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ISSUE NO.117
OCTOBER 2025

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**Karen Graham
Pamela Armstrong**

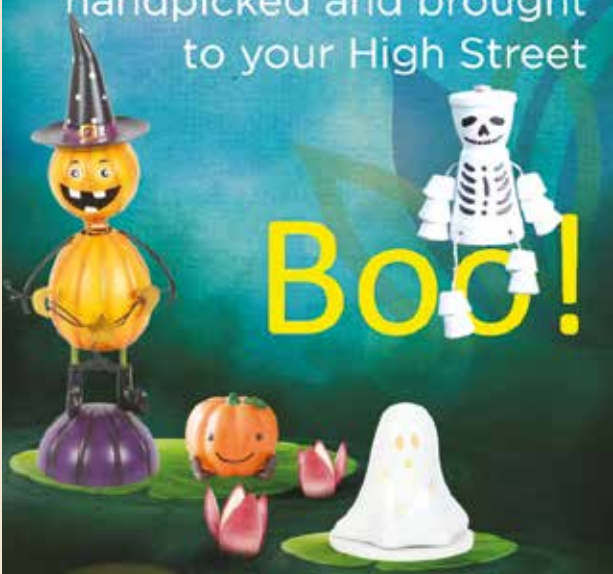
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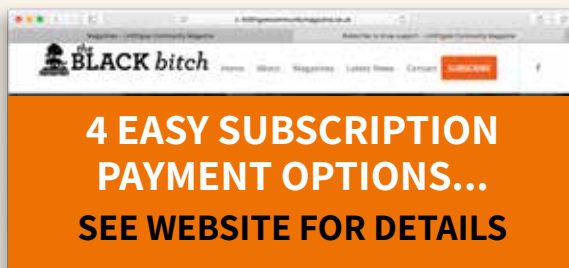
NEXT ISSUE COPY DEADLINE
29 OCTOBER 2025



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DAVID TAIT
EDITOR



**4 EASY SUBSCRIPTION
PAYMENT OPTIONS...
SEE WEBSITE FOR DETAILS**

As daylight hours shorten and the nights are fair drawin' in, plans are afoot to turn Shoemaker Lane into Spooky Lane on 1st November as creatures of the night, and some "friendly fiends", gather to celebrate Hallowe'en. Find all the details on page 28.

Staying with the younger folks, **Linlithgow Academy, Linlithgow Bridge Primary, Springfield and Low Port Primary schools** all feature in this Issue. The Academy article turns the spotlight on the school's outstanding achievements across the whole range of school activities - academic, sporting and extra-curricular. Linlithgow Bridge Primary focuses on gaining the Scottish Book Trust's Gold Reading School's Award and Low Port and Springfield Primaries launch a brilliant business initiative, Springport Coffee Co in collaboration with U-Roast Coffee and White Dove Café.

Another new feature is the first of a series of articles, **"Focus on Farming"**, in which **Murdie Kennedy and local farmer, Jamie Smart**, will discuss the issues facing one of the industries critical to our communities in a rapidly changing world.

Linked to the use of Linlithgow's prime asset - land - is **John Kelly's exploration of the process by which large areas of that prime asset are consumed by the urgent need for additional residential accommodation**. As discussed in a previous issue the imbalance in the town's population, lack of suitable accommodation for the missing cohort of young adults and inadequate infrastructure must be addressed. "To do nothing is a

distinctly unattractive option"

One Linlithgow Business Improvement District draws attention to the community benefits of the Linlithgow Trail which attracts visitors from far and wide to enjoy the town's hostelrys and thereby generate funds to be reinvested in community facilities. Also featured are new business arrivals on the High Street, the new permanent home for the Banking Hub and business relocations.

Bruce Jamieson shifts the focus to one of Linlithgow's older businesses, sadly no longer with us. The St Magdalene distillery, founded in 1798 but drawing on deeper roots, produced a "very acceptable" dram which, if you can find one to buy today, will be guaranteed to drain your savings!

On matters sporting, **Linlithgow Rose FC** have got the season off to a fine start sitting at the top of the Lowland League (at the time of writing). There

is a fresh determination to remain there but, also, a realistic acceptance that there is a long way to go. This is where the Linlithgow community has a big role to play in supporting the club. If you hung up your boots a few years ago but haven't made it along on match days then this would be a great time to rekindle interest and find a space on the terraces.

These are some of the features in this issue but as always there are plenty more to find.

The final space on this page draws your attention to the reader survey immediately below. The QR code will take you to a short reader survey and we ask that you let us have your views on the magazine to help us shape the next phase of its development.

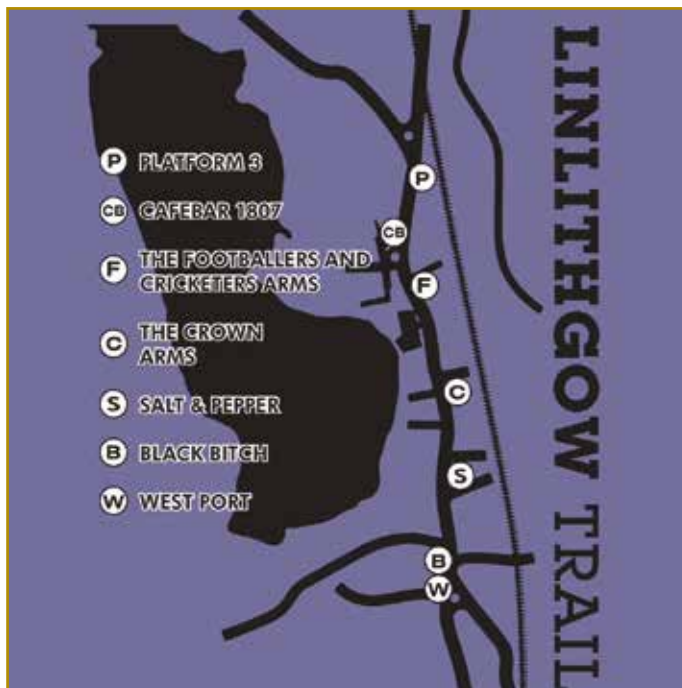
A paper copy of the survey can be provided if you forward a request with contact details to on.a.lead@gmail.com.

>>> For details and events visit **what's on** www.mylinlithgow.com <<<



LINLITHGOW TRAIL HELPS FUND HIGH STREET FESTIVE LIGHTING AND LIFE SAVING DEFIBRILLATORS

The funds raised since the trail started in 2014 have also helped with school art competitions and beehive planters. However, the Thistles monument is probably the most significant contribution the trail has made to Linlithgow High Street.



Everyone who completes the "Linlithgow Trail", directly contributes to the above local initiatives in Linlithgow. It began in December 2014 as a free idea to encourage more people to visit pubs on Linlithgow High Street. Its instant popularity made the organisers think about how they could use that popularity to benefit Linlithgow. A £5 fee was introduced, and all money made from the trail benefits the people of the town.



For this small fee, participants can literally say *"been there, done that and got the T-shirt"*. And very nice they are too. Once you have an official t-shirt, you become known as a *"trailer"* and there's an obvious sign they are popular, as the colour changes as each batch of T-shirts are sold.

The start of June this year saw the fresh delivery of vibrant violet T-shirts. Trail organisers were proud to share that *"the Linlithgow Trail has been such a hit since the launch of our new colour, with 500 T-shirts flying off the shelves over the past four weekends!"*

The Instagram account ([Instagram.com/linlithgowpubtrail](https://www.instagram.com/linlithgowpubtrail)) shows lots of examples of previous T-shirt colours now in circulation, no doubt across the world. For the trailers, it represents precious memories with family, friends and colleagues in the historic town of Linlithgow.

Many people in the town have T-shirts in multiple colours. This number represents the popularity of the trail and the number of people who have helped make Linlithgow a better place.

HIGH STREET BEEHIVES

The trail has also helped biodiversity in Linlithgow. Two beehive planters were installed at each end of the High Street (outside Platform 3 and across from the West Port Hotel), as well as a flowerbed behind the Black Bitch statue and the planting of the Peace Garden.

However, there is a serious side to the project that readers may not be fully aware of.

It is often said that the simplest of ideas offer the best solutions. Since the Linlithgow Trail began, 35,000 T-shirts have been sold with profits used to fund local initiatives.

PUB DEFIBRILLATORS

Following the initial investment of around £6,000 to buy nine defibrillators in 2022, the single-use pads have had to be replaced due to their expiry date being reached.

More importantly, a small number of pads have been replaced due to being used in real-life saving situations. Funding for the defibrillators located in each of the pubs was also contributed by One Linlithgow BID and West Lothian Council Town Management Group.



FESTIVE LIGHTING 2025

As the days become shorter and the leaves start to fall; thoughts wander to the number of weeks to Christmas. The reality for the Linlithgow Trail and their festive lighting partners above, the plans for the continuous improvement of the festive lights started in March this year.

Since 2014, the Linlithgow Trail has contributed to the cost of purchasing and maintaining circa 36 of the current 72 the festive motifs along the High Street. For 2025, the festive lights will be extended to Stockbridge and new Christmas Tree lights will be installed on the tree at the Cross, thanks to a contribution from the Community Council. One Linlithgow provides significant funding for the storage and maintenance of the lights and project manages their timely installation

DRINKAWARE

A spokesperson from the Linlithgow Trail said *"We are proud to be part of the ongoing upgrading of the festive lights in the town. On behalf of all the publicans who make up the Trail, we'd like to extend our sincere thanks to every single person who has completed the trail to make all our projects possible.*

It must also be stressed that the Trail does not need to be completed all at once. The emphasis is strongly upon sensible drinking and enjoyment with family and friends in a beautiful town. There are currently seven pubs on the Trail, so trailers could take seven separate visits to Linlithgow to get a stamp on their card each time."

P7 ART COMPETITION

The Linlithgow Trail also sponsors the annual P7 Art Competition each year, with a total prize fund of **£1,300** shared between local schools and participants. The winning artwork is awarded **£300** judged by local representatives of Linlithgow groups.



For more information about the Linlithgow Trail and to post your own experiences, visit:

<https://www.instagram.com/linlithgowpubtrail>

<https://www.facebook.com/Linlithgowpubtrail>

THE GIFT HORSE (18A HIGH STREET PREVIOUSLY LOW PORT MUSIC)

Young local lady and graphic designer Evonne Summers runs her Gift Horse business at the east end of the High Street. Speaking recently, Evonne was happy to tell us -

Now, as The Gift Horse approaches its first anniversary, I'm so grateful for the support from locals and visitors alike. It's been a whirlwind year of learning, collaborating with incredible artists, and meeting the warm and welcoming people of Linlithgow.

If you're looking for a pop of colour for your home or a quirky gift for a friend then next time you're passing along the High Street, pop in and say hello, we're right across from Platform 3.

Contact: www.thegifthorse.shop

STYLED BY MACS (28 THE VENNEL BUT MOVING SOON TO 2 THE VENNEL)

There was big Facebook news from Hazel and Kirsty on 11th September - Good afternoon. We are very excited to let you know that we are finally moving to a bigger shop. We are moving just a little, hop, skip and jump up the road towards the Cross.

To say we are excited is an understatement. We are so grateful to all our customers, friends and family who have supported us to make the expansion possible. We are hoping to move mid-October but will confirm exact dates nearer the time. There will also be a few new additions to the shop.

Also, back on 5th September Hazel & Kirsty were able to announce - We were delighted to be handing the cheque over to Strathcarron hospice today for £3,209.65. Thank you so much to all of our customers, friends and family who helped us raise this fantastic amount in memory of a beautiful ray of sunshine, Anna Walker. We are so grateful to be able to help this fantastic charity.

Love from a very excited Hazel & Kirsty

Contact: www.styledbymacs.co.uk / Info@styledbymacs.co.uk / 01506 844 977

KD FACIAL AESTHETICS (24 HIGH STREET WITHIN DEVINE DENTAL)

Business owners Dr Dayna Campbell and Dr Kirsten Heburn have told us - We both attended Glasgow University together to study dentistry and practiced dentistry and facial aesthetics in Stirling until May when we started up in Devine Dental.

Combined we have 15 years of experience in aesthetics, we offer Botox, dermal filler, tailored skin treatments such as microneedling, polynucleotides and PRP and also stock ZO medical grade skincare. **(See feature article on page 31)**

Contact: KDFacialaesthetics@outlook.com / 01506 842 011

FAYDA MEDICAL AESTHETICS (100 HIGH STREET - BESIDE OXFAM - PREVIOUSLY :THAT STUDIO CHARTERED ARCHITECTS)

Business owner Ashley Manderson has arrived on the High Street and brought new life to the ground floor of the 170 year old building.

Ashley has said - *Fayda Aesthetics is a Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) - regulated medical aesthetics clinic where I provide professional skin, injectable and wellness treatments as an independent nurse prescriber. I offer advanced medical-grade skincare, non-surgical treatments and injectables, with an emphasis on natural results. I offer treatments such as anti-wrinkle, microneedling, skin peels, LED, dermal filler, treating skin concerns such as pigmentation and acne. Opening night - Sunday 16th November 2025 at 18:00*

Contact: a_shley@hotmail.co.uk / 07951 414 250

BANKING HUB (BURGH HALLS BUT MOVING TO 30 THE VENNEL)

Our banking hub will be moving from its temporary location at the Burgh Halls to a new long-term site at 30 The Vennel.

