

ST MICHAEL'S 2030 VISION

CROSS HOUSE –
THE REGENERATION
FOCUS P35.



ROWEN EVENTS PRESENT
FESTIVE FOREST
BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK

BEECRAIGS

ALL LIT UP FOR
CHRISTMAS P12.



© Rowen Events Ltd 2022

LOCAL PLACE PLAN
REPORT P4.



DOWNLOAD A PDF OF THIS
MAGAZINE FROM OUR WEBSITE:
www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk

LINLITHGOW COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

BLACK



ESTD. 2011

BITCH

LINLITHGOW'S NEWS BY LINLITHGOW'S PEOPLE

ISSUE NO.
102 NOV 2023

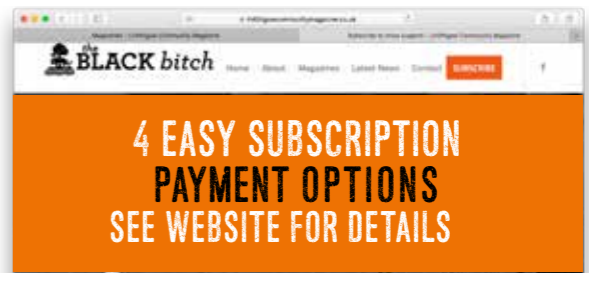
4	The Planning Forum <i>Local Place Plan, Linlithgow's future?</i>
5	Citizens Advice Bureau <i>New Linlithgow Service</i>
6	The Planning Forum <i>Deanburn Housing Development, the Reporter's Decision is final</i>
8	One Linlithgow <i>Ambitious vision for the Vennel</i>
10	One Linlithgow <i>The spirit of Christmas</i>
12	Beebraigs Festive Forest <i>Bigger, better, brighter</i>
14	Burgh Beautiful <i>2023 review, planting, volunteering and fundraising</i>
16	Linlithgow Fire Station <i>Recruiting On-Call firefighters</i>
17	Linlithgow Players <i>On stage with panto Cinderella</i>
18	Festival of Trees <i>Christmas trees raising funds in St Michael's Parish Church</i>
19	Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) <i>Addams Family review and What's Next?</i>
20	River Kids <i>Christmas Toy Appeal at Playbugs</i>
21	Linlithgow's Rotary Fundraiser <i>Tree of Light annual charity appeal</i>
22	LADAS <i>preparing allotments for the next growing season</i>
23	The Black Bitch Magazine <i>100 Issues celebrated</i>
24	Bruce Jamieson <i>Longcroft House and Brothers in Arms</i>
26	Advent Fayre 2023 <i>Crafts, torches and a Santa Dash!</i>
27	Ladies Choir <i>Sing a song of Christmas; Low Port Centre</i>
28	Linlithgow Reed Band 2023 <i>review, new home at Low Port Centre?</i>
29	Book Review <i>The Marriage Portrait, & Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde at the Barony Theatre</i>
30	Project Trust <i>Orla and Maisie on a Year out in Honduras and Ghana</i>
32	New Hopetoun Gardens <i>Christmas Day, indoors and in the garden</i>

33	Gary Clinton <i>Music, learning to play, a cure for our times</i>
34	The New Well Counselling Service <i>Augmenting statutory services; future plans and needs</i>
35	Linlithgow Aspires <i>Ambitious plans beyond the Spire</i>
36	Skin Happy <i>Pigmentation/Discolouration</i>
37	Strangers Brewery <i>Linlithgow business reports a successful first year</i>
38	The Bowling Buddies <i>Indoor Bowling at Xcite Leisure, come and join us</i>
39	Springfield Scribblers <i>Primary 7's on the power of volunteering</i>
40	Peterkin & Kidd <i>Merging to expand services</i>
46	Paul Rolfe Estate Agents <i>The Mortgage Market - property prices 2006 to present</i>
47	Pet's Corner <i>Winter fun and precautions</i>



DAVID TAIT,
EDITOR

SUBSCRIBE TO THE BLACK BITCH MAGAZINE



As we distribute our final magazine of 2023 with Christmas and a new year on the near horizon we are pleased to be able to publish our biggest edition to date of 48 pages covering lots of town events and activities since our last issue.

We now have confirmation that the finalised Linlithgow Local Place Plan has been submitted to West Lothian Council by the Planning Forum. The Plan summarises your opinions on the future planning needs of the town based on public events and consultations with town groups and their members. Wide support was expressed for "something to be done" about the unsatisfactory state of the High Street as the principal east-west transport corridor going through the town centre. Learn more about how you can get involved in this critical process on page 4.

As many readers will be aware there is current controversy over the large sums of money potentially due to the town from the development at Deanburn Road on the south west of town. Matters were brought to a head on 20/21st September at a Hearing conducted by a Scottish Government Reporter to determine the outcome of an application by the landowner to modify the proposed arrangements of a s75 agreement with the Planning Authority. Read all about the outcome of the Hearing and the significant implications for the town as summarised by the Planning Forum on page 6.

A feature of a number of the other articles is the frequency with which the word "fundraising" occurs. With severe cuts to previously available funding to voluntary organisations via local government more and more organisations are obliged to organise fundraising events and appeal to the community for donations to maintain operational viability. This is a situation that has gradually become critical over the past few years and threatens the existence of all voluntary organisations many of which have become household names. And, of course, if such organisations are to increase their fundraising activities then they need to increase the number of their volunteers to undertake the extra work.

Which takes us to a second word - volunteers - which is appearing with increasing frequency in requests for space in the magazine. Groups need to raise awareness of the urgent need for new volunteers to bring in fresh enthusiasm and energy to deal with changing times. If you haven't volunteered before then there won't be a better time to try it - you will be warmly welcomed and it won't necessarily take up a lot of your time.

And finally, it's good to see the return of many seasonal activities - Linlithgow Players, Barony Theatre, Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP), the Reed Band, Advent Fayre, Late Night Shopping, River Kids Appeal - and much else besides.

MAGAZINE SUBSCRIPTION

Please don't forget that the Black Bitch Magazine is also a not-for-profit voluntary organisation and depends on subscribers, donors and advertisers for its funding. Our aim is to reserve 70% of the magazine for editorial content so if you don't subscribe already it would be greatly appreciated if you would consider subscribing now to help us maximise space devoted to editorial content about Linlithgow matters and its many groups and organisations.

Go to www.linlithgowcommunitymagazine.co.uk and click on "Subscribe" to see various ways you can support the magazine.

Many thanks and (very early) Best Wishes for the festive season to all our supporters, subscribers, donors and advertisers.



Black Bitch Magazine design & production: www.cgcreative.co.uk

Linlithgow Physiotherapy

Local Physiotherapy Clinic.

We can help with:

- Back/Neck Pain
- Sports Injuries
- Joint/Muscle Pain
- Ante/post Natal Care
- Modified Pilates
- Bladder Problems
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Acupuncture

26c High Street
Linlithgow
EH49 7AE

Karen Graham
Pamela Armstrong

Tel. **01506 238189**

www.linlithgowphysiotherapy.co.uk
contacts@linlithgowphysiotherapy.co.uk

Healthcare Insurers Recognised
HCPC registered

THE PERFECT GIFT

The perfect gift for the perfect occasion

View our full range and latest offers instore, online or follow us on Facebook
lilypondcrafts.co.uk

LILYPOND CRAFTS & GIFTS

25 HIGH STREET, LINLITHGOW, EH49 7AB TEL: 01506 840225

ENQUIRIES@LILYPONDCRAFTS.CO.UK

NEXT ISSUE COPY DEADLINE
10 JAN 2024

CONTACT THE EDITOR
on.a.lead@gmail.com

WEDDINGS • EVENTS • PORTRAITS

UNIT 7
BRAEHEAD ROAD
EH49 6EP
(opposite Linlithgow Rose F.C.)

01506 671700
www.paulgavin.co.uk

MPA

Qualified MASTER Photographer

Gift Vouchers on sale now
Appointments available 7 days

PAUL GAVIN
PHOTOGRAPHY

LOCAL PLACE PLAN REPORT – IT'S FINISHED!

The Black Bitch magazine has, over the past two years, printed several articles on the development of the Linlithgow Local Place Plan. It all began last year with the March 2022 magazine introducing the changes to planning legislation to incorporate Local Place Plans, the second in April 2022 sought views on housing, the third in May 2022 introduced the discussion on plans for the High Street.

These three articles led to an exhibition held in the Burgh Halls on the 16th and 21st June 2022 which presented a draft of local planning ideas. Both days were well attended, the last day particularly so with up to 30 people at any one time studying the exhibition displays and sitting at tables working their way through the plans for the future of Linlithgow, many completing a detailed questionnaire. A small exhibition in the reception area of the Burgh Halls attracted more completed questionnaires supplemented by an online version which closed at the end of December.



Coincidentally, in early 2022 St Michael's Parish Church and Linlithgow Community Development Trust, the latter also a member of the Planning forum, launched their own wide-ranging questionnaire. The data from this questionnaire was shared as input to the Local Place Plan. Many people not only completed the questionnaires but also submitted comments of their own.

Now the hard work began. All comments were transcribed and over 12,000 discrete pieces of data from the transcriptions and questionnaires were recorded on Excel spreadsheets and the whole dataset analysed using content analysis. The response rate indicated a confidence of within a ±5% margin of error which was extremely gratifying since the Planning Forum could be assured, when writing the Linlithgow Local Place Plan, that it did reflect

the view of Linlithgow residents. Of course, it was not just the views of residents that needed to be heeded; it was necessary for the Local Place Plan to comply with the Scottish National Planning Framework 4 which was adopted by Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023, following approval by the Scottish Parliament in January.

This requires the West Lothian Council Local Development Plan to reflect Scottish Government priorities including the move towards net zero emissions, "20 minute neighbourhoods" (living, studying and working within 20 minutes of home), improved health and well-being and a better natural environment. The Planning Forum is confident that the Local Place Plan is fully compliant with the National Planning Framework 4. West Lothian planners will therefore be working with top-down and bottom-up input to the West Lothian Local Development Plan. A very useful meeting with our three ward councillors resulted in a few issues being addressed following which the chair of

Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council signed the letter of submission.

By the time you read this the Linlithgow Local Place Plan will have been received by West Lothian Council. It will be one important piece of information to be considered by planners in their compilation of the new West Lothian Local Development Plan to be published in 2026. In 2016 Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge Community Council (of which the Planning Forum is a sub-group) submitted a 16-page critique of the 2018 West Lothian Council Local Development Plan which was largely ignored. We are hopeful that the new Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, which requires greater scrutiny of the draft Local Development Plan in its formative stages, will mean that more attention will be paid to the wishes of the local community.

The main recommendations in the local place plan are to relieve the High Street of its current congestion, Linlithgow's primary problem identified by residents, and to allow for controlled housing development to the south-east of the town serviced by a new link road to cater primarily for local needs. Other core recommendations are:

>> Acceptance of the existing housing sites described in the current local development plan (H5 H7 and H10 on the map), conditional on road T3 being constructed.

>> Rejection of area R5 as a housing site (recommended without public consultation by the government reporter examining the current Local Development Plan and accepted by West Lothian Council again without public consultation). The Planning Forum requires the redesignation of R5 as green space for recreation and biodiversity.

>> Doomsdale is the biggest publicly owned open space in Linlithgow Bridge. The Planning Forum advocates the decontamination, remediation and restoration of Doomsdale as a public park linking with the Listloaning recreation ground, with a small area reserved for council housing (H8 and H9 on the map).

>> Redefine the settlement boundary of Linlithgow to that bounded by new link road T3 to permit further housing as necessary in years to come.

>> Construct road T2 as a High Street relief road and access to Mill Road industrial estate.

>> Create safe cycle routes to schools and a cycle route to Livingston via Beecraigs T14 on map.

There are a number of other recommendations in the Local Place Plan which also describes the context and reasons why they should all be included in the forthcoming Local Development Plan. The final version of the local place plan and the appendix can be accessed at <https://llbcc.org.uk/planning/>.

**The Planning Forum
October 2023**



CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU NEW SERVICE IN LINLITHGOW

Citizens Advice Bureau in Linlithgow

We now offer an **Outreach session** in Linlithgow every second Monday from 6th November – then 20th November, 4th December, 18th December - from 10am – 1pm. It's a drop-in session, currently located at Linlithgow Community Development Trust at 7 The Vennel. **Please visit us for advice and information that you need.**

How Citizens Advice Bureau Can Help

We live in a world where we are often faced with numerous challenges. From dealing with the cost of living crisis to understanding benefits, employment, family, consumer, debt, housing, immigration, law and courts, and health issues, it can be overwhelming. That's where the Citizens Advice Bureau comes in. We offer holistic, free and impartial advice to the community to help them navigate these complex issues. Our aim is to empower individuals by providing them with the information they need to take control of their situations. We cover a broad range of topics to ensure that we can provide support on a variety of issues that our community members may be facing. Whether the community are dealing with employment issues, struggling with debt, or uncertain about their immigration status, we are here to help.

Are you interested in volunteering?

The demand for our services is growing, and **we need your help** to meet it. Volunteers are the heart of our frontline service and we are not able to provide our service without them. We are looking for dedicated individuals to join our team as volunteer advisers. This is an excellent opportunity to give back to your community, gain valuable experience, and make a real difference in people's lives.

As a volunteer adviser, you will be providing our frontline service which includes face-to-face, email, and telephone advice. You will be the first point of contact for those seeking help, offering them guidance and support. Don't worry if you don't have any previous experience in this field. We provide full training to ensure that you have all the knowledge and skills you need to carry out your role effectively. You'll be well versed in a variety of topics and capable of providing comprehensive advice to those who need it. If you are a compassionate individual who wants to help others, this role could be the perfect fit for you. You will be making a significant impact on your community, helping individuals overcome challenges and improve their lives.

Get in Touch

If you are interested in joining our team email at volunteer@cabwestlothian.casonline.org.uk or visit our website at www.cabwestlothian.org.uk

A Volunteer's View

I live in Linlithgow and have been a volunteer for 18 months at the Livingston Citizens Advice Bureau. I volunteer as a Generalist Adviser one day a week and give face to face advice on a wide range of areas. The best thing about volunteering is feeling you are helping to make a difference for people in the community. I enjoy learning new things and was given comprehensive training.

It's been a very rewarding experience. Citizens Advice has a good reputation, is a trusted, well-known organisation with good social values and helps to shape social policy.



DID WE JUST LOSE £1 MILLION FOR TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS TO THE HIGH STREET? THE REPORTER HAS DECIDED.

The March edition of the Black Bitch magazine described the controversy over the disputed payment of approximately £1 million by the landowner to West Lothian Council as a condition of planning permission for the Deanburn development. This and other payments to be made by the landowner are described in a legal agreement called a section 75 agreement, the conditions for which were described in the April edition of the Black Bitch magazine.

The dispute was brought to a head at a legal hearing by an official reporter appointed by the Planning and Environmental Appeals Division of the Scottish Government. A representative of the Planning Forum was invited to speak at the hearing and two other members attended as observers. The hearing was held over two days, the 21st and 22nd of September. Shepherd and Wedderburn, a Scottish headquartered law firm, represented the landowner, West Lothian Council was represented by its own officers and Morton and Fraser LLP.

The background to the dispute can be summarised as follows. In March 2022 CALA Management Ltd received planning permission for the construction of 60 houses and associated works at Deanburn subject to a section 75 agreement, a legal registered agreement tied to the land which imposes obligations on the use of the land and requires financial contributions to offset the impact of the development on the community. The section 75 agreements were signed by the parties and work commenced on site. In November 2022 the landowner applied to remove the approximately £1 million obligation for the traffic improvement contributions described in the section 75 agreement. West Lothian Council made no decision on the application to modify the original planning permission and so it went to appeal with the landowner as appellant.



West Lothian Council's argument was that the development would add to congestion in the High Street which could be relieved by constructing west facing slips at M9 junction 3 and other works in the High Street. The council relied on a traffic consultant's report which the council had commissioned to determine the amount of traffic currently in the High Street which would be removed if west facing slips were to be constructed. The council's logic being that if a measured quantity of traffic was to be removed then that left space to accommodate the same quantity of traffic from the six developments described in the current Local Development Plan (including Deanburn) without making High Street congestion any worse. Therefore, the Deanburn estate should share, with other

future developments, in the cost of west facing slips.

The appellant's legal team quoted the Scottish Government planning circular 3/2012 which clearly states that section 75 money can only be claimed where it is to pay for infrastructure improvements which "relate to the proposed development either as a direct consequence of the development or arising from the cumulative impact of development in the area" further the infrastructure must "fairly and reasonably relate in scale and kind to the proposed development". The appellant's legal team stated as Deanburn residents heading west would not use the proposed M9 slips then money cannot be claimed under the planning regulation quoted. Further, the legal team, aided by a traffic consultant, undertook a forensic examination of the council's traffic report highlighting several shortcomings.

In the decision published following the hearing the Reporter decided that:

>> A contribution must be made by the landowner/developer where requiring such a contribution serves a necessary planning purpose. In the case of the M9 junction 3 west facing slips the Reporter rejects the council's suggestion that 100% of the cost should be borne by the developers of the six sites in the Local Development Plan but also accepts that the correct percentage is not 0%.

>> The objective of the West facing slips and the High Street improvements are a package of measures to reduce congestion in the High street. Whereas it is accepted that residents closest to the M9 junction will have a higher usage of the west facing slips, the residents of all six proposed development sites will have a common usage of the High Street and will benefit equally from reduced congestion. Therefore, the contribution from each residential unit on each of the six sites (including Deanburn) should be the same.

>> At a strategic planning level, it is agreed that no significant planned housing development can be permitted (identified as the six sites) without the provision of a

solution or a means to a solution to the identified challenges posed by Linlithgow's High Street.

