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LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

# BLACK



ESTD. 2011

# BITCH

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

ISSUE NO. 99  
JULY 2023

**4** **One Linlithgow**  
*Independent businesses; launch of new Visitor Guide*

**6** **New Kettilstoun cycle track**  
*Ready for action*

**8** **Folk Fae Lithgae**  
*Kirsty Ball - Ladies Choir*

**9** **Rotary charity golf Fundraiser**

**10** **Party At The Palace**  
*Gary Clinton introducing PATP 2023*

**12** **Linlithgow Planning Forum**  
*Linlithgow: A Plan for the Future 2020-2035*

**14** **Springfield Community Education Association**  
*Facility at the heart of Springfield*

**16** **GreenFox Energy**  
*Solar energy designed for the home*

**19** **Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions**  
*Cabaret evening, major fundraiser for theatre*

**20** **New Hopetoun Gardens**  
*10th year of Art in the Garden*

**21** **Linlithgow Players**  
*New, different, exciting Scratch Theatre*

**22** **New Visitor Guide project**  
*Welcoming and guiding visitors and residents*

**23** **Archer Joy Financial Planning**  
*AI applied to your financial future*

**24** **New Community Garden**  
*Growing for the Foodbank*

**25** **Book Review Lisa**  
*Nettleton - Martin Amis's Money, 1984*

**26** **Katie's Cup at Kingsfield**  
*Raising money for children's charities*

**27** **Linlithgow Rose Community Club**  
*Another successful season of achievement*

**28** **Bruce Jamieson**  
*Long Live The King - Edward VII - "a person of the people"*

**30** **LADAS**  
*What's to be done in the allotment?*

**31** **Skin Happy**  
*All skin types need protection*

**34** **Paul Rolfe Estate Agents**  
*Property market review. Permitted Development Rights*

**35** **At the Vet**  
*Living with Venice - a lovely family companion*



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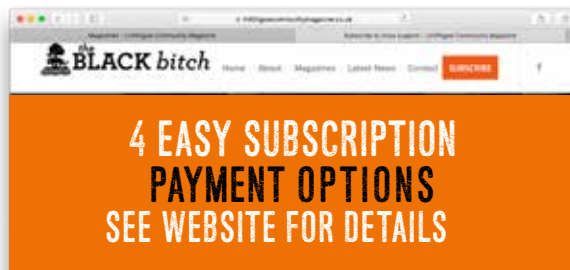
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**DAVID TAIT,  
EDITOR**

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MAGAZINE**



**4 EASY SUBSCRIPTION  
PAYMENT OPTIONS  
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There are so many good aspects to Linlithgow from its natural beauty and built heritage to the achievements of the many groups and organisations, mostly run and funded by dedicated volunteers, which enhance the attraction of the town as a prime place to live and work in Central Scotland. So near the big cities but also far enough away.

There are so many positives they risk obscuring the lack of current care and attention to many of those qualities that make Linlithgow such an attractive place of character for residents and visitors alike. The centuries of accumulating heritage, home in its day, although sometimes fleetingly, to Kings and Queens, and in the surviving buildings around The Cross, it is home to one of the finest centres of civic pride in Scotland. The area has been held in high enough regard by previous generations to earn the designation of Conservation Area of Outstanding Merit. Sadly, now largely uncared for – and that despite the repeated offers of co-operation with the Planning Authority in Livingston from well-motivated, experienced town groups with the expertise and willingness to help maintain its status.

In this issue we list the efforts of one such group, **the Planning Forum, (a formal sub-group of the Community Council)** set up in 2013, has been trying to have the community voice heard in relation to the long term development of the town. The milestones on its journey of frustration and rejection since then are set out on pages 12 & 13. Planning is rarely a subject to set the heart racing but refusing to set long term objectives that will ultimately

solve Linlithgow’s “one street town” problem only prolongs indefinitely the High Street issues of congestion and air pollution which a staggering percentage of consultation consultees have stated to be their number one concern.

We will cover what is also being done by the Planning Forum and others to progress solutions to the gap sites at the old Victoria Hall, the McCarthy & Stone Development and the Vennel redevelopment in our next issue.

Elsewhere in the magazine we help to celebrate the completion of the project to construct a first class **multipurpose cycle track at Kettilstoun**. The project was started in 2012 as the first major project for the nascent **Community Development Trust**. Umpteen changes of personnel later the ambitious project is ready to welcome riders, wheelers, scooters and walkers of all ages and ability. The article on pages 6 & 7 sets out how to book, opening hours and much else besides including a brand new event, The Junior Park Run, started July 9th – see the article for full details.

**Party at the Palace** returns in a few weeks, 9 years after its launch in 2014 (hard to believe!) and Gary Clinton catches up with event founder John Richardson to find out a bit more about his journey. What followed was what Gary describes as “an eye opening” conversation with lots of ideas on how events could be better supported to bring more visitors into the town for the benefit of the community as a whole. Gary tells the story of patience and perseverance on pages 10 & 11.

Articles to look out for: **Linlithgow Players and LAMP** prepare for upcoming performances; golf features

in two fundraisers – **Katie’s Cup at Kingsfield and the Rotary’s Annual AM/AM Charity Golf Tournament at Linlithgow Golf Club**; two new businesses launch - **GreenFox Energy** explains how to make solar energy work for your home and **Archer Joy Financial Planning** assess the potential impact of AI on their market.

See page 2 for the full list of articles covered in this issue.

### MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

As readers will be aware the magazine is run as a not for profit Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) by volunteers with costs for design and print services only.

All funds raised go towards improving and growing the magazine content. We know not everyone is in a position to subscribe but we ask that those who enjoy coverage of the local community and can manage a small subscription check the options available at [www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk](http://www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk).

Subscriptions and donations of any amount help to support the magazine. Thank you.



>>> For details and events visit **what’s on [www.mylinlithgow.com](http://www.mylinlithgow.com)** <<<



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## ONE LINLITHGOW

Linlithgow comes alive with visitors in the summer, with some headline events bringing footfall to the town, and to our businesses. As the magazine goes to print, people will be talking of the jousting event at the Palace. **Party at the Palace** soon follows – watch out for the activities of **M9sheep.com!**

Many of our local businesses will help get you equipped for the summer holidays, whether that be games from **Brightstar Toys**, books to read from **Far From the Madding Crowd**, or the latest summer fashions from **Styled by Macs** and for on the golf course from **Golfposer.com**. As well as all these gems in our community we want to encourage many more people to come to Linlithgow to shop, do business and have breaks. You'll read more about this further on, but for now here is the clarion call: **Please tell your friends, family, and contacts about how amazing Linlithgow is and the many reasons to visit.**



## INDEPENDENT MINDED

Have you noticed how many locally owned and run businesses there are in Linlithgow?

Shopping on the High Street there are few chains. However, if you go to our industrial units, you will also mainly find locally owned and staffed businesses. This is a real strength in our town to be celebrated, as we aim to keep a thriving time during turbulent economic times. Why does it matter though, especially as I go off to work in another place every day?

Businesses of Linlithgow contribute significant sums to local events, such as the Marches and Gala Day, as well as maintaining CCTV and festive lighting in the town. Many

of these businesses also support local charities and the work of the schools, whether that be a volunteer football coach or teaching young people about a particular technology. These are just a few examples.

So, next time you need to buy a product or service, before you buy with a faceless organisation elsewhere, check out what Linlithgow has to offer. **Let's Love Local, Shop Local, Do Business Local...** in the coming weeks you will see a new Linlithgow Loves Local campaign. Do join in.

## SPORTING SUCCESS

If you have been paying attention locally you will have seen plenty going on lately. **Linlithgow Rose** winning promotion to the Lowland League, **Bellsburn and Linlithgow Bowling Club** back in full swing along with **Linlithgow Sports Club**, and the new cycle track being used for cycle training, racing, and some athletics. **Xcite** has its full programme going, and we will be inviting them to tell us more about the less obvious but amazing things they do soon. Watch out for **Pure Gym** arriving in the town too. All of these places will have things going on right through the summer.

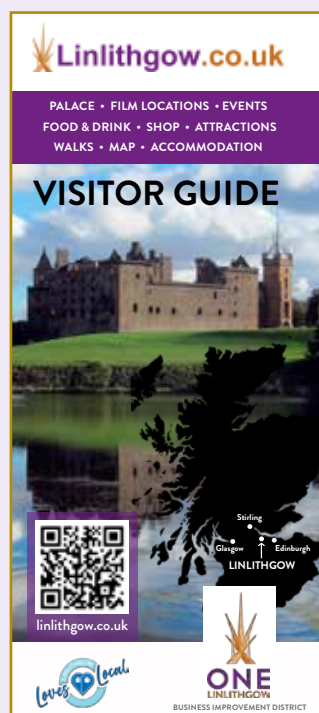
However, we had an unusual mix of sport and the Kirk together recently. **Stephen Gallagher, Craig Levein, Scott Hastings and Tom English** joined **Graham Speirs** for an evening of light hearted entertainment in aid of the **Aspire project**, renewing the Spire atop St Michael's Parish Church.

What was apparent on that evening was the generosity of so many local people and businesses offering prizes, and indeed you could read more about each of them thanks to books at **Far from the Madding Crowd**. For Stephen in particular a number of his sponsors are local businesses. Check out **FMG, Kingsfield Leisure and Alan Steel Asset Management** very local companies supporting him.





## ONE LINLITHGOW WORKS



### Visitor Guide Revisited

45,000 copies of the new Linlithgow visitor guide are now hitting the streets. You may see some in venues around the town. However these guides are also going further afield, going to travel hubs and accommodation in surrounding towns and cities to encourage people to our town.



This year there are two significant changes. There are QR codes throughout the guide. These are linked to the new Linlithgow business website, [Linlithgow.co.uk](http://Linlithgow.co.uk).

Enabling the visitor guide to be more interactive and keeping it up to date more easily, these simple changes ensure that our printed guides don't go

out of date as soon as they are printed. Want to see it now and share the guide with your friends before they visit... have a look at [issuu.com/Linlithgow](http://issuu.com/Linlithgow). Here you will find a handy flip version of the guide that can be read on any device. You can also access the whole guide on [Linlithgow.co.uk/visitorguide](http://Linlithgow.co.uk/visitorguide).

### Rating Our Businesses

Those who tune into the business press may have picked up that there has been a recent review of rates for business premises – a tax a bit like Council Tax for business. For many of our local businesses, they are potentially exempt from paying rates through the Small Business Bonus Scheme.

34 of our businesses locally are in a position where they can get Small Business Transitional Relief, helping as their rates status changes. That will affect businesses with a rateable value of between £12,000 and £15,000.

**One Linlithgow** are working for and with local businesses to ensure each business has access to the correct information and links to be able to ensure they are paying the correct rates, or indeed getting the relief that might be available to them. Especially for those in bigger premises, but to one degree or another for all businesses, the environment has been tough in recent times, and ensuring businesses

know about and how to access all reliefs available to them is an important role **One Linlithgow** is playing.

**Gone But Not Forgetting** **One Linlithgow** has given up its office base

in the centre of Linlithgow. The reason for this is that our team are keen to be out and about much more, talking to local businesses and addressing the challenges and concerns that they have.

Reducing the costs for the organisation at the same time, this also gives **One Linlithgow** some more flexibility as we invest in the town.

### Digital Gains

There are a number of new initiatives in the pipeline from the team at **One Linlithgow**. From planning Sky TV advertising of the town and all it has to offer, to digital audits of our levy payers web presence, and better understanding of footfall. Many of the items planned could not be justified to be done by one business on its own; but with the benefit of shared resources through the **One Linlithgow** company area we are able to bring big company benefits to our small businesses.