On 2nd September 2025 West Lothian Council approved the 10-year lease application from Cash Access UK (who are responsible for setting up banking hubs) for the currently vacant property at the pedestrianised Vennel area.

The Vennel has been empty for some time now but some readers may recall when it was used as a doctor's surgery. (Thanks to Jean Wilson of Wilson's Newsagents for remembering that one). The banking hub has been operating in the Burgh Halls since 22 May 2025.



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

FUTURE HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS IN LINLITHGOW

AN INDIVIDUAL OPINION



This article is written by John Kelly¹ to prompt debate into the future of Linlithgow. Within the next 4 or 5 months there is still an opportunity to input into the forthcoming 10-year West Lothian Local Development Plan after which there is no real opportunity to influence West Lothian Council's 10-year vision for the development of Linlithgow.

The Black Bitch of July 2025 drew attention to the falling population of Linlithgow highlighting the disparity between Linlithgow and comparable local towns which have growing populations. In my opinion this is a wake-up call to debate the approach to the consultation on the West Lothian Local Development Plan timetabled for February next year. The well researched Linlithgow Local Place Plan is clear – no new development in Linlithgow without improved infrastructure, but how can this infrastructure be afforded. This article takes a closer look at how a developer's budget and land value works and why it matters to the community.

For the sake of illustration let us assume a fictitious farming family, the McKey's who have 20 acres of undulating land to the east of Linlithgow. We will assume that the land is identified in the new West Lothian Council's Local Development Plan for housing development land with a target capacity of 200 dwellings. Of the 200 dwellings, 50 will be affordable housing, available either for rent or shared ownership. The McKey's will most likely appoint a land management agent to obtain planning permission and manage the project on their behalf with the prime objective of negotiating the best deal possible. The agent will arrange the sale of plots of land to one or more house builders and, as appropriate, go into partnership with a registered social landlord, or the Council, for the provision of the social

housing which qualifies for a Scottish Government grant.

Let us assume that the total income from house sales and the government grant is about £55 million, this sets the budget. Of this about 70% goes on construction, namely the houses plus roads, water, drainage, sewerage, street lighting, IT and electricity

POPULATION CHANGE IN COMPARABLE LOCAL TOWNS, 2001-2022		
Town	2001 Census Population	2022 Census Population
Linlithgow	13,460	12,517
Bo'ness	13,961	14,885
Queensferry	9,370	10,216
Broxburn & Uphall	12,892	15,418
Bathgate	15,068	22,222
Whitburn	10,391	11,775
Armadale	9,063	

cabling, mains gas and landscaping. About 15% is spent on professional fees and financing and about 10% goes to the local authority in what is known as a Section 75 agreement and is a required financial contribution towards community facilities needed to serve the new residents. For example, money might be allocated to enlarge a primary school, add to the cemeteries fund, expand local healthcare services, improve roads and access, and in

Linlithgow's case, contribute to relief roads to alleviate the congestion in the High Street. What remains goes to the McKey's to pay for the land.

While development budgets focus on costs, it is equally important to consider the value to the community. Housing projects require construction workers who could be local. Once homes are built, new residents contribute to the local economy and bring new life and vitality to clubs and organisations with new infrastructure enjoyed by both newcomers and existing residents. Over time, properly planned developments could bring new life to Linlithgow, sustaining schools and services that might otherwise struggle with a declining population.

To date, planning authorities have been cautious regarding growth in Linlithgow. Linlithgow's High Street, in comparison to Scottish towns of similar size, has unique difficulties, being the only east/west through route. The concentration of retail, commercial and residential property leads to traffic congestion and parking problems which were considered in 1994 to be particularly acute and of justifiable concern. The Linlithgow Area Local Plan (1994) established the principle that Linlithgow had reached its environmental capacity, and therefore housing

development in the future should be limited. This caution was repeated in the West Lothian Local Plan 2009. Notwithstanding the fact that in the period from 1994 to 2018 there had been no significant change to the High Street the current 2018 West Lothian Local Development Plan concludes that there is scope to allow for limited development within the town. However, only 2 sites have been given planning permission and the number of houses on each development site was severely

restricted, meaning that only £½million plus houses were economic which did nothing to alleviate the town's chronic shortage of quality accommodation for young adults, first time buyers and those wishing to downsize.

The community's own Linlithgow Local Place Plan is clear that any development in the town should be in the southeast quadrant of the town and should be conditional on the provision of the roads and other infrastructure identified in the plan. I believe that planned growth to accommodate the next generation is necessary to maintain a sustainable and balanced population. To do nothing is a distinctly unattractive option. I believe also that quality housing for the young and those wishing to downsize, including the necessary infrastructure, can be made affordable within the developer's budget.

The Linlithgow Local Place Plan is available to view at:

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/78847/Local-Place-Plans-LPPs-Register>.

John Kelly

¹Dr John Kelly is a retired chartered quantity surveyor whose career began with a major national contractor moving to an architects practice and finally an international quantity surveying practice before commencing an academic career. He held the Chair of Construction Innovation at Glasgow Caledonian University and left in 2007 to set up a consultancy specialising in the value management of construction projects. He retired in 2013 and volunteers as a member of the Community Council.



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SNIPPETS FROM LINLITHGOW

NEW PHYSIOTHERAPY SERVICES Now Available in Linlithgow

Local runner and triathlete **John Redding** is now offering physiotherapy services in Linlithgow through his business, JR Endurance Coaching and Physiotherapy. John is a highly experienced physiotherapist and Extended Scope Practitioner within the NHS, and is bringing his skills and expertise to the local community. His clinic is located in the centre of town, just off the High Street, making it easily accessible.



With extensive NHS experience, John has in-depth knowledge of a wide range of musculoskeletal conditions, including back, neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist, hip, knee, and ankle pain. He works with both acute and chronic conditions, ranging from everyday musculoskeletal issues such as back, neck, and joint pain, to more complex injuries. While his sporting background gives him unique insight into sport-related injuries and performance recovery, his expertise is by no means limited to athletes – he supports people of all ages and activity levels to return to pain-free movement.

John takes pride in offering clear, thorough care. He will:

Identify and explain the problem and its likely causes

Develop a tailored treatment and rehabilitation plan

Provide practical feedback, exercises, and strategies for safe movement

Support you with a long-term recovery plan to get you back to your best

Appointments are currently available on Wednesday and Friday evenings, and can be booked online at: www.jrendurancecoaching.com/physio-services.

LINLITHGOW PHARMACY (269 HIGH STREET - PREVIOUSLY IMPRESSED)

A new pharmacy has obtained Listed Building Consent to take over premises at 269 High Street where the vacant shop is currently being refurbished. (Planning application 0974/LBC/24).





LINLITHGOW ACADEMY



CELEBRATING SUCCESS: LINLITHGOW ACADEMY PUPILS SHINE IN 2025

Linlithgow Academy is proud to celebrate another academic year of success, with pupils across all year groups achieving remarkable results in their 2025 SQA examinations and demonstrating creativity, perseverance and resilience in every aspect of school life.

Celebrating Achievement for All



Under 14 Scottish National Tennis Champion

At Linlithgow Academy, we attempt to celebrate achievement in every aspect of school life and continue to focus on how we can improve our recognition of achievement. From pupils who achieved national sporting recognition, to those who showed leadership in extra-curricular clubs, to young people who demonstrated kindness and perseverance through personal and

family challenges, we try to highlight the diverse talents and qualities that make Linlithgow Academy a great school. Our end of term newsletters is a great place to start to read about school life and the accomplishments of our young people:



Our recent Awards Ceremony was also a powerful reminder that success is not defined just by exam grades alone. The evening showcased a wide range of achievements, with awards given not just for academic excellence but also for contributions to sport, creativity, citizenship, leadership, resilience and service to the school and community.

Exam Success in 2025

This year's attainment results reflect the hard work and determination of our pupils.

In S4, an impressive 94% of pupils achieved five or more National 5 qualifications or equivalent, up from 93% in 2024.

In S5, success reached record levels, with 75% of pupils achieving five or more Highers or equivalent – a significant increase from 68% the previous year.

In S6, achievement remained consistently high, with over 94% of pupils leaving with at least one Higher or equivalent, a notable rise from 87% in 2024.

These results place Linlithgow Academy pupils among the highest achievers in West Lothian and reflect both academic strength and the determination to overcome challenges and achieve.

Achievement Across School Life

Pupil achievements in 2024–25 spanned a wide spectrum of

disciplines, showcasing the depth of talent across the school:

Chess Champions



Debating and Public Speaking: Runners-up in the West Lothian Schools Debating Competition.

Sport: Champions in West Lothian athletics, national skiing, and regional football, finalists in Scottish senior netball and other major tournaments.

STEM and Computing: High rankings in national computing competition, chess winners, F1 In Schools National Champions, engineering challenge success, with pupils placing among the top 10% worldwide in the BEBRAS challenge.

Enterprise and Creativity: Social enterprise projects, including a football awareness initiative and a business club supporting charity, received national awards.

Performing Arts: Pupils achieved distinction in music exams, represented Scotland in international dance events, and contributed to community arts projects.

Leadership and Citizenship: Through the Pupil Parliament and ambassador roles, pupils influenced school culture, promoted equality and championed sustainability.

Follow all the news and events at Linlithgow Academy:
<https://linlithgowacademy.westlothian.org.uk/>

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

2025

These achievements, alongside countless personal milestones, reflect Linlithgow Academy's commitment to nurturing the whole person and recognising excellence wherever it is found.

SCQF Gold Ambassador Status

In addition to these achievements, Linlithgow Academy has been named West Lothian's first Gold Ambassador School by the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) – one of only around 30 schools across Scotland to achieve this prestigious recognition.



Gold Ambassador Award

Gold Ambassador status is awarded only to schools that can demonstrate they recognise wider achievements, enhance senior phase pathways and promote equality between vocational and academic qualifications. It reflects a whole-school commitment to inclusive, flexible and forward-thinking education, embedded across curriculum design, leadership, and community engagement. As a Gold Ambassador School, Linlithgow Academy offers a wide array of opportunities tailored to pupils' ambitions. This accolade underlines Linlithgow Academy's role as a leader in providing ambitious, inclusive and responsive education for every learner.

Recognising Achievement Every Day

Celebrating success at Linlithgow Academy is not limited to once a year. The school's culture of positive relationships places recognition at the heart of daily life. Pupils are celebrated not only for academic progress but also for living out the school's vision and values, whether through our Vision and Values postcards, certificates, '3pm emails' or simple moments of recognition in the classroom and beyond.



F1 in schools, Scottish Championships 1st and 2nd

An S2 pupil shared: *"I got a Vision and Values postcard for helping someone in my class. It made me feel noticed and it gave me more confidence to keep trying."*

This commitment ensures that achievement is inclusive, recognising both the big milestones and the small daily acts of effort, resilience and kindness that make a difference in the school community.

Building a Culture of Respect and Resilience

Positive relationships remain the cornerstone of life at Linlithgow Academy. We want staff and pupils

to work together in an environment built on respect, inclusion and encouragement.

This strong foundation allows pupils to thrive academically and personally, overcoming challenges and finding ways to succeed in their own right.

Stories of resilience this year include pupils balancing caring responsibilities with their studies, young people discovering confidence through creative outlets and many working together to support peers through friendship, leadership and teamwork.



School staff v pupils darts match

Looking Ahead

As Linlithgow Academy looks to the future, the school remains committed to nurturing every pupil's potential, recognising that each young person has unique strengths and achievements to celebrate. Whether in the classroom, on the sports field, in creative pursuits, or through acts of service, leadership and enterprise, Linlithgow Academy is proud of every pupil and the journey they are on.

Grant Abbot,
Head Teacher





• THE ROSE GO MARCHING ON! •

SPORT ///

Image: Andrew West



A GREAT START TO THE SEASON

Linlithgow Rose have made a great start to the season and the Prestonfield men are looking forward to exciting times ahead. They currently sit top of the Lowland League and will be on Scottish Cup duty in the coming weeks.

New head coach, Darren Wilson, told me:

"We're naturally very pleased with the way we've started our Lowland League campaign. The players have shown great energy and commitment, with goals coming from all over the pitch and a strong defensive effort across the squad. There's a real togetherness in the group, and we've had to work hard against strong opposition to reach the top of the table."

Highlights so far include the derby win over Bo'ness and a convincing performance against Broxburn. Cup competitions remain an important focus too, and the recent victory

over Clydebank on penalties underlined the character and determination within the team. We know there's still a long season ahead with many challenges to come, but there's a real sense of progress both on and off the pitch. With some key additions to the squad and a great buzz around the club, we'll be looking to carry this momentum into what will be a demanding run of fixtures over the winter months, but it is a challenge that we will relish."

