

# ALGAE ON THE LOCH AT TIPPING POINT?

IS IT KILLING THE LOCH? P7.



LOW PORT CENTRE  
PROGRESS UPDATE P12.

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LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

# BLACK



ESTD. 2011

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

# BITCH

ISSUE NO.  
101 OCT 2023

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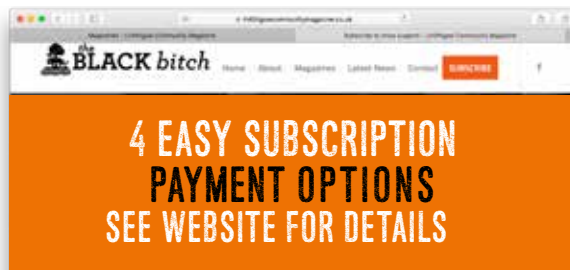
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MAGAZINE**



As we begin our second century of Black Bitch issues we feature two articles of some note to everyone with a concern to use and enjoy two of Linlithgow's many great assets.

One has been around for very much longer than the other but both are in need of some care and attention.

The first, as featured on our front page, is **Linlithgow Loch**, a prime asset for the town but at present suffering from the worst outbreak of algal bloom seen for some time which at the very least diminishes the enjoyment that walkers, fishers and sailors derive from using the loch and its surrounds.

The problem is of course not local to Linlithgow but is an intractable worldwide problem. Various groups have been convened over the years with little real advance in understanding the problem on the Loch or implementing potential solutions. Our article on page 7 sets out the bones of the issue and the beginning of another earnest attempt to put some real momentum behind efforts to shed light on the problem and find a solution, even if only partial.

The second article brings very encouraging news on the progress of attempts to complete a community asset transfer of the **Low Port Centre**. As reported in our Issue 81, April 2021, the Low Port Centre, promoted by Mel Gray (Councillor) and built by Lothian Regional Council in 1987, was originally run by a dedicated committee of local residents before being adopted by West Lothian Council in 1997. Now the clock has turned full circle and the exciting

prospect of the Centre being run once again by a committee of dedicated community members is very real.

There is clearly still much to be done but organisers report a morale boosting contribution to funds of £133,000 during Giving Week in June along with the proceeds of the Edinburgh Kiltwalk which will contribute significantly to bringing the main hall back into use. Further details on how to help to bring the Centre back under community control can be found in the article on page 12.

And so to some of the other articles...

For adult **parkrun** enthusiasts read about the phenomenal turnout of 600 participants for the first event at Winchburgh and the role played by Linlithgow Athletic Club members in its inauguration and management. Elsewhere on the fitness trail we have our very own Murdie Kennedy reporting on his brilliant experience with the "Walk for Jock" on the West Highland Way and new business Vitality Pilates by Kirsty explains how Pilates can help bodies keep aging at bay.

And a first for **Springfield Scribblers**, pupils from Primaries 6 & 7 of Springfield Primary School, in their introductory piece for the magazine telling us what they like about living in Linlithgow - a timely work of appreciation of the Town and well worth reading.

**New Hopetoun Gardens**, one of three businesses that have supported the magazine since its inception in May 2011, recall their twelve years of the stories, hints, tips and recipes they have shared with readers.

Bruce Jamieson describes the work that has been required over the centuries on St Michael's Parish

Church to keep the weather out and the congregation in; looking to the future, Linlithgo-solar launches a new initiative; Sean McKinven reviews the value to the community of Party at the Palace and the Festive Forest team sets up its stall for another family friendly Christmas light show at Beecraigs; LAMP's Addams Family, Spooky Lane and Calvin Sinclair's film review continue the spooky theme.

Rounded off with property advice, money matters, health services, One Linlithgow and Station Adopters we hope there is something there for everyone.

## MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

Many thanks to all our subscribers whose contributions have allowed us to include more pages and hence cover more topics in each issue and, of course, deal with the sharp increase in print costs this past while.

For all our current subscribers, your contribution is greatly appreciated. If you have always been meaning to subscribe but haven't quite got round to it yet please use one of the options on our website to make a subscription now at

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## ONE LINLITHGOW

**One Linlithgow prepares for business consultation and Christmas buying season.**

Since 2019, despite a global pandemic, the One Linlithgow business improvement district (BID) has delivered over £400,000 of investment in the town, delivering on the business plan that businesses voted on.

The BID team and directors are now working on a four year-progress report detailing many of the projects delivered since 2019 and will be consulting with local business owners for feedback on how the projects have benefited their businesses and Linlithgow as a whole.

Evelyn Noble, chair of One Linlithgow BID said *“As we work towards the development of a further business plan, the BID team will continue to work on delivery of the plans to the end of this BID term in September 2024. While we highlight our achievements in the report, we will not dwell upon them over the coming months. There will be new challenges facing all businesses in the years ahead and the BID team will welcome the opportunity to keep working and developing a Linlithgow fit for the next five years and beyond.”*



**The business consultation process will also ask business owners if the volunteer board of directors and BID team have achieved enough to vote Yes to continue as a Business Improvement District until 2029.**

## FESTIVE PERIOD PREPARATIONS



The business consultation will take place as businesses start to prepare for the festive buying season. This is an ideal opportunity for people to shop local and buy some of their Christmas presents in Linlithgow.

When we love local, we can create better places to live, work and visit. By loving local, we are choosing to back local businesses, and build stronger communities that can respond to the cost-of-living crisis and the climate emergency.

For many local people, there is an assumption that many successful projects are completed by West Lothian Council, when the reality is they have been funded and completed by local businesses via One Linlithgow.

In this issue, One Linlithgow has highlighted just a few projects that have been completed. For instance, during the festive period, this includes over £45,000 invested in the festive lights in the town centre.

## WHAT IS A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID)?



BIDs can broadly be described as geographically defined areas, where businesses come together and agree to invest collectively in projects and services designed to improve their trading

environment. You may have heard of Essential Edinburgh, GoForth Stirling, Falkirk Delivers, Enterprising Bathgate and Alloa First. Along with One Linlithgow, these areas are just some BIDs in Scotland delivering the business plans for their areas.

One Linlithgow was formed in 2019 following the merging of two BIDs for Mill Road Industrial Estate and the Town Centre, to pool resources and deliver even more for Linlithgow. Six months into this BID term, the pandemic was upon us and BIDs had to quickly adapt to an unprecedented environment.

When the Pandemic hit, the BID for Linlithgow had to change what they were doing, delivering PPE support to local businesses together with a hugely successful online digital Christmas market, and offering grants towards Perspex screens, signage, and the Scotland Loves Local promotions.

However, a lot has still been achieved.

## WHAT HAS ONE LINLITHGOW DONE SINCE 2019 FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES AND LOCAL PEOPLE?

Firstly, the BID publishes articles in the Black Bitch community magazine, showcasing businesses and informing residents of business and community news. This is alongside social media updates, business promotions and more recently, the new Linlithgow.co.uk business directory, events and jobs listings has been set up by the BID.



The Artisan Market introduced a revitalised outdoor market, subsidising BID member participation with stalls. The market takes place monthly at the town centre Vennel area. Alongside this the “Coffee and Cake” trail leaflet is handed out to market visitors.



The BID provides support to Burgh Beautiful, to support maintenance of existing floral displays in town.

Continual financial support is provided to invaluable community events such as the Advent Fayre and Civic Festival.



Premises Improvement Grants encourage local investment, support individual businesses, and improve the town’s presentation to everyone who visits.

Hard-copy and digital versions of the popular Linlithgow Visitor Guide had a 45,000 print run this year for distribution by Landmark Press across neighbouring high tourist footfall areas including Edinburgh, Stirling and Falkirk.

Display boards and banners are funded by the BID and are regularly changed seasonally.

The Linlithgow “Loyalty Lottery” is a very popular local promotional tool for the town that many local businesses participate in. It is also very well received by residents.

One Linlithgow are now working with contractors on installation of festive lighting for the forthcoming season. The BID’s role is to fund, maintain, erect, store, and expand festive lighting as part of a continuous improvement of lights for the town. This is paid by local business owners – and is a reason to #ShopLocal.

### Community

The BID team and Directors, including Community Directors, have worked closely with many community groups including Burgh Beautiful, Linlithgow Union Canal Society and the Community Development Trust over the

last four years on projects including the Chatty Benches, refurbishment of the information display boards, and charitable contributions such as the Ukraine appeal. This community engagement is an integral part of the aims and objectives of One Linlithgow.

### Safety and Security

Investment in CCTV with number-plate recognition, with 12 cameras covering Mill Road and the town centre.

The supply of fraud prevention measures such as security kits are provided to retail businesses including fake note and forensic marking kits, “DNA” liquid, guidance, and stickers.

In the Mill Road Industrial Estate, CCTV and security is an important issue and is maintained by a local supplier, Scutum.

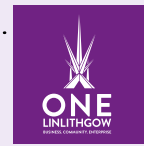
A 130m security fence off the motorway was installed and business directory signage is regularly updated to reflect tenant changes on the estate.

There are many other roles that the One Linlithgow BID team fulfil, with their adaptability clearly demonstrated across Scotland during and post pandemic times. BIDs are go-to organisations that link businesses with local authorities, elected representatives, and government Ministers. They leverage in much more extra additional funding from other sources so projects can get done rather than being talked about.

One Linlithgow has engaged the services of Page\Park architects to provide an improved look for the Vennel area. The BID team is applying for external funding to be able to deliver on the plans.

One Linlithgow, in partnership with the Linlithgow Trail, the Town Management Group and First Responders, has installed 8 Defibrillators throughout the town, including in public spaces and licenced premises followed up by the training of over 50 staff in the licensed trade on how to use them.

**One Linlithgow**  
**Email: [office@onelinlithgow.com](mailto:office@onelinlithgow.com)**  
**Tel: 07708 194592**





## FOLK FAE LITHGAE HECTOR WOODHOUSE

*“I am the only person in the world called Hector Woodhouse. That’s a line I use when chatting to strangers. When they Google it, they are always amazed. You should try it!”*

That’s the cheery message I received from the man who is undoubtedly one of Linlithgow’s best-loved characters and somebody who is held in the highest regard throughout the community.

Before meeting him for a chat, I did consult Google – and he was right!

Hector has been involved in many organisations over the years and has brightened countless lives. Although he hasn’t been enjoying the best of health in recent times, and has had to give up his beloved bowls, I was struck by Hector’s great spirit. He told me:

*“I always say that whatever happens in life, you have to try and keep your sense of humour”.*

Hector has certainly done that, and we shared lots of laughs as he regaled me with stories about his colourful eighty-four years.

Hector was born in Dunfermline in 1939, just weeks after the outbreak of war. He began school in Longridge, where his grandparents ran the Commercial Hotel. His father served in the Navy and was demobbed in Mombasa in Kenya. The family moved over to join him and sailed

on the ship called the ‘Empire Windrush’, which would later become famous for transporting people from the West Indies to Britain.

Hector attended Mombasa Primary and then Nairobi Primary boarding school and there is a hair-raising tale of being confronted by a troupe of baboons with red bottoms when he got lost in the African bush! Luckily, Hector survived that ordeal and returned to Scotland at the age of twelve. He lived at Threemiletown and attended Linlithgow Academy. After school, he studied civil engineering at Heriot Watt and, as a student and new graduate, got the chance to work on the Forth Road Bridge

Hector’s bridge memories made him something of a local celebrity in 2014, when he was featured in a BBC documentary to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the opening.

