WITH BANTER

If you would like to advertise with Banter, please email belhelviebanter@live.co.uk. We welcome adverts ready for publication, but help is available for advert design if you need it. There will be a small charge for this.

A5 PAGES	SINGLE EDITION	2 EDITIONS Paid in advance	4 EDITIONS Paid in advance
Whole back page advert	£120	£110 (total £220)	£100 (total £400)
Whole page advert	£90	£85 (total £170)	£80 (total £320)
Half page advert	£45	£43 (total £86)	£40 (total £160)
Quarter page advert	£25	£23 (total £46)	£20 (total £80)
Small Ad	£15	£14 (total £28)	£13 (total £52)

BANTER DEADLINES	SPRING-SUMMER (Ed 50)	AUTUMN-WINTER (Ed 51)
Articles & ads	Fri 19 April 2024	Fri 20 Sept 2024
Delivery begins	Sat 18 May 2024	Sat 19 Oct 2024

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!



ALLAN JEFFREY - A SAD LOSS

It is with great sadness that we, at Banter, write about the passing of a great friend and selfless contributor to our local community. Allan Jeffrey, a well-loved Balmedie resident, died in June this year. A constant participator in Balmedie community projects, he was an early member of Better Balmedie and was committed to its work for most of its 14 years. He was also a founding member of Belhelvie Community Trust, as a trustee and its chair for a year. He was the

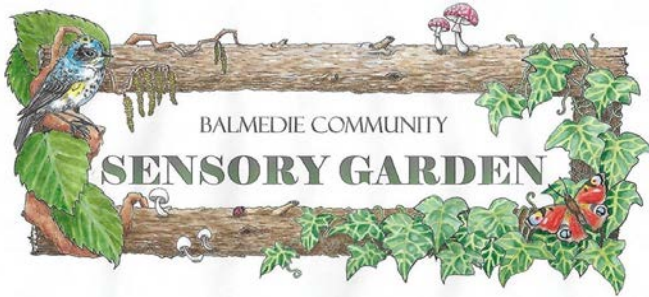
inspiration for Balmedie Sensory Garden, and a dedicated supporter of The Sand Bothy and Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs. He was also a member of the Friendship Club for many years, contributing in all sorts of ways.

On the day of his funeral, Belhelvie Church was overflowing with all who wished to pay their last respects. There, Rosie Nicol, Secretary of Belhelvie Community Trust, gave an insight into Alan's community life:

"Allan loved meeting people, trying new things, telling stories, and seeing nature work its magic. He loved to learn, to challenge himself and grow. He enjoyed working hard building useful things like walls, benches and planters for the village (including the train and the pea green boat). His aim was simple, to help others, make things a bit better and play his part in the groups he was involved in. His contribution to our village was enormous, but he often said that he too felt supported by other volunteers particularly after his wife Mary's death.

At the Sand Bothy, Allan was often seen in fancy dress as he entertained visitors and he was proud of his barista skills learned at the Bothy kiosk. Most of all though, he will always be remembered by children - of all ages - as Santa - at the Bothy and at other Christmas events in Balmedie. He had a rare ability to make every child feel special.

Allan was very positive about life, with a smile for us all, and he also loved to dream, to imagine, and to inspire others. He became an accomplished photographer and took many shots of the local area. He wrote reams of poems which he made personal to the recipient, offering support, encouragement, condolence, or humour. Allan was a well-loved man, and he will be dearly missed by many."



Over the spring and summer, our volunteers have been busy in the garden with all the usual garden tasks of planting, pruning, weeding and watering. We try to keep the colours going throughout the year, from daffodils and bluebells to sea hollies and lilies. Our biggest project has been the creation of our 'Mega Bed', a long perennial border. It has been a lot of hard work, but well worth the effort with lots of lovely flowers appearing over the summer, from big clumps of shasta daisies to bright spiky gladioli. We are now the proud owners of a ride-on mower which makes life a bit easier for our mowers. We also have a smart purpose-built noticeboard so we can let you know what is happening at Belhelvie Community Trust and in the garden.

Our willow classroom and arbour developed some bald patches in the early part of the year, so Deeside Willow stepped in to repair and replace as necessary, and both are now thriving beautifully. We have a willow tunnel planned for the springtime.

Most important of all, the garden has increased in popularity with folks and families of all ages. We love seeing regular visitors too from Links Nursery, Balmedie School Nursery, Balmedie Primary School, Beavers, Brownies and other groups. Look out for our fun trails to be enjoyed by the younger visitors to the garden.

Balmedie Sensory Garden, which is up the wee road to the south of the library is open all the time, so we hope you will have a wander through, or even join our hard-working squad of volunteers. You will be very welcome.

Julie Fordyce Sensory Garden Co-ordinator



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Instagram: [@the_white_horse_balmedie](#)

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD 2023 - MARIO CHIRU



In August, Belhelvie Community Council presented their first Special Recognition Award to **Mario Chiru**, owner of the White Horse Hotel and previous owner of the Balmedie Premier Shop. The award aims to recognise an individual within our settlements who has gone that extra mile to benefit the local community.

Mario was asked what motivates him and how he feels about the community he has chosen to make his home. Here's his response:

"I have treated people like I wanted to be treated, this is the main reason for my success. I always put myself in others' shoes, which made my life easy in understanding issues and serving the community in a better way. I have lived in different communities before, but this is my community, this community cared about me, this community shared my pain, shared my joy, [and is] always there for me. In other words, this is not my community, this is my family."

David Wallace, BCC Chair is full of praise for Mario:

"Mario has such a pleasant and friendly disposition and has been a welcome addition to our community. He is helpful and considerate to all and very compassionate towards the older members of our community... He is universally well liked, and we are delighted to announce him as the first recipient of our Community Recognition Award."



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STRABATHIE VILLAGE

Find your dream home at Strabathie Village in Blackdog and Kirkwood will pay your mortgage for 12 months - up to the value of £20,999!

This exclusive offer is available for reservations made on or before 22nd December 2023, so you can secure your brand new home by the end of 2023 and enjoy a year of no mortgage payments as you settle into your new surroundings.

Located on the periphery of Aberdeen city and shire, Strabathie Village presents a unique opportunity to live on the coastline - and boasts stunning sky and seascapes, a pretty, sandy beach and a coastal walking trail - right on the doorstep.

A home here is extremely well connected, with the AWPR and A90 a 2 minute drive away, Bridge of Don retail park a 3 minute drive away, and the city centre just a 15 minute drive away.

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ON THE BUSES

Stagecoach recently introduced new timetables across their Aberdeenshire network. These were largely because of funding changes from Aberdeenshire Council, as well as economic review over the viability of individual buses. Many concerns were raised over the routing of the new X65 service. Most of the concerns were eliminated following discussion with Stagecoach. The 290 / 291 route serving Potterton, Belhelvie and Whitecairns area has not been significantly altered. The new X65 service which replaced several routes serving Blackdog and Balmedie has for most of the day resulted in a similar service or in some cases improved service. The gap which has arisen has been the service from Aberdeen between 15.00 and 17.00. Whilst the X63 has an hourly service to Balmedie from Aberdeen, it does not serve Blackdog or anyone wishing to go to Ellon from Blackdog or Balmedie during this period. This discrepancy has been flagged to Stagecoach who advised that the reduction was based on usage at this time necessitating the cuts. Links to the new timetables are listed below:

Buses covering Balmedie and Blackdog (61, X63 and X65)

<https://tiskon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/North%20Scotland/Bluebird/Peterhead%20Gude%20Aug%2023.pdf>

Buses covering Whitecairns, Belhelvie and Potterton

<https://tiskon-maps-stagecoachbus.s3.amazonaws.com/Timetables/North%20Scotland/Bluebird/290%20291%20292%20Aug%2023.pdf>

A handy **journey planner** is included in the link below:

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables>

Stagecoach also has an App which helps with Journey Planning and provides live updates. The App has recently been updated to give better up to the minute data. There have been a few teething problems but it seems to be working better now. Stagecoach also has Facebook and X (Twitter) accounts which are a source of service information.

Several issues have been identified including buses not turning up. This could be because of driver shortage or incidents on route. The bus company is struggling to recruit enough drivers. They are prepared to offer training if anyone in our area is looking for a new career.