Darren's appraisal was echoed by Rose President, Jon Mahoney, who said:

"It goes without saying that we are delighted with the start we have made to the season. We're top of the league having won our last eight league matches on the bounce and scored lots of goals in the process."

"Having acquired the services of Lucas Stenhouse from Livingston FC and Blair Henderson from the Spartans, there is plenty of additional firepower at the top end of the pitch as we head into the autumn. We've also been more resolute at the back and the way that the team has blended so quickly this season is encouraging – albeit there's a long, long way to

go. We had a tasty South Challenge Cup tie against Clydebank which we came through after a penalty shootout - another strong result for the lads having been up against it and trailing in the match until the 94th minute"

Steady progress on the pitch is being matched by developments off the pitch, as Jon explained:

"Off the pitch, we're looking forward to opening the doors on our new club shop inside Prestonfield in the near future. That should make life much easier in terms of picking up all things Rose-related on a match day. We are also delighted at the uptake of our matchday hospitality packages and look forward to that support continuing."

Contact Jon Mahoney on 07849 836511.

ROSE FIXTURES:



4/10/25 –
University of Stirling (H) 3pm
11/10/25 - TBC
14/10/25 – Celtic B (A) 7:45pm
17/10/25 – Hearts B (A) 7:45pm
25/10/25 – TBC
1/11/25 –
Berwick Rangers (A) 3pm
8/11/25 – Tranent (H) 3pm

Murdoch Kennedy



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FOCUS ON FARMING WITH JAMIE SMART

In this issue, we are launching what we hope will be a regular feature in the magazine.

We are delighted that we have been able to enlist the help of local farmer, **Jamie Smart**, for what we are calling **“FOCUS ON FARMING.”**



In the coming months, we will be looking at various issues concerning the local farming community, such as:

Sustainability & climate: how farmers are adapting to reduce emissions, boost biodiversity, and improve soil health.

Local food: the role of Scottish farms in producing quality, traceable food and supporting local supply chains.

Rural economy: farming's impact on jobs, services, and keeping rural communities alive.

Sector challenges: rising costs, policy uncertainty, labour shortages, and the pressure to stay viable.

Next generation: Young people into farming & inheritance tax succession.

Diversification: Any movements to diversify their farms.

Jamie is actively involved in the **National Farmers' Union Scotland (NFUS)** and for many years was their transport specialist. This saw him play a leading role in pushing for improvements to farmer and crofter safety when operating farm machinery and transporting agricultural vehicles and equipment on the roads.

In 2015, as chair of the NFUS Legal and Technical Committee, he headed up UK representation on a European Agri-tech pilot project valued at 30 million euros. This involved representing UK farming interests on a large-scale trial of agricultural technology, feeding in the views of what grassroots farmers need on the ground from the wide suite of technologies currently available.

To lay the groundwork for the forthcoming articles, I met up with Jamie for a chat. He farms two hundred and fifty acres at Balderston, which is on the road to Bo'ness, and grows spring and winter barley, wheat, oil seed rape, and grass to make hay as a cash crop. Some of the barley goes for malting for the whisky industry. His current farm overlooks Loch House farm, where Jamie grew up and first started working alongside his dad, Sandy.

He told me of the many changes he had seen since he left school and went into the family business in 1979 and how he sees the future of farming. These are areas we will be covering in greater detail in “Focus on Farming” in the coming months.

Jamie was very keen to stress the role that farmers play in the wider community and the way they support numerous organisations by providing them with much-needed workspace. For example, Balderston is the base for the Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) and one of the sheds is currently a hive of industry, as members work hard on the sets for their forthcoming production of “Anything Goes.” The farm is also the place where various groups prepare their decorated vehicles for the Riding of the Marches every year and some of its tractors are pressed into service pulling carriages in the procession.

We look forward to working closely with Jamie to highlight the challenges facing farmers in the local area and trust that this feature will be a welcome addition to the magazine.

Murdoch Kennedy



THE SPIRIT OF LINLITHGOW

Bruce Jamieson



A misspelt street name tribute to the closed distillery.

Don't you just love the descriptions given to whisky by expert connoisseurs? Here is one specialist's description of a whisky distilled in Linlithgow – a 19-year-old St Magdalene, bottled in 1998, at a cask strength of 63.8% ABV.

"The nose is of beeswax polish and rosin, with shades of ripe nectarines and fragrant, drying hay after a rain shower. There's also a light dusty element like the thinnest veil of coal dust and also perfumed elements, reminiscent of dolly mixtures, cherry blossom, pancake batter and baby oil." (Dave Broom)



A bottle of this particular product can still be purchased for £2790 – even although, just four years after the 19-year-old whisky was first casked, St Magdalene Distillery closed, after 185 years of existence. It had been opened in 1798 by Adam Dawson – the owner of Bonnytown Farm where he had set up an even earlier distillery, growing and malting his own barley and using a pure source of spring water.



Adam Dawson was Provost of the Burgh from 1830 – 1848. He died in 1873 and is buried in St Michael's Kirkyard.

For a while, both plants were in operation but Dawson later focussed on St Magdalene – near the site of a medieval chapel and close to where an annual Holy Fair was once held. The distillery carried on a whisky-producing tradition in the town where there had once been five distilleries in operation – the biggest created by Sebastian Henderson, using natural spring water from the Bulzion Well – situated in the same area as St Magdalene.

Adam Dawson was a much-respected individual – one of the first in Scotland to apply for a legal distilling licence and chosen to be the spokesman for the

Lowland distillers in their campaign to get the same exemptions from excise duty granted to Highland distillers.

He was followed as owner of the distillery by his brother, John – who also served as Provost, from 1855 until 1869. He was a very hands-on employer who took a keen interest in the St. Magdalene establishment, personally involving himself, for example, in the reconstruction of the large factory chimney which had blown down in a December storm.



St Magdalene from the south showing the reconstructed chimney.

Dawson's Distillery was visited in 1889 by Alfred Barnard who was researching every distillery in Britain (129 of them in Scotland) in preparation for his mighty tome on the subject.



Above, St Magdalene Distillery. Below, Alfred Barnard.



Barnard entered through "a large gateway on the Edinburgh Road", was welcomed by Alexander Kerr, the manager, and shown the West Maltings – a huge

building 124 feet long, 75 feet broad and five stories high. There, he witnessed a two-horse-power engine being used to hoist large quantities of barley up to the grain loft.

He saw how the water supply was obtained from a reservoir in a field on the south side of the Union Canal, alongside which a wharf had been constructed for unloading consignments of grain and peat. The 60-feet long kiln, floored with "wire cloth" was in full use – its furnaces, powered by a mixture of peat and coke, being used to dry and impart flavour to 1300 bushels of malted barley. A smaller maltings and associated kiln stood to the east and he was shown how the liquid output of both buildings was taken to two wash stills holding 3500 and 4800 gallons respectively, the contents being constantly stirred by an overshot water wheel.

He was told that all the ingredients required to make the end product were sourced fairly locally: water from springs in the hills above the town and a 300-foot-deep artesian well; peat from Slamannan Moor; coke made from coal mined near Bonnytown and barley from West Lothian farms.



Linlithgow had a long connection to barley, being given the keeping of the official Scottish barley measure – the firlot – now in the local museum.

Barnard was able to taste the raw spirit in "The Ball Room where the Safe and Sampling Apparatus were housed". Finally, he was shown the 19 bonded warehouses where hundreds of casks were slowly maturing the "St Magdalene" and the "Linlithgow" single malts.



Security Officer T Clydesdale guards the casks in the 1970s.

He was, at the end of his tour, able to taste

a whisky bottled in 1875 and declared it "slightly peaty and a very acceptable dram" – a slightly more enthusiastic appraisal than that given in a "Falkirk Herald and Linlithgow Journal" of the same period, "The flavour imparted to the produce is neither harsh nor so offensive as peaty whisky can be. So far, the quality appears to be somewhat satisfactory."

St Magdalene continued to expand, eventually employing a workforce of some 40 men who produced 7000 gallons of the amber liquid every week. In the early 20th century, the distinctive, pagoda-shaped towers (called Doig Ventilators after the inventor) were added and they were opened and closed to control the density of peat smoke.

Later, although the distillery still used some peat, the output became more like the typical, unpeated, Lowland malt, often described as "light and fruity". Some locals who were not keen on the product libellously suggested that the drink was made using water from the canal! Union Canal water was actually used in the distillery, but only as a cooling agent. The actual H₂O used in the manufacturing process came from Loch Lomond.



Coal and coke were delivered to the Distillery's own railway sidings.

In 1895 the A and J Dawson concern became a limited company with a capital of £70,000 divided into 2,800 preference shares (in Dawson hands) and 4,200 ordinary shares of £10. The first directors were J. R. Dawson, J. M. Crabbie, spirit merchant of Leith, and George Robertson, wine merchant of Edinburgh. When it went bankrupt in 1912, the distillery was bought over by the Distillers Company Ltd who also owned Rosebank, Glenkinchie, Clydesdale and Grange. Latterly, most of St Magdalene whisky was used for blending – primarily in outputs from John Walker and Sons Ltd. of Kilmarnock and William Greer and Co. of Glasgow.

The company tried hard to keep up with the times and cater for the tastes of the day, using a laboratory at Glenochil to experiment with different ingredients and processes. From 1949 this Research Outstation was managed by TV “personality scientist”, Magnus Pyke.

For the distilling regime, the original worm tubs were converted to copper condensers and they produced annually an output of 1.3million litres

of spirit. In the 1970s, the distillery stopped the malting of grain on site and instead obtained malted barley from the Glenesk Maltings in Montrose.



The St Magdalene staff in 1975. Among the workforce are Tom Peacock, Ronnie Hastie, Dick Snedden, Tom Stokes, William McMeechan, Bobby McQueen and John Packman. In the centre is the manager, Ian Garden, and to his left, behind the cask, is Jim Duncan - the father of Davie Duncan, Linlithgow Town Crier for 32 years.

However, times were hard and competition fierce and so, amidst economic turmoil, the distillery was closed in 1983. United Distillers, later Diageo, now hold the rights to any remaining casks of St Magdalene whisky and they occasionally release a rare vintage such as a 1978 cask, bottled in 1998. Yours for £7500. In 2004 a 30-year-old “Linlithgow” was released. At only £1700,



it quickly sold out and only the tasting notes remain: “a bold, jammy attack with citrons and lemon marmalade. There are underneath notes of linseed, olive oil and ashes with a hint of cloves and nutmeg.”



Also gone are some of the distillery buildings. The malting barn, kiln and Doig Pagodas remain as listed buildings but the rest was converted in the 1990s to residential apartments.



Memories still remain of the industry whose staff regularly took part in the Riding of the Marches. Forbes Walker remembers them wearing blue dungarees with the letters SMD in red letters on the front. He was told, when a youngster, that the letters stood for “Some Mair Drink”!

The world's biggest collection of St Magdalene/Linlithgow whisky is held by a Swedish train-driver, **Tomas Karlsson** who owns 212 different editions of the brand - over 400 bottles in total!



Just before submitting this article, I discovered this item on ebay: “An empty bottle which once contained 30 year old “Linlithgow” malt whisky, and exported to Japan, £625.” Check your cupboards!



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SNIPPETS FROM LINLITHGOW

The Annual Linlithgow Ladies' Choir Bursary

The Linlithgow Ladies Choir are delighted to announce that we are again able to offer a bursary to help a young person with their musical education. The Linlithgow Ladies Choir is a well-established community choir that has been delighting the town with its singing for 21 years. We hold two concerts a year and also sing at local events, care homes and the like. The choir is made up of 80 ladies of all musical abilities who enjoy singing together. One of our aims is to encourage people to enjoy and develop their musical talents and it is with this aim we established a bursary in memory of two former choir members, Hazel Briton and Sandra Jackson -Bass.

The choir aims to award one annual bursary of £300; The purpose of the bursary is to assist the successful applicant to achieve their musical goal. The bursary could be used to pay for musical tuition, instrument costs, sheet music, travel to lessons or similar. Last year's successful applicant used their bursary to pay for singing lessons

Applicants should be aged 18 years or younger, of any gender and live in Linlithgow and the surrounding area. They would have to demonstrate dedication and motivation to study of any musical discipline, whether formally or informally.

In awarding the bursary the choir will take into consideration the difference the award will make to the successful candidate and how this small bursary will aid the candidate with their musical education

Interested applicants can find an application form via the choirs' Facebook or Instagram pages. Local primary and high school music departments have also been sent information about the bursary. All applications will be treated in strict confidence. Applications should be made by submission to the choir secretary before the closing date of 31st October 2025. After consideration, it is intended that the award will be made by Christmas 2025. The Choir looks forward to seeing the aspiring young musicians Linlithgow applications for consideration for this exciting venture.

TESCO (Regent Centre)

New trolleys with refundable £1 coin locks have been introduced by Tesco. The change comes as a result of customer feedback which includes cars being damaged by trolleys in the car park and trolleys being abandoned around town.

Tesco have also said - We work with a company called Trolleywise to collect our lost trolleys. The best way to let us know about them is using their app, available on iOS and Android.