As well as better communications now coming out to all levy payers, you can watch out for a variety of business features on the new **Linlithgow.co.uk** and other local media.

Watch out for more details on these and other new projects coming through the autumn and winter of 2023.

**West Lothian CYCLE CIRCUIT**

**CLOCKWISE ONLY**

Only use the **outside loop** during public sessions (SHOWN IN BLUE)

You are here

**Rules:**

- Helmets must be worn at all times
- Respect other users
- Ensure your bike is in good working order
- Ride within your ability and keep your bike under control
- Riders ahead have right of way
- Over take on the left
- Keep to the track
- No salting or gritting if icy
- No dogs
- No littering
- No cars unless for officials
- No motorbikes

The circuit is 1km long

**Logos:** sportscotland, West Lothian Council, SCOTTISH CYCLING, west lothian leisure XGITE, West Lothian Clarion

**Disclaimer:** Any use of these facilities is unsupervised and at your own risk. Linlithgow Community Development Trust cannot accept responsibility or liability for any claim, loss or damage that may arise from the use of the facilities.

**Note:** This is your cycle circuit. Please help us look after it by reporting any damage or issues, or if you have a suggestion to the Linlithgow Community Development Trust on [helpline@trust.linlithgow.org.uk](mailto:helpline@trust.linlithgow.org.uk)

## WEST LOTHIAN CYCLE CIRCUIT

Last month saw the grand opening of the West Lothian Cycle Circuit by the Minister for Social Care, Mental Wellbeing and Sport, Maree Todd. The opening day was great fun, with over 500 people having the chance to ride, walk, scoot and wheel round the circuit led by our very own Reed Band. We held women and girls coaching sessions and over 80 children took part in fun racing courses. There was racing in the evening and participation from many local cycling charities and local businesses.

We are now open for individual public bookings and regular club bookings, as well as special events. Bookings are rolling in and what a great year to have this facility, particularly with the UCI Cycling World Championships coming to Scotland in August!

To help you make the most of it, we've put together some useful information.

### WHAT IS IT?

The Cycle circuit is a 1km fenced tarmac track, and whilst mainly designed for cyclists, it can be used for a whole range of wheeled sports and running. It is beside Xcite Leisure Centre and is accessed from the end of the car park.

### WHO IS IT FOR?

It's for people of all ages and abilities. Its main purpose is to increase people's participation in healthy and sporting activities. So, whether you are a beginner, a returner or an active cyclist, there will be opportunities for you!

### WHO RUNS IT?

The track is operated by Linlithgow Community Development Trust - a local charitable organisation and bookings are managed by Xcite West Lothian. It will take us some time to build up activity on the site, as we are a small organisation, but we hope it will be enjoyed by many for years to come and bring more visitors

to our wonderful town.

### HOW DO I BOOK IT?

For bookings contact Xcite Linlithgow on 01506 237960 or visit [www.westlothianleisure.com](http://www.westlothianleisure.com) Cycle Circuit page with all the necessary information and booking forms.

### PUBLIC SESSIONS

You'll need to phone or book and pay at Xcite reception in person.

#### Public opening hours:

Monday to Friday 8am-6pm

Saturday 9am-5pm

Sunday 11am-5pm.

This availability is subject to special event bookings, so we'd recommend you phone first to avoid disappointment.

Prices for public sessions are £4 for adults and £2 for under 18's. Public sessions will be unsupervised.





### CAN OTHER WHEELED OR NON - WHEELED SPORTS USE IT?

Public sessions will be for cyclists initially; however, we do plan to trial open public sessions for specific types of sport (eg. running, skating, skateboarding). As this is a new facility, we need to take our time to get to know what works and what the demand will be for different types of activity.

### WHAT SORT OF ACTIVITY IS ALREADY RUNNING REGULARLY?

There are two women's cycling groups on a Monday evening, open to all. For further details, follow the West Lothian Cycle Circuit and West Lothian Clarion social media. Sign up via the Spond App: <https://group.spond.com/VSVTM> Your local West Lothian Clarion cycling club also hold their regular club coaching sessions on the site. Visit their club information here: [new.westlothianclarion.co.uk](http://new.westlothianclarion.co.uk)

Junior Park Run will be started on July 9th on Sunday mornings at 9.30am <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/westlothiancyclecircuit-juniors/>

Linlithgow Athletics are trialling some training sessions too. <https://www.linlithgowathletics.org/>

We are holding free cycle coaching for kids in early July, we will have 'learn to skate' sessions on Thurs 27th July/ Thurs 3rd August from 3-4pm (pre-book via Eventbrite). <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/lcdt-47934226133>

From October, we will receive funding from Paths for All to run lots of all sorts of Active Travel activity on and offsite locally. We will advertise these widely when available. This will be focused on encouraging many more people to walk, wheel and cycle. Keep an eye out for free activities happening over the coming months and next summer.

There will be many special events run by different organisations too... from running races to cycle coaching and racing. For the more sport focused, you can follow the FB group 'Racing and

Training on the West Lothian Cycle Circuit' Group for all the latest!

### CAN MY BEAVERS/ SCOUTS/ BROWNIES/COMMUNITY GROUP/ SCHOOL USE IT?

Yes. We want the circuit to be used by a whole range of organisations and engage young people particularly. There will be provisions for groups to make block bookings for these purposes at highly preferential rates.

### CAN I VOLUNTEER TO SUPPORT THE CYCLE CIRCUIT?

Yes! We'd love to hear from you (email below).

### WHAT'S NEXT?

There has always been a plan for a skate park/pump track and athletics facility to be developed onsite, and this will require much fundraising and new volunteers to come forward to take this to the next stage.

If you are interested in helping out with this or have other ideas for the Circuit, you can email us at [hello@trust-linlithgow.org.uk](mailto:hello@trust-linlithgow.org.uk)

**Linlithgow Community Development Trust**





Image: Rebecca Holmes

## FOLK FAE LITHGAE KIRSTY BALL

On Saturday June 24th, the **Linlithgow Ladies Choir** gave a truly memorable performance at their concert in **St Michael's Parish Church**.

Under the title “**Celebrating Eurovision and beyond**”, the concert did exactly that, with a whole array of songs, which had either featured in the Eurovision Song Contest at one time or been written by Eurovision song composers.

There was material in various languages, including French and Hebrew and two young guest artistes, pianist **Andrew Woolsey** and vocalist, **Layla**, gave wonderful renditions of previous winning songs “Hold me now” and “Rise like a Phoenix”. The concert concluded with Mamma Mia highlights from the movie soundtrack, and the audience was encouraged to join in the singing of Abba’s ‘Waterloo’.

Taking centre stage and ensuring that everything ran smoothly was the choir’s musical director, **Kirsty Ball**, who was delighted that the concert had gone so well and been so appreciated by the large audience. She was very grateful to her assistant, **Lucy Wilson**, who had the idea for the evening and put together some of the arrangements.

“I like to make every concert different from the last”, she told me, “Just to keep everyone on their toes a wee bit and not be samey”. Apart from their own musical

events throughout the year, the choir regularly collaborates with various musical groups in the town. Earlier this year, they joined other local choirs in the magnificent performance of Handel’s “Zadok the Priest”, which provided the climax to the Reed Band’s annual spring concert in St Michael’s.

Kirsty came to Linlithgow in 2004 with husband **Matthew** and young son **Alex** and has overseen the 80-strong Ladies Choir since 2012.

“I think it was when we were going to the **Albert Hall** for the massed choir festival of brass and voices in aid of **Cancer Research UK** that I first took it on properly”, she recalled.

Originally, the choir was started at the behest of wives and girlfriends of the **Rugby Club Male Voice Choir**, but it soon attracted many more people than that narrow base. A few years ago, a re-branding took place, and the **Linlithgow Ladies Choir** was born.

“We still try to connect with the gents’ choir”, Kirsty said, “and we still do joint events. I suppose we have gone in a slightly different direction, and we are quite a bit bigger, so we operate in parallel now. We’ve probably got a different approach and that’s partly down to me, in that I have pushed the choir quite hard and said ‘you can sing this famous piece of classical music. Trust me, you can’. I get bored if I am doing the same thing. I like to challenge myself, so I like to challenge

them too. I am a passionate believer in the ability of singing together to promote a healthy and happy outlook.”

Kirsty grew up in **Cumbernauld** and studied music at **Lancaster University**. Her instrument is the flute. She followed her degree with academic research while lecturing and tutoring in music and playing flute semi-professionally. She is a flute tutor at **Fettes College** in **Edinburgh** and runs a thriving private practice in **Linlithgow**.

Looking ahead to **October**, **Kirsty** is helping to organise a concert in **St Michael’s** involving ‘**Flutes Unlimited**’ – a community flute choir from **Glasgow**. **Kirsty** is a member of the group, and they play flutes of all sizes. They are teaming up with a similar group from **Kendal** for what promises to be a very interesting event. Full details will appear in the next issue of this magazine.

### Murdoch Kennedy





# THE ROTARY CLUB OF LINLITHGOW GRANGE

## ANNUAL AM/AM CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY 28 AUGUST 2023  
AT LINLITHGOW GOLF CLUB



**YOUNG LIVES  
vs CANCER**



**MON  
28  
AUG**

*"If you watch a game, it's fun. If you play it, it's a recreation. If you work at it, it's golf." [Bob Hope]*

Many a true word is spoken in jest! - however, on Monday 28 August 2023 the emphasis will be on having fun in aid of two very good causes when the Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange holds its eighteenth AM/AM Charity Golf Tournament, teeing off at Linlithgow Golf Club. Teams will compete for The Magdalene Cup and medals and many other attractive prizes. Since its inception, the event has raised well in excess of £80,000 for major Scottish, UK national, and international charities.

This year, two children's charities will benefit from the generosity of the many golfers who will turn out to do a good turn, doing the thing they enjoy most - playing GOLF!

**Young Lives vs Cancer** are a charity that helps children and young people and their families find the strength to face whatever cancer throws at them, working hard to make sure each family has what they need - whether a financial grant for a parent struggling to keep their child warm through their treatment or for a young person who can't afford to get to hospital; or helping a family stay together at one of their free homes from home close to the hospital where their child is having treatment.

**Whizz Kidz** is the UK's leading charity for young wheelchair users. An estimated 75,000 young people in the UK need a wheelchair to be mobile. For a young person, having the wrong wheelchair can lead to dependence on others, social isolation, poor mental health, pain and injury. Without the correct equipment to be independent, young wheelchair users are restricted in their ability to socialise and participate in society. The charity's purpose is to empower young wheelchair users by providing the wheelchairs, equipment, support, and confidence-building experiences they need, and campaigning for a more inclusive society.

If you are a golfer and would like to take part then, here's the deal. Linlithgow Golf Club has a challenging and well maintained course. The 4-ball competition is open to all - ladies, gents, and mixed teams. There is a full handicap to a maximum of 24 for gents and 36 for ladies. The best two nett scores per hole will count towards the team score with the winning team carrying off The Magdalene Cup and individual winners medals. Cash prizes are also presented to the winning team and the two runner-up teams. What's more, at the end of the round, every player can replay those classic shots, lucky breaks and near misses over a two-course meal included in the entry fee. A great day out and a great way to benefit two worthy causes.

Whether you are in a winning team or not, there are many other prizes to be won on specific holes such as nearest the pin, the longest drive, and the lowest aggregate team score. You can add to the fun by playing in the yellow ball competition. A raffle and silent auction with generous prizes are also run on the day. All this enjoyment and a great day of golf for only £130 per team of four!

