

The

South Deeside View

North Kincardine Community Newsletter

Spring 2026



Boswells Monument
Credit: Graham Norrie

What a start to this year we have had! Snow, more snow, and then rain in biblical proportions! Thankfully it seems that normal weather patterns have somewhat resumed so we can hopefully look forward to a more gentle spring and a sunny summer season.

This year there are changes to the way that you will receive this newsletter. In February, at the pre spring issue planning meeting, there was serious discussion about the future of The South Deeside View. This newsletter has always been an independent voluntary affair, and as such is not considered a charity or organisation by the various councils and committees that hand out funding. We are therefore continually looking for advertisers, benefactors, and other alternative sources of funding, in an effort to obtain the amounts needed to pay for the printing costs. In the past the Community Council has very kindly made up any shortfall but, due to changes made by Aberdeenshire Council, this is no longer an option.

It was decided that there can be only one printed edition in 2026, this spring issue. The Autumn issue will be available online only. It is hoped that by printing only one issue of the newsletter this year, rather than two, there will be enough in the account to cover costs and the pressure of fundraising will be reduced. This decision will be revisited and reviewed at the end of the year.

Thank you as always to all our contributors - local community members, groups, organisations; and advertisers from across the area - and to the volunteers who hand deliver this newsletter to your door.

If you have something of local interest for inclusion in the next issue (local events, photos, stories, historical information etc), please contact us via email at: editor.sdvnewsletter@gmail.com

The SDV Editorial Team

PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL NEWSLETTER!

A DONATION OF £5 FROM EACH READER NOW WOULD COVER THE PRINTING COSTS AND SECURE THE FUTURE OF THE SDV FOR MANY YEARS.

Please consider making a donation this month. Thank you!

"The South Deeside View"- The Royal Bank of Scotland.

When transferring, please add "Donation" as the subject/reason.



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**COMMUNITY
PLANT SALE**

FRIDAY 5TH JUNE

We'll be running a community plant sale at the Cookney Cuppa in June.

If you're sowing seeds, dividing etc please consider putting some aside for the plant sale.

Proceeds from the sale will be split between our community newsletter (The South Deeside View) and a local charity selected by the Cookney Cuppa team.

NEW ADVERTISING FEES

The Spring issue, printed copies.
The Autumn issue, online only.

Delivered to over 1000 households.
Over 1000 Facebook members.

TO ADVERTISE PLEASE EMAIL:
editor.sdvnewsletter@gmail.com

Fees are for inclusion in both Spring and Autumn issues

LARGE advert £100/per year *Full Page*

SMALL advert £50/per year *1/2 page or 1/4 page*

- Advertise in the Spring printed edition, also available online.
- Advertise in the Autumn edition, online only.
- Post updates/promotions weekly on the Facebook group.

John Irvine-Boswell of Kingcausie 1785 - 1860

Situated on the Hill of Auchlee, Boswells monument is well known. It is a massive circular tower rising from an octagonal base and the following biographical inscription is inserted on one of the sides of the base:-

"In Memory of John Irvine Boswell, of Balmuto and Kingcausie. Born Wednesday, 28 December 1785. Died, Sunday, 23 December 1860. A man who loved his Saviour, walked steadfast with his God, and whose rule of life was — 'Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.' In early life he joined the Coldstream Guards, and carried their colours in the battle of Talavera. Retiring from the army he settled at Kingcausie, and lived to transform the natural barrenness of the estate into luxurious fertility. He will be long remembered in the district for the enlightened zeal he displayed in the introduction of all the improvements of modern agriculture; and he did not confine his attention to his own estates, his knowledge and experience being ever at the service of his neighbours, rich and poor alike. In every position and relation of life, he maintained, with rare fidelity, the character of a Christian gentleman; and he died in peace, trusting simply in the merits of his Saviour for acceptance with his God. His sorrowing widow, Margaret Irvine Boswell, erected this monument as a solace in her bitter bereavement, 1862"

Local history is often shaped by individuals whose lives reflect the character and evolution of the area around them. One such figure is John Irvine-Boswell of Kingcausie, a name associated with a long-standing connection to the land and heritage of the district.

He is remembered locally as part of this ongoing story - representing continuity, stewardship, and a commitment to the area's traditions. Whether through involvement in land management or community matters, his presence and influence forms part of the fabric of Kingcausie Estate and Farm. He had two sisters, the elder of which, Eliza, eloped with Patrick Syme, the drawing-master of Dollar Academy, who later took the chair at the first meeting of the Royal Scottish Academy. The scandal caused by the elopement led to many years of estrangement, but I am pleased to record that Eliza was later reconciled to her brother, so there is a happy ending.

John was an officer in the Coldstream Regt of Guards and served in the Peninsula War in Spain under the Duke of Wellington but retired from the service at his father's desire, holding the rank of Captain. He entered the Army in 1804 and went with his Regiment to Spain, 1808, and was present at the relief of Oporto and carried the Colours of the Regiment at the Battle of Talavera. The French bullets struck his Colour's staff above and below his hand and the Colour Sergeants on each side of him were killed. H.H.Dixon, in "Field and Fern", describes this incident, "as the youngest Ensign in the Coldstream Guards, he carried the Colours at Talavera, and he was wont to tell how he bore quite a charmed life when two Colour Sergeants fell by his side and the flag stick shook in his hand under the hail shower of bullets".

He returned home in 1810 and soon after married Margaret Christie of Durie and settled at Kingcausie. He succeeded to Balmuto in Fife on the death of his father in 1824 and to Kingcausie in 1841 when he took the additional surname of Irvine.

John was very keen on agriculture and made many farm improvements. He also employed squads of dry stone wallers from Fife, some whom had recently returned from the Napoleonic Wars and were seeking work. The beautiful granite-coped dykes mainly date from the 1820 period. *When some large silver fir trees were felled to make way for the Aberdeen bypass, I counted the rings on the trees and discovered that they were about 200 years old and must have been planted about 1820, so I imagine that they must have been part of his estate planting at that time.*

He successfully bred shorthorn cattle and was keen to develop the spread of the breed. He also won the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland's gold medal in 1841 for "An extensive and successful improvement of waste land on the farm of Swellhead," in particular the draining of the bogs there.