THE SUPER SCRIBBLERS

JOINTLY RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY THE SUPER SCRIBBLERS - PUPILS OF SPRINGFIELD AND LOW PORT PRIMARY SCHOOLS.



Springport Coffee Co. Launch A Collaboration Between U-Roast Coffee, White Dove Café and Springfield & Low Port Primary Schools!



Get ready for a flavourful Saturday!
U-Roast Coffee has teamed up with Springfield and Low Port Primary Schools to create Springport Coffee Co. – a coffee brand brought to life by the pupils themselves.

Where? Linlithgow Frigate Night Market, located within the Low Port Centre

When? Saturday, 18th October 2025

Time? 12:00 – 6:00 PM

The P7's at both Springfield and Low Port Primary Schools are excited to introduce a hands-on, collaborative enterprise with our local coffee shop White Dove. They are working together to brand, market and sell organic, fairtrade coffee beans to our local community.

This initiative is designed to nurture creativity, teamwork and entrepreneurial



thinking as pupils take ownership of every stage—from designing packaging and crafting a marketing strategy

to managing sales and customer engagement. The goal is to generate a profit, which will first be reinvested into growing and improving the enterprise business. Towards the end of the school year, a portion of the earnings will be theirs to spend/donate, and some will go to the next P7 year group to continue the business.

Our P7 pupils will be running the stall, selling both whole and ground coffee beans, and sleeves of coffee pods from

U-Roast Coffee, at a fair price. This project is more than just coffee –it's a hands-on lesson in financial education, teamwork, and entrepreneurship. We're proud to represent our schools and share our hard work with the community.

Come support us, grab a bag, and taste the passion behind every bean.

Our brand name has been voted on and the winning name is 'Springport Coffee Co'. The sales team at SpringPort Coffee Co would be grateful if you could take 1 minute to fill in the short market research survey, using the QR code, to help us determine which stock will sell best at our upcoming markets.



HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT SCOTLAND

Thanks this month to Rachel Sydeserff, District Visitor and Community Manager at Historic Environment Scotland, for providing us with an update on what has been happening at the Palace and Cairnpapple Hill.

We asked Rachel about a number of aspects of the popular historic attractions and Rachel has been able to report:-

THE PALACE

At Linlithgow Palace, we have seen visitor numbers increase every year since lockdown, and feedback from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive.

Visitors come from all over the world to our sites. Many visitors are from the United States of America, but also Canada, Australia and New Zealand, South America and Europe. Visits from Scotland and the rest of the UK also make up a large percentage of our visitors.

What brings visitors to the area - Outlanders tours etc?

Yes, certainly, Outlander tours are popular. However, we have found that most people visit independently, for all kinds of reasons. Many are interested in Linlithgow Palace's connection to Mary, Queen of Scots and want to follow in her

footsteps. The architecture of the Palace is really impressive, so many people come to visit the building, as well as to learn stories about who built it and who lived in it. We also have our living history programme and events, including the extremely popular Spectacular Jousting, which are both a huge draw for families.

VISITOR NUMBERS

In 2015, the Palace saw 66,324 visits while in 2024 this number had increased to 84,549. In recent years, we have noticed that our visitor numbers are steadier year-round with a less pronounced summer and winter split.

We have also gradually increased the staffing levels at the Palace to continue to provide a high standard of welcome to all our visitors. We are continually looking at ways to improve the visitor experience, and in 2023 we launched a new audio guide in English and Scots which has received positive feedback from visitors.

We are also working with the local community to explore ways to commemorate the 500-year anniversary of the Battle of Linlithgow Bridge next year.

Cairnpapple Hill

For the past couple of years, Cairnpapple Hill has been opened seven days a week during the summer season, making it easier for people to visit. Cairnpapple Hill was also not affected by our High-Level Masonry inspections and remained fully accessible while some other properties had temporary access restrictions in place.

This year, we invested in new interpretation at the site which has received fantastic feedback from visitors. Not only are we seeing a huge growth in the number of visitors to the site this year,

but many visitors have also been sharing positive experiences from their visits on social media.

Cairnpapple Hill generally attracts visitors who have a particular interest in prehistory or archaeology. We also see many visits from our Historic Scotland members and Explorer Pass holders who are looking to maximise their visits in the area.

How is the marketing done?

We carry out a wide range of marketing activity throughout the year. This includes our Historic Scotland Members Guide,

leaflets and maps for both members and Explorer Pass holders, and our Historic Scotland magazine which is sent out to members four times a year and features a range of sites in each issue.

On the Historic Environment Scotland website, there are detailed listings for each of our properties in care and we often feature our sites on our social media channels and blog, sharing news and information on events via email marketing and working with destination marketing organisations in the region.

Annual events and exhibitions, such as Spectacular Jousting at Linlithgow Palace, are marketed through large campaigns which include a mix of online and offline marketing

The Spectacular Jousting event on 28th and 29th June this year sold out with 12,136 tickets sold in total.

If possible we can perhaps touch also on the scaffolding - why it has been needed, what good work has been done, when will it be taken down?

Whilst we do have some scaffolding and barriers in place, visitors can access the majority of areas in the Palace.

We currently have two scaffolds erected at Linlithgow Palace. The scaffold on the external north elevation allows us to address masonry deterioration across the North Range of the Palace which is believed to have accelerated due to significant historic fire damage. We are currently progressing with the first phase of works which includes re-pointing and stone repairs. As each phase of works is completed, areas of the scaffolding will be dismantled.

The other scaffold is erected on the south courtyard where works to the courtyard masonry are taking place following our High-Level Masonry inspection of the site. A programme of works in the courtyard is currently underway and we have carried out stone repairs to the Courtyard and Great Hall.

We have since been able to remove barriers to two thirds of the courtyard, and in August, we were pleased to be able to reopen the mid-north stair, northeast stair, and east entry pend to the courtyard. We are currently undertaking a tactile inspection of the wine cellars and once complete, we hope to reopen them to visitors.



Rachel Sydeserff



Linlithgow Peel and Loch provide a green space for locals and visitors to enjoy, with activities organised by our Rangers also taking place, and we welcome regular learning visits from schools, universities and other learning groups interested in learning about a range of topics from



Folk Fae Lithgae **REBECCA HOLMES**

Australian-born Rebecca Holmes first came to Linlithgow in 2007 and for her and her family, the town is now very much home.

"I'm a country girl at heart," she explained, "and I love the small-town vibe, where you always run into somebody you know. It's a wonderful community, with lots of people willing to help each other."

Well known locally for her photography business, which is now based in a lovely studio at 129A High Street, Rebecca has had a lifelong passion for music and musical theatre.

She grew up in the small town of Newborough, eighty-six miles southeast of Melbourne.

"I was on stage when I was three," she told me. "I was involved right through school for many years, firstly dancing and then as a musician. I played flute and piano and a few other things. I got into youth theatre as a teenager and absolutely loved it, working my way

through and becoming a leader. I later studied professional musical theatre at the National Theatre Drama School in Melbourne."

In Australia, Rebecca met her now husband, **Dave**, a Scotsman who was born in Kirkcaldy and grew up in Edinburgh, and decided to move to the UK with hopes of pursuing a musical career.

"Professional theatre life wasn't really conducive to a family and having a life, so I ditched that as a professional career. The whole way through, I'd been doing photography, which my dad taught me when I was sixteen, so I picked that up and that's what I do professionally. I also run photography courses and do some singing teaching."

The pull of performing has proved too strong for Rebecca, as she explained:

"I realised that I was really missing music, singing, and performing, so I first joined the Ladies Choir and then I moved into LAMP (Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions). Now, I also go and perform at the Edinburgh Fringe every year with

Captivate Theatre. I absolutely love it, because I got all the enjoyment out of musical theatre, without having to worry about using it to put food on the table."

In February of this year, Rebecca took over as President of LAMP and she is now gearing up for the adult company's production of **"Anything Goes"** at the Linlithgow Academy Theatre from the 21st to the 25th of October.

"I'm told that your first show as president is always stressful, because you need to make sure that all the ducks are in a row. It feels like a big deal. It's also exciting and it's incredible what we manage to do in the weeks leading up to the show to make sure that everything is in place."

Rebecca is very proud of the impact that LAMP has on the community, particularly for the young people involved, whose numbers are at a record high. She told me:

"Being part of LAMP teaches them teamwork, project management and problem solving, confidence – basically it teaches them life skills, and I can't think of another subject that gives that to kids as much as drama does. One of the reasons I took on the President's role was to make sure that LAMP goes into the future, not just for the adults who also get those skills out of it, but for the kids who are perhaps not getting the opportunity in school"

Rebecca is one of the Angels group of dancers in "Anything Goes" and is delighted that she is tap dancing again for the first time in twenty years.

"I was a really good Tapper," she revealed.

She is very excited about being on stage again with what she describes as *"my LAMP family."*

Further details about the production can be found on page 26 of this issue.

Murdoch Kennedy



Senior School Students Careers Information Advice and Guidance notice from Scottish Government

Interested in a career in planning? Come and join us for a free career day at the Scottish Government on Thursday 23 October 2025. Attendance is open to anyone who is interested in a career in planning. You can register by emailing DirectorPAR@gov.scot stating your name, current role and age (must be 16 or over). Closing date to register is 10 October

We will send you an email confirming your attendance. For security reasons you will not be able to just turn up. Closer to the day of the event, you'll be sent some information. The event will take place in Victoria Quay, Leith, Edinburgh but we will not be able to cover your transport costs or lunch

ASPIRE LINLITHGOW MYSTERIES AND HOW TO SOLVE THEM

“Without mysteries, life would be very dull indeed” said Charles de Lint. Here at the Aspire Linlithgow fundraising campaign, we have several tantalising mysteries waiting to be revealed over the next few months. Even better, you get to do some of the solving!



On Friday 24th October, Edinburgh Theatre Arts return to the Rose Club. The audience at last year's murder mystery night begged us to book them again, and we always aim to please! ETA's new production – ‘The Committee’ – will immediately appeal to any of us who have endured a committee bore once too often.



A highly entertaining night is in store, with doors opening at 7pm for a 7:30 start. Tickets are available on Eventbrite via the QR code and will

shortly also be available in Far From book shop. The cost of £17.50 per head (plus booking fee for online purchases) includes a light supper. All profits go to our A House for the Town campaign to transform Cross House.



Next up is a choir so new that we don't know who they are! What we do know is that Linlithgow Rock Choir's concert at 7:30pm on Tuesday 25th November in St Michael's Church will mark their first public performance – and that under the experienced leadership of Jennifer Scouller they'll wow us with their enthusiasm and pzazz as they sing hits

from Motown to Maroon 5.

Donate as much as you decide on the night, with all proceeds going to our Project 600 campaign to put the church building right for the 21st century.



Another favourite back by popular acclaim is our raffle for Christmas hampers. What will the 20 hampers contain, and who will win? Well, the contents will definitely deserve the ‘luxury moniker’, and you'll have to be in it to win it! Tickets will be available from early October at £3 each, or 4 for a tenner. Follow us on Facebook to uncover what's going on and maximise your chances.

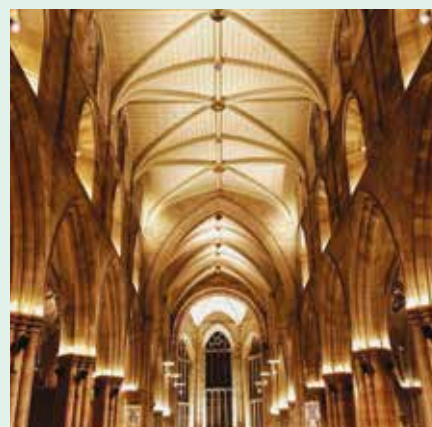
Then there's our ongoing book sales held on Saturday mornings from 10am-12:30pm in St Michael's Kirk Hall and managed by our retail supremo Tim Brown. With upcoming sales on 18th October and 13th December, together with a special sale of board games during the Advent Fair on 29th November – the big question is how much can you help Tim add to the £5,400 this year's sales have already contributed to the Cross House funds?

Bigger Mysteries

Your support for our events is fantastic and unwavering - and has contributed an amazing total of £27,000 to our fundraising for St Michael's Church and Cross House during 2025 alone. That gives us a great platform from which to launch into the deep waters of major grant funding.

We're currently finalising major applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and to Church of Scotland central funds for Cross House. For Project 600, applications are heading to Historic Environment Scotland and, again, to the Church of Scotland general trustees.

Incidentally, St Michael's Church will be closed for a month from 28th September to allow stonework surveys and repair work to take place.



Our enlarged Linlithgow and Avon Valley Parish now includes St Ninian's Craigmalen in Linlithgow plus Torphichen Kirk and Avonbridge Church along with St Michael's. Avonbridge has great potential to offer a hub for the whole community, and Torphichen is a historic B-listed building, but both require significant spend – just how significant is currently under investigation. We hope to develop creative options to fund the works on these unique and important buildings.



What responses will we receive to these funding applications? Can we successfully juggle all the balls? These are mysteries that await answers over the next few months. In the meantime, with deadlines flying around life will be anything but dull. Watch this space to find out how we get on!