<https://www.stagecoachbus.com/promos-and-offers/national/careers>

It is important that we all report problems with the service as unless these are reported the bus company has no visibility of the problems. Contact details are available in the App. Similarly, when the bus company publishes proposed changes for consultation it is important to raise concerns during this process as once a new timetable is implemented it won't be changed until the next upgrade.

The level of service is very much driven by the level of usage, so it is important that we all use the bus whenever it is feasible to do so, to ensure that our services remain at current levels or hopefully even improve.

The Belhelvie Community Council will arrange for paper copies of bus service details to be produced and distributed to the Premier Store, the Co-op and the Library for people who do not have access to the internet.

Alex McIntyre

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For pharmacy opening times over the Christmas and New Year period - see page 15

BALMEDIE HUB & COMMUNITY LARDER



Over the past year, many communities investigated creating a Warm Hub, to be used in the event of an emergency (such as Storm Arwen) or to support people experiencing high energy costs. Belhelvie Community Trust looked for suitable premises for such a Hub for our area and were fortunate to be able to pair up with Balmedie Congregational Church (The Wee Kirk), who had received a grant from the Rural Communities Fund (Scottish Government) to install a generator. Thus, the Balmedie Hub and Community Larder was born, hosted by Trust volunteers, located in the Wee Kirk and supported by Balmedie Co-op.

The Hub does not just provide a warm place or a hot drink in a time of need but has become an opportunity for strangers to become friends, folks to come and chat, play games, do jigsaws, or borrow a book as well as take needed items from the Community Larder.

Young, old, and those in between, are welcome to drop in any time during our opening hours from 10am - 1pm every Monday. You will be welcomed with a hot drink, a fine piece and friendly chat and there is no charge. And if you would like to volunteer to help host the Hub, please pop in or phone Joni on 07752 768918. We are in the Wee Kirk opposite the Co-op - hope to see you soon.

The Hub Team



Does your child like using their imagination and doing crafts and baking? Then why not pop along to our Craft Club in the Wee Kirk Hall opposite the Co-op in Balmedie.

We are back after our summer break and still have a few spaces left. We meet every Wednesday during term time from 6.30-7.30pm. If you would like a space, please message our Facebook page, or contact Diane on 07850 235215.

OUR PARISH IN PRINT

Not one, but two very talented local authors have successfully had their books about our parish published - and in time for Christmas too!

THREADBARE

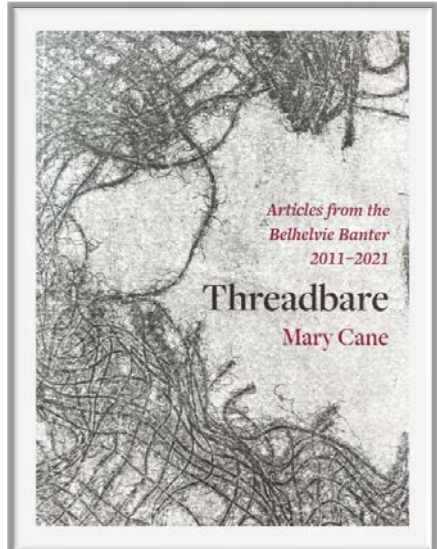
by Mary Cane

Over forty editions of Belhelvie Banter, we have been entertained by Mary's quirky commentary on life here in the parish. In her popular 'Parish Threads' articles, she regaled us with her sharp wit and fine observational skills in her own inimitable style. Now all forty short essays have been published as 'Threadbare'.

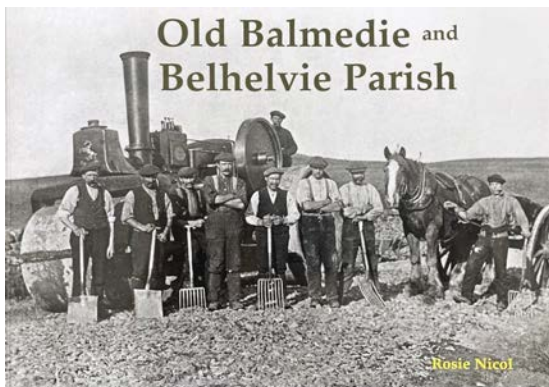
Some of the stories are old, some are new, some are imagined. Past inhabitants who turn up on these pages are Lord Tweedsmuir, the Reverend Forsyth and the artist James McBey. Others mentioned you may know, like her neighbours, friends, volunteers at the Sand Bothy or the editor of the Belhelvie Banter.

The pen and ink illustrations reflect the miscellany of the subject matter, so you may see a plughole next to a handbag, a duck's bill by a shopping trolley, or an octopus posing in front of Slains Castle. As threads, they weave a fabric of connections to anchor us... and that could be invaluable in our fast-changing world.

On sale now for £10. Contact Mary at marycane52@gmail.com or phone 07803 518013.



OLD BALMEDIÉ and BELHELVIE PARISH by Rosie Nicol



You will all know or have heard of Rosie, who is instrumental in getting so many of our parish projects up and running. Her love and enthusiasm for community life and making our parish a better place to live knows no bounds. Add to that her interest in the history of our area, and the result is the publication of her book 'Old Balmedie and Belhelvie Parish' which she has been working on for some time.

This informative journey through 100 years of Belhelvie Parish from the 1870s to the 1970s highlights how our village communities have developed. It is full of wonderful photos of bygone times with an abundance of information about our parish.

On sale now for £11.95 with all proceeds going to The Sand Bothy. Contact Rosie at rosie.nicol81@gmail.com or phone 07872 493308.

Balmedie Pharmacy - Christmas opening hours

Friday 22nd December: **9am - 5.30pm**

Saturday 23rd December: **9am - 12.30pm**

Sunday 24th, Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th December: **CLOSED**

Wednesday 27th, Thursday 28th and Friday 29th December: **9am - 5.30pm**

Saturday 30th December: **9am - 12.30pm**

Sunday 31st December, Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd January: **CLOSED**

Wednesday 3rd January: **9am - 5.30pm**

In August of 2021, Parkhill purchased Whitelodge Garden Centre at Turriff, so we now have **Parkhill at Whitelodge Garden Centre**, Burnside, Turriff AB53 5PP Tel 01888 562924.

Two centres, more choice!



The **garden bird** section has been changed to allow even more choice. The Parkhill team continue to keep **bird food** very competitively priced by packing on site into 3kg and 6kg bags, with even greater savings on 20kg bags.

Exclusive Parkhill Premium Blend especially for North East birds.

A complete no mess feed with 13 ingredients.

Sundries are also in the glasshouse.



Check out our reconfigured, easier to browse gift and Christmas section.

Keep warm this winter - coffee logs, paraffin, Cannon Premium Grade coal, Ovoids Red, burning peat, with very keenly priced large bags of kindling and hardwood logs.

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.

Pot grown Christmas trees - a choice of 4 types.



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 skilled 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

Open 7 days

Garden Centre 9am to 4.45pm - Tel 01224 722167

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Parkhill, Dyce, Aberdeen AB21 7AT

On the B977 Dyce to Balmedie Road

www.parkhillgardencentre.com



Beachside Coffee Shop

Eigie Road, Balmedie AB23 8YF Tel: 01358 742003

The days are getting colder and shorter!

Why not come along and enjoy a delicious bowl of homemade soup with a sandwich or panini. Or just have a soup and a pudding from our menu.

ABERDAM will be in the carpark on 1st November and 3rd December from 5pm.

Christmas Fayre - Sunday 26th November 11-4pm

We look forward to seeing you!

www.balmedieleisurecentre.com

or our facebook page Balmedie Leisure Centre



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Delivering to homes and businesses in **Balmedie, Potterton, Belhelvie, Whitecairs** and **Foveran** every Wednesday afternoon. Parked at Balmedie Leisure Centre every Wed, 2.30 to 3.00pm. Balmedie deliveries thereafter. Potterton home deliveries only. If you are not at home, prior arrangements can be made so you get your fish, just call **Stephen** on 07854 891360 to make arrangements. For weekly and special offers, see our facebook page or email Stephen Bruce: stephen@peterheadfish.com Fish can also be ordered using our Click and Collect Trawl and Haul service at www.peterheadfish.co.uk Any questions, please call 07854 891360.



