

BELHELVIE BANTER

Balmedie : Whitecairns : Belhelvie : Potterton : Blackdog



EDITION 50

SPRING-SUMMER 2024

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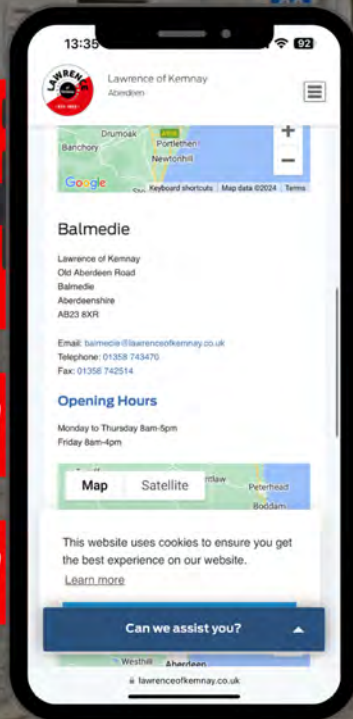


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EDITORIAL

It's such a relief to be emerging from dark wet days, into the joy that is Spring, with the warmer days of Summer to come. Time flies and I can hardly believe that this is our 50th edition of Belhelvie Banter. I remember saying initially that I'd do the Editor's role for a couple of years and now I find I'm 10 years into the job with 30 editions under my belt. Time for change I reckon - so watch this space!

The Banter Team have indeed seen some change over the years. The latest is that Shuna Jenkins, who has been around for all of 49 editions, has left us. We are very grateful to have had her working her charm on advertisers and organising distribution for so long and thank her profusely for all the hard work she has put in. Next edition, we hope to welcome some new members to our Team, but more of that later.

Yes, change can be good. We've seen quite a change in Banter over the years, going from stapled, photo-copied sheets to professionally printed booklets, from black and white to full colour glossy pages. I feel our job has been to produce a means of pulling our communities together and keeping everyone up to date with what's going on round about us. We do hope that you enjoy seeing our community magazine arriving through your letter box. Remember, Banter can also be accessed online at www.belhelviebanter.org.

We are very much a Team here at Banter, all working together to the same end, that of providing community news to over 2,000 homes in our area. We need every part of our Team - editors, advertising designers, distribution managers, distributors, contributors, and advertisers. Take one of those elements away, and we're stuck. So, I would like to extend our thanks to everyone mentioned above - you have all played your part in Banter's history and helped us to achieve our goal - and our 50th edition.

Jess Petrie, Editor

ADVERTISE WITH BANTER

If you would like to advertise with Banter, please email belhelviebanter@gmail.com
 We welcome adverts ready for publication, but help is available for advert design if you need it.

A5 PAGES	ACTUAL SIZE	ONE EDITION
Whole back page advert	W148mm x H210mm	£120
Whole page advert	W128mm x H190mm	£90
Half page advert	W128mm x H90mm	£45
Quarter page advert	W60mm x H90mm	£25
Small Ad	W60mm x H40mm	£15

BANTER DEADLINES	AUTUMN WINTER Ed 51	SPRING SUMMER Ed 52
Articles & ads	Fri 20 Sept 2024	Fri 18 April 2025
Delivery begins	Sat 19 Oct 2024	Sat 17 th May 2025

A big thank you to Claire Allan from the NHS (Lead Paramedic on the Air Ambulance Service in Aberdeen) for our Edition 50 cover photo showing Belhelvie Village and surroundings.

THIS IS PERCY, SHE IS LOST



We need your help to find our beloved family pet. She is a 3½ years old, chipped, spayed, muted tortoiseshell (grey) cat. Missing from Balmedie for some time now (since 25th February). She has never strayed before or stayed out overnight. We think she could have hitched a ride in a vehicle and ended up far from home.



Any new cats in your neighbourhood? She is friendly, but timid, and doesn't like being lifted. If you see her or hear about her whereabouts, please get in touch.

07752 988182

Even if anyone finds (or has disposed of) remains, we would still like to know, and if possible recover to scan for the microchip.

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WHAT'S ON - Spring-Summer

MAY			
Fri 24th	Potterton Coffee Morning	Potterton Community Centre	10.00-12.00
Sun 26th	Summer Gala Day	Balmedie Leisure Centre	12.00-16.00
JUNE			
Sat 22nd	Potterton Coffee Morning	Potterton Community Centre	10.00-12.00
Sat 22nd	Brownies' Bingo Night	White Horse Inn	18.00
JULY			
Sun 28th	Summer Fun Day	The Sand Bothy	12.00-16.00
AUGUST			
Sat 10th	Blackdog BBQ Fun Day	Blackdog Park	Time tbc
SEPTEMBER			
Sat 7th - Sun 15th	North East Open Studios	Exhibition at The Sand Bothy	10.00-16.00
OCTOBER			
Thurs 10th - 4wks	The Creative Pod	The Sand Bothy	18.30-21.00

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!

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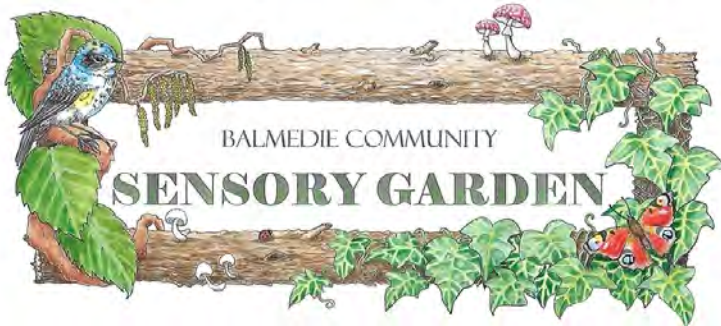
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Instagram: [@the_white_horse_balmedie](#)



This Spring has seen a mixed bag of weather so far, but some hardy volunteers have managed to do some weeding and tidying up in the garden. The Spring flowers have been glorious, adding colour from the beginning of the year with snowdrops and crocuses, followed by daffodils, hellebore, anemone, scyllas and many more.



There have been a few exciting new developments in the garden already this year. In February, thanks to Deeside Willow, a long-term plan finally came to fruition. We now have a willow tunnel, which is already being enjoyed by our nursery group visitors. We are looking forward to seeing it sprout in the coming months. In March, the surfaces under the picnic tables were levelled and slabbed, improving access for everyone as well as making them look great. Thank you, Neil Black Contractor Ltd, for another great project for the Sensory Garden. Also new in March was a children's noticeboard which a valued Sensory Garden supporter kindly made for us. Our younger visitors will find display posters, scavenger hunts and seasonal trail information here.

We had a Christmas and an Easter trail in the garden so keep an eye out for our next one.

Last summer we had a fantastic display of flowers in our new 'mega bed' and this year we are making another new bed, so there will be even more flowers for you to enjoy. Other new developments planned for the coming weeks include a new sign, made by yet another of our supporters, and some totem poles. The Sensory Garden has many regular visitors of all ages who love it. If you have not been to our little 'haven', do come for a wander through or sit and enjoy the tranquillity.

A busy summer lies ahead for our volunteers to keep the garden looking beautiful and to add new features for all to enjoy. We really need more volunteers to join our small group to achieve this, so, if you would like to help, please get in touch. Alternatively, just come along any Tuesday between 10 and 12 (weather permitting). No gardening experience required. We sometimes even have coffee and cake!

Julie Fordyce Sensory Garden Co-ordinator

OPEN WATER SWIMMING

The Bluetits Group



Watching the 'One Show', nearing the end of COVID restrictions, was when I first got into wild swimming. I watched as two women broke through ice on a river, and I immediately thought, I need to do this!

