

# CYCLING WITHOUT AGE SCOTLAND P.6



Linlithgow Arts Guild,  
Summer Concerts P.27

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LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

# BLACK



ESTD. 2011

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

# BITCH

ISSUE NO. 91  
JULY 2022

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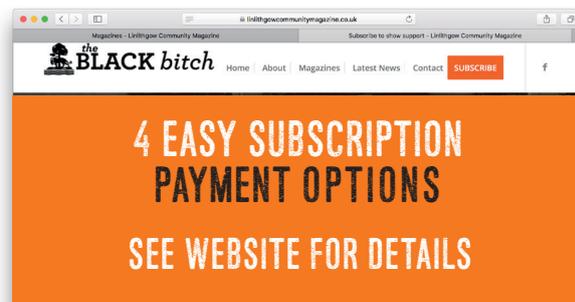
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EDITOR

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MAGAZINE**



A principal theme of our previous three issues has been the introduction by the Scottish Government of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and, more specifically, a discussion of some of the issues that communities may wish to consider in presenting their “community-led Local Place Plan”.

A critical part of that process is as broad participation by the community as can be achieved to provide an opportunity to delve into the issues that determine the future of our town over the next 10 to 20 years and to submit ideas and suggestions for how the community would like to see their town develop.

To that end, well attended public consultations were held in the Burgh Halls on 16th and 21st June 2022 organised and presented by Linlithgow Planning Forum to encourage members of the community to contribute to the preparation of a Local Place Plan.

In this issue we carry a brief preliminary summary of the consultation itself and the next steps required to gather and agree proposals on the way to producing a final Local Place Plan expected in Autumn 2022. **To participate you can find an online questionnaire at <https://forms.gle/G7Qkgp8jqYjPvyov6>**

Despite all the additional obstacles to be negotiated in these tough times we can report on some exciting community initiatives around the town. **Cycling Without Age Scotland** we have introduced previously and now with additional support in place and two trishaws CWAS is ready to assist those with limited mobility to get out and about. You’ll find their novel project explained on pages 6 & 7.

**Just why “Linlithgow leads the way”** is explained by **Christine McKay of Community Moorings Scotland** on pages 20 & 21.

The establishment of the first community-owned moorings hub in Scotland on the canal bank at Narrowboat Farm to the east of the town marks an historic milestone in the creation of choice and opportunity for canal-based communities to bring life back to an underused asset.

Elsewhere in this issue look out for a **Book Exchange** and – to the Editor anyway – a completely new idea, **Letters from Linlithgow**, both projects hosted at Linlithgow Community Development Trust’s recently opened Hub at the Vennel.

Add to that Bruce Jamieson exploring some quirky aspects of Linlithgow’s heritage; Gary Clinton’s thoughts on making dog walking a pleasant experience for all; notice of a public consultation on a new pharmacy for the town; New Hopetoun Gardens “Art in the Garden” event; a programme of events arranged by Linlithgow Arts Guild and much more.

And finally, I have a favour to ask of those readers of the magazine who have not as yet taken the plunge to subscribe. We are very pleased with the uptake so far which has allowed us to plan ahead with increased confidence to think of possibly increasing our frequency of publication and range of topics covered.

On the other hand we have not escaped the well-publicised rise in the cost of raw materials. For us the raw material is paper and overall cost of print. Whether rises are temporary or permanent remains to be seen but meantime we must meet our costs.

The magazine is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and is run on a not-for-profit basis. All surplus revenue after the expense of production and printing goes towards the improvement of the end product. The magazine is owned by its members and anyone who supports the aims and objectives of the magazine can apply to become a member by contacting the Editor at: [on.a.lead@gmail.com](mailto:on.a.lead@gmail.com)

We know that not everyone can spare the time to actively participate and in these times of significant financial uncertainty we are very well aware not everyone can offer support in that way either but we ask, at least, that readers give it some thought and consider making a small monthly subscription to help us make ends meet.

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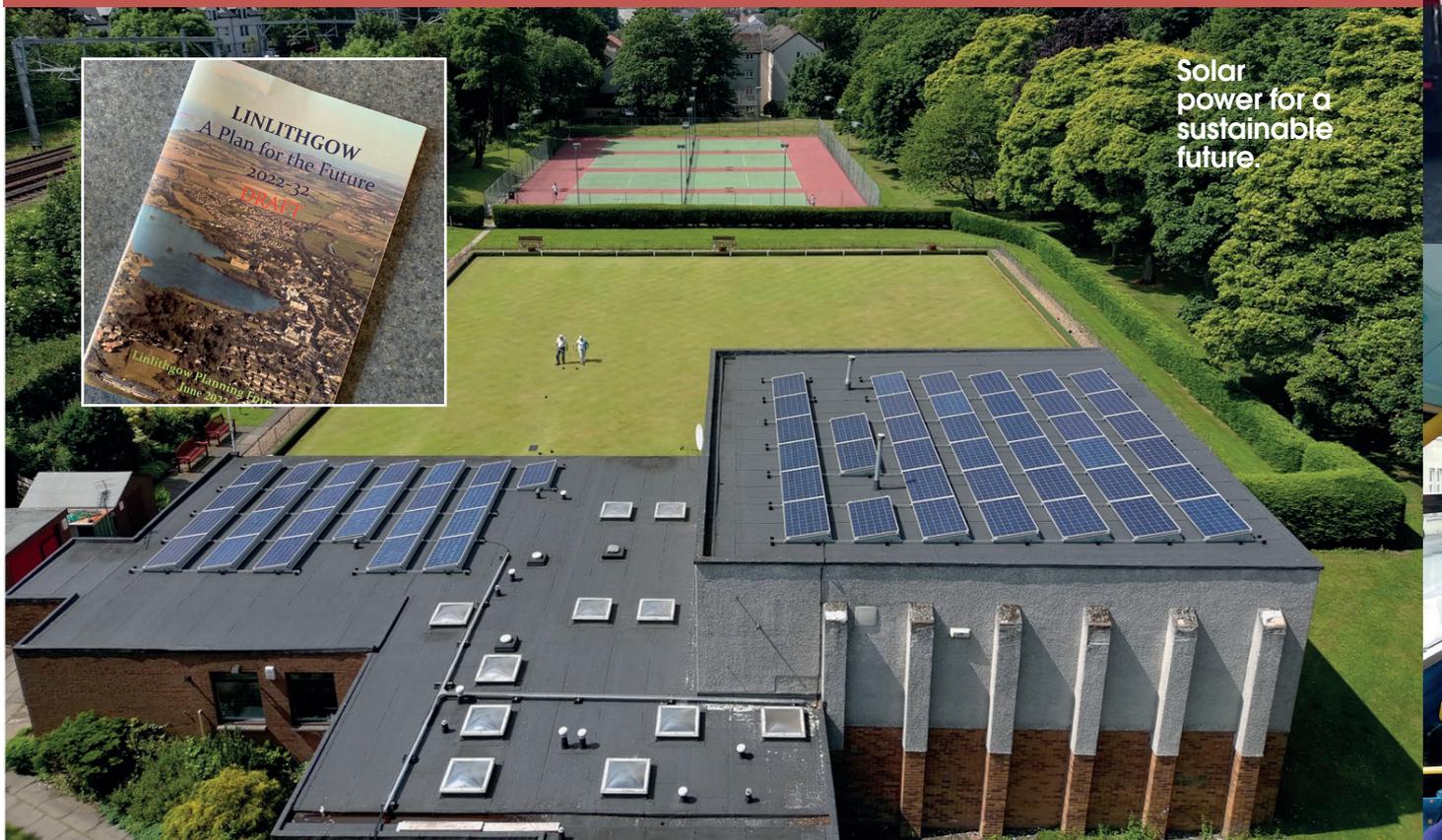
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PHOTOGRAPHY**



## THE LINLITHGOW ‘LOCAL PLACE PLAN’ EXHIBITION IS OVER – WHAT’S NEXT?

The planning articles in the last three editions of the Black Bitch have introduced the launch of ‘Local Place Plans’ in West Lothian, the objective of which is to encourage residents of local communities to take an interest in those planning issues that have significant impact on their town.

The first article in March introduced the changes to planning legislation to incorporate Local Place Plans, the second in April sought views on housing and the last article in May introduced the discussion on plans for the High Street.



Solar power for a sustainable future.

All three articles led to an exhibition held in the Burgh Halls on 16 and 21 June to allow public scrutiny of a draft plan prepared by the Linlithgow Planning Forum. Both days were well attended, the last day particularly so with up to 30 people at any one time studying the exhibition displays and sitting at tables working their way through the draft plans for the future of Linlithgow.

The large number of questionnaire responses and comments from the exhibition will be processed during July to collate the consensus views of those who attended. These responses will give a sound basis for Linlithgow’s Local Place Plan.

Based on conversations with those who attended the exhibition and a preliminary glance at the comments on the questionnaires, the primary issue which leaps out of the pages is infrastructure, summarised in one respondent’s comment *“my main thoughts are that town infrastructure needs to be in place before major housing developments start, as houses are built far quicker than roads, etc”*.

Some of the comments pose challenges to the Planning Forum in drafting the local place plan for example:

**>> Content:** *“The exhibition raises a mix of development and non-development issues which need separated out”*. Although there has been a recent decrease in Linlithgow’s population, any new development would reverse this trend and cause further stress on community services which would need to be catered for.



Eradicate town centre congestion.



Increase supply of affordable housing.



Provide a viable alternative to car usage.



Regenerate town centre conservation area.