*“I was so lucky”, he told me. “I saw the project from start to finish. I was the first person to walk over the structure, completing the last few metres by ‘tight roping’ over the walkway support cable”.*

As a gift to his grandchildren, Hector wrote down lots of his tales for a booklet called **“The Forth Road Bridge: Hector’s stories”**. His fame continues and, a few months ago, he was interviewed by Michael Portillo under the north-side viaduct of the bridge, and this will feature in a television programme later this year.

Hector’s mother was born at the Customs House Hotel at the West Port, and he is very proud of his Linlithgow roots. People are well acquainted with Hector’s great love for the Riding of the Marches. He was involved as far back as 1969, when Linlithgow Town Council approached the local Round Table for help to re-vitalise the ancient tradition, which was in grave danger of collapse. When the Council established the Deacons’ Court to preserve the Marches after local government re-organisation in the mid-1970s, Hector was a founder member. He worked his way through the organisation and was elected as Provost – and Vice-Admiral of the Forth – in 1994. The great honour he felt is tangible:

*“I was so proud at being the Provost for three years and it was a fabulous experience. I have tried to pass on to others that when you put those robes on you aren’t yourself. You are playing a part of history. I was delighted that I was able to attract some very distinguished speakers, such as Edinburgh’s Lord Provost, Norman Irons, and Commander Q. Bunting from the Rosyth Naval Base”.*

Hector’s wonderful sense of humour shone through our interview, and I have no doubt that he will continue to keep smiling and having a laugh with his many friends and admirers.

**Murdoch Kennedy**



# LINLITHGOW LOCH BLUE-GREEN SOUP!

**Right now, our wee Loch seems more like a giant cauldron of blue-green toxic soup. This is, of course, due to an algal bloom which is affecting the water and wildlife. While algae growth at this time of year is natural, Linlithgow Loch is now being overwhelmed by an excess of three nutrients: Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Chloride.**

The loch, managed by Historic Environment Scotland (HES) and designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its botanical and ornithological interests, was originally noted as the only example of a lowland mesotrophic loch in West Lothian. This means it contained moderate amounts of nutrients, with healthy, diverse populations of aquatic plants, algae, and fish.

Over recent years, the loch has become eutrophic. This means there is an excess of nutrients, supporting dense plant populations, including algae, the decomposition of which kills animal life by depriving it of oxygen. And evidence suggests this situation is worsening.

Eutrophication can be devastating for biodiversity and wildlife in and around the loch. Public health risks are a concern too, limiting water sports, with people advised to avoid the water and keep their pets away.

Last month, a group of concerned residents met in the Burgh Halls to hear a summary of a recent scientific report which analysed the various sources of nutrient pollution going into and out of the loch. This study had been agreed at a Linlithgow Loch Summit in 2015, and was funded by key members of the Strategic Loch Advisory group (Historic Environment Scotland, West Lothian Council and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency).

This public meeting was the community's first major update on the issue in 8 years. At the meeting, **Lothian MSP, Lorna Slater**, presented the details of the previously unpublished report conducted by the

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology into the water quality of the Loch, which was obtained via a Freedom of Information (FOI) request.

Thanks to the FOI request we can now identify many of the sources and scale of the problem, and recommended actions. Phosphorus, nitrogen and chloride greatly exceed recommended levels, primarily coming from septic tank discharge, housing sewage drainage, agricultural and road grit/salt runoff.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE EXCESS NUTRIENTS

> **Phosphorous:** Guidance to septic tank owners about upkeep and overflow prevention. Ultimately, connect properties on Edinburgh Road to the sewerage network.

> **Nitrogen:** Implement a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) and associated management measures to reduce nitrogen runoff from fields into the loch, e.g. reduce the use of agrochemicals, and support land managers to establish best practice.

> **Chloride:** Improve planting of roadside verges as a natural buffer to soak up road grit/salt runoff before it reaches waterways.

A significant aspect the report doesn't properly cover are the Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs). These are tanks that mix sewage with rainwater during heavy rainfall or storm events. These pump raw sewage directly into the loch to avoid the water treatment works at Mill Road from being overwhelmed. There were 9 CSO events recorded in 2021 lasting over 13 hours in total and 18 events in 2022 spanning over 45 hours.

While it's easy to identify large sources of pollution, it is important to realise that even small individual actions impact the loch. What chemicals do you treat your lawn with, what chemicals are in your washing liquids or powders? We all have a part to play

in fixing this and making our Loch beautiful and healthy for all to benefit.

In 20 years, Mary Queen of Scots 500th birthday party might be taking place beside a lifeless giant pea green soup bowl. This can't happen. We must be better custodians of our beautiful loch, so it remains a jewel in Linlithgow's crown for generations to come.



## TAKE ACTION

> Join the 'Friends of Linlithgow Loch' Facebook group.

> Read background documents and updates on the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council website - llbcc.org.uk

> Write to your elected politicians, Councillors and MSPs. Let them know you are concerned about the loch water pollution. Ask them to put pressure on key strategic stakeholders to respond to report recommendations.

> Attend a follow-up public meeting planned for the new year.

Alan Brown and Pamela Barnes

ROWEN EVENTS PRESENT

# FESTIVE FOREST

**BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK**

As the days get colder and the nights get darker, this December, Beecraigs Festive Forest returns once again for an amazing fourth year and promises to be even more spectacular than ever before!





# BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK FESTIVE FOREST

Yes it really is nearly that time of year again !!!

From its inception in 2019, the local event has homegrown event has gone from strength to strength with some amazing statistics over the past 3 years to be very proud of;

- > Over 75k visitors attending the event
- > Over 15k children to see Santa
- > Voted in the Top 14 light trails in the U.K.
- > Voted in the Top 2 light trails in Scotland
- > The biggest family event in West Lothian and Central Scotland
- > Over £11 million brought to the local economy
- > Over 300 local and National employees
- > Over 100 local companies involved

It really is quite a remarkable achievement for **Rowen Events** - two local lads (Directors Roy Snedden and Ewen McMartin) who are working hard all year round to put Linlithgow firmly on the events map and they will not stop here with much, much more to come next year and beyond.

Roy said "We truly believe we are the jewel in the crown in Central Scotland, perfectly placed between Edinburgh and Glasgow with fantastic commuter links. Linlithgow and West Lothian has so much to offer and we are inviting everyone in to see what we have for themselves."

Ewen added "The accessibility and high production standards of all our events ensures quality family experiences for all ages".

This December **Bee CRAIGS Country Park, West Lothian** will once again be transformed into a magical Christmas wonderland, creating a unique, mesmerising winter experience for all the family.

Both wanted to thank the local community for all their help and support over the years and want everyone to continue to get behind them to promote Linlithgow on the events map.

## THIS YEARS BEECRAIGS FESTIVE FOREST RETURNS EVEN BIGGER AND BETTER THAN BEFORE FEATURING...

A spectacular 1.8km illumination trail of stunning woodland featuring state-of-the-art lighting design, amazing visual installations, dazzling projections and stunning sound by one of the UK's leading lighting and production companies

- > The longest light tunnel in Scotland
- > The return of the Radio Forth Silent VIP Club!!
- > New Christmas movie tent
- > Santa's Grotto and Storytelling Experience with his cheeky Elves, toys, sweets and North Pole post box



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- > Santa's Christmas village selling festive gifts, treats and novelties
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<https://beecraigsfestiveforest.com/>



# LAMP LIGHTS UP THE SPOOKY SEASON WITH 'THE ADDAMS FAMILY' SPECTACLE

As the autumn chill begins to descend upon Linlithgow, the warmth of theatre lights and the thrill of live performances beckon from the heart of Linlithgow Academy Theatre. Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) is set to deliver a hilarious rendition of 'The Addams Family the Musical' - poised to be a highlight for theatre enthusiasts and lovers of all things spooky.

Starting from October 10th and running through to the 14th, LAMP's adult company is ready to dazzle audiences. For those doing a quick calendar check, yes, the show does fall perfectly in line with Wednesday Addams' birthday on Friday, October 13th. Just a coincidence? Or perhaps some mischievous planning?

## A BITE OF THE SHOW'S BACKGROUND

The Addams Family the Musical whisks audiences into the lives of our favourite ghoulish clan. It orbits around young Wednesday Addams, who's all grown up and fallen in love with a sweet, intelligent young man from a \*gasp\* 'normal', respectable family. Ah, young love! But things turn wild during a fateful dinner where two very different worlds collide. Can love prevail amidst the Addams' antics, the Beineke's supposed 'normality', and the secret Wednesday is itching to reveal?

## GUIDING THIS EERIE EXTRAVAGANZA

With **Hannah Easton** at LAMP's directorial helm for the third time, this rendition promises to blend nostalgia with fresh

creativity. Hannah has been a dedicated member of LAMP since she was just nine years old! Her rich experience and passion are set to steer this show to LAMP fame. **Eddie MacLennan's** musical magic and **Hayley Fleming's** spellbinding choreography will ensure toes are tapping, even if they're six feet under.

## A STELLAR CAST AWAITS

Embracing the macabre mischief of the Addams, LAMP's talented troupe is set to dazzle like never before. **Ray O'Sullivan** is gearing up to present Gomez in the most rib-tickling way, and **Charmain Leitch's** Morticia? Well, she's set to steal hearts... and maybe a soul or two.

Adding to the eccentric family mix are **Gregor Preston** as the lovable and electric Fester, **Rebecca Miller** portraying a passionate Wednesday, **Jack Wallace** breathing life into mischievous Pugsley and the funniest Grandma Addams you'll ever see, performed by the brilliant **Carol Fraser...** And let's not forget **Eric Brown** towering above it all as Lurch - will he ever crack a smile?

The Beineke family are just as stellar, with photographer **Rebecca Holmes** as the 'colourful' Alice Beineke, **Craig Lowe** as the stuffy Mal Beineke (last seen as the lead in LAMP's Betty Blue Eyes) and local student and talented musician **Euan Campbell** as the romantic Lucas Beineke.

As for the chorus? They're not just singing from the sides; they've more to do than some of the principals! Every chorus member plays a unique 'ancestor', hauntingly hilarious ghostly figures risen from the dead to oversee the action and attempt to create a happy ending for our beloved Wednesday.

## PRODUCTION MAGIC

LAMP has pulled out all the stops this year. The much anticipated LED backdrop screen

will plunge audiences straight into the heart of the Addams' mansion, and the live band promises to be the perfect accompaniment to the creepy and kooky antics on stage. Plus, our brilliant full set of professional costumes? They're so exquisite they deserve their own standing ovation!

## WRAPPING IT UP, MUMMY-STYLE

In these evolving times, LAMP's dedication remains deeply rooted. With principals putting in over 100 hours of rehearsals, it's clear that every drop of sweat and every rehearsed line is a testament to LAMP's dedication to their craft and community. Like *Elf the Musical* last year, the much-acclaimed High School Musical in April, and the sell-out LAMP Cabaret last month, 'The Addams Family the Musical' promises a night of laughs, thrills, and unforgettable moments.