Tel: 01358 743725

Email: balmedie_leisure@btconnect.com

Find us on Facebook

Well, that's been another busy year, and it was great to see so many of you join us throughout the summer months. We have some great activities planned for the autumn and winter months. We held a Paint & Drink evening on the 28th of April hosted by local artist Mandy Club. Everyone really enjoyed the experience, with dare I say a few masterpieces created. Another Paint & Drink evening was held on Friday the 29th of September.

The wonderful **ABERDAM** will be back in the car park on Wednesday the 1st of November and Sunday the 3rd of December. They will be bringing the Smash Van for their famous Smash Burgers. Reserve your spot on their Eventbrite page.

On the 3rd of November we are delighted to present our very first Race Night. The bar will be open for this fundraising evening for the Leisure Centre, so please come along and support the event which is bound to be a lot of fun! Ticket reservations will be opening soon.

Sunday the 26th of November sees the return of our Christmas Shopping Fayre, 11am - 4pm. Bring the whole family for a day full of fun with a variety of stalls featuring some of the best craft, cakes, and bakes in the area. We'll also be serving food in the **Beachside Coffee Shop** for those who want to sit back, relax and take in the festivities. Don't miss out on this amazing opportunity to connect with your community and celebrate the festive season.

We are always keen to help and support local families and voluntary groups within the parish. Free use of our lounge is used to support the Friendship Group, Knit & Natter, SWRI, First Responders and Belhelvie Community Council.

Also, on Sunday the 2nd of July at the request of a local family with a special needs child, we held a free ASN event supported by We-Too & Sensational. Twenty local families with similar children attended, some meeting for the first time. It was an incredibly successful day. From the response and feedback from parents, it was clear that there was a definite need for further ASN events. Therefore, we are delighted to announce that thanks to funding received from the Formartine Coastal Community Fund, Balmedie Leisure Centre is now able to offer Additional Support Needs families in and around Balmedie, a **FREE sensory play activity class on Sunday 12th of November**. There will be two one-hour sessions, 10.30 - 11.30, and 11.30 - 12.30.

We will also be offering a weekly **mother and toddler activity class** which will include some sensory play, starting in October. These classes are designed to be safe, stimulating, inclusive and accessible to all children. All these classes will initially be offered for free, giving parents the opportunity to create a support network with other ASN families within our community.

Lastly, a Pop-Up Café supporting Alzheimer Scotland will be hosted in our Beachside Coffee Shop on Tuesday the 24th of October from 10:30 to 11:30. For further details please contact Susan Westcott, the Community Activities Organiser on 07876 003154 or email swestcott@alzscot.org.

To stay up to date with events and classes at the Leisure Centre, make sure you find us on Facebook and Instagram. You can also contact us by phone on 01358 743725, or email at balmedie_leisure@btinternet.com or drop in and see us! If there is an event you would like to see at the Leisure Centre, please let us know and we will see what we can do!

Bill Murray
Voluntary Chairman

LEISURE CENTRE LOUNGE GROUPS

We, at the Leisure Centre, are delighted to be able to donate the Lounge free of charge to the following groups that have recently enjoyed using our space to meet up. Needless to say, the chance to have a chat with a cuppa and cake features strongly at every meet-up!

THE FRIENDSHIP GROUP

This group has successfully restarted and meets in the Leisure Centre Lounge every second Tuesday from 1 to 3pm and the next date will be 24th of October. New members are very welcome. Activities include bingo and quizzes and speakers will visit from time to time.

KNIT-AND-NATTER GROUP

This takes place in the Lounge every Friday morning from 10am to 12noon.

SWRI

The Scottish Women's Royal Institute meets here on the third Wednesday of the month.

For further details of these groups, please get in touch with us at the Balmedie Leisure Centre on 01358 743725.

Shona Buchan

BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCC)

Special Recognition Award

BCC is delighted to have awarded the 2023 Special Recognition Award to Mario Chiru in recognition of his outstanding support in our community. We are planning to make this award an annual event along with the introduction of one for a younger member of the community (under 18 years old). Nominations for these awards will be sought from the local community next year and will be awarded towards the end of 2024.

Village Improvements

Over the summer we installed eight new benches throughout Balmedie, Potterton, Blackdog and Belhelvie, along with repairing the bench on North Beach Road (Balmedie). Many thanks to Hilary Foxen, Graham Middleton, David Wallace, Ewan Phipps and Gavin Drummond from the BCC, Alan Neave from the Blackdog Residents Association and Gavin's team at Harestone Moss, for helping organise the funding, site, install and repair the benches.



The new benches in Balmedie are dedicated to Allan Jeffrey and Don Forbes for all their work in our communities. You can find the bench locations on our website <https://belhelviecc.org.uk/work.html>



The bridge in Potterton has been repaired by Community Councillor Gavin Drummond's team and new planters set up in Potterton, with planting by Hilary Foxen from the Potterton Green Fingers gardening group. At the request of residents, the wild-flower area in Belhelvie has been cut back and the containers there re-planted. Moving into the autumn, we will be installing new noticeboards around the villages.

Community Council elections 2023

We held our elections in June, but we are always looking for new members to represent the communities of Balmedie, Belhelvie, Potterton, Blackdog and Whitecairns. If you would like to join the Community Council, you can be co-opted between annual elections.

There are many opportunities to work on issues and projects that matter to our communities. Find out more about your Community Councillors and what we are working on here: <https://belhelviecc.org.uk/members.html>

Autumn Covid vaccination appointments taxis

If you are unable to make your own way to your upcoming vaccination appointment, we can co-ordinate and pay for taxis to help you attend. We will need your name, pick-up 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 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

On our website you can find information on local support including foodbanks, energy bills, school uniform grants, how to report infrastructure problems to Aberdeenshire Council, local defibrillator locations and Police Scotland.

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

Monthly meetings

Monthly meetings are held **every third Monday, 7pm, in person at the Balmedie Leisure Centre with online access**. Meeting dates, agendas and minutes are available on our noticeboards and online at: www.belhelviecc.org.uk/meetings.html

Contact us

Email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com

Phone: 07767 237644

Facebook: www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil

Website: www.belhelviecc.org.uk

Carolyn Wood

The logo for VSA, consisting of the letters 'VSA' in white on a purple speech bubble background.

the best of lives

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting at a table in a bright, modern setting. The man, on the left, is wearing a blue t-shirt and is laughing heartily. The woman, on the right, is wearing glasses and a dark top, looking towards the man. There is a white coffee cup on the table in front of the man.

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To view and apply for our latest vacancies, visit our website careers.vsa.org.uk or email us at recruitment@vsa.org.uk (referencing "Belhelvie Banter CAH")

We can't believe that the season is at an end. We were looking forward to the summer and what it would bring and here we are in Autumn already with what seems like a flick of a switch!

We welcomed several new volunteers to our group this year, which has been enormously helpful. This means we can accept more bookings midweek and last minute and what a difference that really makes.



It has been an eventful summer with larger group bookings, some who have returned again with new friends and they continue to spread the word for us and for that, we are very grateful.

We purchased a second baby buggy which has proven to be very popular. Everyone seems to be very surprised when we explain that it is all FREE to use! **NO CHARGE, NO DEPOSIT, NO RENTAL FEE!**



Many of our visitors come from outwith Belhelvie Parish to access our wonderful beach, but here we see Balmedie resident, Jeff (seen left), who has made it to the beach for the first time in over 17 years. He was seen zooming along the sands on our wonderful X8 wheelchair with a huge smile on his face!

BBC Radio Scotland interviewed us for their 'Out of Doors' programme with Rachel Stewart. They went down onto the sand with some of our visitors from Banff Day Care Opportunities. They chatted with the volunteers and carers, but what we really could hear was the giggling of the young folk in our chairs as they got on the sand and into the water. It's always lovely to hear people say nice things about what we do down at

Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs, but there is nothing as wonderful as listening to the pure joy of people having fun.

We will be closed by October so you won't see us at the bunker until next summer, but we will be happy to take bookings for those who wish to brave the cooler climates of our winter.

Fiona Winstanley

BLACKDOG NEWS



The Blackdog community and its small band of volunteers have been involved in a variety of tasks over the last six months, supporting ongoing and new projects in the area, and taking part in activities to improve our village.