In addition to constructing the farm steadings and houses, he also was responsible for adding the wings onto the original mansion house at Kingcausie, engaging the Scottish architect David Bryce. It was said that when Queen Victoria was travelling up to Balmoral, she had the train stopped in Milltimber so that she could look across the valley as the works progressed on Kingcausie. This picture shows the original house as it was when it was re-fronted in the 1750's. Formerly it faced the opposite direction to the south, into the garden behind.



Henry Irvine-Fortesque

The Causey Mounth

Long before the A90 dual carriageway was the main road between Aberdeen and Stonehaven, and its predecessor the single carriageway road, the main route between these two settlements for hundreds of years was the Causey Mounth and this is believed to have first been used back in the 1100's as a drover's road to move cattle between Aberdeen and Stonehaven.

The name Causey Mounth may have been adopted for a number of reasons. The word causey may be a contraction of the word causeway which is a raised path over wet or low lying land. Another possible explanation is that causey is a variation of the still commonly used Scottish word 'cassie' meaning cobble or cobbled, as in a paved path or rocky road.

The word mounth is an Anglicised version of the Gaelic word monadh, which is of Pictish origin and is often pronounced 'munth'. It meant mountain, moor or heath but over time came to mean the pass through the mountains or over the moor. "The Mounth" commonly refers to the broad upland area between the River Dee and the Highland Boundary Fault which, of course, has its most eastern leg just north of Cowie at Stonehaven. The eastern end of the Mounth was very boggy until it was extensively drained in the 17th Century. So, the road is well named.

Many parts, but not all, of the Causey Mounth are still in common use today. The route itself, from the Aberdeen end, begins at the River Dee at Leggart Terrace where the road inclines up past Banchory Devenick school over the crossroads and onwards to Hillside School, which it passes on its east side. From there the road crosses the Hillside to Blairs road and continues towards Badentoy Road which it joins just to the west of Portlethen Golf course clubhouse. The next section of the route is no longer visible but can be easily imagined along the western edge of the golf course.

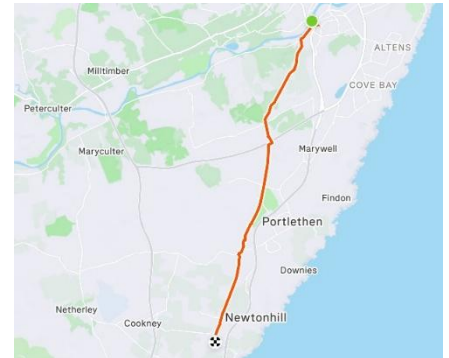


Photo credit:
www.moab.in

The route re-appears on the Cairnwell road and continues southwards passing Aquhorthies Stone Circle off to the right, then Old Bourtreebush before crossing the Portlethen to Lairhillock road near to Berryhill House where the route has been somewhat modified more recently, passing the Hilton of Cairngrassie standing stone over to the left, on and over the Cammachmore to Chapelton of Elsick road, past Gillybrands Farm and over the Burn of Elsick.

The track continues on south, past Windyedge on the recently named 'Doohills Road', skirting the Chapelton development to the west, across the Burn of Pheppie and the new houses there (built on the site of the old farm) where it rejoins the North Cookney to Muchalls road for a short spell as it passes St Ternan's Church to the right. At the sharp left hand bend in the road there to Muchalls, the Causey Mounth disappears from view but records tell us that it carried straight on across what are now fields, towards Muchalls Castle where it briefly joined the track which extends from the castle down to the village, before again being lost to fields.

Records also indicate that the route crossed over the Bridge of Muchalls and from there passed Kempstone Hill, the Hill of Megray and the now ruined Castle of Cowie (this stretch was also known as the Cowie Mounth) before descending down towards Cowie village, the Fault and its conclusion.

Bob McKinney

Further information about the Causey Mounth can be found here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Causey_Mounth

<https://doriccolumns.wordpress.com/pre-history-beyond/causey-mounth/>

<https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/265961>

<https://stonehavenhistory.wordpress.com/pages/causey-mounth/>



Cookney Cuppa

People near and far are most welcome to come along to the Cuppa and catch up with friends and neighbours from the area or just pop along and make some new friendships. For £3 all can choose from a huge selection of delicious home bakes, and as much tea, coffee and soft drinks as they like.

We often promote a book exchange, have donated goods available that are looking for new homes, sell home made jams and occasionally free range eggs, plus our ever popular Christmas Market in December, where we invite local business stall holders along, has gone from strength to strength each year. We have regular visits from our local Community Police Officer PC David Charnley, and local Councillors also pop in from time to time.

In June there is the popular Plant Sale that we have previously hosted in conjunction with the Cuppa. If you have spare plants of any variety, we would ask that you consider donating to the sale. Last year we were so fortunate with donations of seedlings, bedding plants, perennials, house plants and also a mass of pots, tools and garden equipment.

These types of donated items are always much appreciated.



The money raised from the Cuppas is usually in excess of £2,000 each year which is donated to charities and not for profit groups, a lot of which are local. Here are a selection of the good causes that have been supported recently:

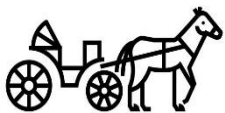
- Cornerstone Support Stonehaven
- Lairhillock School Sensory Project
- Maryculter Friendship Club
- Stonehaven Disability Table-tennis club
- Porty Cabin Foodbank
- Stonehaven Community Collective
- Social Bite Aberdeen
- Poppy Appeal Scotland
- Blakiewell Animal Sanctuary
- North East Sensory Services

Everyone is very welcome and we appreciate all the support from our bakers, helpers and the wider community too. Dates for the Cookney Cuppas are usually posted up on local FB pages a week or two before the event. If you can offer any help or home baking, please message us via the [Friends of Cookney Hall Facebook page](#)

Nicola, Shona and the Cookney Cuppa Team

Date: First Friday of the month
Time: 10am to 12 noon

Location: Cookney Community Hall
Donation: £3



Maryculter Driving For The Disabled

Registered Charity no. SCIO 28630

**** !! HELP NEEDED !! ** This year our group is celebrating its 40 year anniversary!**



Can you spare some time to help keep our wheels turning? Our group has fourteen disabled participants keen to drive the ponies when our weekly sessions commence on Wednesday 6th May from 12.30. Whether you fancy assisting by baking, cycling (electric bikes) / walking to accompany the carriage, grooming/harnessing the pony, towing a horse trailer, admin etc, can help out occasionally or regularly please get in contact.