>> **Environment:** *“We have 7 to 10 years to drastically cut carbon emissions, the ideas in the exhibition only scrape the surface”.*

>> **Legal:** *“Be very careful of developers’ promises – make agreements legally binding and punitive if broken”.*

>> **Location:** *“More brownfield sites should be used – agricultural land once developed is lost for good”.*

>> **Development:** *“Expansion of any community is not mandatory; developers will always be attracted to locations where profit can be maximised. Priority should lie with the local population of any future developments”.*

**What is next in our journey towards a Local Place Plan?**

At the present time, we have no guidance from West Lothian Council on the timetable for when they expect to receive the submission of Local Place Plans, although we expect this to be some time in the autumn of 2022. Irrespective of timetable, the next task for the Linlithgow Planning Forum is to summarise the main points from the exhibition questionnaires and then test these in one final consultation. Whether this is done through another face-to-face workshop and/or through some form of social media event has yet to be decided, but what can be guaranteed is that everyone will have the chance to make final comments before submission of the Local Place Plan to West Lothian Council.

**Linlithgow Planning Forum**

# CWAS LINLITHGOW CYCLING FOR THE COMMUNITY

**CWAS Linlithgow officially launched on May 14th unveiling its two trishaws – now available for community use!**

After seven months of hard work, fundraising and lots of training, the sun came out on the volunteers of CWAS who officially launched their two trishaws: Catherine and Heidi. Glenn Miller, captain of the Linlithgow chapter, officially presented the trishaws to the town thanking the team of volunteers for their determination and dedication which has made this moment possible. The trishaws were then welcomed to the town by Hector Woodhouse, a weel kent face, who afterwards enjoyed sampling the trishaw with a short trip along the loch.

Christine Bell, from CWAS headquarters, also gave a speech to congratulate Glenn and the team on the successful launch of the Linlithgow chapter.

### The Stories Behind the Names

**Catherine** is named after Catherine Shaw, late wife of John. Many locals will have seen John pushing Catherine's wheelchair around the town come rain or shine. Catherine passed away peacefully in May 2020 after a long illness. In the time she was confined to a wheelchair, they meandered around the loch, the canal and the many streets in Linlithgow, in fact they walked so far John had to buy new tyres for the wheelchair! Catherine loved the outdoors and John hopes the trishaw will allow a time of companionship, stillness and joy for all those enjoying the ride and hope they enjoy all the lovely places around Linlithgow in the same way Catherine did.



**Heidi** is named after CWAS secretary Ellen Wilson's niece, who sadly passed away in 2019, aged 4. Ellen is heavily involved in the trishaw project and she was moved when the Wednesday-group cyclists, aka the committee, said they would like one of the trishaws to be named Heidi. Ellen has shared many Heidi stories with her fellow cyclists and is delighted that Heidi's memory will live on and hopefully bring happy memories to those that enjoy the Trishaw experience.

### Day-to-day

Catherine is booked for use at the following places throughout the week:

**Monday** HC One

**Tuesday** Bield House

**Wednesday** Linlithgow Day Care Centre

**Thursday** Brae Court

**Friday** Ark Housing and Kinloch View

**Saturday** Disability Sports: No Limits Club (Xcite)

Heidi is available for public booking by the community throughout the week – if you, a friend or relative, might enjoy this experience, please contact us for further details and to book (details below).

All rides are free of charge, and a trained pilot will cycle the trishaw along with a trained co-pilot on foot.

### The Road to the Launch

In September 2021, an enthusiastic group of cyclists brought the idea of CWAS to the streets of Linlithgow. The project originated in Denmark and there are currently 50 trishaws running in Scotland.

The aim of the CWAS Linlithgow group is to enhance and enrich lives by giving passengers access to our beautiful outdoors through Trishaw rides, access which is denied to so many people simply because of age or limited mobility. It's a fun, fulfilling and life-enhancing experience that we can give our elderly, disabled people (of all ages) and those with life-limiting conditions.

We maintain the highest standards of safety in all our operations, fully complying with the requirements of the Scottish Care Inspectorate. This includes insurances, PVG disclosure, full Trishaw and First Aid training for all our



volunteers.

We have worked collaboratively with West Lothian Council and our CWAS charity colleagues, undertaking careful research to establish accredited routes around the town.

### Fundraising

There has been a tremendous interest in this project and we have been amazed by the donations to date. Alongside community fundraising, a substantial donation from Linlithgow Round Table enabled us to purchase our first Trishaw, and get us officially on the road.

Thanks to the amazing determination of **Ellen Wilson**, who filled in form after form, we secured a large grant from the **National Lottery Fund** to purchase the second trishaw.

### Going forward

**Linlithgow Community Development Trust** is currently working on a purpose-built cycling circuit. We hope in the future the trishaws will be available for trips around the circuit for passengers to experience and enjoy the nature projects that will be set up in conjunction with Burgh Beautiful.



For more information and to volunteer as a pilot, find us on Facebook @ [cyclingwithoutagescotlandlinlithgow](#), email us [cwaslinlithgow@gmail.com](mailto:cwaslinlithgow@gmail.com) or phone 07835 938469.





## THE LIFE/WORK BALANCE!

It's been busy at New Hopetoun Gardens since the last issue of the Black Bitch and not just because it's peak gardening season. Surprisingly, it appears that there is life beyond gardening, something they call the life/work balance!



Morag, Edinburgh Marathon

Our Managing Director, **Morag**, completed the Edinburgh marathon last month in just a few minutes over four hours. Her 'life' element seemed to be training for the run for months before, and she raised over a thousand pounds for the gardeners charity **Perennial**. She was flat out with the 'work' side of her life at the same time, so we hope she has got her 'life' back now!



Lesley and Dougal

Dougal and Lesley fitted in a short busman's holiday at the end of May judging show gardens at the Chelsea Flower Show. They were caught here on the Perennial trade stand in Eastern Avenue which was supporting the Perennial show garden on Main Avenue. The garden deservedly won the Peoples' Choice Award with so many visitors exclaiming that it was a real garden and by far their most favourite. As a judge, Dougal felt he couldn't comment!



There have been some new arrivals as well. **Sam and Ian** have celebrated the very happy arrival of **Oscar** who was born on June 2nd, weighing a healthy 9lbs 1oz. Congratulations to them and welcome to Oscar!



**Holly**, our new rescue cat, joined us in May and settled in very quickly. Her marmalade companion, **Rowan**, isn't that impressed with her, although he doesn't meow quite so much and quite so loudly. But this might be, because **Holly** doesn't stand any nonsense from him, despite being half his size, and he might be trying to keep a lower profile?

Head over Heels



Finally, we have had many new original works of outside art arriving in the gardens. We have our **Art in the Garden** display running in July and August where we install original works of art in our demonstration gardens.

We hope to entertain and inspire you with these pieces and perhaps tempt you to add a new ornament to your own garden this summer.

You can also vote for your favourite piece, and the names of those who voted for the winning **People's Choice** are entered in a draw to win **New Hopetoun Gardens Gift vouchers**.

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Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson  
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## GET A G.R.A.S.P OF YOUR SKIN!

Continuing from last month's article which was on gentle refreshing facials to condition your skin. Did you know that I can take it even further to help you really get a G.R.A.S.P of your skin with any concerns or conditions? **It is easier to achieve than you think!**

### Do you have...

- General skin health
- Redness prone skin
- Ageing or Acne skin
- Sensitive skin
- Pigmented skin

If you answered yes to any of the above, then I can help you.

With the right skincare and treatments, you can stimulate your skin to rejuvenate itself faster like younger skin. You can...

- Improve your general skin condition further
- Reduce the symptoms and manage your redness prone skin
- Improve and slow down your ageing skin or reduce acne
- Repair sensitive skin
- Reduce pigmented skin.

### Why I am confident I can help you.

At Skin Happy I use Alumier medical grade skincare, this gives me the guarantee (White Papers- Scientific proof & evidence) that any home skincare products used, and in-clinic treatments received work how they are supposed to work. This means they go through a heavily funded process of strict testing and trials before they become available.

### How can I help you to improve (get a GRASP of) your skin?

By having at my fingertips, a selection of superficial to medium depth chemical peels with treatment options for all skin colour types that will trigger the replenishment of new skin cells in the lower epidermis leading to skin rejuvenation (improving your GRASP).

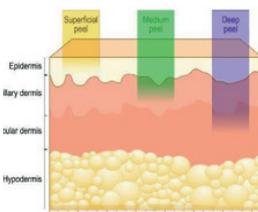
I use mild to medium chemical peels which are superficial peels.

Most clients I see are scared or put off by chemical peels because of what they have seen on television dramas or series that show various high risk deep chemical peels or acid peel treatments. These deep and aggressive peels need to be conducted by a medic in a medical environment because they do come with risks. The face goes red, raw, sore and recovery is around 3 weeks. These peels

do have their place but for mainstream rejuvenation and maintenance this is not required or necessary.

### Superficial to medium - depth peels are known for exceptional results and safety profile with minimal downtime.

At Skin Happy the chemical peels I use DO NOT have the same downtime as the

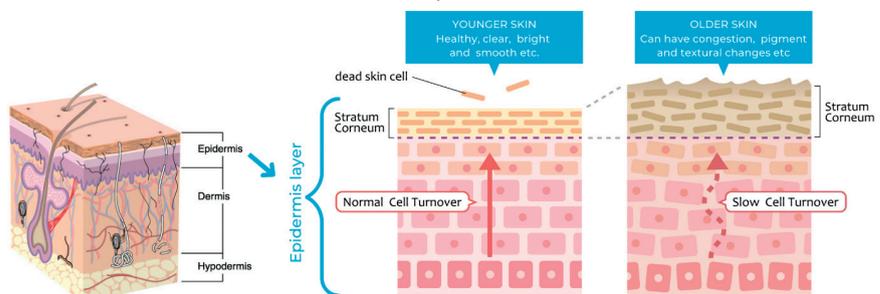


Chemical peels (aesthetic treatment)

deep peels mentioned above. Downtime can be nothing or at most 3-5 days of mild small patches of dead flaky skin cells that can easily be flicked away. (Nobody would think anything other than you have a bit of dry skin). I provide a post treatment kit to minimise this down time further (which consists of a gentle face wash, intense moisturising and hydrating balm and sunscreen).