We continued to meet our targets in 2023 with regards to our Village and Beach Tidy-Ups. These waste gathering activities continue to have such a positive impact on the environment within Blackdog. Our focus has also included the removal of the tree guards from the sapling trees that were planted when the new road was developed. Those of you who walk or drive past the grass verges will see a significant change in the health of the trees in this area which are now thriving. A big 'Thank You' goes to the volunteers who took part in this activity, and we were delighted to have the tree guards recycled to a local rewilding team and the damaged stakes turned into kindling for handing out to our residents who have wood-burning stoves or open fires.

It has also been a busy time for the helpers who support the green areas and planters within the village. We continue to have the support from our residents who cut the grass verges and the Community Park and want to take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment to keeping these areas tidy. We have also been busy filling our village planters (see above) with annual bedding plants and look forward to taking part in a bulb planting exercise. Our thanks to all volunteers who help and to Aberdeenshire Council for their generous donation of plants.

We continue to engage Aberdeenshire Council on issues that are close to the hearts of our residents, and we were delighted to see that a project to build a lit pathway from Strabathie Cottages to the Blackdog bus stop has been completed. This path will considerably reduce the time it takes to walk to the bus stop from the centre of the village and we thank the Council for their support in bringing this project to fruition. We have also been working closely with the team who are looking to determine the feasibility for a Council supported community facility in Blackdog. The initial feasibility studies for this project have been completed and the team are now applying for funding to support the next phase. For a village that has no facilities at all, the possibility of having a community facility is a big deal and we want to thank everyone who has supported the project to get it to its current status.

The oil-remediation initiative led by FCC at Blackdog Landfill site is now operational and we hope that the project will be successful in reducing the oil contamination of Blackdog beach which has been ongoing for some years.

We continue to review the feasibility of having a pedestrian bridge built over Blackdog burn to allow access to the beach for the young, the elderly and those of us who are less able. Trying to manage access up and down the sand dunes is tough going and has also resulted in damage to the dunes which are receding at a much faster pace. We need to move this project on, and we are now working with a new survey company in an attempt to secure the funding to support future activities within this project.

We have engaged, and met onsite, a supplier of playpark equipment to quote prices for new units for the Children's Play Park. The idea would be to replace less-used redundant equipment with new items.

Aberdeenshire Council have also indicated that they have plans to replace the multi-play unit in the park by early 2024. This is good news, and we will monitor this activity to ensure a successful completion.

Belhelvie Community Council kindly donated and installed three benches in the village which have been strategically placed on routes where people can rest when out for their daily exercise. We have also received two further benches, supported by funding from Aberdeen Propellor Funds, which we hope to have installed on the grass verge beside the Vattenfall operation. This cannot happen until the verges have been maintained, as they are overgrown and unmanageable in their current state. We have engaged Vattenfall operations for their support to have this work completed soon.

The Blackdog Residents Association (BRA) Committee worked tirelessly to plan and coordinate the Blackdog Gala which was held in the Community Park on Saturday 19th August. A delayed start due to a morning of heavy rain led to warm and sunny weather for our event, albeit with windy gusts that challenged our gazebo raising skills at times!

There was an excellent attendance at the event and everyone enjoyed the various stalls and activities available throughout the afternoon. Bouncy Castles, Mr Bubbles, Various Races for All Ages, Tug O' War, Beat the Goalie and many other activities were available for all, and this was supported by Tombola, Face-Painting and Craft Stalls along with a variety of goodies for sale. The hot food stall was ably manned by Chef Jeremy and the compliments for the quality of the burgers and sausages were abundant, both during and after the event!

Our thanks go to everyone who supported the Gala, either through donations of Tombola prizes or home bakes, or by volunteering throughout the day to help set up the equipment, man the stalls, and tidy up afterwards. Your generosity knows no bounds and your support is the reason that we had such a successful day. Our thanks also go to Joni from the Sand Bothy in Balmedie for supporting us with additional equipment and to Sharon and Graeme from Butterywells Farm for helping us get the equipment to and from Balmedie.

Finally, to our sponsors Augean North Sea Services, Kirkwood Homes and Archer Marketing, we owe you so much gratitude for your support for the Gala. Your funding and support ensured that, again this year, we were able to supply all the children's activities free of charge, which is so gratefully appreciated by all.



At all our events we have been successful in raising funds for the community and it has allowed us the opportunity to start to buy equipment to support future activities. Purchases of gazebos, tables, lights, hot plates etc. will all be useful additions to our inventory, as well as acquiring a new noticeboard (see left) at the Community Park. We will have two events in the final quarter of 2023 - A Christmas get-together in the Community Park for the children, with the switching on of the Christmas tree lights, and an official Christmas Raffle. More information regarding these events will be posted on the Blackdog and Balmedie Facebook pages when we have more details.

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BELHELVIE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

On Saturday 2nd September we held a Family Fun Day to let the community see what's going on in the Forsyth Hall and Annexe and we were delighted that a good number came up to enjoy the day.

Things are gathering pace now after the summer with groups and activities starting up again. Check out our Facebook pages for the Church and the Forsyth Hall and Annexe for updated info on what's going on, but here are the main dates in the diary for the remainder of the year. We'd love to see you along.

Here's what's going on:

Tuesday 7th November	Coffee Haven, 10-12, The Forsyth Hall
Sunday 12th November	Remembrance Service, 10.50am
Saturday 18th November	Christmas Fayre, 10-12, The Forsyth Hall
Sunday 19th November	All Age Service, 11am, The Forsyth Hall
Saturday 2nd December	Wreath Making Event, 2-4pm, The Forsyth Hall
Sunday 3rd December	Advent 1 and Christingle Service, 6.30pm
Sunday 10th December	Advent 2, Bon Accord Silver Band
Sunday 17th December	Advent 3, Nativity Service, Forsyth Hall
Sunday 24th December	Advent 4, Leisure Centre Service, 4pm, Watchnight, Belhelvie Church, 11pm
Monday 25th December	Christmas Morning Service, 11am

Rev. Paul Mckeown

COFFEE & ZUMBA

Coffee Haven takes place on the first Tuesday morning of every month, from 10am - 12noon in the Forsyth Hall. All are welcome to come and join us for tea or coffee, home baking and a chance to chat. Feel free to come on your own or bring a friend.



If you feel the need for some gentle exercise, then why not join the senior Zumba class on Monday mornings in the Forsyth Hall from 9.45 to 10.30am. If you require any further details, then please contact Caroline on 07754 185283.

Caroline Daniel Pastoral Care Team



POTTERTON VOLUNTEERS

Potterton Volunteers met seven times throughout the Spring/Summer months this year, with its main area of activity being in the parkland adjacent to the Potterton Burn. We try to meet fortnightly, but weather and commitments don't always allow this. Our objective in this area is to make it a pleasant place for local people to enjoy with a wide diversity of trees, plants, and shrubs. So, the following tasks were undertaken:

- Keeping the burn flowing by removing algae, and controlling weed growth along the burn banks.
- Planting wildflowers, perennials, fruit trees and bushes (apple and plum trees, blackberry, red berry and gooseberry bushes), the plants being provided by Belhelvie Community Trust and the local Council's 'Perennials for Pollinators' programme.
- General housekeeping: keeping paths weed-free, strimming areas not addressed by the Local Council e.g., around park benches, picnic tables etc.
- Installation of an IBC (Internal Barrier Container). This has given us a 1000 litre water supply to assist in watering new plants. June was a particularly hot and dry month and some new plants suffered. The IBC was filled from the Black Dog burn using an electric pump.
- Digging out a flower bed running parallel to Panmure Gardens and planting out flowering plants and evergreen/deciduous flowering shrubs. Thanks go to Christiane for doing most of this work, with some assistance from Neil on the heavy digging.
- Maintaining and replanting the tubs, not only in the Potterton Burn area but around the village, this work being done by Hilary and Shuna.

It was great to see that our wildflower planting campaign had started to show some results, as had our efforts to restrict the Willow Herb growth in the area.



Future Projects for Potterton Volunteers

- Installation of a Willow Arbour & Seat (we are awaiting the outcome of a funding application).
- Installation of a 'Big Bug Hotel' - hopefully with assistance from the local Scouting/Cub group.
- Solar lighting for the path - Longer Term Project, Bernard Humphrey to research funding.

We meet at the Potterton Burn every two weeks from 11:00 until 13:00 (weather permitting!) mainly in the Spring and Summer, although we will have a Spring bulb planting day in October. We are always on the look out for volunteers. Keep an eye on the Potterton Volunteers Facebook page for details of when we are meeting. You would be very welcome to join us.

