

ST CYRUS NEWSLETTER



Photo by Snowfox Photography

The Easter egg rolling has come and gone along with that extra hour in bed when the clocks went forward. Many of you will have enjoyed a lovely Easter break with the children or maybe visiting grandchildren. We would like to say that the weather has been favourable but I think we can all agree that this spring certainly seems to have sprung a leak! Making it somewhat difficult to enjoy the holidays. As we go forward towards May we can only hope the weather makes a better effort.

May is a transitional month, as we are halfway between Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice. Across Europe this time of year has been a period of celebration since 2AD. In Gaelic tradition it was called Beltane or Bealtaine – a springtime festival of optimism. Scotland has its own way of celebrating almost any occasion and this is no different from any other. From parades and song to fire festivals Scotland has seen a resurgence in celebrating this ancient pagan time particularly round the central belt. Perhaps St Cyrus can plan a celebration for next year?

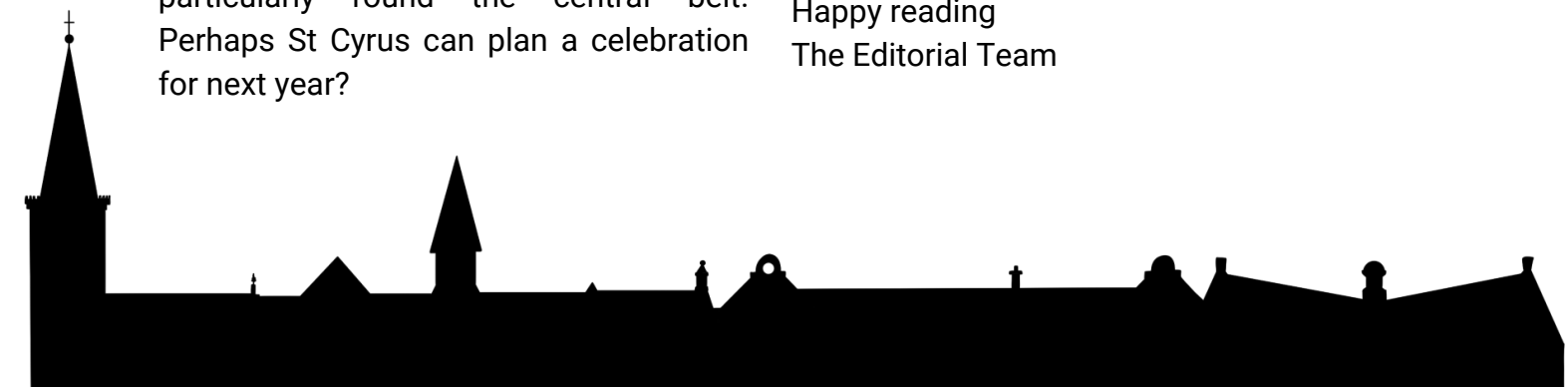
SPRING HAS SPRUNG A LEAK!

However you choose to welcome the coming summer we hope that the sun shines around our village. Especially when our volunteers are delivering your newsletters to you all. The editorial team would like to thank you all for your continued support and we hope you enjoy this issue.

We sincerely hope you enjoy this issue of our wee newsletter. Please feel free to drop us an email with anything you would like to share in the next issue. Feedback is also much appreciated.

Email – stcyrusnews@gmail.com

Happy reading
The Editorial Team



ST CYRUS CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

Our Church is settling in well with the new Sunday routine of a different Minister each Sunday. We are very grateful to those Ministers, readers, and members of our own congregation who now lead Sunday worship.

Christianity, like many other religions, is founded in faith. Faith is a vital component of well-being as the following work demonstrates.

Professor Shaun Larcom of Cambridge University recently published some results of the effect of faith and mental health issues arising from post Covid infection. Experts say that religion may help to protect against fear and disappointment. Furthermore, religious people were less likely to feel depressed. Studies were based on 3,884 people during the first national lockdown and then compared to three years of data prior to the pandemic. Those with religious faith experienced approximately half the increase in unhappiness seen in those for whom religion made little or no difference. The intensity of religiousness is an important factor. The probability of religious people having an increase in depression was 20% lower than in non-religious people. There was little difference between religious groups. Mental health in people with Covid was approximately 60% worse in non-religious people. The Bible, in the book of Hebrews, defines faith as to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see. When you feel hopeless, you have a sense that things won't improve and that you will never be happy or that you are stuck in your life. Losing all hope can have a devastating impact on your emotional wellbeing. In contrast, faith and hope in the future are two of the most powerful motivational factors in life.

May your faith grow during this time of spring and Easter.

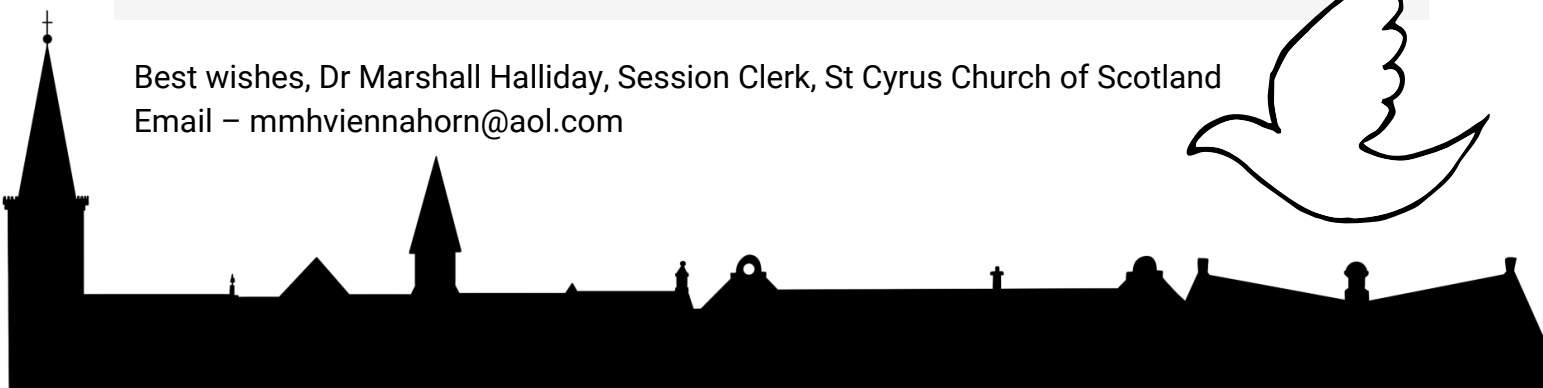
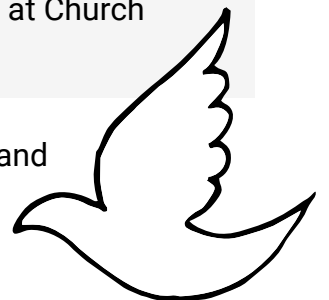
Church Service Every Sunday 10am – Last \Sunday of the Month the Service is followed by a time of fellowship with a cuppy/home baking – All Welcome

Dates for the diary

25 th May 10am – 12 noon Plant Sale/Coffee Morning. Donations can be made at the Church on Friday 24 th between 6pm and 7pm.

Bottle Stall at St Cyrus Gala – 15 th June All donations welcome. Drop off at Church or contact Elizabeth on 850161 or Marion 07891117898

Best wishes, Dr Marshall Halliday, Session Clerk, St Cyrus Church of Scotland
Email – mmhviennahorn@aol.com



ST CYRUS FRIENDSHIP CLUB

Friendship Club meets every Wednesday 10am – 1pm in the Church Gallery (lift access available).

The morning starts with a welcome Tea/Coffee, quiz, gentle exercise, singing, and games. Then finishes with a lovely two course lunch, provided by St Cyrus Primary School Canteen. This is always thoroughly enjoyed by members.

Members pay £1 per session, and this includes lunch. Members must be able to carry out their own personal care.