After some research, I found the Bluetits groups. They are a group of swimmers that started off in Wales and now have groups all over the world. Contacting the Bluetits HQ, I found out that there were no groups in the Northeast of Scotland so - would I be willing to start one?

In April 2021, I started the Aberdeen city group, which now has over 1,000 members and they usually swim at Fittie. Bev from Balmedie is the admin for that group now, as I have moved to Auchnagatt and started another group for North of Aberdeen. We mainly swim in Collieston, Cruden Bay and Peterhead Lido, but have been known to be 'Tits on Tour' and venture further afield for day trips to some amazing locations.

Balmedie residents are so lucky having access to so many fantastic beaches. Anyone is welcome to join the group, or all three groups (there is a south group for Stonehaven too). You can swim as often or as little as you like, you can swim or just have a dook. If you want to swim, you just post on Facebook and, more often than not, someone will keep you company. You can even just come along and join for the tea, chat and cake after if you aren't quite ready to take the plunge.

The groups are amazing. I've met so many incredible people along the way, from all walks of life and made some solid friendships through swimming with them. We are also incredibly lucky to have an amazing swim coach, Paula from Adelle Penguins Open Water Swim Coaching (see Facebook). Paula holds sessions for anyone interested in open water swimming and is a little nervous to try it. She'll show you what to look for before you get in the water, and you will have some sessions in the water to help build confidence.

Paula's sessions concentrate on learning safety, what you need to get started, and how to get warm after your swims. Paula can also do more advanced lessons too, I've always wanted to learn how to do heads down swimming and with some sessions with Paula, I'm on my way to learning front crawl at 49 years old.

A few of the 'Baltic Bluetits fae Aberdeenshire North' have signed up to swim at an event in Loch Morlich in September. We are swimming 750m to help raise money for Teenage Cancer Trust, amazing to think we just started as 'dookers'!

When I first started wild swimming, I wasn't aware of all the health or social benefits. Now after swimming for two years and researching a little, I can now appreciate the benefits. Apart from socially and the friendship groups that form, I've heard many members talk about how pain free (from the likes of arthritis) they are after starting swimming in the cold water.

Many of the 'flock' swim for their mental health, I'm currently in the throes of perimenopause, my anxiety was high, and moods were variable to say the least! But the sanity and calm felt as soon as you immerse yourself in the water was just the small escapism that my body needed to reset and as I walk out of the water after my swim, I feel ready to face life again. Some members have mentioned that wild swimming is helping their Reynaud's, giving them a sense of community and a form of exercise they enjoy, easing symptoms of fibromyalgia, giving them some 'me time' from a busy family life, helping with hip pain... the list goes on!

We have some themed swims over the summer, coffee, cake and road trips are all part of the experience and this also forms bonds between group members and elevates low mood and loneliness. I've yet to hear a negative comment!

Swimming in the open water is just so freeing and for me nostalgic. I feel totally at ease with the world. Looking out to the horizon is very humbling and puts things into perspective, it's the same with river swims and seeing the mountains surrounding you. It really makes you feel like you are totally immersed in nature.

When swimming on my own, it gives me time for my brain to reset and help me deal with life as it starts to appear as I emerge from the water. When swimming with the Bluetits, it's about being part of a community - laughter, chatting, camaraderie and meeting people from different walks in life. No-one is judged, everyone is accepted.

It's coming up to the perfect time to start Open Water swimming. The water is starting to get warmer (it's at its coldest in March and warmest in September). If anyone fancies trying OWS you can find all three of our groups on Facebook. Feel free to join any of the groups and swims - all are welcome!

Karen Catto



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A BIG THANKYOU

We are sad to say goodbye to a real stalwart of the Banter Team. Shuna Jenkins has been involved with our community magazine since its inception in 2009. She was in fact one of the founding members of the Team when Banter was first produced with the use of a photocopier and a stapler! A valuable cog in the Banter wheel, she has worked in advertising, distribution and has generally mucked in where needed.

Shuna has been a Potterton resident for 36 years and goes out of her way to be involved in so many community projects. She is also an active supporter of the Belhelvie area Scouting group, often seen at camps, usually with a ladle in hand, ensuring all are fed and watered. But now Shuna is ready to spend more time on her own hobbies and pursuits, away from the panic of Banter deadlines. We're hoping for the best of Spring and Summer weather to come, as we know she will be found in her garden, doing what she loves.

We'd like to say a big thank you to Shuna for all she has done for Belhelvie Banter. She has worked tirelessly for many years to ensure that our wee community magazine continues and is distributed across our Parish. We shall certainly miss her input. Enjoy your well-earned rest Shuna! ("What rest?" we hear her say!)

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AFTER-SCHOOL CLUB AXED

Back in February, Aberdeenshire Council voted (11 to 6) in favour of stopping the authority's out-of-school care provision (After School Clubs). The Council has been running eight facilities across the region, providing somewhere for children to spend the time while their parents remain at work. The Council argued that it could no longer afford to keep the services going. Anxious parents had six months to seek alternative care. Some worried that they would have to give up working if an alternative was not found. In the Belhelvie Parish area, we have some excellent child-minders, but they can only provide a service for a limited number of children.

It was fortunate that a solution was found, in the form of 'Kids Academy', the brainchild of Shona Grant, who introduces herself, and her service below. You can also have a look at the [Kids Academy Out of School Club](#) Facebook page to find out more.

NEW CHILDCARE OPTIONS IN THE BALMEDIE AREA



Kids Academy

Families across Aberdeenshire have always faced challenges in sourcing affordable and sustainable childcare for primary school aged children. Aberdeenshire Council have provided an out-of-school club service in several towns across the 'shire. However, these clubs mostly run at capacity, leaving many parents on a waiting list to secure spaces for their children.

I found myself in this situation in 2014, when I returned to work after having my youngest child. I got in touch with Ellon out-of-school club only to be informed that they had over a 2-year waiting list. At a loss, as to how I could continue in my role, I decided to research the possibility of setting up a new club.

This could solve my childcare problems and help many other families. I have 5 children and, when they were very young, I was a stay-at-home mum. I was very involved in the local play group and was chairperson of the committee there for many years. When the Play Group was threatened with closure, due to no applications for the position of manager, I decided to take on this role myself. During this time, I completed the qualification SVQ level 3 Childcare learning and development and gained 5 years' experience in managing a childcare setting.

Kids Academy out-of-school club opened in April 2016, based in Ellon Academy community campus. My club started out small, which was great as it gave us the ability to build good relationships with the children and parents. We are currently registered to have 40 children at both breakfast and after-school clubs and are now running at capacity with a waiting list in place.

When Aberdeenshire Council recently announced the closure of out-of-school clubs across Aberdeenshire, I was inundated with requests for spaces at Kids Academy, which I unfortunately could not fulfil. Several parents got in touch suggesting that I expand my service. After much deliberation I decided to open additional services in Balmedie and in Ellon. The Balmedie setting will be based in Balmedie Primary while the additional setting in Ellon will be based in Auchterellon Primary.

We are currently in the process of registering both services with the Care Inspectorate and are hopeful of opening both services in August for the schools going back. We hope to provide as much continuity as possible for the children who currently attend these settings.

We will be providing breakfast club from 7.00 and after-school club until 18.00, both settings will be registered for 40 places. If you would like further information or wish to register a place for your child, do get in touch.

Email: kidsacademyellon@gmail.com or call 07880 528816.

Shona Grant

BALMEDIE NETBALL CLUB



Balmedie Netball is a recreational netball club and we are a friendly bunch. We meet/play every Tuesday at the Balmedie Leisure Centre at 7.15pm until 8.30pm. New members are always welcome. Players can be of all fitness levels but must be over 18. Come along and meet us and enjoy learning a new skill.