As the curtain rises and falls, the genuine success of a show is marked by the audience's applause and cherished presence. So, with Halloween just around the corner, Linlithgow locals and visitors, why not immerse your family in the antics of the most beloved creepy and kooky characters? Let's continue our tradition of supporting local theatre.

Tickets are soaring off the shelves faster than a witch's broomstick, so be sure to snag yours.

Tickets: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/inlithgowamateurmusicalproductionsboxoffice>

Or phone the box office: 07862 211525

Or scan the QR code below

Rebecca Holmes LAMP



Photo Credits: Rebecca and Isabella Holmes





# Linlith-Go-Solar

Impacts of our Community Energy Project 2019-2023



Linlith-Go-Solar has successfully delivered two phases of community solar pv energy projects across 3 local sports clubs - Linlithgow Rugby Club, Golf Club & Sports Club

We are a group of **local volunteers** passionate about community energy & want to do more

We raised over **£45,000** from two community bonds & over 130 mainly local investors

In 2022/23 the clubs saved over **£7,000** in grid energy costs!



Solar panels on Linlithgow Sports Club

&

More sites and community bonds in the pipeline and working with other local communities

*Stay tuned!*

Our key supporters & partners in Phases 1 & 2



Our projects have prevented over **42000kg** of Carbon Dioxide (CO2e) from being emitted



Saving the equivalent of a car driving round the Earth 8 times!\*

Follow us on Twitter: @linlithgosolar & Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/linlithgosolar/

## More Community Benefits:

Surplus re-invested locally to support youth education and improve green spaces

Sponsored Vennel display flower bed by Burgh Beautiful volunteers with energy and environmental awareness themes

Sponsored another 2 Linlithgow Academy teams in their F1 in Schools STEM project in 2022/23

Supported public energy saving & renewables awareness events

Provided educational opportunities for our Young Energy Enterprise Group

Gave energy advice to local people and organisations and shared knowledge with fellow communities

## Do you want more information?

please contact

**Neil Barnes**  
at [energy@trust.linlithgow.org.uk](mailto:energy@trust.linlithgow.org.uk)

## Background data

Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Carbon Saving kgCO2e	4520	13290	13283	11456

\*Based on 2022 Scope 2 Emission Factor from Defra

## LINLITH-GO-SOLAR GOES COMMUNITIES-GO-SOLAR!

After 4 years of delivery, thousands of pounds saved on grid costs for local community sports clubs, around 50 tonnes of CO2 emissions avoided, or the equivalent of driving a car more than 8 times round the Earth, and delivering local community benefits including support to educational and energy engagement initiatives, our passionate community team is now ready to take a major step forward.

Linlith-Go-Solar (LgS) has now teamed up with 5 other like-minded communities, across 4 other Scottish regions, in a major 'Communities-Go-Solar' (CgS) Lottery funding bid to build on our ambitions.

Since we installed 5 Solar PV systems for 3 local community sports club buildings, LgS hasn't looked back.

Whilst we haven't enjoyed any new installations since 2020, partly as a result of the pandemic, and the closure of the UK Government's national incentive - the Community Feed-In-Tariff - LgS has not lost our ambition to do more, especially as energy costs have spiraled rapidly in the last 2 years for local building owners and users.

Generating lots of interest in our small community enterprise in Scotland and the UK in the past few years, we were shortlisted for an award at last year's Scotland's Towns Partnership annual conference. We've also been presenting our new community enterprise on numerous occasions, and a community bond model supported by Scottish Communities Finance

Ltd. So much so that we have now made new friends and a long-term learning and sharing collaboration with 5 other local communities: Polbeth Community Hub; West Calder & Harburn Community Development Trust; Sustainable West Linton & District; Penicuik Community Development Trust; and Porty Community Energy.

Collectively, we have submitted a stage 1 bid to The National Lottery Community Fund to bring in a whole new team of paid staff to help build our ambitions.

Having got through the first phase last month, we are now working/volunteering closely with our 5 fellow community groups behind the scenes to build up our stage 2 bid.

We shall be submitting this bid in November with a final decision in January 2024.

If successful, we shall recruit a team to work for 5 years (2024-2028) to develop our various projects being proposed by our communities. This will also involve engaging with our communities, building and land owners and users, and raising capital through community bonds, possibly shares and other means, to pay for more community-owned solar PV roof and ground systems, potentially solar farms, battery storage and EV charging systems. Where possible, we shall also be delivering energy efficiency and saving measures for community building owners and users.

To go hand-in-hand with these improvements, we are also planning more community engagement, employment,

education and training activities, especially for our young folk through the Young Energy Enterprise Group involving local schools, colleges and universities.

Like LgS, the other key long-term plan for CgS is to create a 25-year-plus community revenue surplus fund from selling the solar electricity at a lower cost than the grid to building owners/users. This fund will be disbursed democratically via the newly proposed Communities-Go-Solar organisation to provide more community benefits, including supporting good causes such as helping people in fuel poverty, or building smarter, more affordable community-owned renewable energy systems.

If you are interested in volunteering or supporting our local ambitions in any way, or simply have an energy-related query, please do not hesitate to contact us below.

**Or hook up with our new Communities-Go-Solar social media pages coming soon**

### Neil Barnes

energy@trust-linlithgow.org.uk  
Voluntary Trustee of LCDT & Lead for Linlith-Go-Solar

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Linlithgow Community Development Trust (known as LCDT) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), SC045971, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)



## LOW PORT CENTRE: REOPENING ONE STEP CLOSER

It has been a busy summer for the project team and volunteers who are working to reopen the Low Port Centre (LPC) as a community hub. So much has happened in a few short months!

We had a fantastic response to the community consultation in June and we were grateful to the individuals and community groups who attended the meeting, giving valuable feedback and encouragement to the LPC project team and trustees. We have also had good conversations with charities and businesses over the last few months keen on renting rooms. We are pleased to say that we now have sub-lease agreements in place for these tenants, once the lease agreement with West Lothian Council is signed and the phase one refurbishment work has been carried out.

St John's Church also raised a staggering £133,000 for the Low Port Centre project during their Giving Week in June. This money will be used to refurbish the main hall in the Low Port Centre for use by St John's Church and other community groups through the week.

Speaking of money coming in to support the reopening of the Low Port Centre and its refurbishment, a team from St John's Church completed the 21 mile Edinburgh



Kiltwalk on Sunday 17 September. There were sore feet and aching legs by the end, however raising over £3,500 for the LPC project spurred them on!

There has also been a buzz of activity within the Low Port Centre itself, with a number of contractors in the building to do electrical work and make sure the centre is in good order for us entering the premises. This work has now been completed and we want to thank West Lothian Council for their support in getting the building ready for reopening. The Low Port Centre Trustees are now working to finalise and sign the lease agreement with the Council.

There is still much work to be done, but it is great to see how far we have come already on this journey to reopen the

Low Port Centre and have it as a hub space for Linlithgow and the surrounding communities.

If you would be interested in supporting us in developing the Low Port Centre as a community hub there are a number of ways you can help. We are still raising money for the refurbishment work and if you would like to donate to this you can use the QR code to take you to the webpage.



**Andy Clark**  
Low Port Project Lead

# REOPENING THE LOW PORT



# XMAS AT THE ROSE CLUB.



COMMUNITY ///

## Party Nights

**Friday 8 December**  
**"The Time of Your Life Show"**  
 Tribute to the stars for an evening.

**Saturday 9 December**  
**Jesse Garron**  
 & the rock n' roll circus

**Saturday 16 December**  
**Trina Milne's "Diva Show"**  
 & cabaret

Homemade Lentil Soup, Pate with oatcakes served on a bed of fresh crisp salad, Prawn Cocktail. Turkey /Trimmings, chefs Homemade Steak Pie, Silverside roast. All served with new potatoes & seasonal veg. Tea/coffee, Homemade shortbread & after dinner mints.

**£35pp**, deposit **£20pp** on booking, balance by **Monday 3rd Dec.**

**Monday 18 December**  
**1:30-9:30pm**

3 course Xmas Dinner (same as before, along with sweets board).

**Shona McVey**  
 does Cher & Tina Turner

**Joe Camay**  
 Scotlands No 1 comic

**Jubilee**  
 (award winning, top of the music charts duet)

**£45pp**, includes tea-time buffet, **£25pp** deposit on booking, balance by **Mon 3rd Dec.**

Vegans, vegetarians etc can be accommodated with prior notice, all tables reserved 7:30pm Dinner, carriages midnight.

## HOGMANAY

Hogmanay Show

**Sunday 31st Dec**  
 (9pm-2:00am)

featuring "The Homelanders", Malcolm Dougall, piper & buffet. Tickets now on sale **£20 each.**

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## SUN, SONGS, AND SOLIDARITY

### The 2023 “Walk for Jock”

**For many years, I had wanted to do the West Highland Way with the wonderful “Walk for Jock” charity group, but it always clashed with other things I was involved in. This year was different, and I signed up early to undertake the 96-mile hike from Milngavie to Fort William, starting on September 1st and finishing on the 7th.**

In recent times, I had watched with great interest how the group had developed and founding member, Davie “Deep Sea” Paterson, always made sure that I was kept up to date with all their activities. Determined not to be left behind in any way, and with great encouragement from my partner, I put together a training programme, which basically involved lots of walking in all sorts of terrain in the Bathgate Hills and beyond. The area around Witchcraig became a regular haunt.

I was very excited at the prospect of being the Black Bitch Magazine correspondent embedded with the troops and looked forward to reporting, like Brian Hanrahan in the Falkland Islands, that I had

**“counted them all out and counted them all back.”**

The final briefing meeting on the Saturday before the trip took place in the ‘Taste Deli-Café’ at 47 High Street, which

was the main sponsor this year. Owners **Steven and Lisa Wilson** do a huge amount of work for the “Walk for Jock” group behind the scenes, and they are also enthusiastic participants in the annual assault on the West Highland Way. Everyone involved in the walk is encouraged to choose their own charity and set up an online “Just Giving” page or something similar. Steven and Lisa had chosen Alzheimer Scotland, in memory of Steven’s Mum, **Jeanie**, who passed away in May of this year after a five-year battle with dementia.

Lisa handed out the very impressive sponsors’ T-shirts, which would be worn every day, and I really felt that I had finally arrived as a fully-fledged “Jocker.”

We gathered at “Taste” again at 6am on September 1st, to be met by Lisa distributing pirate hats and inflatable swords. I had been warned that fancy dress would be involved at some stage during the week. With Linlithgow’s answer to Jack Sparrow – **Douglas “Captain” Smith** – very much to the fore, there was always going to be a pirate theme somewhere along the line. “Captain” had brought along two shipmates, his twin son and daughter,

**Ben and Dorine**, and with shouts of “Ahoy, me hearties!,” we boarded the minibus for Milngavie and the official start of the West Highland Way.

I had packed for every eventuality, especially rain, but over the next six days, we were blessed with some of the best weather of the year. I was totally overdressed on day one and was almost melting by the time we reached our first destination, Balmaha. I had heard all the stories about how the first pint wouldn’t even touch the sides and that was definitely the case with the beautiful glass of Innis and Gunn craft lager in the Oaktree Inn.