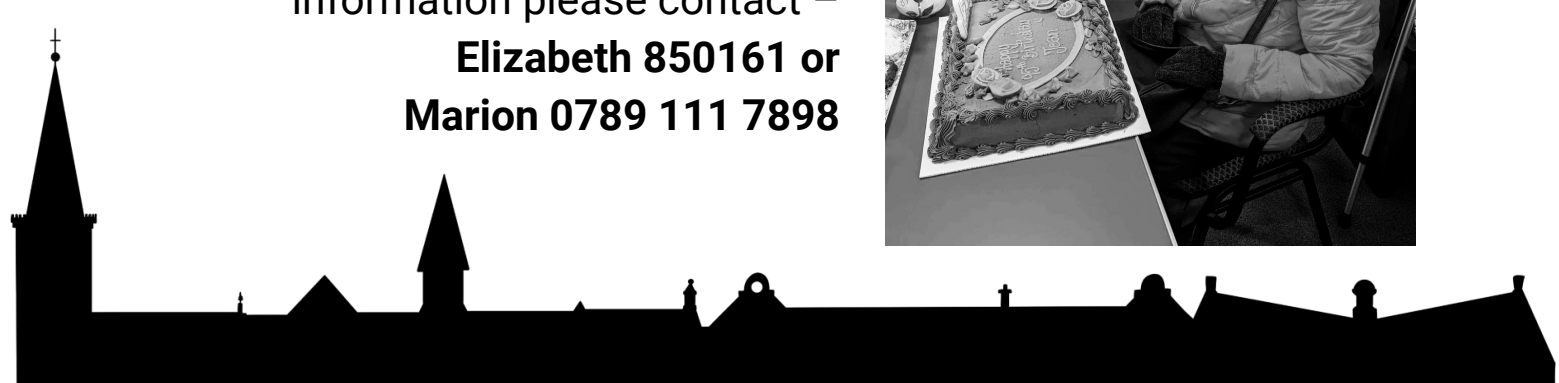


On Wednesday 3rd of April members enjoyed a bus trip to Anstruther, with lunch at the Waterfront Restaurant. This trip was organised in memory of Charlie and Margaret Pirie, Anstruther was a favourite day trip for them and was where an aunt of Charlie's lived.

Jean McLean, a long-standing member of the club celebrated her 95th birthday! A lovely cake was enjoyed by all after an excellent lunch in Anstruther.

Should you wish any further information please contact –

**Elizabeth 850161 or
Marion 0789 111 7898**



COLOURING COMPETITION



To submit your entry please take a photo of your finished picture & email to stcyrusnews@gmail.com and the winner will be announced in our next issue! Good luck!





Kincardineshire
Development
Partnership

KDP is delighted to be hosting a Volunteer Recruitment Event on Thursday 25th April.

The aim is to help local people discover current volunteering opportunities and to give groups, such as yours, the chance to spread the word about the work you do, and the support and assistance you require from volunteers.

It will also be a great chance to network with other like-minded groups.

Although the venue is in Stonehaven, this will be an event targetting the whole of Kincardine and Mearns, and we will be advertising it widely throughout the area.

At present we have 15 groups participating, but we still have a limited number of tables available for other community groups and voluntary organisations. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact Margo at margo@kdp.scot by Monday 25th March at 5pm.

The event will run from 3pm until 7pm on Thursday 25th April at the Fetteresso Church Hall. Access to the hall will be from 2.30pm for set up.

There will be a small cafe area for informal chatting, and a noticeboard displaying current volunteering opportunities.

Please get in touch if you would like to get involved.

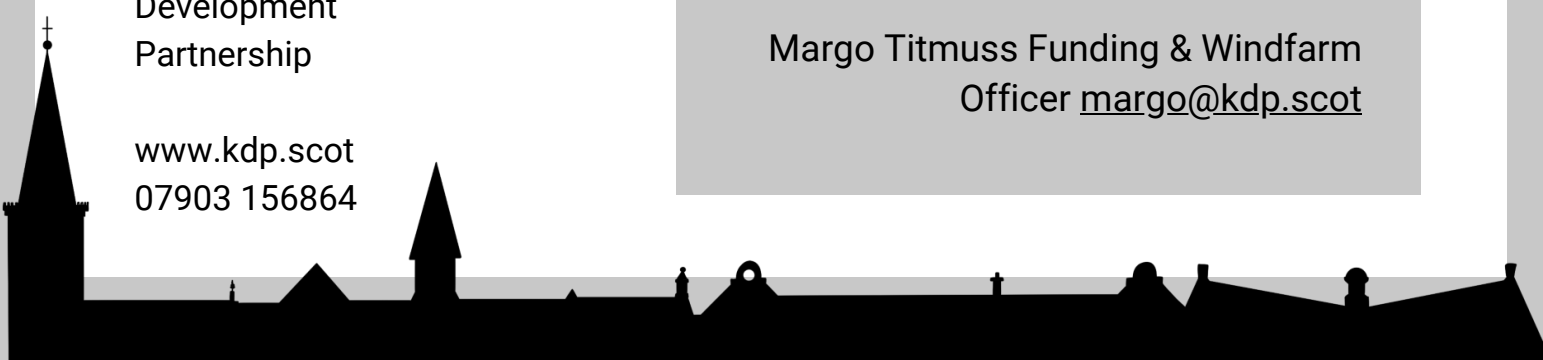
Best regards
Mairi & Margo

Kincardineshire
Development
Partnership

www.kdp.scot
07903 156864

Mairi Eddie Development Officer
mairi@kdp.scot

Margo Titmuss Funding & Windfarm
Officer margo@kdp.scot



SAFER CYCLING IN ST CYRUS

As a child I cycled a lot in Belgium. I also had to pay for a licence on my bike, but my father did not have to pay for a licence for his car! In Belgium the cyclist had right of way, and we had lots of cycle paths, and it was a pleasure. Similarly, Holland has lots of cycle paths. We had a two-week holiday cycling in Holland, and it was lovely and safe.

In St Cyrus it is not safe to cycle, and it is not even safe to walk to Montrose!

Twenty years ago, I asked Aberdeenshire Council for the cycle and pedestrian way which goes to Marykirk to be re-opened. They responded saying the width of the path was not wide enough to cycle on. The width of the path is the same as the cycle path coming from Montrose towards Brechin and as the one from Montrose to Forfar. My mother-in-law used to walk that path from the Stone o' Morpie to school in St Cyrus. The path on the right-hand side of the road under all the grass is tarmac which could be seen by all the people walking south of Montrose during lockdown. The two houses to the right where the wall comes up to the road are still there and this could be used as a pedestrian walkway. I would like to see the cycle path from Montrose continued at the other side of the bridge and at the side of the farmer's field. The amount of land that the farmer ploughed in from the centre of his field was 15m wide. A cycle path could be made with 10m of land allowing for bushes which I feel are an important feature when cycling next to a road with a lot of polluting cars and lorries.

I would also like to see a new cycle path all the way up cycle route 1. This route is the number 1 route all round Europe. Aberdeenshire Council have tried to obliterate cycle route 1 and painted out several signs. St Cyrus Nursery received £11,000 from Cycling Scotland to use towards cycle paths in St Cyrus. The route to and from school from the new housing estate has had some improvement from the council? This needs further extending to the school. As does the route from the school and the new estate up Ecclesgreig Road. This could easily be done to the south side of the road to form a safe way for children to get to the park.

We could also ask the UK Government to help with a levelling up grant to improve connections to Montrose. Aberdeenshire Council received £1.5m from the Scottish Government for cycle paths this year but where they spent it, I could not find out. It was Sustrans that paid for the cycle/pedestrian walkway between Gourdon and Inverbervie along the coast.

I visualise a cycle path made from reinforced concrete and solar panels over it to supply electricity to power electric bikes on route with putting excess back in the grid. Also, if it was wide enough it could be a pedestrian walkway with seats every so often for resting. The panels could protect you from the rain.

Come on St Cyrus, let us lead the way.

Clean healthy ways to travel short distances.
Reduce carbon monoxide and improve health.