We will do our utmost to give you a tee-off time slot to suit your team. But hurry! It is on a first come, first served basis. Book today by contacting the organiser, Ian Raven whose details are below.

**Perhaps you're not a golfer? Well, you can still help. Sponsorship is a good way to support the two nominated charities, who can do good things with your money. Consequently, we also welcome sponsors of tees and greens (at £50 each). The tee or green will feature your name or your company's name at each hole and in the programme for the day, if you wish. Raffle and silent auction prizes are also invited. All the money raised in this way will go directly towards the charities. For more details, please contact Ian Raven on 07748 321720 or at [ian.raven7@outlook.com](mailto:ian.raven7@outlook.com).**

**Allan M Robertson**



# PARTY AT THE PALACE GARY CLINTON



Shed Seven, OMD and Happy Mondays are just a few of the acts that will entertain thousands of music lovers at Party At The Palace over the weekend of 12th & 13th August 2023 and organiser **John Richardson** is very excited about what he thinks will be the best year yet. Last year's instalment of the award winning, family friendly music festival will be hard to beat with its 'coming out of Covid' buzz. Crowds were welcomed back and the many business connections that make Linlithgow's festival possible were re-established.



So this year John and his team, now with 9 years' experience under their belt at putting on a show, seeing what works, what doesn't and what can be improved, certainly have the template for making it one to remember for the masses; but also one which gives the most back to the

wider community from a socio-economic perspective. So I caught up with the main man himself to find out more about what Party At The Palace brings, aside from the actual Party, and it was an eye opening conversation.

John explained Linlithgow is host to many important events like The Marches, Gala Day, the Hopsotch at the Palace and now cycling at the new track at Xcite.

*'All of these make [Linlithgow] an attractive place to stay and I think Party At The Palace is included in that. It's another event that the town supports and I think we do give plenty back like bringing visitors here and it gives the town a financial lift.'*

At a recent Events Scotland seminar in the borders which John attended, the benefits of events in Scottish towns were shown to not only be economic, in terms of boosting the revenue of local businesses and creating unique marketing opportunities, but also being positive for mental health and wellbeing amongst those who are involved. And in a post-pandemic Scotland, this has never been more important.

John also mentioned a pre-pandemic survey which PATP organisers were asked to carry out and 86% of festival attendees, who were not local residents, said they would return to visit Linlithgow in the next 6 months.

*'A lot of those people were couples saying, we could bring the kids here and walk round the palace and loch... or the mother-in-law would enjoy shopping on the High Street.'*

And as PATP is also the local event which brings in the most visitors - around 15,000 attend over the weekend - the benefit to the local economy is considerable and that's not just on the days of the festival, it's a longer term advantage.

This increased tourism may also lead to more people deciding to live in Linlithgow which keeps the housing market strong and able to withstand drops elsewhere in the country and on the weekend of the festival itself, Linlithgow's bars, restaurants and shops are busy. John also mentioned the Loch House Farm, next to the festival site, whose hospitable owners enjoy hosting a couple of hundred campers facilitating singsongs around a night time fire and bacon rolls in the morning. Plus, he added, other revellers without a camping ticket will fill nearby hotels and Airbnbs.



John also mentioned local businesses like Dehli's Winter, Mannerstons, Playbugs, JMK Printers and Jollies Funfair that are, or have been, involved over the years. The security for the festival is provided by Specialised Security in Livingston; the stage is from Scotia Stage Hire in Winchburgh; and lighting, over the years, has been from Matthew Masterton in Stirling, Apex in Dundee and Scott Munro in Glasgow. It's when you start to list out all the businesses that are involved you begin to really get the feel for just how much PATP generates in the surrounding area and it has the potential to produce more.

Opportunities still exist for businesses who have thus far not decided to get involved with Party At The Palace and now, having spoken with John, if I was starting out my guitar tuition business again I might have even called him to see what was possible advertising wise. Whilst there will be a (tax deductible) cost to your business (charities & community groups exempt) John genuinely wants that cost to be outweighed by the marketing benefit of being involved so perhaps it's worth

a conversation. He also alluded to the fact things are negotiable and earnestly talked about supporting local brands over the big nationals. Personally I'd like to see more local beer, spirit and food makers striking up deals for their produce to be sold at the festival but it all has to happen within the realms of sound business.

If for example a big brand spirit is half the cost to Party At The Palace compared to something local, it doesn't really leave John with much of a decision to make. So local businesses have to think laterally, make their price point competitive and grab the marketing opportunity with both hands. It wasn't so long ago a vile brand of Scottish lager had the naming rights to a Scottish music festival so who knows what is possible. In fact this year, the breakthrough stage has been renamed the Low Port Music Stage after a sponsorship deal was arranged which is a shrewd move by owner Chris to both advertise his great record store and support local, emerging musical talent like West Lothian's Dead Sea Souls, Lewis Watt and Jasmine Jet who are all set to play this year's festival.

To create all of this positivity for festival goers, the bands, local businesses and the local community is an incredible feat and perhaps it's something that John and Party At The Palace are not fully recognised for. Critics of the festival will point to perhaps drunken behaviour, the noise, the litter and some shop owners are opposed to the festival claiming they don't get any extra business. However, John would point out that extra tourism is generated by the festival afterwards as partygoers revisit Linlithgow.

No matter what the event is - The Marches, The Royal Highland Show, TRNSMT or even the Champions League Final - they divide opinion, create controversy and also have negative consequences for the local area. The good massively outweighs the bad though, driving local economies plus helping communities interact and socialise.

In fact during the pandemic, festival and event organisers were asked by industry bodies to research what their event brings to their local economy and John informed me that Party At The Palace is worth in the region of £670,000.

'That is money that is spent in businesses within a 25 mile radius of the event'.

Additionally Events Scotland research has found 50% of visitor spending in Scotland is on events which is why I was quite shocked to find out from John that the festival receives 'no financial support or encouragement' from West Lothian Council.



According to John, other local authorities like for example Borders, Dumfries & Galloway and Aberdeenshire offer some funding to events like music festivals and at one stage whatever the local authority gave, Events Scotland matched as a grant. Party At The Palace has received exactly £0 from West Lothian Council who John said 'don't recognise the economic benefit of events' which is very disappointing, especially when you consider the Events Scotland grants. Perhaps monies like that could have contributed to subsidising the extra expense of using local businesses to provide food and drinks at the festival i.e. businesses who can't easily compete with the big corporations. I would be keen to hear some council feedback on this for some balance however John did mention a big positive - the council do give the festival the go ahead.

In spite of this lack of support, Party At The Palace is stronger than ever and arguably now vital to the local economy and it is nearly time to once again welcome the bands and the buzz back to Linlithgow. John talked passionately about the final week leading up to the festival, the arrival of the stages and locals beginning to take an interest in the steadily increasing hive of activity at Bonnytoun Farm - but the night before is really when he really feels the buzz.

*'The night before is great, it's so busy, it's like Sauchiehall Street! They're testing the sound system, programming the lights [and I'm] super nervous that everything goes alright.'*

Judging on the previous successes of Party At The Palace I am sure it will be another belter. John has solved many issues and snags over the years including the toilets, card reading machines, food supplies and changing the actual location of the festival, to make room for more stages, but there's one thing he can't control - the Scottish summer weather.

SATURDAY 12th AUGUST 7PM  
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## FILM REVIEW CALVIN SINCLAIR LINLITHGOW ACADEMY

**Wes Anderson** is one of the most iconic modern film-makers currently on the scene. Over the course of twenty seven years he has cemented himself amongst the greats. From his feature debut in 1996 to his latest output this year 'Asteroid City' Wes has produced nothing but quality and developed a very particular visual style most could easily recognise. But I think his movies go much deeper than just the aesthetic, which is why I'd like to examine his most stripped back film to date, his cinematic debut: **Bottle Rocket**.



**Bottle Rocket (1996)** was a feature film version of a previous short film by the same name. The film stars the young Owen and Luke Wilson's as they attempt to become professional burglars and fail at basically every turn. The movie is an interesting marker in Anderson's career since being his first film some cinematic staples of his movie aren't quite fully integrated such as his famous love of symmetry, tracking shots, pans, zooms, snappy rhythmic editing and peculiar character movement. However, without all of these aesthetic choices 'Bottle Rocket' still feels very familiar to those acquainted with his other films perhaps for reasons you can't quite pin down.

I think that the core of Wes Anderson's movies aren't the visuals like many would think, instead I think that the core of all of his works is strong scripts and strong characters and a pervasive oddball energy that's tricky to really pin down. **Bottle Rocket** undoubtedly has all of

these in spades. The dialogue is subtly hilarious which is only compounded by the fantastic performances from the cast. They really take the comedy in the idea of 'a bunch of terrible burglars try their best to pull off a life of crime' and run with it exemplifying the amazingly pathetic but sympathetic nature of all of their characters. Owen Wilson's character Dignan especially - the one really committed to all of the ideas. He is very passionate but also not especially competent. (This character archetype would be repeated several times in Wes's later works). Combine that with Anthony played by Luke Wilson who is basically apathetic to the crimes but goes along with it out of love for his best friend. Their dynamic is excessively charming and endearing and really makes the film. Their first heist is a very polite hold up at a bookshop where the muggers are more aggressive than the muggers. It is dead-pan and frantic, cute and heartfelt. This scene encapsulates the energy of the movie.

Although the film isn't shot nearly as artsy as some later efforts by Anderson it's definitely got a lot of personality. More than some film-makers could ever wish to have, in fact. Wes makes use of layers of action by having things happening in the background and the foreground simultaneously. Shots hold for a while, cuts are never needless, it's all very intentional if not a bit rough.

The movie isn't without its shortcomings of course. Being a theatrical debut the film can really drag in the second act and the love story isn't very well fleshed out for the amount of time we spend on it but nonetheless **Bottle Rocket** is earnest, funny, and genuine and that is what I believe is the core of all of Wes Anderson's films.

# LINLITHGOW'S PLANNING FORUM IS 10 YEARS OLD THIS MONTH.

This article is based on key events extracted from its "Diary" from that period.

The first official plan for Linlithgow was the Linlithgow Area Local Plan of 1994 followed by the Edinburgh and Lothians Structure Plan of 2004. West Lothian Council's first Local Development Plan was adopted in 2009 and defined Linlithgow as an area of "development restraint" because of infrastructure, landscape and environmental constraints. In this context development restraint did not ban development but it had to be minor in scale so as not to stress the existing infrastructure.

In 2012 the developer Wallace Land challenged the 2009 plan by proposing a large mixed development of 600 houses, a superstore sized supermarket, shops, health centre, hotel and activity centre. They promised to fund the construction of west bound slips onto the M9. The Community Council responded with extensive community consultation including a public meeting. This was not helpful as opinion was divided. The letter sent to West Lothian Council concluded that *"diversity of community opinion means that the Community Council would need to conduct further studies, using more sophisticated data gathering techniques with a valid population sample in order to reach a conclusion in which the Community Council and the Community as a whole can be confident"*. **West Lothian Council did not respond.** Lessons were learned by the Community Council on the importance of proper data gathering to support Community opinion.

In 2013 the Community Council formed the Linlithgow Planning Forum primarily to examine the West Lothian Council Main Issues Report (the first stage of the development plan process). The members of the Planning Forum comprised then, as now, members of the Community Council, Linlithgow Civic Trust, Linlithgow Community Development Trust and representatives of the business community. The Planning Forum is open to representatives of any organisation with an interest in Planning. In addition to its focus on the Local Development Plan, the Planning Forum became an effective vehicle for examining planning applications. Each member organisation responds individually to West Lothian Council but in the knowledge of what other organisations were thinking.