### How do Chemical Peels work?

They encourage exfoliation by sinking into the pores and follicles dissolving any dead skin cells there, along with excess oil and bacteria. It also dissolves and sloughs off (lifts off and away) dead skin cells from the very top layer of your skin/Stratum corneum. These cells are already dead, waiting to naturally shed away. As we get older our skin cell cycle slows down, sebaceous oil becomes thicker causing dead cells to become sticky making it more difficult for them to naturally shed away.



The chemical peel exfoliation forces the body to quickly replenish them with new cells. This process speeds up its overall skin cell production cycle. Increasing your cell cycle production enables your skin to function and work better improving your GRASP giving you a more youthful appearance with skin that is clear, smooth, and radiant.

Once the dead skin cells/outer dead layers of the stratum corneum are removed, booster ingredients are better absorbed and so applied immediately after the peel. Booster ingredients consist of anti-ageing, antioxidants, peptides and brightening accelerators which enhance the treatment results.

### What are the benefits of Chemical Peels?

The benefits of doing these peels thickens the epidermis, increasing dermal volume and stimulating collagen. The results give smoother more radiant skin complexion and when they are performed regularly the skin gets use to this process and begins to rejuvenate itself faster like younger skin improving your GRASP!

### Why get maintenance or repeated treatments?

Healthy radiant skin doesn't happen overnight. Some treatments take time to show results. A single chemical peel can provide the immediate effect of bright, smooth, and radiant skin; however more significant results in treating textural issues, discoloration, fine lines, and inflamed acne can take longer. Therefore, a scheduled plan is recommended. This is repeated treatments for progression in intensity of treatments and results. When peels are performed regularly, the skin gets use to this process and begins to rejuvenate itself like younger skin.

Popular areas treated are the face, neck, chest and back.

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We return your skin back to radiance, helping you to feel confident, carefree, and skin happy.

## LINLITHGOW ROSE F.C. LOOKING BACK & LOOKING FORWARD

As Season 2021/22 finished with two cups in the trophy cabinet after an eight year wait for success, I was asked to make some comments regarding the roller-coaster of last season.

Optimism was high after a successful pre-season and with the bonus of fans being welcomed back after the previous two years of interrupted football. Our first game was away to Crossgates Primrose and a last-minute penalty meant we came away with a point, but dropped points were to become a feature of more games. This led to the hard decision to remove Brown Ferguson from the manager's role, a decision that involved lots of discussion within the committee.

After a successful interview, former player - and legend - Gordon Herd was appointed as the new gaffer, bringing with him John Miller, Eamon Fullerton & Paul Cairney. An exit in the first preliminary round of the Scottish Cup by the hands of Banks of Dee, led the new management team to make some difficult choices in the playing squad as a number of players moved on and others joined.

No one thought at this time the Rose would embark on a 21 game winning run that put them back in the chase for the league title although it just wasn't to be. However cup final wins against Gala Fairydean in the East of Scotland Cup and another against Tranent in the East of Scotland League Cup on two successive Sundays led to huge celebrations for players, management, fans and committee.

The last season also saw the re-branding of the ground to The MV Commercial Prestonfield Stadium, as well as continued backing from J&W Harris and Alan Steel (Asset Management).

Match day hospitality packages were introduced, with additional service at times from The Crannog Café and The Ashman Tandoori restaurant proving very successful.

On a more poignant note, our Club Chaplain David Todd led a short service of remembrance for those who passed away during the COVID period.

Less than three weeks after celebrating beating Tranent, the players returned on Saturday 25th June for a double training session. In addition, several players have left the club, with no fewer than seven new arrivals, as we prepare for a serious title challenge and the goal of promotion to the Lowland League.

It's not easy running a club the size of Linlithgow Rose as the committee are all volunteers. A huge amount of work is done behind the scenes on almost a daily basis. We are always looking for new faces to join the committee but would also welcome others who merely want to join our band of helpers on match days. We gratefully acknowledge those who already give up their time to do so.

*You can also help by purchasing a season ticket, taking one of our match day hospitality tickets (gift vouchers will be available for either birthday or Xmas presents), or joining the existing 50/50 club for £10 per month with a current monthly prize of £500.*

*Keep up to date for any new announcements on our Facebook or Twitter pages, and we look forward to seeing you all shortly.*

**HAIL THE GALLANT!!**

**Alan Sneddon**  
LRFC Committee



Photo credits Andrew West



## A NEW PHARMACY FOR LINLITHGOW?



**My name is Tom Byrne.**

I am a pharmacist and a resident of Linlithgow for the past 26 years. I am undertaking a joint consultation with NHS Lothian regarding the requirement for a new pharmacy in the town. I would like your help.

As a resident of the town I am only too aware of the pressures that the existing pharmacies have been under for some time. The recent pandemic has only served to further exacerbate these pressures. With people continuing to work from home, in some form, on a permanent basis, accessing services locally rather than at their place of work means that demand on the already strained pharmacy services in Linlithgow has increased further. Just think of the queues we have seen recently at both existing pharmacies.

A new pharmacy will provide the additional capacity required to address the issues currently being experienced and ensure provision of adequate services.

I plan to open a pharmacy that will be focused on an efficient, patient centered dispensing service along with delivery of additional services such as pharmacy first, pharmacy first plus, multi component compartment aids, blood pressure monitoring, NHS vaccinations service, travel health service etc.

These additional services will allow the local community to quickly access a range of treatments for certain conditions that would previously have required a GP appointment, thereby releasing GP appointments for more serious conditions. Naturally the new pharmacy would work in partnership with existing services particularly with local GPs and nurses to ensure patients requirements are met.

Premises have been secured on the High Street, at EH49 7EP and will include the facilities required to deliver the above range of services.

The pharmacy will be staffed by two pharmacists, including an independent prescriber, to allow provision of pharmacy first, pharmacy first plus and other prescribing services along with support staff to ensure an efficient service to meet patient requirements. All dispensing of prescriptions will be carried out on site with no use of remote dispensing operations to minimize prescription supply times to patients.

However, before any application for a new pharmacy can be considered by NHS Lothian the regulations require that NHS Lothian and the TPB Partnership LLP carry out a joint consultation for the requirement of a new pharmacy with residents who live in the area.

Residents of Linlithgow are, therefore, invited to participate in the joint consultation, which is available at [www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/Services/Pharmacies/NewPharmacyApplications](http://www.nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk/Services/Pharmacies/NewPharmacyApplications).

**To request a paper copy of the survey residents can phone 0131 537 8427 or write to: Pharmacy Contractor Support Officer, NHS Lothian Primary Care Contractors Organisation, 2nd Floor, Waverley Gate, 2-4 Waterloo Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3EG.**

**The closing date for comments is 30th September 2022.** I believe this is a real opportunity for the residents of Linlithgow to influence the provision of additional health services in the town and I would encourage you to take some time to give your views.

**Tom Byrne**



Ian Fowler, former captain of the Kingsfield Golf Society and Jane Connachan, PGA Teaching Professional at Kingsfield. Inset: Past winner with Jane Allan.



"In The Barn after the tournament - an expectant wait"

## 'KATIE'S CUP' WILL RETURN WITH A BANG!

The annual charity tournament known as 'Katie's Cup' has become the highlight of the golfing calendar at the Kingsfield Golf and Leisure complex on the outskirts of Linlithgow. It attracts teams from far and wide and since its inception in 2010, has raised over £200,000 for many amazing charities.

The event hasn't taken place in the last two years, but plans are well underway for a triumphant return on Saturday August 20th.

The Arkley family established Kingsfield Golf and Leisure in 2009 on land that had previously been part of the long-established family farm and the complex is home to an exceptionally maintained 9 hole USGA specification course, as well as an 18 hole family putting green, a short game area, a 20-bay driving range, TaylorMade fitting centre, tuition studio and the popular Tee Caddy coffee shop.

Kingsfield Golf Society run the competitions at the facility and its members are heavily involved in organising 'Katie's Cup' every year. An Arkley family tragedy was the inspiration for the inaugural event in 2010, as Jane Allan (nee Arkley) explained: -

*"I had a stillborn baby - Katie - in 2002 and it was quite a taboo subject. Nobody*

*would mention her name. A friend of ours said that we needed to celebrate the baby and he bought a cup. I wanted to do something for SANDS - the stillbirth and neonatal death charity - and a tournament involving the Golf Society members seemed like a good idea. It started really small in 2009 and coincided with my son's tenth birthday. We had a barbeque, and it was a real family affair."*

Andrew Corr was a founder member of the Kingsfield Golf Society in 2009 and 'Katie's Cup' was a fitting way to mark their first season of competitions. He told me: -

*"This was our first charity fundraiser, and it was such a success that it has followed on year after year. I think the second year, it got a bit bigger, with more people involved and then in year three, we decided to take the big step and have an evening event down at the Barn. That's when it went up a notch or five, because it allowed us to take more players during the day and then invite people at night. We had games, a disco, and an auction that raised thousands and thousands of pounds. The evening celebration is now firmly established as a huge event and friends have described it as the best barn dance they have ever been to."*

*"COVID put paid to the tenth anniversary in 2020, and it's a bit of a shame, because that would have been Katie's eighteenth birthday. Unfortunately, we missed that opportunity because of the circumstances, but this year we will be back with a bang on Saturday August 20th"*

Since its inception, 'Katie's Cup' has

always raised funds for causes close to the hearts of the Arkley family and the Kingsfield members. These include the Beatson Cancer Centre, the British Liver Trust, the Children's Liver Disease Foundation, the On Course Foundation, Pancreatic Cancer Scotland and the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation. In 2019, the Chris Mitchell Foundation and the agricultural charity, RSABI, shared a fantastic total of £20,000.

As well as money raised on the day, including the spectacular auction at the night-time event, other fundraisers take place throughout the year, as Andrew Corr explained: -

*"We have forum nights at Kingsfield, where one of our members, Brian McLaughlin of the BBC, will set up a panel of famous sports people and members and friends are invited to take part in a question-and-answer session. We raise money at our annual AGM and through various initiatives, which have included a sponsored chest wax and a bungee jump. Local businesses are also very generous, in terms of donating prizes and sponsorship."*

This year's charities include CHAS (Children's Hospices Across Scotland), My Name's 5 Doddie, Ronald McDonald House, Riding for the Disabled, The Moira Fund and Cross Reach (in memory of Rev. Johnny Paton).