We have two pre-season volunteer training days on Wednesday 22nd and 29th April, from 1pm at Maryculter Home Farm. Please park at the Templars carpark along the track which branches to the left. Anyone interested in volunteering is most welcome to come along and meet the team!

On Friday 29th May we have a 'Fish supper and Bingo fundraiser' event at The Ashvale Restaurant, Great Western Road in Aberdeen. For details please check our FB page or email us. There will also be a raffle.... we'd be delighted if you can join us!

Please contact Sarah or Kate via email for more information.

Email: RDAMaryculterCD@outlook.com
Date: Wednesdays - Mid April to October

Location: Maryculter Home Farm
Time: 12:30pm onwards





Portlethen & District Men's Shed

News from the Shed

Portlethen & District Men's Shed is open to anyone who wishes to come along and see what we do. Whether you wish to be actively involved 2 or 3 times a week, or occasionally, you will be made welcome.

We have continued our efforts to take over the unused Social Work Building to give Shed members more space to continue, and eventually expand, the services we provide for the community. After a unanimous vote in our favour by Councillors in Stonehaven last September, Aberdeenshire Council sent the matter to Business Services at Woodhill House in Aberdeen where at the November meeting, the whole matter was discussed again. The resulting vote by Councillors was again in our favour with 9 votes for and 4 against. Since then, we have had regular contact with Council officers and we have now been able to instruct solicitors to submit a formal offer for the Social Works Building. So, things are moving forward but not as fast as we would ideally like

Members continue to respond to requests from the local community to make or repair a whole range of items. So, if you want your garden furniture repaired, refurbished or just repainted in time for Spring then come by our Shed for a chat. We have started making planters for Spring planting so let us know what you need. Should you wish the members to make you an item or if you have a project you would like us to assist with, please get in touch and we can discuss your requirements.

Here are a couple of examples of the benches & planters we have worked on recently.



If you wish to join the Portlethen & District Men's Shed, please contact the email address below and ask for a Membership Form or come along for a blether and learn more about how to get involved.

Meetings: Mon, Wed and Fri 10am to 1pm.

Location: Cookston Rd, Portlethen, AB12 4PT.
Next to the Porty Cabin

Check out our Facebook page for more details.

Email: secretary@portlethenmenssheds.co.uk

Facebook: [Portlethen & District Men's Shed](#)



Culter & District Pipe Band

Culter & District Pipe Band and the 47th Culter Boys Brigade Novice Juvenile

Pipe Band are gearing up for another successful competition season this year.

Under pipe major Neil-John Robertson and lead drummer Suzie Bruce, we'll be making our debut at grade 3B, having been upgraded after our successful season last year. The competition will be tough but we've been working hard over the winter learning new tunes and preparing for the challenge. We've also welcomed new members to the band, and we're looking forward to producing a big sound.

Our 3B band will be at four 'major' competitions this year – the British Championships, the European Championships, the Scottish Championships and the World Championships, and our Novice Juvenile band will make their "majors" debut at the British and World Championships. Both bands will also be competing at a number of local competitions over the spring and summer, including the Aberdeen Highland Games, the Stonehaven Highland Games and the Garioch Highland Games, plus a few more further afield. It's shaping up to be a busy season!

If you're a former piper or drummer thinking about getting back to playing, contact us by email or through our social media accounts. We also offer tuition, so if you're looking to get started, give us a shout!

The band is available for public and private engagements, whether as the full band, a mini band, or individual pipers/drummers. For more information, please email us.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram.

We also have a new website that's full of information, news and photos.



Email: pipebandculter@gmail.com

Website: www.culterpipeband.org

Facebook: [CulterPipeband](#)

Instagram: [Culterpipebands](#)



SWI - Scottish Womens Institutes

General SWI info email: hello@theswi.org.uk

Maryculter SWI

We usually meet every month, apart from July and August. If you would like to come along to one of our open meetings, you will be made very welcome.

At our meetings, we provide a wide range of talks, activities and competitions for our members enjoyment. With this aim in mind, we have scheduled the following events up to June 2026. We are then taking a break before meeting again in September.

13th May 2026 - "Business Meeting, Bring & Buy and Bingo" to be followed by competitions, teas and coffees

10th June 2026 - "Summer Outing" to Aberdeenshire Highland Cattle, Banchory.

If you would like to come along to one of our meetings, you will be made very welcome.

For more information please contact us.

Secretary Christine	07398 156039
Facebook:	MaryculterSWI
Date:	2nd Wednesday of the month
Time:	7:30pm
Location:	Corbie Hall, Maryculter
Cost:	£5 Non-Members / £4 Members



Cults & District SWI

SWI Hall, 45 Kirk Brae, Cults.

Monthly on 1st Thursday at 7:30pm (Sep to May)

Durris SWI

Kirkton Hall, Kirkton, AB31 6BP.

Monthly on 2nd Monday at 7:30pm

Muchalls SWI

Muchalls Village Hall, Muchalls (except Dec & Apr)

Monthly on 2nd Thursday at 7:30pm (Sep to May)

LOCAL YOUTH GROUPS



Maryculter Scouting Groups

For the Maryculter, Netherley and Banchory-Devenick areas.

Meeting Location: The Scout Hut, Kirkton of Maryculter

1st Maryculter Beavers (6-8yrs)

Tuesdays, 5:30pm to 7:00pm

The Beavers enjoy a wide variety of games and crafts. Recent programmes have included archery, obstacle courses, den building, planting seeds and bulbs, pancake making and an outing to Garthdee for tubing.

All beavers have gained several badges over the winter months including photography, team challenge and health and fitness. Now that spring is here we hope to be outdoors for our activities as often as possible.

We currently have 21 Beavers and 4 leaders. We have also registered a number of parents as helpers with Disclosure Scotland - Protection of Vulnerable Groups. Recent legislation has required anyone who helps out with youth groups to be PVGd. and as we cannot operate without parental help this is going to be a requirement from parents in future.

