

# STRATHERRICK & FOYERS NEWS

May 2025 Issue Number: 55



DAFFODIL TEA  
SUCCESS!

GRANT  
SUPPORT  
FOR BCC



THE HIGHLAND  
GATHERING IS  
BACK!

and... Introducing our new  
Chair!

*Photo by Helen Grainger*

The deadline for content for the Summer  
newsletter is **Friday 13th June 2025**.

Please email [strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk)  
with your articles including your name and  
a picture!




# WILDSIDE WEDNESDAY

## LOCAL PRODUCERS

YOUR OPPORTUNITY TO SHOP LOCAL

From 11.30am



## OUR NEXT EVENT IS THE 4<sup>TH</sup> JUNE

9.30am

### JOIN US ON 3<sup>RD</sup> SEPT AFTER THE SUMMER BREAK

Relax and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea and some cake!

## COME CHAT TO THE TEAM

STAFF WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS





## MOBILE LIBRARY!

**THE MOBILE LIBRARY WILL BE IN THE AREA ON THE FOLLOWING DATES:**

<p><b><u>The Wildside Centre Car Park</u></b></p> <p><b>11:00 – 11:30</b></p>	<p><b><u>Erroglie – Yellow Brick Road</u></b></p> <p><b>10:15 – 10:35</b></p>
	<p><b><u>Gorthleck - Village Hall Car Park</u></b></p> <p><b>10:45 – 11:15</b></p>
	<p><b><u>Foyers – The Hub Car Park</u></b></p> <p><b>11:30 – 12:00</b></p>
<p><b>May 28<sup>th</sup> - Jun 25<sup>th</sup> - Jul 23<sup>rd</sup> - Aug 20<sup>th</sup></b></p>	<p><b>May 20<sup>th</sup> – Jun 17<sup>th</sup> – Jul 15<sup>th</sup> – Aug 12<sup>th</sup></b></p>

**PLEASE CONTACT THE DRIVER FOR FURTHER INFORMATION.  
EXISITING MEMBERSHIP NOT REQUIRED.**

Driver: mark.laurie@highlifehighland.com - Tel: 01349 869869

## MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS

This newsletter is made possible by community benefit funding from SSE Renewables, Greencoat and Green Highland Allt Luaidhe (228) Limited.



Welcome to the Spring edition of the Stratherrick & Foyers News! In this issue you will find community news, stories and events, as well as updates from the Board on projects and grants awarded. If you have any photographs, recipes, stories or news that you would like to share with the community, please send them through to [strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk).

We are working hard to ensure that all members of the community are able to access copies of both our newsletter and our bi-annual magazine, which we are now sending out to every household that we have addresses for in the community! If you do not want a paper copy of the magazine or newsletter and would like to receive it electronically then please contact Kirsteen, our Administrator, at [admin@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@sfctrust.org.uk).

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The Stratherrick & Foyers Magazine is published twice a year – online and on paper. Any opinions expressed are not the views of the Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust and any businesses mentioned are not endorsed by the Trust.





## INTRODUCING THE TRUST'S NEW CHAIR

For those who don't know me, I'm Peter and have made Stratherrick and Foyers my home for the past fourteen years. I took an interest in local activity and development when I learned what a marvellous opportunity this Community had with the receipt of Community Benefits from renewable energy suppliers. Previous experience in local government had taught me what can be achieved if a community pulls together for its common benefit. I live in Whitebridge with my partner and two dogs, am an enthusiastic amateur cook and gardener, as well as being a keen follower of sports (particularly rugby). Since moving here, I have retired but spent my working life as a commercial property surveyor, working in the private, corporate, public and third sectors, both south and north of "The Border".

Again, this has proven useful and in previous stints as an SFCT Director, I was involved in the acquisition of The Wildside Centre and adjacent land, the BCC units and land, the Foyers Bay area, the Riverside Field and the Errogie Church building. More recently I have assisted in the completion of the two new houses in Inverfarigaig and am currently involved in the potential acquisition of the Inverfarigaig Forest School, and the possible use of the currently "moth-balled" Foyers School for our local Heritage Group. Perhaps I'm a little obsessed with property?

I hope that I can help to build a legacy of projects that this Community can enjoy, sustainably, for many years to come. This can only happen with active, enthusiastic endeavour from all the Community. The Trust is merely a vehicle, steered by a volunteer Board of Directors, many of whom still have full-time work commitments, and a very small number of extremely dedicated staff, all of whom do their utmost and offer their knowledge, experience and skills to all of us. We should support these people in whatever way we can.

I dislike Social Media intensely, as I feel it has lost its way and too often is used as a tool to denigrate good

folks who are doing their best. I fully accept that those "good folks" don't always get it right, or perhaps do things others may disagree with. If that is the case, then surely it is better to openly talk with them, establish the real facts and then try and find a solution. We can't all know everything or always get things exactly to suit everyone. I know that - and would be very grateful for all the assistance, support and advice on offer. So why not give it a try – come and meet us, talk through your ideas and then help us to implement them.

So, right now we have problems to solve and challenges to face. However, we have a group of people who have "stepped up to the plate" and will do their best. Fortunately, we have a small, able, willing and dedicated group of staff under very capable new leadership and management. There are many decisions to take and directions to choose. Now's your chance to join in and show your support – and have a say in how your Community Benefit funds are distributed. Please don't waste that chance.

With my very best regards,

Peter Faye  
Chair, Stratherrick &  
Foyers Community Trust



## CEO'S REPORT

Since my arrival at the start of the year, I have enjoyed getting to know the community and the countryside and I am really grateful for the welcome the community has shown me. I made it a priority to meet people by attending events and formal meetings as well as making myself available in the Wildside Centre for 3 days a week and I am happy to visit community members personally (especially if coffee and cake are involved).

I quickly recognised the many challenges I inherited and have come to appreciate the community's frustration with the Trust with issues around communication and the perceived distance between the Trust and the Community. I see my role as changing this perspective and I believe I have the skill and experience to do this.

I am realistic enough to understand that this will take

time and effort but I believe we have made a good start. To improve our communication with the community, we have increased our social media presence by adding Instagram and are currently engaged with bringing our website up to date. In addition, we have installed suggestion boxes on the 6 SFCT Information Boards and we encourage you to put forward your ideas and feedback. We produce weekly progress reports for the Errogie Church project and published a report to show how the Trust has distributed the Small Grants Scheme awards over the last 5 years.

We have recently upgraded the toilet facilities at the Wildside Centre, funded in part by the Highland Council, and reinstated the Wildside Wednesday event, and I thank the local producers for attending and for their delicious products. We are really trying to encourage community use of the Wildside Centre and have some ideas to be announced shortly.

The Trust is made up of the Board and the operational staff and I applaud all the work done and commitment they showed in responding to the community, even outwith their normal hours, when the CEO position was

vacant. I have worked to improve the HR policies to ensure the staff have consistent and compliant contracts. For the Board members, I organised an induction workshop and a Development Day, both facilitated by Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), to enhance their understanding of their role in the governance of the Trust and develop our annual action plan and budgets based on our Community Action Plan. In addition, we are revisiting some of the governance and project policies to try to avoid some of the issues we have encountered previously.

I know I cannot change the past, nobody can, but I am determined to learn from it and with your help and support address the challenges raised. I look forward in anticipation of what we, together, can achieve.

I will continue to be a visible presence in the community and look forward to meeting more of you at the Highland Gathering in July.

Thank you again for your warm welcome,

Jewels Lang  
CEO, Stratherrick & Foyers  
Community Trust

# Explore our local area

## WALK THE WALK



*Using the camera on your smart device, scan this code to view a selection of local walks.*

*<https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/walk-the-walks/>*

# IN MEMORIAM



## BETTE DOUGLAS-JONES INVERFARIGAIG

Bette was born Ruth Elizabeth Twamley, in November 1934, in Wenvoe South Wales, the fifth child of Richard and Ruby Twamley.

The family stayed in Wenvoe, just north of Barry, which was very rural in those days – the house is still there; and Bette had many vivid memories of her childhood, including the wartime years:

- Memories of those harsh ‘thirties’ years – she walked to school with holes in her shoes, and with oil lamps at home rather than electricity.
- Memories of collecting ‘the accumulator’ for the radio – the battery!
- Memories of cycling everywhere as a girl, including into Cardiff, and

to Barry Island – Bette would later make fresh memories, taking her grandchildren.

- Memories of Barry Docks being bombed during the war and having herself to dodge enemy fighters a couple of times, once hiding under a hedge, and another time under a viaduct.
- One memory of a German plane crash-landing in a neighbouring field - and of the villagers ‘arresting’ the pilot until the authorities arrived.