Further information about Kingsfield Golf and Leisure and 'Katie's Cup' is available from Laura Fowler on her email: [laura@kingsfieldleisure.com](mailto:laura@kingsfieldleisure.com)



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Gary Clinton

# Take The Lead

**Take The Lead is an initiative I am spearheading to communicate West Lothian Council rules surrounding dog walking in Linlithgow – especially in children’s play parks - and secondly to garner support for the introduction of both dog friendly and dog free times in specific zones in the town and potentially across the county.**

In my last contribution to our community magazine (issue 88, March 2022) I covered the issue of nuisance dogs running off the lead and scaring children at play parks, and I have since carried out some research to find out what the current rules are and how big an issue dogs ‘off the lead’ in Linlithgow is. [www.facebook.com/taketheleadlinlithgow](http://www.facebook.com/taketheleadlinlithgow)



## What Are The Current Rules Regarding Dog Walking?

Without a doubt, dogs off the lead in public places is a divisive issue as my post on the Linlithgow Facebook page on 27th February demonstrated. It asked dog owners in the town to please put their pets on a lead at children’s playparks with a picture of a sign recently put up by the council unambiguously saying: ‘dogs on leads’. However, I do think there are valid points on both sides, and there are times

and places when it’s perfectly acceptable for a dog to be off the lead. This is reflected by the West Lothian Ranger Service Guide To Responsible Access In West Lothian who point out that:

*“Dogs are an important and welcome aspect of outdoor life in West Lothian” and “Walking a dog remains the most popular reason for why people visit the outdoors in Scotland, with more than 40% of all outdoor visits by Scottish adults being dog walks.”*

However, they also say: *“Always keep your dog under ‘proper control’ [meaning] the dog is able to respond to your commands, and is under close control or kept on a short lead (2 metres or less)” and “even the friendliest of dogs can easily become an annoyance or even a danger to other users, whether they’re cyclists, horse-riders or indeed other dog-walkers.”*

**The Ranger Service** point out rules do vary depending on where you are, however, a dog should not be off the lead, running around at full tilt at children’s playparks – there are other outdoor places dogs can safely do this, for example, ‘The Secure Dog Area’ at Beecraigs Country Park and The Dawg Field at Ecclesmachan, plus countless other deserted fields that surround Linlithgow. The Access Code sums it up by saying *“dog-walkers should ‘avoid causing concern to others’, so if your dog has not been trained to obey your commands, whomever or whatever crosses its path, you should be prepared to keep it on a short lead.”*

And there is the main problem... dogs who do not recall when commanded and owners who do nothing about it. As one contributor to my Facebook post alluded to, there is no such thing as a ‘nuisance dog’, only a ‘nuisance owner’, and unfortunately this minority are unlikely to change their ways. However, I am hopeful this article may resonate with the responsible dog ownership of Linlithgow

and, in fact, have already heard from some dog lovers who now do put their pet on a lead at kids play areas and are happy to do so.

## Access For Everyone? Not Quite...

One remit of the above government funded organisations is to ensure fair access for everyone to public spaces, and currently this is not the case. A number of people contacted me as a result of the Facebook post (also the West Lothian Courier who did a small story on the issues raised, such as their prevalence) to say they are unable to use public spaces due to fear of encountering a dog. The **WL Ranger Service** say:

*“A recent survey by the Dogs Trust found that 1 in 3 children, and 1 in 7 parents, are genuinely afraid of dogs.”*

In a town of nearly 13,000, that is over 4,000 children and nearly 2,000 adults. Unfortunately, this fear is sometimes met with ridicule which can sadly be seen on my Facebook post. Two people described it as ‘snowflake generation’ and one person even ridiculed me personally, however, it’s important to filter out these unhelpful comments, because this is a serious issue. Additionally, as a race of people it’s fair to say we all have irrational phobias.



Have you ever seen a fully grown adult at a garden BBQ literally fly through the air because a wasp has flown in their vicinity? Irrational, because the wasp measures 1.7cms, and a sting isn’t all that sore - we are maybe 100 times bigger than it is, but yet to that person, the fear is very real, perhaps inducing stress, anxiety, raised

heartbeat, hot flushes, etc. So worth remembering we are all different and we should try and treat each other with respect and compassion whenever possible. (Unless that person who flies through the air escaping the wasp spills your drink – then it's a different matter entirely!) So for me, it's not fair that a person who experiences a very real fear of dogs is completely excluded from our beautiful public spaces, like the loch, the canal, countless play parks, and recreation areas.

Public places should be accessible to all, including those who have cynophobia (fear of dogs), plus those who just don't want to be around dogs, and currently this is not the case. So, if there is enough support, I propose to lobby local councillors and politicians to introduce 'dog friendly times' in Linlithgow and West Lothian; around which dogs would not be permitted, so everyone is accommodated- which brings me back to **Take The Lead**.

[www.facebook.com/taketheleadlinlithgow](https://www.facebook.com/taketheleadlinlithgow)

**I have set up a Facebook page as a focal point, and if you would like to show your support and even become involved, please like the page, and from there we can see if the appetite for this exists.**

**My ideas for Take The Lead are few things in the community, as well as making public places safely accessible to all:**

- >> *Ensure clear signage is introduced, communicating the rules.*
- >> *Help those with cynophobia by inviting local animal experts to advertise dog 'desensitisation' classes on Facebook page.*
- >> *Raise money for The Dogs Trust, who rescue and re-home dogs in need of help.*
- >> *Establish Council funding for a free and enclosed children's ball play area in Linlithgow.*
- >> *The re-introduction of full-time dog wardens in the county.*

I also want to make it clear- this is not in any way 'anti-dog' and not about trying to make lives more difficult for dog owners – it's about trying to improve life in Linlithgow and based on my conversations thus far, most dog owners are already very mindful about keeping their pet under control and fully support it. Plus it's important dog owners feel they can bring their pet to Linlithgow, as there are a number of dog friendly establishments on the High street, and this brings business into the town. Furthermore, some dog owners weren't aware their friendly and



beloved pet can cause distress to others and have begun popping the lead on around children's playparks and tight spaces like the canal towpath and Loch where dogs can be a dangerous hazard to other users and local wildlife, if allowed to run out of control.

In England it is the norm to have dog free times in certain places, like for example, on beaches in Cornwall, and it's something that solves an issue for both sides. If you don't want to be around a dog, you have somewhere to go and as a dog owner, you can confidently take your pet to, for example, a beach and let it off the lead, as long as it responds to your commands.

#### **Schnauzer Pups!**

As I think most Black Bitch readers know (just noticed the irony there!) my day job is music, not community issues - although I am keen to try and contribute if I can - and many of my students have dogs, and I know the happiness they bring. There are very good reasons human beings love dogs and that's been made even clearer to

me hearing about one of my young student's recent experience looking after Schnauzer pups from birth before waving goodbye to them, as they went to local families. Every week in that lesson I asked about the pups, how they were getting on and I loved hearing about it. The extraordinary work and sacrifice required was incredible, and despite the whole family being very sad to see them go, they said it was an amazing experience, and it made me think that dogs are an animal that needs our help more than anything else.

#### **Sources:**

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/61711/Ranger-Service-Guide-To-Responsible-Access-In-West-Lothian>

<https://www.outdooraccess-scotland.scot/practical-guide-all/dog-walking>

<https://www.dogparksnearme.co.uk/>



# WHITE HOUSES

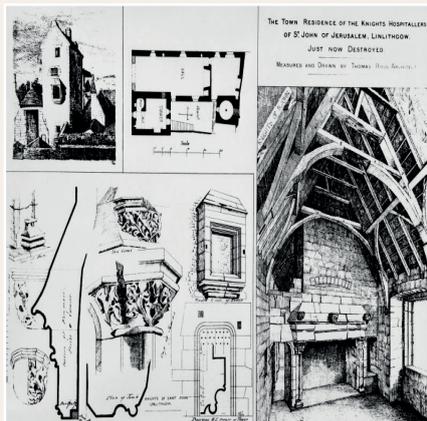
Bruce Jamieson



*The White House in Barnton.*

By pure coincidence, I recently came across references to two buildings each called “The White House” – neither being the abode of the American president but two very different dwellings with connections to Linlithgow. The first White House is this one, in the Barnton area of Edinburgh.

At its core is a 16th century tower house built on an L-plan, but extensively added to over the centuries. It features a doorway, above which is carved the insignia “16 DP 15”, the letters signifying the name ‘David Primrose’, an ancestor of the Earl of Rosebery, who bought the house in 1615.



*Part of the record of the Mint compiled by MacGibbon and Ross.*

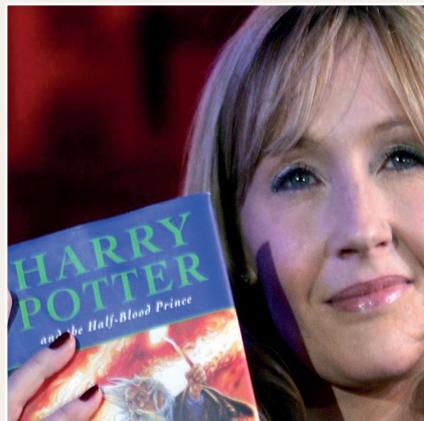
By the late 19th century, the property was owned by a **John Mackay**, who commissioned architects David MacGibbon and Thomas Ross to make considerable alterations to the property which were duly carried out

between the years 1897 and 1901. An extension was built onto the smaller wing, and a new section was also added to the north-west corner of the old house, extending it even further.

The same two gentlemen had previously been commissioned to make a detailed record of the building

called The Mint which stood on Linlithgow High Street and which was threatened with demolition. They accordingly produced a written and photographic report of the complex which had at one time been the Town House of the Knights of St John who were a medieval and early modern military order also known as the Knights Hospitaller.