Alan Miller

Aspire Linlithgow Campaign Leader



THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO CHRISTY LEFTERI

"Sometimes we create such powerful illusions, so that we do not get lost in the darkness".

This is a deeply moving and evocative novel that explores the trials, vulnerabilities and hardships faced by refugees, fleeing from the war-torn city of Aleppo in 2011.

We follow the lives of Nuri and Afra, a Syrian couple who are struggling with the devastating consequences of leaving their homeland and their resulting journey across Europe. Lefteri crafts their narrative expertly and sensitively, inviting the reader to identify not only with their plight but also with the personal grief and conscience that surrounds their every thought and action.

Nuri is a beekeeper while his wife Afra is a talented artist. The novel moves between two timelines –

their journey as refugees where life is constantly in motion and their present situation, where they are held in limbo, in the UK, where they are seeking asylum. Through their memories, we are also given insight into the ease and beauty of their lives before the Syrian Revolution. They were a family surrounded by friends and a community, who lived in comfort, and who appreciated the vibrancy of the landscape and nature which surrounded them.

"I think of the field in Aleppo before the fire, when the bees hovered above the land like clouds, humming their song. I can see Mustafa taking a comb out of a hive, inspecting it closely, dipping a finger into the honey, tasting it. That was our paradise, at the edge of the desert and the edge of the city."

The novel has some roots in Lefteri's experience of volunteering at a refugee centre in Athens. She herself is also a child of Cypriot refugees which adds an additional layer of understanding and comprehension towards the experience of the refugees. Fleeing one's country is a profound and forceful experience which shapes and transcends the generations that follow. Through the novel, Lefteri shines an illuminating spotlight on a provocative and charged situation that remains current through world events in the years since her novel was first published.

"I imagined that there was no war, that we were really going to see our sick aunt, and that when we arrived the houses and the streets and the people would be as they always were. This is what I wanted: to be with Afra in a world that was still unbroken."

For Nuri and Afra, the act of becoming a refugee, of being displaced from their country, robs them of their identities and sense of belonging. Each has developed their own response and coping mechanism for processing the harrowing situation that has been thrust upon them. They are doing their best to work together in their struggle to survive - to adapt and adjust in an unfamiliar and broken world - where the usual laws and regulations are inverted. It is not always easy for them to know who to trust. This is made all the more difficult by the fact that all around them are refugees, in similar plights and on similar journeys, each working through their own personal hell on earth.

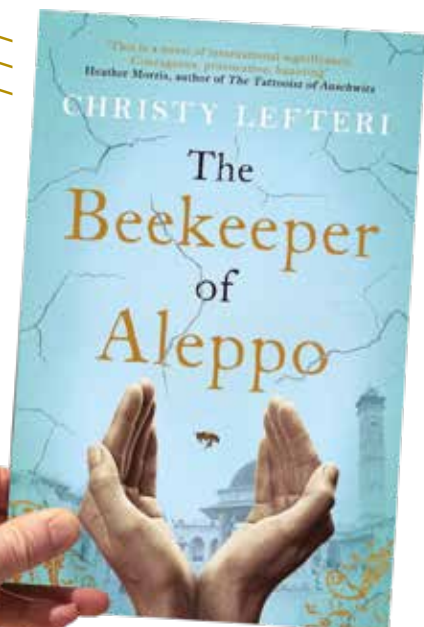
"Sometimes I think that if I keep walking, I will find some light, but I know that I can walk to the other side of the world and there will still be darkness. It's not like the darkness of the night, which also has white light from the stars, from the moon. This darkness is inside me and has nothing to do with the outside world."

The *'Beekeeper of Aleppo'* is a beautifully written, expertly crafted novel, which offers a powerful and compassionate insight into the harsh, unstable reality of life as a refugee within a modern world.

"Away to the moon, away to another place, another time, another world, anywhere but here."

Lisa Nettleton

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



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BURGH BEAUTIFUL AND THE SUMMER OF 2025



Whew! We have had some hot weather which means lots of watering for our teams of volunteers and from Alan Agnew who waters our hanging baskets. I think I can sincerely thank all these people for their contributions to the marvellous display they have given us despite the heat.

The canal bed, just north of LUCS, is looking splendid and the team who looks after it is grateful that the perennials planted in this bed need a lot less watering than the previous annuals. The flowers attract lots of pollinators making this bed extra important.



Another success has been the hanging baskets. We changed the selection of plants this year to include: 'hot pink', 'giant purple' and 'heavenly blue' trailing petunias (surfinias), light blue trailing lobelias and double yellow calibrachoas. There are also some dichondra 'Silver Falls' but these are not too obvious! Lots of sunshine and dedicated watering both helped.

In June there was our annual plant sale when the selection of plants proved to be a winner and helped us to raise considerable income to offset our expenses.

We have had some high winds and these brought their problems with branches being snapped and requiring to be removed.



Many people will have noticed the wonderful display of wildflowers if you walk along the canal past the Xcite centre. The project was started by **Averil Stewart** in March 2016 when a grant from Foundation Scotland Comic Relief Fund enabled the purchase of environmentally friendly and attractive wildflower plants to soften the visual impact of the new ramp. Once the flowering plants were established, the slope levels have been cleared every year by a "hit squad" from Burgh Beautiful. This acts to impoverish the soil and restricts the growth of rank grasses which would otherwise out-compete the flowering plants. We have now found 64 different flower species as the meadow has developed over the years.

This year we will be cutting back and removing the growth on **Saturday September 27th at 2pm**. Please come along if you can for an hour or so, to help keep this site beautiful. You will need garden shears, a rake if you have one and maybe something to kneel on.

**SAT
27
SEPT**

A really special achievement by three Burgh Beautiful volunteers has been at Rosemount Park with the development of an arboretum. The site now includes three of the rarest trees worldwide. As well as a considerable collection of trees native to Scotland some non-native, but naturalised specimens have been planted. The QR code on the interpretation screen at **Rosemount now links directly to the Rosemount Park and Site of Carmelite Friary - Linlithgow Burgh Trust page.**

This shows an updated map of the park with 90 different tree species there. The text has been updated to include details of the work done at the Friary to grass over the surface. On the same page is a full list of all the trees with their common and botanical name, the country of origin of the tree species and its position in the park by "what3words".

Some horticultural advice: capsid bugs (that eat the leaves and leave holes with a brown edge that can kill the plant) is rife on Viburnum Tinus in Linlithgow. One can spray them but if you do not like using chemicals, you can also cut the plant back to allow new growth. At Mill Road, two plants were removed and another cut back: likewise, at the Water Yett, a plant was cut back, while the Viburnum Tinus has been entirely removed from the beds at the St Michael statue, partly because of the capsid bug problem.

Advice from another volunteer is about how all the townspeople can help: when putting out bins please do not lean them against planters as plants are then squashed; take your litter home; weeds are a problem – if your frontage is weedy consider pulling them up. It all helps to support Burgh Beautiful's volunteers and improves the look of the town.

Jean Long
Contact: bbl@lbt.scot



VETERANS WILL BE HONoured IN THE MASONIC HALL

The Linlithgow Lodge of Freemasons (Ancient Brazen 17) is opening its doors on Remembrance Sunday, November 9th, and inviting veterans and their families to come along for refreshments and a chat.

It is hoped that people attending the Remembrance service in St Michael's Parish Church will call into the Masonic Hall in Market Lane on their way home for teas and coffees and the opportunity to share stories.

The man behind what is being described as a "Veteran Memorial" is Lodge member, **Lieutenant Colonel Jamie McMeechan**, who has strong family connections with Linlithgow. At this year's Riding of the Marches, he took part in the ceremonies with the Fraternity of Dyers and together with the **Deacon of the Dyers, Alistair Old**, laid a wreath at the war memorial in Blackness.

Lieutenant Colonel McMeechan told me: *"We are inviting the community to swing by together in an afternoon dedicated to the remembrance of our veterans."*

"Our Veterans' Memorial gathering will be held at the Linlithgow's Masonic Hall, a venue that has been an integral part of the local community for over one hundred years. Friends, families, and neighbours are warmly welcomed to share stories, enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, and take time to remember those who have served."

He continued: *"Following the morning's formal ceremony at St Michael's Church, the afternoon is designed to*



be a relaxed and friendly occasion – a chance to meet old friends, catch up with familiar faces, and extend a hand of gratitude to the men and women who have worn the uniform."

"The Lodge Ancient Brazen, with its long history at the heart of the town, is proud to open its doors for this occasion of fellowship and remembrance. It's an opportunity for everyone, young and old, to join in, pause together, and reflect on the sacrifices that continue to shape our freedom today."

Although Linlithgow has now lost all its veterans of the First and Second World Wars, there are people living locally who served in other conflicts. There are also many in the community whose relatives served. Lieutenant Colonel McMeechan's grandfather – **Jimmy "Puffer" McMeechan** – was one of the hundreds who rallied to the colours of the 14th (West Lothian) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery, which saw service in the Egyptian, Libyan and Italian theatres of the Second World War. Several members of the Regiment made

the ultimate sacrifice and are featured on the war memorial in St Michael's Church. Men like **Gunner James Gilroy** from Linlithgow Bridge and **Lance Bombardier**

Thomas Bell from Bridgend, who were both killed at Tobruk. They still have relatives living locally, as do many of the one hundred and thirty fallen from the First World War. In recent years, various families have painstakingly researched the stories of their relatives who are on the war memorial and have even visited their graves in France and Belgium.

Lodge Ancient Brazen would be delighted to see any mementoes or memorabilia that relatives could bring along on November 9th and a warm welcome is extended to all.

Murdoch Kennedy



THE FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES AT ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Since 2017, for one weekend in December, the magnificent St Michael's Parish Church has been decorated and lit up by church, community, and school groups for the annual Festival of Christmas Trees.

This year is no different and the event will run from Friday 5th - Sunday 7th December. On Saturday 6th December, there will be a quiet hour, with no flashing lights or music playing, between 10am and 11am.

All money raised throughout the weekend goes to charities. Last year's beneficiaries each received over £3,000 from the event. This year's charities are still to be decided, as is the theme. It seems that participants like having a theme to work around, and this is still being discussed.

Groups wishing to take part this year should contact the organisers as soon as possible, so that a space can be allocated to them. Space is limited and it is a good idea to register your interest early. Just send an email to Margaret Johnston, whose email address is maggij@sky.com. She told me:

"Last year, the numbers were at the maximum the church can hold. We had a waiting list and if anyone decided to withdraw, then we would go to the list. Once all the trees are reserved, we will not be able to take anymore."

The 2025 Festival of Christmas trees promises to once again be a fantastic event, and Margaret and her team can't wait to welcome you all along between 5th and 7th December. **MK**





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Year 2025

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MICRONEEDLING: THE UNDERRATED SECRET TO YOUTHFUL SKIN

Looking for smoother, firmer, glowing skin without invasive treatments?

Microneedling with EPN (Electroporation) also known as **collagen induction therapy** is the beauty world's best-kept secret because of its natural results, minimal downtime, supercharged skin serum and long-lasting results.

An easy and effective go-to treatment for glowing, revitalised skin when done by a trained professional, who will also guide you on aftercare and share essential do's and don'ts to get the best results.

WHAT IS MICRONEEDLING AND WHO IS IT FOR?

Microneedling is a skin treatment that uses tiny needles to create controlled micro-channels in the skin. This stimulates the body's natural healing process, triggering the production of collagen and elastin helping the skin repair, remodel, and renew itself for a healthier, more refined appearance.

It can be beneficial for anyone looking to improve scars, large pores, fine lines, wrinkles, pigmentation and or overall skin tone and texture.

WHAT IS MICRONEEDLING WITH ELECTROPORATION (EPN)

The Electroporation (EPN) Pen is the world's first medical-grade device to combine microneedling with electroporation technology. Whilst the microneedling creates controlled micro-injuries that stimulate the natural production of collagen and elastin, the electroporation applies gentle electrical pulses to temporarily increase cell membrane permeability, allowing serums, even those with high molecular weight to penetrate more effectively into deeper dermal layers.

This dual-action approach not only enhances collagen induction but also maximises the absorption of active ingredients, resulting in faster, more noticeable outcomes with minimal downtime. Safe and minimally invasive, the EPN Pen represents a significant advancement in aesthetic treatment technology.

BENEFITS OF MICRONEEDLING WITH EPN

The combination of microneedling and electroporation (EPN) provides a comprehensive approach to skin rejuvenation, offering the following benefits:

- > **Collagen & Elastin Renewal** – Stimulates the natural production of structural proteins, leading to firmer, tighter, and more elastic skin.
- > **Enhanced Serum Absorption** – Electroporation drives medical-grade serums deeper into the skin, maximising their effectiveness at a cellular level.
- > **Improved Texture & Tone** – Smooths roughness, refines pores, and creates a more even complexion.
- > **Reduction of Fine Lines & Wrinkles** – Softens visible signs of ageing by accelerating dermal repair and renewal.
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- > **Safe & Minimally Invasive** – Suitable for most skin types with minimal downtime compared to more aggressive procedures.