Bette was married to Brian, a civil engineer, and his work took the family all over the world, always returning to Inverness. In the late sixties Brian worked for Nuttel’s, who built Foyers power station, so Bette knew this area very well before moving here.

In 1970, Bette was left to pack up the house and three small children and drove the family down to south Wales in her Hillman Imp. She, Andrew, Fiona and Helen then flew to Nairobi, and spend two years in Mombasa, in Kenya. In 1972 she and the family returned to the UK, sailing home on a Polish cargo boat.

Bette was to repeat packing up homes many times over the years. She lived in Malaysia, Brunei, and Singapore – but always returning home to Inverness.

Bette was the housekeeper at Flichity House, for the Beirmans. She continued to work for Hugo Bierman at Milton of Ness-side until she retired.

Bette was a grandmother to Hannah, Calum, Aileen and Emily and loved this role.

Bette moved out to Inverfarigaig in 1999 and lived with Helen and Nik.

She always loved the view over Loch Ness from the conservatory – and watching the boats on the Loch.

After retiring, Bette loved going to the lunch club and Soup to Go on a Monday collecting the ‘old folk’ because she never regarded herself as being old – many of them were younger than her. She continued to drive her Micra!

Bette didn’t need to pay for AA or RAC breakdown cover – she relied on flagging someone down if needed and did so on many occasions. Helen often got phone calls from locals and random strangers to say that they were with her mum and that there was some ailment with the car! Bette kept her licence until her late eighties, giving up only eighteen months ago. She also enjoyed gardening and going to the Scottish flower shows in Edinburgh, and Helen took her to The Chelsea Flower show, where



she sat and drank Champagne and marvelled at the show gardens. She always had a particular liking for orchids – going back to her time in Singapore. Indoors, Bette loved to read a novel (and was a regular user of the mobile library) or the newspaper, along with a G&T after a hard day in the garden. And at Christmas, the annual carol service at Croachy Church was always a highlight.

Bette was absolutely thrilled to become a Great Grannie, and although she struggled with failing health, she was determined to see this little boy born and enjoyed 18 months of her “wee man Corran” as she affectionately called him.

About this time last year, Bette moved to the Isobel Fraser care home, where she passed peacefully away on the 5th December 2024. She was much loved by many, and I think she would have been amazed at how many folks came along to her service.

I am sitting at her desk to write this after working in the garden, the sun has been shining, the greenhouse is full, I've had a G&T and as my mum would say “it's been a perfect day”.

Helen Grainger,  
Inverfarigaig



## REMEMBERING MARGARET

Family, friends and former pupils have been fondly remembering one of Stratherrick's longest serving teachers. Margaret Thirde (nee Fraser) passed away in February aged 95. One of eight children, Margaret's childhood was spent on the family farm at Oldtown and later Migovie. She attended Errogie Primary School (where she would later return as a teacher), and then Inverness Royal Academy. After completing her teacher training at college in Edinburgh, Margaret returned north to a post at Ardersier. It was there she met her husband Alex, an airman at the nearby Dalcross RAF base. He often related how he first spotted his bride to be as she taught her class outdoors in the school garden. They later got chatting on the bus back to Inverness. A long and happy marriage lasting over sixty years soon followed. Married life for Alex and Margaret began in 1954 in

Inverness, but before long Margaret was back in the classroom at Errogie. She also taught for a spell at Boleskine and was then appointed headmistress at the new Stratherrick School.

She became both “Auntie” and “Miss” to numerous nephews and nieces, while her younger daughter Julia had to adapt to having “Mam” at home and in class. Neither were scarred by the experience.

The family then relocated to Inverness, where Margaret accepted a new teaching opportunity at Drakies School. Following her retirement, she and Alex again moved back to Stratherrick, and a cottage in Gorthleck that had been in the Fraser family for generations.

Latterly both Margaret and Alex had been living in Rogart to be close to their elder daughter Rosemary. Margaret was finally laid to rest alongside her late husband Alex at the picturesque, tree lined Foyers Cemetery. At her funeral service, her nephew Willie Fraser, who still resides in Gorthleck, remarked that he could imagine Auntie Margaret brushing snow from the graveyard footpaths. His abiding memory is the meticulous care she took to maintain her Gorthleck home and garden.

Margaret is survived by her two daughters, four devoted grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.





ALISTAIR (ALI) FERGUSON

Alistair (Ali) Ferguson passed away at his home in Cranshaws, Duns, Berwickshire, on 17th December 2024, aged 86 years.

Much loved husband to Maureen and father to Beth, Alison, Dougie, Keith and the late Andrew.

Alistair spent his formative years at Knockcarrock, Whitebridge, where his father Neil was employed as a shepherd to Colonel Grant, Knockie.

Alistair attended Whitebridge school and went to Foyers for his secondary education.

On leaving school Alistair followed in his father's footsteps and became a

shepherd, working locally at Knockie, Dell and Knocknagael.

After National service, Alistair worked for many years at Taynuilt, Argyllshire, before moving to Berwickshire in the Borders.

Alistair was a highly experienced shepherd, which led to him serving on numerous occasions as a Judge of Black Faced Sheep in agricultural shows all over Scotland.

We have lost a number of community members over the last few months. If you would like to share your memories of them in the next magazine, please email [strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:strathnews@sfctrust.org.uk).

We are also keen to celebrate other family milestones, including births and marriages. If you would like yours to feature, please email us on the above address.

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

### MEDICAL & EMERGENCY

FOYERS MEDICAL CENTRE: 01456 486224

Website: [www.foyersmedicalcentre.co.uk](http://www.foyersmedicalcentre.co.uk)

NHS 24: Phone 111

POLICE - Non-Emergency or to report a crime:  
Phone 101

MEDICAL, POLICE, FIRE, LOCH OR  
ANOTHER EMERGENCY:  
Phone 999

FOYERS FIRE STATION (Non-Emergency):  
01463 24099

POWER OUTAGE SSE Power Cut Helpline:  
Phone 105

### POTHoles & FLOODING

To report a fault including potholes or flooding  
telephone either:

Tel: 01349 886601  
(Office Hours Mon-Fri)

Tel: 01349 886690  
(Evening & Weekends)

# INVERFARIGAIG RESIDENTS GROUP

As the flowers begin to bloom and the days grow longer, we are excited to bring you the latest updates about what's happening down in Inverfarigaig. We held a meeting at the end of March, and lots of topics were discussed.

The field management discussion focused on the various jobs that require attention. Residents shared their insights on the tasks that need prioritised to ensure the field remains a valuable community asset. A significant part of the conversation revolved around the management of bracken and aspen trees. Strategies were proposed to control and maintain these plants for a healthier ecosystem. The meeting also addressed Polycrub management techniques for optimised growing. Residents exchanged ideas and best practices. A solar powered watering system has been installed in the Polycrub, and it is hoped that if our grant application is successful, we can extend this system and have a timed watering system in place "hopefully" for those hot days of

summer! We have also planted more fruit trees in our community orchard. The allotment area across in the field opposite Hillhead houses is really taking shape. Residents have worked hard on soil improvement, and we have our fingers crossed for a fruitful growing season.

As mentioned, we are applying to SFCT for a grant. There was a detailed discussion on the grant application aimed at securing funds for fencing, compost, and outside seating. The group outlined the benefits of these improvements, and the steps involved in the application process.

The progression of the project at the bottom of the corkscrew road was another crucial agenda item. Plans were made to advance the project, including collaborative efforts and to set up a Steering group.

And finally, Residents were invited to view the new houses at Dodds Park. This invitation offers a chance for residents to see the latest developments in our area and we look forward to meeting our new neighbours.

Helen Grainger,  
Inverfarigaig Residents Group





These purchases have only been made possible with the thanks to our successful grant application to Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust. We are very grateful for every penny and it really does help our group grow from strength to strength!

So, what's to come?

- Our Summer BBQ will take place on the 3rd of August
- We are in the process of organising activity days throughout the summer, where the older siblings are encouraged to come along and join in the fun!
- Our most exciting plan is with thanks to the Community Council and a successful micro grant for a new outdoor playhouse, which will be tucked in the Wildside woods along with our mud kitchen. Hopefully it will have arrived by the time you are reading this!

## WILDSIDE BABY & TODDLER GROUP

The Wildside Baby & Toddler Group have been busy over the last 6 months with lots of fun, laughter and cake! We meet every Thursday morning at the Wildside Centre from 9:30am - 11:30am, even through the school holidays! All parents, grandparents and care givers are welcome to come along with their pre-school children, we would love to see new faces!