Shortly after the architectural report, the building was indeed demolished and, during its dismantling, the firm of MacGibbon and Ross claimed the oak timber from the elaborate ceiling in the Great Hall and some walnut panelling – both of which were used in the construction of the 19th century extension to the White House at Barnton. The stately dwelling is now the property of a well-known individual, the author **J. K. Rowling**, who now resides in a house which features timber detailing which once graced a historic Linlithgow property.



*The present resident of the White House at Barnton.*

In the place of the Mint was built a solid Victorian development which

housed shops, residential properties and the St Michael’s Hotel. In the rear area, alongside St Michael’s Wynd, were the remains of some interesting outbuildings and the foundations of a spiral staircase. Unfortunately, in 1990 these too were obliterated by a developer’s mechanical digger, before any archaeological work could be carried out.



*Demolition of the last remaining evidence of The Mint.*

Gone were all traces of what architectural historian **Geoffrey Stell** claimed was “undoubtedly the most impressive and, at the time of its demolition, the most unaltered 15th century urban building in the land”. **Mr George McNeill**, at the time the director of planning for West Lothian, described the final clearing of the site, “commercial vandalism at its very worst”.



*The development which replaced The Mint can be seen in the centre.*



*St Michael’s Hotel and public bar – now converted into flats.*

The other ‘White House’ once stood in Linlithgow’s Blackness Road. A late 18th century building, by the year 1970 it had seen better days and was in a slowly deteriorating condition, its once whitewashed walls tarnished and its windows and doors all boarded up.



*The White House photographed in 1970.*

In that year, the Town Clerk of Linlithgow, **Ian Cameron**, wrote to the National Trust asking if they would be prepared to restore and preserve the interesting, historic structure. They replied saying that it might fit nicely into their "Little Houses" scheme which had already restored some significant domestic dwellings across Scotland - notably in Culross and in some East Neuk fishing villages in Fife.



*At the foot of the previous column is Rowanbank, a 17th century building in Culross, restored by the National Trust.*

However, things moved slowly, and by the time the Trust was ready to act, the building had been privately purchased from the building's owner, Mr Brock. The new owner, **Mr Jim Shanks**, declared his intention to demolish the building and to build a modern bungalow on the site.

Despite concern being raised by West Lothian planners and notwithstanding opposition from the newly established Linlithgow Civic Trust, plans to flatten the building went ahead. A detailed survey was commissioned, and it reported that the walls were sound and the building was eminently restorable. The report declared that the unique window layout, and the pantiled roof should be retained in the restoration.

An offer to buy and restore the edifice from a **Mr S. Henderson** was received but it was rejected and the demolition went ahead. West Lothian Planning Department, led by **Mr Moodie**, and the Scottish Development Department raised no objection and the Category C listed building duly disappeared. Another part of the town's historical fabric had vanished.

*Below: The building which replaced White House.*



*The Linlithgowshire Gazette pointed out the threat to the building.*



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## ONE LINLITHGOW

**YOU MAY HAVE SEEN THE NAME, ONE LINLITHGOW, POP UP IN THE BLACK BITCH, THE GAZETTE AND AROUND TOWN, BUT WHO EXACTLY ARE WE?**

'ONE LINLITHGOW' is the Business Improvement District (BID) for the local area. Funded by local businesses through a levy, 'ONE LINLITHGOW' works with local organisations to help deliver a wide variety of projects and services to help improve the local economy. We also seek external funding to help supplement these projects and support the local community.

The following is a sample of the projects we are currently involved in while developing a focused tourism and business strategy to attract visitors to the town, boost the local economy, and help create a thriving business and community environment:

- *Implementation of a CCTV and ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system on the High Street and Mill Road Industrial Estate/ Business Park to help deter criminal and malicious behaviour*
- *Rollout of new defibrillators in the pubs along the Linlithgow Trail, in the Burgh Halls and two new external units (to be installed), one at The Vennel and another out at Braehead Business Units*
- *Support Burgh Beautiful with funding to help maintain and water the various beautiful planters around town*
- *Festive lighting to help the town sparkle at Christmas*
- *The Fiver Fest fortnight supporting local independent businesses*
- *Relaunch of the Linlithgow Artisan Market*
- *Publication of the Linlithgow Visitor Guide*

Following the pandemic, we are renewing our efforts to support local businesses, and help the town emerge from lockdown and the current recession, by working with local organisations and business/ community groups.



## BLUE GREEN ALGAE BLOOMS

**A STAY SAFE MESSAGE FROM THE BID PUPS...**

**"Dogs love the water! We really do. That's why it's important that our fellow pups and other animals stay safe when blue-green algae blooms appear in freshwater lochs, ponds, and rivers across the UK.**

At certain times, depending on weather conditions and other factors, algae can multiply to cause blooms. Often, this makes the water look cloudy and a horrible, blue-green colour, sometimes with scum floating on the surface. The problem is for us dogs, and potentially humans too, these blooms and the water itself may become toxic. Sadly, some dogs have passed away having come into contact with the algae, scum, or by drinking the water.

**Linlithgow Loch** and the **Beecraigs Reservoir** are known to be susceptible to these blue-green algae blooms so here is some advice to keep you and your humans safe:

Look out for any warning signs put up by the responsible national environmental agency or local authority near water bodies;



Keep us pups on the lead and by your side around water bodies known to have, or suspected to have, a blue-green algae bloom - don't let us dogs swim in it or drink from it (that goes for you humans, too!);

If we do accidentally end up in the water, please wash us with clean water afterwards (urgh, a bath!);

**Seek emergency veterinary treatment if you are worried that we might have ingested toxic algae.**

**Follow these simple guidelines to stay safe and have lots of fun this summer!"**

## THE JUBILEE CORGI TRAIL

The Jubilee Corgi Trail proved very popular with 97 entries and a host of families exploring Linlithgow High Street for these runaway pooches.

We have contacted the prize draw winners and 30 Royal Corgis are now residing in their new homes.

The Corgis were hiding out at the following shops on the High Street:



2 Feet 1st // A Wee Mindin' // AJM Hair // Aran // Bonnie Weddings & Events // Bright Star Toys // Centre Stage Dancewear // Complete Health at the Millstone // Crannog Cafe // Elevation Cycles // Fair Tradewinds // Far from the Madding Crowd // J Walker Carpets // Jewellery by Design // Kapital Kilts

Lilypond Crafts & Gifts // Linlithgow DIY // Linlithgow Stoves & Gifts // Little Beau Beep // Mackie & Brechin Vets // Mac's of Linlithgow // Mid-C-Mod // Oliphants // **One Linlithgow** // Purely Patchwork // Specsavers // TD Anderson // Thread Counter // Tracey Victoria Interiors // Wilson's Newsagents

We thank all the businesses for taking care of the Corgis during the Trail and special mention to Linlithgow DIY and Bright Star Toys for volunteering to collect the entry forms, and to Bright Star Toys for sourcing our cuddly Corgi friends.

Well done to everyone who took part and congratulations to the winners of the prize draw!

## LINLITHGOW ARTISAN MARKET

The first Linlithgow Artisan Market launched on Saturday 4 June and proved popular with visitors. There was a buzz in the air, it was a beautiful sunny day, and everyone was out and about enjoying themselves over the bank holiday weekend.

The Artisan Market will return on the first Saturday of every month up to and including December, here are the dates for your diary:

Saturday 6 August // Saturday 3 September  
Saturday 1 October // Saturday 5 November  
Saturday 3 December (Christmas market).



## LINLITHGOW TRAIL

It's back with a flourish, and once again providing not only a welcome boost for pubs in Linlithgow, but also for locals and businesses alike with funding for a raft of initiatives to enhance the attractiveness of the town, as well as its safety.



The Linlithgow Trail (formerly Ale Trail), founded in 2014, has suffered a hiatus in the last two years, further eroding the income of pubs already suffering the drastic effect the pandemic has had on their income.

Now, with Covid restrictions lifted, seven pubs in Linlithgow Pubwatch are seeing the return of both townsfolk to the trail, and also visitors from a wide area keen to enjoy the experience and be rewarded with a special Linlithgow Trail T-shirt when they complete it.

Seven pubs feature in the trail, which can either start or finish at the West Port Hotel or Platform 3, with the Black Bitch, the Crown Arms, the Footballers and Cricketers Arms, the Four Marys, and Cafebar 1807 providing the link.

Ian Gibson, mine host at the popular Platform 3, and secretary of Linlithgow Pubwatch, described the pandemic restrictions as a "disaster" for the trail, as well as for trade in pubs in the town.

*"It's fantastic to see it return and beginning to near the popularity it had prior to the pandemic. One of the many good things about it is the numbers it is attracting from Edinburgh and Glasgow and elsewhere."*

*"For many it's their first time in Linlithgow. They see all we have to offer in our beautiful and historic town, and return with family or friends, and spend money in local shops, cafes and restaurants."*

Ian said that what was less widely known was the local initiatives either completely or partially funded by income generated by the sale of trail T-shirts - initially given out free, but now bought for £5 by participants.

*"We have given out 22,000, and we wanted to see the income generated being used for worthwhile projects to further add to the attractiveness of the town, but also to add to its safety."*

*"Pubwatch was instrumental in the installation of defibrillators in all its members pubs, and we eventually received financial assistance from One Linlithgow, which represents businesses in the town, and the Town Management Group."*

*"I can't think of any other town centre in Scotland that has that amount of DeFibs in such a small area. We sincerely hope they will never have to be used, but they could save a life, or lives."*

Since its inception, Pubwatch has contributed over £7,600 towards Christmas lights in Linlithgow. Initially they were installed outside its member pubs, but there are now a total of 41 on the High Street.

In a further enhancement to the town's famous floral displays, Pubwatch has installed large planters outside Platform 3, and opposite the West Port Hotel, paying for displays by Burgh Beautiful, and their annual maintenance. Linlithgow Trail also sponsors the flower beds at the Black Bitch sculpture on the High Street.