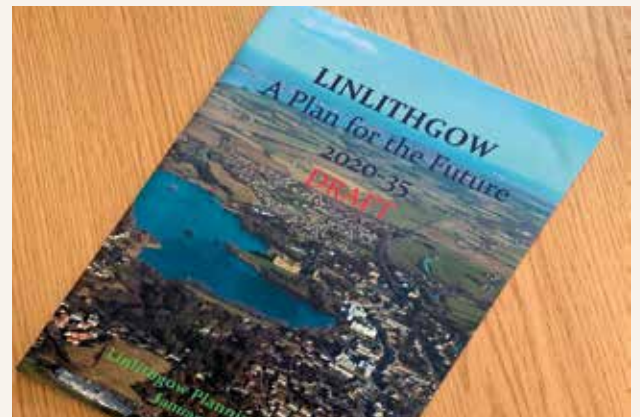
In 2014 the Community Council responded to the Main Issues report. There was a very high level of Community engagement with the Main Issues Report process comprising a public exhibition and subsequent meeting, questionnaire, and informal consultation. The Community Council comments were summarised as: *"Linlithgow's infrastructure is not adequate to serve current requirements and significant improvements are needed before any housing development is undertaken. The current policy of "restraint" has failed, with 440 homes being constructed over the past 20 years with very few infrastructure improvements. It is essential that issues including High Street congestion and pollution, commuter car parking provision, shopper and visitor car parking, provision of adequate facilities for tour coaches, a larger*

*health centre and better routes for walkers and cyclists are issues that require to be properly resolved, and a plan in place, before permission is given for housing development. There should be a master plan for Linlithgow that deals with all these issues and developers should be required to contribute towards the cost of making necessary infrastructure improvements"*.

**WLC did not respond** to the Community Council and failed to take account of any of the many points made during the public consultation.

In 2015 the Planning Forum prepares a document "Linlithgow: A Plan for the Future" its aim to raise awareness of members of the Planning Forum and the Community to the impending release of the Local Development Plan. "Linlithgow: A Plan for the Future" received good coverage in the local press and was cited elsewhere as a good model for a local plan.

12th October 2015: West Lothian Council released the draft Local Development Plan for comments by the public and other interested parties. Responses were to be made within 6 weeks to a complex document of 284 pages plus 5 maps which also refers to Supplementary Planning Guidance and other documents, one of which, the Strategic Environmental Assessment is 727 pages plus 9 maps.



17th Nov 2015: the Planning Forum held an all-day exhibition at Low Port Centre which compared the draft Local Development Plan with the Plan for the Future. A detailed questionnaire was available for attendees to complete. **No officers from West Lothian Council attended.** After an intense period of analysis of comments and questionnaires a letter was sent to West Lothian Council giving a detailed response to the proposed West Lothian Local Development Plan. **West Lothian Council did not respond.** The Planning Forum asked West Lothian Council for a meeting to discuss the Linlithgow response, but this was refused. An email received from West Lothian Council Planning stated that any objections from the Planning Forum to the Local Development Plan will be passed to the Reporter (a Scottish Government official charged with examining the Development Plan). This entirely missed the point that we wished to contribute to the Local Development Plan, not to object to it.



**4th April 2016:** John McNairney, at that time Scottish Government chief planner and Ian Gilzean, Scottish Government chief architect, attended a meeting of the Planning Forum in Linlithgow. Ian and John reviewed the Plan for the Future describing their vision for engagement and consultation on a plan with a long-term focus. Proper consultation was defined at the meeting and workshops for young people recommended.

**18th August 2016:** Ron Smith introduced to the Planning Forum a discussion paper from John Walls which promotes a proactive approach to the assembly of land required for development, infrastructure and environmental purposes. The Planning Forum's opinion is that a proper approach to the organised assembly of development land is fundamental to effective planning.



**1st December 2016:** Following a visit to the Planning Forum by Stephen Tolson a researcher from the Scottish Community Alliance the Planning Forum reviewed his report which recommends more community input into planning and cites the Linlithgow: Plan for the Future as a useful model. 29th August 2017 the Planning Forum hold the Vennel Development exhibition prompted by West Lothian Council plans to engage with a developer for the redevelopment of parts of the Vennel and the car park. A significant amount of data was collected through questionnaires, and Linlithgow Facebook page.

**19th February 2018:** The Planning Forum held a meeting with Graham Simpson MSP and Andy Wightman MSP in Linlithgow to discuss the Plan for the Future in the context of the new Planning Bill.

**4th September 2018:** After a lengthy period of examination by the Scottish Government Reporter, West Lothian Council adopt the West Lothian Local Development Plan accepting all the Reporter's suggested changes. The Planning Forum are dismayed at the decision to include development at Deanburn which was opposed by the Linlithgow Community and also to introduce without any

consultation or prior warning a development at Kettlistoun.

**3rd October 2019:** The Planning Forum discusses the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 which is to incorporate Local Place Plans. John Kelly becomes the Planning Forum's representative on the Scottish Government panel for the development of secondary legislation for parts of the Planning (Scotland) Act. The Linlithgow: Plan for the Future is mentioned by the Minister in the Scottish Parliament as an example of what a community can do to contribute to the planning process.

**21st January 2022** The Scottish Government publish the Planning Circular 1/2022 Local Place Plans. The aim of Local Place Plans is described as part of the Government's wider work on planning reform including steps to reduce conflict, improve community engagement and build public trust in planning matters. The Scottish Government state "It is vital that local people have the opportunity to engage meaningfully and have a positive influence in the future planning of development in their areas. The aim is to significantly enhance engagement in development planning, effectively empowering communities to play a proactive role in defining the future of their places".



**16th and 21st June 2022.** The Planning Forum holds an exhibition in the Burgh Halls of material relevant to a prospective Local Place Plan for Linlithgow. Attendees are encouraged to give their views through the completion of questionnaires. At the same time St Michael's Parish Church and LCDT undertake a survey of opinion on several issues affecting Linlithgow. Data on those elements affecting planning have been shared with the Planning Forum. These exercises have resulted in the largest database of comment and opinion on local planning ever compiled in Linlithgow.

**23rd May 2023.** The final pieces of the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 jigsaw are approved by the Scottish Government. Now everything is in place, Linlithgow Planning Forum awaits the invitation from West Lothian Council to submit a Local Place Plan. It is interesting to note that Falkirk Council's "invitation to submit" has already gone out to local communities in its area accompanied by a comprehensive guide which gives as an example of the scope and content of a local place plan, the *Linlithgow: Plan for the Future*. Come on West Lothian Council – let's get moving.

#### **Linlithgow Planning Forum**

This review of the work of the Planning Forum is focused on local planning but the Planning Forum is also working tirelessly to resolve the issues around the gap sites on the High Street and the Vennel development. More on this in future issues of the Black Bitch.

# SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Hello and welcome to  
**Springfield Community Education Association**



## Who are we?

The Community Wing is owned by West Lothian Council and operated by volunteers as a charity. Established over 40 years ago, our aim is to provide facilities and space for community groups and small businesses for the benefit of the residents of Linlithgow and the surrounding areas, and for all age groups.

## Where are we?

The Community Wing is the building located between Springfield Primary School and Bonnyton Nursery, at 141 Springfield Road Linlithgow. We are located in the heart of the Springfield estate and are easily accessible by foot, bus, bicycle and car. We are on the main bus route, however, please note that there is no car parking available during the day, only in the evenings, there is however plenty of on-street parking available in the surrounding area. We currently are open from 9am – 2.30pm and from 6pm-10pm Monday to Friday during term time. The hours in-between are set aside for the Out Of School Care Club so cannot be used at these times.

This fantastic resource is run by a volunteer management committee who oversee the letting and upkeep of the building.

There are two types of users of the 'Wing' - community groups and business users. We have a

membership system for community groups (currently £6 per adult, £1.50 for seniors and £2.20 for under 18's), these are yearly costs per member but a family membership is also available. Business users can also let the building at special rates and set their own charges for their classes.

Current community groups are Badminton, childminders, Rainbows, knitting group 'Drop 'n' Stitch', carpet bowlers and Parent & Toddler Group.

Business users are Yoganuu Yoga Group, Iyengar Yoga Warriors and Mariposa dance studio.

In addition to these groups, the Community Wing has also hosted adult education courses which include mental health first aid, emergency first aid courses, autism awareness training etc and these have always proved very popular with both members and non-members of which costs can be subsidised by the management committee. If there are any courses you would like to see run in the community, please get in touch and we will see what we can offer you.

We have a large main hall which can accommodate approximately 100 people, a smaller general purpose room for about 25 people and an upstairs meeting room for about 12 people as well as a lounge and kitchen area and changing room facilities which are available to all members for use.

We are always looking for new and enthusiastic people to join us and help run the Wing so if this is something you would like to consider, please do get in touch for further information. It's not a huge commitment by any means, meetings are held approximately every 6-8 weeks and you could help shape the future of this valuable community resource.

We currently have various time slots available for community and business users alike. We are looking to expand our current programme of classes and activities. So if you are looking for space for your activity, be it for community or business use, the 'Wing' could be the ideal location for you!

If this is something you are interested in, we have a dedicated email address [springfieldcommunitywing@gmail.com](mailto:springfieldcommunitywing@gmail.com)

So please get in touch with your requirements and one of our committee members will get back in touch with you. If you would like to come and see what is on offer, again just drop us an email and we will get back in touch to arrange a mutually convenient time to show you around.



**Thank you and we look forward to seeing you soon! Springfield Management Committee**







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# GREENFOX HELPS HOMEOWNERS FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT SOLAR ENERGY



**Like many homeowners in recent years, GreenFox Energy's Linlithgow-based founders, Andy Murphy & Eddie Curran, stumbled into the market for solar energy feeling unprepared.**

Eddie says *"I knew there was money to be saved on my utility bills, and my family was determined to switch to a more sustainable form of energy - but although solar instinctively felt like the right solution, we just didn't know where to start"*.

After months of researching products, Eddie finally felt he knew which panels and equipment he wanted. Despite that, and, as he puts it, *"being bombarded by adverts from companies promising huge savings and increases in the value of my house"*, he still couldn't find anybody he felt he could trust to give him the right advice and deliver the job to the standard he wanted.

**Speaking to over 2000 Homeowners made things really clear**

Fast forward a couple of months and Eddie was describing his experience to Andy. *"We just felt that the market for sustainable energy needed to work better for customers. We believed we could achieve that, by giving homeowners greater up-front confidence to embrace solar and it's benefits, and by managing the whole process really well."* says Andy.

Shortly afterwards the pair commissioned a national polling firm, Opinion Matters, to survey over 2000 homeowners about their attitude to solar energy. Eddie says: *"The survey was really important. We validated our gut instinct - that a huge number of potential solar energy customers are put off by their lack of knowledge about the practicalities of installing and running solar. But what really opened our eyes was the extent to which the survey also showed that customers' anxiety often increased when - all too often - they sought help from solar energy installers and didn't feel at all confident in what they were offered."*

**Further research followed and the GreenFox team discovered that many solar energy installers:**

- >> lack basic knowledge about how solar energy systems work and how to properly configure them
- >> create problems for their customers with lack of appropriate certification
- >> give poor or incomplete advice lacking impartiality
- >> make excessive claims about the scale of savings achievable
- >> leave customers without post-installation support and little understanding of how to get the best from their investment.