So, what's been happening?

- Bookbug sessions
- Purchased gardening equipment for the community Polycrub
- Festive get-togethers
- Easter Activities
- Purchased an amazing new Mud Kitchen and accessories (the link to where we purchased this mud kitchen is here - [www.madebyhandscotland.co.uk](http://www.madebyhandscotland.co.uk) as many people have asked where we got it from!)

The kids will have so much fun, and it will hopefully be a great addition alongside the new park.

Every week we get together we make new plans so who knows what else will be happening by our next update! We hope to see some of you come along on a Thursday morning. You can be added to our Facebook Group by simply searching 'Wildside Baby & Toddler Group' if you would like more information and we will be in touch.

Thanks, and here's to a fab Summer!  
Wildside Baby & Toddler Group





## STRATHERRICK CLAY TARGET CLUB

The club has been at Torness since 1985; although it was established in the 1890's and believed to be the oldest clay target club in Scotland - but it was originally a glass ball with feathers in it which was shot at, not clays!

Taking us to current times, we have over 50 members - many of whom attend our regular summer practice sessions and on an open shoot day we can have over 60 attendees entering the competition. It's a very busy day for the team but also a great day.

In the past few years, we have benefited greatly from grants received from Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust. Our most

recent grant, along with a Micro-grant from the community council, has purchased a defibrillator and cabinet for outside the clubhouse. This could prove to be very valuable on any particular day and can also be used by anyone in the area needing assistance.

We also received funding from the Great Glen Energy Fund, with help from the Community Trust Fundraiser, for an underground water tank. We can now harvest the rainwater as we don't have running water at the club and the new toilets, also purchased with a grant from the Trust, will be supplied by this tank.

Our practice nights start on Thursday 15th May at 6.30pm. The following week will be the Wednesday evening then back to Thursday and so on. We will also be holding some 'taster'



sessions for anyone interested in having a go, watch out for dates to be advertised. We now have 3 shotguns for anyone new to have the use of and are hoping for juniors and ladies, in particular, to come along.

If you are interested, please email [stratherrickclaytargetclub@outlook.com](mailto:stratherrickclaytargetclub@outlook.com) or watch for the information to be advertised in the local community Facebook pages.



# STRATHERRICK PUBLIC HALL

Stratherrick Public Hall held its AGM on Thursday 25th March, when we slightly amended our constitution. The amendments were to include the Chairperson or suitable member of the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Council on to the list of Trustees.

We also added the settlement of Killin into the list of areas, and a couple of other minor amendments were made, and duly passed.

We now have a Facebook page, which we are starting to get upcoming events published on, and we are in the process of setting up a website. This will enable everybody to see what is happening, and also allow you to make a booking online. When the website is up and running, we will also list

the committee members and any relevant contact numbers, along with meeting minutes and the current constitution.

Our Badminton court has now been sorted out with new tape laid and nets available. It's looking good, so anybody wishing to start up a badminton evening please contact us.

We are all pleased to say that the Hall is being used a lot more now; it is almost back to pre-Covid levels. There is weekly Bowling, Pilates and Dancing, with Tai Chi every month, and also the return of the Youth Club, music events and private parties. We have even had an enquiry about a wedding for next year.

The Daffodil Tea in March, run by the ladies from Soup to Go, was a great success, with lots of yummy cakes and sandwiches. Funds raised at this fabulous event went

towards the Marie Curie Appeal.

The Luvvies theatre group will be bringing us another spectacular show in the future, and the Hall is still being used as a Polling Station as and when needed.

The Community Council now meet here every three months, alternating with Wildside and BCC's Hub in Foyers, don't forget that all these council meetings are open to the public.

At this stage I would like to thank the Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust for the support that the Hall has received in the past and hope that it will continue into the future.

Janet Hobson,  
Chair. Stratherrick Hall  
Committee  
Tel: 07771 800572



## BOWLING FOR ALL

BOWLING FOR ALL is blossoming at Stratherrick Public Hall in Gorthleck. We meet every Tuesday afternoon at 2pm until 4.30pm, with a break for a cup of tea or coffee along with biscuits and the occasional cake. There are up to twenty people who come along each week, of all age ranges.

Everybody is welcome to come along, you can have a bowl if you would like to try it or just pop in for a cuppa and a blether and watch the games being played. We are a very friendly bunch of people.

The two mats that we use are the ones that were played on years ago, but the bowling lapsed some 15 or twenty years back, and were rolled up and kept in the boxes that were originally made for that purpose when the Hall had a Millenium grant back in early 2000's.

When we came to unroll the mats back in October 2022, we really were not sure what sort of condition we would find them in. Would they have been eaten by mice; would they be suitable to play on again? So, we were delighted when we eventually plucked up the courage to roll them out only to find all was well and just needed a good vacuuming.

So, pop along and see what we get up to, we will be pleased to see you.

## WILD CRAFTS

Wild Crafts is an umbrella group under which sit 4 crafting groups; Needles & Pins, Spin & Chatter, Knitting & Crochet and Wild Crafts Workshops. Some of these groups have been running since 2018 and continued meeting over Zoom during the years of Covid lockdown.

Many items have been made and crafted over the years, some of which have sold on the craft tables at Winter Wonderland and the Highland Gathering. The proceeds from these sales were part of our annual charity fundraising, which benefited local charities. We do not charge for any of our meetings, but we do have a donations jar for tea & coffee.



NEEDLES & PINS	<p>This group meets fortnightly on Monday afternoons at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge. Meetings run from 12:30-4:00pm but members can come and go as they wish. Beginners and all levels of experience are welcome.</p> <p>Members usually work on their own sewing or mending projects but occasionally we do have group projects. The Knitting &amp; Crochet group joins us at these meetings.</p>	<p><b>2025 MEETING DATES</b></p> <p>MAY 5th 19th</p> <p>JUN 2nd 16th</p> <p><i>fortnightly thereafter</i></p>
SPIN & CHATTER	<p>This group meets fortnightly on Monday afternoons at the Wildside Centre, Whitebridge. Meetings run from 12:30-4:00pm but members can come and go as they wish. Beginners and all levels of experience are welcome.</p> <p>Members usually work on their own spinning projects but occasionally we do have a group project, like spinning wool to make poppies for the War Memorial. The Knitting &amp; Crochet group joins us at these meetings.</p>	<p><b>2025 MEETING DATES</b></p> <p>MAY 12th 26th</p> <p>JUN 9th 23rd</p> <p><i>fortnightly thereafter</i></p>
KNITTING & CROCHET	<p>Knitting &amp; Crochet meets weekly on Monday afternoons at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge. Meetings run from 12:30-4:00pm but members can come and go as they wish. Beginners and all levels of experience are welcome.</p> <p>Members bring their own knitting or crochet projects. Group projects included making poppies from brooches and to decorate the War Memorial.</p>	<p><b>2025 MEETING DATES</b></p> <p>MONDAYS WEEKLY</p>
WILD CRAFT WORKSHOPS	<p>The crafting workshops are held on a quarterly basis. The group meets at the Wildside Centre in Whitebridge.</p> <p>Meetings are held on Saturdays from 10:30am-3:40pm but members come when they like, for as long as they wish. The group is open to all, from aged 5 years and above, however children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.</p> <p>Over the years the workshops have covered a variety of crafts including paint pouring, felting, willow weaving, dry clay sculpting, soap making, candle making, paper crafts, macramé, Christmas decorations and wreaths to name but a few. Again there is no charge for the meeting but you will be asked to bring your own craft materials. There is also a tea &amp; coffee donation jar. Members also bring a packed lunch with them.</p>	<p><b>2025 MEETING DATES</b></p> <p>JUN 21st SEPT 20th</p> <p>DEC TBC</p> <p><i>The crafts we will be doing at the workshop on 21st June are Encaustic Art &amp; Quilling.</i></p>

# PUMPED HYDRO STORAGE, ANCIENT WOODLANDS, AND THE FUTURE OF LOCH NESS

The Scottish Highlands are no stranger to energy infrastructure. But the scale and concentration of pumped storage proposals around Loch Ness is raising a powerful question: how much can one place take?

With one scheme already operating at Foyers, a second (Red John) approved, and the proposed Glen Earrach coming on the radar plus Loch Kemp scheme now under review, communities along Loch Ness are bracing for the cumulative impact of these developments — not just on infrastructure, but on the natural environment and way of life that define the region.