Bernard Humphrey (Potterton Volunteers)



Please consider joining us at Belhelvie Community Trust, your local parish volunteer charity. We advise on projects throughout the parish, and we also run **The Sand Bothy, Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs, Balmedie Community Sensory Garden, Balmedie Litter Squad, Balmedie Hub & Community Larder and Potterton Volunteers.**

We have a paid coordinator at the Bothy, but otherwise the Trust is run entirely by volunteers. We have always tried to be realistic with what we do, by not taking on more than we have volunteers to cope with. We are also aware though that we could do more if more people join us. For example, there are empty and under-used buildings in the parish which could be put to better use, and we could develop more projects that would make people's lives a bit better.

We need to hear from people who are interested in joining our volunteer squad, with a range of experiences, all sorts of help are invaluable, including organisational skills, financial and legal skills, community work experience, hospitality flair, interest in the environment and gardening - the list is endless. Everyone has something to offer. Volunteering is rewarding, and fun, and a way of getting to know your local community. For BCT to thrive, we need your help. Contact us to find out more.



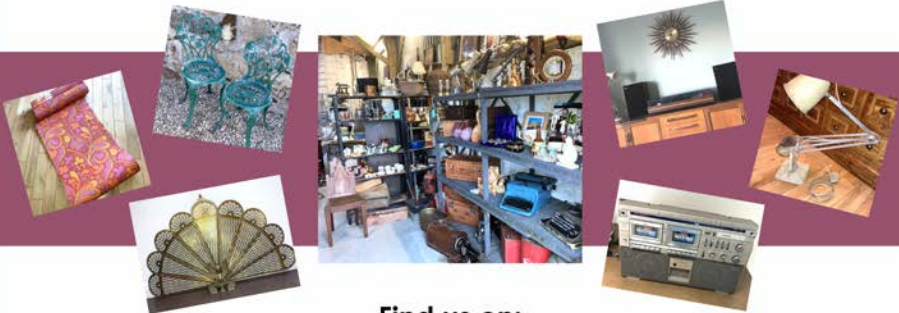
(Please note that we are not BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL, which is an official strand of local government, your link to Aberdeenshire Council.)

Rosie Nicol, Secretary, BCT



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The Sand Bothy

A Successful Summer at the Sand Bothy and Exciting Winter Workshops Ahead!

This summer has been nothing short of fantastic for the Sand Bothy. We've welcomed new volunteers, hundreds of visitors, hosted a series of engaging and memorable events that brought our community closer together. From beach clean-ups, postcard exhibitions, Doors Open Days, our Creative Pod, our Crochet Group, and everything in between, our team of volunteers has worked tirelessly to create a vibrant hub for everyone to enjoy. One of the highlights at the Country Park this season has undoubtedly been the outstanding efforts of the ACRS Seasonal Access Ranger Naomi who has posted here this summer. Her dedication and hard work have resulted in a beautifully clean beach that we can all be proud of. We really appreciate her commitment to preserving our natural surroundings.

We closed our kiosk window for the season on the 1st of October, opening again in April 2024, but the Sand Bothy doesn't go into hibernation during the winter months. We're thrilled to announce that we'll be hosting workshops throughout the Christmas season including everyone's favourite Wreath Making Workshop with Catherine. Details can be found on our Facebook page and on our ticket site here:

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-sand-bothy>



You can see the results above from last year's Wreath Making Workshop.

We would like to express our gratitude to the entire community for making this summer so special at the Sand Bothy. Your support, enthusiasm, and participation have been invaluable to us, and we look forward to continuing to grow and thrive together.

Email: info@thesandbothy.co.uk

<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-sand-bothy>

Joni Corbett 07752 768918
The Sandy Bothy Coordinator

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HAVE YOUR SAY!

Belhelvie Community Trust has been running a consultation during 2023 to find out what community facilities people who live in Balmedie Parish would like to see in their neighbourhoods.

The consultation is continuing until
November 24th 2023
and results will be published in 2024.

It is a chance for you all to comment on community provision, and also to say if you would be happy to be involved in developing your community.



To take part, call Joni Corbett on 07752 768918
to get a form, or message her on
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Potterton Greenfingers continues to maintain and provide colour throughout the season in various planters throughout the village. Aberdeenshire Council provided plants this year to help us add some summer colour. We have recently added to our selection of planters, with larger planters made from recycled oxygen tanks which were kindly donated by a local company. The planters have provided a new and interesting attraction.

We have been working voluntarily in our local communities undertaking gardening, replacing broken planters, clearing overgrown areas and putting new seating in place. We also have a selection of planters at the Community Centre which create a colourful welcome. We are pleased that last year's donated fir tree continues to thrive at the entrance to the centre. A new Potterton resident has donated pots to add to the display.

Our efforts will continue and anyone of any age is welcome to join in with managing the planters through the seasons. All help is appreciated, and if not with the gardening, then watering in warmer weather to save the plants drying out. All plant cuttings, seeds and plant donations are also welcome.

If you are interested in helping, please text on 07918 665114.

Hilary Foxen



It has been lovely to welcome so many new mums and grandparents to our Wednesday morning group. Our Summer holiday messy play sessions were a great success with lots of fun and mess made. Messy children are happy children!

After the October holiday we will return with some Halloween messy play sessions.

Please follow our Facebook page for info. We run Wednesdays in the Wee Kirk Hall opposite the Co-op from 9.30-11am. The cost of £3 includes a snack, drinks, and cake etc.

Diane Cassie 07850 235215



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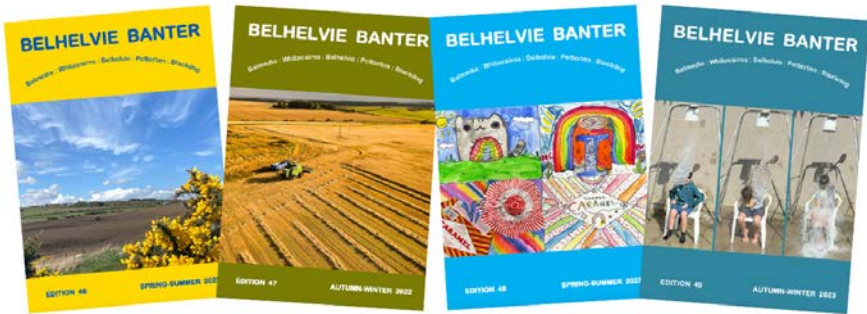


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We really need some new volunteers in our production team if Banter is to continue. We have the following vacancies below and would love to have some new blood in the team, so if you are interested, do please get in touch by emailing us at belhelviebanter@live.co.uk or phone 07763 314579.

If you are happy to take on any of the jobs below, rest assured that someone with experience in that area will work alongside you, showing you the ropes until you feel ready to take over.

We are looking for folk who would be willing to take on the following:

JOB 1

- **Editor: liaise with contributors, gather local news, edit articles, coordinate and work with other team members. Liaise with Advert Designer to collate articles and adverts into a final printable version, ready to go to the printers.**

JOB 2

- **Attract new advertisers, liaise with all advertisers to ascertain their needs; pass on info to our Advert Designer and share info with Accounts Manager.**



A WORD FROM THE DOC...

Making Choices

We live in a world which has a bewildering amount of choice. I am sure that some of you, like me, can remember when we only had three television channels, now there are over one hundred available on free to air or satellite, and more through the streaming companies. By the time you have waded through the various menus, you find that you've spent ages just trying to find something to watch! Wide choice extends in many other areas such as clothing, food, drink and even colours to paint your home. Extensive choice is part of modern life, and something that we take for granted and feel is our right, even when it feels it makes life more complicated than it needs to be! To a certain extent, this is beginning to happen in health too.

Through the internet and by watching many of the aforementioned TV channels there is a huge amount of information and advice available to assist health choices. Some of these are little more than a vehicle to sell you something or highlight the transformative effect of cosmetic surgery. However, there are useful programmes too - for example, giving information on the harmful effects of ultra-processed foods.

With all this choice and availability of information it can be difficult to be certain that any claims made, or that the effectiveness of the treatments mentioned, are backed by rigorous research. I have been struck by the large increase in patients going abroad to have surgery done, particularly for more 'cosmetic' reasons, and worry that the long-term effects of exerting this choice are not known. This is in addition to the extra workload that is faced by primary care teams and our hospital colleagues when there are complications after they return home.