Enquiries about joining the Beavers or becoming part of our Leadership team please contact Kathleen.

[Kathleen Paterson](#) 07748 774535

Email: kpaterson57@gmail.com

1st Maryculter Cubs (8-10 ½ yrs)

Thu, 5:15pm to 6:45pm

We have a group of lively Cubs who make the most of every session and can normally be found either taking part in an energetic team game or fire building.

We have been working on our Earth tribe badge, Animal carer, Science, Space, Backwoods cooking, Pioneer alongside the challenge badges. A number of our older cubs have recently earned their Chief Scout Silver award.

Highlights are our outings and camps, such as to Apple Store digital workshops, NESCOL Planetarium, Farm Stop, Aberdeen Science centre and Aberdeen Arts centre to watch the Aberdeen Gangshow. We have had a multi section camp at Skyline Trampoline park and also took part in the Big Sleepover at Glasgow science centre, travelling completely by public transport and visiting the Riverside museum and Tall ship Glenlee on the way. The cubs were an absolute credit to us and were really looking forward to our camps in Braemar and Fordell firs in the summer.

Contact Kate to volunteer or to add your young person to our waiting list.

Kate Gwynne Tel: 07421 466312

1stmarycultercubs@gmail.com

We are currently operating a waiting list for enquiries outside of existing sections and we are in real need of more volunteers to join our leadership team. Being involved with Cubs, and Scouting as a whole, is great fun and hugely rewarding. You will get the opportunity to be part of lots of adventures and building lasting memories for our young people.

Email:

1st Maryculter Scouts (10-14yrs)

Fridays, 7:15pm to 9:15pm.

We currently have a troop of 25 Scouts, a mix of boys & girls, aged 10-14. The scout programme focuses on 9 Challenge Awards, and during the Spring term we focused on the Teamwork Challenge, with many of our Scouts achieving the award. Recently, we have camped in the woods near Scolty, at Pressendye near Tarland, at Skyline in Inverurie with the Cubs and Explorers, and have visited the Aberdeen Science Centre. We have also completed the Fire Safety badge and Emergency Aid Level 3.

During the past few months, the toilets and some flooring in our Scout Hut have been refurbished following some flooding problems last year, and we aim to replace our kitchen soon, once funds have been raised.

The Scout group can help the community by occasionally lending tables & chairs and our large tent for outdoor events. Please get in touch for more information.



Graeme Paterson Tel: 07817 483118

1st Maryculter Explorers (14-18yrs)

Our Maryculter Braw Badger Explorer Unit has been running for a year now and it's been a busy one! Keen cooks on both the campfire and stoves, they've smashed the Chef badge with their international cooking. They also nailed navigating at Templars, building survival shelters and pioneering, dealing with first aid scenarios, competing in The Apprentice challenges, more cooking and not forgetting our favourites - egg pong and Traitors! Supporting our Scouting community the Braw Badgers ran the kitchen at the Scout Group Ceilidh (can still smell the stovies on our shirts!) and camped at Skyline. Looking forward to more cooking, challenges, camping and community as we encourage our Braw Badgers to plan, lead and support. Please email us if you are interested in joining our sett.

Julie Tucker and David Owen

Email:maryculterbrawbadgers@gmail.com



Youth Café

Youth Café meets on Thursdays from 7pm to 8:45pm during term times. Everyone who is in school between P7 and S3 is welcome, and if you are a little older than that but still want to be involved why not come and help?! This rewarding experience allows you to get to know the wonderful young people in our community. There is plenty to do from football, table tennis and pool to board games and of course the tuck shop! Or just relax and chill out chatting with friends.

For further information contact Dianne Brown: 07801 542154



Cookney Hall

The Hall has remained a popular venue for events over the last few months.

Unfortunately we were unable to host a Hogmanay

ceilidh last New Year but we're taking steps to ensure that doesn't happen for the forthcoming year. A charity ceilidh planned for early January had to be re-scheduled for February, due to January's adverse weather conditions, but when it went ahead a whopping £1250 was raised for the NHS Grampian Charity Cardiology Fund. The Burns supper in January was, yet again, another 'Sold Out' event with some cracking entertainment, including the inimitable Jim Brown.

In March, 10 volunteers from the Committee and Hall users underwent First Aid refresher training and happily, everyone passed the training and received their First Aid certificates. We still host ongoing Yoga and Pilates classes, and the carpet bowling club have been meeting twice a week over the winter. If you're interested in any of these, please see below for contact details.

The Cookney Cuppa continues to be as popular as ever. Even over the winter it has been well attended by folk from far and near and it continues to send any profits off to local good causes and worthy charities. At £3 a head for tea, coffee, juice and more cake than you can shake a stick at, it's great value for money. See the Cookney Cuppa notice for more details of events.

Our upgrading efforts continue and looking to the future, we are hopeful of getting fibre broadband installed in the Hall. We are also hopeful that we can screen live TV events and movies in the Hall soon, and we're finalising the requirements to allow us to do that.

Over the coming weeks, the Committee will also be seeking the views of the community and our supporters, by way of a short survey, on what they would like to see by way of improvements at the Hall. Keep up to date with all of this and more on Facebook .

If you would like to join the Friends of Cookney Hall committee or are seeking further information about hiring the Hall or joining one of the classes, please contact Willie Angus.

Bob McKinney

Chairman, Cookney Hall Committee

Willie Angus: 01569 730123
Email: wgangus.moc@gmail.com
Facebook Group: **Cookney Hall**



Corbie Hall

We always feel it necessary to report on the weather when drafting our contribution to the SDV

and this year is no different with January being continually wet and the hall being within a few inches of being flooded again. Our art group had to abandon one session before the water level rose and stranded their cars in the car park. Our Burns Supper (which was a great success again) was so close to being cancelled as the flood water inched up the field just hours before the haggis was due to be addressed!. Needless to say there was no football played for much of January and February. However, apart from a bit of bank erosion and our fence pushed over again there was no serious damage caused - just some tidying up required by the committee.