## **Pumped Storage and the Loch Kemp Scheme?**

Statera Energy's proposal involves turning Loch Kemp into an upper reservoir and using Loch Ness as the lower one. The size of the dam to be built absorbs other small lochs and covers a very large area. Through a tunnel, water would be pumped uphill when electricity is abundant and cheap, then released downhill through turbines to generate power during peak demand. This system doesn't generate energy — it stores it. That distinction matters.

While framed as a “green” project, pumped hydro is not a renewable energy source in itself. It's a grid-balancing technology. The

electricity used to pump the water uphill could come from any source — wind, gas, or nuclear. Its climate credentials depend entirely on how it's operated.

We cannot expect any community benefit income from this scheme as it is not a “renewable scheme” and therefore no requirement to compensate the community for the huge impact this will have, no matter which way you square it.

## **Nature vs. “Renewables”: A False Binary?**

This is not a fight against renewables. This is a fight for balance, scale and honesty in how we transition to clean energy.

When developers cut down ancient forest to build green infrastructure, something's gone wrong. When salmon runs are threatened to store wind energy, we're swapping one crisis for another. When entire communities are sidelined in the name of sustainability, it's not progress — it's short-sighted planning.

Scotland needs energy storage. But stacking three major schemes around one loch, impacting a globally significant freshwater body and some of the UK's most irreplaceable ecosystems, is not sustainable.

This is not nimbyism. This is stewardship.

The Highlands don't need to carry the weight of every infrastructure experiment. There is nothing low-carbon about destroying ancient woodland or risking the ecology of one of the most iconic lochs on Earth. If not here, where do we draw the line?



### **What is happening at the proposed Loch Kemp Pump storage scheme?**

Planning permission has not yet been determined and Highland Council have yet to come to a decision on whether to support or object to the scheme. However, the developers and the Dell estate have been hard at work constructing a new road around Loch Kemp, felling trees and erecting fences for new planting. They have also constructed a new road into the ancient woodlands of the Ness Woods Special Area of Conservation almost down to the shores of Loch Ness - without planning permission and perhaps even, without the consent of NatureScot. This new road is not in the same location as the proposed access route to the power station so we do not know what its real purpose is.

The noise, dust and disturbance of hundreds of lorries and vehicles during the construction process along the B862 through the villages of Erroglie, Gorthleck and Whitebridge and onwards through the Whitebridge woods and down to the shores of Loch Ness will have a huge impact, not just on natural habitats and species, but on all of us who live in Stratherrick. This will be the largest industrial development in the area since the Foyers pump storage scheme of 50 years ago. And, of all the 5 pump storage schemes built or

proposed around Loch Ness, the Loch Kemp development is the only one that will be built in a protected site, so highly valued it has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation of National and European importance.

### **What You Can Do**

Submit an objection or comment via the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit ([www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot) and search for Loch Kemp).

Every voice matters. You don't have to be an expert — just share what you know, what you love, and what you fear we're about to lose.

### **Attend local consultations.**

Contact your MSPs and Highland councillors. Ask them to oppose this scheme unless and until clear protections for nature and community are guaranteed.

*These articles were written by Sarah Byrne and Neil Mackenzie and submitted on behalf of Boleskine Biodiversity Group.*



## SOUTH LOCH NESS HERITAGE GROUP

On the evening of Thursday 28th of November at Stratherrick Hall the Heritage Group held their AGM. The present committee were re-elected on block with Alister Chisholm standing down as chair and at a subsequent meeting former chair Bob Main was appointed chair and Janet Sutherland vice chair. After the AGM there followed a talk by Fraser Mackenzie of the Glenurquhart Heritage Group on Highland Memorials and Cairns.

Fraser, who has been researching the topic for over 50 years, took us on a trip round Loch Ness pointing out various memorials and cairns, some were well known, whilst others forgotten. The memorials were all outwith cemeteries and the cairns were generally on the roadside, or on the hillside. The ones on the hillside were generally marking the spot where somebody had died tragically. One of the most notable cairns is the Cobb memorial the Loch Ness side just south of Drumnadrochit. After covering the north side of Loch Ness, Fraser moved into south Loch Ness side, pointing out the Fraser Memorial at Leadclune, the Bryce memorial in Inverfarigaig pass, the cairn Bhean Ardochy near the Chapel Bridge, the

Adam Ingles Cross on Killin estate, the Jane Fraser Memorial at lower Foyers, and possibly the newest one for the actor Ian Bannan who was killed in a road accident in 1999 at the end of the Suidhe straight.

After the talk Allan Macdonald thanked Fraser for a very interesting talk. In the general discussions later on during refreshments after the talk, several other possibilities of memorials in the district came to light, which the group will have to be follow up on.

For more information about the group and the heritage of the area visit <https://southlochnessheritage.co.uk/> or our Facebook page.



## INVASIVE SPECIES AND MINK CONTROL IN STRATHERRICK AND FOYERS

American mink arrived in this country courtesy of fur breeding farms during the second half of the last century and, through escapees or release, can now be found throughout Scotland, with the exception of some offshore islands and the far north.

Mink are very effective predators of fish, birds, water voles and poultry and typically use water courses to travel throughout the country although not exclusively. Last year from Sutherland to the Tay 292 animals were

captured; including 2 at Inverness airport (perhaps looking for a return flight to their homeland!). Throughout the north area there are 353 volunteers manning 419 traps and 200 mink rafts with the same initiative also focussing on the eradication of non-native plants such as giant hogweed, Japanese knot weed, skunk cabbage and Himalayan balsam.

Last year I offered to look after a trap in the Pass of Inverfarigaig area and caught 2 mink in a fairly short time before an end of year spate swept the trap away but I hope to replace it in the near future. The trap is a simple cage trap with a very strong mink scent gland extract inside a practice golf ball at the far end. The mink is attracted in, the trap sprung and on daily inspection

euthanised with a small firearm. The other way of tracking their movements in the area is by clappads on rafts to record their footprints and more recently by spy cams, but they are more expensive to provide.

If you want to know more about what is going on check out the website for Scottish Invasive Species Initiative: <https://www.invasivespecies.scot/> which was established with government funding some 8 years ago with a remit to protect watercourses and their associated wildlife. There is a local Project Officer ([Trudi.Clarke@cromartyboard.com](mailto:Trudi.Clarke@cromartyboard.com)) who would be keen to hear from anyone that would like to help with mink control.

Alex Sutherland  
Boleskine Biodiversity Group

## FOYERS SHOP/CAFÉ RETENTION

As a basic need for any Community in a rural location, the Foyers Shops were built around 120 years ago to fulfil that requirement.

Over the years the area has seen the loss of the Factory, the Church and of late the Village School and the closure of these retail premises would be a further massive blow!

A shop, Post Office, banking facility and Cafe is a real live and necessary part of life in any community, City or Rural, and not just an emotional desire or

connection. Previous efforts to avoid the possible loss of these facilities has been limited, and it is hoped that the new Steering Group comprising members of Stratherrick & Foyers Community Council and Trust alongside Boleskine Community Care will drive this project to a satisfactory conclusion on behalf of our whole community.

In a much more positive sense, the last few months of joint effort has resulted in a Scottish Land Fund Stage 1 grant application being awarded along with significant contributions from the 3 bodies involved! The combined level of funding at around £22,000 has enabled us to appoint Community Enterprise to conduct an in-depth study on the likelihood

or otherwise, of a successful community acquisition and on the future security of the venture!

Given the positive result of the studies of community desire, feasibility, business plans, accommodation possibilities; decision-making and identification of all funding possibilities are now of vital importance for any possible positive outcome.

Ownership – Future Management – Operational methods are all in the melting pot, but decisions will need to be made in the earliest possible timescale!!

Billy Mackenzie, Treasurer,  
Boleskine Community Care.



## BOLESKINE COMMUNITY CARE: SPRING INTO SUMMER WITH EXCITING UPDATES!

We're absolutely thrilled to bring you all the latest news from Boleskine Community Care - it's been a busy and exciting few months at the Hub!

First and foremost, we are extremely pleased to announce that, thanks to generous funding from SSE Renewables, we are now the proud owners of two electric vehicles! These cars will be used by our Care at Home staff to support those in our community most in need, as well as for community errands and befriending visits. They mark a huge step forward in making our services more sustainable and accessible.

And that's not all SSE has supported! The grant also includes funding for the installation of three EV charging points at the Hub, ensuring our new vehicles stay powered up and ready to go. These works are already underway, and you may have noticed some of the electrical upgrades as part of these improvements.

While we're talking about improvements, we're delighted to share an update on our new therapy room, funded by a grant from Screwfix. The old garage doors have been replaced with bright, welcoming French doors, and further electrical works are being carried out to install a new interior door and make the space fully private and functional. This room will offer a much-needed space for therapies and quiet support.