**GreenFox is born to deliver Solar for the Savvy!**

So, **GreenFox** was born to do all of this better; giving friendly, helpful and considerate service, focused on ensuring customers are delighted with both the process of getting solar and the results they achieve.



### Five Foxy steps to solar satisfaction

Andy adds: *“At GreenFox, we want customers for life. We’re totally against the idea of turning up, transacting once with a customer and then disappearing. For us, supplying and installing solar equipment is just the start.”*

With that in mind, later this year, GreenFox will launch their maintenance and service support package for customers who want extra reassurance in the years after they’ve installed their solar energy system.

**GreenFox’s friendly customer support team are available to help and advise before, during & after your system installation.**



### But can solar power really help me save money?

Eddie is emphatic, *“A correctly specified, configured and installed solar energy system can generate significant savings for almost every homeowner in the UK”. Only a very few people who have structural issues with their home or whose property is almost entirely shielded from the sun would be excluded from that.”*

Eddie goes on to demonstrate the type of savings that are possible by sharing his own experience.

The graphic below (taken from the GreenFox App linked to Eddie’s Solis solar energy system) shows that, in Eddie’s Linlithgow home, on Monday 12th June

2023, solar energy generated 50% more power than the household consumed in the entire 24 hour period.

In the circle labeled ‘Grid’, you can see that Eddie imported 10.6 units (kWh) - on a cheap overnight tariff - which was used to top up his energy storage battery and to meet the ‘Home’ demand overnight (appliances using electricity). During the day, when the sun was up and solar energy was being harvested, Eddie’s system more than met the ‘Home’ demand and exported 23.5 units back to the ‘Grid’ (an income of £2.82) whilst continuing to keep his storage battery topped-up with free power for another day, or to put into the family’s EV (Electric Vehicle).

You might be surprised to hear that - even in February - the combination of solar

energy, a storage battery and a ‘Time of Use’ energy tariff enabled Eddie to make a 43% reduction in electricity consumption from the grid (by producing his own free energy), and a 74% cost reduction for the month (from storing excess solar energy and using cheaper overnight energy).

So even when there is less sun around, solar energy and storage can still pay-off handsomely.

#### Savings & Service

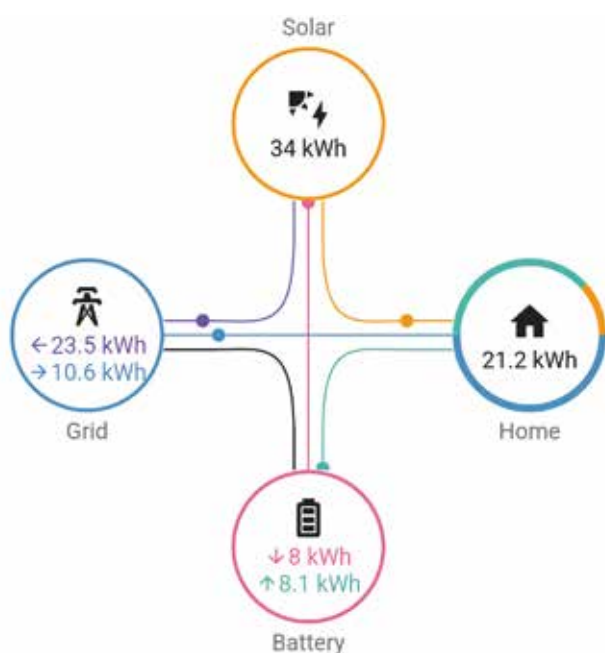
The GreenFox founders’ final thoughts return to the central issue of customer service. *“Customers shouldn’t have to choose between savings and service” says Andy. We’re so serious about that we’ve written it into our solar engineers’ contracts.”*

Eddie continues: *“All our installations are carried out by MCS certified teams and every one of them is incentivised to treat customers and their homes with the utmost care and respect. Our contracts penalise them if they don’t meet our high standards, but pay them a bonus if the customer rates them highly in the post-installation survey we ask them to complete.”*

You can contact GreenFox at [hello@greenfoxenergy.co.uk](mailto:hello@greenfoxenergy.co.uk)

And find out more on [www.GreenFoxEnergy.co.uk](http://www.GreenFoxEnergy.co.uk)

### ENERGY DISTRIBUTION



# Solar for the Savvy



Thinking about solar but not sure how to do it or who to trust?

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# LAMP SHINES BRIGHT: HOW YOUR SUPPORT CAN KEEP THE SPOTLIGHT ON.

Images:  
Rebecca Holmes,  
Cameron Leask.



At the heart of Linlithgow, we, the passionate team at Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP), have been tirelessly creating a lively and enriching environment for theatrical arts. For almost 40 years, we have dedicated ourselves to promoting creativity, fostering community bonds, and bringing joy through our performances. As performers and volunteers, we have experienced firsthand the tremendous physical and mental benefits of participating in the theatre, and we are committed to offering these opportunities to others. As our landmark 40th year approaches, we are facing the substantial task of balancing the costs of staging our productions, and we invite you, our community, to join our cause.

Operating a theatre company is an expensive venture, especially when we aim to bring top-quality productions to our local stage. Our budget includes script royalties, costume and set construction, venue hire, lighting and sound systems, printing materials, and more. Each show costs us between fifteen and twenty thousand pounds. We strive to make theatre accessible and affordable for our community, but the financial pressure is considerable.

Despite these challenges, LAMP remains dedicated to its mission. We have been fortunate to have volunteers who pour their hearts into organising and executing our shows, helping us manage these costs. Yet, as with any production, certain costs are inevitable. One significant upgrade we are working towards is including a video wall to replace traditional backdrops, taking our productions to the next level.

Your contribution can make a real difference. Our dedicated LAMPers have already achieved a fantastic amount. We have raised over £2900 from recent events, including a fun-packed bingo night (thanks to Linlithgow Rose) and a lively twelve-hour Singathon! And we are not stopping there!

This summer, we are hosting three spectacular musical theatre workshops for children, inviting students aged 5 to 16 to immerse themselves in the joy of Broadway and the West End. These workshops offer an engaging way to improve their singing, acting, and dancing skills under expert guidance, culminating in mini performances for family members.

Mark your calendar for a memorable evening with our LAMP Cabaret on Friday, 1st September in the Academy Theatre. We are excited to showcase our members' talents with solos, duets, and group performances from the biggest hits in musical theatre. It's a night of fun, inspiration, and a harmonious blend of music and merriment!

**FRI  
1  
SEPT**

### How can you help?

We would greatly appreciate any help. Come and enjoy an evening at our Cabaret, book a spot in our children's summer workshops, or donate directly through our JustGiving page. Details of all of these are available on our revamped website, [www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk](http://www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk).

We are also offering a variety of sponsorship packages for local businesses. Supporting LAMP not only helps us to continue our tradition of high-quality

productions but also provides ample marketing benefits. We believe in a partnership that benefits everyone, providing visibility on our social media platforms and publications. For more information, please reach out to [lampresident@gmail.com](mailto:lampresident@gmail.com). And on that note, we would like to say a huge thank you to Steven and Lisa Wilson of Taste Deli Cafe for their sponsorship over the last year - your support has been invaluable and has helped us keep the lights on.



As we approach our 40th year, we are excited about the future and grateful for the past. We could not have achieved so much without the Linlithgow community's support.

*"LAMP creates a sense of belonging for people in the community, whether you are a part of their shows or in the audience you are part of the big LAMP family. Working together to give people a safe place to share their love for theatre while building confidence and new friendships, a truly wonderful family to be a part of."*  
Orla Mayling

Join us in our journey and help keep the magic of LAMP alive for the next generation. Thank you for your continued support!

### The Lamp Committee





# CELEBRATING OUR 10TH ART IN THE GARDEN

We are celebrating our 10th art in the garden event in July and August. Many of you will know about this annual show, but can we remind you that we install original works of art by artists working in Scotland in our many demonstration gardens. Our gardens are free to customers and visitors, and, additionally, you should vote for your favourite piece of art in our People's Vote. All those voting for the winning piece will have their names entered in our draw to win New Hopetoun Gardens Gift Vouchers!

Here are a few of our favourite entries over the last ten years. James Parker has supported our event since its start. We had a show garden at Gardening Scotland opposite his trade stand and over the week we fell in love with his slate Garrocher Twist and just had to buy it. A few years later we were taking Princess Michael of Kent around the Chelsea Flower Show and one of her guests wanted to see her sculptor James Parker. We found his stand in the show catalogue and guided the royals to it. As we approached we recognised James Parker, we'd forgotten his name, but we don't think the royal party believed us when we said we had a James Parker in our garden!



James Parker, Garrocher Twist

The team at Ratho Byers Forge have shown every year as well. They are lending us 'Unity' again this year. Their pieces are timeless, classic additions to any garden. The Kaleidoscope of Butterflies fluttering in the woodland here was memorable. They are flying past Diana the goddess of hunting and unmarried mothers, further back up the riverbed. Acteon, the hunter, has spied her bathing and she is so incensed that she turns him into a stag and he is killed by his own hounds, spot them next time you visit!



Ratho Byers Forge (Unity) & Kaleidoscope.

Max Nowell's Poppy Heads were perfectly at home in our Scottish Garden and they all sold quickly, some as individuals, some as sets.



Poppy Heads. Below: Head over Heels.



Katy Galbraith's mosaic Head Over Heels brought much merriment to our visitors when they came upon it in the woodland, once again we couldn't resist it and it performs in our front courtyard at home whenever we come in or go out. It's an expensive business hosting art in the garden. Morag, our managing director in charge of the event and our artists, has an allotment now, and we are wondering if she will be tempted this year, or perhaps you will?



Dougal Philip and Lesley Watson  
New Hopetoun Gardens

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ART IN THE GARDEN 2023

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF THE SUMMER EVENT IN OUR GARDENS HERE. ORIGINAL WORKS OF ART INSTALLED IN OUR GARDENS.



# THE LINLITHGOW PLAYERS – SCRATCH THEATRE



SAT  
**26**  
AUG



Saturday, August 26th – Pop that date in your diary, because following the Linlithgow Players’ successful productions of “Shakespeare in Hollywood” and “Ladies Down Under”, they are bringing you something very new, very different and very exciting – it’s called “Scratch Theatre”. Why Scratch? Because they’re starting from scratch!



That evening, they will perform a series of, never seen before, short plays and sketches written by... (drum roll) ... The Linlithgow Players! A world premiere you might say.

“Won’t that be rubbish?” I hear someone at the back shout.

“How very dare you!” replied Scratch Team committee member, Les Fulton. “It’s going to be a great night. We encouraged anyone in our group, who had been nursing that gem of an idea for a brand-new piece of storytelling, sometimes for years, sometimes for five minutes, to ferment those creative juices and commit those thoughts to paper. The results were both hilarious and moving. Maybe we shouldn’t have been surprised since we already have a number of Players who have been Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA) script-writing national finalists. As a group we then selected our favourite writings and worked collaboratively to further develop each piece.”

“So on Saturday 26th August, our small, but hugely talented, cast of actors and directors will start from scratch - working together throughout the day on each piece before performing them, script in hand, that very same evening. I know, crazy or what?”

From comedy to heartache, from reworked fairy tales to courtroom dramas, from local politics to space travel, the performances will engage and entertain you as the well known, talented pool of actors and actresses interpret some of the newest and

freshest writing in the town.

The Players are delighted that The West Port Hotel will host their event upstairs in the Function Room (Code). “This will allow us to perform in an intimate setting, for the bargain price of £6 per ticket (I’m sorry, how much!?) You’ll need to be quick though, because this special event is for one night only and with tickets limited to just 50, book early if you want to be part of the fun.”