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- > **12 Vitamins** – to protect, nourish, and revitalise the skin.
- > **24 Amino Acids** – to strengthen skin structure and function.
- > **5 Essential Minerals** – to support enzymatic activity and balance.
- > **4 Coenzymes** – to optimise cellular energy and metabolic processes.



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PLANT SALES CHART'S TOP SIX

Which of our plant sales chart's top six are you growing in your garden or allotment?

Looking back at our hardy plant sales this year there are some varieties that stand out as top of the pops in our sales charts, they are all shrubs or hardy perennials. Most of them include several different varieties of the same plant. So, for example, **Lavenders are No.1** with about twenty different varieties, some hardier in our cold climate than others. We always believe that we kill more lavenders than any other plant but we still love to replace them because of their colour and fragrance. They are generally fairly short lived unless you clip them regularly and they certainly will not live long unless you give them a sunny and very well drained position.



This is the well-behaved variety **Hidcote** that is a good blue and quite compact. Clip off the spent flowers stems in summer and shear back last year's growth in late spring making sure each stem still has some silver leaves showing.

No.2 in the charts must be the Hardy Geraniums.

During the year we offer over 30 different ones, from very low ground covering varieties like *Geranium sanguineum* varieties to this delightful vigorous sprawling one called **Rozanne**. She has a



very long season of flowering from June to September because she doesn't produce seeds which would end that season's flowering. Pollinators still visit the flowers to feed. You can choose a

variety for growing in sun or partial shade, in colours from white, pink, blue and purple plum. They are so easy and not fussy.



Plant breeders have created so many varieties of **Heuchera**, most of them chosen for their lovely leaves in colours from green to golden, orange, red and purple. Many of them have showy flower stems which

are great to include in flower arrangements as feathery fillers. They do very well in pots and being evergreen their winter displays are very welcome. This is the lovely variety **Marmalade**.

Also in our top six are Hydrangeas and oriental Hellebores.

There are so many different varieties of both these plants. The **Mop-head and Lace-cap Hydrangea macrophyllas** have a great range of flower colours, blue in acid soil, red in alkaline (limy) soils with different leaf and stem colours, this group for sale show a range of the colours available. They demand a damp soil,



and the name *Hydrangea* comes from the Greek 'Hydor' meaning water. 'Macrophylla' means large leaved.

There is an amazing range of hybrid **Oriental or Lenten Hellebores** available. Different varieties flower from November through to late March. They are easy and provide dramatic flowers during the lean winter months.

Last but not least is the group of **Rhubarbs**. Where on earth are you all growing different varieties of **Rhubarb**? They are easy and very long lived but we still sell hundreds each spring! Forcing them in the dark of a **Rhubarb Forcer** in January gives an early crop to pull in March.



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DON'T FORGET THE GARDEN!

AS THE COOLER WEATHER AND SHORTER DAYS COME THERE IS A RUSH TO BUYING CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND DECORATIONS BUT THERE ARE LOTS OF BULBS AND PLANTS HERE TO STILL DECORATE YOUR GARDEN.

‘Moving For Good’ at Linlithgow Academy

Pupils now Move for Good at Linlithgow Academy with the new Active Travel School Hub launched.

In a partnership between Linlithgow Academy, Forth Environment Link Scotland (FEL) and Linlithgow Community Development Trust (LCDT), a new Active Travel School Hub has opened for the start of the school year.

The Hub promotes the joy and benefits of active journeys: building confidence, improving health, encouraging independence, and helping pupils connect with their local area.

Our new **Schools Officer, Joe Clare** will be on-site at the Academy three days per week to deliver activities and training to encourage people-powered journeys, including walking, wheeling and cycling. He will support pupils and staff to explore and promote all the ways we can be more active in our day-to-day journeys. Joe introduced the new School Hub first at house assemblies and then with a two-day road show to give S1 pupils a chance to try out different activities. Joe joined FEL Scotland after beginning his career as a primary teacher in Dundee and we are delighted to welcome him to Linlithgow as part of the LCDT active travel team.

Grant Abbot, Head Teacher at the Academy has shared his excitement for the project:

“Linlithgow Academy is delighted to partner with LCDT and FEL, bringing the first active travel school hub partnership to West Lothian. This is an exciting and new opportunity for our young people to cycle, scoot and wheel as part of everyday life. Pupils will be able to take part in events and activities such as our new Cycling Ambassadors group, earn SQA qualifications in cycle maintenance, and borrow bikes through our Bike Buddies scheme. We believe this partnership is about more than bikes – it’s about healthy habits, life skills and connecting our young people to their community.”

FEL Scotland has been running eight other school hubs across Stirlingshire and Clackmannanshire since 2018. These hubs provide safe, supportive spaces to help young people build confidence in travelling actively and



independently. Schools with Hubs have seen more children walking, cycling or scooting to school instead of relying on cars.

We all know that being active and spending time outdoors has big benefits for physical and mental health. It also strengthens community connections and helps embed sustainable habits that support our response to the climate emergency. But beyond the big themes, our focus is simple: helping pupils build happier, healthier and more independent lives. The aim is a solid foundation where active travel becomes a consistent part of school life.

With this in mind, we plan to build closer links to support the Academy’s catchment primary schools so that pupils going to high school are ready and raring to go with shared experience and skills in travelling actively.

This is all part of a wider movement for good (excuse the pun). It has been inspiring to Winchburgh’s new Bike Bus (@winchburghbikebus on Instagram), organised by a group of parents to get their wee ones to school by bike in joyful, colourful journeys. PlayWorks in Armadale have also started a walking bus called Play on the Way that brings a creative and fun start to the day for school pupils.

As noted in our last article for our community magazine the volume of traffic on the High Street in Linlithgow remains a challenge when it comes to encouraging people young or old to travel actively. We are encouraged to see a local concerned parent start a new petition at [change.org](https://www.change.org) calling for traffic calming measures

outside Low Port primary school (linked at end of this article). As a community we need to have these conversations about how our town is designed and organised.

To support wider discussion, LCDT, West Lothian Bike Library and West Lothian Climate Action Network have started a regular forum. It is open to everyone to share ideas and concerns about how we support each other to travel more actively.

We are always very keen to hear from everyone in the community about things you’d like to see change in the town to help people walk, wheel and cycle more; or for activities you might like to try. At the start of this new project we are also particularly keen to hear from parents and teachers at local schools who want to improve how children can travel more actively.



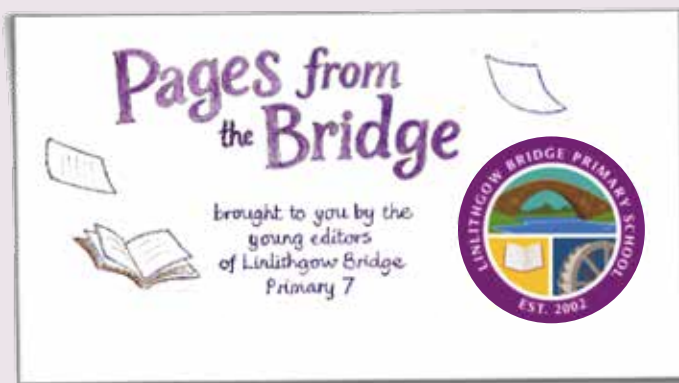
Please do get in touch with your thoughts and ideas by emailing luke@trust-linlithgow.org.uk

Link to new petition at [change.org](https://www.change.org/p/support-traffic-calming-measures-outside-low-port-primary-school) <https://www.change.org/p/support-traffic-calming-measures-outside-low-port-primary-school>

Luke Collins Move For Good active travel Project Manager

Linlithgow Community Development Trust.





A Literacy Showcase from Linlithgow Bridge Primary School Collated by Primary 7

Reporter: **Fearne Sneddon**

Photographer: **Robbie Sneddon**

Welcome from Primary 7

"We're proud to present the first edition of Pages from the Bridge, a celebration of reading and writing across our school. Every class has been busy exploring books, sharing ideas and creating wonderful written work. We hope you enjoy reading about what we've been up to!"

Fearne Sneddon, P7 Reporter

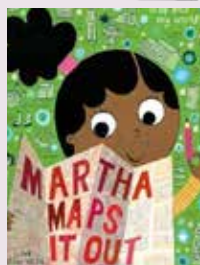
Primary 1: Exploring Feelings Through Stories

P1 have been reading *The Color Monster* by Anna Llenas and *Our Class is a Family* by Shannon Olsen, using these stories to talk about emotions and link them to our school values of **Kindness, Respect, and Responsibility**. They've been finding strategies to manage feelings and building a strong sense of classroom community.



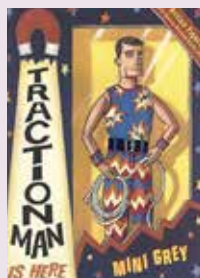
Primary 2: Mapping Our World

Inspired by *Martha Maps It Out* by Leigh Hodgkinson, P2 have created their own maps and leaflets in preparation for their upcoming trip around Linlithgow. Their writing has focused on **information and layout**, helping them communicate clearly with others.



Primary 3: Adventures with Traction Man

P3 are reading *Traction Man is Here* by Mini Grey and have been writing imaginative stories using **descriptive language**. They've designed new outfits for the hero and invented exciting new characters to join his adventures.



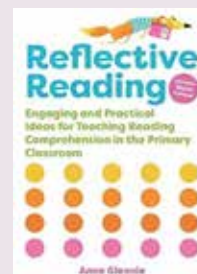
Primary 4: Romans on the Rampage

As part of their topic on The Romans, P4 are reading *Romans on the Rampage* by Jeremy Strong. They've been working on **sentence structure** and making their writing more interesting. Before reading, they made predictions about the story, showing curiosity and inference skills.



Primary 5: Reflective Readers

P5 have been using the **Reflective Reading programme** to explore an advert for a job on a school newspaper. Their work focuses on **critical thinking and comprehension**, helping them become thoughtful readers. They are



also currently reading *The Tiger Skin Rug* by Joan Haig.

Primary 6: Thoughtful Reflections from The Wild Robot

P6 are reading *The Wild Robot* by Peter Brown and have shared some reflections:



"The book shows me how families can be different."

Robyn

"All families are different."

Rory

"Do not discriminate against others."

Jacob

"Express your emotions."

Damon

Their discussions show engagement with the story's themes of **identity, belonging and empathy**.

Primary 7: Remembering Through Reading

P7 are reading *The Missing* by Michael Rosen, a moving non-fiction book about the author's search for family members lost during World War II. The book includes **reflective poems** at the end of each chapter, helping pupils connect emotionally with history and prepare for their upcoming WWII topic.



Looking Ahead This edition marks the beginning of our journey to share literacy learning with the wider Linlithgow community. As we work towards the **Scottish Book Trust's Gold Reading Schools Award**, we're proud to showcase the joy of reading and writing across our school. We look forward to sharing more in future editions—and we'll be sure to let you know if we achieve the award!



MAKING MUSIC 2025

LINLITHGOW STRING ORCHESTRA IN AN EXCITING COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

SUN
9
NOV



As we move into our 2025/26 season, the Linlithgow String Orchestra is preparing to celebrate 10 years of music-making in the community. At the same time we are about to embark on our most ambitious project to date. We were successful last year in our application to become an amateur music group paired with a composer for the duration of 2025 and in January we were able to announce that we have been assigned to work with Edinburgh-based composer, Deborah Shaw aka @AuroraEngine.



Hailing from Shildon, County Durham, the historic 'Cradle of the Railways' Edinburgh-based Shaw has been collaborating with the Linlithgow String

Orchestra as part of Making Music's Adopt a Music Creator 2025 programme to create a new composition to mark Rail 200- the bicentenary of the railway's birth in the UK.

Taking inspiration from both the physical power and deep social impact of trains, the composer has collaborated with the orchestra to develop the new work, and from live field recordings of George Stephenson's 'Twizell' locomotive to capture the breath, hiss, and heartbeat of steam in motion, the rhythmic undulation of a moving engine, and the textures and timbres of the steam age- purring pistons, sighing valves, and the mechanical sounds of locomotion.

Beyond the industrial, the composition explores the wider legacy of the railway: its role in the Industrial Revolution and its environmental impact. Musical influences evident in the work include folk, jazz and blues. The piece will chime with those



holding an interest in the local history of Linlithgow Station, one of the oldest in Scotland.

The work is funded and supported by Creative Scotland and Making Music the driving force behind the Adopt-a-Creator scheme, supported by the PRS foundation and includes mentorship from Scottish composer, Ailie Robertson. Support from LNER and the Rail 200 project will also enable us to offer free entry to our audience members.

This creative process is an exciting new experience for the string orchestra, which has become known in recent years for its varied programmes and collaboration with other local Linlithgow groups including the Reed Band, the Ladies Choir and St Michael's Church Choir. Bill Jones, who also directs the music at St Michael's, is keen to develop community projects and this year's opportunity is one to savour.