The hall hosts numerous groups: Pilates, Art, Gaming, Brownies, Women's Institute and a variety of one-off parties and training courses. If you are interested in joining any of these groups I am sure they would be delighted to hear from you.

On 7th May we will be acting as the Polling Station for the local area including the Banchory-Devenick voters as their usual venue is not available.

Here's to a sunny Summer! There is a Dog show booked on the field for 10th May and some football games, but otherwise not much happening. We would be delighted to hear from potential field users over the June/July months to utilise our facilities before the football season starts all over again in August.

To enquire about using the hall please email us and someone will respond.

Les Paterson

Fees: Hall £15 per hr / Field £45 per game or ½ day
Whole day, or longer, may be negotiated.

Email: maryculterhall@yahoo.co.uk
Facebook Page: **Corbie Hall and Field Maryculter**



Lairhillock Primary School

Lairhillock School continues to provide a warm and inclusive environment, supported by modern facilities and expansive outdoor areas that become even more vibrant as the weather improves.

As spring arrives across South Deeside, Lairhillock School is embracing the energy of the new season, with growth, learning, and community spirit very much in bloom. By the time you read this, a large number of children will have joined us from Banchory Devenick School. We are looking forward to welcoming them to the Lairhillock T.E.A.M. There is huge excitement in the air as we undertake activities together and work towards supporting our new students. 'Together, Everyone Achieves More !'

The spring months are particularly special for the nursery, where children benefit daily from outdoor access that supports wellbeing and encourages curiosity. A January 2026 inspection by the Care Inspectorate praised the warm, nurturing interactions between staff and children, alongside a stimulating environment that keeps our youngest learners engaged and happy. With the days lengthening, the nursery's outdoor play areas and school grounds offer even more opportunities for exploration, imaginative play, and hands-on learning.

This time of year naturally highlights the school's deep commitment to environmental responsibility. Lairhillock continues to celebrate its impressive seven Eco-Schools Green Flags, a reflection of sustained efforts across the school community. Pupil Leadership Groups play a key role in these initiatives, helping embed the values of Community, Responsibility, Environment, Wellbeing, Kindness and Dream Big, in everyday school life.

As part of our ongoing school improvement, staff have been working to further strengthen learning, teaching and assessment. We have focused on listening and talking, active learning and play this past year. Next year, we turn to our planned review of Lairhillock's Curriculum Rationale—designed to develop successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors. This process will ensure the curriculum continues to evolve to meet the needs and interests of pupils as they progress through the school and remain active participants in their community.

Lairhillock's Parent Council remains a lively presence, supporting events, fundraising and community-building efforts that bring families together. The school benefits greatly from the enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteers.

Stewart Crabb (Head teacher)

Tel.: 01569 690485

Email: lairhillock.sch@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Website: www.lairhillock.aberdeenshire.sch.uk

School Holiday Dates

February 2026	March 2026	April 2026	August 2026	September 2026	October 2026
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May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	November 2026	December 2026	January 2027
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Term Dates			Main School Holidays		
In-service Days			Other Aberdeenshire Holidays		

CHURCH NOTICES



Maryculter Trinity Church Of Scotland

Charities Number SC013648

All services and events are held in Maryculter Trinity Church unless otherwise intimated..

Please see our website and our facebook page for additional updates, events and information.

Regular Services are now live streamed on YouTube. We look forward to welcoming you at any of our services and events

Church Services every Sunday at 10.30am. Children are welcome to join us. Family service on the 3rd Sunday of the month at 10:30am, except July & August, with hymns accomanied by our praise band whenever possible.

CHANGE OF DATE - Holy Communion will be held on Sunday May 17th instead of Sunday May 24th

Bible Study Group have reverted to meeting on a Tuesday in the church hall at 7.30 – 9:00pm. This is ecumenical and open to all. Come along and enjoy discussions and fellowship over a cup of tea or coffee and chocolate biscuits. Contact Margaret Britten for further information.

Community Coffee Mornings are held on 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month (excepting July & August) in the church hall from 10.00am -12 noon. Fresh coffee or tea and home bakes £4.00. Come and and enjoy chats with friends and make new friends. We look forward to welcoming you. For further details or to arrange a lift, contact either Anne Massie or Helen Anderson.

The Guild is held on the first Monday of the month in the church hall from 7.30 to 9.30pm, October to November and February to April – *March meeting is World Day of Prayer and is held each year on the first Friday of March.*

New members or visitors are always welcome to come and hear interesting talks, enjoy fellowship and a cup of tea. Contact Helen Anderson for further information.

Youth Cafe meets on Thursdays from 7pm to 8:45pm during term times. Everyone who is in school between P7 and S3 is welcome, and if you are a little older than that but still want to be involved why not come and help?! This rewarding experience allows you to get to know the wonderful young people in our community. There is plenty to do from football, table tennis and pool to board games and of course the tuck shop! Or just relax and chill out chatting with friends. Contact Dianne Brown for further information

Email: marycultertrinitychurch@btinternet.com

Website: www.marycultertrinitychurch.org.uk

• Interim Moderator	Rev.Tony Stephen	01330.822811	Email: tstephen@churchofscotland.org.uk
• Locum Minister (3 days pw)	Rev. David Galbraith	07914 265412	Email: david.galbraith@churchofscotland.org.uk
• Session Clerk	Mrs. Joyce Mackintosh	01224 733495	Email: joycemackintosh@yahoo.ie
• Treasurer & Bible Study Group ...	Margaret Britten	01224.780305.	Email: margaret.britten@btinternet.com
• Church Caretaker, Hall Bookings & Coffee Mornings	Mrs. Anne Massie	01224.732071	Email: marycultertrinitychurch@btinternet.com
• The Guild & Coffee Mornings	Helen Anderson	01330.811754	
• Youth Cafe	Dianne Brown	07801 542154	



St Ternan's Scottish Episcopal Church

Charities Number SC023264

St Ternan's Church is a member of the world wide Anglican Communion. Our worship is traditional.

Open daily for private prayer and contemplation. The church is located in the North Kincardine Rural Community Council area, to the west of the A92 at the Muchalls turn off, the road is signposted "Cookney". There is also a footpath that connects through from the Chapelton estate to the St Ternan's church road.