Come on - get fit - make friends - have fun!

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POTTERTON COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

At the start of 2024, members of Potterton Community formed a steering group to undertake a Community Action Plan (CAP). The CAP is a great opportunity to make changes and improvements to your community. Over the past couple of months, the Steering Group have been collecting the thoughts and comments from Potterton residents on changes and improvements that can be made in the village. Many thanks to the many members of the community who completed the survey and came along to the coffee mornings. These responses have given valuable insight to inform the next stage of the CAP process.

A CAP is a participatory process that can build the skills and capacity of a community. It is when people get involved to take action to address their needs, any issues and develop the potential of where they live and work. It provides a framework for implementing positive change by identifying and specifying WHAT will be done, WHO might be involved and HOW it will be done.



The action plan will have a lifespan of 3-5 years. To help identify the community's priorities and what actions to focus on for this plan, the steering group will be holding a drop-in event at Potterton Community Centre in the next couple of months where residents will be able to see the results of the consultation and have their say on the emerging themes.



A Facebook page has been created to help connect Potterton residents with what is happening around Potterton, including news of Community Action Plan process.

You can find this at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/802944341669939>

To become involved or to learn more about Potterton Community Action Plan, please contact formartinecaps@gmail.com

Jacky Niven



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POTTERTON COFFEE MORNINGS



Come along to our regular coffee mornings to meet and discuss community plans with fellow residents. We've had some interesting chats at previous gatherings and look forward to new folk coming along for a catch-up. Our next coffee morning is on Saturday 22nd June 10.00 to 12.00. Do come and join us!

BELHELVE BOWLING CLUB



Belhelvie Bowling Club is 100 years old.

Based in Belhelvie at the Green Hut, it was originally a quoits club, and later a bowling club in 1924 - it has kept going ever since!

Our new season started on Sunday 23rd April at 13.30. The Club would like to invite new members to try bowling, no experience necessary, no restriction on age, you will be very welcome to give it a go. Coaching is available weekends or evenings and bowls are available for practice. If you would like to know more, phone me on 07729 817718 or email marion.donald@btinternet.com. We also have a website: www.belhelviebowlingclub.com. Why not come along, have a go, and help the Club move into its centenary year?

Marion Donald



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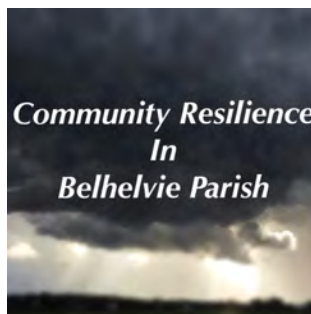
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BELHELVIE PARISH RESILIENCE GROUP

Over the last 6 months some of your local community groups and residents of the community, have come together to create **Belhelvie Parish Resilience Group**. In times of crisis, it is important for our communities to come together to support one another. It is crucial for us to be prepared for any potential emergencies that may arise during a bad weather crisis.

The recent establishment of our community resilience group aims to enhance communication between our communities and local authorities, and to provide vital information about community hubs and services that will be available during a bad weather crisis. We have set up a new Facebook page with the intention of posting all relevant and up to date guidance from local authorities, emergency responders, energy suppliers and our own community services. Please find us on Facebook: **Community Resilience in Belhelvie Parish**.



We want to emphasise the importance of being self-sufficient for at least 72 hours during a bad weather crisis. If an emergency happens in your community, it may take the emergency services some time to reach you. This is because they may need to help other, more vulnerable people first. You should be prepared to take care of yourself and your family for up to 72 hours. By looking after yourself and your household, you will also be helping emergency services focus their limited resources on the people who are most in need.

Make a plan - and don't forget neighbours can help by sharing resources, such as gas for camping stoves or food supplies. You should have food that won't spoil, such as canned food, energy bars and dry food. During some emergencies, some water sources can become contaminated. Have a back-up supply of bottled water available.

Preparedness is key, and it is essential for each household to have their own plan in place to effectively navigate through challenging circumstances. You can find links to templates of such plans on our new Facebook page and also at: www.ssen.co.uk (Your Home Emergency Plan). You can also find out more about Aberdeenshire Community Resilience Strategies at:

<https://engage.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/aberdeenshire-community-resilience-strategy>

In addition to individual preparedness, our community resilience group will be disseminating information about community hubs that will serve as warm spaces for resources, hot drinks, and assistance during a crisis. Soon, we hope to provide you with a list of local services that will be available. Please keep an eye on our new Facebook page as well as community notice boards for further updates. Stay safe.

Joni Corbett

BLACKDOG NEWS



Following our AGM, it was all change at the BRA wheelhouse. After a successful few years as Chair and Secretary, Alan and Moyra Neave stood down from the committee to focus on other commitments. We thank them both for everything they have done. The new committee was formed with Gary Sanders stepping up to the role of chair, Gary Mann joining as vice-chair and Tom Sanders joining as secretary. Elaine has steadied the ship and will continue as treasurer. We also had a few new committee members join us, which is great. If you want to get more involved with

our wonderful village, please email: blackdogresidents@gmail.com.

As we all know, the village is growing with all the new homes, so we are keen to make sure there is equitable representation from all areas. For those that have recently moved to the village, we also have our residents' association FaceBook page, so search **Blackdog Community Group** for up-to-date information.

Since the last edition of the Banter, the community have been out in force, making the village a better place for us all to live in. The autumn planting day saw the team of volunteers plant over 1,000 bulbs around the village which are due to flower this Spring, so look out for some new flashes of colour this year. Thank you to Elaine, from the committee for being so green fingered and arranging the logistics of the day. These planting days happen twice a year in the village so look out for the next one. The Council provide the bulbs every year, which is great to see as given the funding cuts we know how difficult it is to provide anything for the village.

The annual Christmas tree light and carol ceremony took place again in December. Thank you to Ellon Local Vocals who braved the cold to sing to us all. Moyra was also on hand with her special brew of Mulled Wine to keep us all warm. The kids were well-entertained, and they all got a gift from Santa's elves as I am sure they were all very well behaved throughout the year.



We had our Christmas raffle which was well supported with donations and ticket sales. The winning tickets were drawn by Butterywells Farms and all prizes were distributed around Christmas. On a personal note, I watched in horror as I won a jigsaw and then spent the rest of Christmas trying to complete it, only for our dog to eat the last piece! We raised over £2,500 which is needed to allow us to continue our work, so a huge thank you for all your support.

We have continued with our village and beach litter picks throughout the period. The storms were particularly devastating with lots of debris being blown onto the beach. We were assisted by East Grampian Coastal Partnership on two clean-ups where over 50 bags of rubbish were collected and sent to the Council for recycling. The more volunteers we get, the more litter we can collect, so do make an effort next time we advertise a litter pick. Dog-fouling continues to be an issue in the village so please pick up after your pooch and put the bag in the bin too. Behind the scenes we continue to push ahead with our Community Centre, new play park equipment, beach bridge and various benches around the village. Progress is sometimes slow, but we are moving forward, so keep an eye out for our updates on these major projects.



On the Community Centre, the consultants are making good progress and are arranging another community engagement event to showcase Stage 2 of the design. We are also working with Kirkwood Homes and the Council to ascertain when the land will be transferred.

For the play park equipment, the Council have unfortunately delayed this project until sometime later in the year which is disappointing. The committee continue to put pressure on the Council to progress this.



The bridge has now progressed to the structural design phase with a surveyor being appointed to perform the ground investigation works. Funding from Vattenfall has been secured to cover these expenses. We are also progressing with installation of benches on the path down to the beach to improve

the access and attractiveness of the path. We hope this will encourage people to use the path rather than the road to improve safety.