>> As transport problems in the High Street have existed and worsened in the town over many years it is not appropriate for the six proposed development sites to bear the full costs of the mitigation measures namely, the west facing slips and other traffic improvements. The reporter stated "In my view, the west facing slips and developer contributions towards it are only one factor in this multi-dimensional solution to the challenges faced in respect of Linlithgow. This requires a more nuanced approach than a simple calculation of a percentage figure of how much traffic from the appeal site uses the west facing slips (or the High Street)."

>> A contribution of £15,938 per new residential unit is excessive. An appropriate contribution is one third of that sum namely £5,312 per new residential unit.

In a final twist the Reporter decided that because the appeal was only brought by the landowner and not CALA and because of the land ownership of the plots at the time of the appeal, the landowner would pay West Lothian Council £5,312 in respect of one plot and CALA is still currently liable to pay £940,342 in respect of the remaining 59 plots.

The implications for Linlithgow are mixed.

- 1 It will be necessary for CALA to submit its own planning application to have its liability reduced.
- 2 Developers of future developments will use the figure of £5,312 as a benchmark in their section 75 negotiations.
- 3 West Lothian Council will not be able to finance the west-facing slip roads at Burghmuir and the High Street improvements entirely from contributions from the six development sites in the current West Lothian Local Development Plan.
- 4 On the plus side, the decision shows that Section 75 monies can be realised for the town, at least in part, even if there is only a general relationship between development and infrastructure benefit.
- 5 It adds significant weight to the Planning Forum's approach to infrastructure investment described in the Linlithgow Local Place Plan now submitted to West Lothian council.

Overall, not the Christmas present we were looking for but a good second best.

**The Planning Forum
November 2023**

How to manage your child's screentime over the festive season



Specsavers

Every year, it's thought parents across the UK collectively spend around £3 billion on tech gifts for their children at Christmas.

And with recent figures showing some kids spend as much as six hours a day on digital devices, it's never been more important to know how to limit your little one's screen time.

In this column, **Diana Kelly** – store director at Specsavers in Linlithgow – shares her top tips for managing your child's screentime over the festive break.

Follow to 20:20:20 rule

Diana says: 'We all know how excited kids can get with a new gadget, so this simple step is one of the quickest – and easiest – ways to ensure your child is giving their eyes a break.'

'Every 20 minutes encourage them to look away from their screen and off into the distance at something around 20 feet away, for 20 seconds. This simple exercise will help relax their eye muscles and reduce the risk of digital eye strain.'

Establish media-free times

'Christmas is all about spending time with your loved ones, and what better way to do it than away from your screens. Instead of watching the TV or spending time on your digital devices, why not come together for a boardgame or a classic game of charades.'

'For little ones especially, this will help to reduce the risk of eye fatigue and remove any fixation or reliance on digital devices.'

Schedule some time to go outside

'We might not be guaranteed snow this festive season, but one thing is for sure – getting some fresh air and going for a walk is one of the best ways to give your eyes a break.'

'Time spent outdoors will not only give your kids' eyes a rest from focusing on a screen, but it also gives their minds a chance to slow down and relax too.'

Book an annual eye exam

'New Year is all about new beginnings and establishing healthy habits, so what better time to book your child's yearly eye exam? We recommend getting your child's eyes tested annually to ensure their eyes remain healthy during this important stage of their development.'

Our store at the Regent Centre is open from 9:30am-5:30pm on Mondays, and 9am-5:30pm from Tuesday to Saturday.

We're closed from 24-26 December, and from 31 December – 2 January.

To book an eye appointment for your child – or even yourself – call 01506 534484, or visit our website www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow.



ONE LINLITHGOW

A VISION FOR THE VENNEL IN LINLITHGOW

Working with award winning architects, Page\Park, One Linlithgow has produced a vision document for the Vennel area of the town centre.



The Vennel is a 1960s development, located off the High Street and just a few minutes' walk from Linlithgow Palace. It is mainly residential, but also encompasses LCDT Hub, shop units, and - the focus of the starter project - a slender strip of public realm connecting High Street and Linlithgow Loch.

Page\Park Architects has been appointed by One Linlithgow BID to produce a vision for the Vennel, exploring how this valuable piece of public realm might be developed incrementally to better serve the community and businesses of Linlithgow.

The document considers some of the key historical and social context in Linlithgow and sets out high-level proposals for the Vennel that One Linlithgow might take forward as independent projects in the future.



The Vennel is a blank canvas for Linlithgow, but it's likely that its transformation will take place incrementally over a number of projects. The strategy is therefore set out in three phases by Page\Park:

- >> short term projects, with costs in the region of £3-5k;
- >> medium term projects, at £15-18k;
- >> and long-term projects, with higher capital costs.

This is with a view to helping the BID to be responsive to different funding opportunities that might present themselves, and not to be reliant on a single large funding windfall.

The report presents a vision of what these phases of delivery might look like, from the short-term 'quick wins', to the more complex, long-term aspirations for this key piece of public realm.

This strategy is flexible, and Page\Park has encouraged the BID to continually reflect on how public use of the space changes over the course of the project, and what other opportunities might open up to use the space for public benefit in different ways.

FUNDING

Following publication of the "Vision Document" the BID team have set about attempting to source leveraged funding to enable the project to take place. A grant application has been submitted for consideration to the West Lothian Council 'Place Based Capital Grant Community Choices' fund that would require the project to be signed off by March 2024 and completed by the end of September next year.

As an established Business Improvement District (BID), One Linlithgow is strategically positioned to tap into larger sources of funding to be able to deliver projects of a larger scale, to benefit their towns and communities.

Evelyn Noble, chair of One Linlithgow said "this is a fantastic opportunity to improve the public realm of Linlithgow and improve the overall visitor experience to the town. This can only be a benefit to local businesses and the overall prosperity and appeal our beautiful town."

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The Vision document has been presented and put into the public domain, to get valuable feedback from everyone with an interest in Linlithgow.

One Linlithgow would like to take into account these opinions, by asking people to visit Linlithgow.co.uk/vennelvision/ to read the full report and complete the feedback survey. All anonymised responses will be published towards the end of this year.



LOCAL PRODUCTS, LOCAL PROVENANCE, LOCAL GIFT CARD

As the countdown to Christmas approaches and town centres come alive with colour and sparkling with lights, you will discover there is local produce on every corner in Linlithgow.



To **Samantha Jordon**, a big well done, congratulations and thank you to Fair Trade Winds at 133 High Street, which has been trading in Linlithgow since 2011 stocking an interesting mix of ethical gifts, indoor plants & handpicked crafts from Scotland and the U.K See [Facebook.com/fairtradewinds1/](https://www.facebook.com/fairtradewinds1/)

A selection of Local gift shops in Linlithgow

Head into Linlithgow to discover a fine array of gifting retail outlets to suit many tastes. Why not make the decision to buy a local gift for each of

your immediate family this year from the local shops. Many of them also sell online and can offer same day "Click and Collect", increasingly important as the big day approaches.

- A Wee Mindin' [Aweemindin.wordpress.com](https://www.aweemindin.wordpress.com)
- Bright Star Toys [Brightstartoys.co.uk](https://www.brightstartoys.co.uk)
- Fair Tradewinds Gifts [Facebook.com/fairtradewinds1](https://www.facebook.com/fairtradewinds1)
- Far From the Madding Crowd [Maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com](https://www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com)
- J. Walker Carpets & Gifts [Linlithgow.co.uk/j-walker-carpets](https://www.linlithgow.co.uk/j-walker-carpets)
- Jewellery By Design [Jewellerybydesign.co.uk](https://www.jewellerybydesign.co.uk)
- Kapital Kilts [Kapitalkilts.com](https://www.kapitalkilts.com)
- Lilypond Crafts & Gifts [Lilypondcrafts.co.uk](https://www.lilypondcrafts.co.uk)
- Line Gallery [TheLineonline.co.uk](https://www.thelineonline.co.uk)
- Linlithgow Stoves & Gifts [Linlithgowstoves.co.uk](https://www.linlithgowstoves.co.uk)
- Linlithgow Wishes
- Low Port Music [Lowportmusic.co.uk](https://www.lowportmusic.co.uk)
- Mid-C-Mod [Linlithgow.co.uk/mid-c-mod/](https://www.linlithgow.co.uk/mid-c-mod/)
- Tracey Victoria Interiors [Traceyvictoria.co.uk](https://www.traceyvictoria.co.uk)

LOCAL FESTIVE CHEER & SPIRIT IN MILL ROAD

It's amazing what is being produced locally this Christmas, showcasing the imagination and ingenuity of local producers right on our doorstep.



Chocolatier, **Sebastien Kobelt** based in Mill Road has collaborated with the talented David from [trufflepigart.com](https://www.trufflepigart.com) to curate a delightful and slightly tongue-in-cheek Christmas theme that's infused with class. The result is an Advent calendar that not only counts down the days to Christmas but also doubles as an elegant decoration, worthy of gracing any Linlithgow mantelpiece. See [Sebastiankobelt.com/shop](https://www.sebastiankobelt.com/shop) for details.



The owners of **Linlithgow Distillery** used to make a special Gin every Christmas just for their family. In December 2020 they decided to make a bigger batch sold out within a few days. Since then 'Lin Gin Mulled' has been made it every year and is now an established Premium Winter Gin, coming out of the still at over 70% Abv at Dry Gin quality. It's made with their base Lin Gin recipe including Christmas spices - Lemon Peel, Ginger, All Spice and Clove to give a beautifully smooth Mulled Gin.



A WARM WELCOME TO 226A HIGH STREET LINLITHGOW TO ZIBAH KILBRIDE OF LINLITHGOW POTTERY

On 25th Nov (12 to 4pm) & 3rd Dec to raise funds for charity, she is doing a drop in bauble painting sessions. On 2nd of December there is student show and drop in bauble painting. Why not surprise the special person in your life with pottery lessons from Linlithgow Pottery.

Find out for yourself if it's much harder than it looks to do. See [Linlithgowpottery.com](https://www.linlithgowpottery.com) for details.



One Linlithgow can also announce that the **West Lothian Gift Card** can now be picked up from many local retailers, to allow customers can "self-load" the gift cards from the comfort of their own home.

LoadThisCard.com allows funds to be loaded seamlessly onto the West Lothian Gift Card, that can be used across the region in participating retailers as well as food and drink outlets.

One Linlithgow
 Email: office@onelinlithgow.com
 Tel: 07708 194592

The SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

captured in Linlithgow

Festive events in towns are the heartbeats of community life, pulsating with joy, vibrancy, and a sense of belonging. These occasions bring together people from all walks of life, transcending differences and uniting them in celebration. Whether it's an annual tradition or a special occasion, these events hold a special place in the hearts of local people.

The annual Linlithgow Advent Fayre has become one of these occasions over the last few years, along with the spectacular Beecraigs Festive Forest spectacular event and much more throughout December.

It all starts off with a late-night shopping spree on the High Street on Thursday 23rd November, with live music, mince pies and special offers getting everyone into the early festive spirit. The shops decorate their windows for a chance to win the annual One Linlithgow Advent Fayre cup for best window. They have their festive goodies on fabulous display, and sparkling windows standing out as the days get shorter and the evenings get darker. It's so good, the traders have decided to continue the late-night shopping on the following Thursday 30th November too, just in time for pay day.

It All Happens by Magic

As the day dawns, the town awakens to a transformed landscape. The High Street, the bustling hub of daily life, stands adorned with local charity stalls, community group tombolas and over 50 festive lighting decorations on the lamp posts in the town centre.

Families and friends don their warmest winter attire, children's eyes wide with wonder, eagerly awaiting the festivities.

Festival of Christmas Trees in St Michael's church, a craft market in the Burgh Halls and interactive arts and crafts in the community HUB provide opportunities for hands-on experiences, fostering a sense of connection between artisans and attendees.

The local bars and restaurants such as the Platform 3, The Four Mary's and Café Bar 1807 are pulsating with people, along with the local Linlithgow Reed Band, volunteers and choirs taking refreshment breaks.

Children revel in the festivities, their laughter and exuberance filling the air. Their wide-eyed wonder at the sights and sounds around them is a testament to the magic of the occasion. The crowd builds with lit flaming torches building a beautifully lit procession which weaves from one end of the street to the other and back to the Christmas tree to see the lights get switched on.

These are the magical memories of Linlithgow that will be passed down the generations by the younger children of today, who will regale stories of their magical memories of Linlithgow as they were growing up.

Community bonds are strengthened during festive events. It's a time when the town comes together, setting aside differences and celebrating unity in diversity.



Festive events in towns are not merely gatherings; they are an embodiment of community spirit and vitality. They remind us of the importance of coming together, of celebrating life and the bonds that tie us to one another. These events leave an indelible mark on the town's collective memory, serving as a beacon of light in the tapestry of everyday life.

- The Linlithgow late night shopping days are on Thursday 23rd Nov up to 8pm. And Thursday 30th Nov.
- The Linlithgow Advent Fayre and Christmas Lights Switch on event is on Saturday 25th Nov. from 12 noon to 5.30pm, organised by the Linlithgow Community Council.
- The Beecraigs Festive Forest runs from 1st to 23rd December.
- St Michael's Festival of Christmas Trees from 1st to 3rd Dec 10am – 7pm (12noon – 7pm on Sunday)
- Santa arriving at the Canal Centre for Santa Cruises 9 & 10th and 16 & 17th December.
- Meet Santa and the animals at Kingsfield for an Afternoon Tea treat! 16th & 17th December.

Wrap up warm and come along to enjoy the magical experiences. For more information, visit Linlithgow.co.uk

Shopping and Eating Local at Christmas

Shopping local at Christmas is a heartwarming tradition that embodies the spirit of giving and supports the heartbeat of communities. It's more than just a transaction; it's a gesture of solidarity with local businesses, restaurateurs, publicans, and entrepreneurs who pour their passion and creativity into their products and services.

When you shop local, you directly contribute to the vitality of your community. Local businesses are the backbone of towns and neighbourhoods, providing employment opportunities and contributing to the local economy. Local businesses offer a treasure trove of unique, handcrafted items that you won't find in mass-produced stores. These gifts carry a special charm, often reflecting the distinct culture and creativity of the region.

Local shop owners provide personalized service, offering recommendations and helping you find the perfect gift for your loved ones.

Local shops and boutiques add character and diversity to the community's retail landscape. They contribute to the unique identity of a town, making it a more vibrant and interesting place to live and visit.

Studies show that a higher percentage of money spent locally stays in the community compared to purchases made at online retailers. Small businesses are the lifeblood of entrepreneurship and innovation. By shopping local, you empower individuals and families to pursue their dreams and contribute to the economic growth of the community.

Cultivating Relationships

Building relationships with local shop owners fosters a sense of belonging and familiarity within the community. It creates a warm and inviting atmosphere where customers are valued and appreciated. Local shops often carry unique products and brands that are not widely known. Exploring these stores can lead to delightful discoveries and a renewed appreciation for the creativity and craftsmanship in your area.

Supporting local businesses during the holiday season and throughout the year helps build resilience in the face of economic challenges. It ensures that your community remains strong, even in uncertain times.

In essence, shopping local at Christmas is an act of love and gratitude toward the community that nurtures and supports you year-round. It's a way to celebrate the spirit of togetherness and show appreciation for the businesses and individuals who make your town a special place to call home.



 **Linlithgow.co.uk**



ROWEN EVENTS PRESENT
FESTIVE FOREST
BEECRAIGS COUNTRY PARK



MRS CLAUS GIVEAWAY!

WIN an EXCLUSIVE VIP Family Ticket for Beecraigs Festive Forest 2023!

We are ecstatic to announce that this year Santa will be joined for the very first time at Beecraigs Festive Forest by a very special guest - the one and only Mrs Claus!

Prepare to be spellbound by her captivating storytelling and frosted tales, available to book now as part of the Santa's Grotto & Group Storytelling Experience* at www.beecraigsfestiveforest.com.

However to celebrate our new VIP, we are giving all readers the opportunity to win 1 x VIP ticket for a family of 4 for Thursday 30/11/2023.

TO ENTER:

1. How many reindeers do Mr & Mrs Claus own?

Please send your answers to: admin@rowenevents.com

The competition closes Monday 20 November.