And to start your evening, why not have a meal at The West Port Hotel? As well as the usual menu, the hotel is also generously offering our audience a special pre-theatre meal deal. So, if you are attending the show, you can opt for a set menu of 2 courses for £15.50 or 3 courses for £18.50\*

So, if you would like to come along to The Linlithgow Players’ inaugural “Scratch Theatre” event, please book your tickets through our website, [www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk](http://www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk) where you’ll also find lots more information about the show.

*\*Booking for this offer is essential (01506 847456) and must be made after 4 pm and up to 6 pm. Please advise The West Port that you are attending Scratch Theatre on booking.*



## HAPPY BAND OF HELPERS GEARING UP TO GUIDE

To fill a much needed gap in the tourism aspect of Linlithgow, the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council decided to form a band of volunteers, who are more than happy to 'meet and greet' visitors, welcoming them to the town, and then answer any questions to help them to get the most enjoyment from their visit.

We've had a busy month, with visitors from all over the world, from the UK, and also many local people all looking for specific details, whether it's about the Canal Basin, the Museum, the Falkirk Wheel, Beecraigs, the High Street, or how to book fishing on the Loch.

We were especially delighted to be in place when Linlithgow Palace re-opened, and it's given us extra footfall, and extra questions too.

As a volunteer it's a really enjoyable way to spend a couple of hours, sharing the heritage, the local events and not forgetting the natural environment of the Lochside.

We can be found in the entrance to the Burgh Halls, or on the steps outside, or out and about in the Kirkgate, or at The Cross. At the moment we're operating just three days a week, with two x two hour shifts, so if you fancy having a chat with visitors, and enjoy sharing stories and anecdotes from Scotland's history, or just sharing the joys of the High Street businesses and the coffee shops, then please come along and join us.

Those interested should please contact :  
[secretary@llbcc.org.uk](mailto:secretary@llbcc.org.uk)

## Summer and your eyesight



Just as the sun can harm your skin, it can affect your eyes and potentially impact your vision. So, just as you apply your suncream, you should also consider how to protect your eyes from UV damage on sunnier days.

In this column **Diana Kelly**, store director at Specsavers in Linlithgow, highlights some of the pinch points to keep in mind and explains how to protect your eyes this summer.

### Can my eyes get sunburned?

*Diana says: 'Yes – both the skin around your eyes, as well as your eyes themselves, can become damaged by the sun if they're not properly protected with appropriate sunglasses. Excessive sun exposure can cause irreversible damage to your eyesight and can increase the risk of blindness. Overexposure to the cornea's outer layer can also cause photokeratitis (sunburned eyes) which temporarily causes them to become inflamed and sore and may cause blurred vision.'*

*'If you think you have burned your eyes, you should go indoors until your symptoms subside, close your eyes and place a fresh, damp cloth over them and avoid rubbing or itching the affected area. Most symptoms should subside in about 48 hours, however if your eyes continue to feel sore then you should visit your optician.'*

### Does heat exhaustion and sunstroke affect my vision?

*'Heat exhaustion and sunstroke can impact your eyesight in a few ways. As well as potential blurred vision, you may experience double vision and find it hard to focus. If you find yourself overheating, the most important thing to do is cool yourself down by moving to a shaded area and drinking lots of water. If you have tried these cooling methods and still feel unwell, call 111 for medical assistance.'*

### What should I do if I get suncream in my eyes?

*'If you accidentally get suncream in your eyes, the best thing to do is flush it out with saline or clean running water for a few minutes. If you're still feeling some discomfort, try applying a cool compress to your eyes for some relief.'*

*'If the irritation doesn't ease after an hour, you should contact your optometrist who can examine your eye for damage. Remember, it's important to protect yourself from sunburn and while most suncream is safe to use on the area around your eyes, you should always check the label to be sure.'*

### How can I protect my eyes on sunny days?

*'You should never look directly at the sun and make sure you have a good pair of sunglasses that fit well and with lenses that cover the entire area of your eyes. Always check your sunglasses comply with BSEN 1836: 1997 or bear the CE kite mark and are marked UV 400. These will protect your eyes by filtering UV light – however, many people still choose a cosmetic pair to suit their outfit instead of their eyes. Some sunglasses may actually cause the pupils to dilate, which can increase the amount of UV light entering the eyes. Contact lenses with a UV coating are also available. You should also try wearing clothing that offers additional sun protection, such as a wide-brimmed hat, and head indoors to hydrate if you feel yourself getting too hot.'*

To book an appointment at Specsavers Linlithgow, call 01506 534 484 or visit [www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow](http://www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow).





## HOW MIGHT ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IMPACT FINANCIAL PLANNING?

The launch of ChatGPT last year has led to many questions being raised about how this amazing technology can be used... and its use in the wider Financial Services industry is a hot topic.

### WHAT IS AI / CHATGPT?

ChatGPT and AI use algorithms and pre-existing data to try and pull together new outputs – you may have seen some AI-generated images, or perhaps an AI-generated song or poem. It's a great way to get images for a website or poster, and can create some fantastic speeches when needed.

### IT SOUNDS GREAT BUT WILL AI WORK IN A FINANCIAL ADVICE ENVIRONMENT?

AI and ChatGPT are a great way of asking questions and getting easy to digest information back – it's a bit like asking google a question. AI in Financial Services isn't new – "Robo advice" has been talked about in the industry for some years now but hasn't really taken off. We can now see how AI can be applied in some really useful ways; maybe a quick way for companies to summarise different data sources when reviewing lots of client information; or for clients to be able to ask questions that you were maybe too afraid to ask a person like "how does a pension really work?".

### WILL AI REPLACE FINANCIAL PLANNERS?

In our opinion access to quick information is great, but we don't see AI replacing the human, face-to-face relationships that clients need when it comes to financial planning. When entrusting someone with your retirement fund, hard earned money, or protection needs we believe it's really important that you get to know them and build a safe relationship. AI won't become the norm, but Financial Planners will use it to create social media posts, to help

generate images and documents that before now, would have taken hours to write, and we know that time can be better spent with clients. (And by the way...the opening image was created using AI!).

### KAYLEIGH DORRIAN

Archer Joy Financial Planning

  
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# NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN GROWS FOR WEST LOTHIAN FOODBANK



St Michael's RC Church, Blackness Road, Linlithgow has a disused artificial surface area backing onto Linlithgow Peel. In October '22 the charity, the Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) hosted a "West Lothian Foodbank awareness creation" coffee morning in the Church Hall. At this event the idea of creating a small plot to supply vegetables was discussed and from this discussion a plot has been established on the disused area.

With the help of generous financial donations from local companies including Alan Steel Asset Management & Peterkin & Kidd plus numerous other acts of charity from parishioners and other local people, we now have a small plot growing organic vegetables in sustainably built pods and containers. Our Parish priest has also been supportive in supplying an external tap to allow watering. Within 4 weeks of the construction we were able to supply 2 Kgs of beautiful, succulent Radishes to the Foodbank. Soon there will be Strawberries, Courgettes, Carrots, Swede, Celeriac, Beetroot, Onions and we are hoping for about 75Kg's of potatoes.

**We welcome anyone who wishes to join in this project. The beds are situated and built at a height to allow easy access for all. We also welcome financial contributions or anyone who would like to finance a bed / compost. We will also have an area for lower specification beds and welcome anyone who wishes to contribute this way.**

**If you are interested please call the SVDP number 07596 225937 or 07942 873190**

**West Lothian Foodbank has developed a large Community Garden that produces fresh vegetables for Foodbank distribution. It has also developed a smaller vegetable plot at its community centre in Armadale and is helping and encouraging other organisations to do the same.**

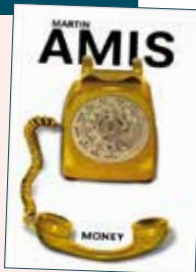
**Jerry O'Dwyer  
Saint Vincent de  
Paul Society**





# Money

## Martin Amis



“Sometimes I feel that life is passing me by, not slowly either, but with ropes of steam and spark-spattered wheels and a hoarse roar of power or terror. It’s passing, yet I’m the one who’s doing all the moving. I’m not the station, I’m not the stop: I’m the train. I’m the train.”

Money was written in 1984 by British writer Martin Amis whose work famously shines a spotlight on the excesses of late-capitalist, Western society whose perceived absurdity he often satirised through grotesque caricature and hyperbole. Amis is a screenwriter, novelist and essayist credited with inspiring many British novelists over the last four decades.

Money is one of Amis’s best known works and has long been critically acclaimed. The novel focuses on the competitive world of filmmaking, fueled by personal politics and grudges, and is told from the perspective of an advertising executive named John Self who is making a foray into filmmaking in New York city.

Self, a stereotypical failed creative who is lazy and overindulgent, is further enabled by the producer who hires him, Fielding Goodney. At the start of the novel, Goodney contacts Self and invites him to assist with his film’s casting and title. Self readily obliges, initially suggesting the title ‘Good Money’ for the film, which he later switches to ‘Bad Money’, after meeting with the film’s central characters and motivators. One wry irony of the novel is that the cast members of the film are placed in roles that clash with their natural demeanour.

Readers can only watch as Self falls into a life in which he squanders most of his money on hedonistic, spiralling patterns of behaviour. As Self repeatedly fails in this foreign, fast-moving culture, he slowly learns to navigate it and recognize his faults.

“Standing in the nordic nook of the kitchen, I can gaze down at the flimsy-limbed joggers heading south towards the Park. It’s nearly as bad as New York. Some of these gasping fatsos, these too-little-too-late artists, they look as though they’re running up rising ground, climbing ground. My generation, we started all this. Before, everyone was presumably content to feel like death the whole time. Now they want to eel terrific forever.”

As the novel reaches its turbulent and chaotic end, Amis cleverly deploys several literary techniques to dissolve the narrative leaving readers to question the structures they have come to accept about the genre of novel. Self’s world and sense of identity break down completely in the final chapters and he is rescued from the abyss by a timely intervention from none other than Amis himself, who breaks down the narrative’s ‘fourth wall’ to write himself into the novel.

Money is a novel that is chaotic, deliberately shocking and revels in the absurd. It sets out to identify the disingenuousness and transparency of many social constructs, most noticeably those surrounding fame, money and commercialism.

“Money doesn’t mind if we say it’s evil, it goes from strength to strength. It’s a fiction, an addiction, and a tacit conspiracy.”

Yet, despite the complete deconstruction of Self’s physical and metaphysical world by the end of the novel, the character of Self remains self-deprecating and is cautiously optimistic about his future.

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



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## GOLFERS GATHER FOR "KATIE'S CUP" AT KINGSFIELD

Golfers from all over the country will be converging on Linlithgow's award-winning Kingsfield Golf and Leisure Complex on Saturday August 19th for the charity tournament known as "Katie's Cup".

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*

*As well as money raised on the day, including the spectacular auction at the night-time event in the Kingsfield Barn, other fundraisers take place throughout the year, including forum nights, organised by club member Brian McLaughlin of the BBC. Fundraising takes place at the Golf Society AGM and local businesses are very generous in terms of donating prizes and sponsorship. Any donations for the 2023 event would be gratefully received.*



SAT  
19  
AUG

Now in its twelfth year, the event has become the big annual highlight at the popular centre on the outskirts of the town, which earlier this year, was named as the winner of the prize for the best 9-hole course and facilities at the Scottish Golf Tourism Awards.