We look forward to planning our BBQ Fun Day on 10th August, so get your shorts looked out! More information will be available nearer the time.

Tom Sanders
Secretary B.R.A.



Beachside Coffee Shop

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Check our Facebook page for dates of events coming up.

www.balmedieleisurecentre.com

or Facebook page [Balmedieleisurecentre/beachsidecoffeeshop](https://www.facebook.com/Balmedieleisurecentre/beachsidecoffeeshop)



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A question we are regularly asked is who owns Balmedie Leisure Centre, Beachside Coffee Shop, football pavilion, car park and grass pitches. Well, the simple answer is they are all currently owned by Aberdeenshire Council. However, the community

provision is managed and delivered by the Balmedie Leisure Centre Association SCIO, a not-for-profit charitable organisation which was set up in 1986.

We work in partnership with Middlefield Wasps who operate and maintain the grass pitches, but the overall running of the centre and football provision is overseen by a management committee which is made up of local volunteers and members from most of the groups which are in operation at the centre.

We employ full and part-time staff who manage and run the centre and coffee shop on a day-to-day basis. We rely on volunteers, and income from rentals, activities and fundraising to keep it afloat. In an average week, we regularly welcome more than 2,500 children and adults into the building. It is a valuable resource within our community, please come along and have a look.

WHAT GOES ON

Balmedie Leisure Centre and Beachside Coffee Shop have a wide variety of groups including ASN classes and activities for all ages and abilities. Have a look at our timetable and see what's going on.

As the summer approaches, we are looking forward to welcoming you back for our Summer Gala. We have worked extremely hard again this year to make sure that this year's Gala is the family fun event you don't want to miss! Keep an eye on our social media pages to see who will be joining us! The event is happening on Sunday the 26th May 2024 from 12-4pm. You are guaranteed a fabulous day out as we have your whole family covered with things happening inside and outside.

CONTACT US

There is many a fine way you can get in touch. Firstly, if you're passing, do pop in and introduce yourself. Alternately, give us a call on 01358 743725.

You can also 'like' us on Facebook and Instagram to receive regular updates about things that are going on at the Centre. Then there is always our email address: balmedie_leisure@btconnect.com.

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 these groups below.

KNIT-AND-NATTER GROUP

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

SWRI

The Scottish Women's Royal Institute meet here on the third Wednesday of the month, from 1pm to 3pm.

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

Shona Buchan



FRIENDSHIP GROUP

We meet in the Balmedie Leisure Centre every second Tuesday from 1.30pm to 3.30pm where we chat and are entertained by music, talks, Bingo, Beetle Drive or quizzes. We have a bus outing with lunch in June and a Christmas Lunch in December.

Our meetings take place from 21st May, then we break for the summer after the 15th June meeting, restarting on 10th September 2024. We would love you to come along and join us! If you would like to find out more, please get in touch with one of us: Helen 01358 743634 / Jean 01358 743283 / Isobel 01358 743122.

Helen Deans

GOOD LUCK BILL - YOU'RE AN INSPIRATION!



Good luck to Balmedie Leisure Centre Voluntary Chairman Bill Murray, who has been nominated, and has reached the final judging for an 'Inspirational Volunteer' Award. Bill has been a hard-working, long-standing volunteer and has raised a huge amount of money for the Leisure Centre and Coffee Shop, and also for the community. We wish Bill all the best for the final at Meldrum House in September.

The Sand Bothy

The Sand Bothy at Balmedie Beach has launched into the season with great success, drawing in a diverse range of visitors during the busy Easter weekend. The engaging new exhibitions, particularly the photography display capturing the beauty of Balmedie Country Park and Beach by Anne Davies, have resonated with guests and added a new dimension to the visitor experience.

The recent Balmedie Beach Explorers workshop, hosted by Dawn James of RSPB Aberdeen & North East Scotland and myself, provided an enriching opportunity for participants of all ages to immerse themselves in the natural wonders of the coast and gain insights into the local ecosystem. We hope this is something that we can bring back to Balmedie Beach again soon!



Looking forward, the Sand Bothy has an exciting line-up of events planned, including the much-anticipated Summer Fun Day on Sunday 28th July from 12-4pm. This event promises a day of entertainment and education, featuring interactive displays by HM Coastguard, creative crafting demonstrations by Deeside Willow, and lively performances by the pirates and mermaids of Love Rara and much more!

With its commitment to offering diverse and engaging experiences, the Sand Bothy continues to serve as a beacon of community connection and environmental appreciation at Balmedie Country Park and Beach.

You can find our visitor centre and kiosk, where we serve delicious Mackie's ice-cream, snacks and drinks, open on Saturdays from 12-3pm and Sundays from 12-4pm from April to October. The Sand Bothy is proudly run by volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering with us please get in touch on 07752 768918.



info@thesandbothy.co.uk

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

Joni Corbett

Coordinator at The Sand Bothy
& Development at BCT



By the time you read this article, the 2024 season will be well underway. We will be out with the chairs, and you'll be able to get back on the sand! Our brave volunteers have often had to spend long hours waiting in the cold in the bunker where the wheelchairs are kept, so we are going to go with a slightly different approach during the colder months. For now, we are based at the Sand Bothy, making us more visible to people arriving at the park. So far, this arrangement is working well. Our Baby Buggies are certainly proving very popular just now.

We are still able to rent out chairs (for free) every day of the week from the bunker, but this new change has been ideal for the volunteers as we are all now closer to the bathroom and can get a hot cup of coffee, or even an ice cream if we are brave. The bunker, however, will open again as it gets a bit warmer.

Our first official booking of the season was quite an emotional one and it made us realise the importance of what we do. Family and friends wanted to scatter the ashes of someone very dear to them, but the dad had mobility issues, and he knew he wouldn't manage the sand. They all wanted to do something special to commemorate what would have been her 40th birthday so they borrowed a Sandcruiser chair and went to the water's edge. Although so sad, we were delighted to help to make such wonderful memories for them.

Not every chair goes out for such powerful reasons as this, but many have a story to tell. Without these types of chairs, access to something as reasonable as getting to the water's edge with your family, for special moments, or simply to get your toes wet, can be a real issue. We are delighted to add another two chairs this year which means we can cover more needs and host larger groups. The bookings are now coming in and it's going to be an exciting year!



In March we participated in the Volunteers' Open Day at the Sand Bothy as we are always looking for extra hands and now, we are delighted to be joined by another four willing volunteers. They will be a great asset to the team. Having a larger team means we can cover more bookings as our aim is to never have to turn anyone away. If you feel you could be part of this exciting project, then please get in touch. It doesn't take a lot of time, there is no pushing up and down dunes (I promise, unless you really, really want to!). We need people who can do weekdays or weekends, or sometimes cover last minute bookings. All you need is a sunny disposition, willingness to participate and a bit of free time. If you know anyone who would like to use our service, a school, hospital, home or an individual please tell them about us. We would be happy to discuss arrangements that can help provide a fun trip to the beach.

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BELHELVIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL (BCC)

Community Council elections and Annual General Meeting 2024

Aberdeenshire Council currently plans to move Community Council elections to September each year, previously our election was always held in June. However, our Annual General Meeting will still be held in June. If you are interested in finding out more about being a Community Councillor please get in touch or come along to our monthly meetings or AGM. There are lots of opportunities to work on issues and projects that matter to our communities.

Village improvements - We're continuing to work on new benches for our villages, refurbishing our noticeboards and installing new planters.