Cycling on the pavement is against the law.
Cycling on the main road is dangerous!
David Neill



ST CYRUS PUBLIC HALL

Congratulations to our 200 Club winners for January and February who were:

Prize	January	February
£100	Vicky Neill	Ian Sinclair
£50	Cherry Holland	Claire Lawson
£25	Sandra Grant	Jen Warden
£15	Margaret Adams	Sheila Fraser
£10	Valarie Fotheringham	Margaret Adams

Our thanks again to St Cyrus Indoor Bowling Club and Creative Space Yoga for completing the draws.

As advised in the last Newsletter our Annual General Meeting took place 6 February. There was a very poor turn out but enough that allowed us to form a Committee for a further year (we locked the door and didn't let them out until they agreed).

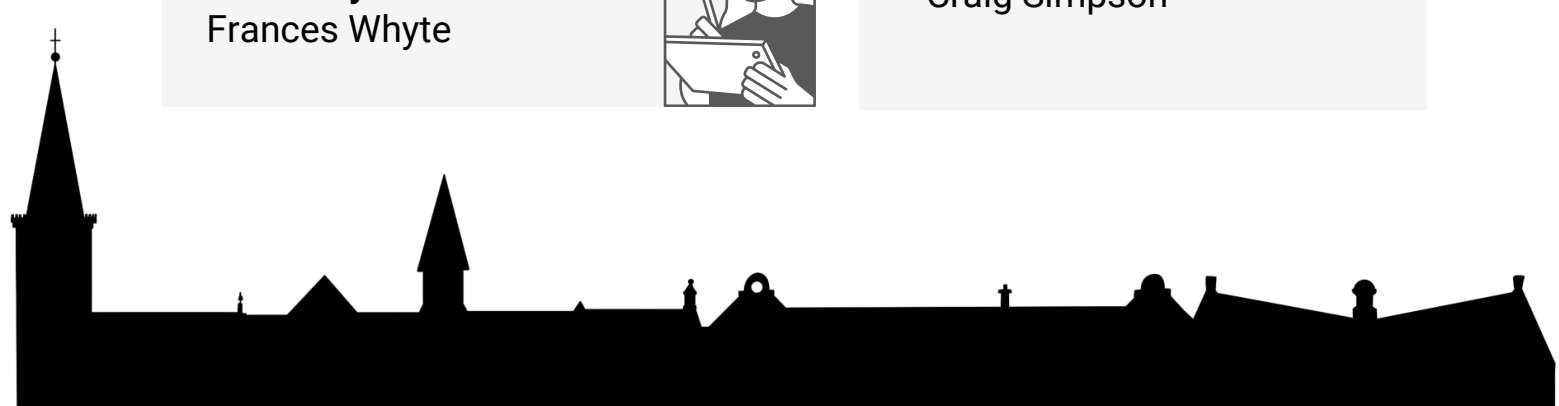
Chairperson
Peter Moir

Treasurer
Ken Greig

Secretary
Frances Whyte

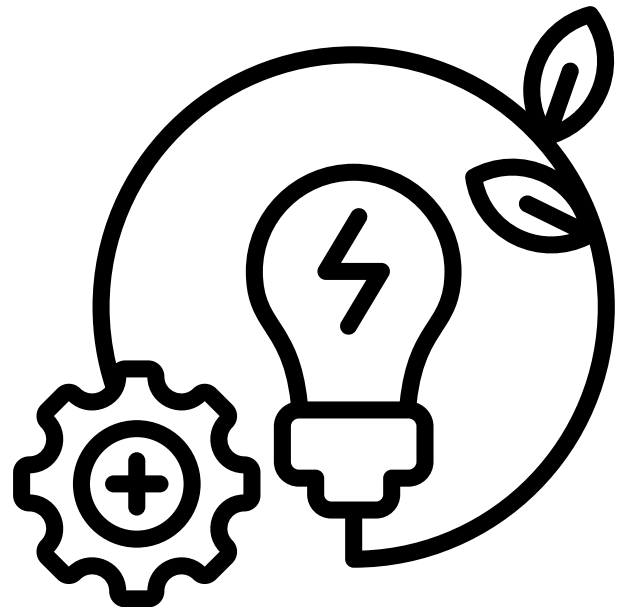


Committee
Chris Adam
Cherry Holland
Tommy Mullholland
Beverley Simpson
Craig Simpson



We haven't shared our financial accounts with you this year because we had a faulty electricity meter and our accounts do not show any electricity charges - one of our main expenses- for the period from 1 May 2023 to 31 January 2024. This is still under discussion but if anyone wishes a copy of said accounts we will happily share.

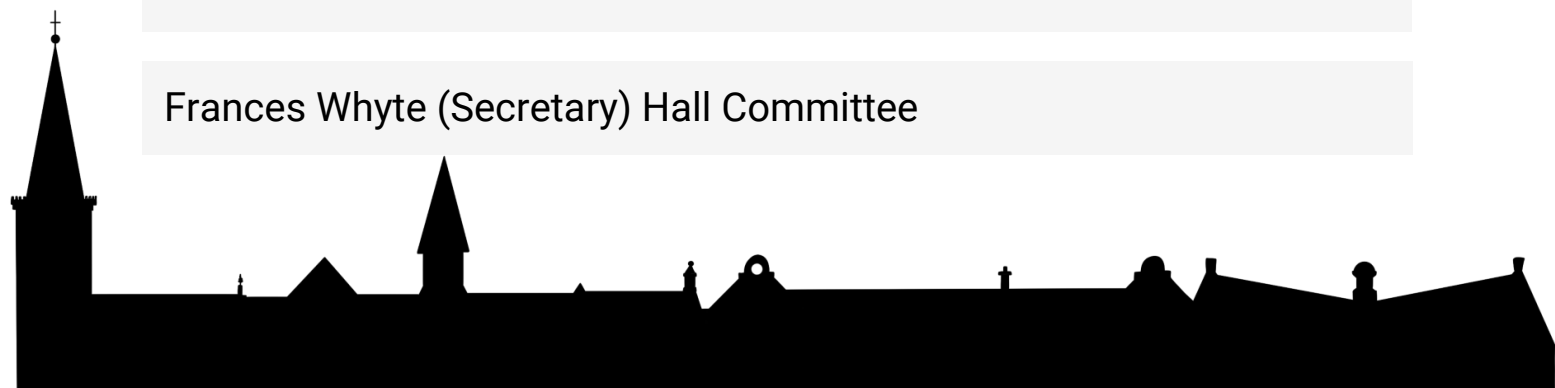
We would like to take this opportunity to thank Christine Jamieson, the outgoing Chair, for all her hard work and dedication over the past 11/12 years. It's not until you are actively involved in the Hall Management that you realise the time and knowledge needed to keep a village hall open and running cost effectively.



As also mentioned in the last Newsletter, we were successful in being selected for a detailed survey to enable us to make our village hall as energy efficient as possible. Both the survey and the air permeability test have been completed and we now await the Report. We have already been made aware that we need roof ventilation in the main part of the building and whilst there are vents installed in the rear extension they are not linked up. The roof insulation in the extension is also grossly inadequate but we await the full report before deciding our priorities.

If you are interested in how this progresses, or any other aspect of running a village hall, you are most welcome to join us at our monthly meetings. They are held on the first Tuesday of each month 7pm start April to September and 7.15pm start the remainder of the year and are open to all.

Frances Whyte (Secretary) Hall Committee

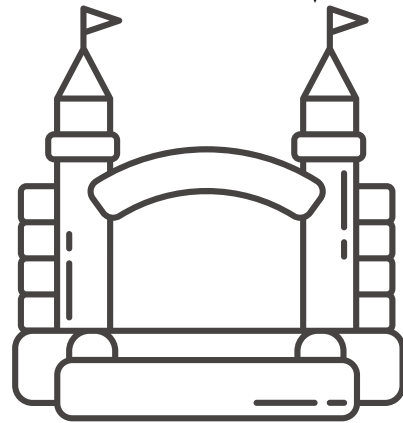


MEARNS ACADEMY PARENTS AND CARERS

Mearns Academy are excited to once again be running their Summer Fayre on 2nd June between 11am and 3pm. Last year was our inaugural event and we hope to build on our success this year. The purpose of the event is to bring the school community together while raising funds for the school.