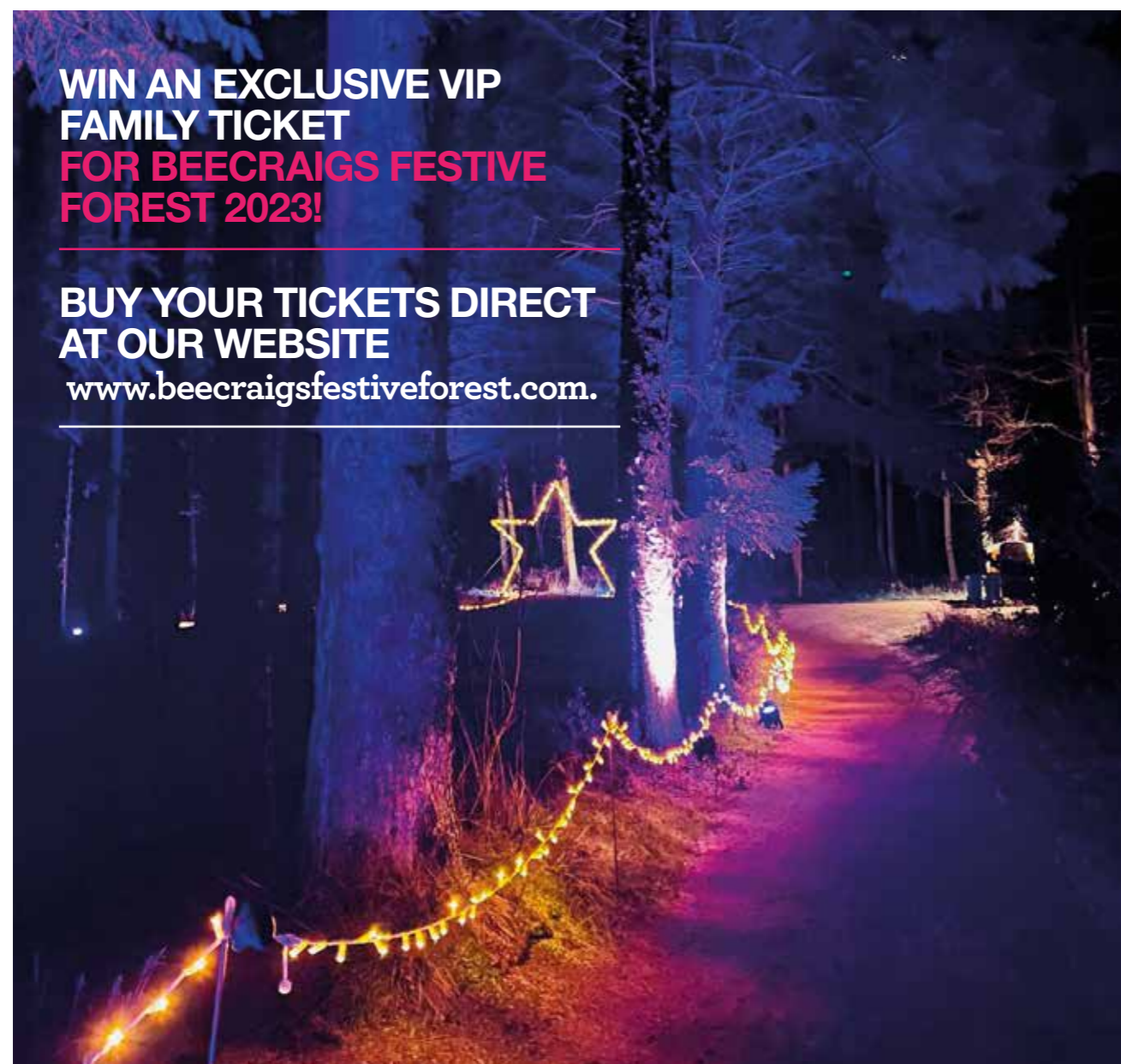
The prize will then be issued via e-ticket.

Good Luck! The BFF Team



T&Cs: The winner will be selected randomly and the winner will then be contacted to redeem their prize via email.

*Please note: Santa's Grotto & Storytelling Experience is an extension to and must be booked after purchasing an illumination trail ticket.



WIN AN EXCLUSIVE VIP FAMILY TICKET FOR BEECRAIGS FESTIVE FOREST 2023!

BUY YOUR TICKETS DIRECT AT OUR WEBSITE
www.beecraigsfestiveforest.com.

XMAS AT THE ROSE.



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.

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

Linlithgow Rose FC
2024
Talent Contest

Commences Friday 2nd February 2024
6 Heats consecutive Fridays.
Acts now being sought.

£2,500 prize money.

HOGMANAY
Hogmanay Show
Sunday 31st Dec (9pm-2:00am)

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

Come in & view all the renovation changes, new members will always be made welcome.

PLEASE CONTACT: DAVIE MCDUGALL
ON (07792 160 745, OR 01506 843 736)
FOR BOOKINGS.

FUNCTION HALL AVAILABLE FOR HIRE:
FOR WEDDINGS, ANNIVERSARIES, BIRTHDAY PARTIES & FOR THOSE SADDER DAYS - FUNERAL TEAS.
CASH BINGO EVERY TUESDAY & THURSDAY EVENINGS 8.00PM

SHORT OF AN IDEA FOR A CHRISTMAS PRESENT

LUCS vouchers make an ideal Christmas present

Voucher can be used for all LUCS cruises and boat hire at any time
bookings.lucs.org.uk/vouchers
For more information



JAZZERCISE
WHERE FITNESS AND FUN
Come to party

New Customer Trial Pass
Enjoy 2 weeks UNLIMITED classes for just £20!

JAZZERCISE LINLITHGOW
SCAN QR CODE FOR CLASS SCHEDULE & BOOKING

✉ kms77jazzercise@aol.com
☎ Call Karen on 07725 085599
📱 @jazzerciselinlithgow
📍 @jazzerciselinlithgow

Keeping the Burgh Beautiful

Ron Smith, Convenor

The 'golden' bed in front of the Low Port Centre, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Linlithgow and Bo'ness.



With another year ending, we thought that it would be useful to give readers an overview of the breadth of Burgh Beautiful's activities and of the issues which tend to arise over a typical year.

Summer and Winter Planting

Many people have commented that our floral displays this summer have been outstanding, especially luxuriant because of copious rain which followed the dry start! Over the past month, Burgh Beautiful volunteers have been removing faded summer bedding plants and replacing them with winter/spring plants. Our hanging baskets were changed over on Sunday, 15 October. Already, we have next year's summer floral displays in sight, and price quotations have been sought from our usual suppliers. It is to be hoped that the coming winter is kinder than last to our plant life – in particular, numerous cordylines and phormiums were lost, with their replacements having to be added to the past year's chores.

Planters at The Vennel

Following last summer's adoption by the Ex-Tinguishers of the derelict phone box at The Vennel to form a floral planter, this novel feature lasted until the end of July, a deadline set by Linlithgow's First Responders who had prior claim on the structure for the installation of a defibrillator. All was not lost though, as the Ex-Tinguishers relocated the components of the planter itself to a new position nearby. Our adjacent wooden barrels were getting in the way



Our ever-popular Serpentine Bed, now maintained by an amended band of volunteers.

of the monthly Artisan Market, and, with help from One Linlithgow BID, we have relocated them to the frontage of the Victoria Hall site, where replanting has been done by a very welcome new volunteer. With another year ending, we thought that it would be useful to give readers an overview of the breadth of Burgh Beautiful's activities and of the issues which tend to arise over a typical year.

Review of Existing Permanent Planting (Shrubs and Herbaceous)

Following a review of permanent planting maintained by Burgh Beautiful, we have completed 'makeovers' for the beds at the Spar Shop in Springfield, at Kinloch View and at the Low Port roundabout, although

we had to call in contractors for the heaviest jobs involving large overgrown shrubs. Renewal work is nearly complete at the Lennox Cairn, but we have decided that the community bed at the West Port, formerly maintained by Peter Common, should be removed, due to lack of volunteer resources, and West Lothian Council has agreed to grass over the site of this bed. In order that such problems do not arise again, we are working towards producing maintenance advice for volunteers, covering such topics as pruning, cutting back and feeding, but we have, so far, been unable to attract anyone to take on the role of Coordinator of Permanent Planting to oversee this important part of our work.

Additional Permanent Planting

Following input from some volunteers who had been working on the Serpentine Bed, concerned about the wastefulness of the disposal of bedding plants once or twice a year, it was recently decided to assess the possibility of converting the contents of some of our flower beds from bedding plants to permanent planting and our volunteer Laura Camfield kindly took on the task of making recommendations, producing detailed planting plans, working out costings and seeking quotations from suppliers. There was much debate at the Burgh Beautiful Committee and the Planting Working Group about the relative merits of bedding and shrubs/herbaceous planting and the need for an appropriate balance between the two, especially bearing in mind public preferences and the need to retain sponsors. In the end, it was decided that only the sloping bed beside the Union Canal (excepting the small crescent bed around Dudley) would be entirely changed over to permanent planting, alongside the upgrading of existing permanent planting at two other locations. All the resulting planting is expected to be undertaken in April next year.

Biodiversity Scrape at Kettilstoun

Our new wildlife pond near the recently opened West Lothian Cycle Circuit has been undergoing natural regeneration over the past year, although we have added some recycled iris and other aquatic plants to add interest. Current thinking is that a new footpath through the general area, together with a 'pond



dipping platform', would make a good future project, although we would need a new volunteer to act as project manager.

Rosemount Park Arboretum

Labelling of the trees is almost complete and a new interpretation board, partially funded through a successful grant application to the Mushroom Trust, will soon be installed at the Friars Loan entrance to the park. Sadly, some trees here (as well as features elsewhere in the town) have recently suffered from vandalism.

Floral Trails Booklet

For 2023, we published a new edition of our popular tourist booklet describing our principal floral displays, distributed through local outlets, including the Burgh Halls where the Community Council's tourist information volunteers have been busy.

Beautiful Scotland and Britain in Bloom

We decided not to compete in Beautiful Scotland this year, mainly because of the lack of true cooperation from West Lothian Council to achieve the quality and cleanliness of environment needed to make it worthwhile entering such competitions. However, we remained in the 'non-judged' category of Beautiful Scotland, allowing us to stay on their mailing list, and two members were invited to their 2023 awards ceremony. We were also delighted to show off our work to a delegation from Milngavie in Bloom and, in the same vein, our station volunteers organised a visit from a party of other 'station adopters'. On the down side, however, the lack of impetus caused by not competing in a competition this year has meant that more detritus and weeds have been apparent in our streets all summer (albeit tackled by some individual initiatives).

Fundraising

Earlier in the year, our usual June plant sale was another great success and money was raised through the Linlithgow & Bo'ness Rotary Club's Duck Race and a successful quiz night at Platform Three. Currently, we are processing annual sponsorship renewals which are our main source of income and are applying for grants from ScotRail and the One Linlithgow BID, as well as West Lothian

A happy group of volunteers after completing a 'makeover' of our flower bed near the Springfield Spar shop.



Councillors' disbursements. We are looking forward to our Advent Fayre stall (with its raffle), the sale of holly wreaths and the sale of Rotary calendars. We are incredibly grateful to all involved, and for all the money raised from the various initiatives since our day-to-day operations are entirely financed by local people and businesses.

Succession Planning and Shortage of Volunteers Willing to Take Responsibility

We have achieved some success in attracting help with administrative tasks and heavy gardening work, with folk kindly coming forward to coordinate sponsorship, organise certain other fund-raising activities, work with young people and organise litter picks, but we still desperately need people to coordinate our permanent planting and the year-round management of our hanging baskets. Our parent body, Linlithgow Burgh Trust, really needs a new Treasurer, without whom we may not be able to continue, and we need to plan for successors to our current convenor and secretary.

If you would like to help with gardening or administrative duties, enquiries to bbt@lbt.scot are always welcome!



Right: Tree planting in Rosemount Park.

Below: A recent litter pick by Linlithgow Loch.



FIRE STATION IS LOOKING FOR RECRUITS



Linlithgow Fire Station is recruiting for On-Call (part time) firefighters, previously known as retained firefighters.

This is part of a Scotland-wide initiative, which is looking for men and women to carry out a range of duties, including attending a wide variety of emergency incidents, as well as undertaking work within their local communities. This includes home safety consultations and school visits.

On-call firefighters are "on call" with a bleeper to respond to a range of emergencies. On average, they could be called out two to three times a week for a couple of hours. If people can't be available all the time, it's not a problem. However, the **Scottish Fire and Rescue Service** is particularly keen to hear from people who are available during weekdays.

On-Call firefighters come from every walk of life, including shopkeepers, builders, plumbers, farmers, secretaries,

market gardeners, engineers, and directors of companies, together with people who are not currently employed. Previous experience is not required, thanks to the comprehensive training programme.

You must be able to get to your local fire station quickly after being alerted by a bleeper and the role can be physically demanding. Therefore, physical fitness is very important.

The Linlithgow fire station is on Philip Avenue, behind the West Port Hotel. Two informal sessions are taking place there on November 18th called "Brew with the Crew", where anyone interested can come along and find out more about recruitment. The sessions will highlight what the role of an on-call firefighter is, the terms and conditions, pay, recruitment process and training.

There will also be an opportunity to have a look at some of the equipment on the appliance and watch a demonstration of drills.

I met recently with **Iain Withers** and **Colin Stuart** at the fire station to discuss the recruitment drive. Interestingly, Iain got involved a few years ago after reading an article in the Black Bitch Magazine. They are very keen to get more people signed up.

"Most on-call stations are usually looking to recruit," Iain told me, "But we are specifically keen, because we could really do with a couple more people on board to up the numbers in our crew. Right now, we've got eight people on the crew. If we had ten, that would help us to hit our target of having to have a minimum of four people available for calls."



Anyone interested in becoming involved in Linlithgow Fire Station should contact Colin Stuart at **Colin.Stuart@firescotland.gov.uk** and book a slot at one of the "Brew with the Crew" sessions on November 18th. Please note spaces are limited to ten people per session so please only book if you are interested in joining and wish to find out more. You need to live or work within five minutes of the station.

Murdoch Kennedy



PANTOMIME IS BACK IN LINLITHGOW THIS JANUARY "OH YES IT IS!"

Images: Rebecca Holmes

The Linlithgow Players Present
At Linlithgow Academy Theatre

Cinderella

A magical family pantomime

Wednesday 17th January 2024 at 7pm
Opening night offer Tickets: £8 & £10
Friday 19th January 2024 at 7pm
Saturday 20th 2024 matinee at 2.30pm
Tickets: £8 & £14
Available from:
www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk
Far From The Madding Crowd
Tel: 07849 448999



FROM
17
JAN



The Linlithgow Players will be putting on that ageless classic, **Cinderella**, complete with Ugly Sisters, incompetent henchmen, an apprentice Fairy Godmother, glass slippers and jokes that make you go, "I'll explain it when you're older."

Following the success of The Players' unique, sold-out Scratch Theatre event in August, performed to widespread rapturous acclaim, where more than one audience member was heard to say, "Well, that was much better than I thought it would be!", the Players are returning to more familiar ground with the timeless fairy story. Cinderella is the classic 'rags to riches' tale about a kind-hearted girl who, taunted and bullied by her evil stepsisters, perseveres against all the odds to... (spoiler alert!) marry a very nice chap who just happens to be a prince.

Readings have been held, roles have been cast and rehearsals have already begun under the watchful, experienced, all-seeing eye of **Serena Jones**, who will be producing and directing this year's extravaganza - and she has a full-time job!

This script for Cinderella was written by the late great **Dr. Peter Anderson**, who sadly passed away earlier this year, but in his lifetime was a most active member of the Players as a chairman, actor, writer and... drummer! Peter wrote a number of scripts

for The Players and the group thought it would be a fitting way to pay tribute to Peter, to revive one of his best pantos this year. You can be sure to enjoy a host of local references as our cast do the "Lithgae Walk" down the High Street on their way to the ball at Linlithgow Palace.

It's wonderful to see the return of the town's panto after a brief hiatus, because it's always something to look forward to once the hubbub of Christmas has waned.

"As the show is in January, tickets can make a fantastic Christmas present for anyone, particularly your children or grandchildren," said Players' Chair, **Liz Drewett**, "So this year we're offering the "Gift of Panto" where you can receive an official Ticket to The Ball that you fill out for your friends or family, which can then be given as a Christmas gift. These will be on sale at our ticket launch at the Advent Fayre at the Burgh Halls on 25th November and then via our website when online sales start the following day. Visit us at www.linlithgowplayers.org.uk where you'll also find more information about the cast and show."

Cinderella will be performed at Linlithgow Academy Theatre on Wednesday 17th January and Friday 19th January at 7.00pm and Saturday 20th January at 2.30pm.

Tickets are £14 adult and £8 child (16 and under). Opening night offer is £10 adult and £8 child. The "Gift of Panto" Ball invites are offered at no extra charge!



FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES IN ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH



Who would have thought when St Michael's Parish Church started The Festival of Christmas Trees in 2017 that it would become what we see today - a much-loved staple in the Christmas countdown in our town?

The event started as an outreach project from the church's Fellowship Team, as a way to interact and bring together the many groups from the local community. In 2017, organisations, and schools were approached, with forty-nine trees eventually being displayed in the church. That first year, there were no particular themes given to those taking part, but a number of them used their trees as an opportunity to showcase all that they do. A particularly memorable tree was from the Longcroft Hall Table Tennis Association, who crafted their decorations entirely from table tennis balls - including a light up star to top it off!

In 2018, the organisations returned to decorate their trees, this time inspired by their favourite Christmas carols and songs. Creativity was in full flow, especially from the young people of St Michael's Youth Fellowship, who decorated their tree on the theme of "God rest ye merry gentlemen," with top hat, monocle, pipe, and Financial Times adorning the branches. Thanks to the hard work and support shown by all involved, a total of £2,767.87 boosted the funds of Bethany Christian Trust and West Lothian Foodbank.

2019 saw fifty-seven trees decorated with the theme "Around the World". Trees were represented from Trinidad & Tobago, Disney World, Canada, and a memorable upside-down tree from the church office

staff representing the land down under - Australia. The festival expanded its musical offerings too, with the Edinburgh Police Choir serenading the crowds on the Sunday afternoon. Linlithgow Link, St Michael's Day Care and LYPP shared the profits raised through tickets and donations.



With the Covid-19 Pandemic, the doors of the church were shut in December 2020, although the Fellowship Team still reached out to the community by illuminating the windows of Cross House, displaying a tableau of the Nativity story.

2021 saw the trees return with a bang, although some restrictions were in play. Sixty-five trees lined the church inspired by the idea of "What Christmas means to

you." Once again, the festival grew with the addition of Mr and Mrs Claus in their sitting room waving at visitors young and old through their windows. We also used this as a toy drop off for the Gift Appeal campaign in partnership with the Salvation Army. The monies raised were donated to the Aspire Campaign to help support the work needed for our church spire.

Last year, saw the biggest festival yet, with the return of Mr and Mrs Claus, the hot chocolate bar, musical offerings from the Edinburgh Police, and Linlithgow Rugby Club Choirs, dancing displays from the local 'Highland with Claire' group and seventy-two decorated trees. The theme of "Past, Present and Future" was memorably represented in the tree decorated by Ukrainian Families now residing in the Linlithgow area. An impressive total of £6,127.86 was shared between First Steps Charity and the Aspire campaign.