Everybody warned me about the midges, and I stocked up with ample supplies of “Jungle Formula” and “Smidge.” I even had two head nets. I must honestly say that I was hardly bothered with them throughout the trip, possibly because of the glorious weather, but an encounter with the little blighters in the Inversnaid bunkhouse caused me to burst into song and provide the group with what became the anthem for the week.

**The midges, the midges  
Ahm no gaunae kid yez  
The midges is really the limit  
Wi teeth like pirhanas,  
they drive ye bananas  
If ye let them get under yer semmit**

There seemed to a lot of singing, and not all of it out of a sense of relief after we had reached our daily destination. People made up wee songs to encourage each



other and keep the spirits up as they walked along and **Sarah** (“Wee Boabby” and **Robyn** (“Tracey Beaker”) were particularly adept at this (Frank and Susan, Susan and Frank!).

This year’s group of seventeen walkers saw women outnumber men for the first time and they were brilliant at making sure that everybody looked out for each other. I struggled on the Sunday morning and wouldn’t have reached Bein Glas farm without **Catriona** and **Sean** helping me on the rocky descents. On arrival, **Claire** and **Lisa** strapped up my dodgy knee and sent me on my way to Crianlarich.

With the glorious weather, we undoubtedly saw Scotland at its best. I will never forget the stretch from Kingshouse in Glencoe to Kinlochleven, where the scenery was truly breathtaking. The West Highland Way is a wonderful advert for our country and, along the way, we were delighted to meet so many people from other countries, such as Germany, the Netherlands and Israel. It was also very heartening to be able to help overseas visitors, such as transporting a group from Bridge of Orchy to Tyndrum in our van.

When local musician **Phil Magee** took part one year, he declared “We don’t do egos on the Walk for Jock” and that statement really struck home with me. The fact that we were all kitted out in the same shirt every day - a different sponsor for each stretch of the walk - really helped to build the sense of togetherness and esprit de corps. We wore the fresh shirt

for the next day when eating together at night. Despite their backgrounds, everybody was the same. Everybody was working together and helping each other. The solidarity was immense. We all had our personal stories and all our chosen charities had great significance for us as individuals, but we were all part of a team, brought together by a terrible tragedy - the loss of Davie Paterson’s dearly-loved brother, **Jock**, at the age of only forty-seven.

Giving a toast to his brother at the bridge over the river Fillan, which the “Jockers” have dubbed ‘Jock’s Brig,’ Davie declared, “Jock was too good a man to be forgotten.” As he played a lament on his penny whistle, we all bowed our heads in remembrance. Memorials play a big part on the “Walk for Jock” and the stories behind them made the whole experience very emotional.

I was hugely impressed by the organisation behind the “Walk for Jock,” with **Claire** and **Brian Kirkwood** handling all the logistics of moving the bags to each location and driving the two vans. Both are former colleagues of Jock Paterson in the prison service. Together with Steven and Lisa Wilson, they are the administrative powerhouse behind the whole operation. Their choice of accommodation was faultless and, as fully trained First Aiders, Claire and Lisa were always on hand to administer to every cut, bruise, bite, sting, or sprain.

Brian was a great source of advice and, on more than one occasion, provided a

much-needed shoulder to cry on.

For me, doing the West Highland Way was an amazing experience, full of camaraderie, emotion and a huge sense of achievement and it was lovely to be surrounded by such great people. I have no doubt that I have made friends for life, and I think all the participants would echo that sentiment. I would like to thank my fellow “Jockers,” who encouraged me every inch along the way and would pay special tribute to Davie Paterson, the man who has turned tragedy into triumph and raised thousands of pounds for good causes, both locally and nationally. I was walking in aid of the Scottish Stammering Network and raised £1300, thanks to generous supporters. Will I do it again next year? You bet, and I am already making copies of another of the week’s anthems. All together now!

**Have a banana. Have a banana. Have a banana. Six bob a pund Oi!!**

I counted them all out and I counted them all back.

**Murdoch Kennedy**



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## parkrun takes off!

The last edition of The Black Bitch featured an article about the new junior parkrun at the West Lothian Cycle Circuit. However, the fun isn't restricted to children and young teenagers.

The great news for adults and older teens in Linlithgow is that just along the road at **Auldcathie District Park on the western side of Winchburgh** is one of Scotland's newest parkruns. For those not in the know, parkrun is a free, community event where you can walk, jog, run, volunteer or spectate. **parkrun** (never a capital P!) is 5k in length and takes place every Saturday morning at 9.30am. It has a positive, welcoming and inclusive ethos, with no time limit. Each event has a tailwalker so no one need worry about being last.

The **Auldcathie District event** started in January this year, with Linlithgow Athletics Club members playing a key role in its preparation and inauguration. **LAC member Ian Fyfe**, who is part of the core volunteer team said *"We worked hard to bring parkrun to Winchburgh, but even we were surprised at the bumper turnout of over 600 people at the first event, breaking all Scottish records for inaugural events. We regularly attract over 150 runners and walkers each week and many LAC members are regular participants or volunteers, making it happen each week."*

Recently this went one step further with Linlithgow Athletics Club performing a takeover, which means taking on every single volunteer role (usually around 16-18 roles each week). In addition club members volunteered as pacers, which means running at a set pace for those who wish to achieve

a certain time. Despite being a very wet day, the smiles were broad, with members bringing children and dogs along to support them and a party atmosphere created by bubbles and chalk art.

Although all parkruns aim to be very inclusive, Auldcathie District seems to score particularly highly on this front, with several families attending together each week. The event starts behind the new Sinclair Academy and staff and families from the adjacent Holy Family Primary School are regular participants. The course is also suitable for pushchairs and wheelchairs, now being fully tarmacked.

**parkrun** has also brought a great sense of community to the village and surrounding area. Many new residents have welcomed a regular event, some running or walking, others volunteering and finding a role in the core team. Run Director, **Gillian Frame** said

*"Auldcathie District parkrun has been an incredible addition to our village and the wider surrounding communities. My passion is inspiring people of all ages, shapes and sizes to get moving and parkrun is the perfect way to achieve this. Now, more than ever I believe we should look for ways to encourage one another to look after our mental health as well as our physical health. Being able to offer and access this free and inclusive event on your doorstep is invaluable. At a time where many are struggling with the stresses and strains from the pandemic it's a fantastic way to come together as a community in a relaxed environment whilst also allowing us to help support local businesses who will provide space for conversation and refreshments afterwards."*

Regular participant **Stuart Kerley**, said *"parkrun is a great event to help motivate me to keep up with running. Before I used to just plod along on my own, which can be tough, however since then I've used it to help push me along and keep going. Having that weekly chance to run with others*

*and improve my time, is a great focus. I always find time outside jogging a great break from the daily stress and to be able to share that with others from the local community is fantastic.*

*I've also volunteered at parkrun, the first time I've ever really done regular volunteering. As it's my local event I feel that it is important to keep it going and not just pitch up and run each week. Volunteering was a bit daunting at first, but it's great fun and the core team are really welcoming to new people. Seeing familiar faces each time and getting to know the other volunteers, all while being able to cheer on those running is a great experience."*

So, if you're looking for a new challenge or just something different to do on a Saturday morning head along to Auldcathie District parkrun. For full details check out the website <https://www.parkrun.org.uk/auldcathiedistrict>



**For more general opportunities to run with others, whatever your age or level of fitness LAC and LGL (Lets Go Linlithgow, part of Jog Scotland) have something to offer. Check out our website <https://www.linlithgowathletics.org/>.**

Above, Club volunteers photo: *"just some of the LAC volunteers smiling through the rain."*

Below, Tailwalker photo: *"LAC member Tor Munday acting as tailwalker with her dog, Harris."*



# LINLITHGOW STATION ADOPTERS VOLUNTEER DAY

On Saturday 19 August, volunteer Station Adopters at Linlithgow hosted a visit to the town by Station Adopters from Burntisland, Cardross, Dalry, Fauldhouse, Whitburn, Largs and Uddingston. The visit was sponsored by Scotrail.

Proceeding on to Linlithgow Loch, then through into the Peel (via the community orchard), and after a steep climb we came to Linlithgow Palace and St Michael's Parish Church which was open for us, once again staffed by volunteers.

By now you will have noticed that our day of entertaining and celebrating our town was a result of our wonderful group of volunteers from different organisations coming together and working as a well-oiled team.



Visitors were greeted by **Ron Smith** of Burgh Beautiful who gave a short talk on the history of Burgh Beautiful. **Derek Chambers** gave a talk on the history of Linlithgow Station. **Charles**, our Station Manager, gave a short introduction on the work being done behind the scenes by Scotrail. The station was busy but **Kat** from the Station Office, our Station Ticket Master, was able to join us for a short time.

The group then inspected the planting on Platforms 1 and 2 and a newly installed Pollinator corridor.

From there, Ron hosted a tour of part of the Floral Trail and the Low Port Flower Beds and viewed the 6 beautiful mosaics on the topic of climate change that were produced by pupils from all our local primary schools.

A visit to the sculpture of St Michael followed and from there we headed up to Learmonth Gardens and then over to Linlithgow Union Canal Basin where another group of volunteers from LUCS became involved in our tour of the town. Guests went on a trip on Saint Magdalene where lunch was provided.

On returning to the basin and everyone suitably refreshed, the tour continued to Linlithgow Museum, once again staffed by volunteers. From there, over to the 2023 Environmental Display "Go By Bike" then on to view the Black Bitch Statue at the top of the Serpentine Bed.



**Volunteers from LUCS, Linlithgow Museum, St Michael's Parish Church, Burgh Beautiful, and the Station all joined forces to make the tour enjoyable and informative.**

**A folder of information and places to visit, was given to all who attended.**



“wonderful group of volunteers from different organisations coming together and working as a well-oiled team”

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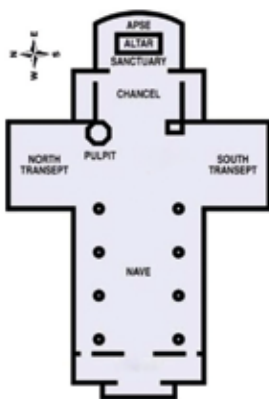
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# TROUBLE AT THE TOP ST MICHAEL'S ALOFT

Bruce Jamieson

Caring for the fabric of St Michael's Church has always been a continuing, and often worrying, task. Today, the immediate concern is with the crumbling spire but there has always been work to do on the building's roof and ceiling and there will be more!

In the early 16th century, the church's Roman Catholic priest, George Crichton, was ordered by Pope Leo X to construct a "durable oak roof" over the nave, the chancel and the newly constructed apse. It is alleged that this was in order to pay penance for some breach of ecclesiastical rule.



*A typical church diagram.*

The roof was duly built but, true to Crichton's character, he insisted that it was emblazoned with his initials - and so it remained, the letters 'GC' proudly displayed aloft, for almost 300 years - its oak planks probably aligned in a hammer beam formation like that seen today in Stirling Castle.



*The timber roof in Stirling Castle banqueting hall.*

In the year 1808 the (by then) Protestant congregation was alarmed to hear that Crichton's roof was in imminent danger of collapse. The old beams in both the chancel and the nave were reported to be "rotten, decayed and insufficiently secured". Provost Sir Alexander Seton ordered an investigation and called in Edinburgh architect Alexander Laing who had designed churches in Dysart, Huntly and Dunfermline.