The day is being planned to include family fun with activities for all ages. A new addition to the day will be our teacher dunk tank, so old and young will have the opportunity to make a splash at the event. The bouncy castles, axe throwing (remember to wear closed toe shoes), and the mountain biking track will be making a return.

The Laurencekirk Scout Group hope to run an archery stall to fundraise. The Laurencekirk Inner Wheel, Rotary Club, The Mearns Youth Club, and Mearns Football Club will also be joining us to fundraise and build the profiles of their organisations. We also hope to have the Fire Brigade with a fire engine and the Police with a police car in Attendance.



As with last year, we plan to run a wristband system so one payment will allow access to multiple activities. Entrance to the Fayre is free so feel free to come along and browse the many stalls that will be present. Due to the popularity of homemade pizzas last year, we plan to make more dough so that even more people can taste them. Ice-cream and drinks will also be available as well as food stalls. The proceedings will be opened by the Howe O' the Mearns pipe band and musical entertainment will continue throughout the day.

We hope that you can come and join us to have some fun. If you would like to have a stall at the event or have any questions, please email events@mapc.org.uk.

PLATINUM JUBILEE COASTAL PATH PROJECT



A small group is involved in a project to develop a coastal path - largely grassed, for walking - from the Angus border by St Cyrus to Cullen, just inside Moray.

The plan has the full backing of Aberdeenshire Council, the Lords Lieutenant and a number of other stakeholders. Funding for the path's development and management will come mainly from grant applications for funds for coastal community projects from various wind farms as well as and other sources. The Council will not be funding the project, although they will provide other support in kind.

Tangleha Artists Collective (TAC), who has been working on reopening the coastal path from St Cyrus NNR to Johnshaven, has been asked to extend their work along the coast as far as Cove. Another group is operating in the north of the county. So far, project officers from TAC have surveyed the bulk of the 65km of the potential route in Kincardineshire. They have met the majority of the landowners and had constructive discussions about how the project might work, listened to concerns and tried to find solutions. At the same time, TAC has met with the majority, so far, of the coastal Community Councils to share the plans; hear ideas and concerns and, equally importantly, call for volunteers to help with the development and management of the path, whether as a "Ranger" or behind the scenes.

As well as developing the actual path, we wish to develop the economic, educational, environmental and health and wellbeing potential of the route. An overarching charitable Trust is being formed to oversee all aspects of the development and subsequent management of the whole path around Aberdeenshire path.

If you would like to hear more; have questions or want to receive our quarterly Update, please email us at platinumjubileecoastalpath@gmail.com

- Casper & James



PROJECT OFFICERS

ROADS AND BRIDGES

Following the recent Aberdeenshire Council budget, I was concerned to see yet again, more cuts on budgets and the scope of Aberdeenshire to deliver the infrastructure of roads/bridges/culverts/ retaining walls and pavements. Most of you know that Aberdeenshire loses out on £51m compared to the Scottish average and that “unfair share” means that all of us are expected to do with less funding per head compared to the rest of Scotland which really grates with me, especially as the cake is shrinking!

“unfair share”



I'm working with others however to see if we can see firstly our potholes dealt with, and then secondly to see some summer resurfacing done which helps prevent defects developing. Aberdeenshire Council are trialling some new kit to repair pot holes and that has got to be good news and I'm waiting to see the results of that trial. Repairing these defects better, and sealing the patch with tar will make it longer lasting. This will save Council workers time, and save cash too, so I'm hoping we can really pilot some innovative ways of improving our road network, compared to the quick fix temporary patching which is far too temporary.

We convened a recent meeting of Roads, SEPA, Flood Teams and landowners at Haulkerton Farm beside Laurencekirk before Christmas. As a result of that event, they have made an amazing difference to the bridge, clearing debris and improving river flow. I hope that solves the flooding problem!

And talking of flooding it was great to note at the weekend, the improvement to the drainage channels on the higher ground adjacent to Lochside. It is amazing how much water can accumulate on farmland and then spill onto the road network with mud and silt which further impacts the road gullies.

On bridges, the road adjacent to Marykirk bridge should begin work in April, so I hope this complicated repair work can be done quickly. Utility cables and working up a solution which will future proof the road from future flooding has meant the project has taken time, but hopefully the disruption will end soon.

CLlr George Carr
Conservative
Aberdeenshire Council
Mearns Ward

COMMUNITY INSIGHT PROFILE



St Cyrus Community Council received the Community Insight Report in December 2023 produced by Housing Associations Charitable Trust (HACT) and Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI). So in this article we share information contained in that report about the "Housing" across St Cyrus.

A dwelling space is the accommodation occupied by an individual household. The numbers reflect the number of people in St Cyrus living in each accommodation type. Source National Records of Scotland 2017.

Detached - 444

Flat/Maisonette - 11

Semi - Detached - 256

Terraced - 99

.....

When it comes to the type of housing tenure the percentages are based on the 2011 Census.

When it comes to dwelling size, defined by number of rooms per dwelling, are based on data from National Records of Scotland 2017

Owner Occupied - 74%

Other Rented - 9%

1 Room - 2%

2 Rooms - 9%

3 Rooms - 21%

Local Authority Rented - 13%

4 Rooms - 21%

5 Rooms - 15%

6 Rooms - 9%

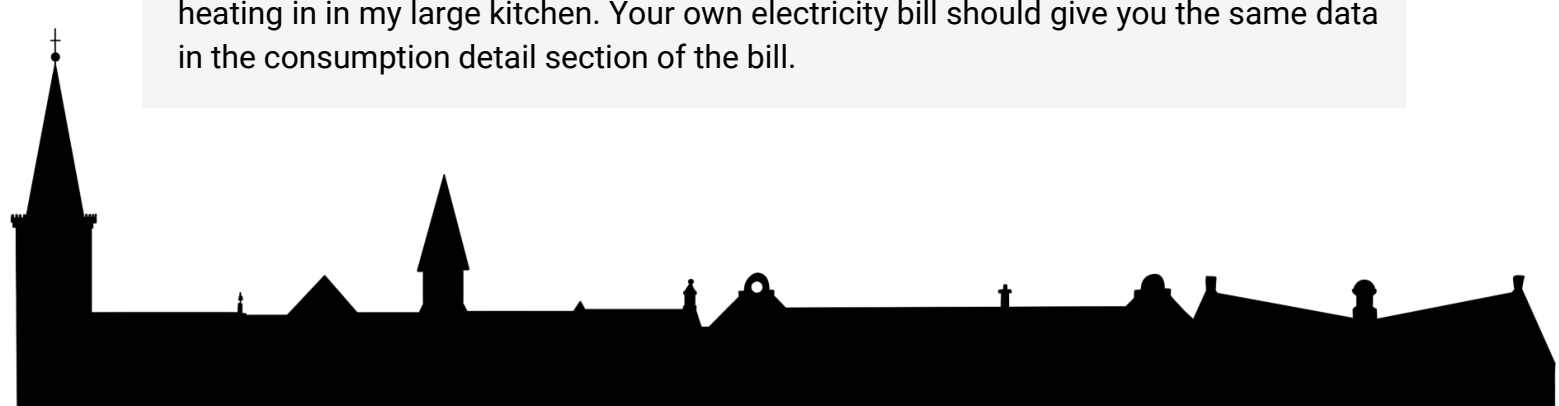
Housing Association Rented - 4%

7 Rooms - 6%

8 Rooms or more - 12%

Now here is an interesting statistic and it relates to electricity consumption based on information from the UK Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in 2020. Electricity consumption is measured in megawatt hours, and a megawatt is 1,000 kilowatts, the unit you will see on your bill.

The St Cyrus Community Area consumed 3,721 megawatts in 2022 which equates on average to 5,800 kilowatts per meter. So, I looked at my latest electricity bill and it quotes that I consumed about 4,600 kWh per annum last year. Roselea was built in the 19th century of local stone with poor insulation until the cottage was fully renovated in 2018 and a substantial amount of insulation was added to the walls, roof void and also underfloor and I use kerosene for heating including underfloor heating in in my large kitchen. Your own electricity bill should give you the same data in the consumption detail section of the bill.