This year's Festival of Christmas Trees will open its doors from Friday 1st December - Sunday 3rd December, with the return of the Mr and Mrs Claus' toy donation drop off, hot chocolate bar, and wide selection of musical contributions, alongside a quiet session (10-11am, Saturday 2nd Dec) designed for those with sensory processing challenges. All profits this year will be donated to 'Quiet Waters,' who offer counselling, and bereavement support to their users.

If you would like more information or would like to volunteer in supporting this great community event, please contact me by email at maggij@sky.com.

Margaret Johnston



A SPOOKTACULAR SUCCESS: LAMP'S "THE ADDAMS FAMILY" DAZZLES AUDIENCES

As the final curtain closed on Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions' (LAMP) rendition of "The Addams Family the Musical", audiences left the theatre spellbound, recounting the moments that made them laugh, cry, and everything in between. From a casting so spot-on you'd think Gomez and Morticia had moonlighted from their crypt to a backdrop as lively as Uncle Fester's lightbulb act, this wasn't just a performance - it was an unforgettable thrill ride.

The ingenious LED screen, with its cartoonish flavour, added a layer of depth to the show, turning the stage into an exquisite canvas. But what truly took the cake were the elaborate costumes, wigs and make up - all creating a professional quality show.

Hayley Fleming's choreography set the stage alive and with Hannah Easton's directorial prowess and Eddie MacLennan's Musical Direction, the outcome was a masterpiece.

The principal characters were an embodiment of perfection. From bang-on acting and beautifully timed comedic moments to spectacular songs - it was easy to forget the performers were amateur.

From Grandma Addams' (Carol Fraser) unexpected on-stage 'incident' to Lurch's (Eric Brown) priceless facial expressions, comedic gems were everywhere. The crowd adored Fester! Gregor Preston's heartfelt, warm and funny performance was truly captivating. Rebecca Holmes, as Alice, dazzled the audience with the hilarious unexpected twist during her rendition of 'Waiting', while Craig Lowe masterfully shifted Mal Beineke from a gruff businessman to a loving family man in the space of just a few hours.

The mix of seasoned and newer, younger cast members was a delightful blend. In particular, Wednesday (Rebecca Miller), Lucas (Euan Campbell) and Pugsley (Jack Wallace) showcased the remarkable talent among LAMP's younger generation, underlining their potential and the bright



future of the theatre group.

Rebecca's portrayal of Wednesday was a masterclass in capturing the character's signature deadpan demeanour, only to wonderfully surprise the audience with moments of Disney-loving enthusiasm. Equally captivating was Euan's performance as Lucas; he brought depth to the gentle, loving, and slightly geeky character, making every moment on stage memorable and genuine. Jack Wallace's Pugsley, the bomb-carrying flower girl, was hilarious, and the gentle, sweet song 'What If' had everyone holding back a tear.

The crowning glory of the production had to be the magnetic performances of Morticia and Gomez, portrayed by the incredibly talented Charmain Leitch and Ray O'Sullivan. Their embodiment of the characters was so authentic and seamless that they weren't merely playing roles; they became Morticia and Gomez. Throughout the show, their chemistry was palpable, effortlessly bringing to life the iconic duo's unique blend of sass, charm, and comedic brilliance.

The chorus was nothing short of

spectacular! Each member delved deep into their roles as the Addams family ancestors, giving life (or afterlife) to their unique ghostly personas. Not only did they provide a hauntingly harmonious backdrop with their vocals, but their dance sequences were impeccably synchronised, and their acting brought an eerie charm that only the Addams lineage could.

The true testament to the musical's success lay in the flood of testimonials that poured in:

"The best Amateur dramatic production I have ever seen. So much talent, the show was brilliant and great for the whole family. My children are still talking about it!"

"What a fantastic performance showcasing so many amazingly talented individuals. The casting was the best yet, the Principals were outstanding. We smiled the whole way through. Very well done LAMP, can't wait for the next show!"

"Such a fabulous and professional production - wouldn't be out of place at The Playhouse. Congratulations!"

Through a combination of talent, dedication, and passion, LAMP has once again delivered an exceptional show. 'The Addams Family the Musical' was more than just entertainment; it was a celebration of a legacy. The performance set a benchmark for future productions, leaving audiences eagerly awaiting what LAMP will present next.

SO WHAT'S NEXT?

As the curtains fall on "The Addams Family the Musical", the ever-enthusiastic LAMP team is already gearing up for their next spectacular performances.

The LAMP Cabaret 2024 - A Star-studded Affair

Mark your calendars for the 24th of February 2024. LAMP is set to enthral its audiences with another mesmerising cabaret performance. Following the first sell-out cabaret in September, and featuring over thirty of LAMP's most talented performers, this event promises to be a grand celebration of musical theatre - and a fabulous night out!

LAMP Children's Theatre Presents: Beauty and the Beast

From the 2nd to the 6th of April 2024, prepare to be whisked away into a tale as old as time. LAMP Children's Theatre is set to enchant with their rendition of "Beauty and the Beast". A story of love, courage, and transformation, this musical promises to be a visual and auditory delight. With its iconic characters, memorable songs, and a heart-warming story, audiences of all ages are in for a magical treat.

Both these performances, like all LAMP productions, will be a testament to the company's dedication, talent, and passion for the arts. Get ready for more unforgettable nights at the theatre with LAMP!

To join the mailing list, and be the first to hear about upcoming productions, please head to the LAMP website.

Team LAMP

www.linlithgow-musicals.co.uk

Rainbow Railways

All Major Hobby Brands Stocked















Find us within Playbuds
Unit 24
Little Mill Business Park
Linlithgow
EH49 7DA
01506 237099

LINLITHGOW'S ROTARY TREE OF LIGHT



Rotary is all about helping communities wherever they are in the world but most especially locally. The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange are, once again supporting local charitable organisations with its Rotary Tree of Light festive fund raising initiative and are hoping for the support of the townsfolk of Linlithgow and surrounding areas.

West Lothian Council have kindly given permission again for the town's Christmas tree at Linlithgow Cross to be used. The Club are very grateful for the Council's continued support. This special tree, placed right at the very heart of the community, will provide a focal point for both remembrance and celebration. The event kicks off officially on the day of the Advent Fayre (25 November), when the lights are switched on, and runs up to the end of December.

First and foremost, the tree is a tree of remembrance. An opportunity to "speak the loved one's name", of keeping the memory alive, and providing a beacon of light and hope. Those that have made a Tree of Light dedication in the past have found the process consoling, even cathartic. However, the tree can also be a tree of celebration — perhaps of a friend or family member past or present, or to celebrate a milestone event such as a significant anniversary or birthday, or even a new arrival. There will be many personal reasons to make dedications. Many of course are happy simply to give a donation in aid of the various good causes that work locally and that the event supports.

Various charitable organisations

operating in the Linlithgow area work tirelessly to help disadvantaged children and their families, to combat feelings of isolation, and to provide support to those in need. All are worthy causes, and all have a pressing need to raise money to fund the increasing demand on their services. The Club hopes to raise a significant amount again this year for these organisations.

FOR 2023, THE CHOSEN CHARITIES ARE:



River Kids is a West Lothian based children's charity, founded in 2005, with the sole purpose of supporting disadvantaged children and their families by providing those children with opportunities to reach their full potential. They do this through educational, financial and emotional support. They provide children with volunteering and employment opportunities to ensure they have the best start in life; financial support (grants) to ensure they are not excluded from extra-curricular events; they deliver the West Lothian Toy Appeal; and they provide those who need it a safe place to come and get the support.

Linlithgow & District Day Care Centre is a charity, managed by a voluntary committee, for frail elderly people living in Linlithgow, Bridgend, Philipstoun, and Winchburgh with varying degrees of dementia. They provide relief for the family or carer, as well as a meeting place for groups and individuals to preserve their health and wellbeing. They operate from the Linlithgow Partnership Centre.



Quiet Waters provides counselling and bereavement support services to help those in need find a constructive way forward with their problems. They provide over 1,000 hours of counselling

each year - almost exclusively in face-to-face sessions. Other services include bereavement listening services and a partnership with HM Prison Stirling. They also provide training for their volunteers and external agencies, including local Churches.

The Benevolent Fund of The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange will be able to disburse any Gift Aid received from these donations to all these good causes.

The Rotary Tree of Light is a community endeavour, and it will shine brightly again thanks to the generosity of Alan Steel Asset Management, Pacitti Jones, Stewart Electrical, Cala Homes East and other community-minded businesses and individuals. Their financial support ensures that every penny of every pound of public donations goes to the designated charities. Many other local businesses rally round and support the project in kind. Dedication forms and envelopes will be found at a variety of shops along the High Street and other locations in and around Linlithgow. Look out for the Tree of Light posters displayed around the town for details of these venues. Several venues have also agreed to receive completed dedications and donations in sealed envelopes. These will be regularly uplifted and processed by members of the Club who will update the panels around the base of the tree and on the website. Alternatively, you can make donations by credit or debit card via the online donation platform Jumblebee at <https://www.jumblebee.co.uk/linlithgowsrotarytreeoflight>

The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange is proud to be able to promote and support these worthy causes but could not do so without the big-hearted folks of Linlithgow, a strong and compassionate community which has proven time and again that they are more than willing to put their hands in their collective pockets when the need arises. The Club looks forward to the continued support of all you Lithgae' folks!

More information can be found at www.linlithgowtreeoflight.org.uk/ or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/linlithgowtreeoflight/. More information can also be obtained by emailing Allan M Robertson at administration@linlithgowtreeoflight.org.uk

Allan M Robertson
The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange



RIVER KIDS WEST LOTHIAN CHRISTMAS TOY APPEAL 2023



Ho Ho Ho, well almost! It's nearly that time of year when Santa will be rounding up his reindeer and loading up his sleigh to deliver toys to children all around the world.

The Collection Point for Linlithgow is located at Playbuds Soft play in Mill Road Industrial Estate.

Playbuds
Unit 24 Little Mill Business Park
Linlithgow, West Lothian
EH49 7DA

We are open to drop off donations 10-5 every day except Tuesday when we are closed.

Thank you in advance for any donations you can make.

Mark Darragh, Playbuds

Here in West Lothian far too many children face the prospect of waking up on Christmas morning to find their stockings empty! But River Kids SCIO manage the West Lothian Christmas Toy Appeal to ensure as many disadvantaged children as possible wake up to find Santa has been.

The Christmas Toy Appeal helps children from 0-18 years and gifts should be up to the value of no more than £20. They don't need to be wrapped as the volunteers at River Kids sort them into the age categories for all the families they are asked to help.

LINLITHGOW AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT SOCIETY ALLOTMENT LIFE IN THE WINTER



At this is the time of year, when the clocks change, there appears to be less time to be on our allotments but, contrary to what we often think, there is still plenty to do to ensure a good growing season next year. It isn't really a time to wind down. It is particularly important to grab any time you can before the frosts and heavy rain arrives, which can very much be November weather.

Preparing the soil

>> Ensuring good growing always begins with the soil. On the allotment over the last month, some of us have been covering the soil with soil improver as a mulch to improve the soil condition. The worms work on improving the soil by pulling down the compost and aerating the soil. It is important wherever possible not to leave areas bare as nutrients can leach away. Green manure planted over the last couple of months should now have sprouted and is ideal at fixing the nutrients in the soil, preventing them being washed away.



Harvesting

There is still a lot that is available for harvesting late in the year.

>> In November, some of us still have lettuce, spring onions, coriander, fennel, beetroot, brassicas, turnips and black radish growing. With the weather turning colder, covering the tender crops e.g. lettuce and coriander with fleece gives some protection, which can extend the season.



>> And then there are the usual crops at this time of year that are staples in the winter like leeks, winter cauliflowers, cabbage, brussel sprouts, parsnips and carrots.

Planting

Each month there is always something to plant. The alliums garlic, onions and shallots are easy to grow. Shallots are grown from tiny bulbs, known as sets, and garlic is grown from cloves. Onions can also be grown from sets.

>> In November, there is still time to plant onion sets and garlic if this hasn't already been done. Unlike onion sets, garlic cloves need to be planted deeply with about an inch of soil over the clove. Only use the biggest, fattest cloves for planting and use the smaller, inside cloves for cooking.

>> If you grow Onions from seed, December is the time to sow them, Boxing Day being the traditional day to do it. The seeds will need to be sown in a greenhouse or indoors. If you want to grow giant Onions, choose a suitable variety such as "Kelsae" or "Giant Exhibition". Unlike some other giant vegetables, huge onions keep their flavour well.

>> Shallots can also be planted now. Shallots are a great crop and store really well. They have a milder flavour than onions and are less overpowering in dishes. Although shallots can be planted in early spring, an autumn sowing can produce earlier, heavier crops. Like onions, shallots prefer sun and a moisture-retentive, fertile soil, ideally with plenty of well-rotted organic matter such as garden compost added. Rake over the soil to break

down any large lumps. Plant sets with the tips showing. Space your shallots, which produce multiple bulbs, 15-20cm apart. Allow 30cm between rows. It is important to cover with fleece at this time of year to protect them from the worst of the weather. Autumn-planted sets are ready after 36 weeks.

>> New fruit bushes can be planted now.

Pruning

Pruning fruit bushes and trees is also a job for the next few months, any time between November and March, while they are dormant.

>> Blackcurrants, redcurrants, whitecurrants and gooseberries can all be pruned at this time of year. Prune out any dead, dying or diseased wood and aim for an open, goblet shape.

>> Apples and pear trees can be hard pruned after the leaves fall off.

>> Autumn-fruiting raspberries bear fruit on new wood, so cut down all of the old canes to the ground once they have finished fruiting, between November and March.

Crop protection

>> Protecting brassicas at this time of year from birds is important. Cover with mesh and make sure that it is well pegged down. Keeping the top clear of the plants prevents birds pecking through to the brassica tops.



>> Staking tall brassicas like brussel sprouts, purple sprouting broccoli and kalettes stops them toppling in heavy winds.



Val Corry,
Chair LADAS



Linlithgow and District Allotment Society

Please note the website address for the LADAS is linlithgowallotments.wordpress.com where you will find out more about us and how to join our waiting list.

ISSUE 100

A CELEBRATION OF LINLITHGOW & ITS PEOPLE

BLACK BITCH MAGAZINE REACHES 100!



What was clear from the Q&A session is that **David Tait** (editor), **Murdoch Kennedy** (writer) and **Chris Hamilton** (graphic designer) have all really enjoyed giving something back to the community with the work they have done for the magazine over the years; they all agree they have met a lot of interesting people and made lifelong friends along the way. However it was clear from what they were saying that there was definitely a need to encourage new people to come forward to contribute their time and skills in the future as this team is not getting any younger!! So if you would like to help in some way in the future then please get in touch with David at on.a.lead@gmail.com

A big thanks to all those who helped make the event possible. Our generous advertisers who contributed fabulous



As you will no doubt be aware we achieved our 100th edition of the Black Bitch magazine recently and the trustees felt that those who had supported the magazine over the last 12 years deserved a wee get together to celebrate our collective achievements.

So on the afternoon of Saturday 30th September a number of volunteers, advertisers and subscribers joined the trustees and editorial team ... as well as the event organising committee ... for fizz, cake, music and an entertaining Q & A session compered by our regular historical article contributor **Bruce Jamieson**.

All was going well with selling the raffle tickets (and no ... **Pat Stewart** and **Chris Edgerton** did not plan to come

along in matching dresses!) and the fizz was flowing ... although it was quickly discovered by some that the fizz was flowing out of the leaky plastic glasses onto the floor of the Queen Margaret Hall. We won't ever be using these supposedly reusable flutes again!



raffle prizes to raise the money required to fund the event (refer list below), **Euan Campbell** on guitar, **Emma Carmichael** our photographer, **John Barker** who provided the sound system, **Barclay & Co** who printed the bunting, **Bruce Jamieson** for his entertaining compering and ... last but not least ... our wonderful organising committee (you know who you are!)

A list of our generous advertisers who donated to the raffle:

New Hopetoun Gardens
Skin Happy
Playbugs
Colin Lowie Decorator
Specsavers
Jazzercise
Paul Rolfe
Greensteam
Life Fit Wellness
Strangers Brewing Co.
Linlithgow Arts Guild
Complete Health
Maria Hybszer Pilates

Organising Team

THE GILLESPIES BROTHERS IN ARMS

Bruce Jamieson



Thomas Gillespie and A. Douglas Gillespie.

Longcroft House sits today somewhat marooned amongst a modern housing estate. The Victorian hunting lodge with an added Italianate tower was built in sandstone to a design by David Bryce in 1850 and was initially the home of Alexander Cowans, the owner of Lochmill paper-mill. From the year 1866, it was the residence of Thomas Chalmers who had the house extended.



Longcroft House in the 1980s.

A member of the Linlithgow Free Church (later St Ninian's Craigmalen) Chalmers was a great benefactor – paying, in 1869, for the building of the



Longcroft Hall – a structure that later housed the first Linlithgow Academy from 1894 until 1900 when the new school was built at the Low Port.

St Ninian's stained glass window in memory of Thomas Chalmers who died in 1883.



Thomas Chalmers.

In 1914, the Longcroft Hall was requisitioned by the military as a barracks and, for the next four years, it housed several regiments at various times. Longcroft House also had new residents – the Gillespie family, headed by Thomas Paterson Gillespie who had married Thomas Chalmers' sister, Elizabeth, and became the manager of the family paper mill. They had two sons – both extremely clever and talented individuals who, on the outbreak of war, were both earmarked for a very bright future.