Community Awards 2024 - Last year, we were delighted to award our first Special Recognition Award to Mario Chiru, owner of the White Horse Inn and previously owner of the Balmedie Premier Shop. 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 our Community awards will be sought from the local community and will be awarded towards the end of 2024.

Contacting the Police - Following reports by residents of anti-social behaviour, our local Police continue to advise residents to report incidents to them using the 101 number or online at <https://www.scotland.police.uk/secureforms/contact/>

Police advice: "*Please remember if your enquiry is urgent or you wish to report an ongoing incident, telephone 101. Phone 999 if you require an immediate or emergency response.*"

Spring 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: <http://www.facebook.com/BelhelvieCommunityCouncil>

or email: belhelviecommunitycouncil@hotmail.com

Phone (for BCC vaccination transport help): 07733 32244. 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 food banks, 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 held every third Monday, 7pm, in person at the Balmedie Leisure Centre with online access when we have resources available. Meeting dates, agendas and minutes are available on our noticeboards and online at:

www.belhelviecc.org.uk/meetings.html

Contact us -

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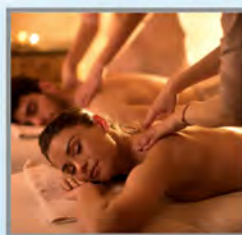


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It's hard to believe that it is almost 10 years since the founders of Belhelvie Community Trust were offered a shell of a building, damaged by fire and vandalism, at Balmedie Country Park - the building we now know as The Sand Bothy. Within months we had been approved as a charity and the work began, with the Bothy opening on July 1st 2016.

Since then, the Bothy has become a fixture in our community and has literally weathered the storms thrown at it by the North Sea, and the hurdles put in our way by bureaucracy and the covid pandemic.

Over time, BCT has created and run Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs, Balmedie Sensory Garden, Potterton Volunteers, Balmedie Hub and Balmedie Litter Squad, plus giving support to other projects around the parish. We have our critics who ask why don't we do more? The simple answer is we have always tried to work according to our resources. We don't want to promise what we can't achieve. The only way we can expand now is if we have more volunteers and people prepared to take on projects in their own communities. I am therefore taking this opportunity to ask if you can help to keep BCT going? All sorts of people with all sorts of interests and abilities can join our team. Volunteering is fulfilling and fun!

We carried out a Consultation in 2023. Throughout the parish, a wide range of issues was important to residents. Some of these would require considerable input from Council, Health and Transport providers, but there are other projects which could be community led. We will be examining these in more detail to determine if they could be provided by the community - more about this in the next issue of Belhelvie Banter.

Rosie Nicol, Secretary BCT SC0 45563

Fancy meeting up with someone new to chat over a coffee? Or perhaps you're feeling alone, cold, or bored or want to find out about activities in Balmedie. The **Balmedie Community Hub** in The Wee Kirk, opposite the Co-op, is open from 10am to 1pm every Monday and we'd love you to join us.

Originally set up to provide a Warm Hub, to be used in the event of an emergency or to support people experiencing high energy costs, the Hub has evolved. It doesn't just provide a warm place with hot drinks when it's necessary but is now a place for strangers to become friends, folks to come and chat, play games, do crafts, or borrow books. We also have a stock of toiletries in our Community Larder should you need some. Young, old, and those in between, can drop in any time. There is no charge. If you would like to volunteer to help host the Hub, pop in by or give Joni a ring on 07752 768918. The Hub is hosted by Belhelvie Trust volunteers, and we are supported by Balmedie Co-op.

Hope you'll join us soon!



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BETTER BALMEDIE

As I write, it's very wet outside, not very encouraging weather for Better Balmedie volunteers! Undaunted, we have our plans made for 2024, and have been busy during February and March, replacing and restoring planters, mending the wee train outside the library, clearing storm damaged trees and selling logs.

Better Balmedie's presence is very noticeable in spring, with daffodils, crocuses and snowdrops blooming all around the village. The potting shed is now filling up in preparation for our Plant Sale on 8th June. It is a special day for us as it is our main annual fund raiser. It is more important than ever this year as the number of plants from the Council which we plant around the village has been cut, so every penny we get will help us to top up those supplies. We hope you will come along to support us. Also, if you have any spare plants that we could sell, they would be very welcome! Throughout this year we will have our Book Shack open, selling paperbacks and jigsaw puzzles. Bags of logs are also on sale at just £4 a bag.

We are always looking for more volunteers. The more people who help, the more we can do to keep our village looking good. We are open Thursday and Saturday from 10 until 12, based beside the Wee Kirk across from the Co-op. You can find us on Facebook.

Rosie Nicol

GARDEN WASTE PICK UP POINT AT BALMEDIE

Bring your garden waste in bags to the
Balmedie Library Car Park
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We're hoping for a warm Spring and Summer but it's good to be prepared. Or perhaps you may want to stock up for next Autumn/Winter. Why don't you shop local and support us? All proceeds will go towards community projects. Call in by on Thursday or Saturday to the Better Balmedie site by the Wee Kirk 10.00 - 12.00.





A WORD FROM THE DOC...

Reflections

This year, on the first of February, marked thirty years since I started as a GP at Scotstown. I can scarcely believe that three decades have passed since I was a young loon (with hair!), looking forward with a mix of excitement and trepidation to my first day. Not surprisingly, this has made me pause and reflect on thirty years of working as a GP and how things are now compared to last century!

In 1994 our practice, like most GPs, still did 'traditional' on call, and we had no mobile phones. I had a bleep and a stack of 10p coins to use in phone boxes when the bleep went off. My home phone would ring when people needed to be seen out of hours, and my wife had to be at home to answer the phone and set off the bleep when I was out and about. Effectively the whole family was on call when I was. Now this is covered by NHS 24 and GMed.

The biggest change, I feel, is the sheer volume of work that faces every practice, every day. Sadly, there are many less GPs around to share the workload, there may be more GPs by 'head count' but GP numbers as 'whole time equivalent' has seen a significant fall. I routinely speak to or see roughly 50 to 60 people every day but often many more. This does not include the time and further contacts generated from making referrals, reading hospital clinic letters, reviewing blood tests and reports from other investigations as well as signing hundreds of repeat prescriptions. This contrasts with a daily total of about 36 people seen when I started, with lower volumes of subsequent work resulting. The British Medical Association and the European Union advise that each GP should have only 25 contacts per day. Most GP practices now have a mix of more phone or electronic appointments with longer face to face appointments to try and be as efficient as possible, to cope with the huge demand.

An unappreciated area of additional workload is from medical reports to insurance companies, the DVLA, occupational health colleagues and many other people acting on behalf of patients. If a patients' lawyer asks for copies of their medical records, GPs must spend valuable time carefully checking them to make sure there is no third-party confidentiality breach. We must do this free of charge despite considerable cost, particularly in time, to the practice. We must also provide care to people from outwith the UK free of charge.

All this makes the job much more demanding and at times frustrating, but I am still glad to be a GP. Medical students and young doctors are increasingly put off the career I chose when they become aware of the workload, and the very public nature of working in primary care.

A huge feature in recent years has been the rise of social media and for most patients, instant access to 'Dr Google', which, I have no doubt, increases workload as there is more anxiety generated about possible causes for symptoms experienced.



A significant concern is that mental health resilience is, for some, undermined by the unforgiving nature of social media interactions. So why am I still glad to be a GP given the huge workload challenges and the potential for vilification on Facebook? Quite simply, it is a great privilege to be a GP and to work with patients over many years to try and help them with their health problems.

What I mean by privilege is that there are few jobs where you get to meet people on their best days, for example when they share that they are happily expecting a baby, or just come in to tell you that they have been accepted for university and to thank you for the support you have given in past years. Then there are the worst days, when you must tell someone that they will not recover from their illness, or you visit to provide palliative care. These highs and lows and the doctor patient relationship are what makes the job so rewarding and a privilege to do.