Turning to the energy efficiency of St Cyrus homes, statistics from Energy Performance Certificates (EPC) for domestic buildings are published by Scottish Government and the following data relates to all EPC assessed buildings between 2016-2020. The energy efficiency rating, expressed in Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) points, is a score between 1-100 with 1 being poor energy efficiency and 100 being excellent energy efficiency. The current average rating of buildings is given alongside the potential rating (if improvements to the buildings were made) and the difference between the two is the 'energy efficiency gap'. Only homes that have been built, bought, sold or retrofitted since 2008 have an EPC.



In the St Cyrus Community Area the average is 56 current SAP points but with a potential to attain a rating of 84 SAP points, ie on average a 50% improvement in the energy efficiency could be achieved, helping to reduce household energy bills. The newspapers are full of stories about families deciding whether to feed their family or heat their home. The statistics described in this article highlights that the potential to improve the energy efficiency in many St Cyrus homes is huge.

And finally, how affordable are houses in the St Cyrus Community Area as measured by the Local Authority Tax Bands.

Source National Records of Scotland 2018.

Tax Band A - 67
Tax Band E - 172

Tax Band B - 157
Tax Band F - 105

Tax Band C - 95
Tax Band G - 60

Tax Band D - 144
Tax Band H - 0

Roll on the warmer Spring and Summer weather.
Peter Moir, Member, St Cyrus Community Council

NEW!

We are delighted to announce the launch of our refreshed Community Council Website!!!

Find our minutes, the St Cyrus Newsletter, planning applications, links to Aberdeenshire Council Social Media, contact details for our local Councillors and all things news for our area.

stcyruscommunitycouncil.com

Your Community Council Members:

Donna Wilson - Chairperson

John Brown - Vice Chair

Brian Fleming - Treasurer

Chris Adam - Secretary (Associate)

Lee Nimmons

Peter Moir

Donna Beveridge

Jenny Bevan

Nicci Bruyere (Associate)

We meet every 2nd Tuesday evening of the month in the Village Hall.

To raise any issues/items of business, just drop us an email: stcyruscommunitycouncil@gmail.com

ST CYRUS WATER FOUNTAIN

Interesting that you have drawn attention to the St Cyrus water fountain which most/many villagers did not know it existed or where it was located at this period of time. I was walking along past the shop with someone the other day when I pointed it out and they indicated that they had never noticed it before. I know not of the fountain history or previous locations but I do know a tale about it which intrigued me. I used to walk around the village regularly with a local gentleman and a very good friend called Tam Dalgarno who is now sadly departed. (His offspring are still scattered throughout the village.) As we passed the fountain and I commented on it he said something which astonished me, he said "I have seen elephants drinking out of that fountain"

"What!" I said, "elephants?"

He explained that a "circus came to town"

And in these days (now luckily consigned to history) it was usual for there to be 'wild exotic' animals in a circus. Hence the elephants which were paraded (walked to) the site of the circus and stopped and had a drink out of the fountain. Hope this provides some more interesting info on the village fountain.

Ron Beveridge



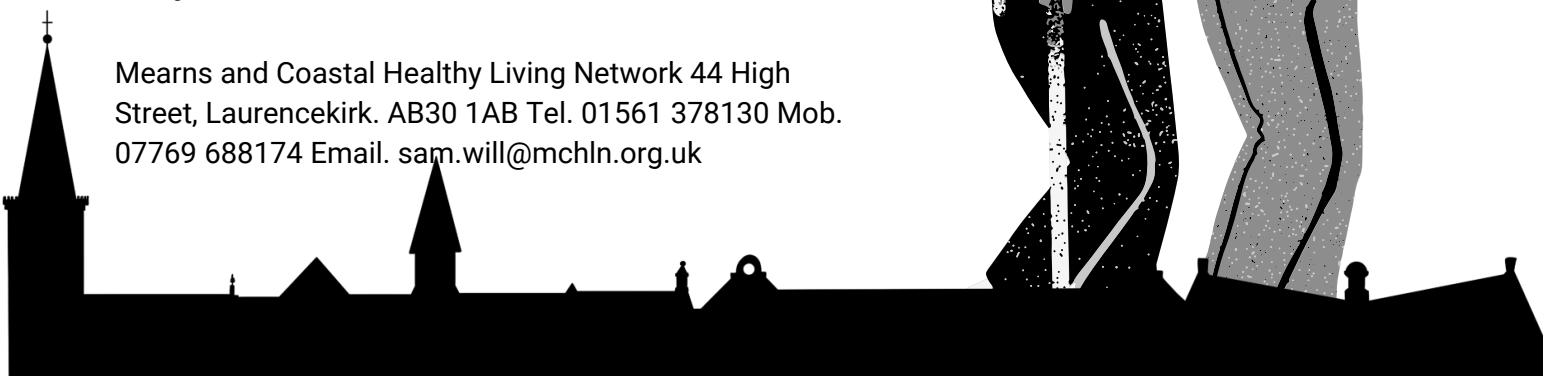
THE ST CYRUS WALKING GROUP

St Cyrus Strollers Mondays - 10am - Village Hall

A low level walk around the village, plenty of opportunities to stop for a breather. All abilities welcome, no-one will be left behind. Open to those aged over 50.

Regards, Sam Will (she),
Project Coordinator.

Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Network 44 High Street, Laurencekirk. AB30 1AB Tel. 01561 378130 Mob. 07769 688174 Email. sam.will@mchln.org.uk



COUNCILLOR ALISON EVISON



The Council Budget was set for the next financial year in February, and the savings that are being taken to achieve a balanced budget will be becoming apparent across communities.

Just a couple of points to clarify on the process: firstly, severe savings were needed mainly because the income which the Council gets is not enough to cover the growing demand for services as the population changes and as the Council faces the same increases in costs as we all do; secondly, there are many parts of the Council Budget which relate to "statutory services" which the Council has to provide, and there are other parts of the Council Budget which have to spend as they relate to Government policy, and this means that savings can only come from a relatively small area of council services, which are unfortunately often areas with immediate impact on communities.

There were two sets of Budget proposals presented to the Council meeting – one set from the Administration Councillors and an alternative set, with different choices, from the Opposition Councillors. There are twice as many Administration Councillors, so in the vote, their Budget was passed. Despite the differences presented, I think there was a feeling shared by all councillors that the financial decisions this year were really tough to make.

This situation is not going to improve quickly, and as a result it will become even more important for the Council to work in partnership with local communities like St Cyrus, to ensure that the little money that is available is spent in the best way possible to meet the needs of local people. Last year, people from St Cyrus did get together in the Village Hall to start thinking about your local priorities and it would be great if this work could be continued. I would be happy to help how I can with this.

Finally, it is great to see how many people are now attending Community Council meetings and these remain very helpful points of contact between the community and the councillors. In March, the Area Manager for the Council himself attended, which gave an opportunity for the Community Council to raise concerns directly with him. I would encourage you to pop along to one of the monthly meetings if you can.

I hold a surgery on the second Monday of most months, 6.30pm-7.30pm, at differing locations across the Mearns. Please contact me for more details of these or for support with local issues.