The older boy, Thomas, was studying for a PhD with a view to staying on as a lecturer at Oxford University. Thomas had played rugby for the University and he also rowed for his college, twice winning the Head of the River, a processional (against the clock) race for "eights" rowed over the 4.25-mile championship course from Mortlake to Putney i.e. the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race course but in reverse. In 1912, Thomas was selected for the British rowing team at the Stockholm Olympics – winning a silver medal.



A silver medal from the 1912 Olympics.

Within a few days of the outbreak of war in August 1914, Thomas was gazetted to the 2nd Battalion King's Own Scottish Borderers and left for the front almost immediately. He served a couple of weeks near the River Aisne under almost continuous shellfire until orders were given to



The Le Touret memorial lists 13,389 names of British and Commonwealth soldiers with no known grave.

advance eastwards across the La Basse Canal where he was killed on 18th October, aged 21. His body could not be recovered, and with no known grave, he is commemorated on Panel 15 of the Le Touret Memorial, on the road from Bethune to Neuve Chapelle.

Tom must have married sometime between 1912 and 1914 as it is recorded that his next of kin, Mrs Ellen Gillespie, received his effects including a copy of John Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress." His parents at Longcroft House got the news of their son's death by War Office telegram – delivered by a cyclist from the Linlithgow Post Office in the High Street.



Linlithgow Post Office, opened in 1903.



A telegram messenger boy.

His younger brother, Douglas, was training as a lawyer in London when war broke out but, almost immediately, he volunteered. As he had been a member of the Inns of Court Officers Training Corps, he quickly obtained a commission in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and, after a brief period of training, left for the front in February 1915.

The sector in which he was stationed was relatively quiet and, for a few weeks, he had time to write many letters back to Blighty. One of them was written to his old headmaster who published it in the Winchester School news-sheet. It contained Douglas's suggestion of a walking route after the war was over, along the whole length of the Western Front – from Switzerland to the sea. He wrote:

"The ground is so pitted and scarred, and torn with shells, and tangled with wire, that it will take years to bring it back to use again; but it would make a fine broad road in the No Man's Land between the lines, with paths for pilgrims

on foot. I'd plant trees for shade, and also fruit trees, so that the soil should not be altogether wasted. Some of the shattered farms and houses might be left as evidence of the conflict, and the regiments might put up their records of service beside the trenches which they held all through the winter. Then I would like to send every man, woman and child in Western Europe on pilgrimage along that Via Sacra, so that they might think and learn what war means from the silent witnesses on either side. A sentimental idea, perhaps, but we might make it the most beautiful road in all the world."



The Linlithgow War Memorial and (below) the plaque showing the Gillespie names.



Soldiers going 'over the top' at Loos, 1915.

Douglas's last letter was written to his parents at Longcroft who received it two days after their son was killed in an attack on enemy lines during the Battle of Loos. Once again, a telegram arrived, delivered by a local Post Office cyclist at 10-50 am on Wednesday, 29th September 1915.

To further the grief of the boys' parents, they later received the news that, like his brother, the body of 26 year old Douglas had not been recovered. His death is recorded on the Loos Memorial to the Missing.

Both boys, Lieutenant T. Gillespie and 2nd Lieutenant D. Gillespie are also commemorated on the Linlithgow War Memorial in St Michael's Church.



After the war, the suggestion of a Pilgrimage Route along the length of the Western Front was raised and a rough guide drawn up. Recently, historian Sir Anthony Seldon has reinforced the idea – walking the 1000-kilometre route himself and publishing his account in his 2022 book, "The Path of Peace." For part of the way he was accompanied by the great nephew of the Gillespie brothers – TV Countryfile presenter Tom Heap.



Tom Heap, "Countryfile" presenter.

Douglas's letters were published in 1916, reprinted several times thereafter and are still available to purchase. Below is an extract from that last letter sent to his parents in Longcroft House:

"I advanced to a cemetery to defend it and stayed there most of the day. It is a beastly thing to have to do, digging trenches among graves and pulling down crosses to make room. One feels that something is wrong when a man lies behind a child's grave to shoot at a German who has probably got a family anxiously awaiting his return at home.

It was a miserable wet day. There was a large crucifix at one end and the sight of bullets chipping Christ's image about, and the knowledge of what He had done for us and the Germans, and what we were doing to His consecrated ground and each other, made one feel sick of the whole war (or even sicker than before)."



SAT
25
NOV

THE LINLITHGOW ADVENT FAYRE IS BACK!

The Linlithgow Advent Fayre is back! Linlithgow's Christmas will be starting in spectacular style on the last Saturday of November 2023.

Following last year's fantastic event, this year will be even bigger, and there are more ways to get that festive feeling than ever before!

Do you fancy making your own lantern for the Advent Fayre this year? Then this is your chance! Join one of our weekend lantern making workshops and with guidance and assistance from experienced local artist Susan Smith, you'll create your own paper lantern which you can carry at the head of the procession. The lanterns will be lit with electric candles, and all materials are included in the ticket price. The workshops are happening in the Linlithgow Burgh Halls on Saturday 18th and Sunday 19th November. Tickets are £10 and can be purchased from Far From The Madding Crowd Bookshop: www.maddingcrowdlinlithgow.com

On the day of the fair itself, there'll be an expanded Craft Fair in the Linlithgow Burgh Halls, plus the usual stalls around the Cross. There will be entertainment on the outdoor stage at The Cross from 12-6pm from Radio Grapevine, plus the popular quartet Quatro Voci will be performing inside

the Burgh Halls.

Mrs Claus will be making a special appearance in the Masonic Lodge, and keep an eye out for Santa himself, he's promised to visit Linlithgow on the day!

The Line Gallery's annual angel themed exhibition returns – they open at 1pm, and their popular mince pies and mulled wine will be a very welcome return. St Peter's Church will also be throwing open their doors to offer soup and cocoa to visitors in need of a little extra warmth.

This year for the first time ever, Linlithgow Athletic Club are organising a 3KM Santa Dash! Starting at 4.05pm from Station Road, with several loops of the High Street and finishing at The Cross, this will be a brilliant way to warm up before the Torchlight Procession – runners are invited to dress up as Santa, and everyone will be raising money for charity; the first three male/female runners shall have the option of donating their prize winnings to a charity of their choice. All details on how to enter can be found on EntryCentral: <https://www.entrycentral.com/Linlithgow-Santa-Dash>

The torchlight procession* will start at the Low Port at 5.00pm, it will proceed along the High Street as far as St John's Avenue and then move back along to The Cross. This year, the Reed Band will lead the procession and the Camelion Pipe Band will also be a part of the procession.

At 6pm, our Gala Queen and her Chief Lady in Waiting will switch on the Christmas lights at The Cross, and then our very own Linlithgow Reed Band will lead everyone in traditional carol singing.

It's going to be a wonderful day and we hope you will be able to join us for this celebration of Advent and everything our town of Linlithgow has to offer!

*Like last year, tickets for the torchlight procession are £5 family tickets. Each ticket is valid for one flaming torch, plus as many glowsticks as you need! Tickets will be available for purchase from the following shops: A Wee Mindin', Bright Star Toys, Complete Health at the Millstone, Fair Tradewinds, Far From The Madding Crowd, The Line Gallery, Low Port Music and The Thread Counter.

So save the date: Saturday 25th November, 2023

Stop Press: "Shops and businesses throughout Linlithgow are making this Christmas easier than ever with extended opening hours throughout November and December! As well as stocking high quality and unusual goods ideal for Christmas gifts, your favourite places in town will be staying open longer, making it easier for you to browse, shop, and click & collect! There will be some special evenings planned as well, so keep an eye on the Linlithgow Traders Facebook Page for all details."

LINLITHGOW LADIES CHOIR

SAT
16
DEC

Our next date for your diary is the Annual December concert - "Sing a Song of Christmas" at St Michael's Church on Saturday 16th December at 4pm, but first the events of our autumn...

The end of October gave us a twinning weekend in Linlithgow. Following our visit last year to Linlithgow's French twin town of Guyancourt, it was our turn to host this year. Guyancourt is situated to the south west of Paris, very close to Versailles.

Amongst our French visitors was a strong contingent of around 30 from their ladies choir, Les Falbalas, showing the strong links and friendships made through the twinning visits. Some had brought their husbands to share the experience.

Our guests arrived on the Friday, a typically damp Scottish autumn afternoon and after a welcome to the whole party, left with their hosts to unpack and start to enjoy a busy weekend. The hosts entertained on the Friday evening before a selection of activities over the weekend including walks, steam trains, films at the cinema and visits including to Stirling and Edinburgh.

The Choir highlight was a joint concert in Bo'ness Town Hall, with the two choirs performing separately (including an Abba medley and a version of the Magpie theme), and then joining together (with joint conducting) for a final three songs climaxing with a stunning rendition of Leonard Cohen's Hallelujah! Fantastic to see the two choirs - some 70 voices - working so well together with limited practice.

This was followed by an excellent meal with local delicacies for our visitors to try, including haggis, neeps and tatties and stovies. The evening was greatly enjoyed by an appreciative audience who obviously preferred the choirs to the Rugby World Cup Final (alright a few rugby fans left after the singing, but they missed the great food!)

The twinning weekend culminated with a Ceilidh at the Inchyra Hotel on the Sunday evening. The ladies of Les Falbalas particularly enjoyed the dancing, and claimed that such dancing does not happen in France, (although the visitors did provide some music and a couple of French formation dances were tried). The dance floor was filled as our guests enjoyed Gay Gordons and Strip the Willow. It was a great way to finish the visit, and consolidated many

friendships.

The Linlithgow Ladies Choir now turn their attention to practicing and rehearsing for our Christmas Concert - "Sing a Song of Christmas" - under the baton of our inspirational and hard-working conductor, Kirsty Ball, who manages us to get the best sound for our choir from our individual voices.

Music is traditionally an important part of Christmas, whether it is as part of a church service, a child's nativity performance or carol singing - with family and friends, or carol singers.

Please come and join the Linlithgow Ladies Choir when we will be singing a mixture of well-known and not so well-known carols at our Annual December concert - "Sing a Song of Christmas" at St Michael's Church on Saturday the 16th of December at 4pm.

This year we have an early concert so that you can carry on and go out for the evening or alternatively make it home in time for the final of Strictly! We have learned from our clash with the rugby!

We would like to thank you for all your support throughout the year and look forward to seeing you on the 16th December.

Mary Clark

REOPENING THE LOW PORT CENTRE - WE'RE NEARLY THERE!

The great news is that we are nearly at the point of reopening the Low Port Centre as a vibrant community hub and anticipate the centre to be open again within the next couple of months.

Just after our last article was published we had more good news - we have been awarded a grant of £96,000 to help refurbish the accommodation wing. However, we still have more work to do both in terms of raising awareness of the project and fundraising the final £50,000 required for the refurbishment work.

Please consider helping us raise that final £50,000! Your gift would help enable the community to benefit from using the Low Port Centre again. To donate, please use the QR code to take you to the webpage.

We are interested in hearing from anyone interested in renting or leasing rooms at the Low Port Centre for meetings, storage or office space.

We have major partner discounts available on leasing or hire of the Low Port Centre facilities. For more information about room leasing and room hire, please contact Andy Clark, Project Lead: andy@stjohnslinlithgow.org or 07341341028.

LOGO AND WEBSITE

We recently asked local artist Christina Aisthrope (www.designbychristina.co.uk) to work with us to create our new Low Port Centre logo. As well as the logo we are also working on setting up a new LPC website and dedicated email addresses. The website should be up and running soon and will allow people to book and pay for the hiring of our facilities.



LOW PORT CENTRE



EXCITING TIMES AHEAD FOR LINLITHGOW REED BAND



Members of Linlithgow Reed Band are celebrating another very successful year and looking forward to exciting times in the future.

At the recent annual general meeting, President Jonathan Molloy reported that the band had undertaken twenty-four public engagements since the last meeting, two more than the previous year.

In addition to the regular annual engagements, the band played at the opening of the Linlithgow cycle circuit on May 27th and turned out on September 25th for the special Free Colliers parade commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Redding Pit Disaster.

The Christmas concert was held in Linlithgow Academy Theatre and featured a massed bands' finale of 'Merry Christmas Everybody', involving all three band ensembles – the first time they have attempted this. The Spring concert was held in St. Michael's Parish Church and the undoubted highlight was the uplifting performance of 'Zadok the Priest', with the Reed Band joined by musicians and singers from across the local community.

The Reed Band's growth and development

show no signs of slowing, as Jonathan explained:

"We have continued to work hard to bring new players in to replace leavers, mainly via progression from our own Beginners' and Training Bands. Twelve players have moved up to the main band from the Training Band this year. In recent months, we have regularly had more than fifty players at rehearsals, which is fantastic. We need more players to turn out at the marching engagements and hope to repeat the marching practice sessions with members of the Royal Regiment of Scotland band".

Looking ahead to the future, the band are planning to move all their activities to the Low Port Centre, which is due to re-open in the coming months. Jonathan told me:

"We have an opportunity to have storage and rehearsal facilities for all our bands in the newly refurbished building, with the equipment we need for rehearsals stored adjacent to the playing area, ample space for the various Sunday evening activities and a dedicated music library and uniform store within the same building. We have been looking for an alternative base for the Reed Band for the last fifteen years and this is the first time since the band's activities expanded that such an opportunity has arisen. Given that there are issues with our current arrangements, this seems like an important and exciting

opportunity for the band to secure its future and to become an 'anchor tenant' in an important community asset. However, it will come at a substantially increased cost to the band, both in terms of one-off costs to get established at the Low Port Centre and ongoing rental costs. We will apply for grant funding to assist with some of these initial costs, and will spend some of our reserves, but we need to raise additional, regular funds to meet the jump in annual accommodation costs. The committee has considered various options for raising this sum – charging for instrument hire, charging for music lessons, undertaking additional engagements, increasing concert ticket prices and other fundraising. A mixture of some of these will help. I am sure that everybody associated with the band will be very excited at the prospect of having a permanent home, all on one site, for the first time in decades".

The band will be busy in the run-up to Christmas, with the torchlight procession on **Saturday November 25th** and the concert in St. Michael's Parish Church on **Sunday December 10th**. Further details are available online.

Murdoch Kennedy



THE MARRIAGE PORTRAIT MAGGIE O'FARRELL

The premise for *The Marriage Portrait* is to explore the factual historical events and rumours that surround the marriage of Lucrezia de' Medici to Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara in the 16th century. O'Farrell has expertly woven a narrative from sparse historical accounts, records, portraiture and poetry. The novel is essentially inspired by portraits of the Duchess Lucrezia at different points in her life.

"May I keep this?" It was not a question. He was already turning away, placing her miniature painting inside his leather book and tying the straps, so that the bird could never fly away again, even if it had lived."

Lucrezia was married to the intended husband of her elder sister Maria, who tragically died young. Lucrezia herself was only fourteen years of age on her wedding day to the Duke, who was more advanced in years. Their marriage was short, unhappy and it is inferred in historical documents that the couple spent much of it apart. It is officially recorded that the Duchess died of pulmonary tuberculosis but, almost immediately following her untimely death, rumours began to circulate about the circumstances and events leading up to this event and suspicion was cast on her husband, Alfonso II. Readers will be transported through time into the panicked mind of the young Lucrezia, trying desperately to survive in a world dominated and controlled by men.

"This is a different man, surely, from the one who ordered Contrari's death. It cannot have been him. This is her husband, who loves her, or seems to; that was the ruler of Ferrara. They are the same man, they are different men, the same yet different."

In addition to providing the impetus for O'Farrell's Renaissance novel, the suspicion surrounding Lucrezia's death captivated the imagination of celebrated poet Robert Browning, over 300 years later, who created one of his most famous works using this as a subject. His poem, 'My Last Duchess' is a dramatic monologue inspired by

Alfonso II's marriage to Lucrezia.

"Does the light still slant into my chamber in the evening, just before it disappears below the city's roofs?"

Do you miss me? Even a little? Does anyone ever go and stand before my portrait?"

From the novel's outset we are aware of Alfonso's plan to kill Lucrezia, and her awareness of this in the narrative's present tense. O'Farrell moves between these present and past focal points in the couple's brief history, creating tension and suspense as we interpret events differently with all the advantages of hindsight. We gain knowledge of Lucrezia's childhood and upbringing, learning more about her education, place within the family and expectations surrounding her destiny which in turn provides an interesting view into the life of an aristocratic woman in the Renaissance period.

"She has always had a secret liking for this part of the embroidery, the 'wrong side, congested with knots, striations of silk and twists of thread. How much more interesting it is, with its frank display of the labour needed to attain the perfection of the finished piece."

The novel itself is exciting and dramatic, with O'Farrell building suspense gradually through the novel. Events are vividly imagined, and brought to life through O'Farrell's exquisitely descriptive prose. This is an enjoyable and richly descriptive read which will not disappoint admirers of Maggie O'Farrell's writing.

Lisa Nettleton

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



FROM
20
NOV

The strange case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde

As the winter nights draw in and mist shrouds the old buildings of Linlithgow, what mysteries lurk in the wynds and closes of the ancient Burgh? It is the time to coorie in, light the fire and tell stories that warn us of the dangers of the night...

The Barony Players are telling a story that speaks to the duality of humanity, the quest for knowledge and the ambition of mortal man. Based on the novella by Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is a gothic tale that both reveals and warns us of the dangers of hypocrisy, of repressing our true nature and of the consequences of failing to recognise that there is good and bad in every one of us.

Doctor Jekyll (**John Knox**) is brilliant but flawed, frustrated by his failing health and the restrictions of Victorian life he is obsessed with finding an elixir that will help him understand the good and evil sides of his character. His friends Dr Hastie Lanyon (**Jamie Wright**) and Lanyon's wife Eleanor (**Lindsey Mullin**) are powerless to intervene as Jekyll descends into a kind of madness as he struggles with the consequences of his erratic split personality.