I have been a GP trainer for most of my career, helping younger doctors become GPs, which has also been a very rewarding and occasionally challenging role. The area many trainees struggle with is the uncertainty of our job. We cannot test, scan, or admit everybody we see, even though there is an increasing demand for such interventions. Our role is to help explain and build understanding as to why tests are not necessary at a particular time. This is an essential role that the GP has, which helps to protect people from over medicalisation and indeed stop the NHS going bankrupt! The opposite of this is of being able to realise when action is needed. This is a career-long and never fully-mastered art, but one which we keep working at through what we call reflective practice.

This means that we try to learn from cases, and each other. We, as practice teams, think about what has been done to and for patients and how we can pass on good aspects of care to others and improve where needed. This needs time and is a very important aspect for all health professionals but is increasingly squeezed by demand. I do feel that it is important to realise that good primary care needs time to teach, reflect, and learn from one another and experts so that we have the best tools to help our patients.

To everyone who reads this who is registered at Scotstown Medical Group, I would like to thank you for thirty rewarding years, and I hope I have been able to be of help when asked. I still have a few years to go before I can hang up my stethoscope, and I am sure you will all keep active (you'd be disappointed if I didn't do my usual nagging!), eat well and try your best to stay away from having to see your primary care team!

Dr Alasdair Forbes

Editor's Note: *I well remember that fresh-faced young man with a mop of curly hair, dressed in an old brown duffle coat. Boy, have the years flown...*

Congratulations Doc Forbes from all of us at Banter.

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POTTERTON VOLUNTEERS



For the Potterton Volunteers, the Autumn-Winter period is generally a quiet time due to the usual cold, wet weather. However, this year we managed to push ahead with some of the projects that did not involve spending too much time outdoors.

We managed to build and install two raised flower beds and the structure for a 'bug hotel'. Despite the poor weather, we have managed to plant the perennials, which we received from Aberdeenshire Council, in the raised flower beds. The structure for the bug hotel is complete and installed adjacent to the Potterton Burn in the wooded area. Potterton Volunteers will now work with the local Cub group to install all the internals and complete the project in May. Most of the work on these two projects was carried out by John Burr (pictured above), although as you can see, he did receive some 'help' from local children.



Below are the dates that Potterton Volunteers plan to meet in 2024. These dates are always subject to change based on weather and participants' availability, so it is always best to check on PV Facebook or PV Chat before heading out. We will continue to meet at the Potterton Burn until we have achieved all our objectives there, and then we will look to other areas of the village. You don't need to bring garden tools - all will be provided, thanks to a generous donation from Formartine Rural Partnership.

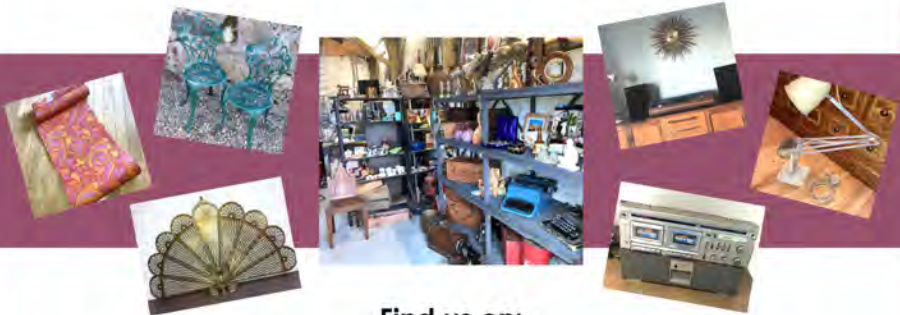
Sat 1 st June	11:00 to 13:00	Sat 10 th Aug	11:00 to 13:00
Sat 15 th June	11:00 to 13:00	Sat 24 th Aug	11:00 to 13:00
Sat 29 th June	11:00 to 13:00	Sat 7 th Sept	11:00 to 13:00
Sat 13 th July	11:00 to 13:00	Sat 21 st Sept	11:00 to 13:00
Sat 13 th July	11:00 to 13:00	Sat 5 th Oct	11:00 to 13:00
Sat 27 th July	11:00 to 13:00	Sat 19 th Oct	11:00 to 13:00

Bernard Humphrey (pictured above)
Potterton Volunteers Tel: 07710 416003



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GOOD LUCK CAROL!

We will certainly miss this well-known face in our community. Everyone who has frequented Balmedie Pharmacy will recognise the lovely Carol who has been a font of information, helping us with our ailments and medication queries for the past ten years. We shall miss her smiling face and helpful manner, but we wish her well as she moves on, hopefully to more relaxation and a break from poorly customers!



The planters are showing some Spring colour although some are getting rather battered by the winds. We hope to create more colour in the village as the weather improves. Aberdeenshire Council have supplied some perennials for us to include in the displays which means less need for plants that are short-lived. Some of the

planters are showing their age and we are planning to replace two of them soon at locations by the football field and at the north entrance to village, with more to follow. Potterton Greenfingers group maintains the planters as the weather allows. The two aluminum planters should last for a very long time.

We are always happy to accept plant donations that can be added to the displays. Our efforts will continue, and anyone is welcome to join us in managing the planters. All help is appreciated and if not with gardening, then watering when hopefully we get warmer weather. If you are interested in helping, please text on 07918 665114.

Hilary Foxen



BETTER BALMEDIE PLANT SALE

We will be having a Plant Sale on Saturday 8th June from 10am to 1pm with refreshments at the Wee Kirk. If you have any plants to donate, they would be very welcome. Hopefully we can raise some funds for our work around the village. Do come along and get stocked up for the Summer.

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BELHELVIE CHURCH PASTORAL CARE TEAM

Coffee Haven takes place on the first Tuesday morning of every month, from 10.00 until 12.00 in the Forsyth Hall. All are welcome to come and join us for tea/coffee, home baking and a chance to chat. Easy access is available from the side entrance if needed. Feel free to come on your own or bring a friend. For further information please contact caroline.daniel@btinternet.com or phone 07754 185283.

If you feel the need for some gentle exercise, then why not join the senior Zumba class on Monday at 12.45. The class lasts for 45 minutes and costs just £5. To find out more, please contact jeanettelamb@btinternet.com



BELHELVIE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



11am every Sunday at Belhelvie Church.
Lots going on at the Forsyth Hall and Annexe too.
Check us out on Facebook for up-to-date info. or contact
Rev Paul McKeown on 01358 742227
pmckeown1@btconnect.com



BALMEDIE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

(The Wee Kirk)

11am every Sunday at the Wee Kirk in Rowan Drive,
Balmedie, next to the Co-op. For details contact
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acowie999@btinternet.com

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The Scouts have had an extremely busy and adventurous year. They have enjoyed activities such as pioneering, fire building, Dungeons and Dragons, and even a joint night with 38th Aberdeen Scouts. Our highlight last September was a trip to Lochgoilhead Scout Adventures. The Scouts

had an amazing time experiencing many water sports: sailing, canoeing and paddle boarding. The trip was heavily subsidised by our fundraising efforts such as the car wash and coffee morning. We would like to thank the local community for their support. We are looking forward to camping trips planned for this year and the oldest Scouts will complete their expedition challenge. We now have a waiting list at Scouts and would be delighted to welcome new leaders, so we can continue to offer a fun and varied programme for as many young people as we can.