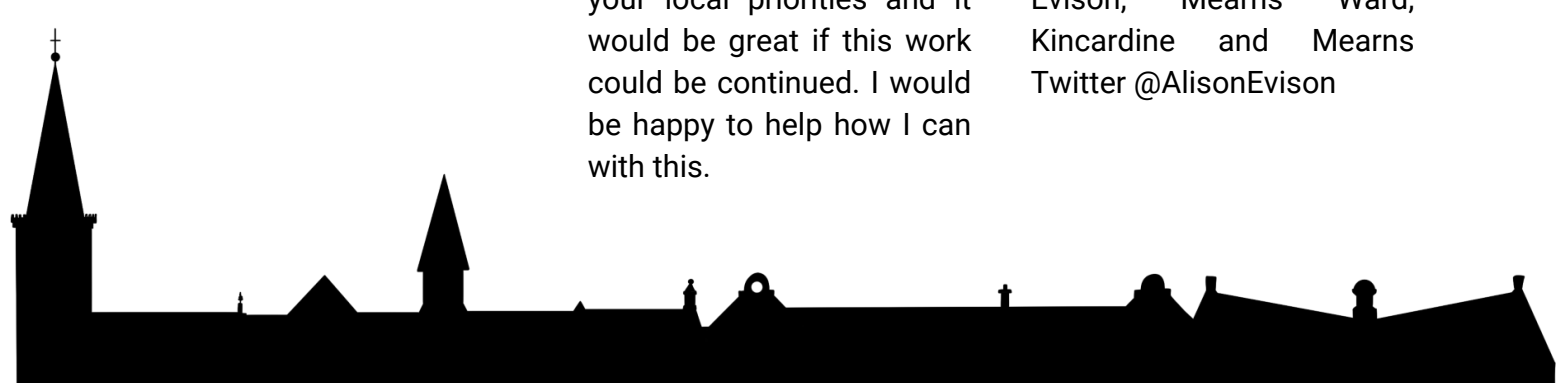
With best wishes

Alison Evison,

Email

cllr.a.evison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk Telephone
07855682845

Facebook: Cllr Alison Evison, Mearns Ward, Kincardine and Mearns
Twitter @AlisonEvison



MAIRI GOUGEON MSP

"As your constituency MSP for Angus North and Mearns, I have been working hard to represent you within the Scottish Parliament.

My constituency office team went on tour to the St Cyrus Public Hall. It was a very busy event with several constituents coming in to discuss their concerns with my staff. The two main issues that St Cyrus residents wanted to bring to my attention were their concerns about the delays to the Laurencekirk A90/A937 flyover, and about SSEN Transmission's proposals for a new 400kV overhead line between Kintore and Tealing. I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with a brief update on both these issues.

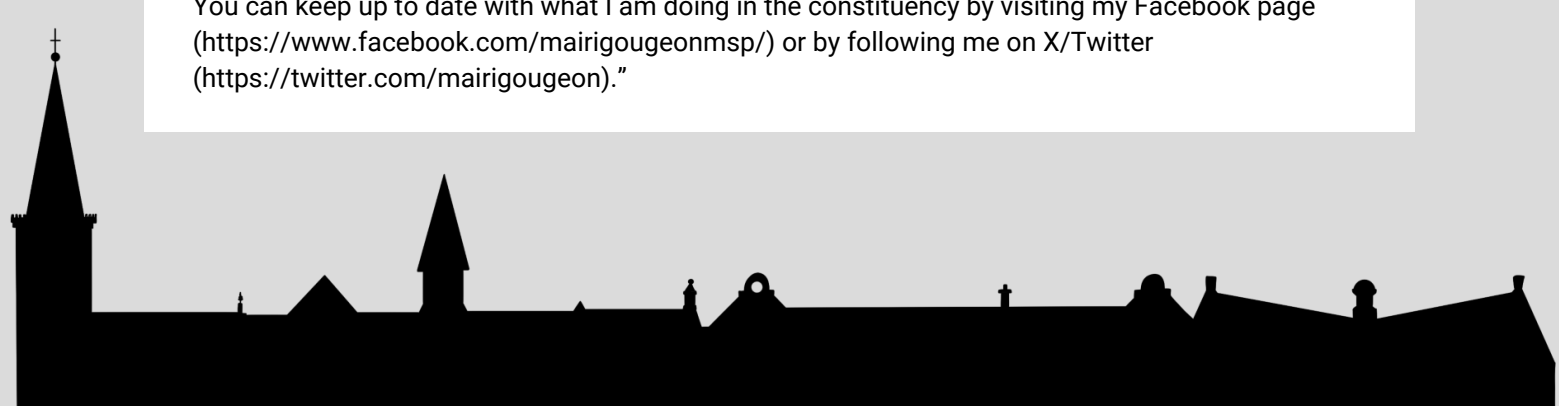
I was delighted on the 20th February when Aberdeenshire Council finally lifted its technical objection to the Laurencekirk A90/A937 flyover. Although other objections remain, I very much hope that progress can finally be made towards building the flyover. I have written to Transport Scotland to request an update on what they are doing to try to resolve the outstanding objections. The Scottish Government remains fully committed to delivering the vital road safety improvements required at the Laurencekirk Junction.

**"progress can
finally be
made
towards
building the
flyover"**

Regarding SSEN Transmission's proposals for new electricity transmission infrastructure in the Mearns, I am aware of how concerned many people are about this issue. SSEN Transmission's plans consist of a new 400kV overhead line between Kintore and Tealing, and a new 400kV substation at Hurlie, which is located within Fetteresso Forest. You can view these proposals and access information about the public consultation on SSEN Transmission's website: <https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/projects/2030-projects/East-Coast/>. The consultation period for SSEN Transmission's proposals will close on the 30th April 2024. I would strongly encourage you to participate in the consultation as it is the best way to ensure that your concerns are taken on board during this stage of the planning process. If you have any questions about these proposals or the consultation process, then you should contact SSEN Transmission via their dedicated project inbox, tkup@sse.com.

If you need support or would like to raise any issue with me, please feel free to contact me by calling **01356 626942** or by emailing **mairi.gougeon.msp@parliament.scot**.

You can keep up to date with what I am doing in the constituency by visiting my Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/mairigougeonmsp/>) or by following me on X/Twitter (<https://twitter.com/mairigougeon>).





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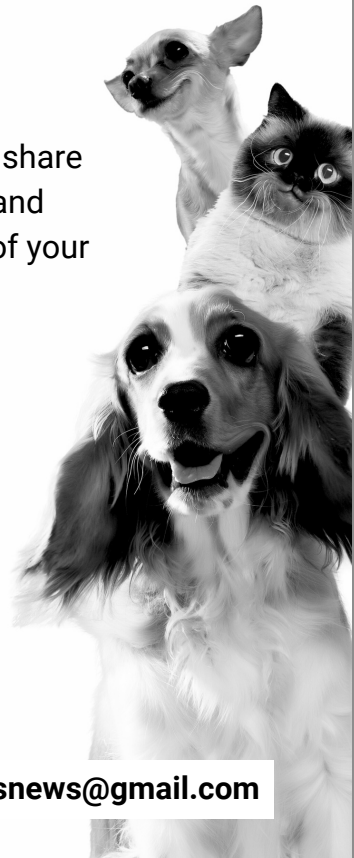
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IMPROVING OUR PARK PAVILION

Your community needs you....

For many that have used and visited St Cyrus Park on Ecclesgreig Rd, you will appreciate that we have an amazing space for play, recreational sport and events

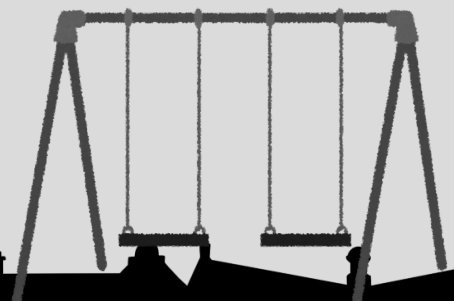
However, **what if** we could improve the Pavillion for greater/wider use?

What if we could design and build a community hub that could enable better facilities, new activities and support our many groups to extend their offer?

What if we create a space for generations to come that benefits all ages and ensures a commitment to the health & wellbeing of our community?

To achieve this requires people, ideas, planning and investment.

What if you want to be part of this.... Get in touch & let us know: **stcyruscommunitycouncil@gmail.com** or talk to one of our Committee Members.



HILLHEAD HAVERS *by Andy Shanks*

The new year came in dreich and dour, shaking its frosty pow in torrents of wind and rain. Dark clouds loomed above Woodstone hill like a collective village hangover. The big trees at the back of my garden look weary, tired of the constant battering, hoarse from roaring all night and drookit to their very roots.

Not a promising start. Then it snowed and suddenly I'm out in a blizzard getting logs for the fire only to find I'm down to my last few. I thought of the scene from that wonderful old movie of Captain Scott's expedition to the South Pole, "I'm just going outside and may be some time," says Oats, and they never see him again. I bet he wasn't wearing old baffies like these.