Need a meeting place for community groups and parties? We have a community room (for up to 20 people), toilets & kitchen connected to the church. There is disabled access and an induction loop for those with hearing impairment. In addition, if you need more space we have a large flexible space at the back of the church which has access to a screen and chairs and is an adaptable space that can be used for larger talks, meetings and youth groups. It has been used for first aid training, group presentations and can hold up to 50 people seated.

Contacts: Carol: 07751 677115 / Sheila: 01569 731608

Website: www.stternans.co.uk

ROAD WORKS - B979

Road Closure Section 3

*B979 – from Foresters Croft to Fishermyme
Will close from Monday, 13th April 2026 until
beginning of November (approximately)*

The road closure will start at the south end of this section at Foresters Croft and move northwards on a rolling basis. Access to and from side roads and individual properties within the road closure area will be maintained from one side or the other depending on the location in relation to the work. Our site team will liaise with those properties.

The road closure is required to ensure we are carrying out the work as safely as possible.

Please be aware that these road closures are part of a number of road closures along the

B979 as part of the whole project. Details of the current road closure and the future planned road closures can be found by visiting www.scottishwater.co.uk/sunnysidemegray . Updates will be posted on this webpage.



NORTH KINCARDINE COUNCILLORS

WARD 17 - NORTH KINCARDINE - Aberdeenshire Council Website



**David Aitchison,
SNP**

Tel: 07876 475227
email: cllr.d.aitchison@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



**Mel Sullivan,
Scottish Liberal Democrat**

Tel: 07787 819582
email: cllr.m.sullivan@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



**Shirley Burnett,
Scottish Conservative & Unionist**

Tel: 07787 817758
email: cllr.s.burnett@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



**Catherine Victor,
SNP**

Tel: 07787 800678
email: cllr.c.victor@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

News from Cllr Catherine Victor

I hope this finds you all well, having survived the ferocious winter weather we had earlier. I can imagine it was bad for those of you living in remote areas. We have become complacent over the years as our winters have not been particularly severe. When I was a child, we expected heavy snow at least once in the winter months, we were used to it, so prepared. We need to get back to that readiness as I am sure, according to future forecasts on the climate change, severe storms will be the norm in the coming years. Make sure that you have food stocks in and some backup to keep you warm should you need it, be prepared.

The sad news I have is the closure of Banchory Devenick primary school. The children are to be accommodated in other schools after the Easter holiday, with most choosing Lairhilloch. This was unavoidable, there was deterioration of the boiler flues that were beyond repair, plus boiler parts were not available to ensure it would keep working. Along with other maintenance problems, due to the age of the building, the cost of keeping the school open was spiralling. A meeting was held with parents and Officers/Staff from the council education department. They listened and did their best to accommodate the parents wishes. Transport to the childrens new school will be provided, where applicable.

It is always emotional when a rural school closes, especially one as old and with the history of Banchory Devenick. They are in many ways, the centre of the community. I wish all the children a bright future and look forward to seeing them settled in their preferred school. If anyone has any questions please email me and I will be happy to meet up or answer any questions that you have about the closure.

That's it for now, have a great summer, I hope the weather is kind to us. Please get in touch if I can be of assistance.

Notes From the Chair

The North Kincardine Rural Community Council (NKRCC) continues to be active in your area. All are most welcome. Details of meeting times are below. We look forward to seeing you!

Details of meetings /correspondence of interest are posted on the website or on Facebook. As a statutory body, we believe the Community Council serves a useful purpose in our area, it is well supported and has a strong voice for the local community

Understanding “Material Considerations” in Aberdeenshire Planning Decisions

All local planning applications are reviewed at our monthly meetings. When Aberdeenshire Council assesses a planning application, it must base its decision on relevant planning issues known as “material considerations.” These are factors that directly relate to how land is used and developed, and they play a crucial role in determining whether an application is approved or refused.

In simple terms, material considerations include anything that affects the public interest in the development of land. Decisions are guided primarily by the Local Development Plan and national planning policies, but material considerations can influence the outcome if they point toward a different conclusion.

Common examples include the design and appearance of a proposed development—such as its size, layout, and visual impact on the surrounding area—as well as its effect on residential amenity. Issues like overlooking, loss of daylight, noise, or

disturbance are all taken into account. Traffic and access are also key considerations, including road safety, parking, and the volume of traffic a development may generate.

Environmental factors carry significant weight. These include impacts on wildlife, trees, landscapes, and heritage assets such as listed buildings or conservation areas. Practical matters like drainage, flood risk, and infrastructure capacity are also important, alongside compliance with planning policy.

However, it is important to realise that some concerns—while understandable—are not considered “material” in planning terms. These include potential impacts on property value, loss of a private view, personal disputes, or objections based purely on dislike of a proposal. It is difficult to object to an application if these are the only grounds for objection.

For anyone submitting comments on a planning application, it’s essential to focus on material considerations. Representations that clearly relate to planning issues are far more likely to influence the final decision.

Understanding what counts - and what doesn’t - can make all the difference in engaging effectively with the planning process. And we are here to help!

In addition, you may wish to have a look at the Planning Aid Scotland website which can be very helpful which you can find at pas.org.uk where you can get free, impartial advice.

Henry Irvine-Fortescue – Chair

Details of meetings and correspondence of interest are posted on the website or the Facebook page. We also receive and publish monthly police reports and useful crime alerts that are posted on our website.

Meetings: 7:30pm at the Lairhillock School

Jan to JuneThe **third** Monday of the month
 JulyNo Meeting - **Summer Break**
 Sep/OctThe **third** Monday of the month
 DecemberThe **second** Monday of the month

Website:

www.nkrcc.org.uk

Facebook:

North Kincardine Rural Community Council – NKRCC

*The following names are the current committee members at the time of editing this newsletter.
 Please check the NKRCC website for up to date details of elected committee members.*

Chair	Henry Irvine-Fortescue
Vice Chair	Graham Norrie
Treasurer	Bob McKinney
Secretary	Graham Norrie
Minutes Secretary	Susan Astell
Planning Officer	Rod Farquhar

henry.irvine-fortescue@nkrcc.org.uk
graham.norrie@nkrcc.org.uk
bob.mckinney@nkrcc.org.uk
secretary@nkrcc.org.uk
susan.astell@nkrcc.org.uk
rod.farquhar@nkrcc.org.uk

MUCHALLS KAILYARD

Hello, we are Ella and Michael, the growers behind Muchalls Kailyard, a small market garden at Lorient in Bridge of Muchalls.