When making choices about our health, we need sound, impartial advice. This is what doctors and other health professionals strive to give, and where appropriate we try and explain choices available to a patient. This, in the case of a GP, means that there has been a minimum of ten years of education and training, with a rigorous external examination, the MRCGP, as an assessment which ensures that a minimum standard is met. This might not be the case for those performing some treatments, for example cosmetic Botox injections.

When you want to buy a car, you can make an informed choice by using various online sources or car magazines, to assess performance, economy, and details such as safety features. You can even take a test drive before you buy to help you decide. Information is not so easily available when thinking about a surgical procedure or a medical treatment.

GPs realise that patients' decisions can be influenced by their own experiences and by those of friends and family. I am often asked by patients to prescribe the same pill that a friend or neighbour got, because they feel better, even when the patient themselves does not have the same condition, or indeed the pill itself could be harmful to them!



Unless you can take a course in medical statistics, or start reading medical journals, it is difficult to get the tools to allow a fully informed choice on medical treatments and interventions. That is why trained professionals such as your Community Pharmacist, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, or GP are usually a more dependable source of reliable advice to help guide health choices.

NHS Inform, as I have said before, is a good place to start online, and there are other sites such as the Patients Association website or MedlinePlus which are recognised as having a good reputation for providing reliable information.

Ultimately, the best choice you can make is to make sure you take responsibility for your health and try your best to minimise any contact with the NHS. I recommend choosing to be as active as you can be, eat as best as you can and try and be aware of how to get better information for your health choices.

Good health can be helped by choosing to avoid known harms, such as ultra-processed foods, smoking and drinking too much. Choosing these options will give yourself a better chance of longer lasting good health. By reading information from reputable sources, you give yourself the tools to understand claims made about a 'superfood' or the latest health supplement being advertised.

Choice is a good thing, and informed choice is even better. Finally, remember to get your annual flu vaccine and if eligible your covid vaccine too. As last year, please do not contact your GP practice, invites will come from the Health Board.

Dr Alasdair Forbes

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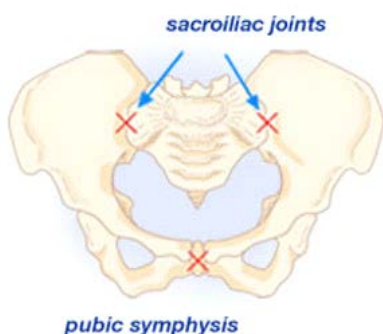


POWER TO YOUR PELVIC FLOOR

Who would think that the pelvic floor is so important? I am seeing more and more people with problems that I feel result from structural influences on this very important structure. The problems can be acute or chronic pain coupled with urinary or faecal incontinence, impotence, infertility and more. A very painful pregnancy condition with severe pubic and groin pain can cause real disability - and something can be done.

Muscles of the pelvic floor run from the tailbone to the pubic bone. They act as a hammock to support the bladder, uterus and bowel, control the muscles that close the anus, vagina and urethra, work with the abdominal and back muscles to stabilise and support our spine (helping us to stand up straight). They help with abdominal pressure when we are lifting and/or exercising. They also facilitate ejaculation, maintain erections, tighten the vagina and are involved in sexual pleasure.

Male or female pelvic floors can be weakened by pregnancy, constant sitting, childbirth, menopause, obesity, chronic coughing, straining with bowel motions, scar tissue, heavy lifting, no exercise, radiotherapy and surgery e.g. prostatectomy.



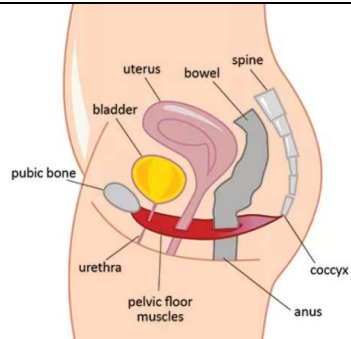
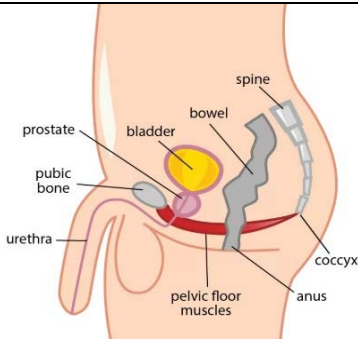
The pubic bones meet at the front of the pelvis with the sacroiliac joint at the back. Pubic bones rely on the hip muscles, the abdominals and the pelvic floor muscles for stability. The pelvis is often misaligned due to the whole pelvis being tilted more forward on one side. This affects back and front. These bones separate to allow baby's head out but after birth, the bones may not realign - massage techniques and pelvic balancing treatments, followed by stretching and/or strengthening.

The sacro-iliac joints transmit the weight of the body to the pelvic girdle, so the sacrum needs to be correctly positioned so that the coccyx/tailbone is in the correct position for those all-important pelvic floor attachments. Having a structural check is always a good idea!

As we can see, it is important for everyone to exercise their pelvic floors (*except for the minority whose floors are too tight which we can talk about next time.*) To obtain the best results, the basin needs to be held in correct alignment. When there are distortions, fascial restrictions or muscle spasms causing uneven 'pulls' on bones, the knock-on effects can be devastating.

These exercises should be part of your routine - like cleaning your teeth. They can be done sitting, standing or lying down. Breathe normally, keep everywhere else relaxed. Contract your pelvic floor before you sneeze, cough, or lift heavy weights.

Ladies and gentlemen, the muscles that we want to target first are the ones that stop you from farting. Imagine you are cracking nuts with your buttocks. Start with an imaginary walnut and work down to a peanut. Leave a few seconds between each contraction so allow the muscles to relax - just as you do when you work-out.



MEN can identify their PF muscles by stopping the flow of urine when they go for a pee. Don't hold it and only do it once! This is just to let you feel where the muscles are. The exercise is tensing, squeezing and lifting. Look in the mirror and watch as your penis pulls back a bit and your scrotum rises. PF exercises pre and post prostate surgery will help your bladder regain its control.

LADIES: You too can identify the muscles that you clench when you are desperate. Now, imagine a pencil in your vagina - tighten the muscles around it and then bend your knees and using your hips write the alphabet holding on to that imaginary pencil. This is a standing position but can be adapted. OR Imagine grapes in your vagina and squeeze from the base up to the top. Then rest. Then repeat. This is handier when you are in queues and can't wriggle about.

Osteopathy and **Remedial and Sports Massage** are the treatments of choice for imbalances and painful problems. Working on leg muscles helps ease the pain while at the same time helping to balance the pelvis. Osteopathic techniques may be required for the pubic and sacroiliac joints. These are gentle techniques and should help a great deal.

Maggie Brooks-Carter, DO, RN, SMTD



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POTTERTON BROWNIES



We are very pleased to let everyone know that a Silver Award and a Bronze Award were gained by Jessica and Ava just before the summer holidays. Well done girls. To gain the Bronze Award a Brownie needs to gain two Theme Awards. To gain the Silver Award a Brownie needs to gain a further two Theme Awards. For these awards, independently, Ava and Jessica worked on their Know Myself and Have Adventures Theme Awards. They both completed the Local Heritage badge (their knowledge of Potterton is very interesting) and the Aviation badge, successfully creating flying objects. They both gained the Camp Skills Builder badge, learning some basic preparation for camping, and the Network Skills Builder badge learning how to work well with other people. There are many more badges almost complete, waiting to be presented to our other Brownies. Our Brownies are aiming high!

We had a pizza party celebration to top off last term, with ice cream and pizza galore.

We have room for more brownies, so if you have a daughter aged between 7 - 10 who would like to try Brownies please email 1stpottertonbrownies@gmail.com

Katherine Hebron-Scott (Brown Owl)



WANT TO JOIN US?

Our football club, Middlefield Wasps was founded in 1968 and is based in Balmedie. We have various age groups from 5-6 year-old right up to amateur. Contact us through our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/MiddlefieldWaspsSc>




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BALMEDIE BROWNIES

1st Belhelvie Brownies have had so much fun over the past six months. As well as working towards some of our badges we have had a few special events.