The Cubs have had a very busy year with a total of 252 badges awarded. These have included hikes and nights away, emergency first aid, digital citizen, teamwork and team leader, swimming, athletics, astronomer, fire safety and world faiths to name a few. Three Cubs have also achieved their Chief Scout Silver Award - a great achievement! Activities have included bivvy building, fire lighting and campfire at the beach, a camp in Stonehaven,

wheelchair skills session, robots, a visit to Aberdeen Mosque, Innoflate and much more - our programme has been jam packed.

Cubs like to support our local community, so we completed a sponsored bike ride and split the fundraising between Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs and our Summer Camp fund. We were lucky enough to get to name a new wheelchair too - Sandstorm!



A big focus for us has been fundraising for our Summer Camp 2024 at Fordel Firs to celebrate 100 years of Cubs in the parish. We had a very successful Christmas Fair and Soup & Pudding and would like to say thank you to the community and local businesses for all the support they have given us. The Cubs can't wait to go!



Beavers continue to be busy taking part in lots of different activities that help to earn their badges. Over the last year we have had a Sleep-over, carried out experiments, had an egg drop challenge, grown plants then visited the Better Balmedie gardens and celebrated lots of occasions including Chinese New Year and

Pancake Day. Highlight of the year was winning the Gordon District 10 pin Bowling competition last November. Children can go onto our waiting list at 5 years of age and start Beavers once they are 6 years old and a place becomes available.



We are at an advanced stage of planning a Family Camp at Haddo at the end of May. So far, 75 parents have signed up to camp for the weekend with their sons and daughters. Exciting activities and exciting times!

Our 24 strong Volunteer Team of Leaders continue to deliver varied programmes of activities to all sections. We recently welcomed a new leader, Stuart McBain - thank you Stuart! We are also delighted that 3 Chief Scout Awards for Merit were presented to Ali Simpson and Ivor & Shuna Jenkins by our District Commissioner Andy Till. Bravo to you all!



Beavers are from 6-8 years, Cubs from 8-10.5 years, Scouts 10.5-14 years and Explorer Scouts 14-18 years. Enquiries for places or to volunteer as a Leader for any section, please

contact balmedie@gordondistrictscouts.org.uk or text/call 07743 844040.

Ian Thomson, Group Scout Leader

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1st BELHELVIE GUIDES

The next few months will be incredibly busy for the Guides. We are visiting the Science Centre in April for an evening of Out of this World activities. Then in May, there are two indoor sleepover events: one at Skyline Trampolining where we'll be snoozing on the trampolines, and the other at Pittodrie Stadium where we'll be joining up with over a hundred other Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, and Rangers to take part in the 'Gnome Games'. The exact activities are a mystery, but it should be a good day and night. Finally, we have County Camp at Templars in June where the Guides can camp with other Guides and Rangers from across our County in a competition style event.

Add to that - we have our normal meetings going on as well! The Guides will be planning their own activities tackling a skills builder award of their choice, playing games, singing songs, and anything else we think will be fun to do.

Guides are for girls 10-14 years old and meet fortnightly on a Tuesday night in Balmedie, although we are hoping to start meeting weekly after the summer. We currently have three volunteers but are always happy to welcome more. Volunteering can be flexible. 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/>.

1st BELHELVIE RANGERS

The Rangers had a lovely end of term event at Christmas where we went to the Bee Crafty Studio near Ellon and painted some beautiful ceramic masterpieces. I was able to present Silver Awards to Ava and Elspie, well done! Since new year, the Rangers have been continuing with their creativity by making alternative artworks on bananas, creating yoyos, and mixing up some mocktails.

This term we will be focusing on finishing Silver and Gold Awards. This will include giving the Newburgh Guide Leaders a night off and running the Guide unit for them as an act of service.

It's going to be a bittersweet time for us by the summer holidays, as the current Rangers are going to be too old for the Section and will be moving on to their next stage of Guiding. This means I am looking for new members to join the unit over the next few months. The Rangers are for 14-18 year old young women and are great fun. We currently meet fortnightly, on a Monday night in Newburgh, although this may change to a Tuesday in Balmedie. 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: <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/get-involved/>

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2nd BELHELVIE BROWNIES at BALMEDIE

The Brownies have had so much fun over the past 6 months. As well as working towards some of our badges we have had a few special events. In November 2023 one of our leaders was invited to London to receive her Queen's Guide Award. The event was held in the Odeon Luxe, Leicester Square in London. This is the highest award that you can receive in Guiding.



At Christmas time we made Christingle oranges for Belhelvie Church and attended the service. We went to the Panto at Inverurie and had a photo taken with the cast. At our Christmas party, the girls received their badges that they had achieved, in a different manner - out of a piñata!

During our meetings we have learned to make our own paint, foam favourites - using shaving foam and food colouring and transferring the colours then onto card, making spaghetti constructions out of spaghetti and marshmallows as well as many other activities.

In February a few of the girls attended the Thinking Day service at Belhelvie Church. Some of our girls got the chance to be in the colour party and carry the flag.

In March we attended a special night at Aberdeen Science Centre, there were workshops and the girls also had free time to explore in the Science Centre. We also had the Therapets come to visit our unit and the girls learned about how to look after a dog. In April we also went to a 'Dons Day Out' at Pittodrie. This was part of our fundraising activities towards both the unit and to our trip to Holland next year.



We are currently fundraising for an event next year - some of our girls are going on a trip to Holland. We are holding a Bingo night at the White Horse Inn in Balmedie on 22nd June 2024. Please get in touch if you would like tickets for the event. There will also be a raffle and donations would be welcome.

Brownies are for girls aged 7-10 and we are always looking for new girls or leaders in our area. Our pack is currently full, but there are spaces at 1st Potterton Brownies in Potterton. If you would like to get involved, please contact us via www.girlguiding.org (Get Involved).

Marianne McIntosh Brown Owl



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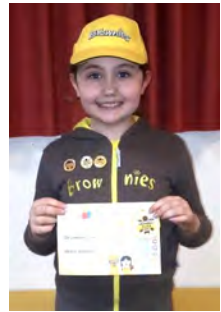
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malcolm@munrostovesandsweeps.co.uk



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1st POTTERTON BROWNIES



We've been busy at Brownies since the last Banter. We've had 8 Brownies make their promise, with another two to go. Our little unit is prospering! We also have presented a Brownie Silver Award and a Brownie Gold Award. A Brownie must be very dedicated to achieving either of these awards, completing

four programme themes for Silver and all six programme themes for Gold and doing a special Gold activity for the unit. Gold being the highest award a Brownie can achieve, Ava chose to share her favourite recipes. We all now have a 1st Potterton Brownies Recipe Book. Very well done to Jessica for achieving her Silver Award and Ava for achieving her Gold Award.

We saw the request for help from the First Responders, to replace the defibrillator boxes locally. So, we swung into action. Each Brownie was given a Smartie tube to collect donations in, in exchange for good turns, once they'd eaten the Smarties of course! The Brownies did very well and together collected £285.86 which was presented to Theresa and Angela by our 3 biggest collectors. When Theresa came to collect our fundraising, she brought a defibrillator to show us, along with CPR dummies. We learnt how to give CPR and put people into the recovery position. The Brownies enjoyed this and had no hesitations in having a go.



Hopefully you've all seen our posters in the windows of Balmedie Co-op. We worked with the Co-op to look at recycling, soft plastics in particular. Debbie, the Co-op Member Pioneer, visited us with their recycling box and taught us what can and cannot go in it. We sorted a very big pile of rubbish the leaders had collected, checking if it could be recycled. We never knew recycling could be such fun! We are one of the Co-op's community causes this year, so if you are a Co-op member and haven't linked your membership to a cause yet, please consider linking to us (Cause ID: 86061).