Added Ian, *"I think we can be proud of what we have achieved. The Linlithgow Trail is still called the Ale Trail by many, but folk taking part can have any drink they choose and still have their card stamped for a T-shirt!"*



## LINLITHGOW LEADS THE WAY!

*Community Moorings Scotland (CMS) are making history by going live with their first community-owned moorings hub located on the bank at Narrowboat Farm, Linlithgow.*

CMS is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) that was created in 2016 to create more choice and opportunities for the canal-based communities, while bringing life and vibrancy to our much-underused canals. CMS intends to create hubs along the length of the lowland canals creating places to live, work, play, and learn together, from which both the canal-based and the local communities can benefit.

Community-owned moorings help address so many of the current environmental and economical issues that are having an impact on our society. Living and trading from a boat is a far more affordable and environmentally friendly way to live and work. Creating mooring hubs on the canal, alongside existing infrastructure, minimises the release of carbon in comparison to house building as well as minimising disruption to the existing community.

There are so many positive ways that community-owned moorings can contribute to the local people and areas where they are established.

CMS's first history-making boaters will soon be taking up their moorings, and one of these history-makers is **Elsbeth Soutar**, who will be opening "This Time Mindfully", a therapeutic, mindfulness and healing centre on a boat.

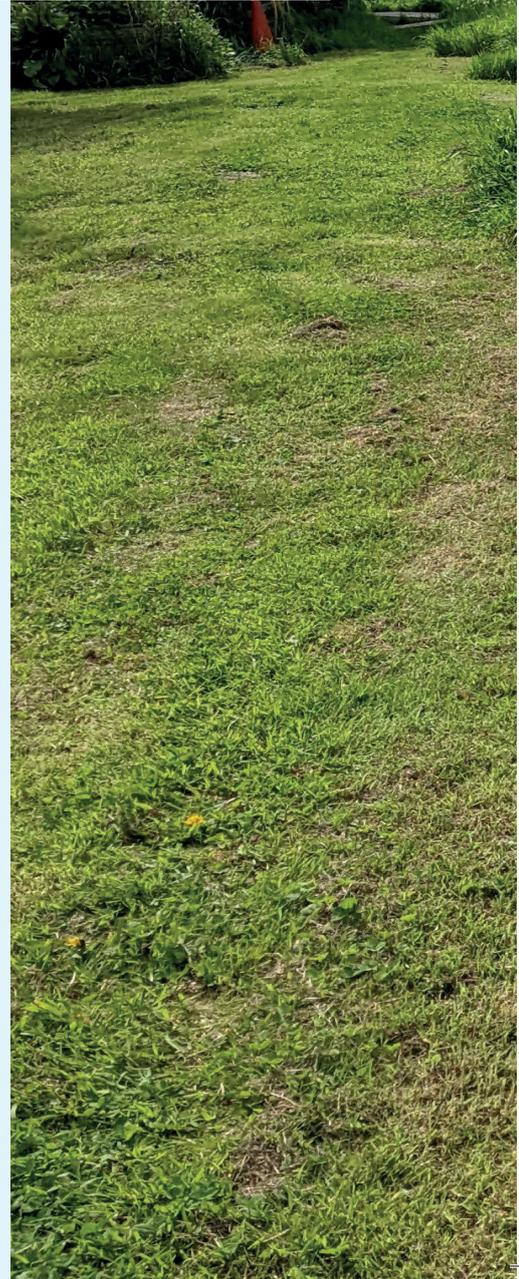
Other history-makers include **Kate Elliot** and **Stephen Hobson**, who were the first to sign up and only joined the Scottish canals when they both moved up from Herefordshire last year.

**Community Moorings Scotland are delighted to welcome them and all the other lovely boaters who will become part of Scotland's first community-owned mooring site in Linlithgow.**



*If you would like to know more about our vision, our moorings at Narrowboat Farm, or how to get involved, please feel free to contact us at - [info@communitymoorings.com](mailto:info@communitymoorings.com), or visit our website: [www.communitymoorings.com](http://www.communitymoorings.com).*

**Christine McKay**



A row of narrowboats is moored along a canal. The boat in the foreground is green with a red stripe and has 'PANDORA'S BOX' written on its side. The canal is surrounded by lush green grass and trees under a cloudy sky.

Community-owned moorings help address so many of the current environmental and economical issues that are having an impact on our society.



## Volunteer with our friendly team at the EH49 Community Hub

**It's hard to believe that it's been more than six months since the EH49 Hub opened in what used to be the Linlithgow library building. As everyone's life begins to regain a semblance of normality, we've seen a renewed focus on people reconnecting, getting together and on community activities and events. Since opening we've welcomed many new groups from yoga classes to craft groups as well as local sports committees and workers using our co-working space. In addition, the Hub is home to the Linlithgow Tool Library where you can borrow anything from a hedge trimmer to a tea urn!**

With more local people making use of this fantastic community space, we are looking for volunteers to help us out and join our friendly team. There are several areas in which volunteers are needed - perhaps you know someone who would like to get involved?

### EH49 reception volunteers

One of the areas that would benefit from a volunteer would be reception in the Hub. We're looking for someone who enjoys interacting with the community, likes chatting to visitors and would be able to offer a friendly welcome to our space. They would also be involved in preparing the space for our many room hires and assisting our administrative staff.

### Marketing and promotion volunteers

We are also looking for people with creative flair and ideas to promote our community space and decorate our windows and community information boards

### Tool Library volunteers

One of the most exciting areas of development here at the Hub is the Tool Library. More Linlithgow residents are choosing to pay an annual membership to borrow rather than buy expensive tools. As the Tool Library gets busier, volunteers would be useful in advising borrowers on correct and safe tool use, maintaining our database and servicing the tools themselves.

### E-Bike Hire volunteers

Finally, we're looking for volunteers to assist with our eBike hire scheme. The Hub has several electric bikes of different sizes (including a cargo bike!) to hire to the local community. A volunteer would be useful for bike maintenance and performing checks prior to collection by users. As with all our voluntary roles, full training would be given. We are also looking for someone to help promote our E-Bikes and make them accessible to as many in the community as possible

### Sustainable Fashion volunteers

We are looking to create a group of volunteers to take forward project ideas around sustainable fashion. So, if you or someone you know have any ideas around this do get in touch.



As a charity, Linlithgow Community Development Trust value greatly the contribution of volunteers and we recognize the vital part they play in running our community projects. Volunteering can also be a wonderful and fulfilling experience for the volunteer too!

Whether you're starting out in your career and looking for work experience, a part time worker and would like to contribute to your community or a retiree who can share your experience and expertise, we'd love to hear from you!



**Get in touch with us for an informal chat if you think that you would like to join our team.**

**Also, if you have an idea for a new community project or activity at the Hub do get in touch for a chat.**

**Drop us an email at [manager@LinlithgowCDT.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:manager@LinlithgowCDT.onmicrosoft.com) or call on 01506 846 991.**

**Alternatively, please pop into the Hub at the Vennel to say hello - we're open from 10-4pm Monday to Thursday.**

# KLARA AND THE SUN

## KAZUO ISHIGURO

**“I’m not saying it’s always easy. We all have our bad days. But compared to what we had before, we feel like... we’re really living for the first time.”**

In *Klara and the Sun*, Ishiguro shines a light on our rapidly changing modern world through the eyes of the central character, Klara, who is an android Artificial Friend for Josie, a sickly child on the verge of her teenage years. The novel is set at an unspecified point in our world’s future, where children are genetically and academically streamed to inhabit specific layers within society through a process called ‘lifting’. Attendance at school is achieved entirely through on-screen tutors, and the market for this is competitive. This understandably limits the social opportunities for children and so, for those who can afford it, an Artificial Friend can be purchased to ensure that the child has a companion.

**“Lifted or not, genuine ability has to get noticed. Unless this world’s completely crazy now.”**

This is not a choice available for some families, and even amongst those who can afford to make this purchase, there is a certain level of comfort and controversy surrounding buying a robot to reside in your home and be a companion for your child. There are different generations of androids, with different qualities and limitations. Klara is a level B2, solar-powered android, and while she is exceptionally intelligent and observant, her knowledge of the world is limited although she is constantly learning and evolving.

As a juxtaposition to Klara’s artificial composition, she has a reverential respect for the environment and in particular the sun, whom she refers to as a conscious entity and always signifies as a ‘he’. The sun’s nourishment is vitally important to Klara, and she is aware of its presence at all times, noting beauty in its rays. Klara believes that the sun has the power to save people and resurrect them from death, which becomes important as the

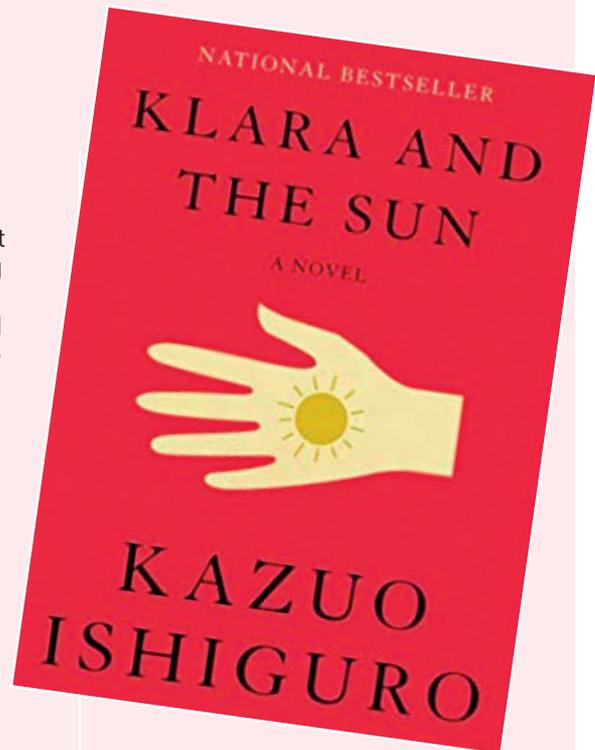
novel develops and Josie becomes increasingly unwell.