We had the Coastguard come to visit us at the unit. They showed us how we would be rescued and some of us even got tied into the rescue equipment to let us see how it would feel. We had a go at throwing a rescue rope. The girls got to try on some of the equipment that they have to carry. The girls also got to see inside the rescue vehicles and got to turn on the sirens. This was an interesting evening as they told us that they are all volunteers and do not get paid for their time. We are all so lucky to have such a valuable service of volunteers. This will count towards our Make a Splash badge.

Usually once a year we like to do a Random Act of Kindness. This year the girls made teddy bears out of a face cloth and ribbon and we delivered these around Balmedie. So many positive comments were received which was lovely to hear. It is good for them to give something back to the community and to raise the awareness of Girlguiding. The girls were then treated to a trip to the chip shop!

Our Brownies meet at the Forsyth Hall, so when there was an event there to highlight the Annexe now being open with all its meeting rooms and wonderful facilities, we were delighted to be asked to come along and show what Brownies do. We had our badge-making machine where children could make badges and we also had hook-a-duck which was very popular.

The Brownies also attended the 'Fly Cup' event for Gordon District at Castle Fraser. There were different challenges that we had to complete including decorating cakes, making biscuits, races, and challenges. We won first prize!



Most recently we have been to the magic woods, where we made campfires in our sixes (groups of Brownies). We enjoyed making smores and singing songs.

There is so much to look forward to in Brownies. We are going to the Christmas Panto and there are more surprises for the Brownies to come. Exciting!

Brownies are for girls aged 7 to 10 and we are always looking for new girls or leaders in our area. Although 2nd Belhelvie Brownies is currently full, you can add your name to our waiting list, or there is a Brownie Pack in Potterton with spaces.

Please get in touch via the website www.girlguiding.org.uk if you would like to volunteer or register an interest in joining Brownies.

Marianne McIntosh (Brown Owl)







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1st BELHELVE GUIDES

We finished our last term off with the Guides curating their own exhibition. Friends and families visited, and it was an amazing showcase of the skills and interests the Guides have including dancing, coin collecting, gymnastics, and jewellery.

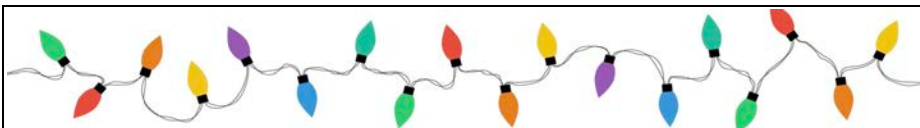
We've had a big increase in membership this term with the unit almost at capacity, which has given me the (welcome) challenge of learning a lot of new names. The Guides have been running the unit themselves this term with each Patrol planning and carrying out their own activities. I've seen splatter painting, paper aeroplanes flying, surfing practiced, and some interesting activities around non-verbal communications.

Over the next few months, the Guides will continue to lead their own activities with support from the volunteers. Next year, Guides will have the opportunity to join the County weekend Camp (June), as well as undertake their own camp, potentially gaining their Camp Permit (September). We'll hopefully manage an indoor overnight before the camping season as well.

Guides are for girls aged 10-14 years old and meet fortnightly on a Tuesday night in Balmedie. Although we have a lot of members, we may still have room for new ones, particularly if we can get a fourth volunteer. If you are interested in joining us as a Guide or volunteer, please get in touch by giving me a call on 01224 703335 or emailing 1stbelhelvi-guides@gmail.com or register online at:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/>

Susan Osbeck



BALMEDIE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

It's nearly that time of year again and preparations are underway for our second Family Fun Day event on Saturday 2nd December 10-3pm in the Whitehorse Function Hall, followed by a Christmas Light switch on in the evening. There will be stalls - from gifts to handmade items, just perfect for Christmas shopping. Please come along and support local businesses at this busy time of year. There will also be a magician from 12-1pm. Tickets are available now but be quick before they sell out!

We aim to have our Christmas tree in place mid-October in time for our light switch on - please note more info to follow over on our Facebook page. Do come along and support these events. All proceeds go to helping light up our village.

Diane Cassie 07850 235215

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1st BELHELVE RANGERS

Before the summer holidays the Rangers gained their First Aid Skills Builder 5 badge, learning about CPR, the recovery position, dealing with broken bones in the wild, and how to support someone experiencing a seizure. They also tried their hand at crime scene investigations, designing computer games, and making wearable electronic fashion with conductive sewing threads and LEDs. I was also very pleased to be able to award Elspie, Ava and Tasha their Bronze Ranger awards. Well done!

The Rangers had a fabulous time over the summer at the Haarlem Jamboree in the Netherlands (below). They spent two weeks camping with over 4,000 Guides and Scouts from other countries. They had such a good time; they now plan to go back to the next one in 2027 as volunteers.



This term, the Rangers have so far had a go at sitting volleyball and have organised and run an evening on self-care for one of their interest badges. They'll be investigating fuels of the future (burning things), looking into volunteering, and challenging negative messages in media. Hopefully we'll manage to organise another night away before camping season starts.

The Rangers are for 14-18 years old young women and are great fun. We meet fortnightly, on a Monday night in Newburgh. New members (and volunteers) can join at any time with no previous experience in Guiding required.

For more information, either give me a call on 01224 703335, or email

1stbelhelvierangers@gmail.com or register online at:

<https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/>

Susan Osbeck



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. **Ask at the Balmedie Co-op store if you would like a card.**

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As we settle into the new normal of the reduced opening hours at the library it is heartening to see the number of people who took part in the Summer Reading this year. With a total of 5,687 sign ups, this was an increase of over 50% on last year. Prize giving will take place on the 18th of November during Book Week Scotland.

The Summer of Play events at the library were an enormous success with the children enjoying the Lego and craft sessions. Also, a special well done to the parents who attended the hedgehog bookmaking session, I think you will agree that the paper folding was quite addictive!

Coming up next is the Tattie Holidays! More Lego and craft sessions will be happening and there will be drop-in crafts too. These will be on the website soon for you to book your place.

BALMEDIE GALA - Thanks to everyone who engaged with the library staff at the Gala, it was great to be part of a community event, and welcome to everyone who signed up for a library card on the day.

BOOK GROUPS - Are you interested in joining a book group? Balmedie Book Ends are happy to have new members. Currently meetings are on monthly at the White Horse, with the library supplying the books for the group.

The library will be starting a new book group for primary children aimed at age 5-8 years. Books will be available to collect in October with the first monthly meeting taking place on Wednesday the 1st of November after school. Please contact me at the library for more information.

LIBRARY VISITS - It is always great to see the children in the library from the local nurseries engaging with the books, enjoying stories, and occasionally enjoying a Bookbug session. If you would like to arrange a visit out-with open times, please email the library.

BOOKBUG - Songs, rhymes, and story sessions for pre-school children are on weekly on a Friday morning from 10.30-11am. Although it is preferable for you to book your place for this, walk-ins are always welcome.

LEGO CLUB - Held fortnightly on a Wednesday afternoon, 3.30pm-4.15pm. There are limited spaces for this event but younger siblings do not need to book a place and there is Duplo available for them to play with.

DIGITAL SERVICES - If you need help with any of our digital services, such as Libby or Press Reader I am happy to answer any of your questions.

FREE FOR ALL - You can pick up food waste bags, battery bags, bin straps, dog waste bags, sanitary products, condoms, and hearing aid batteries free of charge from the library.

Finally, I would just like to say a big thank you to the library volunteers, John Booth and Judith Hendry who help me in the library. You are both much appreciated. Happy reading everyone.

Jane Geddes, Senior Library Administrator

Tel: 01358 281070 Email: balmedie.library@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Website: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/libraries

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There are so many NTS opportunities that are accessible from the Belhelvie Parish area. In June, the Members' Centre group were privileged to visit the private gardens at Finzean House. In July we visited Kemnay House to learn more about the fascinating history of the Burnett family who have lived there for over 300 years. August saw us at Leith Hall enjoying the historic house and the garden. In Autumn we return to our regular programme of talks and indoor events. Do come and join us.

Thursday 16th November at 2:30pm in Haddo House Library - 'Polar Diversity and Climate Change' - a talk by Professor Frithjof Kuepper from Aberdeen University (pre-booking not required)

3rd December at 3pm in Haddo Chapel - Carols for Christmas. Tickets: £10 (adult) £5 (child) will be available through Eventbrite.