The actual decision to implement a full restoration of the church fell to Provost Adam Dawson who agreed that the Town Council would pay two thirds of the cost, if the remaining moneys were found elsewhere. Considerable dispute arose until it was agreed that funds could be raised by selling the rights to the church pews. The seating consequently became the private property of many wealthy buyers from whom a rental had to be paid before a pew could be occupied by locals on a Sunday morning! One such buyer was King George III who paid £400 for his royal pew.



*George III's coat of arms above the royal pew.*

Colonel Islay Ferrier of Belsyde chaired the committee which eventually, after much argument, came up with a restoration plan for a restructured building capable of seating 1200 people.



*Belsyde House - once the home of Col. Ferrier*

Architect James Gillespie Graham produced his proposals which incorporated new window mullions, a paved floor, the erection of balcony seating above the chancel and a gallery above the west door. In addition, replacement central seating was to be introduced along with a massive, mock-Gothic, centrally positioned pulpit. Finally, a new roof was to be constructed which meant the removal and replacement of Crichton's oaken structure.

The masonry work was entrusted to local craftsman, John Gibb, while Robert Mickel undertook the joinery and woodcarving. In addition to the agreed payment, Mr Mickel was also given permission to take away the old roof timbers, the redundant pews and the old pulpit for his own use. For many years to come, parts of this 16th century oak were used in the construction of several dwellings throughout the burgh.

The cost of the project was estimated at £2180 - payable in instalments as the work progressed. In fact, much to Provost Dawson's horror, the costs escalated as more problems were discovered and the eventual expenditure came to over £4100. Nothing new there, then!



*The church following the work of 1812-1813.*

The work completed, Provost Dawson and the Council were able to take up their position in their 'high loft' on December 19th, 1813. Although not every one of the twelve hundred available seating spaces had been claimed, the church was still almost full, with a congregation listening to the Rev. James Dobie preach on 'The Coming of Christ'.

The replacement, plastered ceiling lasted for almost 170 years - with only minor repair work being done in that time, mostly during the

extensive 1894-96 restoration when the ceiling was repaired and “heraldic” shields added. Money then ran out as the restoration, which included the removal of the galleries and the building of a vestry, cost £7300. This left the Rev John Ferguson disappointed that more could not be done to the roof - even perhaps, he lamented, the restoration of Crichton’s oak beams!



*St Michael's after the restoration of 1894-1896.*

Almost 100 years later, in 1983, Fabric Convenor Bill Watt was happily singing during a Sunday morning service when he was aware of plaster falling on to his hymn book. The Kirk Session authorised an inspection and, to their horror, it was discovered that the ceiling plaster was very cracked and in places transparent. It was obvious that the old timbers supporting the lathe and plaster were too light for the job and allowing movement to take place. A ‘Raise the Roof’ appeal was launched and eventually, at a cost of £50,000, new timbers were installed and a traditional plaster ceiling applied. Interestingly, several large pieces of 16th century roof timbers were found – all in good condition!



*The Raise the Roof logo on a carrier bag.*

One other discovery was that two of the “heraldic” roundels were found to be ‘fakes’ – not carved out of wood or plaster but simply painted on to canvas. In addition, the designs on them were fabricated “decorators’ arms” and not of any historic

attribution. Perhaps this was the result of funds running out and a temporary solution being hastily done - with a view to doing the “real work” later. The new ceiling was marked out in the same manner as the earlier Victorian décor.



*One of the two fake roundels.*

While the scaffolding was in place two, filthy, cobwebbed carvings at the corners of the nave were examined and found to be angels carrying censers. They were cleaned and painted in bright colours.



*The carving of an angel carrying an incense burner.*

Maintaining the fabric of such a historic building is ongoing – and the upper fabric still needs constant

supervision. The old, stone crown had to be removed in 1822 and recently the 1964 replacement spire was found to be in need of urgent repair.



*St Michael's 16th C “Crown”.*

*The new one in 1964 and in 2023.*



Decades of Scottish weather have taken their toll and sections of the timber structure now need to be replaced and clad with modern, long-life material. There has been an excellent response for funding the project which, as I write, is still underway. Watch out for the unveiling of the burgh’s restored “Crowning Glory” and for further developments.

A donation was made to the Aspire project from the proceeds of my local history presentations. There are two more to come.

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10th @7.00pm**  
**“Linlithgow in World War Two.”**

**THURSDAY DECEMBER 7th @ 7.00pm**  
**“Linlithgow’s Fascinating Folk an’ Kenspeckle Characters.”**

For more information, please contact [brucejamieson@yahoo.com](mailto:brucejamieson@yahoo.com)



# SHARING OUR STORIES SINCE 2011...

Wow! Onto the 101st edition of the magazine and still going strong! It set us thinking about when we started contributing a column and how many stories we have shared with you over the years. The earliest copy we have stored in 'documents' is for summer 2011 and looking through the pictures we have shared with you over the last twelve years there are some strong themes we have visited over the years.

We always like to show some of our team in the pictures we use, it differentiates us from other businesses and as we are now majority owned by all employees you can see the owners. We have survived the dull summer, although ironically the last few weeks have been very dry.



We have shared many of our potager to plate recipes with you. Over the years Lesley has patiently waited for her dinner while a photograph is taken. Simple puff pastry tarts with many different fillings have regularly featured. This is a **Goats Cheese Tart**. The square of rolled out puff pastry has an edge scored around it and then baked until brown. The middle square is pushed down and filled with a mixture of chopped and mashed tomato, chopped garlic, sliced peppers, grated courgette and crumbled goats cheese. Bake for another 15 minutes.



For the ten years of our **art in the garden** annual event many installations in our gardens have featured. James Parker has exhibited every year and this is his **Slate Urn** installed in our **Bright Shade Garden**, which features plants that will cope with partial shade and brighten it up with their variegation and white and yellow colouring.



James Parker  
Slate Urn

Our own garden at Blackness has long been our 'laboratory' for experimenting and learning about new plants. Many of the shared pictures have been taken there over the years. Lesley complains that I don't take many pictures of her unless I need her in them for scale, she possibly has a point, but this one on our swing that celebrates our four grandchildren is obviously of her... well, and perhaps Henry the black cat.



We've shared many images from our holidays and I will admit that Lesley features when I need a sense of scale. This magnificent flight of steps framed by tall Cypress trees at Villa d'Este in the Italian Lakes is even more impressive with the lovely Lesley in her black and white spotted dress. That dress got us some very special tables in various Italian restaurants on that holiday.



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**THERE IS PLENTY OF TIME  
TO KEEP GARDENING!**

**WE WILL BE TEMPTING YOU WITH OUR CHRISTMAS  
GIFTS AND DECORATIONS OVER THE COMING  
WEEKS BUT DON'T FORGET YOUR GARDEN!**

**Festivals provide an opportunity for people and music of various vintages to share in a spiritually beneficial and fun experience. There is something undeniably valuable about having a space and a full day to give yourself to witnessing act after act, anticipating the headliners that drew you in as well as discovering new and exciting surprises from others on the bill. Armed with eclectic line ups, events can likewise produce a diverse audience, who are then able to benefit from discovering music together.**

When thinking of festivals, people may be quick to summon images of twentysomethings camping in fields, but festivals offer plenty for music lovers across multiple generations. An article in *The Guardian* recently revealed that a third of over-50s attend more festivals now than when they were younger, indicative of a universal appeal that the events now bring. In this way, music festivals at their best cultivate a personality around celebrating music of different genres and vintages.

I was sure to keep this in mind as I attended Linlithgow's Party at the Palace over 12th and 13th of August. PATP has gone from strength to strength over the years and given the ambitious nature of the headliners the festival shows no sign of letting up. However, this year's festival was a success beyond the attractive star-quality of its headliners, with the event also championing its local identity and providing a space for smaller acts.

The main stage line up brought together a lot of different styles of contemporary music from over the decades, from the soulful close harmonies of **Sister Sledge**, the Madchester rave-rock of **The Happy Mondays**, guitar driven pre-Britpop group **Shed 7**, the sing-along indie stylings of **Scouting for Girls** and the synth-pop Liverpudlians **OMD**. These acts stood out on the flyers and although 4 out of 5 of them come from the New British Canon, they all scratched different itches and provided something to be familiar with going in. The main stage functioned as it should, insofar as it provided a diverse mix of acts that gave festival goers a wide range of music to get their feet dancing to.

**Low Port Music** provided a stage to showcase the best of lesser-known talent. It's always a win/win having a strong smaller stage, as it allows the artists to perform and find fans in amongst a diverse audience and it allows festival goers the chance to feel like they are witnessing the start of something, a potential headliner in the making. The Low Port Music stage provided a lot of intriguing artists and a blend of interesting and diverse musical styles which highlights the close attention paid by the organisers.

This year's PATP highlighted how valuable a cultural asset it is to Linlithgow. Its ambitions appear to be growing and I think that the town is both very lucky to possess and deserves immense credit for investing in such an incredible event.

#### **Saturday - 24- Hour Party Palace**

It was a good day of music in a marvellous setting. It was a four seasons in one hour kind of day but that did nothing to stop folk enjoying themselves, here's what I thought of some of the big acts:

**Sean McKinven**

# **PARTY** - at the - **PALACE**



#### **Main Stage**

**Shed Seven**, the York rockers came on to stage with a gallus confidence after Magnificent 7 theme called them to stage. The band had announced in February that they would be working on a new album in Spain and I was curious to see if they would take PATP as an opportunity to trial new material. The band duly played their latest single 'Kissing California' proving this to be the case. The set was an example of tight and well executed guitar music, delicate arpeggios and strong soloing. They expertly played through the rain, clearly having a load of fun and to a jubilant crowd indifferent about the weather.

**The Happy Mondays**, the group often thought to be one of the most seminal groups of the Madchester music scene due to their deft balance of rock and acid house showed they still had what it takes to put on a hell of a show. Rowetta did a stand-up job of hyping up the crowd for the much-anticipated arrival of Bez and Shaun Ryder, who strolled on stage as cool as you like, launching into 'Kinky Afro'. It was an impressive set full of candid moments and highlighted why the group holds an important role in British pop music.

**Elephant Sessions**, for me at least, was

one of this festival's best wee surprises. Folk sessions combined with club house and fun made for a remarkably original set. Possibly the tightest performers of the day, the hypnotic affair displayed impressive musicianship which recontextualises both trad and EDM in such a way that highlights the versatility and relevancy of both.

#### **Low Port Music Stage**

It was impossible to see everybody due to the nature of set timings, but here's what I thought from who I caught:

**John Rush**, closed the stage with folk infused rock which was professional and captivating, highlighting his competence as both a songwriter and performer.

**The Loners**, hard hitting and gallus. Full of style, unapologetically loud and great entertainment.

**Danko**, performed a heavy and soulful set full of organ wails and powerful guitar playing. Country blues a la Falkirk, full of attitude and soul.

#### **Sunday - Linlithgow Rave On**

##### **Main Stage**

One of the earliest bands to be part of the Factory Records, **OMD** hold an important place in the narrative of British pop music, being amongst the first bands to usher in the age of electronic music and synth pop. They weren't a group to have the crowd resting on their laurels, ensuring they were bouncing along from beginning to end. It was a good set to close the weekend, dynamic and cathartic.