There was no "Katie's Cup" in 2020 and 2021, due to the pandemic, but it returned with a bang last year and £42,000 was raised for the chosen charities. Since its inception, the tournament has raised just under £250,000.

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.

*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 has grown considerably over the years, and everybody really looks forward to it. Many people say that the party at night is the best barn dance they have ever been to. Katie would have been twenty-one this year, which means that the event on August 19th has that little bit more poignancy than ever."*

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, the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation and the agricultural charity RSABI.

This year some of the chosen charities include;

*MS Society Scotland, Down's Syndrome Scotland, C.H.A.S. and the My Name's 5 Doddie Foundation.*

*Tickets for the party at Kingsfield Barn on the night of "Katie's Cup" are available, as well as further information about Kingsfield Golf and Leisure and 'Katie's Cup' from Laura Fowler on her email: [lauraf@kingsfieldleisure.com](mailto:lauraf@kingsfieldleisure.com)*

Murdoch Kennedy







The under-14s Maroon squad



2010 CFC team squad

## ANOTHER GREAT SEASON FOR THE ROSE COMMUNITY CLUB

The 2022/23 season ended at the start of June and with it, over 500 players and 130 volunteers could look forward to a short break before pre-season starts. It has been a year full of highlights. The main one is- we are back playing without pandemic restrictions for the first time in three years. We continue to grow as a club; providing football opportunities for players of all ages, continues to be what we value most. There has been some trophy success, too – our 2005 team winning the League Cup in Edinburgh on their last game as a team was brilliant to see. Our 2007 CFC team had a cup double, and it was great to see many of our players in the 4th year Linlithgow Academy team who contested the Schools' Scottish Cup final.

It's been great to see the senior Rose team do so well – it gives many of the players in the Community Club a focus point and with the new Under 20 team providing the pathway and an opportunity to progress, there is a genuine route to playing football at different levels across the town.

The girls' game continues to grow and flourish. We have just under 70 girls in age groups from Under 8 to under-14 and are keen for more to join. The under-14s Maroon squad (see photo) are currently making a big effort to recruit more players and would love to hear from anyone who would be interested.

The growth of Walking Football continues to inspire. We now have over 40 players in men's and ladies' teams regularly competing in competitions in central Scotland and beyond.

Our Soccer School for ages 4 plus continues to grow and anyone who is at Xcite on a Sunday morning will hear the boys and girls playing football before they see them, which, after all, is what it's all about!

We are looking forward to the new season.

Not least, we are looking to improve the grass pitches that the games are played on to try and bring them up to a better standard. We've worked with the local council, and we are keen to invest in their upkeep to try and ensure we could continue to play as many games as possible on grass. Space sadly continues to be an issue for us. We are a growing club, with waiting lists across most ages and we could do so much more with more facilities to cater for the increasing size of town we are becoming. I would echo Linlithgow Rose President, Jonathan Mahoney's comments from a previous issue where he confirmed that there is an open invitation for local politicians to sit

down with the football clubs in the town to try and find ways to cater for the increasing demand for football across the community.

We continue to be grateful to all the local businesses who sponsor different teams. The support they provide to help fund new kits is hugely welcome.

We are also looking to try and do more for charities who help across our town. One new idea we have launched is reverse sponsorship where teams are also encouraged to display the brand of a local charity and pay the charity for the opportunity. For every team that does that, the club will match the contribution up to £250. Two teams have already done this – our 2010 CFC team have donated to Young Lives vs Cancer and have their logo on their training kit. (See photo)

The charity helps families in so many ways at a very difficult time when a youngster is diagnosed with cancer. Our 2009 team are also participating and will have their home kit sponsored by West Lothian Foodbank.

As always, there continues to be some notable examples across the Community Club of success, both on and off the pitch. A huge thank you to all the players, coaches, volunteers, and parents for all their help and support and to our partners at Xcite.

Enjoy the summer!

**Alistair Paton, Chair**  
Linlithgow Rose Community

# LONG LIVE THE KING

Bruce Jamieson

I enjoyed reading, in issue 97 of the Black Bitch magazine, the account written by Murdoch Kennedy of how the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth in 1953 was celebrated in Linlithgow. The article tied in nicely with the Coronation, on May 7th, of our new sovereign, the 73-year-old King Charles III – the oldest person to accede to the British throne.



Prior to that, the record for the longest time anyone had been heir to the throne was held by **Albert Edward, son of Queen Victoria** but, at last, in 1902, Linlithgow celebrated his coronation. He chose the name (against his mother's wishes) of King Edward VII and had actually acceded to the throne on the death of his mother on January 22nd, 1901. The old queen had never properly visited Linlithgow – the birthplace of her 6 X great grandmother, Mary Queen of Scots. She had planned to be formally received at the West Port by Provost Adam Dawson and the town magistrates and duly arrived at 2.00pm in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 13th, 1842.

*The West Port at the time of Queen Victoria.*



The date proved to be an 'Unlucky 13' as, either disconcerted by the poor weather or by the large, enthusiastic crowd, the royal coachman missed his appointed stopping place and eventually brought his four horses to rest further down the High Street. The huge crowd set off in pursuit - as did Provost Dawson who lost the tails of his frock coat in the melee! The royal coachman, fearing for the queen's safety, urged his steeds on and the royal coach galloped through the town and on to Dalkeith Palace where, the next morning, the monarch read her "Welcome to Linlithgow" document!

Queen Victoria was to reign for the next 59 years, but she never did spend time in our royal burgh – although a public building was unveiled in her honour - to celebrate her golden jubilee in 1887.



*Linlithgow's Edwardian High Street and the Victoria Jubilee Hall.*

It wasn't until late 1901 that a day was set for Edward VII's coronation in Westminster Abbey. The chosen date, June 26th, 1902, was announced by the Albany Herald from the top of the Mercat Cross in Edinburgh and, somewhat less formally, by Linlithgow 'Town Crier', Sam Weir, who made the declaration by tuck of drum throughout the burgh.



*The proclamation from Edinburgh Mercat Cross. Town Drummer, Sam Weir.*

Linlithgow residents breathed a sigh of relief that the date did not clash with the Riding of the Marches on

June 17th and the town duly prepared to celebrate the crowning of their king with a Grand Procession from the Public School, at the West Port to the Low Port. This was to be followed by a picnic on the Peel and a bonfire at night after an evening service, conducted by the Rev John Ferguson, in St Michael's Church.

Every school pupil in town was invited to attend the events and a certificate was duly printed, ready to be handed out to each young participant on the day. It was signed by Provost Andrew Gilmour, Archibald Crichton, Chairman of the Parish School Board, Town Clerk and Chamberlain James Russell and Headmaster of the Public School, James (Baldy) Walker – all of whom headed up the organising committee for the parade.



*1902 Coronation Commemorative Certificate.*

There was great excitement at the prospect as Edward was a popular king - more a 'person of the people' than his mother, who had largely kept out of the public eye. There was very little opposition to the celebration proposals, although a few voices did express their displeasure at the fact that Edward was not the seventh Scottish king of that name, and in fact the numeral VII was occasionally omitted in Scotland, even by the Church. It did not help that the first two Edwards had tried to subjugate Scotland and had led invasions against the Scottish nation.

*A medal struck to show that the new King was Edward I of Britain.*





But opposing voices were few and preparations for the Great Day went ahead. However, with just two days to go, Edward was diagnosed with appendicitis. In the early twentieth century the prognosis was not good and the condition carried a high mortality rate. However, by 1902, developments in anaesthesia and antiseptics had made surgery possible and the king's medical team, headed by Frederick Treves and medical pioneer Lord Joseph Lister, performed a successful operation.

This meant, however, that the coronation, and with it all of Linlithgow's celebratory planning, had to be postponed - along with Torphichen's garden fete and the Bo'ness Fancy Dress Cycle Parade. Most disappointed were the local schoolchildren who lost the two day holiday which they had been promised!

In Linlithgow, the hundreds of printed certificates were kept in storage until a new date for the coronation was announced. At least the Linlithgow organisers had not had coronation medals cast - as they had done in some Scottish towns such as Dundee, Aberdeen and Falkirk. These medals, still bearing the original date of the postponed coronation, were handed out on the new date - August 9th.

At Christmas 1902 the Linlithgow certificates were finally presented to all schoolchildren - with an additional printed explanation as to why the original date was shown, as well as the date of the rearranged event.



*Additions were made to the original certificates.*

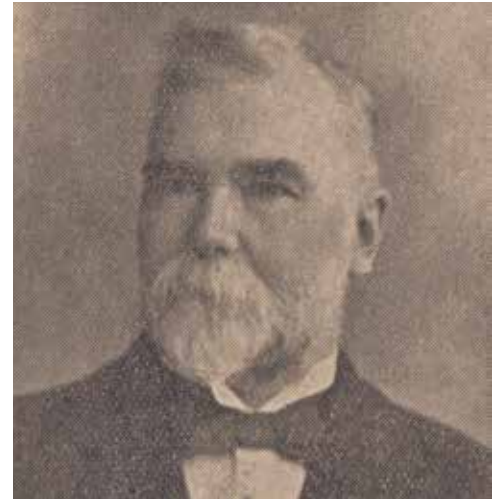
Each school pupil also received a commemorative medal and a souvenir book containing illustrations of the crowning ceremony, including one by Byam Shaw, showing the ageing and almost blind Archbishop of Canterbury placing the crown on the King's head - the wrong way round!

Edward came to Scotland the year after he was declared King Emperor but did not stay in Holyroodhouse as its drainage and sanitation had been found wanting. Instead, his 1903 visit was spent in Dalkeith Palace as a guest of the Duke of Buccleuch. He

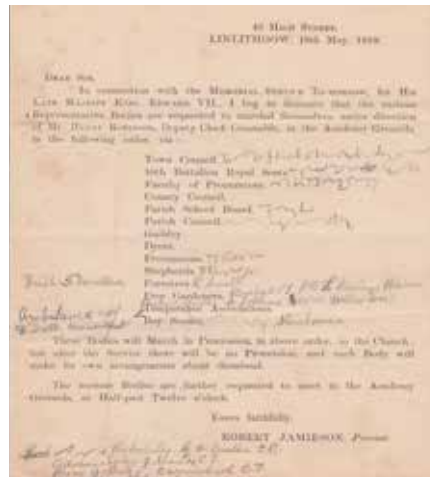
returned to Scotland several times but never visited Linlithgow. Despite that, there was heartfelt sadness when, on May 7th, 1910, it was announced that the 68-year-old monarch had died.

In Linlithgow, Provost Robert Jamieson and his committee made arrangements for a Solemn Procession to make its way from the grounds of (the old) Linlithgow Academy at the Low Port to St Michael's for a Memorial Service. Strict instructions were issued declaring that Henry Robinson, Deputy Chief Constable would ensure that the organisations taking part would stick to the published order in the parade.

Led by the Provost and Town Council, the participants included the 10th Battalion Royal Scots, the Faculty of Procurators, the County Council, the Parish School Board and Parish Council, the Guildry, the Dyers, several Masonic and Friendly Societies and finally, the Boy Scouts.