We've moved here to begin an exciting new chapter growing fresh, seasonal vegetables for our local community. We grow a wide variety of delicious, nutritious produce using ecological methods that care for the soil, biodiversity and the wider environment. Most of our vegetables are harvested on the day of collection when they are freshest and most flavourful.



Our main offering is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) vegetable share. Members receive a weekly share of freshly harvested vegetables throughout the growing season, from May to December. This approach supports local ecological food growing while helping people reconnect with the land and the pleasures of eating with the seasons.

We offer flexible weekly vegetable boxes in two sizes and will host seasonal events to invite the local community onto the farm. We will also sell seasonal ecological cut flowers, with options for value flower shares (weekly buckets of mixed flowers to self-arrange) as well as farm-grown bouquets for gifts and special occasions.

We feel incredibly lucky to be continuing the legacy of the land's previous growers, Paul and Freya Van Midden of Lembas Organics, who cared for this site for over 30 years. To follow the journey or learn more, find us on Facebook and Instagram at Muchalls Kailyard, and at www.muchallskailyard.co.uk.

We look forward to meeting many of you in the coming months.

www.muchallskailyard.co.uk

Ella & Michael

NATURE NOTES

Green Aliens and pink gin!

Last summer whilst driving over Milltimber Bridge, I noticed a huge towering plant growing on the south bank of the Dee, next to Corbie Hall football pitch. I had never seen it there before but recognised it as giant hogweed, the statuesque yet invasive species originally from Asia. I phoned a friend who knows about these things who kindly removed it the very next day, hopefully before its seeds had fallen on to the bank or floated downstream.

We have a few non-native and invasive species within the South Deeside area. These have been introduced by people, either deliberately or accidentally, to areas outside their natural ranges. They reproduce rapidly and can cause significant ecological, economic and/or health issues by outcompeting native wildlife and ecosystems. Our local River Dee Trust focuses on controlling five of these - four plant species: giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed, skunk cabbage and Himalayan balsam and also the American mink.

All of these plants were brought to the UK in the early nineteenth century from their native ranges as decorative garden plants. Being fast growers it did not take long for them to escape into the wild, often outcompeting native species to form large dense patches. In this area, this has led to not only riverbank erosion, when the plants die back in autumn, but to a more general loss of biodiversity. Insects sometimes also favour these species over our native ones.

Giant hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*, is related to cow parsley, carrots and coriander. As its name suggests it is often huge, with five metre tall stems and leaves a metre in diameter. Found in thankfully small numbers from Banchory downstream to Culter and on to Duthie Park, it reproduces only once - normally after three years, producing up to 50,000 seeds that can survive for more than 10 years in the soil. I will be interested to see if any plants grow again this year at Milltimber Bridge.



It is however most notoriously known as being phototoxic. Its sap contains photosensitizing chemicals that cause severe burns on human or animal skin when exposed to sunlight. To identify it look at the stems - these are green and covered in distinct purple-red spots and blotches, that looks like dark bruising. Other hogweeds do not have such obvious red markings. If in doubt, do not touch!



A more common species in this area is Japanese knotweed, *Reynoutria japonica*, with several patches growing along the Netherley and South Deeside roads. Introduced as an architectural plant, Japanese knotweed has heart-shaped leaves on zig-zag stems and grows to three metres tall. Its roots form large rhizomal systems that were previously planted to protect landscapes and buildings from subsidence. It has since been found that the roots grow to three metres depth and seven metres laterally, making removal very difficult indeed. They can also cause damage to hard surfaces, expanding through cracks and even house foundations so much so that it is now a legal requirement to remove it from construction sites. Mortgage lenders can also require proof of eradication as a condition of loan agreements.

The most unusual non-native species we have locally is American skunk cabbage, *Lysichiton americanus*, which I have seen growing in Durris and at Templars. Its leaves are similar to hostas but in spring it bears large yellow arum lily-like flowers, that look really quite alien. Native to north America, it is typically found in ponds, burns and wet woodlands and when in flower gives off a powerful smell of rotting meat to attract pollinating flies.



Himalayan balsam, *Impatiens grandiflora*, is however our most common and problematic invasive non-native species. Since its introduction from Kashmir in 1839 as an ornamental plant to Kew Botanic Gardens it has spread throughout the UK, thanks to its ingenious seed dispersal mechanism. On being touched, each of the five sections of the seed pod spring open catapulting its 16 seeds up to seven metres away. Whilst its pink trumpet flowers do look pretty and it has a lovely sweet scent, the species has inundated miles of stretches of the Dee and other areas locally, resulting in biodiversity loss as it outcompetes local flora. Bees also prefer its high nectar-filled flowers over native species.

Control involves strategic planning so that areas upstream are dealt with, particularly in the spring before flowers form and also so that each plant is either uprooted or cut below its first leaf node to prevent regrowth. Not an easy job. We can however all do our bit to curb the spread of Himalayan balsam. It is a fun and boozy one – use its flowers to make a magical gin!



When the flowers are in full bloom, usually in late July, collect a one litre tub of flowers. Add these to half a litre of gin along with the zest of 2 limes. Strain after 24 hours, adding a dessertspoonful of caster sugar. This should give you a pale amber coloured gin with a light floral smell and taste that combines well with the lime.

And the magic? Adding tonic should turn your drink a stunning, vibrant pink. I am unsure of the chemistry but urge you to give it a go – all in the name of nature conservation of course!



Please note – as it is classified as an invasive non-native species it is against the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to plant or cause Himalayan balsam to grow in the wild. It is therefore safe to pick the flowers but is illegal to collect its seed or any other part of the plant that could cause future growth.

The River Dee Trust is a partner of the Scottish Invasive Species Initiative and responsible locally for controlling all of these species. They run a volunteer programme if you are interested in getting involved to do your bit. Their Invasive Species Officer, Jan Simpson, would love to hear from you, E: jan@riverdee.org.