Disco heavyweights **Sister Sledge** performed a well choreographed set that didn't leave a still body in the house. A performance of all the favourites confidentially delivered and energising the audience. An ode to dance as much as it was to music - from the audience to the backing dancers who all got their moment to shine.

**Heather Small**, the singer formerly of M People, has seen a lot of pop music in the past 30 odd years and has been consistently involved throughout. Her set was a celebration of such involvement, dipping in and out of the M People catalogue and her solo work, culminating in a marvellous rendition of 'Moving on Up'

##### **Low Port Music Stage**

**Kevin Maguire**, a strong singer and with a smart band, canny and smart. Nice way to finish off the small stage with a strong singer songwriter.

**Kenny Lee Roberts**, good old-fashioned soul, accessible, sax filled dad dancing affair. Tight solid performance.

**Johnny Mac**, heel, toe here we go, probably the best performance on this stage throughout the two days, pure fun and jubilation, Johnny Mac himself was something between Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis, with a class band. The performance induced a barn dance/ceilidh and was clearly a fan favourite.

# PILATES FOR WOMEN OVER 40

Say Goodbye to Joint Aches and Pains and Regain Your Vitality



I'm Kirsty from **Vitality Pilates by Kirsty** and I've been running a variety of Pilates classes in Linlithgow since the beginning of the year.

### Tight hips? Stiff shoulders? Sore knees?

My Pilates classes are tailored to ease the joint aches and pains that many women over 40 suffer as we experience the inevitable changes that come with age.

The natural decline in our hormone levels can lead to a variety of challenges, including diminished muscle strength, compromised core stability, weaker bones, reduced joint mobility and increased inflammation.

Turning 40 certainly hit me like a steam train! A chronic illness combined with those inevitable changes left me aching and in pain. I struggled to play with my young daughter, which made me feel awful.

### But here's the good news: Pilates is your new best friend over 40 to help combat these aches and pains!

When I turned to Pilates, it was a revelation! Sore movements became much easier. I felt stronger, taller and brighter and I had the energy to run around with my daughter. Pilates is more than just a form of exercise; it's a lifestyle that can transform your life as you age. Developed by Joseph Pilates in the early 20th century, it focuses on the mind-body connection, emphasising core strength, balanced muscle development and joint alignment. It's a low-impact exercise that suits women over 40 perfectly, providing a safe and effective way to improve mobility, strength and overall health.

### Tailored for your needs

I understand that you may be dealing with muscle weakness, a decline in core strength and joint discomfort and that's why my Pilates classes are carefully designed to target these specific issues and to help you regain your vitality.

### Enhancing Muscle Strength

The muscles supporting your joints can lose tone and weaken causing painful imbalances. Pilates exercises target key muscle groups to help you regain the strength needed to support your joints.

### Improving Core Stability

A strong core is essential for maintaining proper posture and preventing back pain. Pilates exercises emphasise deep core engagement, helping you develop a strong and stable pelvis that can ease discomfort and aching joints.

### Boosting Joint Mobility

As we age, joints can dry out and become inflamed. Pilates exercises work joints through their full range of motion to increase lubrication, loosen them and reduce stiffness.

### Relaxation

Pilates exercises focus on gentle movement in rhythm with the breath to help lower your cortisol levels and leave you feeling more relaxed.

### You deserve to live life with vitality!

With regular Pilates classes, you could wake up in the morning after a good night's sleep and get out of bed with no pain or stiffness, feeling awake and motivated. Pilates exercises help you to move more freely through the day, standing tall and with more energy. Daily

tasks feel easier to do and most importantly, you can say "YES" to all those fun activities with the kids and your family and friends.

### Join a welcoming community today

My classes are suitable for all fitness levels and I will guide you every step of the way. Whether you are new to Pilates or have previous experience, you will find a welcoming and supportive community ready to support you in regaining your vitality. Classes are small, ensuring personalised attention and encouragement.

I have a Level 3 Diploma in Instructing Pilates Matwork and I offer 2 types of classes:

**Beginners Pilates** is a mat-based class where you will learn how to practice Pilates exercises correctly and easily in order to strengthen muscles, improve joint mobility and build core strength.

**Tuesdays 7:00pm in Cross House**

**Wednesdays 11:30am Online**

**Fridays 9:30am in The Longcroft Hall**

**Chair Pilates** is if you are worried about the difficulty of getting down on a mat. A low-impact class which uses the basics of Pilates all while seated in a chair!

**Wednesdays 9:30am in The Longcroft Hall**

Book a class today by visiting [www.vitalitypilatesbykirsty.com](http://www.vitalitypilatesbykirsty.com).

You can also sign up for a free online taster class on my website or get regular Pilates inspiration via Facebook or Instagram @vitality\_pilates\_by\_kirsty

**Kirsty Carella**





SUN  
28  
OCT

# SPOOKY LANE

## IS BACK FOR 2023!

**IF YOU ARE FEELING GHOULISH OR STUCK FOR HALLOWEEN FUN FOR THE KIDS, SPOOKY LANE IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU NEED.**

The third annual Spooky Lane is a community event open to all Linlithgow families who want to enjoy some outdoor Halloween fun! The mysterious Shoemaker's lane is temporarily transformed into a haven for ghouls, ghosties and long-legged-beasties. But fear not, friendly fiends are on hand to guide you through.

The event comprises a lit-up and decorated lane, hot chocolate and marshmallows, kids disco, and hot dogs. Your participation raised a phenomenal £1610.85 last year. Thank you!

With generous support from Cala Homes who sponsor the event, every penny you spend on attending the event goes directly to the schools. Spooky Lane raises money and showcases Linlithgow community spirit at its best. Local homeowners support the event with power and kind businesses like Tesco, Costa Coffee, Steedsy Audio and Events, DS Smith Packaging and Linlithgow Golf Club also offer their support with lending or donating items.

The truly unique spirit of this event came through clearly in comments made by last years' participants: One reveller stated, "Events like this make Linlithgow a great place to live", while another praised hardworking volunteers; "It was brilliant and an absolute credit to the efforts of those who organised and marshalled the event. Top Effort 10/10".

**Come join the fun. Date: Saturday 28th October**

**Time: 5.00pm – 6.00pm is lighter, quieter and the ghouls will not bother you**

**6.30pm - 8.00pm is darker, louder and you may meet some odd characters**

**Tickets: are available from [www.ticketsource.co.uk/spooky-lane](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/spooky-lane)**

Marianne Craig



## HORROR FILM REVIEW: CALVIN SINCLAIR, LINLITHGOW ACADEMY

The Evil Dead is a lot of things at once: Hard to watch, a joy to watch, frightening, hilarious, disturbing, and delightful.

Directed by a young Sam Raimi (possibly most well known for directing the Tobey Maguire Spider-Man trilogy) and starring a young Bruce Campbell, the independently funded breakout film was lauded upon release and continues to be praised similarly to this very day.

The film went on to spawn 2 direct sequels in 'Evil Dead 2', and 'Army of Darkness' plus a TV show; 'Ash vs. The Evil Dead. 2013 then saw a soft reboot titled 'Evil Dead' and most recently this year saw the release of the fifth film 'Evil Dead Rise'.

The continued growth of the franchise over the years demonstrates how the original 1981 cult classic remains popular and relevant today. Now, having seen the film after it had been sitting on my watchlist for a couple of years, it's very easy to see why.

The film opens up with a pretty standard premise for an eighties horror flick; a

group of friends visit a freaky cabin in the middle of nowhere. But even in this quieter phase of the movie, its energy is electric. The absurdly paced cuts that go back and forth between stagnant shots of a group of friends sitting in a car chatting, and handheld perspective shots of an unseen evil presence racing around the woods at sonic speed, are both a bit unnerving and very amusing. You can immediately tell that this is a special film.

The movie really gets going when the team revive the titular Evil Dead using a book written in blood and bound with flesh literally titled "The Book of the Dead". Now the film really begins. From here The Evil Dead is a bizarre mixture of the most hilariously excessive and disgustingly brutal hour of cruelties you'll ever see as Ash (played by Bruce Campbell) and his friends run around the excessively foggy and dark woods while all but one of the group are possessed by demons who can only be defeated by stabbing and dismembering the host.

The low budget and over the top practical effects go a long way in keeping the tone silly and unbelievable. Blood and various other bodily fluids spew everywhere and shower the characters and the scenery

at every turn. The possessed characters look like corpses with bad fungal infections, eyes are gouged, necks are scraped, legs are bitten, and heads are cut off. It's all so obviously fake and over exaggerated that it's impossible to take it seriously. Although at the same time some of the things that happen to these characters might disturb you a little. I had to look away at several points in the movie despite my pretty decent tolerance for gore. I definitely don't recommend this movie while you're eating or if you have a weak stomach but otherwise it's pretty glorious.

The Evil Dead is everything I want in one of these eighties slasher type of films. It is blunt and doesn't waste your time on boring character development, lengthy dialogue segments, or artistic themes. Instead it spends its 95 minute runtime on what matters: Bruce Campbell completely annihilating freaky demons in the most horrible ways you've ever seen. It does what it says on the tin and it does it beautifully. The dead are evil, figure it out.





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**COURT OF THE DEACONS OF THE ANCIENT AND ROYAL BURGH OF LINLITHGOW**

The Annual General Meeting of the Deacons Court will be held on

**Tuesday 14th November 2023 at 7.30 pm. in the Burgh Halls, The Cross, Linlithgow.**

Any member of the public who is interested in the Marches is very welcome to attend.

**Ross McIntosh**  
Clerk to the Court



**Stitch & Textile Art in Linlithgow**

Programme for 23/24

**Wednesday evening meetings, 7.00 pm, St Johns Church Hall, Union Rd, Linlithgow**  
(except for Jan & Feb when we meet on zoom)

**2023**

**September 27<sup>th</sup>** Cate Howell - "The Corbet Bed Project - The Story of a Naked Bed ... & how two women set out to clothe it."

**October 25<sup>th</sup>** Pauline Burbridge - Textile Landscapes - Creating & Making

**November 29<sup>th</sup>** Dabble & Do

**2024**

**January 31<sup>st</sup>** Dr Susan Kay-Williams Royal Society of Needlework "With Just a Needle & Thread" (on zoom)

**February 28<sup>th</sup>** Herma De Ruiter - Going Round in Circles (on zoom)

**March 27<sup>th</sup>** Dabble & Do

**April 24<sup>th</sup>** Jo Avery - "My Journey Through Textiles"

**May 29<sup>th</sup>** AGM



**Friday Stitch Afternoons, 1.30, Cross House, Linlithgow**

**2023**

September 15<sup>th</sup>, October 13<sup>th</sup>,  
November 17<sup>th</sup>

**2024**

January 19<sup>th</sup>, February 16<sup>th</sup>, March 15<sup>th</sup>,  
April 12<sup>th</sup>, May 17<sup>th</sup>, June 14<sup>th</sup>

**Saturday Workshops, St Johns Church Hall, Union Rd, Linlithgow**

**2023 - 21<sup>st</sup> Oct** - 3 Fun Books Using Paper, Mixed Media & Fabric with Carol Jamieson 10am - 4pm

**18th Nov** - Cyano Type Printing with Marion Archibald - 1.30pm - 4.30pm

**2024 - 24<sup>th</sup> Feb** - Embroidered Boxes with Valerie Spence 10am - 4pm (5 places)

**9<sup>th</sup> Mar** - Embroidered Boxes with Valerie Spence 10am - 4pm (5 places)

**20<sup>th</sup> Apr** - Garden Chicken Applique & Machine Embroidery with Lizzie Wall 10am - 4pm

**If you are interested in finding out more about our group or would like to join us, we'd love to hear from you.**

We have an annual membership fee to cover our costs.