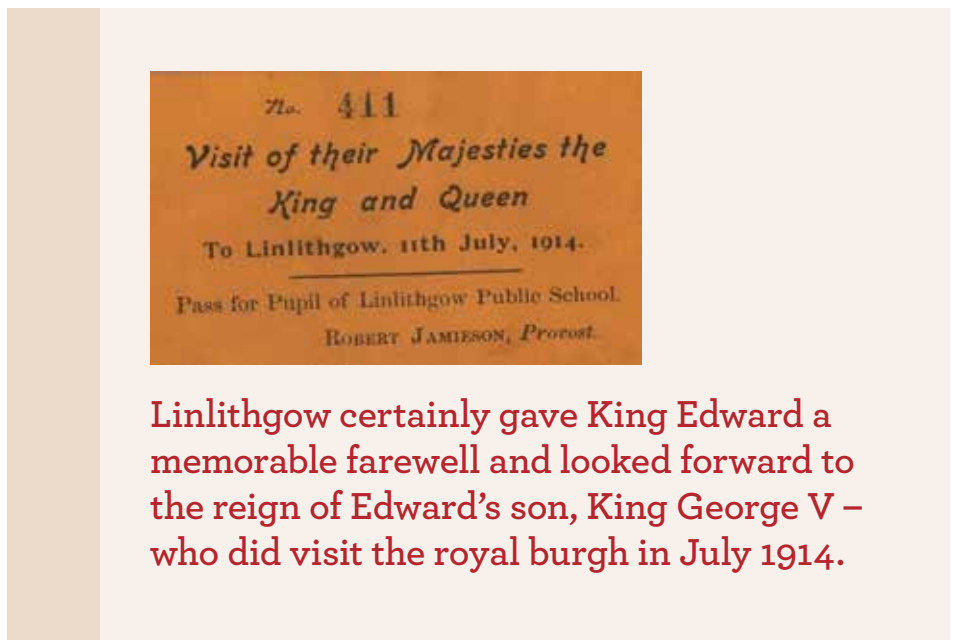
*Provost Robert Jamieson.*



*The official arrangements for the Memorial Service, annotated by Gazette Editor, Robert Fleming.*



*Gazette Editor Robert Fleming.*



**Linlithgow certainly gave King Edward a memorable farewell and looked forward to the reign of Edward's son, King George V - who did visit the royal burgh in July 1914.**

## LADAS OAKWELL ALLOTMENTS IN JULY



**It was definitely blazing June! The weather was appreciated by all, including growers, because warmth from the sun warms the soil and does bring on young plants but the challenge is always having to water when there has been so little rain. There was a temptation to keep watering everything but for some vegetables, e.g. brassicas, as long as they are mature enough, it is best to let them seek water. This can make them stronger.**

Other vegetables, such as squash, courgettes and corn, do require regular watering. But the rain came! The soil is now warm and damp which is good to work. It makes weeding easier and the warm wet weather does accelerate weed growth. Damp soil helps when sowing seed, late carrot seed for example. Oakwell is a stony site and suffers from carrot root fly. To ensure the best carrots on a stony site like ours remove as many stones as possible from the soil where the carrots are to grow just by using a hand fork, mix some sharp sand into the soil, water before sowing the seed and then draw a shallow drill. Watering beforehand prevents the seed being washed away. Sowing the carrot seed sparingly is important because too many seedlings can prevent the growth of large carrots and thinning carrots can attract carrot root fly. Don't forget to cover the carrot bed with carrot root fly mesh.



It is also important to cover other vegetables such as brassicas - birds love them, and it is also worthwhile covering leeks after planting to stop the birds pulling them up. Soft fruit is a feast for birds - strawberries, gooseberries and redcurrants. A redcurrant bush can be stripped in a day when the fruit is ripe.

With all the sun, the growth of squash, courgette and sweet corn plants has accelerated. Courgettes very quickly grow into a marrow-sized vegetable and so it is important to keep picking when the courgettes are small. We are all waiting with anticipation for the first early potatoes - there is nothing like them!



### 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 peas, e.g. Douce Provence or Kelvedon Wonder, can also be sown early in July.
- >> Continue to sow lettuce, salad leaves and radish.

Val Corry,  
Chair LADAS







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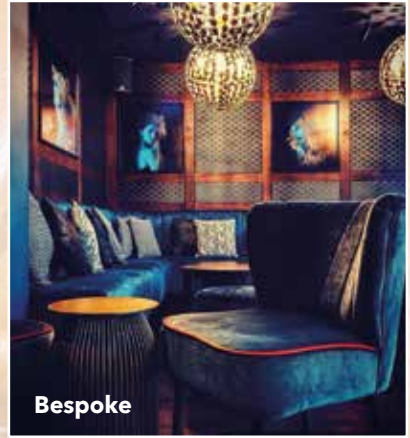




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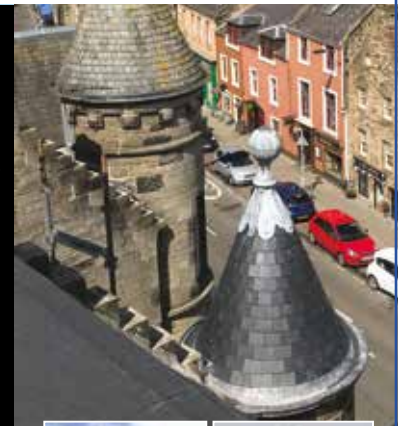
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## The Mortgage Market

Whilst it remains to be seen what the longer term impact of the Bank of England's raising of the base rate to 5% last week, will have on the housing market, commentary in the mortgage market suggests prospective house buyer's are reassessing their affordability, rather than pulling away altogether from moving house.

This seems to be supported by observations that although "heat" has come out of the market compared to 12 months ago, at Paul Rolfe we continue to see that the constrained supply of prime residential family properties coming to the market means there is continued upward pressure on prices for these types of properties. These are sentiments echoed by comments from other agents operating in the prime residential market in Scotland.

Well presented, and realistically-priced properties in sought-after addresses are still commanding competition and, in some cases, buyers are prepared to pay more for the right home. The chronic undersupply of these properties continues to apply upward pressure on prices.

**Latest available statistics from Registers of Scotland show that the West Lothian housing market out performed that of Scotland as a whole.**

In April 2023 the average price achieved for a property sale in West Lothian was £217,500, compared to £188,875 in April 2022, a 15% increase. This compares with the averages

for Scotland of £180,000 and £175,000 respectively, a 2.8% increase.

Transaction volumes also held up in West Lothian compared to Scotland, with a total number of recorded sales In April 2023 of 233, against 234 in April 2022. This compares to the totals for Scotland of 7290 and 7915 respectively.

### Review of PDR's (Permitted Development Rights)

The Scottish Government is carrying out a review of permitted development rights (PDRs). These provide flexibility for homeowners to carry out certain types of development without a planning application having to be approved by the relevant planning authority. The consultation focuses on addressing matters relating to the cost and climate crises and proposes some changes to PDRs covering the installation of renewable energy equipment and thermal efficiency improvements such as solar panels and replacement windows. This focus reflects the important role that such equipment can play in helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs for households.

Fairly extensive PDRs already exist for renewable energy equipment and thermal efficiency improvements.

#### *Changes proposed by the consultation include:*

Extending PDRs to allow the installation of solar panels on domestic properties in conservation areas in some circumstances. Specifically, the government is considering allowing solar panels attached to the rear

elevation of a property, or the side elevation provided it does not front a road.

Allowing solar panels to be installed on a wider range of outbuildings within the curtilage of a dwellinghouse. Making changes to the permitted number, size and location of air source heat pumps on domestic buildings.

Removing the requirement that an air source heat pump installation in a conservation area must be at ground level.

Making changes to the PDRs for wind turbines including changes related to turbine dimensions and location.

Due to concerns about the adequate dispersal of pollutants and the impact of cumulative emissions on air quality, removing PDRs for flues for wood burning stoves (including wood burners and log burners), biomass boilers and biomass heating systems. This would not be retrospective and so would not affect existing flues or chimneys. Introducing PDRs for the replacement of windows on buildings within conservation areas – subject to conditions or limitations specifying that:

The PDRs do not apply in World Heritage Sites; for windows situated on the front elevation of the building, or the side elevation fronting a road, the PDRs would only apply if the replacement window matches the existing window with respect to its opening mechanism, the dimensions and colour of its frame and astragals and the number, orientation and colour of panes.

**The consultation runs until 23 August 2023 and can be responded to through the citizen space consultation hub.**



Venice's owner describes her as a very clever and exceedingly loving girl. She's a lovely dog to live with and has beautiful social skills with both dogs and people. She makes her family smile at least 10 times a day by just being her.

**Her owner Claire says:**

*"Venice loves training and throws herself into learning new things. She loves a good long hike and exploring new places.*

*Although she is a good girl, she does have cheeky habits - her favourite being to pretend my husband is a lion she's hunting on the savanna. Full on stalk, leap, run. It's funny. Glad she only does it with him! Her favourite toy is a flirt pole, Ridgebacks aren't big toy lovers, unless they're being disembodied!"*

When we spoke with her owner, Venice was currently in season. We asked how Venice copes and how it affects their routine:

**Her owner says:**

*"This is her third season, so I recognise when she's due as she gets all weird with different flooring around seven days before she starts bleeding. This passes quickly during the first week of her season she is a bit more needy and a lot more sleepy. After that she is back to normal and sails through. I'd also advise people to keep a close eye for bad smelling discharge, anorexia, lethargy, vomiting or anything not normal. Get a vet check ASAP, I'd rather waste*

*their time than risk losing my dog. Her routine stays the same, and I did try reducing her walks in her first season but she became quite low, so in her second & third I kept her walking outings normal, and she was much better. I just keep her on a leash as that's the responsible thing to do, she's not allowed boyfriends!" "We keep flooring and bedding mega clean, don't ask her to sit outside as infection risk isn't worth it. Venice keeps herself clean and it's just a little more laundry with blankets and throws to protect bedding and furniture. It really is no hassle at all."*

When a female dog reaches puberty, their reproductive cycle starts. The official term is 'oestrus', but you will often hear it being called 'in season' or 'in heat'. A season is the fertile period of a dog's cycle when they can get pregnant.

Their first heat is at around 6 months old, then every 6-7 months afterwards. Larger breeds can have a much later onset. Each cycle lasts approximately 2-3 weeks - they can become pregnant any time during a season and for a few days afterwards. Some have longer or shorter cycles - they should be regular by the time they're an adult. Male dogs show keen interest in females during cycles as hormones and pheromones are passed in females' urine.

Signs of a heat include swollen vulva, bleeding, increased licking of area, swollen mammary glands, changes in behaviour like more anxiety or nesting. Often first seasons can be subtle with swelling only and no bleeding.

To monitor your dog's season count day 1 of the season as the first day you notice any signs.

It is always worth letting your vet know when your dog is in season so they can keep track of their cycle on file. Some do not come out of season and may experience issues/ complications, such as pyometra or pseudopregnancy. Owners must monitor seasons and contact the vet ASAP if they have any concerns.

Dogs can have bigger gaps between seasons as they get older, but unlike humans (who go through menopause), dogs continue to come into heat throughout their life, unless neutered.

Being in heat isn't painful, but can make a dog feel uncomfortable, unsettled and 'under the weather'. Older dogs have a much higher risk of health complications if left unneutered.

To prevent unwanted pregnancy, it's important to keep your dog away from uncastrated males while she's in season, keep on a lead at all times, avoid walking in areas where other dogs are likely to be off the lead, and avoid stressful situations. She may not be as social and may be more possessive of toys or bedding areas - she should be given space and respect.

If you see your dog being mated, don't try and separate them as this can lead to injuries - contact your vet ASAP.



**Hello  
I'm Venice  
Staines**

Neutering is routinely done 3 to 4 months after a season, as the hormones require time to settle to reduce complications from surgery.

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*Sunday 6th August:* Jiayang Song, Piano

*Sunday 13th August:*  
Emma Baird, Violin and Ryan Corbett Accordion



Paul Rolfe\*

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