We learn more of Josie’s life at home through Klara’s evolving understanding of her world. We meet Josie’s closest friend Rick, an intelligent boy, whose mother has made the choice not to have him ‘lifted’ which all understand to be limiting to his future prospects and choices. We also meet Josie’s peers through Klara’s observations at the enforced, compulsory Interaction Meetings to ensure that the children have an adequate level of socialisation before they reach college age. We learn that Josie’s father does not live in the same home as her and that her older sister died a number of years earlier; Ishiguro infers this has been an unfortunate illness linked to the process of lifting. We come to learn that Klara has immense significance to the family for a variety of reasons.

**“There was something very special, but it wasn’t inside Josie. It was inside those who loved her.”**

This is a beautifully written novel which is captivating in terms of central characters and subject matter. As a novel, it contains a moral message and reminder for society to remain connected with the power and wonder of the natural world, regardless how technologically advanced we become. Through Klara, Ishiguro encourages us to question what it means to be classified as human.

**“At the same time, what was becoming clear to me was the extent at which humans, in their wish to escape loneliness, made manoeuvres that were very hard and complex to fathom.”**



It is significant that Klara is the only character in the novel who appears concerned about the negative impact of pollution on our world. The symbolism of Klara, a protagonist who is to a degree naive and uncertain of what is happening around her, is a strong comparison with the vast majority of our population who are too immersed in modern life to be able to have an objective, aerial view of the technological path that we are hurtling along.

**“Even so, I believe there’s still hope. I believe help might come from a place the adults haven’t yet considered. But we need to do something now quickly.”**

**Lisa Nettleton**

*Lisa Nettleton is a teacher and enjoys reading on her daily rail commute into Edinburgh*



# LADAS HEALTHY SOIL



In the last edition of the Black Bitch I wrote about the importance of healthy soil. Healthy soil is the key to growing the best crops. Your plants will be less prone to pest and disease issues, they'll grow better, and they'll look better. You can have healthy soil, no matter what kind of soil you are starting with.

It is about understanding what makes a healthy soil and being prepared to put in some work to achieve this. It also is a process that can take time. We are fortunate that the Oakwell site was once a field growing crops and so there were many years of tending the soil that gave all plot holders a good start when the site was opened. But plot holders have to tend to the needs of the soil to maintain the soil's health.

### What is healthy soil?

Soil health can be defined as the soil's ability to function and sustain plants. Overlooking the health of the soil can lead to poorer plants and even failed crops. There are important factors that impact on the health of the soil. These factors are interrelated and also impact on the way the soil drains and retains water.

#### Some of the factors are:

- 1. The structure of the soil** – Good soil structure can be achieved by avoiding over-digging and adding organic matter.
- 2. pH of the soil** - Most flowers, herbs, and vegetables, require a neutral pH. Here is a link to how to test for pH and how to correct if necessary. <https://www.growveg.co.uk/guides/soil-ph-for-organic-gardeners/>

### 3. Organic matter content –

Well-decomposed organic matter makes compost. Compost can be farmyard manure, compost made from all the green waste from your plot or garden, or compost bought commercially. This can also be something that gardeners will benefit from. Here is a link to making compost. <https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk/Resources/Info-Sheet/Top-tips-for-making-compost> Spreading compost over your plot or garden before planting fruit, vegetables or flowers provides an excellent growing medium for plants and also reduces weeds and stops the ground drying out.



### Allotment open day 25 June - Inviting Gardens

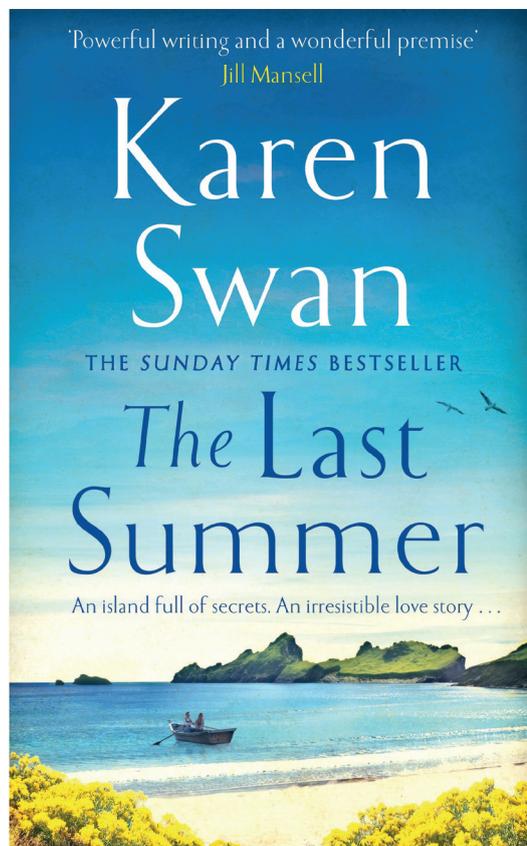
LADAS took part in Burgh Beautiful's 'Inviting Gardens'. The weather was kind to us and we welcomed members of the public to our site at Oakwell. The plot holders had worked hard to have plots ready for our visitors. This is the time of year when plots are full of crops and flowers. Everything was looking green and lush. Thanks to all who helped and made the afternoon a success.



**What to do in your fruit and vegetable garden in July**

- >> Most of the time this month is taken up with harvesting crops and keeping on top of weeding. This is true of gardens as well as allotments. There are still some crops that can be sown or planted to spread out the season.
- >> Feed autumn cauliflowers weekly to get good-sized curds
- >> Summer cabbages, Swiss chard, courgettes, peas, spinach, should be ready for harvesting this month
- >> Strawberries and gooseberries as well as early raspberries can be picked
- >> Stop watering shallots in week 2 and harvest them at the end July
- >> Stop watering onions towards the end of the month
- >> Early potatoes should be ready for harvesting. Try not to leave any small potatoes in the ground as they will come up again next year. There are always some left however thorough you are.
- >> Some varieties of carrots can be sown in early July. Autumn King, Amsterdam Forcing 3, Eskimo F1 are all good varieties to sow now. They store well, and could see you through the winter months. Keep soil moist until seedlings emerge, then water during dry spells. Baby carrots can be lifted after eight to twelve weeks. Larger carrots can be left in the ground during the cooler months (as long as pests and heavy frost are not expected) or lifted and stored indoors.
- >> A row of Kelvedon Wonder peas can also be sown early in July.
- >> Continue to sow lettuce, salad leaves and radish.

Val Corry,  
Chair LADAS



**BOOK LAUNCH  
WED 20th JULY**

**Far From the Madding Crowd** has secured the UK launch for Karen Swan's latest series – a fabulous 5-book historical epic set on St Kilda!

The event is on Wednesday 20th July at 7.00pm in St Peter's Church, and this is a hybrid event, so people can join via zoom if they wish.

A bit of background, **Karen Swan** is the Sunday Times top three bestselling author of twenty books and her novels sell all over the world. Her books are known for their evocative locations, and Karen sees travel as vital research for each story. She loves to set deep, complicated love stories within twisting plots. Her five book historical series, called The Wild Isle, is based upon the dramatic evacuation of Scottish island St Kilda in the summer of 1930.

*We are really excited to be hosting the UK launch for the Wild Isle series! Tickets are £5 and available from Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop, or online here: <https://www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com/collections/event-tickets>*

**Sally Pattle**, Manager, Far From The Madding Crowd  
Linlithgow's Award-Winning Bookshop [www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com](http://www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com)

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Dean Garrity (Alto Sax) and Anna Rastopchina (Piano) for 17th July.

Vox Duo - Karla Grant (Soprano) and Julia Soloman (Mezzo) with their pianist Jia Ning Ng for 10th August.

## LINLITHGOW ARTS GUILD

Linlithgow Arts Guild is about to launch a new series of four short “Summertime” concerts in St. Michael’s Parish Church during July and August. They will be performed by students and staff from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. Entry will be free of charge, but donations will be invited to help to cover the costs of the artists fees.

The events and dates will be:

### CLASSICAL SAX IN THE AFTERNOON

Sunday 17th July at 14.00

### FRENCH FLUTE BEFORE LUNCH

Wednesday 27th July at 12.00

### VOX DUO SINGERS AT NOON

Wednesday 10th August at 12.00

### TRIO IN THE AFTERNOON

Sunday 21st August at 14.00

Full details are being finalised with the artists at the time of going to press and will be available on Linlithgow Arts Guild’s website [www.LinlithgowArtsGuild.co.uk](http://www.LinlithgowArtsGuild.co.uk) by the time that this is published. Tickets will be available online or at the door.

The artists include performers from Australia, Singapore and Europe, as well as Scotland. Look out for **Karla Grant**, a former pupil of Linlithgow Primary School, and now an established performer in the second year of her Masters course. She recently won first place in the Leonie Kayser prize for singing at RCS. All of the performers are of a high professional standard and the programmes will appeal to a wide audience.



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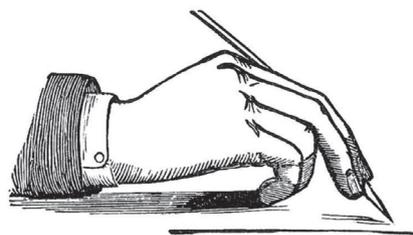
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## LETTERS FROM LINLITHGOW



Letters from Linlithgow is a community project taking place throughout the summer of 2022. We've been inspired by the way neighbours helped one another through lockdown, our town motto ('kinde to strangers') and the welcome extended to our new Ukrainian neighbours.

We're inviting everyone to write a letter or postcard, which will form a Big Letter Exchange - creating a network of connection and kindness across town. Whether you're in, from, or have another connection to the town, this project is for you. Together, we'll strengthen the sense of connection and belonging in the town, spread a little kindness, and bring smiles to all our faces along the way.

### HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

Simply write a letter, which will be redistributed by our volunteers to someone else living in the town. Your letter can be long or short (pictures are welcome too), and can be written on a postcard, fancy notepaper, a post-it note or the back of a cereal box - anything goes. You can write about anything that is welcoming, kind and friendly, and that might bring a smile to the face of the person who reads it. You might want to share a little about yourself, recommend a favourite shop, cafe, walk, or thing to do in Linlithgow, describe a memory about (or hope for) the town, or share a favourite poem, joke, story or picture.