18th January at 2:30pm in Haddo Peatyards - 'A Virtual Walk down Union Street, Aberdeen' a talk by Bill Diack.

For more information, email ne.aberdeenshire.mc@gmail.com. Non-members are very welcome to attend events. A £3 donation is requested for talks. If you are a member of the NTS and would like to get more involved and help to support our local properties, then join the North East Aberdeenshire Members' Centre. Annual membership costs £12. To join contact Dr. Alistair Flett, Easter Crichtie Cottage, St. Katherines, Aberdeenshire, AB51 8SR (01651 891620).

Patricia Shaw

School Holiday Dates 2023/2024		
October Mon 30	First day of Winter term	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
November Thurs 16	In Service day	Balmedie, Ellon
November Fri 17	In Service day	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
December Thurs 21	Last day of Winter term	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
2024 January Mon 8	First day of Spring term	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
February Fri 9	Local holiday	Balmedie, Ellon
February Mon 12	Mid-term holiday	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA,
February Tues 13, Wed 14	In Service days	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
March Thurs 28	Last day of Spring term	Balmedie, Ellon
March Fri 29	Last day of Spring term	BoDA
April Mon 15	First day of Summer term	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
May Mon 6	May Day holiday	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
May Tues 7	In Service day	BoDA
July Fri 5	Last day of Summer term	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Weekly			
Mon	Senior Zumba	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	09.45 - 10.30
Mon	The Hub	Balmedie Cong. Church (Wee Kirk)	10.00 - 13.00
Tues	Sensory Garden Group	Sensory Garden	10.00 - 12.00
Wed	Catholic Mass	St Columba's, Bridge of Don	10.00
Wed	Baby and Toddlers	Balmedie Cong. Church	09.30 - 11.00
Wed	Ladies Group	Balmedie Cong. Church	14.00 - 15.00
Wed	Craft Club	Balmedie Cong. Church	18.30 - 19.30
Thurs	Health Walks	Balmedie Leisure Centre	10.30
Thurs	Indoor Bowling	Potterton CEC	15.00 - 17.00
Thurs	Better Balmedie	Behind Balmedie Wee Kirk	10.00 - 12.00
Fri	Knit & Natter	Balmedie Leisure Centre	10.00 - 12.00
Fri	Book Bug Pre-School children	Balmedie Library	10.30 - 11.00
Sat	Better Balmedie	Behind Balmedie Wee Kirk	10.00 - 12.00
Sat	Catholic Mass	St Columba's, Bridge of Don	10.00
Sun	Catholic Mass	St Columba's, Bridge of Don	09.30 & 18.00
Sun	Belhelvie Church Service	Belhelvie Church	11.00
Sun	Balmedie Cong. Church Service	Balmedie Cong. Church	11.00
Fortnightly			
Tues	Friendship Group	Balmedie Leisure Centre	13.00 - 15.00
Wed	Lego Club	Balmedie Library	15.30 - 16.15
Every 3 Weeks approx.			
Tues	Potterton Walking Group	Contact J Hutcheon - 07811 071732	12.00
Monthly			
1st Tues	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	10.00 - 12.00
1st Thurs	Book Group	Contact Balmedie Library - 01358 281070	
2nd Wed	SWRI	Balmedie Leisure Centre	10.00 - 12.00
Last Sat	Men's Breakfasts	Cock & Bull	09.30
Term Time Groups for Children and Young Adults			
Mon	Cubs	Potterton Community Centre	18.30 - 20.00
Mon	Ranger Guides (fortnightly)	Newburgh	19.30 - 21.00
Tues	Mainly Music	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	13.45 - 15.00
Tues	Rainbows	Balmedie School	18.00 - 19.00
Tues	Cubs	Potterton Community Centre	18.30 - 20.00
Tues	Guides (fortnightly)	Balmedie School	19.00 - 20.30
Tues	Explorer Scouts	Potterton Community Centre	19.30 - 21.30
Wed	Beavers	Balmedie School	18.00 - 19.15
Wed	Craft Club	Balmedie Cong. Church	18.30 - 19.30
Thurs	Rainbows	Potterton Community Centre	17.30 - 18.30
Thurs	Brownies	Potterton Community Centre	18.00 - 19.45
Thurs	Brownies	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	18.15 - 19.45
Fri	Boys' Brigade with Girls	Balmedie Cong. Church	15.30 - 16.30
Fri	Scouts	Potterton Community Centre	19.00 - 21.30

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	Waste and Environmental Health	03456 081207
	Dog Warden	01467 539039
Councillors: Mid-Formartine Ward	CLr Andrew Hassan	07388 956123
	CLr Paul Johnston	07799 582879
	CLr Jenny Nicol	07788 453092
	CLr Derek Ritchie	07788 980814
YOUTH ORGANISATIONS:		
Beavers (Balmedie)	}	All enquiries to Ian Thomson balmedie@gordondistrictscouts.org.uk
Cubs (Potterton)		
Scouts, Explorer Scouts		
Rainbows (Balmedie)		
Rainbows (Potterton)		
Brownies (Balmedie)		Claire via website www.girlguiding.org.uk
Brownies (Potterton)		Pauline Wood 01358 743002
Guides (Balmedie)		Marianne McIntosh 01358 724231
Rangers (Potterton)		Katherine Hebron Scott 01330 833448
		Susan Osbeck 1stbelhelvieguides@gmail.com 01224 703335
		Susan Osbeck 01224 703335
CHURCHES:		
Belhelvie Church of Scotland	Rev Paul McKeown AB23 8YR	01358 742227
Balmedie Congregational Church	(The Wee Kirk) Rev Andy Cowie	07715 279478
Ellon Catholic Church	3 Union St, Ellon AB41 9BA	01358 724580
King's Church	King's Way, Bridge of Don AB23 8BL	01224 651000
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	01358 724580
MEDICAL CENTRES:		
Scotstown, Bridge of Don	Cairnfold 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 (Acting) Jill Cruickshank	01224 707583
Ellon Academy	HT Pauline Buchan	01358 281150

COMMUNITY CENTRES:

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

Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs	Fiona Winstanley	07864 350989
Balmedie Health Walks	Chris Cane	07590 849226
Balmedie House Eventide Home	Emma Balingbing, Manager	01358 742244
Balmedie Library	Jane Geddes	01358 281070
Balmedie Out of School Club	Lynne Fyfe	07920 295508
Balmedie Pharmacy	3 Rowan Drive	01358 741226
Balmedie Post Office	Eigie Road, Balmedie	01358 742556
Belhelvie Banter	Jess Petrie	07763 314579
Belhelvie Bowling Club	Marion Donald	07729 817718
Belhelvie Community Council	David Wallace	01358 743595
Belhelvie Community Trust	Rosie Nicol	01358 742557
Better Balmedie	Rosie Nicol	01358 742557
Blackdog Residents' Association	Moira Neave, Secretary	07876 323835
First Responders	Theresa Thompson	07931 251993
Neighbourhood Watch	Paul Collier (Belhelvie)	07825 216233
Pottertont Volunteers	Bernard Humphrey	07710 416003
Pottertont Greenfingers	Hilary Foxen	07918 665114
The Sand Bothy	Joni Corbett	07752 768918
The Sensory Garden	Julie Fordyce	07821 548367

KIDS' STUFF

Please check current status of groups as arrangements may vary.

Two's Group	}	Leisure Centre, Balmedie	01358 743725
Tae Kwon Do			
Parent & Toddler Group			
Kindergym			
Over 8's Drawing Group			
Additional Support Needs Group			
Ian Wilson Soccer Coaching			
Baby & Toddlers / Messy Play	Diane Cassie	07850 235215	
Balmedie Craft Club	Catherine Cassie	01358 743114	
Danz Creations	Lee Simpson	01358 743661	
Mainly Music, Forsyth Hall	Jeanette Lamb	01358 742684	
Pre-School Bookbug Sessions	Balmedie Library	01358 281070	

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Copy deadline for Spring-Summer Edition - Friday 19 April 2024

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BELHELVIE BANTER CALENDAR 2024

Dates for submission of adverts, articles and contributions are shown in **red** squares and should be emailed to belhelviebanter@live.co.uk

Dates for start of deliveries of Belhelvie Banter are shown in **blue** squares.

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