"What makes this project particularly special is that it falls in the orchestra's 10th year since it began in 2016. We have a number of brilliant events planned for 2026 and we are particularly proud to support music in the Linlithgow community, to encourage young string players and develop further links with other choirs and ensembles."

Linlithgow String Orchestra's Autumn

Concert featuring the World Premiere performance of "Engine Shed" by Deborah Shaw will take place on **Sunday, 9th November at 7pm in St Michael's Parish Church, Linlithgow EH49 7AL.**

Bill Jones Music Director,
Linlithgow String Orchestra

References:

Rail 200 - <https://www.lner.co.uk/about-us/rail200/>

Linlithgow String Orchestra -
<https://linlithgowstringorchestra.uk/>

Deborah Shaw
<https://www.auroraengine.com/>



ALL ABOARD FOR LAMP'S UPCOMING PRODUCTION OF *ANYTHING GOES*!



Linlithgow Amateur Musical Productions (LAMP) is once again ready to set sail this October with their latest show, Cole Porter's timeless musical *Anything Goes*. Packed with dazzling dance numbers, witty dialogue and some of Porter's most beloved songs, this timeless musical will sweep audiences away on a voyage of laughter and love.

Set aboard a luxurious ocean liner in the 1930s, the story follows a cast of colourful characters - including nightclub singer Reno Sweeney, lovestruck Billy Crocker and the endearingly comical Moonface Martin - as they encounter mistaken identities, hilarious mishaps and unexpected romances. With show-stopping tunes such as *I Get a Kick Out of You*, *You're the Top* and of course *Anything Goes*, this LAMP production is sure to make waves with the whole family.

This year's show features a gifted cast, blending familiar LAMP favourites with exciting new talent. **Fiona Scott** stars as the dazzling Reno Sweeney, delivering charm, energy and a powerhouse voice showing her standout performance as Sister Mary Roberts in *Sister Act*. Making his LAMP debut, **Mark Wilson** takes on Billy Crocker, capturing the character's romantic misadventures with wit and charisma. Also new to the LAMP stage, **Mhairi Urquhart** shines as Hope Harcourt, bringing poise and elegance to the role, while **Zander Cruickshank** livens up Lord Evelyn Oakleigh with humour and show-stopping musicality. **Karri Byrne** portrays the sophisticated Mrs Harcourt, blending refinement with playful humour, as **Paul Hopkins** brings charm and a touch of comic intrigue to Elisha Whitney. Returning to the LAMP stage, **John Knox**

delights as Moonface Martin, the bumbling gangster whose antics keep audiences laughing alongside **Karine Stalker**, who adds warmth and comic flair to Erma - offering a delightful contrast to her role last year as the rapping elderly nun Mary Lazarus! The cast also features LAMP favourites **Jack Wallace** and **Becky Blyth** as the comical Spit and Dippy, **Gregor Preston** as the affable Captain and **Ally Brown** as the meticulous Purser. Rounding out the ensemble are the Angels (**Caitlin McCall**, **Izzy Holmes**, **Alice Redding** and **Rebecca Holmes**), a male singing Quartet, a team of talented Tappers and a troupe of dazzling Dancers, all bringing energy, humour and spectacle to the stage.

Rehearsals have been full of energy and fun; balancing complex choreography, delivering beloved songs with flair and capturing the high-spirited energy of the production. *"We have really enjoyed the choreography this year...it has been a fun challenge for us all"*, says the LAMP Team. *"We have also loved singing Cole Porter's legendary songs"*. This year's adult company auditions opened the door for even more community members to shine on stage.

At the heart of this high-energy production is a talented production team guiding every note, step and laugh. **Hannah Easton** returns to the director's chair for the fourth time, bringing her wealth of experience - having been a dedicated LAMP member since age nine - to steer the show with both expertise and creativity. **Eddie MacLennan**, as musical director, ensures Cole Porter's iconic score bursts with vibrancy and precision, while **Hayley Fleming's** choreography adds dazzling, tap-filled energy to every scene. Together, this team guarantees that *Anything Goes* will be a whirlwind of music, humour and show-stopping entertainment,

capturing the spirit of 1930s glamour and the fun-loving chaos of the ocean liner setting. The production team hopes the audience will get a kick out of this year's show!

After last year's acclaimed production of *Sister Act*, which audiences described as *"the most wonderful show"*, LAMP is almost ready to hoist the curtain on their latest production. One of LAMP's most cherished features is their live band which will help bring Porter's music to life. Behind the scenes, a dedicated costume, scenery and backstage crew are working tirelessly to ensure every detail from the 1930s is perfect. This musical accompaniment, combined with LAMP's signature strong vocals and the hard work of the backstage and costume crew, promises an unforgettable night of entertainment. *Anything Goes is 'delightful... delicious... its delovely'.*

Tickets for *Anything Goes* are now available through the LAMP website, via QR codes spotted around town, or by calling the box office directly to avoid booking fees. Don't miss your chance to step aboard this lively voyage where the magic of live music, dazzling performances and the spirit of community promise a truly memorable theatre experience. Join us at the Linlithgow Academy Theatre from October 21st to 25th.



SHOW DETAILS:

Dates:

October 21st-25th

Times: Nightly at 7:30 pm, with a Saturday matinee at 2:30 pm

Venue: Linlithgow Academy Theatre
Show rating: PG

FROM
**21-25
OCT**

Tickets: Book via the website;
<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/linlithgowamateurmusicalproductionsboxoffice>
or using the QR Code below.



Anchors aweigh!
Team LAMP



FOUR MARYS BUS SHELTER ARTWORK TO REMAIN

The colourful artwork on the west bus shelter outside the Four Marys in the High Street is to remain in place.

As featured in the July edition of the magazine, artist Nicola Atkinson decorated the bus stop over a three day period back in May, originally on a temporary basis, as part of her Beautiful Materials (Vessels) exhibition which ran in the Burgh Halls over the summer.

In early September Nicola explained - As you might guess I am feeling a little sad that my exhibition is coming down on 21 September. It has been such a great experience of meeting people and sharing ideas.

I have some good news. I have been asked not to take down the Vessels bus shelter. I am thrilled that it will live on in the High street and many people have expressed relief that it is going to remain.

I was just in Benbecula (Outer Hebrides) for a holiday - I was able to transform the storm shelter with a single Vessel, creating a marvellous connection to Linlithgow.

Images: Linlithgow High Street (top) and Benbecula.



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Club of Linlithgow Grange

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Saturday 8th November 2025
Linlithgow Sports Club, EH49 6AB



in aid of local charities & good causes

Tickets £25 pp
Taste at least 5 Gins

(drivers are free and we have soft drinks)

For your tickets contact Findlay on 07795 040608

An event promoted by The Rotary Club of Linlithgow Grange Benevolent Fund in support of local good causes.
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Linlithgow and District Art Group



Art Exhibition &
Sale
Saturday 4th October
10am - 4pm
Low Port Centre
Linlithgow
Meeting Room 3/cafe
Complimentary
Tea & Coffee
Childrens Art Corner,
Painting Raffle
Come along
All Welcome



SPOOKY LANE IS BACK FOR 2025!



**SAT
1
NOV**

Be very afraid...

We are thrilled to announce that the fourth annual Spooky Lane event will return on **Saturday 1st November 2025** for a night of ghoulishly good Halloween fun for all the family.

This year, Shoemakers Lane in Linlithgow will once again be transformed into a terrifying trail of cobwebs, skeletons and mystical creatures – in aid of the Bowel Babe Foundation and other local causes.

But don't worry – there's something for everyone! From 5.00–6.00pm the lane will be open for our youngest visitors, with a gentler, less spooky atmosphere and some friendly fiends on hand to guide families safely through the fun. From 6.30–8.00pm, the scares step up a notch with darker corners, eerie sounds, and the chance to bump into some unexpected characters.

Along the way, you can enjoy:

A decorated, lit-up spooky lane

Hot chocolate to keep your courage up halfway through

A children's disco

Tasty hot dogs and marshmallows for hungry adventurers at the end

Thanks to the generous support of Cala Homes, who proudly sponsor the event, every penny raised from ticket sales goes directly to the fight against bowel cancer. Over the past three years, Spooky Lane has already raised more than £4,000, showcasing Linlithgow's incredible community spirit.

The unique atmosphere of Spooky Lane shines through in the words of those who've braved it before:

"Events like this make Linlithgow a great place to live."

"It was brilliant and an absolute credit to the efforts of those who organised and marshalled the event. Top effort – 10/10!"

Join the fun:

Date: Saturday 1st November 2025

Location: Shoemakers Lane, Linlithgow (What3Words: flutes.cheering.pavement)

Times: 5.00–6.00pm – lighter, quieter, family-friendly fun

Kathryn Holm



J WALKER CARPETS (Previously 2 The Vennel)

Jim and Eleanor Walker closed their shop at the end of August after 27 years on the High Street - Our shop has closed, but our business hasn't! Thank you to all our wonderful customers for your support - past, present & future. We can't wait to keep serving you in new ways! Contact Jim : 07773 345 270

WHAT A DAY AT 'BELLSBURN' BOWLING CLUB



We're thrilled to share the success of our Annual Charity Event in support of Marie Curie.

With 24 teams of Pairs competing in the full day event. Including members and friends from Linlithgow's amazing community groups playing.

The Provost and their teams from the Deacons Court, the Fraternity of the Dyers, the Round Table, the Rotary Club, the Woman's Rural, Linlithgow BC, Bathgate BC, Kinneil BC, and Bankton Mains BC.

The green was buzzing with energy, laughter and generosity. Winners of the event were **Ewan and Gordon Snedden**, both ex Juniors of Bellsburn BC.

Runners up were **Alan Monie and John McLaughlin**. Professor **Iain Woodhouse** awarding the finalists.

The Hector Woodhouse Trophy donated by Martin Godley, our local Podiatrist.

A great day was had by all and this was enhanced by our wonderful weather!

Brian McKendrick
President Bellsburn BC



Clearer mind, clearer vision: how looking after your eyes and ears supports mental wellbeing



Specsavers

When we think about mental health, our eyes and ears may not be the first things that come to mind. But how well we see and hear can have a huge impact on how we feel every day.

Ahead of World Mental Health Day in October, **Diana Kelly** – store director at Specsavers Linlithgow – shares her advice on protecting not only your sight and hearing, but also your peace of mind.

Stay connected

Diana says: 'When vision or hearing starts to decline, many people find themselves pulling back from social activities because it becomes harder to join in conversations or feel confident in busy places.'

'Over time, this can lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness or even anxiety.'

'Research has also shown a direct link between untreated hearing or vision loss and an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Looking after your eyes and ears isn't just about comfort, but it's about protecting your brain health too.'

'The good news is that with the right support, whether that's new glasses, getting a hearing device or regular check-ups, people can stay connected, independent and confident in daily life.'

Spot the signs early

'Eye and ear health can change gradually, so sometimes it's easy to miss the warning signs.'

'If you're noticing more frequent headaches, difficulty focusing, struggling to hear the TV, or feeling exhausted after social gatherings, it's worth getting checked.'

'An eye test or hearing check doesn't just give you peace of mind, it can also pick up problems early before they begin to affect your wellbeing.'

Small changes, big difference

'Something as simple as the right pair of glasses or properly fitted hearing devices can transform everyday life.'

'People often tell us that once they make the change, they feel like themselves again – more confident, more engaged and less stressed.'

'That's the positive knock-on effect on mental health that we love to see.'

Look after yourself

'Mental wellbeing is about balance. Just as we look after our diet, sleep and exercise, taking care of your eyes and ears should be part of your self-care routine.'

'Regular eye tests and hearing checks are quick, straightforward and can make all the difference. Think of them as essential maintenance for both your health and your happiness.'

To book a hearing or an eye care appointment at Specsavers Linlithgow, call 01506 534 484 or visit www.specsavers.co.uk/stores/linlithgow.

AUTUMN ON OUR ALLOTMENT

LINLITHGOW AND DISTRICT ALLOTMENT SOCIETY



This has been a good year for our allotment despite the long spell of hot dry weather and some very strong winds. Being aware of different weather conditions is important to ensure adequate watering and protection against wind.



Sweetcorn has done particularly well in the lovely summer weather with large, sweet cobs. All soft fruits (berries and currants) and hard fruits (apples, pears and plums) have produced very good yields. And there is plenty of produce still to pick.



It is at this time of year that we plan and prepare for the next season. Weeding, preparing the soil, adding manure and compost, and planning crop rotation of vegetables.

What to do in October

> Harvest cauliflowers, broccoli, cabbage and spinach – good planning of different varieties allows brassicas to be available all year round.

> And there's always kale/kalettes for picking which is a good winter crop. Kalettes are a great crop to grow. Kalettes are a cross between brussel sprouts and kale. They produce little florets all the way up the stem in the same way that brussel sprouts grow. Just break them off and stir fry or steam – delicious! They are very hardy and last all winter.



> Harvest squash and pumpkins. A good test of when they are ready is if the stem has gone brown and hard and a finger nail does not penetrate the skin. Cut the stem leaving about 3 cm attached to the plant. This helps them store better. Pumpkins are traditionally used at Halloween but they are a great crop to keep over the winter for soups, stews and just roasted in the oven. Store in a cool, dry place.