Sandy Queenan's vision as director and skill in building yet another outstanding set promise to make this Autumn's offering from the Barony one to remember. The cast have been working hard to bring you something unnervingly brilliant. If you've never seen a show at The Barony make this the one you come to. It's a fantastic night out; live theatre has a power unlike anything else and the quality of your whole experience here is utterly worth it.

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde runs from the 20th to the 25th of November at The Barony Theatre on Borrowstoun Road, Bo'ness. Tickets are £14 (£12 for concessions) and are available by calling the box office: 03336 663366 or online at Ticketsource. www.baronyplayers.co.uk

David Todd





project
TRUST since 1967

HI! WE ARE ORLA AND MAISIE,
CURRENT S6 PUPILS AT
LINLITHGOW ACADEMY.



Next August we are embarking on a new and exciting chapter of our lives, and we would love for you to be involved in our journey. Both of us decided to take a gap year before continuing with further education. We knew we wanted to do something that would enhance our skills and give us the opportunity to give back to others.

We have both successfully applied to Project Trust and have been offered volunteering placements with them. I (Orla) will be spending 12 months in Honduras, and Maisie is going to Ghana. We will be spending our year teaching school children and helping them develop skills they may not have had the chance to otherwise; through leading extra-curricular activities and helping build a sense of togetherness within the community; immersing ourselves into a new culture while also bringing elements of our home culture with us to share with others.

Project Trust has been operating for over 50 years, specialising in long-term volunteering placements, with a strong commitment to safety, development and training of their international volunteers. They have international placements in Honduras, Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Thailand, Japan,

and Malaysia. Since 1967, over 8000 Project Trust Volunteers have developed new skills, learned from another culture, and contributed to a community abroad.

Through a long-term international volunteering experience, Project Trust empowers young people to develop their confidence, resilience, awareness, and leadership skills. Engaging in cross-cultural exchange, their volunteers have a positive impact within host communities and share their learning and understanding when they return. The experience is one like no others and will have a life-long impact on not only our lives but also on the lives of those we work with.

The relationships formed with the local people we will meet in our new community, and the other volunteers are bonds that may last a lifetime. As well as this, we will come back with a deeper understanding as to how other cultures function, learning about different lifestyles while enhancing our key transferable skills in preparation for later life.

The use of communication while away is vital. For us, there will be a lack of English where we are staying, and potentially a complete language barrier. Working through this will require resilience, determination, and the confidence to think of innovative ways to begin getting to know others while starting to pick up the language. All of this is a small part of the

incredible impact that our placement year will have on us.

To embark on this new and exciting chapter of our life we each need to fundraise £7,450. This covers our return flights, accommodation, health insurance, training and a basic living allowance while we are away. In September, we successfully completed the 21-mile Edinburgh Kilt Walk to kick-start our fundraising journey and are now planning lots of other exciting events. Our next big event will be a Quiz Night, taking place on Friday 26th January 2024 from 7pm, at Linlithgow Rose Club hosted by 'Davie Deep Sea'. The bar will be open and the evening will consist of a raffle and games, as well as a fun, competitive quiz too. If you are interested in forming a team, please get in touch for more information by contacting orla@mayling.org.

If you cannot make the quiz night but would still like to support us, you can sponsor us by following the QR code below. We would be extremely grateful for any donations no matter the size, as every donation goes a long way. Also keep an eye out around town for advertisement of other upcoming events and fundraising activities.

Orla and Maisie



Great beer made in Linlithgow

Order online - local delivery
is always free



STRANGERS
BREWING CO.



www.strangersbrewing.co.uk

star barber
TRADITIONAL TURKISH BARBER

HOT TOWEL SHAVES
GENTS HAIR CUTS & STYLES
BEARD TRIMS & STYLES
OAP RATES
KIDS & BOYS HAIR CUTS
PATTERN DESIGNS
HIGH LIGHTS
GIFT VOUCHERS

FO NE X ARKO MEN

OPENING HOURS
MON-TUE-WED- 9AM-6PM & THURS-FRI 9AM-7PM & SAT 8AM-5PM
76 THE VENNEL LINLITHGOW EH49 7ET 01506237387

facebook

LATEST PROJECT
DESIGN & ARTWORK
ADVERTISING
FOR LINLITHGOW
PAVING.

WEBSITES
LOGO DESIGN
BRANDING
> ADVERTISING



cgh creative

T. 07843 856922

www.cghcreative.co.uk

LINLITHGOW SPORTS PODIATRY
& CHIROPODY CLINIC

Martin Godley BSc, MSCh

Sports Podiatry & Chiropractic
Clinic Linlithgow

- > General/High Risk Foot & Nail Care
- > Biomechanics & Gait Analysis
- > Custom made Orthotics
- > Foot & Lower Leg Mobilisation
- > Low Level Laser Therapy
- > Both Elite and Recreational Athletes treated

Following guidelines from College of Podiatry the clinic is open to patients with Emergencies or in pain and discomfort. Full safety measures in place.

For appointment please call 07596954189.

Thank you for all your support.

Appointments available at:

Unit 8, Braehead Business Units
Braehead Rd, Linlithgow EH49 6EP
www.podiatryscotland.co.uk Tel: 07596 954189
Email: m.g.podiatry@gmail.com

CHRISTMAS COMES BUT ONCE A YEAR...

Listening to David Attenborough's Planet III we are reminded how very long evolution of every living thing in our world has taken, back to and beyond the Dinosaurs. In comparison Christmas, as we now know it, has evolved incredibly quickly since the birth of Jesus two thousand and twenty three years ago. The ancient Roman holiday of Saturnalia, a pagan festival in the shortest, darkest, mid-winter days, was held between 17th and 25th December. The early Christians wisely altered and absorbed this popular festival into the Christmas festival, the celebration of Jesus's birth.



Our festive activities aren't so different to the pagan ones: decking the halls; baking fruit cakes; picking evergreen holly and ivy; kissing under the mistletoe; burning candles to represent light in the darkest time of the year. Bringing an evergreen tree indoors for Christmas, decking the halls, links back to celebrating evergreen plants that hold the promise of life surviving and the promise of the spring coming soon.

Mind you, we always thought that Queen Victoria's husband Albert introduced the Christmas tree to Britain. But King George III's German wife Charlotte is reputed to have introduced this custom in the 1790's, but it was certainly Albert who made the Christmas tree popular and fashionable in the late 1800's.

It won't surprise you that we would encourage you to decorate your gardens as well as your homes at this time of year. We always have a real festive wreath on the patio table, usually with a pot of heather or a Christmas Rose sitting in the middle. In the past we would use a ring of floral foam to keep the foliage alive for many weeks, perhaps this year our natural, plastic free wreath will look too sad by January to keep it in



such a prime position! We see the unbroken circle of the wreath as our continuing link with the past, the present and future.

We have a terracotta urn outside into which we arrange seed heads, such as fennel and phormium, large pinecones drilled and mounted on bamboos sticks and coloured stems like dogwood and willow. Sit it in a border where it can be seen from the house. Add a few battery powered fairy lights, which can be set to come on for eight hours as soon as it gets dark, to give it an extra, welcome festive sparkle.

If it's not too windy or freezing a hot drink around the firepit makes a memorable moment over the festivities. Remember to only burn dry wood to reduce smoke, don't smoke out the neighbours (invite them over so they won't complain) and remember if it's at all still and misty you'll be out there smoking yourselves! Do have a very happy Christmas from all our team at New Hopetoun Gardens.



Dougal Philip
and Lesley Watson
New Hopetoun
Gardens

so much more
than just a
garden centre

www.newhopetoungardens.co.uk



**DON'T FORGET US IN THE
RUN UP TO CHRISTMAS!**

FRESH TREES AND WREATHS, GREAT
DECORATIONS, GIFTS & TEAROOM.
FREE & EASY PARKING OUT OF TOWN!

PRESCRIBING A HEALTHY DOSE OF LEARNING A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

I was reading recently that antidepressant prescriptions from GPs are at an all-time high such are the stress levels experienced by the average person in post-Brexit, post-pandemic, mid-austerity Britain. Furthermore, new weight loss drugs, known as glucagon-like peptide 1 (GLP-1) agonists, are appearing on the market from big pharma like Eli Lilly and Novo Nordisk who claim it may delay type 2 diabetes patients from requiring insulin injections.

That is all very well however I can't help thinking that individuals who fall into these categories should be prescribed a better diet and exercise. They could be given support and consultation with nutritionists and gym referrals wherein a qualified instructor would create an effective routine. And if it was me in the white jacket for the day, I'd also prescribe a healthy dose of learning a musical instrument.



Music is widely recognised at helping human beings across the board from the way our brains work, to concentration, learning, memory, relaxation and self-esteem. So by my logic, Paul Batchford and his wife Sandra – owners of Complete Health At The Millstone - must be feeling like a million bucks right now!

Paul has been learning guitar with me for just over a year and both myself and my wife have come to know him and Sandra very well as we regularly shop at their store, so I know what a fantastic range of healthy, organic and vegan food and supplements they stock. Sandra has ordered in all sorts of gluten and dairy free recipe ingredients for bread, healthy bars, pancakes, ice cream, pizzas, breadcrumbs – you name it, we've probably tried it!

So if you've ever thought about making dietary changes – and it's scary how many young children these days have food intolerances to gluten, dairy, nuts etc – both Paul and Sandra are extremely knowledgeable and can help you find ingredients you need to experiment in the kitchen. Sure, you can spend less by eating



processed foods in Tesco and Iceland but ask yourself what is your family's health worth?

Non-organic food is full of chemicals like pesticides, antibiotics, genetically modified components plus, because food like fruit and veg is grown and mass produced so quickly these days, they spend less time in the ground / on the tree, and the result is less nutrients. The good news however is one only needs to go onto our high street to find more nutrition, as Paul explains:

"We sell all manner of things from supplements to whole foods, vegan and vegetarian alternatives including cheeses and milk. We have a great range of food suitable for celiacs and although that range isn't our most lucrative we are most proud of that as we feel as though we are helping people. We also have a large range of toiletries and laundry detergents/softeners etc. We refill bottles and like to think we are doing our bit and making it easier for others to do theirs environmentally."

Paul and Sandra's first day in their new store was 6th January 2020. Previously Sandra was a full time nurse at Oakwell Nursery for 19 years and Paul was running the Scottish and Irish division of a graduation photography company, which was after a 25 year stint in the RAF. On top of photography, a vocation he is still very much active in, Paul has always had a keen interest in food:

"I have completed numerous college cookery courses and had just enrolled on a 3 year professional course at West Lothian College. I decided I had one career change left in me and was looking for a cafe when I found the shop was for sale. Luckily I didn't find a cafe, as we all know the world went crazy in March 2020. As a food retailer we were allowed to stay open when all the cafes had to close."

Originally from Nottingham the pair married in 1981 after Paul had joined the RAF at the age of 17 and that is what

brought them to Scotland. Paul was posted at RAF Kinloss in 1989. Fast forward to 2020, when Paul & Sandra bought the shop, he received a stark warning from his wife who at the time was still working at Oakwell:

"When I first got the shop she warned me I had to do it myself. Here we are over 3 years later and she loves it, she's pretty much the boss now!"

And I have to say, Sandra is generally at helm any time I am in-store however that is because Paul is still busy with photography, cooking, collecting stock and of course playing guitar!

"I imagine that there are loads of people like me who have always wanted to learn an instrument but never get round to it....well do it! Taking that first step is the hardest, getting over the embarrassment of being a total beginner."

Paul is a super keen student and I have even been told he has the guitar on him whilst cooking at the stove. (It's quite possible there are a few spouses of students of mine who secretly hold a grudge against me for the guitar taking over the house!)

"All I wanted to be able to do is knock out a couple of sing along tunes round the BBQ. What has actually happened is that it's opened up a whole world of opportunities to mix more with my young nephews, nieces and friends."

Some of Paul's favourite artists are David Bowie, Paul Weller, Rory Gallagher and Josh Turner and he also spoke fondly of a folk festival in Fochabers both him and Sandra frequented which featured Hoogie, Flook, Box 'o' Bananas and Paul's top band Last Nights Fun.

The great thing about Complete Health? It's local and it really helps those of us with special dietary requirements, and that is an ever expanding cross section of society, but the best thing is Paul and Sandra themselves. Their warming personalities, their background of hard work and their passion & knowledge for food, and desire to help people, makes their store so much more than just a food retailer – we are very lucky it's here.

www.completehealthinlithgow.co.uk



GARY CLINTON. You can keep up to date with Gary's tuition business through social media Twitter: @GaryGuitar4 Facebook: garyclintonguitartutor



THE NEW WELL COUNSELLING SERVICE



The New Well runs a counselling service in Linlithgow and currently we offer around 48 sessions each month and are supporting 20 people.

The majority of our clients are dealing with life-limiting mental health challenges such as severe anxiety and depression, long-term trauma, grief and relationship breakdown, and many of them have considered suicide as a way out. Alongside the medical help that they may be getting, our clients appreciate the counselling they receive at The New Well because it addresses the roots of their issues and helps to give them tools for managing daily life. Clients are not limited in the number of sessions that they receive, although this is reviewed regularly. With such complex needs, clients benefit from this longer-term consistent approach.

Our local statutory services are stretched and restricted in what they can offer. The cost of private counselling is prohibitive to the majority of people, especially those that The New Well tends to work with, who are mostly unable to work or are in part-time jobs and are feeling the cost-of-living crisis most acutely.

Up until recently, we have been able to provide counselling on a donation basis due to fundraising and generous grants. The waiting list has been short and people have generally been seen

by one of our experienced and highly qualified counsellors within six weeks of first making contact. However over the last six months or so, there has been a significant increase in demand for counselling and those receiving counselling are dealing with more complex and challenging issues. Unfortunately, this means that we now have a waiting list that will take months to catch up with and we are concerned that each individual who has contacted us is vulnerable and needs help as soon as possible.

Over the next few months, we are looking forward to the opportunity to move into space in the Low Port Centre which will give us a better location and more room to expand by employing a trainee or sessional counsellor. This will allow us to provide additional counselling sessions and better meet the demand.

It costs us £60 per session to provide counselling – for staffing, rent and the associated overheads. We are grateful to a number of regular donors who support the service and to some clients who are able to make a contribution towards the cost, but we have a gap of around £1,200 each month to be able to continue to provide the current level of service. When we move into the Low Port Centre, we anticipate costs rising and our monthly gap being at least £2,000 each month going forward.

We continue to apply for grant funding but are looking for individuals and

business sponsors who would donate to The New Well on a regular, or one-off basis, to allow us to continue to provide vital counselling sessions and to expand to support more local people.



£600 would fully subsidise 10 counselling sessions and £1,500 would provide 25 sessions.

Would you be able and willing to help us to meet our target and make a huge difference to the mental health of people in and around Linlithgow?

You can donate online through our website. www.thenewwell.org/donate

Thank you on behalf of everyone at The New Well.



Heather Begarnie,
Manager of The New Well

“The counselling process was like being carried along safely and being helped to see a mist lifting gradually. After my first session I felt a peace I had not known for a long time. I was reassured that my emotions and experiences were valid and a part of grieving. The counselling helped me to start living again.”

“Thanks to counselling with The New Well, I can finally say, with confidence, I’m happy. My self-esteem has improved, my outlook on life has improved, I can deal with stress and I can deal with worries. There’s colour in my life again, and I couldn’t say that before I received counselling.”





The New Well
Bringing hope and connection

If you could do with someone alongside you, perhaps The New Well can help?

If you feel stuck in the house staring at the same four walls, maybe you have newly moved to Linlithgow or have recently been bereaved, and you'd like to connect with others, join us at a Chatty Table. We're in Costa on Mondays 10.30am-12 noon and at Coffee Neuk on Thursdays 1.30-3pm and love to meet new people for a chat.

If you are figuring out what's next, especially if you are looking for a new job, pop along to 183 High Street on a Thursday from 11am to 12.30pm for friendly support at our Job Club.

If you need to talk more deeply with someone, then get in touch with our counselling team.

There is more information on our website www.thenewwell.org



HIGHER ASPIRATIONS Aspire Linlithgow moves up a level Alan Miller

Computer gamers will know the feeling: your reward for completing a tricky level of your game is that you enter a new and even tougher level. The rewards are greater – but so are the challenges.