Pop your letter in an envelope, along with a self-addressed envelope with your own address on it. Then drop your letter off in one of the dedicated 'Letters from Linlithgow' post-boxes, which can be found in the following places :

- >> EH49 Hub (the old library), at 6-7 The Vennel
- >> Aran Cafe, at 1 The Cross
- >> Or you can post your letter, addressed to: Letters to Linlithgow, c/o EH49 Hub, 6-7 The Vennel, Linlithgow EH49 7EX

Please make sure to write 'Letters from Linlithgow' on the front of your envelope. The deadline for dropping off a letter is Friday 2nd September 2022.

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE LETTERS?

Each letter will be opened and checked by our volunteers to make sure it's welcoming, kind and friendly. Then the real fun begins! Our volunteers will redistribute all of the letters to create the Big Letter Exchange - everyone who sends in a letter will receive one in return.

Look out for a kind, friendly letter arriving through your letterbox from the end of July, just as your letter will be winging its way to a new home in Linlithgow.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- >> Do I need to add my name and / or address to my letter?

It's totally up to you. There's no need to - as long as you enclose a self addressed envelope you'll receive a letter in return. Your name and address will remain private (unless you choose to include them in your letter itself).

- >> Can I take part from outside Linlithgow / outside the UK

Absolutely. In fact, we really hope those who've moved out of the town, who've visited us on holiday, or who are from our twinned town in Guyancourt, France, will take part. Just post your letter to the address above, and make sure you enclose a self addressed envelope with enough

postage to cover the costs of return postage from the UK.

- >> Who am I writing to?

Letters will be matched at random, so you won't know who your letter will reach. It's all about reaching out to someone you don't know, and spreading some kindness and connection.

- >> Can I send more than one letter / can we take part as a group? Yes! We expect lots of groups to take part, and you're welcome to send multiple letters. We'll return one letter for every letter we receive. Post for all!

- >> Will you use my information for anything else?

Just updates about this project, and to get a return letter to you (if you provide a self-addressed envelope).

In addition, at the end of the project we might publish one overall 'Letter from Linlithgow', which would use one line from each letter submitted (anonymously) to create a new letter with something from everyone. We thought this might be a nice way to have a letter available over the long term to welcome those new to Linlithgow, or to share with those who don't take part. If you'd prefer your letter NOT to be used in this way, just drop me a DM on Facebook, or include a little note with your letter.

- >> Who is funding / organising this project?

There's no funding at all - it's totally volunteer led, and just for fun. The project is led and organised by local resident Kathryn Welch, and you can find out more about her here.

- >> What if I have other questions?

Drop us a message on our Facebook page, or email Kathryn on [k.e.welch@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:k.e.welch@hotmail.co.uk)

**Kathryn Welch**



## BOOK SWAP AT THE OLD LIBRARY

Inspired by the lovely folk at the EH49 Hub, a group of us have just installed this book swapping station right at the entrance to the old library.

It's currently full of a right old mixture of books - please do drop by and take one, leave one and / or swap one! It's a nice way to pass something on and try something new.

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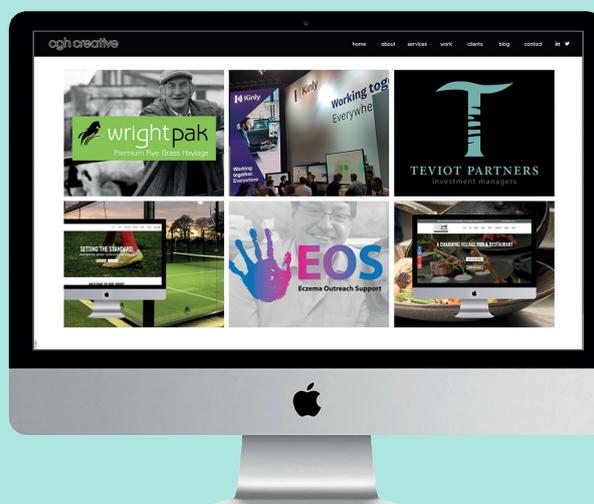


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### Making the most of your Mantlepiece

A recent survey revealed that 67% of us don't think our mantlepiece is a key area to decorate and stage if we are thinking of selling. However, often being the focal point of the main reception room in your property a stylish mantlepiece impacts on the perception of a property's interior and value.

Whether working with plants, ornaments, picture frames or other decorative accessories, positioning is key in maximising the appearance of the items, the framing and the mantlepiece itself. When you are grouping accessories asymmetrically, always work in odd numbers and keep things simple by harnessing the power of three. To do this, group three pieces that are of different heights, widths or dimensions on one side of the mantlepiece and balance this with one larger piece on the opposite side. This allows both sides of the mantlepiece to work in harmony and showcases the owner's eye for design.

Symmetry is a great tool for showcasing similar accessories in an orderly and organised way. A symmetrical layout on a mantlepiece makes a striking statement and works especially well when reflecting a room that has an entirely symmetrical layout or to achieve a more formal feel to a room. Adding a focal piece in the middle of a mantlepiece, whether a mirror, wall sculpture or work of art, and flanking this piece with identical accessories on either side gives any room classic, timeless elegance, also eliminating the effort needed to find separate pieces that complement each other.

### Outdoor Living

Moving into summer, if you are thinking of selling at this time, and you have appropriate outdoor space, you should consider making this space as stylish as the rest of your home for maximum impact.

This year bold bright colours in outdoor furniture are trending and it is an opportunity to make an outdoor entertaining space really eye-catching against a backdrop of green

foliage, grass and plants. Make sure your outdoor furniture is made for all weather types, it is Scotland after all, and remember this is an investment you can take with you to your next home.

Give your garden some impact with the right lighting, this can transform the ambience of your garden. Portable fire lanterns are a good flexible option to create the right lighting scheme for different garden spaces. Firepits and patio heaters will demonstrate to prospective buyers the potential to entertain and enjoy the garden spaces at your property.

Finally don't forget the more mundane tasks, borders and patio areas weeded if needed, stone flags and decking jet washed, fencing in good repair and freshly stained, to complete the overall impression of attractive outdoor spaces that add value to your property.

**Fossil and Ammonite are two cute, cuddly and chilled out Guinea pigs.**

**The 'wheek wheek' noises they make when owners rustle the food bag and their chatting sounds, as they come to climb into their laps - are the family's favourite things about them! Guinea pigs have so many great noises; they really make them smile.**

**Fossil is the chatty one, she likes to stand with her front feet on a toy and tells the family what she thinks! Ammonite is the stunt devil, leaping off things and performing the wall of death around things!**

Ammonite has a habit of ploughing her sister out of the way. If she wants past she'll put her nose under Fossil's bottom and just lift her out of the way. Fossil shouts at her in protest and grinds her teeth.

Their favourite snack is romaine lettuce. They only have it in moderation so get extra excited. Their favourite place to be is with the children, on Amber or Kristian's laps getting tickles or being brushed.

They have loved settling into their school enclosure where the school saved a patch of really long grass and have been busy making tunnels and dens.

The pupils at St Joseph's RC Primary love sitting and watching them at break time. They are very excited to get to have cuddles with the Guinea pigs once they are settled in. Their family say that having them regularly in the school provides a great sense of calmness and wellbeing for the pupils. They staff have all loved having cuddles too!

Fossil and Ammonite are in training

and starting their journey together as therapy pets for the school. Westport Vets are following them on this journey and documenting their progress along the way.

**Guinea Pigs require lots of time and attention. They live around 4-8 years sometimes longer, so are a long-term commitment and are active about 20 hours a day!**

**Can live indoors & outdoors:** Outdoors when temperatures drop will need to be moved indoors and having insulation on hutches. Also cover when hot. Cover outdoor runs to protect from predators and ensure lots of places to hide. Appropriate indoor space should be minimum 5ft x2ft(10 square feet), outdoor space minimum 6ft x 4ft(24 square feet).

**Feeding:** Not just from a bowl-a food scatter aids natural foraging whilst encouraging exercise and prevents arguments.

**Bedding:** Hay is most suitable. It's nice and soft and makes up the largest part of their diet. They like to burrow underneath so ensure to provide enough so they can do this. If using wood shavings as well as hay it must be dust-free, and avoid cedar shavings as they can cause health problems.

Never use fluffy/teddy bear stuffing type bedding and avoid straw-its coarse and risks eye injuries.

**They are sociable animals:** So company of their own kind is preferred. Ensure you have confirmed whether you are getting male or females as it can be tricky to confirm their sex when very young but you want to ensure you prevent

risk of unplanned pregnancies.

Breeding is never recommended-by the time they reach 6-8months the pelvic bones fuse which means they can't give birth naturally. If you have a male and female pairing its important to get the male neutered to prevent this.

Rabbits and guinea pigs should not keep them together.

**Diet requirements**

- grazing animals need good quality non-dust hay to keep their digestive tract working; small amount guinea pig pellets and fresh items to give them vitamin C. Guinea Pigs lack the natural enzyme to produce vitamin C but is a vital component for their diet. Peppers, cucumber and celery include naturally high vitamin C.

Leafy greens like kale and spinach only feed in moderation as high calcium content can cause health issues. Never fed Iceberg lettuce as can cause diarrhoea. Gem and Romaine lettuce are safe.

**Treats** - contain high sugar content so as an occasional only. Consider melon, orange or apple instead.



**Hello  
WE'RE FOSSIL  
& AMMONITE.**

*If you have any questions about your pet or for enquiries, please email [surgery@westportvets.com](mailto:surgery@westportvets.com). In an emergency, or if you have any concerns please call 01506 844165, the Westport Team is always here to help.*

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## BLACK BITCH



**10**  
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*The paper we are using is FSC approved. Images: A big thank you to all our photographers who support the magazine throughout the year.*



Paul Rolfe<sup>\*</sup>  
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