The next day, by the log pile I found a clump of snowdrops. Somehow these delicate chaps had survived and were nodding gently in the breeze. My grandad told me that when all the flowers were created, they jostled and fought for the best colours; the rose for a scarlet robe, the iris for its silken purple. All the while the slender snowdrop sat quietly by until all the colours were gone. The gardener smiled at the gentle plant and said, 'Sorry, there's no colours left you will have to be white. But since you have been so patient you will be the first flower in all the year. Your blossoms will be a sign of the wonderful colours still to come.'

My grandad was a proper old man; he walked and talked with an old pine stick. As we dawdled along the lane, he would point his stick at a clump of snowdrops and whisper, 'See, good things yet to come.'

An hour later Steven Greer arrived from Woodstone farm with a trailer of logs. We talked of kids and grandkids, good things. Now I've a fine fire and logs for tomorrow. Sorted.

The snowdrop and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the wet o' the morn.
Robert Burns

ST CYRUS KAIM

Sheriff Stew and the Lonely Keeptitle

Ever wondered what the story behind the ruin hanging precariously over the rocks at the north end of the beach is? It is more gruesome and romantic than you can imagine.

In the 15 th century, in the reign of James 1st of Scotland, there lived a sheriff by the name of Melville. He collected taxes and by all accounts was a nasty piece of work. So much so, King James was inundated with requests to deal with Melville. There were so many complaints that in a fit of rage he shouted, 'Sorrow gin he were sodden and supped in bree!' (meaning he would not be sorry if Melville were made into soup and eaten.)

Well, this came to the ears of the local lairds in this area like Lauriston and the laird of Mathers, one David Barclay. They conspired to take the king at his word and invited the despised Melville hunting up on the Garvock. Once there, they threw the unsuspecting sheriff into a large boiling pot and made a stew with him and, to keep to the king's word, each of the conspirators supped from the broth.

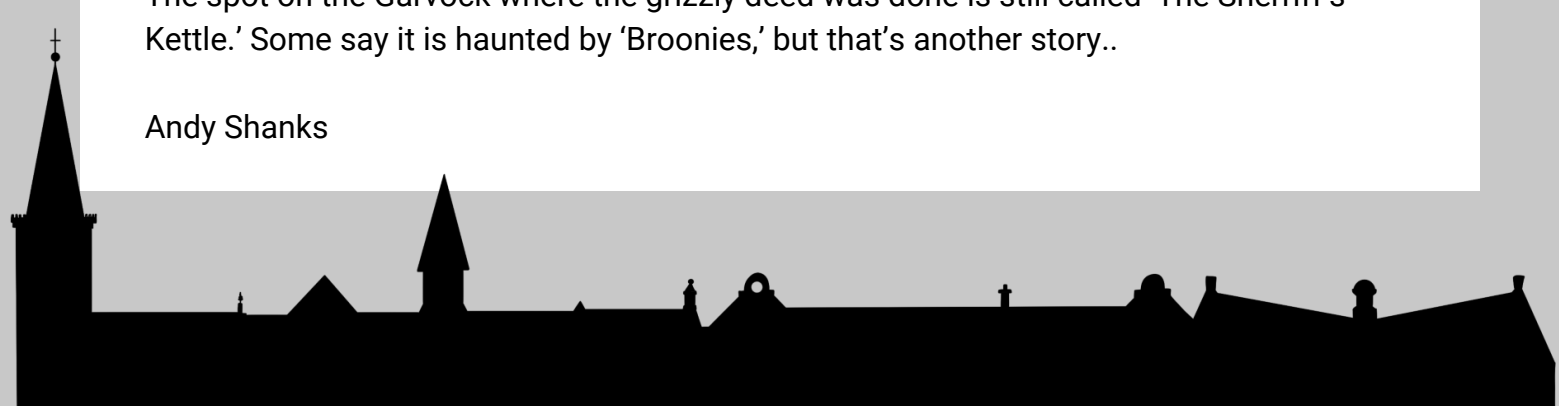
When the King heard of this, he was furious and declared all those involved outlaws and not to be suffered in his kingdom, at sea or land, on pain of death. They scattered and hid; Mathers to his sandstone Keep, perched on the rocks above St Cyrus beach. He claimed it was neither on land nor sea so the king could not touch him. In those days it had several rooms and a narrow path that teetered on a rocky ridge to take you to the door. And there he lived for many a long year.

None of the cannibal lairds were ever brought to justice, indeed some were eventually pardoned. The daughter of a rich and influential family fell madly in love with Mathers and petitioned the King pardon him, so he eventually he found a way out. He was known to have been so traumatised by the supping of the sheriff soup that he vowed never to eat meat or soup ever again.

The ruin is called 'The Kaim of Mathers,' kaim meaning fortress. Locals suggest it is because the narrow outcrop of sandstone it is built on resembles a cock's comb or kaim. Either way it is a fine tale.

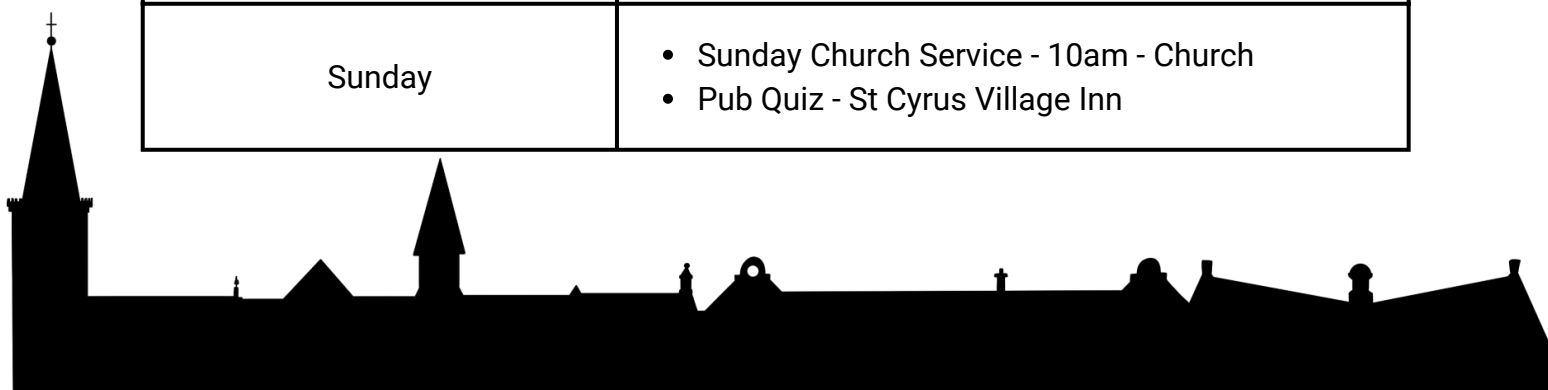
The spot on the Garvock where the grizzly deed was done is still called 'The Sherriff's Kettle.' Some say it is haunted by 'Broonies,' but that's another story..

Andy Shanks



WHAT'S ON IN ST CYRUS?

Day	Activity
Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Space Yoga - 7pm Village Hall • Scottish Country Dancing 7.30 - 9pm - Village Hall
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noreen Marie Geddes School of Dancing 4.15 - 7pm - Village Hall • Indoor Bowling (Winter) 7-9pm - Village Hall • St Cyrus Solos Running - 7.30pm - Meet outside Hall
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship Club - 10am - 1pm - Church • Arran Pilates - 10-11am - Village Hall • Angus Thai Chi - 12.30 - 3.15pm - Village Hall • Noreen Marie Geddes School of Dancing - 5.30 - 7.30pm - Village Hall • Whist Club - 7 - 9.30pm - Village Hall • Bowling Club - Outdoors in Summer - 6.30pm - Park Ecclesgreig Road
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Cyrus Solos Running Club - 7.30pm - Meet Outside Hall
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative Space Yoga - 9.30 - 11am - Village Hall • Youth Club - 6.30 - 8.15pm - Village Hall
Saturday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowling Club (Summer) - 1.30pm - Park, Ecclesgreig Road
Sunday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday Church Service - 10am - Church • Pub Quiz - St Cyrus Village Inn



MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS..