We've also been making smaller but impactful changes inside the Hub, including the addition of modern, streamlined storage. This not only brightens the space but also helps us make better use of the Hub for our growing calendar of activities.

On the topic of new initiatives - our recently launched shopping trips have been a huge success! Our first outing was to Simpson's Garden Centre, and it was a fun-filled day enjoyed by many. Our second outing was to Fort William; we went to Marks & Spencer then onto The Highland Soap Company for lunch and a browse in the gift shop. It's heartening to see such enthusiasm, and we hope to make these outings a regular part of our programme.

We're also thrilled to be part of the Tesco Blue Token Appeal! If you're shopping at the Tesco superstore or Extra in Inverness, please keep an eye out for our name at the token stand and consider dropping your blue token in for Boleskine Community Care. Your support will help us get a grant of up to £1500 towards a children's summer lunch club.

As we look ahead, we're busy planning our Annual Garden Party, which will now become a permanent fixture on our calendar. Save the date: Saturday, 5th July from 12pm - 4pm! We've secured a live band to entertain you throughout the afternoon and thanks to a £500 grant from the Community Council, we'll have a fabulous inflatable slide, bouncy castle, and plenty of garden games. The amazing Auld



Smokey Pizzas will be serving up stone-baked pizzas, The Highland Coffee Pod will be there serving coffee, and the much-loved beer and prosecco tent will be making a return - non-alcoholic drinks will be available too. It promises to be a wonderful day, and we can't wait to celebrate the past year with you all.

Speaking of celebrations, our Easter Extravaganza was a brilliant success! With a Bonnie Bonnet competition and a range of children's games, it was a day filled with laughter and community spirit. A big thank you to everyone who came along and joined the fun.

We're also pleased to confirm that despite earlier reports, the NHS vaccination clinic will continue to operate at the Hub. Alongside it, our foot clinic remains fully booked each month, and we're still offering access to hearing and vision services.

Our monthly activities continue to grow, and there's something for everyone - no matter your age or ability. From Movin' About (a very popular seated exercise class) to our coffee mornings with tea and fresh bakes, and Broth N' Blether, we're proud of the vibrant and welcoming space we've created. The Hub also provides classes run by community members and groups; Tai Chi, a photography group, a book club, and more - please check our Facebook page or pop into the Hub to grab a calendar.

A massive thank you goes to SFCT, whose funding has secured Jo and Olivia's roles for the next three years. We know you'll agree they do a fantastic job supporting our community, and we're incredibly grateful to have them.

Finally, if you've ever thought about giving back, we are always looking for volunteer community drivers. Whether you can spare one hour or ten, we'd love to have you onboard. The role is flexible and rewarding, with mileage expenses covered. Tasks may include prescription pickups or helping people get to medical appointments.

We also want to give a shout-out to our amazing Trustees, who volunteer their time to guide and support BCC:

Katherine Grant (Chair), Billy MacKenzie (Treasurer), Susan Erlam (Fundraising & Marketing and Secretary), Neil Farnham (Gardens & Maintenance), and Isobel Allen. Thank you for all you do!

As always, thank you to our wonderful community for your support - whether you've joined us for a fish and chip night, picked up a pizza, or popped by for a cuppa, it's your participation that makes Boleskine Community Care such a special place.

See you at The Hub - and don't forget to save the date for the garden party!





## SOME INFORMATION AND NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

**Website** - We have a basic website where anyone can view previous minutes, agendas etc. and get in touch to ask a question. The address is –

[www.stratherrickfoyerscommunitycouncil.org.uk](http://www.stratherrickfoyerscommunitycouncil.org.uk)

**Energy schemes** – The members have been dealing with several planning applications for pump storage hydro (PSH) and wind farms locally. At the moment, Loch Kemp PSH, which is proposed for land in Dell estate Whitebridge, has been submitted for planning and we are awaiting it going to the Highland Council planning committee. We were informed at the end of April that Glen Earrach PSH has also been submitted to planning. This one is proposed for the North side of Loch Ness but is directly opposite Foyers. Loch Na Cathrach PSH (previously known as Red John) has planning approval but not starting construction yet. Aberarder Wind Farm is currently under construction and is due for completion by the end of 2026. This one uses the Dunmaglass estate roads for access. Corriegarth 2 Wind Farm has planning but their grid connection has been delayed so construction is not starting until 2026 now. Dell Wind Farm had planning that has now lapsed but they currently have two

planning applications in; one to extend the planning that they have and another to change the scheme (less turbines but taller). We are pushing for an update on this project. Please get in touch if you wish to discuss any of these schemes.

**Foyers Power Station** – SSEN have plans to replace the existing transformers at the Foyers pumped storage power station substation and extend it. This includes replacing the existing underground cable connection between the substation and the existing Foyers switching station with a new underground cable. This will involve tree felling also. Another community consultation event is meant to be happening in May and we will share the details as soon as we get them.

**Foyers Primary School** – A meeting was held online to discuss the future of the school in March and only one parent attended the meeting, with one other who had submitted views in writing. Highland Council noted the Community Council's view that the school should continue to be mothballed for at least another year. It was highlighted that six new houses were being completed in Inverfarigaig. Having considered the views expressed, Highland Council has decided to keep the school mothballed for the 2025-26 school session. A further review of the school's status should take place early in 2026.

**Micro grants** – the Community Council receive £5k per annum from Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust from the SSE Stronelairg fund to distribute in the form of micro grants up to a maximum of £500 per application. These can be for individuals or groups whether constituted or not, but must be able to demonstrate Community benefit in the application form. Please see our website for an application form or email our admin on – [email.sfcc@aol.com](mailto:email.sfcc@aol.com)

## MEETING DATES – DATES FOR COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR ARE AS FOLLOWS ~

TUESDAY 27TH MAY	BCC HUB
TUESDAY 24TH JUNE (AGM)	STRATHERRICK HALL
NO MEETING HELD IN JULY	
TUESDAY 26TH AUGUST	THE WILDSIDE CENTRE
TUESDAY 30TH SEPTEMBER	BCC HUB
TUESDAY 28TH OCTOBER	STRATHERRICK HALL
TUESDAY 25TH NOVEMBER	THE WILDSIDE CENTRE
NO MEETING HELD IN DECEMBER	

## THURSDAY SING!

Come and sing on Thursday evenings at Stratherrick Hall, Gorthleck. A new singing group led by Julie Harvey will launch on Thursday 8th May 7.30-9pm.

Whether you already love singing or would like to learn, this is the group for you. The focus is on having fun, singing with others and experiencing the feel good factor singing can bring. Each session will include posture & gentle stretches,

breathing & voice warm ups and songs from a wide range of styles and traditions.

Everyone is welcome. No previous singing experience is needed.

Julie is a local singing and piano teacher and an experienced singing group facilitator, working with community choirs, children's singing groups and pre-school music making. Julie is also a specialist in singing for health and believes passionately in the connection between singing

and well-being. She loves encouraging people to discover and develop their singing voice.

Session cost: £4  
Thursdays 8th May - 26th June

You can contact Julie to book a place or find out more on: [julieharvey@hindley.org.uk](mailto:julieharvey@hindley.org.uk)  
01456 289035  
07597 577527

If you need transport, please contact Julie as car shares might be possible. Please get in touch if you would like to come but personal circumstances don't allow, we may be able to find a solution!

"With warmth and humour, each week Julie created a true community choir."  
*Traquair Choir member*

"In no time at all we were singing in four or more parts. It was so enjoyable."  
*Singing for Lung Health member.*



# MARIE CURIE DAFFODIL TEA

Saturday, the 29th of March saw the Soup to Go ladies come out of retirement to once again to do their annual charity fundraising.

The ladies donned their tabards once again for this year's charity event, which was a Daffodil Tea Party in aid of Marie Curie.

Marie Curie provides specialist nurses for end of life care and support, an invaluable and worthy service. All 50 tickets were soon sold out!

Everyone had a good afternoon judging by all the lovely comments and messages we all received. A whopping £825 was raised on the day and was topped up to £850 by Soup to Go.

As usual none of this would've been possible without the following :

- The ladies from Soup to Go plus two home bakers who without exception donated ingredients and made cakes.
- Marion who made and sold her very popular tablet.
- Elspeth who gave very relaxing hand massages for a donation.
- Fiona for raiding her garden for the daffodils and pussy willows to adorn the tables and windows; it looked so beautiful.
- The fantastic raffle prizes thanks to donations by local businesses and supporters, which encouraged sales of raffle tickets.
- Ernie, Alistair and Grace who gave up their time to entertain us and they certainly did!
- The Stratherrick Hall Committee for allowing us to use the hall.