If you feel you would like to visit the group to try an activity, there would be a small fee.

**For more information have a look on our Stitch Matters Facebook Page & Contact us at [d6eagle@gmail.com](mailto:d6eagle@gmail.com)**



# SPRINGFIELD SCRIBBLERS

## SPRINGFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL P6 AND P7



Welcome to our first article for the Black Bitch magazine by the 'Springfield Scribblers'. We are a small group of budding writers from Primary 6 and 7 at Springfield Primary School. We will be writing an article for each issue of the magazine, on a variety of different subjects all about Linlithgow and our wonderful community. For this issue, we have decided to tell you all about the things we love about Linlithgow and our local community.



### *Linlithgow... the home of opportunity!*

I love Linlithgow because it has many opportunities to take part in different things. I attend Springfield Primary School and got through to the second round of cross-country championships and a selection of pupils visited The Bridge Inn as a part of my pupil leadership role in school. I also love Linlithgow because there are so many clubs that I can take part in with my friends. I go to LSG (Linlithgow School of Gymnastics), it is great. Some other local community groups that you can attend include 3rd Linlithgow brownies, 1st Linlithgow guides and Maisie Gray's which is an art place. Living in Linlithgow is extremely fun, and I am sure you love it too! Recently a new cycle route opened near Xcite where on a Sunday you can do a junior park run and I love taking part. I would highly recommend! If you have not visited the Linlithgow Artisan Market, which runs on the first Saturday of every month, then we suggest you give it a visit. There are local traders and businesses selling local produce, food, arts and crafts and artisan stalls. It is a great way to support local.



### *Linlithgow... the home of tasty treats!*



Linlithgow is crammed with delicious food, which is the best thing about living here for me. A personal favourite of mine being Mac's ice cream shop. They have lots of delicious treats as well as some sweets and vegan options. There a wide variety of restaurants and cafes in Linlithgow where you can get lots of food. Some of our favourites are Taste, Nero's, and Subway to name a few!

### *Linlithgow... the home of history and culture!*



Linlithgow is a beautiful and historic town with plenty of things to do. I love the history and learning about the old and the new Linlithgow. I also like the palace and St Michael's church. The architecture and the design of the building's brickwork is beautiful. A favourite pastime of mine is looking inside the museum above the library, as it is very interesting. For me, Linlithgow is a beautiful, fun place, which all people will love! I would certainly recommend taking a nice walk around the canal and seeing some of the beautiful sights like the Linlithgow Palace and Loch. One of the most popular historical facts about Linlithgow is that Mary Queen of Scots was born in the palace. Queen Elizabeth came to visit in 1989, which I think is extremely cool.

### *Linlithgow... the home of community spirit!*

I love Linlithgow because when you walk down the High Street you get so many smiles and everyone says "Hi" as you walk past. The community spirit is so cheerful and kind. I would not want to live anywhere else and if I did, I would have to come regularly to visit. The vibes are so fun and cheery and hums of joy float

through the air. We are so lucky to live in such a beautiful town.

There are many great schools in Linlithgow and community spirit is shown with the amount of volunteers willing to give up their own time to volunteer and help young citizens of Linlithgow. At Springfield, our values are confident, resilient, included, kind and respectful. I feel these values shine throughout our community and are demonstrated by many of the town people. There are several great things about Linlithgow but in my opinion I love that everyone cares about Linlithgow, I know this because there are so many people that volunteer to litter pick, keep the town looking beautiful and run many clubs, groups and societies. I love Linlithgow and it often shows just how much the people of Linlithgow care about our town and each other, it is a special place to call home.

### *Linlithgow... the home of historical tradition!*



Our local celebrations like The Marches and the Gala Day that happen once a year are great fun, everyone comes out to join and support their local community and have a good time. The rides are my favourite part and it is fun for both the children and the adults. These events often involve parades, processions and different decorated floats. As part of Primary 6 this year, we were invited to 'The Crying of The Marches' where we attended with different schools from Linlithgow. This was a great opportunity for us to meet other pupils from different schools and be a part of an important historical event.

**P6 & P7 pupils  
Springfield Primary School**



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## Linlithgow Community



**LINLITHGOW WANDERERS - 11:00-12:00PM TUESDAYS FORTNIGHTLY**

Inclusive walking group for all abilities, run by local volunteers, out enjoying various easy walks in and around the Linlithgow area

**LINLITHGOW FRIENDS - 1:30-3:30PM THURSDAYS WEEKLY**

People 60+ meeting up to socialise and take part in various activities including quizzes, games, listening to speakers and performers

### VOLUNTEERING

We are looking for volunteers from within the community to facilitate a weekly group in Linlithgow

For further information contact Lorna on  
**07964 213 351** or [lornabryson@cyrenians.scot](mailto:lornabryson@cyrenians.scot)



Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SC011052 **OPAL** Older People, Active Lives

## What's new in-store at Specsavers Linlithgow this autumn/winter?



No matter how much we love summer, nothing compares to autumn/winter fashion.

As the weather turns cooler, store director at Specsavers in Linlithgow, **Diana Kelly** tells us how to swap out your sunglasses and experiment with this season's eyewear trends with Specsavers' brand-new collection of frames.

### Brighten up the darker nights with a pop of colour

Diana says: 'From muted autumnal tones to vibrant pinks, blues and reds, Specsavers' latest collection of frames will provide something for everyone. We're breathing new life into our most popular styles of frames with bold new colours to contrast those colder nights. We're also introducing smaller fit styles to complement all face shapes. You can check out what style best suits your face either instore, or online on Specsavers' virtual try-on tool.'

Prices range from **£29-£69**.

### Cosy up with Cath Kidston

'Cath Kidston is a much-loved, quintessentially British lifestyle brand known for its unique prints and colourful designs. We'll be introducing four new styles in store, including dainty frames with geometric styles and polished gold metals with teal-blue details.

'The new collection also features a burgundy crystal acetate and a beautiful, blue-based floral print – perfect for the transition from summer into winter.'

Prices start from **£129**.

### Fall for Disney

'We're bringing in a whole new world of Disney, Star Wars and Marvel frames into our children's range, which we're excited to show you. For Encanto fans, we're welcoming Mirabel's classic green, round metal frame so kids can recreate her look for themselves, and we're introducing new Ariel and Cinderella designs complete with cool blue hues and intricate character details.

'But that's not all! To celebrate Disney's 100th birthday, we're excited to showcase our cool clubmaster - style frame with Mickey Mouse details. And for kids eager to explore a galaxy far, far away, we have a futuristic crystal frame adorned with classic Star Wars artwork.'

Prices start from **£64**.

### Fashion with sustainability in mind

'Sustainability is a huge focus for us at Specsavers, and as such we're relaunching 18 of our best-selling frames with more sustainable materials. We have swapped out textiles that have been made by fossil fuels with either bio-based or recycled content to help us towards achieving our goal of having 30 per cent of our global frame range made with more bio-based and recycled materials by 2025.

'Don't worry – these frames still look exactly the same as before, so you'll still be able to get your hands on your favourite styles. Why not come in store and explore them for yourself?'

Prices range from **£29-£69**.

Specsavers is located at the Regent Centre in Linlithgow, and is open from 9:30am – 5:30pm on Mondays, and 9am – 5:30pm from Tuesday to Saturday. You can book an eye appointment by calling 01506 534484, or on their website [www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow](http://www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow).

For more information or to speak to a Specsavers expert please contact:  
**E: [sophie.wallace@tigerbond.com](mailto:sophie.wallace@tigerbond.com) / T: 07395 372 007**



# Make your money work *for you*

**You work hard to support your family and enjoy life, so it makes sense that your money should knuckle down too. This is where a little expert advice can make all the difference**

Our lives are busy and complicated. Families today can be fragmented, increasing demands on our time. You'd be forgiven for thinking that the latest technologies should make things easier, but that's not always the case. In fact, information overload can often leave us feeling overwhelmed and unsure about which way to turn.

So much financial choice can be bewildering. We're here to guide you and advise on changes to the financial landscape and the options available for you.

In so many areas, we rely on experts to point us in the right direction. If your car breaks down, you see a mechanic. If a tooth aches, you go to the dentist. The same should be true of our finances. Why wouldn't we ask the experts and make sure they're being managed effectively?

## Discover our holistic approach

We understand that everyone's finances are unique. So at St. James's Place we strive to offer a long-term, relationship-based service that focuses on what you need, as well as what motivates and inspires you. It's this holistic approach that means we can then find solutions that work well together and match your attitude to risk.

Knowing that your investments are being managed by seasoned professionals and that your worries are our concern can be a huge relief. You can also relax in the knowledge that we'll be here to support and guide you on every step of your financial journey. We want to know you and your finances inside out – and keep it that way. After all, we've learnt from experience

that the best wealth management service comes via thorough understanding and personalised, face-to-face advice. It's what we're passionate about.

## Here's where we can help

You can trust us with a number of financial solutions. From a broad range of funds providing the potential to grow your savings and protect them against inflation, to pension advice – whatever your age. We can also help you make the most of retirement, find the best protection for you, your family and your business, and advise on Inheritance Tax issues.

If you're remortgaging, downsizing or buying your first home, let us help you find the mortgage that will work for you. Whatever it is you need, we have your needs at our core.

We take the time to really know your finances and find ways of making your money work harder for you

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage. The value of an investment with St. James's Place will be directly linked to the performance of the funds selected and the value may fall as well as rise. You might get back less than you invested.

The levels and bases of taxation, and reliefs from taxation, can change at any time and are generally dependent on individual circumstances.

## Get in touch

If you'd like us to help you make the most of your hard-earned savings, give us a call. We'd like to get to know you.

**Kayleigh Dorrian**  
Principal  
07834 837183  
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## CHRISTIE MCNAB, LINLITHGOW'S TOWN PIPER



Christie with the new Deacon of the Fraternity of Dyers, Alistair Old.  
Image courtesy of Iona McNab.

Earlier this year, nineteen-year-old **Christie McNab** made history when she became Linlithgow's first-ever female Town Piper.

Christie has lived all her life in the town, and it was a great honour for her to awaken the Burgh at 6am on Marches morning, following closely behind the flutes and drum at 5am.

By taking up this historic position, Christie followed in the footsteps of her teacher and mentor, **Ross Miller**, who is now making a huge name for himself in the piping world as a member of the "Red Hot Chilli Pipers."

Ross was a near neighbour of Christie in Avontoun Park and she was inspired by hearing him practise at the end of her street:

*"I used to hear him out piping in the garden when I was wee," she told me, "And it started from there. He was my teacher for eleven years. I had private lessons, and he would come to the house. Sometimes I would go to him, but when COVID hit, it was mainly on-line. I only stopped lessons when*

*I got accepted into the piping school in Glasgow last year to do an HNC."*

Christie believes that the course greatly helped her piping, but also made her realise that she didn't want to pursue it as a career. She is now studying hairdressing at the Glasgow City College.