Let's talk about stress. What is stress and what causes stress. We all know back in caveman times, our needs were basic and our nervous system was in-built to aid hunting & gathering, fight/flight with then a period of rest and digest. This still stands for us all today but with the expectation from ourselves and society, we live hectic and busy lifestyles with an almost admiration of being so busy you don't stop. Our body and mind needs the rest and digest period to repair, to reset and allow us to achieve the best we can when we need to ramp the gear up again. Here are some simple but effective ways to enjoy more of this much needed down time -

Be present when you are around others, listen and respect the conversation.

Get down & dirty with your kids as mud washes off but the loss of quality time is felt hard by kids the most.

Activities - do more that are for purely pleasure and not an added chore to your already busy day. This helps activate positive feelings and emotions.

Honour your boundaries - say no, take the long hot bath or take a walk you promised yourself rather than tackling the pile of washing, it will still be there in the morning and no harm is done leaving it.

Change your social media use - give yourself a time limit, recognise that doom scrolling is perhaps an avoidance tool used by ourselves to not address your real needs as they may be difficult to address or a challenge to start, turn your phone off and unfollow unhelpful threads.

Practice gratitude no matter how small and tell someone you appreciate and are thankful for them. Even write an old fashioned letter to give to someone as a thank you.

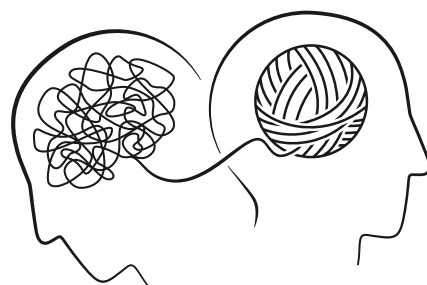
Stop ruminating over work, when you finish allow this to be a mental cut off time and not the replay of conversations you've had that could of went better or the feeling of having so much to do I am overwhelmed, turn the spiralling thoughts into productive ones by looking at solutions - what is my priority to get done, what can I move around to give enough time to ease the pressure to complete it.

Pause and appreciate a moment for what it is, the more the brain focuses on the simple pleasures rather than what it can't do or don't have thoughts, the more the brain will pick up on little glimmers of hope & positivity. It's all around us and we have control over our thoughts and what we think about.

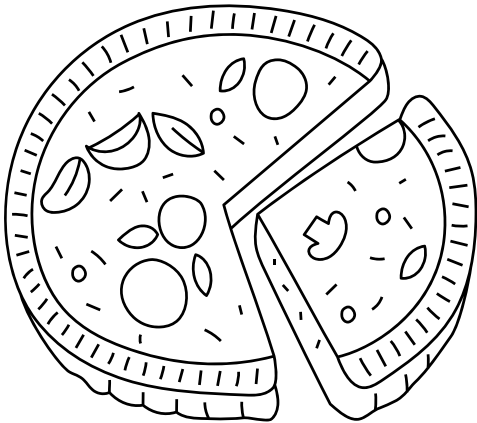
If you find things are overwhelming, here are some useful numbers to call:

Breathing Space 0800 83 85 87
Samaratans 116 123 247
Your GP surgery or NHS 111

-You're local mental health guide



QUICHE LORRAINE (QUICK AND EASY)



1 pack of ready rolled shortcrust pastry
100g bacon lardons grilled or fried until cooked.
75g Gruyère cheese (or mature cheddar) grated
2 large eggs plus 1 extra yolk
275ml double cream
Salt and freshly milled ground pepper

1. Preheat the oven to 180C (160C fan).
2. Lightly grease a 20cm quiche or plan tin with fluted edged and a removable base.
3. Remove the pastry from the fridge 30 minutes before use. Line the tin with the pastry and press firmly on the base and sides. Prick all over with a fork. Bake the pastry case in the oven for 15 minutes. Then remove from the oven and paint the inside of the pastry case with some of the beaten egg from the ingredients. Pop back into the oven for a further 5 minutes.
4. Place the cheese and bacon lardons into the pastry case.
5. Whisk the eggs and then add the cream, add the pepper and a pinch of salt as the bacon will be salty. Pour this mixture over the cheese and bacon lardons.
6. Cook for 30 to 40 minutes until the quiche is set in the centre, has turned golden brown and looks puffy.

For a mushroom and onion quiche, follow the same recipe swapping the cheese and bacon lardons for 225g flat mushrooms and one small onion, both finely chopped and cooked.

-Erica Wood

TIP TOP TALENT!

On Friday 15th of March, St Cyrus Youth Club organised a sensational talent show in the Village Hall. After many weeks of rehearsals, the children who were in P4 - P7 from St Cyrus and Johnshaven, were ready to perform in front of all their family and friends.

All youth club members were involved in the talent show. Jobs included making colourful posters, being on the door to welcome guests or serving tea and cakes. When the young people were asked about their acts:

Amber said: "I chose the song 'Flowers' because I wanted a song that was difficult because its good practice for Glee when I will sing in front of hundreds of people!"

Louie, who was going to solve a rubix cube in record time added: "I wanted to do this act because my dad inspired me - he can do it in under 2 minutes."

Olivia who was doing a magic act declared: "I am most looking forward to my last trick!"

Our three judges were Susan, one of the school's PSAs, Michelle from Mackie Academy and Head Judge Durward, our much-loved local postie.

1st up was Zana and Lucy who started off the show with their amazing highland dancing routine. It was full of high energy and high kicks! They were also the compères who introduced all the acts. Matthew, Charlotte, and Joshua performed a Scottish poem called "The Check Oot Loones Lament." Matthew did a super job reciting the poem and it was agreed that Co-op should hire them! Olivia performed an incredible magic act. It was a confident, dazzling performance and she was great at involving the audience. Johnny, the Thriller Glowstick Skeleton, had dancing skills that were to die for! Louie took to the stage next to stun the audience solving two white sides of a rubix cube in under a minute. Harla and Millie gave an awesome display of highland dancing and made a great team. Piran and Vinnie's Magic Magnifying Machine had the crowd in fits of laughter with their sound effects. Finally, Amber gave a stunning performance of the song "Flowers" by Miley Cyrus.

The judges found it difficult to decide on the winners because all the acts were out of this world.

After much deliberation, joint 3rd place was given to Mathew, Charlotte, Joshua for their poem and Johnny for his dance. 2nd place went to Piran and Vinnie's magic act and 1st place went to singer extraordinaire Amber!!



All the winning acts received a trophy, and all youth club members received an Easter egg which they were delighted about. One of the judges, Susan Campbell exclaimed; "What a brilliant display of local talent" and Durward beamed; "Everyone was a winner in our eyes." It was a fabulous night, and everyone enjoyed the entertainment.

A big shout out goes to the hard working and fantastic committee members who put tonnes of effort into organising the evening and to the super-talented kids (of course).

Amelia Stirling P6



St Cyrus Youth Club runs every Friday from 6:30 – 8:15pm
(term time) in the public hall.
For information and to register please scan the QR code

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If you would like your Business to be added to our directory then please contact the team stcyrusnews@gmail.com

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If you would like to submit a story, photograph or any other interesting content then please send to stcyrusnews@gmail.com for our consideration. (Photographs to be sent in jpeg. please, and please note Newsletter is printed in black & white).

EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT

St Cyrus News is a free community publication distributed every two months to households and businesses in St Cyrus and its surrounding areas.

Our aim is to provide information, appreciation and celebration of our rich and diverse community. Letters; and articles published do not necessarily reflect the views of The Editorial Team but we reserve the right to shorten, edit or not publish any item.

The Editorial Team will request full written parental permission before including any photographs of children.

Photographic resources donated to & collected on behalf of The Editorial Team remain the property of the team.

As a sub-group of the St Cyrus Community Council, all advertising or sponsorship transactions will be processed via the Community Council account.

Reflecting GDPR legislation, we will only share information once we have consent to do so.

Next Issue is out June 2024, any submissions due by 20th May 2024.