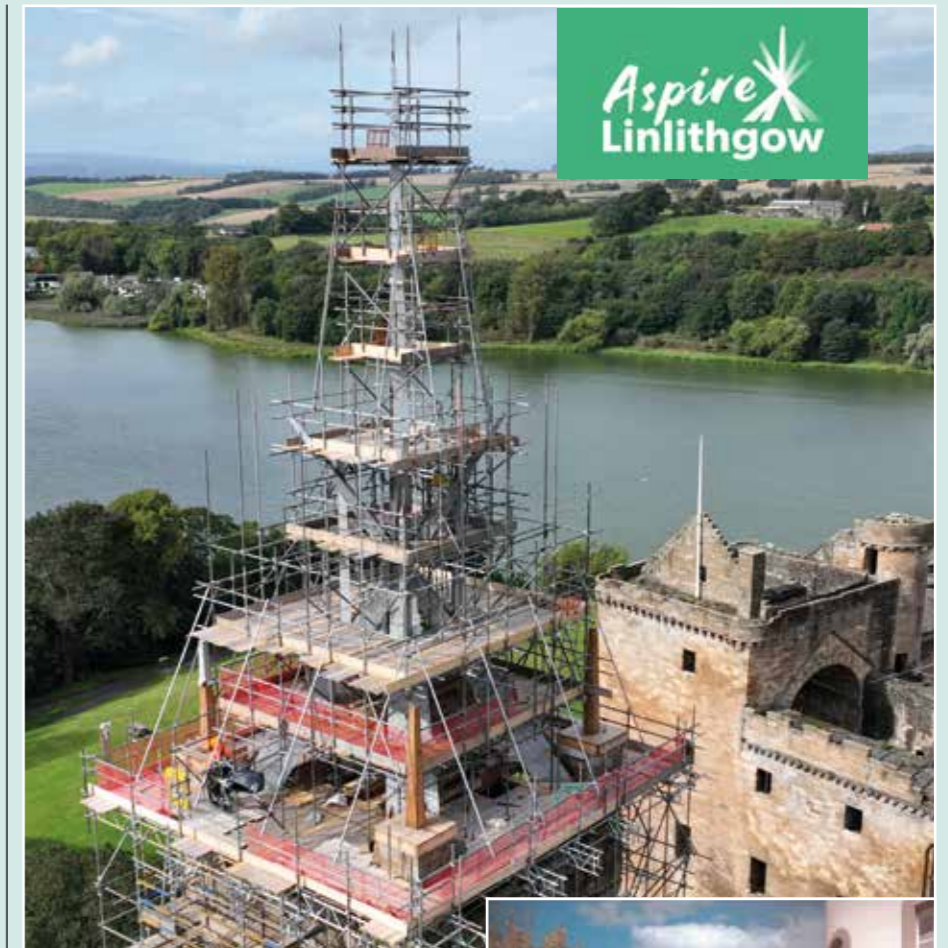
That's where the fundraising team at St Michael's Parish Church find ourselves as we switch our focus to higher targets (even higher than the spire!). St Michael's 2030 Vision involves transforming Cross House into a community hub, securing the fabric of the church building for the future and – potentially – upgrading the church interior for more flexible future use.

How and where do we start on what may be a £5M-6M journey over 4-5 years? The answer is: with gratitude, confidence and conviction. Gratitude for the astonishing support shown for our first target, to fund the full repair and restoration of the Crown of Thorns spire. That support, from you the community, the congregation, local businesses and several grants, now stands at an astonishing £385k.

We're particularly grateful to Historic Environment Scotland: their grant of £90.4k was the clincher that allowed us formally to appoint the contractor and get started on site. Grant funding also came from the Church of Scotland General Trustees (£40k), The Scottish Landfill Communities Trust (£30k) and the Pilgrim Trust (£10k).

All that support gives us confidence to push on to the next level; so does the fact that we have been able to manage the process through this unusual project to the point where the scaffolding is up, the old cladding is off, repairs are well underway and the new bronze alloy covering is beginning to appear up top! As the Man in the Bible once said, *“You've been faithful in handling this small amount - so now I will give you many more responsibilities”*.

Our conviction is that when this ancient centre of worship is animated by a living hope, the church can respond wholeheartedly to the changing needs of the community through our service, witness and facilities. At the heart of our 2030 Vision is a bold plan to transform Cross House – a much used building, but very much in need of repair and renewal – into a community hub for health



and wellbeing. With such a range of community groups and activities in the town, we believe this will complement very effectively what the Low Port Centre offers.

We're working hard to attract major funding from (in particular) the National Lottery Heritage Fund for Cross House and will shortly open a period of discussion with potential partners and other groups about the proposals. We also hope to identify other heritage funding sources for fabric projects on the church building, many of which are now required to address the impacts of climate change.

None of this is straightforward: projects such as lead-lining the gutters on a large, medieval, A-listed church don't come cheap! But buoyed by the confidence you have given us, we reckon we're up for tackling this new level and the challenges ahead.



PIGMENTATION / DISCOLOURATION

Freckles / Sun Damage / Sunspots / Age spots / Pigmentation / Hyperpigmentation / Melasma

Pigmentation

Flat pigmented lesions such as sun damage, age spots and freckles can be successfully removed creating a more flawless, youthful and brighter appearance.

TREATMENT

• IPL/Laser

IPL targets and is absorbed by the high concentration of melanin found within pigmented lesions. The rapid absorption of light energy heats the melanin and causes the destruction of the melanin-rich cells giving you clearer skin. **Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) or laser** is the best treatment for anyone who wants to remove or reduce flat pigment. A course of treatments between 1-3 are normally required to achieve the best results. However, to minimise any new future pigment from arising you really should wear daily SPF of 30 or above. Remember, UVA rays are present all year round!



- Chemical Peels and/or Medical Grade pigment inhibitor homecare products or kits.

If you are contraindicated to IPL/Laser treatments or have Melasma, I can still help you. **I educate my clients on the best skincare options and homecare routines.** AlumierMD have a great collection of products to specifically help clients reduce pigmentation/ discolouration with products containing brightening agents, melanin inhibitor ingredients, protective skin strengthening peptides and retinols for cell turnover which enhances and boost the overall outcome. Lastly and by no means least we don't forget your sunscreen. Always wear your sunscreen! Prevention is better than cure.

I'M HERE TO HELP YOU FEEL CONFIDENT CAREFREE AND SKIN HAPPY.



BOOK NOW



MORE INFORMATION

Discolouration Products/Kit



Ideal for skin with pigment/discolouration

- IntelliBright Complex: Brightening serum to reduce sun damage & uneven skin tone
- EveActive C&E™ + Peptide: Potent antioxidant to reduce visible signs of ageing
- ClearShield SPF42 Sunscreen: 100% Physical Broad Spectrum, Oil Free & Non-Comedogenic
- Retinol Resurface Serum 0.5%: Dramatically improves fine lines, blemishes, skin texture & turnover

Skin Happy, 42 High Street, Linlithgow Tel: 01506 888138
www.skinhappy.co.uk
E: info@skinhappy.co.uk

f SkinHappy i skinhappyme

KEEPING IT REAL...

LOCAL BREWERY GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH WITH A MOVE INTO CASK BEER

As the days get shorter and we move into the festive period, many of us will be thinking about Christmas drinks in front of a roaring fire. With that in mind, we've been talking to local brewer Brett Welch from Strangers Brewing Co. about their recent expansion, to bring their beers to pubs across the region.

Strangers was launched in Linlithgow in March 2022, selling a range of beers through their website, in local shops and restaurants, and at the monthly artisan market. The brewery takes its name from our town motto 'St Michael is kinde to strangers', and their beers have proved very popular since they began. This year, as well as their canned beers, they have launched a new 'real ale' cask range - you may have seen their beers on the bar in a few local pubs. In fact, their spiced winter stout 'Hearthside' recently won Champion Beer 2023 at the Four Mary's Beer Festival.

With tough trading conditions for all small businesses this past year, a number of other local breweries - in Grangemouth, Larbert and South Queensferry - have recently closed down. Brett says that local support has been crucial to keep them going in these tough times:

"Since we launched we've had brilliant local support from everyone in the town, but with rising costs we needed to diversify to make sure we can keep going - getting our great beers into pubs was the obvious next step. It's been amazing to see the support from local pubs, and we're getting very positive feedback from their customers as well. Seeing our beers pouring at the Linlithgow Round Table beer festival was a highlight too!"

As well as selling locally, producing beer in casks has meant that the brewery is sending the beer further afield as well, to a growing number of pubs across the central belt in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and from Dunblane to Kirkcaldy.

Strangers are looking forward to a busy few months as Christmas approaches, with their gift sets and mixed cases proving popular last year. Alongside their core range of beers like Lithgae Lager, Suntrap and Narrowboat IPA, they've got some exciting seasonal beers for the Autumn and Winter too. Their



A freshly poured pint of Suntrap on the bar at The Four Marys, Linlithgow

spiced winter stout 'Hearthside' uses locally grown chillies, as well as a winter spice mix of cinnamon, vanilla, clove and ginger, and they've just launched a new beer made with Perthshire blackberries called 'Bramble Pie'.

And Brett had a final thought for people as they shop this Christmas as well:

"Where you can, try and buy from our great local businesses when doing your Christmas shopping this year. It makes a massive difference, keeps investment locally, and you'll be buying a product that's been made with love!"

Strangers Brewing Co. Founder and Head Brewer Brett Welch pouring a pint at Platform 3, Linlithgow



INDOOR CARPET BOWLS

THE XCITE LEISURE CENTRE

If you fancy a game of indoor bowls or if you attend outdoor bowls in the summer months come along and join us for the winter season. It may be you are looking for a new hobby, if so come along and give it a try. "The Bowling Buddies" is open to everyone.

We meet on a Monday and Wednesday morning from 9.45 until 11.45. Some members come on Monday. Some on Wednesday and some on both days.

We are a friendly bunch and it is more of a fun game although we can be quite competitive as well.

The Bowling Buddies.



A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS
from all the team at the Black Bitch Magazine

See page 23 for information on joining our team.



GROUNDWORKS RESURFACING LANDSCAPING

DRIVEWAYS PATIOS & WALLING

OVER 30 YEARS EXPERIENCE

All work from design to completion carried out by our Linlithgow based, fully trained, professional teams.

CALL FOR A FREE QUOTATION:

TOM: 07419 315239

JAMES: 07801 354316



WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL
APPROVED CONTRACTORS

new website: www.linlithgowpaving.co.uk

SPRINGFIELD SCRIBBLERS

INTERVIEWING OUR VOLUNTEERING STARS @ SPRINGFIELD PS

Volunteering is a powerful way to give back to our community, and over the past few weeks, we have been interviewing our volunteering stars! We love it when the wonderful volunteers give up their time to help at school as well as our P7s giving back to the community by volunteering at the Day Care Centre. Today we have put together (just some) of our amazing volunteer's interview answers to make sure that, their acts of kindness don't go unrecognised. Our stars have given up their time to help us so that we can write this article for you. Grab a cup of tea and be prepared to be inspired!



Ian Fife - Volunteer at Springfield Primary School and Linlithgow Athletic Club.



Ian Fife, a passionate and caring volunteer who gives up his time for the children at Springfield primary and Linlithgow athletics club. Ian decided to start volunteering at Springfield 6 years ago after he retired "because my sons both attended this school, and it is a great school. So, when I retired, I thought it would be good to help with the children". Ian is a vital member of the community as he volunteers and gives up his time not only to us at Springfield but also in Linlithgow. "I look after and

help with a lot of things like Junior Park Run, Linlithgow athletics club, Linlithgow 10k, and the junior fun run". In his spare time, Ian enjoys running and cycling in Linlithgow.

Ron and William - Volunteers at the shed and Springfield Primary School.



Ron and William, two lovely men who volunteer at The Shed, come to Springfield Primary School every Wednesday (to try) to teach P6 children some woodwork. Ron and William volunteer at Springfield because "we like woodwork and want to pass on our skills". During our interview, we asked them if they enjoy volunteering at The Shed/at Springfield and we got a straightforward answer of "YES!" They also told us that the pupils of Springfield LOVE their woodwork sessions.

There are many benefits of volunteering at The Shed, Ron and William say, "it gives you a good sense of wellbeing and improves your mental health". We also asked if they think Linlithgow is a lovely place to live, they replied, "We love the community as there is always a good spirit and they are very generous". Obviously volunteering makes Ron and William happy, so maybe you would like it too!

Day Care Centre - P7 pupils volunteer here fortnightly.



Every fortnight, four of our P7 pupils are lucky enough to go and spend some time at the Day Care Centre for the afternoon. We thought we would ask both the clients and the staff at the Day Care Centre a few questions

about our visits. We firstly asked if they liked it when we visited and one responded with "YES, I love it!" and another enthusiastically said, "I think the children are wonderful!". When asked what they enjoyed about our visits they replied with a flurry of compliments such as they "loved the company" and others added that we "were helpful" and that they enjoyed the intergenerational mixing. The clients enjoy when we play dominoes with them (they usually win!), take part in a table quiz, play games and bingo! The staff at the Day Care centre also said our visits had a positive effect on the clients because "the clients love to see the children and it's a great opportunity for the clients to talk to the children". We thoroughly enjoy giving our time to volunteer at the Day Care Centre and we are so pleased to hear it has a positive impact on those who attend.

Laura Pimbley (Mrs Fleming's Mum) Volunteer at Springfield Primary School

We also interviewed Laura, who helps at the school every Wednesday where her daughter, Mrs Fleming, also teaches. She helps in Primary 3 by taking out small groups and supporting individuals. She likes the friendly atmosphere and how everyone likes to help each other. Laura says she really enjoys volunteering at Springfield. The P3 teachers and others in the school really appreciate when Laura is volunteering, "because she gets to support children with their learning and she is able to share her skills and knowledge with everyone."

When asked what the benefits of volunteering here were, Laura replied with "Meeting new people and making a small difference". She likes to be at the school because she enjoys the company and likes the need to feel useful. According to her, Linlithgow is an amazing place "because of the small town feel and because there is an amazing ice cream/sweet shop". We totally agree with that!

This is only a small selection of people who give up their time to help and support at Springfield. We really appreciate those who volunteer and make a difference in our school community. Thank you!

The Springfield Scribblers



Peterkin & Kidd - teaming up for the future.

The long established law firms of Peterkin and Kidd, based here in Linlithgow, and KW Law, based in Livingston and Bathgate recently merged to form the new firm of P&KW. Still trading as Peterkin and Kidd in Linlithgow and as KW Law elsewhere in the County, we ask David Vause of Peterkin and Kidd and Carol Reid of KW Law how it came about and what it means for clients?

Q. How did it begin?

David: We've found over recent years that as the volume of business dealt with by solicitors gets ever larger that it has become more and more difficult as High Street lawyers to service what our clients want us to do for them. We found ourselves in such a position earlier this year when we had a piece of business that we didn't know how to deal with. The client wanted to keep things fairly local and I spoke to my partner Stewart Robertson about what we thought we should do. We agreed that we would call Carol as we had always got on well with her, respected her firm and were fairly sure that they did the type of business in question. So I picked up the phone.

Carol: I was more than happy to take the call and more than happy to help

out when I knew what it was and that we could help. This though led to a more general chat with David and we discovered that we were facing the same challenges of client service. We decided to explore whether we could help each other in a more general way.

Q. So was merger always on the cards?

Carol: I wouldn't necessarily have said always but we got to discussing that very quickly. David and I met up, had a good conversation, and realised pretty much straight away that our firms were complimenting each other. At KW Law we had a large court department mainly dealing with family law but with some employment law and other matters and Peterkin and Kidd didn't have any of that.

David: I agree with all of that and while KW Law were also offering conveyancing, estate agency and private client services such as executries to clients their departments were much smaller than the Peterkin and Kidd equivalents and offered a narrower range. It just sort of made sense to look further into it.

Q. When did the merger take place?

David: P&KW came into being on 1 July. I think both of us knew pretty much straight away when we started talking

that we wanted this to happen as the two businesses complimented each other so well.

Carol: Yes, negotiations didn't take long at all. We made sure that we did our due diligence on each other, as we had to, got regulatory consent and, most importantly, the partners of both firms met up to make sure that we all got on.

David: All passed with flying colours I might add.

Q. And was it a merger or really a takeover by one firm of the other?

Carol: Merger pure and simple. Both firms were in a good place but facing increasing concerns about whether they could cope with the range of client demand. Our firm sizes were almost identical, our income and profits per partner almost identical, even our firm bank balances almost identical. What had seemed obvious just about as soon as we started talking became even more obvious.

David: Agreed. Both of us were keen on the merger and both went into it from a position of strength. When we saw the similarities of how the two firms were run and that they were in more or less the same place it seemed an ideal fit.

Q. How has it worked so far?

Carol: Very well. As David said, we both went in from a position of strength but we've already seen the benefits of being able to pass on pieces of work that the other previous firm couldn't do but the combined firm can.

David: On more than one occasion Carol and I have talked about what a great move it's been. Can safely say that both of us are delighted how it has worked out.

Q. What does it mean for clients, especially here in Linlithgow?

David: I hope that all our clients, over both former firms see the advantages. The result is that P&KW can offer more services than Peterkin and Kidd or KW alone ever could. Everyone who was a Peterkin and Kidd client before the merger can rest assured that we're still here, same people as before doing the same things that we did before but with added value – if we're marketing your home for example, we still have the same Rightmove and ESPC access as before but our client lists are now much more extensive. Additionally, we can now offer far wider services such as divorces, adoption, child protection and other family law matters as well as in other areas such as compromise agreements in employment situations.

Carol: And I would add that these services are available from all of our offices. We're very much in the business of taking on new clients in the best location for them. If you need family law advice, for example, and live in Linlithgow then we will meet with you in Linlithgow.

Q. And finally the future?

Carol: Very positive. We're already looking to add to our team. We have already expanded the private client team this year and hope that we might add another solicitor there soon. We see room for expansion all over the firm.

David: Absolutely. The early signs are that business has increased as a result of the merger and we're confident that all of our clients will see the benefit as we offer a wider range of advice.

Peterkin & Kidd
Solicitors and Estate Agents

FAMILY LAW

ESTATE AGENCY

CONVEYANCING

WILLS

POWERS OF ATTORNEY

GUARDIANSHIPS

EXECUTRIES

COMPROMISE AGREEMENTS

AND MUCH MORE

Contact us at:

Peterkin and Kidd

8 High Street, Linlithgow EH49 7AF

T. 01506 845191

Further offices at:

Livingston & Bathgate

(trading as KW Law)



Rotary  Donations
Totalled
over £40,000

The Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness

Some of the many ways we have supported both our local community and international causes during the Rotary Year 2022-2023




ARCHER JOY
FINANCIAL PLANNING



Draw up your retirement *game plan*

Retirement isn't what it used to be. We're working longer, living longer and have so many different ways to use our pension pot. All the more reason to get the experts involved

These days there's so much flexibility around retirement. You can choose to stay invested in your pension, decide your own level of income, or even withdraw the entire pot. Buying an annuity is now another choice, rather than being non-negotiable.

Meanwhile, as always, greater freedom brings greater responsibility. You've got to make sure those retirement savings last. It's a thorny business full of tough decisions, made even trickier by the number of options available.