Thank you all. What an amazing community we live in when so many can come together to raise much-needed funds to help others.

Finally, a big thank you to all who came along on the day and supported this event to make it the success that it was.

Soup to Go Team.







## FOYERS FIRE CREW UPDATE

2024 has continued the trend of increasing calls for our local fire crew, with 40 turnouts for the year, and 2025 shaping up to be similar, with 12 calls for the first 3 months of this year. These callouts continue to be varied with a number of differing fire types attended, alongside a variety of other incidents including flooding, water rescue, rope rescue and a number of road traffic collisions and machinery related incidents both within our station area and along the A82 corridor.

Among the fires that we have attended in the early part of this year were a number of calls to a recurring nuisance rubbish fire in the centre of Gorthleck, causing an impact on local residences due to noxious smoke and potential environmental effects due to fire residue and partially burned waste. Following a number of attendances to extinguish the fire only to have it re-lit a day or two later, the issue was eventually fully resolved with the assistance of Police Scotland.

Our station has seen a recent increase in our capabilities, with the addition of a 9000-

litre dedicated water carrier which we crew alongside personnel from Fort Augustus fire station where the vehicle is housed. In addition, in recent months, crew members from our area have, on occasion, co-responded to call outs alongside Fort Augustus personnel to form part of the crew of their main fire appliance, particularly during busy periods such as the spring wildfire season. This arrangement ensures that fire appliances are available for calls as much as possible when both crews have limited numbers of personnel available and would otherwise be unable to mobilise, particularly during the day when many of the crew are unavailable due to work and other commitments.

The Foyers fire crew have been involved on a more national level with wider fire service work, particularly in regard to wildfire response. Crew Commander Iain Hepburn has been instrumental in pushing forward a national wildfire response strategy and is now fully engaged in delivering technical burn training to the Scottish Fire Service as a tool to help manage wildfires. Other crew members have been involved in facilitating training and advising on the use of the fire service's All Terrain Vehicles on steep and rugged ground, also as a response to wildfires.

Congratulations are due to Firefighter Ryan Jardine who

has recently completed his 3-year firefighter development programme and, having passed all of his final assessments with flying colours is now a fully qualified member of the crew.

And finally... Recruitment. As ever, your local fire crew needs you! Currently we have only 7 members and we require a minimum of 4 crew to be able to mobilise. Our fire appliance is commonly in the fire station with insufficient personnel to crew it due to people being either out of the area or having work commitments etc., resulting in a fire appliance coming from either Inverness or Fort Augustus (if they have a crew available) in the event of an incident. This situation results in up to a 40-minute delay in the arrival of a fire appliance to an incident in our area. If we had more people in the local area who were willing to be on-call for some of the time, in particular during weekdays, our ability to respond to emergencies in our area would be greatly improved.

If you are interested in being an On-Call firefighter and are willing to help out your community in the event of an emergency, contact Watch Commander David Main ([david.main3@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:david.main3@firescotland.gov.uk)) or Crew Commander Stewart MacPherson ([stewart.macpherson@firescotland.gov.uk](mailto:stewart.macpherson@firescotland.gov.uk)) in the first instance.

# STRATHERRICK PRIMARY SCHOOL

The pupils have been hard at work, and having lots of fun too! At Christmas we performed our show 'Christmas with the Aliens'. As part of our endeavour to reach out to the community we invited local community members and Boleskine Community Care attendees to come and watch a community performance in the afternoon. We also sang at the Winter Festival and sold our crafts. It is always great to get involved with others outside of school. We enjoyed performing to others and hopefully we can do this again in the future. In fact, we have just opened our very own School Library (with books, shelves, seating, beanbags and adornments purchased via the Parent Council and Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust), and we would love to involve the community in this too – any suggestions please get in touch.

We were involved in the final stages of decorating the stained glass window which will be up in the old church in Errogie. We are really excited about this project and can't wait to see it up.

We have also been out and about a lot. Visiting the local croft, off to Inverness to listen to the Royal Scottish National Orchestra play 'Sounds of the Deep', and some of our pupils went down to Kilchuimen Academy to take part in a STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Maths) challenge. We had to design a paper straw bridge that could withstand a certain weight. We won awards for best teamwork and data input & analysis.

This term we are lucky enough to have some exciting Bushcraft lessons and we are off on our annual swimming session at the Aquadome in Inverness. These are such

valuable experiences for all of our children from Primary 1 – 7. In terms of swimming, most schools only put their upper stage classes in to this however we are lucky enough that all can go – every year. And this is in part due to the funding received via Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust. So thank you very much for all your help. It is very much appreciated.

Thank you,  
Stratherrick Primary and Nursery!





## ALEX RUNS FOR GOLD AGAIN!

In recent years I am very grateful to have been helped with travel expenses by our Community Trust to attend Masters Athletics running events which have taken place outside Scotland.

In the running world there is a whole area of competition and racing which opens up when you get past the age of 35 and are eligible to

try for age category prizes throughout the country and on the wider national & international masters circuit. Of course, that can depend on whether you like competition or just prefer to jog or run for enjoyment to keep advancing years at bay!

Cross country running is very different to road or track running, and events are usually held over a distance of 4 to 6 miles. No two courses are ever the same and can make use of fields, hillsides and woodland trails with streams and ditches also in the mix. This type of running is sometimes described as being about 90% determination and 10% perspiration.

In November of last year, Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust supported me to be a member of the Scottish team at the British Masters Home International Cross Country race in Belfast. I managed to finish third overall behind two Irish men and first for Scotland ahead of England and Wales in the 75 to 79 age group.

More recently I have been able to follow this up with Scottish, then U.K. cross country gold medals and still await confirmation of a new Scottish age group record of 20 minutes 35 seconds for 5 Kilometres.

In our Stratherrick and Foyers area we are blest with great off road and hill running terrain and should anyone wish company or advice about the activity I would be very happy to oblige.

Alex Sutherland

## JOIN THE TRUST

If you would like to become a member of the Trust then please go to  
[www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/join-the-trust/](http://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/join-the-trust/)



## HIGHLAND AFTERNOON TEA AT FOYERS LODGE

We're excited to tell you about something new for our 2025 season...

Celebrating something special or just fancy a nice treat? Come and enjoy the quintessential art of afternoon tea prepared by Chef Vanessa here at Foyers Lodge on Saturday afternoons. Savour all your favourite traditional afternoon tea bites whilst taking in our magnificent view of Loch Ness. Tables are available in the garden looking out across the loch but please note al fresco tea is weather dependent and may not always be possible; in which case you can enjoy the stylish surroundings of our Sitting Room or Drawing Room bar!

Finger sandwiches, scones, and traditional Scottish treats await both **residents and**

**non-residents**, you can view our online sample menu at [www.foyerslodge.co.uk/fooddrink](http://www.foyerslodge.co.uk/fooddrink).

Tables for afternoon tea are available from 12.00 until 14.00 on Saturdays, starting from 10th May. We can accommodate groups of up to a maximum of 4 people (aged 14+).

Please call us on 01456 486351 or e-mail [reservations@foyerslodge.co.uk](mailto:reservations@foyerslodge.co.uk) to book. A non-refundable deposit of £10pp will be required upon booking and **reservations must be made no later than 24 hrs in advance.**

***Please note we're unable to offer gluten or dairy free options for our afternoon tea but have an extensive offering for dinner. We have a non-resident table for two available each dinner service and if we have capacity can offer a table for up to four. Dinner is available Wednesday – Saturday.***







## WHITEBRIDGE HOTEL NEWS

The year got off to a flying start when we received our invitation to attend the National Hotels Of The Year - Scotland Awards at The Crown Plaza, Glasgow! Lucky for us, the award ceremony was during February, which is our closure period and therefore there was only one thing for it... purchase two ball gowns and get ready for the Ball. It was a lovely evening and Bella and Lesley felt proud to be sitting in a room full of big names in the tourism industry and over the moon to scoop the award of Highland Small Country Hotel of the Year 2025. We are delighted to be recognised once again for our contribution to Scottish Tourism; Team Whitebridge is a committed hard-working team who are very deserving of this recognition, offering an authentic Highland experience and a friendly smile to our customers.

When asked the question "What makes a good country

hotel?" there is no straight answer, however, we believe that what sits at the heart of a successful country hotel is the people who work there.