> Some apple varieties are still being picked in October.

> There is still time to plant broad bean seeds to overwinter.

> Winter lettuce can be sown outside and spring onions can be sown under fleece or cloches

> Spring greens can be planted out about 15 cm (6 inches) apart. Spring greens are the first cabbages of the year. They have fresh, loose heads without the hard heart of other cabbages. They can be thinned to 30 cm (12 inches) apart in spring using the thinnings as greens and allowing the ones left to grow on as cabbages.

> When the green fronds of asparagus turn yellow cut them down to the ground. The asparagus bed always benefits from a good layer of mulch (compost, wood chip or manure at this time of year) – about 10 cm deep if possible.

> When the blackberries are finished

fruiting they can be pruned.

> Garlic can be planted up until November.

> Between now and the end of February is a good time to plant rhubarb crowns.

> This is a good time to buy strawberry



runners (plants that have grown from the parent plant) to replace old plants or to fill gaps. Strawberry plants usually only have a life of about four years before they begin to lose vigour and the fruit tends to be smaller and not as abundant.

> Sowing green manure on bare soil will continue to work for you over the winter months.

For those who have an established vegetable garden and want information about what to do each month we have a post on our website that gives growing information, month by month. This is on the left hand side of the home page.



Our website address for LADAS is linlithgowallotments.wordpress.com

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Unfortunately because of the demand for plots we have decided to close our waiting list for the moment. We will let everyone know when the list reopens again.

**Val Corry
Chair LADAS**



KD Facial Aesthetics



Welcome to KD Facial Aesthetics: Expert Skincare and Facial Aesthetics in the Heart of Linlithgow

Linlithgow has just welcomed a new name in advanced skincare and facial aesthetics—**KD Facial Aesthetics**, now open within **Devine Dental**. Founded by experienced dentists and aesthetics experts **Dr Kirsten Hepburn** and **Dr Dayna Campbell**, KD brings over 15 years of combined clinical expertise to clients seeking natural, high-quality results in a friendly, professional setting.

A Shared Vision, Years in the Making

Kirsten and Dayna's journey began at the University of Glasgow, where the two became friends during their dental training. They graduated together in 2012, and shortly after, in 2013, met **Nicole Clarke**, who would go on to become the business manager and a certified SkinPen® practitioner. Their shared passion for aesthetic medicine, coupled with a strong foundation in anatomy and patient care, laid the groundwork for what would eventually become **KD Facial Aesthetics**.

After years of professional development, advanced training, and refining their techniques, the dream became a reality in 2025 when KD Facial Aesthetics officially opened its doors. The clinic now offers a

full suite of cutting-edge aesthetic and skincare treatments from their elegant, discreet base within Devine Dental, right in the centre of Linlithgow.

Experts in Natural, Refined Results

Kirsten and Dayna are known for their patient-first approach, ensuring every client feels informed, comfortable, and confident in their personalised treatment plan. As fully qualified dentists with advanced training in facial aesthetics, they bring a depth of knowledge in facial anatomy that sets them apart in delivering subtle, safe, and beautiful results.

The clinic offers a comprehensive range of non-surgical facial aesthetics treatments, including:

Anti-Wrinkle Injections – Smooth fine lines and reduce dynamic wrinkles for a refreshed, youthful appearance.

Dermal Fillers, including Radiesse – Restore volume, enhance contours, and rejuvenate the skin with natural-looking results.

Polynucleotides – An exciting regenerative treatment that improves skin texture, elasticity, and hydration at the cellular level.

Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) Therapy – Using your body's own healing properties to stimulate collagen and improve skin quality.

Medical Grade Microneedling with SkinPen® – A clinically proven device that stimulates natural collagen production and treats fine lines, acne scarring, and more.

Dermaplaning – A gentle exfoliation treatment to remove dead skin and peach fuzz, leaving skin glowing and smooth.

Nicole, in addition to managing the clinic, is fully certified in SkinPen® treatments and provides a welcoming, knowledgeable presence throughout your skincare journey.

Skincare That Works for You

KD Facial Aesthetics are proud to be **official stockists of two of the most respected medical-grade skincare lines: Zein Obagi (ZO) and Biojuve**. These advanced skincare systems are tailored to your individual skin needs – whether you're managing pigmentation, acne, ageing, or simply looking to maintain healthy, radiant skin.

Each skincare consultation includes a full assessment to ensure your products and treatments are specifically suited to your skin's unique requirements.

A Bright Future in Linlithgow

Joining the Linlithgow community has been an exciting step for the KD team. With a deep appreciation for patient trust and care, Kirsten, Dayna, and Nicole are thrilled to be part of this vibrant town. They are already building strong relationships with local residents and businesses and have even more to offer in the near future, **with plans for additional advanced courses and treatments coming soon**.

Whether you're new to aesthetics or looking to enhance your current routine, KD Facial Aesthetics invites you to experience professional, evidence-based care in a warm and welcoming environment.




To find out more or to book a consultation, visit KD Facial Aesthetics at Devine Dental, Linlithgow or www.kdfacial.co.uk. Your journey to healthier, glowing skin starts here.

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For appointment please call 07596954189.

Thank you for all your support.

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www.podiatryscotland.co.uk Tel: 07596 954189
Email: m.g.podiatry@gmail.com



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Shona McVey - 11th October
Euan Russell - 18th October
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Alannah Colston - 1st November
Kenny Hanlon - 8th November

Sunday 5-8pm
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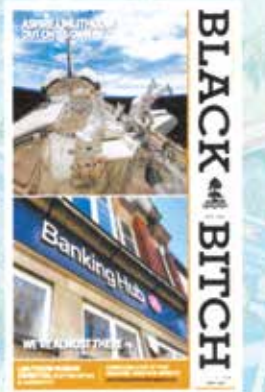


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Thinking of preparing your home for sale or just freshening it up...

If you are thinking of preparing your home for sale or just freshening it up, there are a few generally accepted formulas/ratios you might want to consider when it comes to decoration and presentation.

The “60/40 rule” relates to furniture and floor space. Instead of overstuffing a room with pieces or going way too minimal, you should aim for about 60% of the room to be filled with furniture and 40% of it to be clear to give your eye a visual break from stuff.

The “3-5-7 rule”. The “3-5-7 Rule” refers to the placing of smaller items such as ornaments, pictures and prints and soft furnishing accessories. Essentially it means styling with odd numbers to create an asymmetric but still visually pleasing arrangement of things. Maybe you’ve heard groupings of three can be more visually pleasing to the eye and memorable than perfectly symmetric arrangements.

The “70/30 rule” in interior design. The “70/30 rule” for perfectly balanced interiors. 70% of the room is your dominant style or colour palette (this anchors the space). 30% is for contrast - such as textures, bold accents, or a splash of a different style. It creates visual harmony while making your space feel personal and unique.

Or alternatively:

The “**80/20 Colour Palette Rule**” will help balance any room. The “80/20 colour palette rule” is a design guideline that suggests using one colour scheme for 80% of a room, and a contrasting colour scheme for the other 20% to create balance and harmony. This rule can be applied to single colours or broader colour palettes, such as warm versus cool.

The golden rule for home decor?

At its core, the golden rule most interior designers follow is balance and harmony. This means creating a space where every element complements the others — from furniture and colour schemes to lighting and accessories.

The 2:3 interior design rule is some say the professionals’ secret weapon.

The 2/3 rule (or Rule of Thirds) in interior design is a visual guideline to create balanced, harmonious, and intentional spaces by dividing areas into thirds and placing elements within two-thirds of that space. It applies to furniture placement, artwork, and decor styling, ensuring elements are not too large or too small for the surrounding space, preventing a cramped or disconnected look. The rule can also be used to achieve visual balance by leaving the remaining third for empty space, creating a sense of “breathing room”.

Colour scheme rules provide guidelines for combining colours effectively, with the popular 60-30-10 rule being a widely used method for creating balanced, harmonious palettes by using a dominant colour (60%), a secondary colour (30%), and an accent colour (10%). Other approaches include using colour theory principles like complementary, analogous, and monochromatic colour schemes, consulting the colour wheel, and considering factors like colour psychology and natural light.

The 60-30-10 Rule: This rule is a framework for distributing colours to avoid one colour dominating the space and creating visual interest.

60% Dominant Colour:

The primary colour, often a neutral, that covers most of the space, such as walls, large furniture, or rugs.

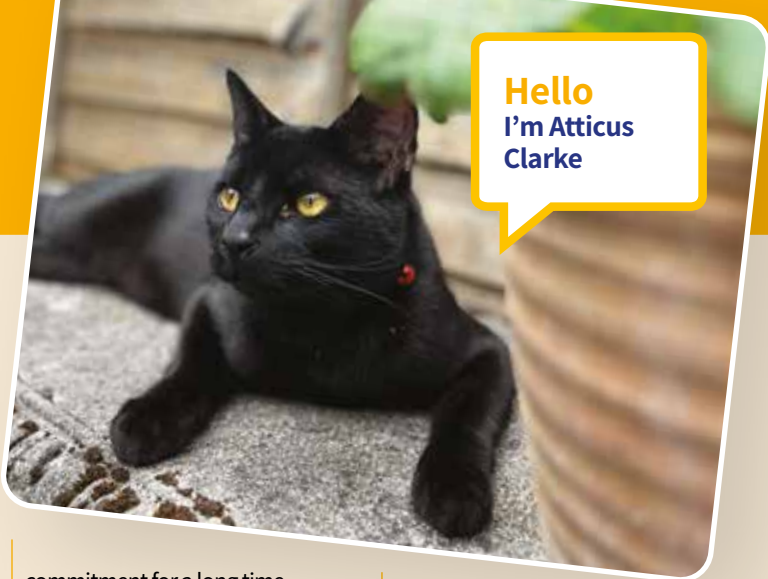
30% Secondary Colour:

A complementary colour that supports the dominant shade and is used on secondary elements like furniture, rugs, or curtains.

10% Accent Colour:

A contrasting or vibrant colour used sparingly to add personality and draw attention to specific details, like cushions, throws, or accessories.





Atticus is a one year old domestic shorthaired rescue cat.

Atticus was adopted from Lothian Cat Rescue when he was ten months old.

His owner describes him as a very affectionate, playful and friendly little cat. He will stick to you like Velcro at times when he wants attention. He is very intelligent and quick to learn new tricks, especially when treats are involved! His owner says he is a lovely little furry black void in the universe.

He has been making his owner smile by teaching her to play fetch with him! Atticus also loves running off with a banana peel! He will wait for his owner to finish peeling a banana so he can jump up and grab the peel, before running off, carrying the peel in his mouth, and have a little nibble of it!

He loves playing in his Ikea cat tunnel. He will carry in one of his toys and hope to have a game with you.

When his owner goes upstairs, he tries to get hold of her hand if she puts it on the bannister - so she has to keep her hands out of the way when on the stairs or Atticus will try to play!

Atticus' favourite toy is the green rope teaser chaser toy which has a bell on it from Moggy Bags! He frequently carries it around, chases and leaps after it.

His favourite place to be is sun puddling near his human, either on the garden patio, or snoozing on a dining chair. He also loves to sleep in the visiting whippet's bed (when the dog isn't there!)

What made you decide to rescue?

Atticus' owner Diana says:

"I've had cats in the past, including rescued ones, and wanted to give a home to a cat needing a forever home. I also know black cats can take longer to rehome."

How is he settling in?

"Atticus made himself at home very quickly and has been investigating outdoors for the past few weeks."

Have you got any advice for anyone considering a foster or rescue cat?

"Having an open mind when going to the rescue centre and considering what would suit your lifestyle. I thought of adopting an adult cat, perhaps about 8 years old, and ended up with a 10 month old kitten! He was clearly wanting to be noticed and wanted lots of attention. After speaking to staff, finding out about his history, and spending some time with him, I decided to adopt him. I have been able to give him the time and attention he has wanted."

"Set up a safe space/room with everything the cat needs. Try to have various spaces for the cat to go to - spots to hide in, high up places, etc so they can choose where they feel safest. Let the cat come to you in their own time. Allow the cat to explore further when they are ready. I used a Pet Remedy plug-in diffuser in the room set up for Atticus so help him feel settled."

Diana makes excellent points in her advice! Taking on a cat, whether it be from a reputable breeder or from a rescue, is a big

commitment for a long time.

Diana did everything right and reputable rescues will help you find a cat which best suits both your home and lifestyle - and the individual needs for that cat.

Being able to spend time with animals in a rescue is also an excellent way to help find the right match. However many rescue animals will need time to bond with you - so prospective owners should not feel disheartened if an animal may be shy, wary, or keep their distance from you on first meetings. Many need time to decompress from changes in their environment and need time to rebuild their confidence with new people and new surroundings.

Cats Protection have excellent advice available on their website on adopting a cat and cat care: <https://www.cats.org.uk/help-and-advice>

Team Westport is always here to help! Westport Vets are available 24/7 with Westport24 Out of Hours Emergency Service available at the Linlithgow practice.

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