**Piping is in the blood, as far as Christie is concerned. Her Mum's family are MacColls, who have a rich piping history.**

Christie started on the chanter at the age of seven and then progressed to the pipes a year or two later.

Ross Miller played with the Grade One Boghall and Bathgate Caledonia and, at his suggestion, Christie later joined them and played in the juvenile band. She even competed three times at the World Championships.

Christie now plays with Wallacestone & District, which is recognised as one of the oldest surviving civilian pipe bands in the world, having been formed in 1887 in the village of Wallacestone, near Falkirk. They practise twice a week in

Brightons, which is a short drive from Christie's home in Linlithgow:

*"They are a lovely bunch of people, really nice, and it's just got a good feel to it. It's really chilled out"*

During lockdown in 2020, Christie became a local internet sensation when, at her dad's suggestion, she played her pipes at her front door every day at 1pm. People tuned in to Facebook every day to see her and many timed their daily walk so they could be near her house for 1pm. She would pipe in her fluffy slippers, and these became her trademark. Christie even started doing requests for people for birthdays and anniversaries and her efforts attracted local and national media coverage.

Although not originally from Linlithgow, Christie's parents, **Iona and Fergus**, are great lovers of the Marches and Christie has grown up with the traditions.

In recent years, Ross Miller had encouraged her to join him for the 5pm finale around the Cross Well and it was a natural progression when she was invited to take over his role as the official Town Piper. She was also asked to accompany the Fraternity of Dyers – Linlithgow's oldest organisation – for the procession and perambulation on the second Deacons' Night and was delighted to lead the newly elected Deacon of the Dyers, **Alistair Old**, who is a close family friend. Alistair and his wife **Jill** have taken a keen interest in Christie's piping career and always given her great encouragement.

Christie really enjoyed her official duties this year and added her own twist by marching all the way from the Cross to the Brig and back, instead of taking up her allocated seat in one of the carriages. This was greatly appreciated by the crowds, who cheered her all the way. Another innovation took place at Blackness war memorial, where she combined the beautiful "Beaches of Harris" with the traditional "Flowers of the Forest", and this was very well received.

**Christie loves piping for pleasure whenever she can and is available for hire for local weddings and other events. She can be contacted on 07407 068417.**

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## ROSACEA

Redness & flushing prone skin / visible blood vessels / Sensitive skin.

### WHAT IS ROSACEA?

Rosacea (pronounced "roh-ZAY-sha") is a chronic but treatable condition that primarily affects the central face (cheeks, nose, chin or forehead). It can develop at any age but typically begins any time after the age of 30 as flushing or redness. It may come and go lasting for at least 3 months and may become more persistent overtime. It is thought to be hereditary.

### SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Keep a Rosacea diary** Learn to spot what your triggers are, email me for a 'Rosacea Diary' a PDF with questions and factors to consider and record each day. Or download it from my Blog page: <https://bit.ly/SHBlogRosacea>
- **Wear daily sunscreen SPF30 or above.** Sun exposure is a trigger for many people with rosacea so protection from the elements is key every day of the year. Rosacea skin is better suited to physical only sunscreens with no added chemicals such as AlumierMD ClearShield SPF 42. Available in clinic.

- **Apply a cooling serum.** Can be soothing, cooling and calming on flushing, burning and inflamed skin such as Lynton Light Soothe. Available in clinic.

- **Skin Care, Cosmetics and Hair Products.** It is about using products that do not sting or cause irritation.

### TREATMENT

**My Rosacea clients are educated on skincare with good calming homecare routines and products.** AlumierMD Calming Collection is perfect for Rosacea and sensitive skin and is the first port of key for any successful results. It repairs broken barriers, strengthens the skin and calms down overall general redness.

In clinic **Intense Pulsed Light (IPL)** is the best treatment for anyone who needs to remove or reduce visible blood vessels and skin redness. A course of treatments between 2-5 are normally required to achieve the best results. However, because Rosacea is not curable you may find that somewhere down the line around 12-24 months, a one-off maintenance treatment could be required. You lead this. When you see any new blood vessels appearing you book in..



### Signs and Symptoms

REDNESS		PUSTULES / PAPULES
FLUSHING EASILY		INFLAMMATION
VISIBLE BLOOD VESSELS		BUMPY SKIN TEXTURE
BLOOD SHOT EYES		SKIN THICKENING
IRITATED EYES		THICKENED SKIN
STINGING SENSATION		ENLARGED NOSE

### Calming Collection/Kit

AlumierMD

Ideal for Rosacea and sensitive skin

<b>SensiCalm Cream Cleanser</b> Soothing and PH balanced	<b>Calm R Hydrating Serum</b> Targets redness & provides long term relief
<b>ClearShield SPF42 Sunscreen</b> 100% Physical Broad Spectrum Oil Free & Non-Comedogenic	<b>HydraCalm Calming Moisturiser</b> loaded with antioxidants

**BOOK YOUR NO OBLIGATION CONSULTATION NOW.**

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**Saturday 9pm - late**

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- 14th October - Kenny Hanlon
- 21st October - Cosmic
- 28th October - Karaoke
- 4th November - Cal
- 11th November - Brian Kelly

**Sunday 5pm - 8 pm**

- 29th October - Pure Malt

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## COURT OF THE DEACONS OF THE ANCIENT AND ROYAL BURGH OF LINLITHGOW

The Annual General Meeting  
of the Deacons Court will be held on  
**Tuesday 14th November 2023**  
at 7.30pm in the Burgh Halls,  
**The Cross, Linlithgow.**

*Any member of the public who is interested  
in the Marches is very welcome to attend.*

**Ross McIntosh**  
*Clerk to the Court*



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## The Mortgage Market

*“Detached properties in Scotland are still in demand as reflected by an annual increase of 3.7% to quarter 1, 2023 in sale prices, compared to just a 0.2% increase for Flats”*

The summer is normally a quiet period for the property market, while people focus on their holidays. At Paul Rolfe we experienced this usual quiet period but it was broadly in line with the same period last year, in terms of volumes of transactions and properties coming to the market.

It was, though, a little bit slower to pick up again after the school holidays, however activity has sharply risen again just in the last couple of weeks.

The higher mortgage rates have, however, continued to impact some people's home-moving plans. Some buyers are more cautious and taking longer to make purchasing decisions.

We have seen mortgage rates edge down slowly since the end of July, the average rate

for a 5-year fixed rate mortgage is still 5.67%, up from 4.16% a year ago.

There are important regional variations in the statistics for property transactions and selling prices across the UK and average national figures don't necessarily accurately reflect what is happening in different regions.

Scottish Government data shows that in quarter 1 of 2023 the number of recorded transactions in Scotland was down 1.9% compared to figures for quarter 1 in the years 2016 to 2019, a fairly modest fall.

Detached properties in Scotland are still in demand as reflected by an annual increase of 3.7% to quarter 1, 2023 in sale prices, compared to just a 0.2% increase for Flats.

### The Private Rental Sector

According to figures from the Scottish Government, private housing rental prices for new lets (which are not subject to the Cost

of Living (Tenant Protection Act) continue to increase. In Q1 2023, letting agencies Citylets and Rightmove recorded annual private rental increases in Scotland of 12.4% and 12.3%, respectively.

This reflects the continuing strong levels of demand we see for rental properties across the central belt. At Paul Rolfe we often reach capacity on viewing requests from prospective tenants for properties we advertise for let.

Measures relating to the private rented sector under the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection Act) have been extended to 30 September 2023. In addition, Tenants' Rights Minister Patrick Harvie has confirmed proposals to extend these measures until 31st March 2024, at the latest, subject to parliamentary approval.





Westport Vet's Pets of The Month is Leela Robertson, a three and a half year old Labrador Retriever.

Hello  
I'm Leela  
Robertson



Leela is a three and a half year old Labrador Retriever.

Her owners describe her as a playful, bouncy and intelligent Labrador who can be shy with new people but loves other dogs. Her photograph was taken by GWS Photography at a fun photoshoot her owners got for Christmas.

She makes them smile by how delighted she always is to see someone she knows. It's lovely seeing the recognition dawn in her face and her swiftly wagging tail!

Leela loves to go on a walk past the Gowan's fish van, where she gets an occasional special treat when her owners are buying fish.

Leela's cheeky habit is really enjoying playing with plastic bottles - whether or not they are empty! If one is left on the floor in the house she will happily knock it over and run away with it.

When Leela was a puppy they ordered her a purple octopus online, but neglected to check the size and when it arrived it was much bigger than she was! But it has remained a favourite toy since, having been through numerous repairs and the occasional replacement!

Leela is a big fan of sunbathing - her favourite place to be is either in the back garden or on her beanbag in the living room. She also loves snapping the water when hosing the garden (making it quite hard to get to the plants!)

Her owners are looking forward to taking Leela for a short trip to the Lake District where they are hoping for good weather to explore the hills. They say if it's bad weather it'll be the same but in waterproofs!

Leela is a beautifully mannered dog with excellent leadwork skills, her owners advice for others starting their training journey:

*"Since Leela was a COVID puppy, we used a lot of online training resources." We think patience is key - sometimes you don't see the progress your dog is making day-to-day but then reflect back a month and realise how much they - and you! - have developed."*

Leela's owners have been dedicated in Leela's training - and it shows!

Training is a key part in being a responsible owner. It is also a wonderful way to bond with your dog and can have a huge impact on your lifestyle.

Regular training sessions work your dog physically and mentally in a positive way, providing mental stimulation. As your dog learns what is expected of them in public and social settings, it enables you with more freedom for where you can go together.

Training in public environments and building your dog's focus can be life saving!

By law owners are responsible for having control of their dog:

*"The law says that dogs must be kept under close control, but it does not state dogs must be kept on lead. If a dog responds to the owners*

*commands and is kept close to heel, can lie down or returns on command, the dog would be considered to be under close control. If you're not sure that your dog can do this, the responsible thing is to keep them on a lead."*

There are many factors which can be unpredictable: traffic, other pets, other people, the environments and elements are just a few examples of potential hazardous situations. Not only does training keep your dog safe, it also reflects how a dog (and an owner) feels in any given situation - training builds confidence with both. Additionally, you will probably also learn how to better understand your dog and be able to identify, possibly prevent potential issues.

Having mini visits to the vet practice and dog groomers - even if this is just a walk to the front door for a treat or popping in for praise - can massively impact on how your dog copes. Handling skills can also impact on future treatments - such as the need for sedation for treatments which could potentially be done without.

Training should be continued throughout a dog's lifetime - a dog is never too old to learn something new! Recall should also be a constant - a vital tool in your dog's safety, not one which only gets used when needed or in an emergency. This can be simply practiced mid-walk.

Never assume that once something has been learned that it is banked forever, consistency is key!

Dogs love to train - it's a great bonding exercise with owners and provides essential mental stimulation to keep your dog's brain at its best - at every life stage. Brain training is particularly important in senior dogs, aiding cognitive function and helps to keep them in their best health mentally and physically.

In an emergency or if you have any concerns about your pet the Westport Team is here to help: **01506 844165**  
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The Linlithgow Community Magazine (aka The Black Bitch) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO): SCO42542 Find us on Facebook, Follow us on Twitter.

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

Paul Rolfe\*

LUXXE