We believe in creating a diverse working environment where people are encouraged to be their authentic selves, where they are celebrated and supported to achieve what is important to them. This builds confidence and authenticity which translates to the customer as a happy, friendly team of hospitality professionals who are proud of the environment they work in and the services they deliver. At The Whitebridge Hotel, we continue to employ a high level of local people - they are truly a lovely bunch, most of our customer feedback is based around how wonderful our staff are! We believe The Whitebridge has become a solid asset to the community; boosting the local economy, providing sustainable employment, delivering on high tourism standards, a quality dining experience alongside a well-stocked bar with a comfortable/relaxed vibe where everyone is made to feel welcome. We deliver on an events program for the 'off season' with the view to keeping our community entertained. We also offer a Local Residents discount card for people living in the area alongside discounted rooms in the off season. Gaining support from the

local community is important for The Whitebridge Hotel's sustainability as it allows us to retain local, year-round staff. You can support us by attending our events or visiting for drinks, lunch and dinner. This helps keep local people in work alongside providing a year-round hospitality venue in your community. We are very focused on The Whitebridge Hotel not becoming a seasonal business. We invested in a hotel with a pub because we want to be part of community life!

There's never a dull moment at Whitebridge Hotel. We are currently celebrating the safe arrival of another Whitebridge Baby. Tracy blessed us with Baby Evie on 21st April.

Congratulations on the new addition to your beautiful wee family, we can't wait to get a squeeze!!





Two members of our team, Sami and Lizzie got engaged on the 9th April – if you enjoy a wee love story, this one is sweet! Sami and Lizzie came to work a winter season with us in 2023 and they are still here! They fell in love with the area, built good friendships and embedded themselves into the Whitebridge Team. They soon bought a house in the local area, plans are now in motion for a wedding and a long and happy future together in Scotland. We all look forward to celebrating your big day!

Every year before we move into the summer season, the hotel undergoes an extensive maintenance program, this usually involves decoration, upgrades and maintenance work and as a result our creative juices are in full flow! Creating quirky installs and pieces of art & crafts

appears to be what our customers love and we like the challenge of giving them something new to look at.

One of our upcycling projects this year was saving two light fittings from landfill and repurposing them in the bar which simply adds to our quirky vibe. If you have not been for a visit in a while, pop in and have a wander around; if arts and crafts are your thing, you won't be bored!

We would like to say a big thank you to the many local people and friends of the Whitebridge for your donations of memorabilia, instruments, ornaments and art. We enjoy displaying things from times gone by, adding to our vibe and enriching our customer's nostalgic experience. Our events continue to be popular, this year we hosted our much-loved Mothering Sunday Roast. This brought in lots of cute, chubby babies and their families. We ran a wee competition on the day which was won by a local family.

Next up was some live music from Freyed & Faded, a local duo who were keen to have a wee gig in the bar. Their setlist included many covers and a couple of original songs mixed in. We enjoy supporting local talent and hope we can continue to do so – get in touch if you are interested in hosting an

event or gig here.

We continue to be open 7 days a week - on a Monday we open at 3pm and our dinner service begins at 5pm to 8.30pm. Tuesday to Saturday we open at 12pm to 2.30pm for lunch and 5pm to 8.30pm for dinner. Every Sunday we deliver on our much-loved Sunday Roast which runs from 12pm to 7.30pm. If you would like to dine with us, it's always best to book a table. Call us on 01456 486 226 but be assured we will prioritise locals alongside our hotel guests. We hope all our local customers enjoy the benefit of The Local Residents Discount Card which offers 10% on food and draught beers and cider.

If you would like to book a hotel stay, browse our menu or simply have a look at what's on offer you can find us online at [www.whitebridgehotel.co.uk](http://www.whitebridgehotel.co.uk). You can also keep up to date with what's going on at The Whitebridge Hotel by following us on Facebook or Instagram. Or check out the 'What's On' board in the pub.

With summer on its way, you can enjoy our lovely old Victorian porch in the shade, sit on the deck at the roadside or chill on the picnic benches at the rear of the hotel. We also have a lovely paddock for exercising your dog alongside dog treats and beds. We can't wait to see you!

## TRUST GRANT SUPPORT FOR BOLESKINE COMMUNITY CARE

Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust has awarded its largest grant to date following a successful application from Boleskine Community Care. The local charity has been awarded a total of £148,898 to fund staffing costs for the next three years. The grant is to cover a Community Engagement Co-ordinator, a Community Services Co-ordinator, a contribution towards the Care at Home Co-ordinator and a Cleaner for the Hub where BCC are based and carry out most of their activities. The previous Chairperson of SFCT, Catriona Fraser, had worked with SFCT's main funder, SSE Renewables, to allow grants for staff to cover up to three years funding. This is to help maintain staff and give job security to the roles. The chairperson of BCC, Katherine Grant, said, 'Everyone associated with BCC is delighted with the successful Stage 2 three years Grant Funding award from Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust, approved by SSE.'

This funding meets the key target of our Board of Trustees' application, which was to secure the Employment funds required to retain the positions of our three excellent BCC Staff members, coupled with the services of our Sunflower Care Coordinator. We look forward to continuing a fruitful relationship with SFCT and SSE. Again, many thanks to the Trust for this funding and to all those in the Community who support our operation.'

Peter Faye, Chair of Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust, said, 'The Board and Staff of SFCT are delighted to have worked with and funded BCC again, in order to provide continuity and employment for the next three years. SFCT recognise the hugely important work BCC undertake in our Community, providing many vital services and activities to the people of Stratherrick and Foyers. The relationship between the two organisations now stretches back many years and we hope will continue for many years to come. The staff of both organisations have worked very hard recently to ensure that we all can continue to rely upon BCC, and our thanks to all of them for their dedication, enthusiasm and persistence.'



# STRATHERRICK & FOYERS COMMUNITY TRUST GRANTS

Did you know that you can apply for a grant from the Trust?

The following are available for community groups and residents:

- Large group grants – for constituted community groups looking to apply for a grant of over £25,000.
- Medium group grants – for constituted community groups seeking funding up to £25,000.
- Small group grants – Available for non-constituted groups or individuals looking to organise a community activity, up to the value of £1,000.
- Student grants – available to residents undertaking a further or higher education course or training.
- Sporting & Excellence grants – available to anyone competing at National or Championship level or participating in a recognised training camp as a trainee.

More information on the criteria and the application process can be found on the

Trust's website –

[www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/grants-and-schemes](http://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/grants-and-schemes)

The Trust recently carried out a review of the grant award scheme, and the key statistics show the support they have provided to community groups and members. The full report can also be found on the above web page. The data covers the period from 1st July 2020 to 19th February 2025. In total 199 grants were awarded and £446,232 of funding was provided.

In summary, 73% of grants were given to individuals as Student or Sporting awards amounting to 13.2% of the funds distributed, whereas 27% of grants, totalling 86.8% of the funds, were distributed to Groups. You will already have read about recent grants awarded to:

- Inverfarigaig Residents Group
- Wildside Baby & Toddler Group
- Stratherrick Clay Target Club
- Stratherrick Public Hall
- Boleskine Community Care
- Stratherrick Primary School Parent Council
- Alex Sutherland's Sporting Grant

Below are reports from two other recent grateful recipients.

## ***Aldourie Primary School***

Aldourie Primary School P7 pupils were all able to enjoy their residential trip to Loch Insh this April with warm thanks to SFCT! The trip enabled them to strengthen their relationships with other pupils ahead of their big move onto Inverness Royal Academy in August and gain confidence in taking on more personal responsibilities. They also faced a range of challenges, from raft building to paddle boarding, canoeing and simply sleeping away from home. The grant







Student Grant applicant, Laud Le Sueur - I am in the process of completing the first year of my degree course in costume design and construction.

My course of study is both practical and academic in nature. The practical aspect of my studies requires regular purchase of sewing machine parts, fabric, materials and haberdashery items which can prove an expensive cumulative cost. This grant has therefore been very useful in contributing to cover these costs over the past year.

These photos show one example of a costume that I designed and currently constructing for the production of my final Regency Costume for the university showcase. It is a work in progress and I'm currently practicing some millinery work to construct the bonnet and tailoring work for the accompanying jacket.

Please visit the Grants page ([www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/grants-and-schemes](http://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/grants-and-schemes)) on the community website for more information on how to apply. The next deadline for applications is 21st June for consideration at the August Board meeting.

enabled the children to not only physically attend, but also the opportunity of personal growth. They embraced the experience which led to them building courage, discovering new capabilities and coming away with a strong sense of achievement and pride in themselves. Thank you again to everyone at SFCT for the support of our grant application, which in turn supported local our families and children to access such a wonderful experience.