If you have a daughter aged between 7 and 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>



ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL NEWS



Aberdeenshire Council - General Enquiries 03456 08 12 08

Councillor Andrew Hassan shares some news:

As I write this during the Easter recess fortnight, I hope all constituents have been able to enjoy a restful time. There are a few things I'd like to remind you of:

The Formartine Area Committee Fund opened for 2024/25 in March - the sum for the year totalled £94,404. During 2023/24, funding was provided for a Seasonal Formartine Ranger, Balmedie Leisure Centre's ASN equipment, and for the improvement of the Balmedie Football Pavilion Car Park. Blackdog received funding towards the design and planning stage of the new Community Facility planned for the village.

The **Formartine Area Recognition Scheme** is now in full operation. Suggestions for recognition are welcome of anyone who has contributed significantly to their community - either over a long period of time, or a one-off event. The Formartine Area Committee would then assess the application and determine if the honour should be bestowed.

Visitors to **Balmedie Country Park** may have come across the permanent Formartine Ranger David Brown who has become a well-known face. Sadly, he has decided to retire from the post and we all wish him well with much thanks for his many years of work. Recruitment is currently underway to appoint a successor.

Road Matters continue to fill my mailbox. I have continued to lobby both the roads team, and Police Scotland on speeding concerns along Old Road, Balmedie which is regularly raised with me. We also continue to liaise to find a solution to the long-standing pedestrian crossing concerns on Eigie Road. In the Autumn, a pedestrian survey was carried out by the road safety team to try and establish a safe crossing point. Unfortunately, Councillors were notified that the criteria were not met for a crossing. We would welcome community feedback on this outcome. I will continue dialogue with the school parents who first raised the issue with me.

Through dialogue with Graeme Fyvie, Formartine's new Community Waste Officer, the Council have managed to secure funding to get a dog waste bin for the area beside the bus stop adjacent to Rowan Drive. I hope this resolves the issue of dog mess to the south of the village.

Finally, the matter of addressing HGV traffic going through Milton of Potterton is progressing. Following a lengthy and detailed discussion at Formartine Area Committee we progressed the topic onto what is referred to as the **Committee Review Process**. The next stage of this is scheduled for 23rd April when we will be having a workshop with officers, Police Scotland and Belhelvie Community Council to discuss residents' concerns about heavy traffic in the area.

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

Please feel free to get in touch at any time if you feel we may be able to assist. Contact details for all four Councillors for your area are in Banter's 'Who's Who' pages near the back.



NORTH EAST ABERDEENSHIRE

NTS Members' Centre

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The Members' Centre Committee is currently working hard to develop an exciting programme of activities for 2024/25. This will include not only talks and events to be held at Haddo House, Fyvie Castle and Pitmedden Garden, but also visits and tours to gardens and historic properties in Aberdeenshire and further afield. Our immediate upcoming events are listed below. Tickets are essential and are available from Members' Centre Committee, unless otherwise stated.

Thursday 23rd May 7.45pm at Daviot Village Hall - NTS Gardeners' Question Time.

Tickets (£10) through Eventbrite.

Thursday 6th June 2pm - Visit to the Gardens of Inverquhomery House, Longside.

Numbers limited. Tickets £12.

Tuesday 2nd July 11am at Fyvie Castle - A Closer Look at the Art of Fyvie Castle.

Numbers limited. Tickets £10.

Thursday 29th August 11am - Visit to the Huntly Festival of Illustration and lunch at Dean's of Huntly. Tickets £12.

Talks are free to members (£3 donation from non-members). Get in touch if you are interested in any of these events or if you would like to get involved and help support our local properties. You can email ne.aberdeenshire.mc@gmail.com for information. NTS members can join the Centre - annual membership is £12.

Patricia Shaw

School Dates 2024

Apr	Mon 15th	Term 4 starts	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
May	Mon 6th	May Day Holiday	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
	Tue 7th	In Service Day	BoDA
Jul	Fri 5th	Term 4 ends	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
Aug	Mon 19th	In Service Day	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
	Tue 20th	Term 1 starts	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
Oct	Fri 11th	Term 1 ends	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
	Mon 28th	Term 2 starts	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
Nov	Thu 14th	In Service Day	Balmedie, Ellon
	Fri 15th	In Service Day	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
Dec	Fri 20th	Term 2 ends	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA
Jan	Mon 6th	Term 3 starts	Balmedie, Ellon, BoDA

WHO'S WHO

Ambulance / Police / Fire / Coastguard	emergency	999
Police Scotland	non-emergencies	101
Community Police	Stacy Morrison	101
Scottish Fire & Rescue Service	non-emergencies	01224 728600
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:	General Enquiries	03456 081208
	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
Guides (Balmedie)		Marianne McIntosh
Rangers (Potterton)		Katherine Hebron Scott
		Susan Osbeck 1stbelhelvieguides@gmail.com
		Susan Osbeck
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 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
Potterton Community Centre	Joanne Murray	01358 727910

Balmedie Beach Wheelchairs	Fiona Winstanley	07864 350989
Balmedie Walks	Chris Cane	07590 849226
Balmedie House Eventide Home	Emma Balingbing, Manager	01358 742244
Balmedie Library	Jane Geddes	01358 281070
Balmedie Pharmacy	3 Rowan Drive	01358 741226
Balmedie Post Office	Egie 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	Gary Sanders	07947 583671
First Responders	Theresa Thompson	07931 251993
Neighbourhood Watch	Paul Collier (Belhelvie)	07825 216233
Potterton Volunteers	Bernard Humphrey	07710 416003
Potterton 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			
Kids Academy (After School Care)		Shona Grant	07880 528816
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

REGULAR COMMUNITY EVENTS

Weekly			
Mon	Zumba Gold	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	12.45-13.30
Mon	The Community Hub	Balmedie Cong. Church (Wee Kirk)	10.00-13.00
Tues	Sensory Garden Group	Balmedie Sensory Garden	10.00-12.00
Wed	Baby and Toddlers	Balmedie Cong. Church	09.30-11.00
Wed	Ladies' Group	Balmedie Cong. Church	14.00-15.00
Wed	Library Open	Balmedie Library	16.30-18.30
Wed	Craft Club	Balmedie Cong. Church	18.30-19.30
Thurs	Balmedie Walks & Coffee after	Balmedie Leisure Centre	10.30
Thurs	Indoor Bowling	Potterton CEC	15.00-17.00
Thurs	Better Balmedie	Beside 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
Fri	Library Open	Balmedie Library	13.00-17.00
Sat	Better Balmedie	Beside Balmedie Wee Kirk	10.00-12.00
Sat	Potterton Volunteers	Potterton Burn	11.00-13.00
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
Monthly			
1st Tues	Coffee Haven	Forsyth Hall, Belhelvie	10.00-12.00
1st Thurs	Book Group	Contact Balmedie Library - 01358 281070	
1st Sat	Balmedie Litter Squad	Balmedie School	10.00-11.00
3rd Mon	Belhelvie Community Council	Balmedie Leisure Centre	19.00
3rd Wed	SWRI	Balmedie Leisure Centre	13.00-15.00
Last Sat	Men's Breakfasts	Cock & Bull Restaurant	09.30
Quarterly			
4th Mon	Belhelvie Community Trust	Venue varies - check Facebook page	19.30
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	Balmedie 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	Potterton Rainbows	Potterton Community Centre	17.30-18.30
Thurs	Potterton Brownies	Potterton Community Centre	18.00-19.45
Thurs	Balmedie 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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Copy deadline for Autumn-Winter Edition - Friday 20 September 2024

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Robin Hood



7th - 24th December

Inverurie Town Hall

www.inveruriepanto.com