Expert advice is key – your retirement could last 30 years, so you'll need to make important short- and long-term decisions

Let's look at retirement age to begin with. The cliff-edge idea of stopping work at 60 or 65 and 'being retired' is history. Today a phased approach is much more likely, transitioning gradually from working and saving towards leisure and spending. Most of us can do this on our terms, according to our own life plans, rather than being restricted by a pension scheme or an employer.

Visualise your retirement

Ask yourself what your retirement looks like. Then how can you make it a reality? If you're retired already, is it as you imagined? Being 'in retirement' is much more than simply drawing an income. It's also about running an efficient home, managing your tax-free cash (especially when interest rates are low) and building a sustainable income that will last your lifetime.

There's no set retirement age these days. Add to this the pressures of supporting both older and younger generations, and it's clear a rethink is needed on how best to use your savings. To adapt to changing needs, you might need to consider other assets and income sources alongside your pension.

So what you have is a situation that's both flexible and heavy on risk, whether you choose to dip into your pension pot or remain invested. Either way, you'll need help and expertise to face the challenges.

In retirement you're also likely to encounter a new set of risks. For example, if you get off to a poor start when you begin drawing your income, with markets falling and returns negative, your investments will have to work much harder from the outset to maintain your desired income.

Another layer of complexity in your retirement strategy is underestimating how long your money needs to last. The 100-year life is fast becoming normal, with more of us living much longer, more active lives than ever before.

The countless choices available at retirement can be overwhelming

At St. James's Place, we're here to help you navigate these obstacles. We believe the value of advice comes from building a strong relationship over time and understanding the needs of both you and your family. We're experts in the intricacies of modern retirement. So you can worry less and focus on the important things in life.

The value of an investment with St. James's Place will be directly linked to the performance of the funds you select, and the value can therefore go down as well as up. You may get back less than you invested. Equities do not provide the security of capital which is characteristic of a deposit with a bank or building society.

Get in touch

If you'd like us to guide you through the retirement minefield, give us a call. We're here to make a difference to your future.

Associate Partner Practice

St James's Place

07834 837183
kayleigh.dorrian@sjpp.co.uk
www.archerjoyfp.co.uk

Kayleigh Dorrian
Principal

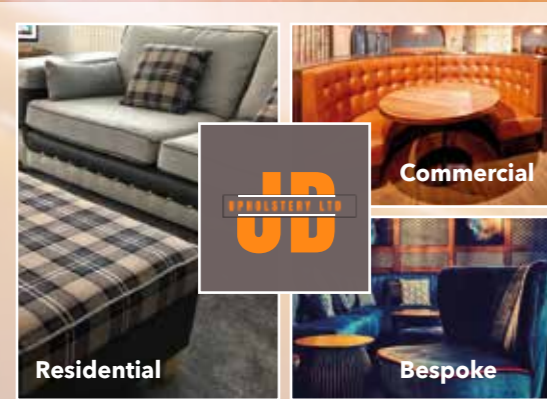


Archer Joy Financial Planning is an Appointed Representative of and represents only St. James's Place Wealth Management plc (which is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority) for the purpose of advising solely on the group's wealth management products and services, more details of which are set out on the group's website www.sjp.co.uk/products. The 'St. James's Place Partnership' and the titles 'Partner' and 'Partner Practice' are marketing terms used to describe St. James's Place representatives.

SJP Approval 10/10/2023

SJPI2290a B1 (03/22)

Our President and all the members of the Rotary Club of Linlithgow & Bo'ness would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supported our events and donated to our fund raising efforts. If you would like to learn more about becoming a member of our club please contact us via our website at <https://www.rotary-ribi.org/clubs/homepage.php?ClubID=96>



RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL UPHOLSTERY SPECIALISTS

Johnston & Deans Upholstery Ltd provide the highest quality, tailored designs to suit the needs of all our customers.

We pride ourselves on the delivery of Upholstery, Bespoke Furniture and Commercial projects. Our team of craftpersons & skilled professionals will cost, design and create outstanding solutions from our base at Mill Road Ind. Estate, Linlithgow EH49 7DA.

www.johnstonanddeans.com



T: 01506 822744

E: johnstonanddeans@gmail.com

Vitality Pilates *by Kirsty*

Tight hips? Stiff shoulders? Sore knees? Pilates can help combat these joint aches!

Beginners Class

Tuesdays 7:00pm @ Cross House

Chair Pilates Class

Wednesdays 9:30am @ The Longcroft Hall

Online Beginners Class

Wednesdays 11:30am @ Zoom

Beginners Class

Fridays 9:30am @ The Longcroft Hall

Book Now



visit my website
www.vitalitypilatesbykirsty.com



Carron Glass

Unit 3, Braehead Business Units
Braehead Road, Linlithgow, EH49 6EP

Tony Miller

Call: 01506 844 900

07939 264 887

Email: carronglass@outlook.com

Website: www.carronglass.co.uk



Find us on Facebook



Personal, considered,
comprehensive

You are our client, not your money

01506 200580

www.morrisonpwm.com

enquiries@morrisonpwm.com



Live Entertainment

Saturday 9pm-late

- 18th November - Les Dee
- 25th November - Karaoke
- 2nd December - Lynne Size
- 9th December - Simply Mo
- 16th December - Charley Bell
- 23rd December - Banksy
- 30th December - Karaoke

Friday 8pm - 11pm

29th December - Kenny Hanlon

Sunday 5pm - 8pm

- 26th November - Pure Malt
- 3rd December - Colin Anderson
- 31st December - Pure Malt
- Boxing Day 6pm - 9pm**
- 26th December - Davy Glen

Willow Tree Function suite

Offering an ideal setting for any function
We offer a private bar with a wide range
Of Wines, Spirits, Beers & Cocktails

Sky-BT Sports-Viaplay

Dedicated in bringing you the best in live sporting action
Come relax, watch & enjoy with us



Find us on Facebook

D. WATSON ROOFING LTD

- > Tiled Roofing
- > Slate Roofing
- > Flat Roofs
- > Chimney Repairs
- > UPVC Roofline
- > Gutter Replacement
- > All Repairs and Re-roofing works undertaken.



T. 01506 847 885

www.dwatsonroofing.co.uk
email: denis@dwatsonroofing.co.uk
D Watson Roofing Limited
41 Mill Road Industrial Estate
Linlithgow EH49 7SF



Colin Lowie
PAINTER & DECORATOR

169B High Street, Linlithgow

www.colinlowiedecorating.co.uk

t. 01506 206161
m. 07817 105659

High Quality workmanship
is our trademark.

Specialists in interior and exterior
Painting and Decorating.

Call me for an estimate.



LINLITHGOW BASED, 16+ YEARS



Fancy a Cuppa?
Linlithgow Link is looking for
volunteers within the Linlithgow and
Linlithgow Bridge area.

Can you spare an hour or so a month
to be a friend to someone nearby who is feeling
isolated - a shared cuppa and a chat are easy to give
and can make a huge difference to someone who is
feeling lonely through age or ill health?



Connecting the Community
SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SC 013502



Linlithgow Link Office. Call today.

01506 845137

www.linlithgowlink.org.uk



The Mortgage Market

“At Paul Rolfe, when it comes to looking at property from an investment point of view, we generally advise regarding property as a medium to long term investment, so we thought you might like to see what has happened to property prices between 2006 and the present day. This data was recently published by Registers of Scotland.”

So, from 2006 (a property price peak and not long before the financial crisis of 2008) through to the present day we find :

>> Detached property prices have increased by 52%.

>> Semi-detached property prices have increased by 56%.

>> Terraced property prices have increased by 55%.

>> Flatted property prices have increased by 37%.

In the year 2022-2023 detached properties had a combined market value of £6.3 billion accounting for 29% of the total value of residential sales. Flatted properties had

the second largest share at £5.8 billion, (27%), followed by terraced properties at £3.4 billion (16%) and semi-detached properties at £3.3 billion (15%).

The New Build Residential Housing Market

Last year there were 12,356 new build sales in Scotland, approximately 12% of the total number of property transactions. Over the last 10 years the volume of new build sales has remained broadly static.

In 2022-2023 the average price for a new build residential property in Scotland was £308,158; this compares with an average price of £216,337 for all residential properties.

Last year the average price of a new build residential property in Scotland increased by 8.0%, and over the last 10 years the average

price for new build residential property has increased by 47%, compared with 40% for all residential properties, the average asking price for a new build property has been around 40% higher than the average for all residential properties.

The Mortgage Market

Viewed over the last 10 years there have been some notable changes in the numbers of property transactions involving mortgage lending.

In 2022-2023 the volume of residential sales involving a mortgage was 66,125, or 65% of the market. This compares to the high point of 2007-2008 when 85% of all transactions involved a mortgage.

Conversely in 2007-2008 only 15% of transactions were cash sales, whereas in 2022-2023 cash sales accounted for 35% of all transactions.

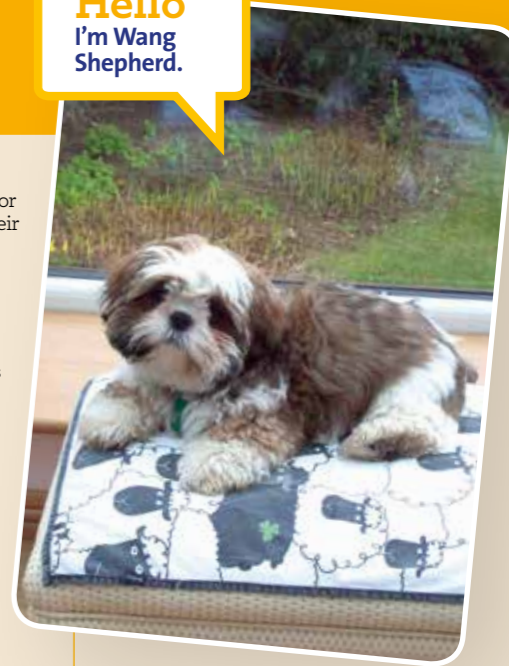


PETS' CORNER



Westport Vet's Pets of The Month is Wang is a Shih Tzu who is nearly 12 years old!

Hello I'm Wang Shepherd.



Wang is a Shih Tzu who is nearly 12 years old! A very sweet little soul full of character who charms the Westport team on his visits to the practice.

Wang's owner describes him as a very happy wee dog and his tail rarely stops wagging! He loves people and children and has a fan club of primary school children who he adores. He rarely barks unless a pigeon lands on his conservatory roof and then it gets what for. He also barks when the front door bell rings to let his owner know that there is someone there for him to welcome!

He loves his food and makes sure his owner knows when it is his feeding time. He seems to have a built in alarm clock for walks and also lets them know when it is time to go walkies. He also seems to have a built in GPS and has very fixed ideas about where he wants to go on his walk and the super glue goes on his paws holds fast if they don't agree! His favourite toy is a yellow star which used to squeak and it has to go to bed with him each night.

His owner says that weather changes don't seem to bother him unless he has to get his coat on and then he runs and hides whenever he sees his owner getting into their wet weather gear!

He loves the cold winter weather and loves rolling in the frost and snow.

From muddy walks to running

through crisp golden leaves, there's so much to enjoy in autumn - but as with any change of season, there are lots of things we need to do to keep our pets safe and healthy during the autumnal months and with winter conditions fast approaching

Pets can still get warm on sunny autumnal days and we always recommend taking water with you on walks - this will also reduce their temptation to drink from muddy puddles which can cause GI upset.

Be cautious pets don't pick up conkers or acorns and avoid Fungi and mushrooms which start to appear in the damp autumn months. Although not all species of fungi are dangerous to pets, some can be very toxic, so it's best to avoid them altogether.

As mornings and evenings get darker ensure you and your pets are visible outside. Reflective collars and light up items are a great way to keep safe. Ensuring that off lead dogs are also visible at all times.

Consider routines when letting your cat out at night as it gets dark earlier and avoid letting cats outside during busier traffic times. Checking on any outdoor hutches and runs that outdoor animals are protected from the cold and ensuring they have places and additional items to help keep them safe and warm. Ideally outdoor animals should move indoors as the weather temperatures drop. Small pets can be especially vulnerable in heavy rain. A sudden downpour can lead to standing water which can cause serious problems for rabbits

and guinea pigs kept outside or in garages. Keep an eye on their runs and enclosures to check they're safely out of the water, and avoid putting them onto very muddy or wet ground once water drains.

Consider your routine at this time of year with Halloween and bonfire night there are added risks and things your pets may find extra stressful. Pumpkins should always be disposed of before they rot as mould is a major pet hazard.

Ensure gardens are secure and free from dangers before you let your pets outside - this includes fallen branches, berries etc. Pets should always be supervised in gardens. Remember dogs don't need walks every day and you can easily reduce their energy levels by training or playing games at home. As firework season approaches, play can be an excellent alternative to an unpredictable walk on a dark night.

Paws should always be washed or wiped to remove grit or salt and be very careful with any products used at this time of year, such as antifreeze, which is highly toxic.

When indoors, pet beds should ideally be raised to remove direct drafts and consider using raised beds particularly for older animals or arthritic pets. Adding additional blankets or jumpers can also be a great way to manage their warmth whilst balancing the need and costs of additional heating.

If you have any concerns about your pet the Westport Team is here to help:
01506 844165 For enquiries
please email: surgery@westportvets.com

Ace Tree SURGEONS

Fully qualified arboricultural specialists

specialising in:

- * Sectional felling of dangerous trees
- * Limb removal * Hedge trimming
- * Pruning and Shaping * Stump Grinding
- * Fully Insured * 24 Hour Service
- * Seasoned hardwood firewood for sale.


For a FREE estimate call (01506) 847 049 or mobile 07850 624 939

www.acetreesurgeons.com


Dogcrafts & Sweet Pea Designs have moved.


If your looking for a bespoke handmade dog collar, card, frame or more, please get in touch.

Telephone: 07984 636135
Email: katzkrafts2022@gmail.com

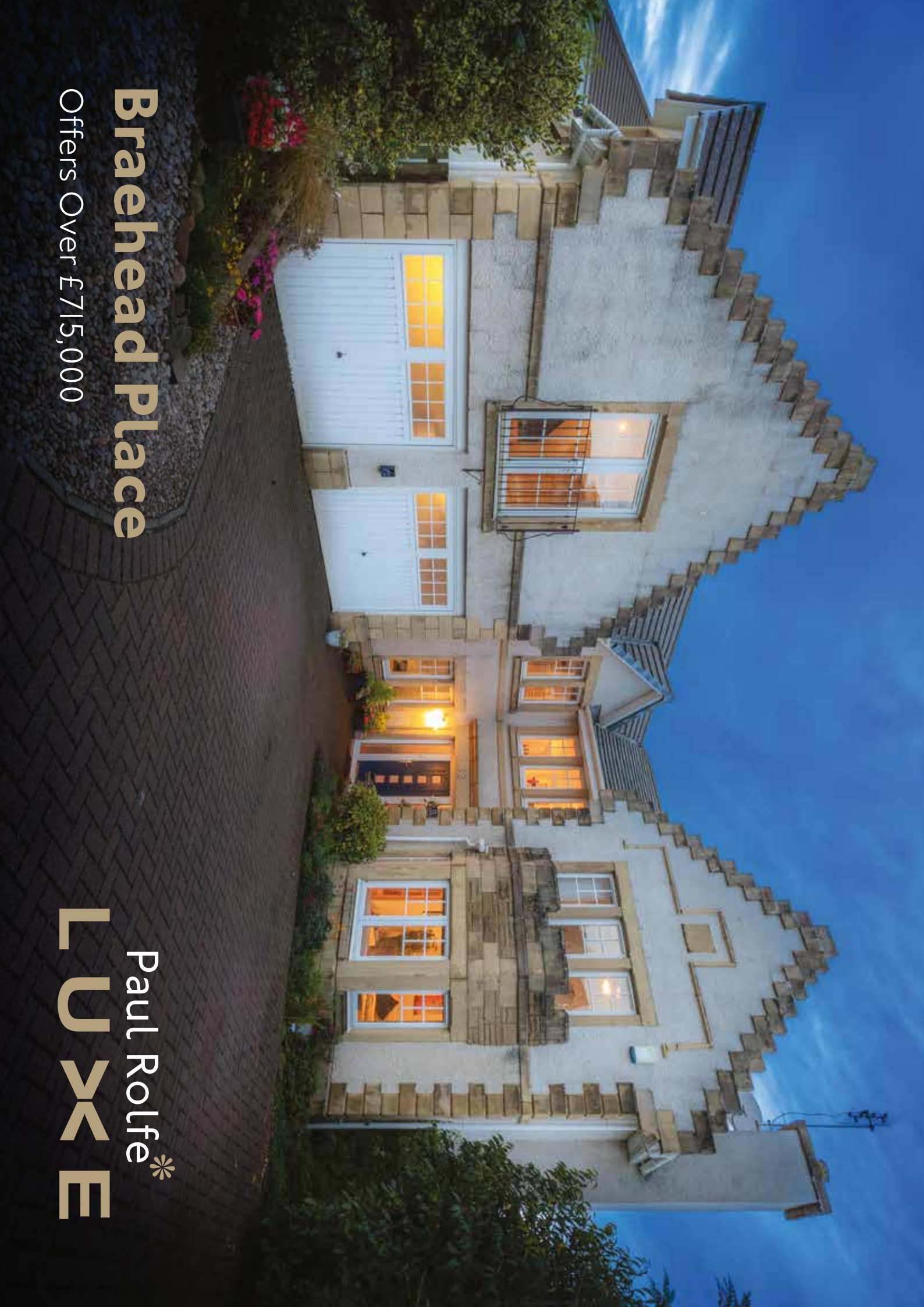


Dogcrafts





Sweet Pea Designs



Braehead Place

Offers Over £715,000

Paul Rolfe*

LUXE