# THE WILDSIDE CENTRE

The Wildside Centre continues to host many community activities and meetings, and with the improvement in the weather it is great to see the younger members of our community making use of the playground!

The biggest changes to the building for 2025 are the recently completed renovations to the ladies and the disabled toilets, ensuring that they now meet all required safety and accessibility standards. Work has also been done to improve energy efficiency by introducing LED lighting and taps that operate on sensors. Not only will this save water, but will also significantly reduce the running costs of the building. Thanks to Sharon, our Fundraiser, for her work in securing funding from the Highland Council Community Regeneration Fund for this project. Thanks also to Rodger Mitchell and his team from Two Planks Ltd for his excellent workmanship – every finer detail has been considered and work carried out to the highest specification! If you would like Rodger to quote for any works you require, you can contact him by emailing [rodger@2planksltd.com](mailto:rodger@2planksltd.com), or by phoning 07930 953611.

We still have more work to do in improving the efficiency of The Wildside Centre, and we hope to move forward on replacing the windows and doors soon too.

Wildside Wednesday returned in January for the first Wednesday of each month, where we welcomed the library van and some of our local businesses, including Lyne Mhor Croft, Caorunn Croft, Jinty's Jams and Whitebridge Honey. There were refreshments available for community members to drop in for a chat with staff, directors and Jewels, our new CEO, and for our most recent session we were also joined by Simon from Changeworks to answer any questions and



provide home energy saving advice. There is one more session, on Wednesday 4th June, before we take a break for the summer, and Wildside Wednesday will return in September. If you would like your community group, activity or business to feature as part of Wildside Wednesday, please get in touch with Caroline by emailing [pc@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:pc@sfctrust.org.uk).

If you would like to book the Wildside Centre for your community group or a private event you can do so via the community website – [www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/bookings](http://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/bookings)

Caroline Tucker,  
Project Co-ordinator



## FOYERS BAY

On Saturday 3rd May, the Foyers Bay steering group hosted an opening event at Foyers Bay to share the progress that has been made on this project over the last 2 years. It was well-attended, with approximately 30 people joining the group for refreshments and the opportunity to see first-hand the work that has been done.

The focus up until now has been on developing a slipway and boat storage area, and upgrading the look and feel of the facility. Having completed the first stages of this, and introduced a membership structure, we are pleased to be able to open the facility for use this summer. We recognise that there is still more to do, and engaged with those of you who joined



us on the 3rd May to gather feedback, which will be discussed by the steering group at future meetings.

If you would like more information on becoming a

member of Foyers Bay, please email [admin@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@sfctrust.org.uk).

Caroline Tucker,  
Project Co-ordinator

# ERROGIE CHURCH

Following an Errogie Church Steering Group meeting held at the end of January, community representatives, the project's Lead Director, and the Trust's CEO all agreed that the priority for the first half of 2025 was to ensure that Errogie Church is re-opened for community use, after concerns were raised about compliance and accessibility issues within the building.

We have taken the following steps to move this forward:

1. We have engaged with Mike Lawson, SFCT's retained Architect, to carry out an assessment on the works required to enable the building to become Health and Safety compliant and improve accessibility. He has proposed that:
  - We improve access at the West end of the building by upgrading the existing exit with a fire safety door.
  - We upgrade the current toilet space to form a designated accessibility toilet, and add another single toilet for general use.
  - We upgrade entrance with disabled ramp and create a dedicated disabled parking space at the entrance.

As requested by the Board, a series of reports were commissioned to detail the plans and

costs of delivering the agreed modifications to the Church to make it usable by the community. These reports were presented at the Board meeting in May, and accepted. However, the Lead Director raised further concerns about the septic tank and the heating system and asked that these issues were investigated fully, and the Board agreed that the project team should get these done before moving forward on the building work.

This is a disappointing development and unfortunately will lead to a long delay to the start of the building work particularly as the Board also agreed to prioritise the Highland Gathering over the Errogie Church project which will reduce the amount of time the project team are able to give to the project. As a consequence of these decisions, it is unlikely that the building work will be started this calendar year as we still have to present a business case, taking into account all associated costs, and secure the necessary funding before proceeding to select and engage the builders.

If you have any concerns, or would like to share your feedback on these latest developments, please email Jewels on [ceo@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:ceo@sfctrust.org.uk)

Jewels Lang,  
CEO  
Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust

## STAFF NEWS

Over the last few months, we have sadly lost three members of the SFCT staff team; Jillian Barclay, our Communications Officer, who left us before Christmas, Sarah Byrne, one of our Fundraisers, who took on a new role with Kyle of Lochalsh Community Trust in February, and Matt Rhodes, our Facilities Officer, who stepped down in April. All three were extremely valued members of the team, and will be hugely missed. Best of luck to you all with whatever the future holds, and as community members, please don't be a stranger!



# HIGHLAND GATHERING 2025

The Highland Gathering at Corriegarth will be returning this summer! A number of the same activities from previous years will be returning, including the Dog Show, Pull the Tractor, bouncy castles and Highland Dancing, along with new food stands, market stalls and activities! Over the following pages we will give you a taster of what is to come, but please follow our dedicated Facebook page – Highland Gathering 2025|Facebook for more information, and join us on Saturday 19th July!

## INTRODUCING THE JOHNSTON TROPHY

In July 2023, the whole community was shocked by the sudden death of Kevin Johnston, Shepherd at Corriegarth Estate. Kevin was part of a well-known and well-respected family who had farmed at Corriegarth for many years.

Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust worked with Kevin's family to identify a way that his legacy could be continued as part of the Highland Gathering event, and a trophy was identified as the best option, resulting in the creation of the Johnston Trophy. It was also agreed that the trophy would not be linked to the same event each year, but would be awarded to a member of Stratherrick & Foyers Community. Last year (the first year the trophy was awarded), it was presented to Christian Mackay, the first member of the community to complete the Hill Race.

For 2025, again in collaboration with Kevin's



family, we felt that it was appropriate to link the trophy with sheep as Kevin won many prizes showing his sheep at local shows. As showing or handling sheep doesn't form part of the Highland Gathering, the idea of using wool as a craft material was suggested. To make this happen, we would like to unveil a new competition for this year's Highland Gathering:

### **Create a rural scene using wool**

You can use any type of wool, in any form.

Entries should be A4 in size, and there are no age limits! The Johnston Trophy will be presented to the highest

awarded member of Stratherrick & Foyers Community.

Please submit all entries to the competition tent on the Gathering field by 1pm.

Judging will take place at 2pm.



# COMPETITIONS

Our other competitions are also back, so get your gardening gloves on, and brush up on your baking skills!



## CORRIEGARTH HILL RACE

The Hill Race is back! The course is 3.5 miles in length, with an ascent of 700ft.

Most of the course is visible from the games field and has been designed for spectators to follow and cheer on their nearest and dearest, with binoculars if necessary! It is open to anyone over the age of 16; please collect your registration form from the Welcome tent when you arrive.

Further details on start times will be shared closer to the event, but get your running shoes on and start training now!

## DOG SHOW

Join Gill and Alannah with your 4-legged friends for the dog show. At the time of going to print, we are still finalising some of the finer details, so keep an eye out for updates on social media!





**LOCAL**  
**Wildside Centre**

**WHO**  
**Beginners 3yrs+**  
**All Welcome!**

**WHEN**  
**Tuesdays 4-5pm**

## Highland Dancing Classes

### Class Vision

To develop  
rhythm,  
dance,  
coordination  
and  
confidence

### Funded and Supported by

**SFCT**  
Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust



### Class Info

£3.50 child  
£5.50 family  
Per class  
(Block of 9 from  
22nd April)

**BOOK HERE!**



[www.bookwhen.com/cherylhoggie](http://www.bookwhen.com/cherylhoggie)



# HIGHLAND GATHERING 2025

**CORRIEGARTH  
ESTATE**

**SAVE THE DATE!**



**SAT  
19TH  
JULY  
12-4PM**

PIPE BAND / BOUNCY CASTLES /  
WILLOW WEAVING / COMPETITIONS /  
FERRET RACING / HIGHLAND DANCING /  
TRACTOR PULL / DOG SHOW  
FOOD, DRINKS & CRAFTS  
ACTIVITIES FOR ALL THE FAMILY  
MORE TO CONFIRMED!



CAN YOU VOLUNTEER?  
EMAIL: [PC@SFCTRUST.ORG.UK](mailto:PC@SFCTRUST.ORG.UK)

**SFCT**  
Stratherrick & Foyers Community Trust