Whilst they know of many local areas where these species grow, they are always interested to hear of further sightings. Please log these at <https://invasivespecies.scot/report/>.

Sláinte!

Mandy Tulloch

Solstice Nurseries “We Grow People and Plants”

A Scottish Social Enterprise

Growing People

At Solstice people who have severe, ongoing mental health issues are supported to grow their confidence and skills while working and learning in a supportive, non-threatening environment.

Everyone learns useful general work skills, such as routine, good communication, working with others, awareness of safe work practice as well as specific horticultural skills.

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Referrals to Participate at Solstice are generally through Social Work or Health Teams.



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We supply Garden Designers, Landscapers and local community groups with the plants they require.

Advice can be given on which plants grow well in this area and which plants will suit your garden and which plants grow well together.

If it is something more unusual you are looking for we can source it for you and help you put together a stunning display for your garden.

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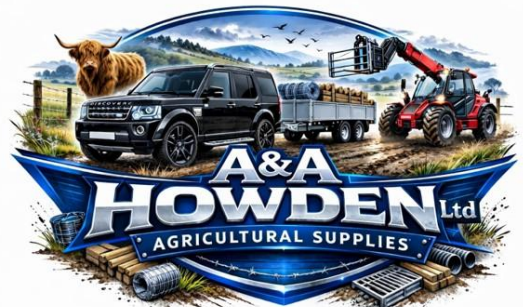
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Got a 2 to 5 year old who loves being outdoors?!

Mud Pies runs weekly nature classes for nursery-aged children to discover nature and explore outdoors!

Sessions running throughout this spring on **Monday** mornings and afternoons and also during the summer holidays, all at Hazlehead Park in Aberdeen.

We find out about nature, play in the wilds and have snack outdoors. It's a great way to support your child's development, spend quality time in the great outdoors and meet like-minded families.

Book at www.mudpieadventures.co.uk

or call Mandy Tulloch on 07929 465680 for more details.



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WEBSITE FIXES

Helping local businesses across the North East of Scotland get more enquiries from their existing websites.

After several years working in web design and development, I've seen what works and what doesn't.

Focusing on making sure that websites are clear, effective, and customer friendly, especially on mobiles.

Maryculter based.

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BREAKFAST, LUNCH,
AFTERNOON TEA AND
DINNER



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The Cults Hotel



LOCAL PRODUCE

AT The Cults Hotel

We're all about great Scottish dishes that everyone can enjoy. We find every opportunity to use fresh local ingredients, to really show off what the North East of Scotland has to offer and make every bite extra special.



CELEBRATE

AT The Cults Hotel

We are just a short drive from the city centre, a perfect location to host all manner of events. We can offer two function spaces, perfect for weddings, birthdays, as well as corporate events!



BREAKFAST

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and open for Non Residents*




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THE ALBYN
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EST 2021



CAROL

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Express Facial with Back, Neck & Shoulder Massage - 60mins, £50

A relaxing back massage to ease away tension followed by a lovely facial which includes a double cleanse, exfoliation, mask, scalp massage and moisturiser all tailored to your skin type.

Relaxing Facial - 60mins, £50

A relaxing facial which includes a double cleanse, exfoliation, facial massage, mask, scalp and hand massage & moisturiser all tailored to your skin type.

Swedish Massage - Full Body 60mins, £60

Restores balance and eases tension in the soft tissue and muscles.

Aromatherapy Massage - Full Body 90mins, £80

A very relaxing massage using essential oils blended specifically for you.

Back, Neck & Shoulder Massage - 30mins, £30

A relaxing stand-alone treatment or can be an add-on treatment.

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Using warm basalt stones to completely relax any tension away.

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EVENTS

Muchalls Kailyard OPEN WEEKEND

**Sunday, 3rd May &
Monday, 4th May**

10am–3pm

We're a small, ecological market garden just outside Stonehaven, growing fresh, seasonal vegetables and cut flowers for our local community. Our open weekend is a chance to visit the farm, meet the growers, and learn more about our vegetable and flower offerings. Experience what being part of a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) scheme is all about.

What to expect:

- Guided wander around the growing beds
- Tasters of early spring crops
- See samples of our weekly veg boxes
- Find out how membership works
- Plant & seed sale (including free wildlife-friendly seeds)
- Tea, coffee & homemade cakes available



Address

Lorieneen,
Bridge of Muchalls,
AB39 3RU
(10 minutes from
Stonehaven)

Find out more at:

www.muchallskailyard.co.uk

Follow us

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Find us

on Google Maps
"Muchalls Kailyard"

WE HOPE TO MEET YOU THERE!

USEFUL INFORMATION

Local Halls & Grounds

Contact details are located in the relevant article:

- **Cookney Community Hall, Cookney**
- **Corbie Hall and Field, Maryculter**
- **Lairhillock School, Netherley**
- **Maryculter Trinity Church Hall & Glebe Field**
- **St Ternan's Church Community Room, Muchalls**

DIAL A BUS

01467 535333

Home Deliveries

Coal & Wood: J.H. Roberts of Auchenblae
Tel 01561 320335 / www.johnhroberts.co.uk

Fish: George Fairweather Tel: 07974 311326

Facebook Groups & Pages

If you know of other local groups of interest then please let us know so that they can be included in the next newsletter.

- **Friends of Cookney Hall**
- **North Kincardine Community – Cookney, Netherley, Maryculter etc.**
- **North Kincardine Rural Community Council - NKRCC**
- **Peterculter & Surrounding Areas Community**
- **Portlethen, Hillside, Newtonhill and Nrth Kincardineshire Community**

Blairs has a community WhatsApp group.
Please contact Lynn Winton for details of how to join -
Lynn.winton@talk21.com

Find us on Facebook:

The South Deeside View (SDV)

EMAIL:

editor.sdvnewsletter@gmail.com

**Previous issues are on the
NKRCC website**

This issue was produced by:

Bob McKinney, Carolyn Morrison, Emma Lester-Smith, Rob Winmill and NKRCC representatives. Rob Winmill also coordinates an additional volunteer team of local residents and community councillors for hand delivering this newsletter to over 1000 homes.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editors.

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy of content however, responsibility cannot be taken for errors or omissions.