

seatonscene

Winter 2016



In this issue:

REGENERATION MATTERS
POCKET PARKS
FRIENDS OF SEATON PARK
OUR PLACE, OUR
PRIORITIES

www.shmu.org.uk/press

Image: Gordon Grieve

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This stunning photograph of a preening kingfisher was pictured in the River Don estuary by Aberdeen photographer, Gordon Grieve whom is noted for his nature pictures. Kingfishers fly rapidly, low over water, and hunt fish from riverside perches.



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editorial

Welcome to the winter edition of Seaton Scene. We hope you enjoy reading this magazine. Inside we have news from Aberdeen City Council Communities Team, ACT Aberdeen, Seaton Park Buggy Walk and Friends of Seaton Park.

Seaton Scene is put together by the good people of Seaton and we need your help to fill the pages. Staff at shmu are on hand to help out with anything you need so please don't hesitate to get in touch.

If you would like to get involved in the next edition of Seaton Scene then you can phone shmu on **01224 515013** or email **laura.young@shmu.org.uk**.

Meetings are held at Seaton STAR Flat on Fridays at 1pm on the following dates:

First meeting – 24th March

Second meeting – 7th April

Content deadline – 21st April

Proof – 28th April

Supported by





Regeneration Matters

Real lives, real needs, real people – working together for change

The Regeneration Matters Group celebrated their 10th anniversary this year and at their residential review from the 1st and 2nd of October reflected on the work they have covered over the past 10 years. The group's first meeting was held at the Town House on the 23rd of November 2006.

The group formed after a meeting held in the previous year (2005) to discuss the potential development of a city-wide regeneration forum, the meeting followed on from considerations by the community representatives of the Great Northern Partnership (GNP) Board. The focus of the group would be:

Enable cross community working and integration on issues of common interest and concern

Have a strong and unified voice with a focus on community regeneration

Share information, good practice and plans for developments

Improve communication across communities

Improve communication and consultation with service providers/agencies

Increase their capacity to influence and develop/improve services within their communities

Have a focus on change, improvement and action and not to be a 'talking shop'

Since 2006 the group has rebranded and changed from the Community Regeneration Forum to the Regeneration Matters group and has members from each of the regeneration areas which include: City Centre, Cummings Park, Mastrick, Northfield, Middlefield, Seaton, Tillydrone, Torry and Woodside.

Seven members of the group are also on the Fairer Aberdeen Board which allocates £1.6m of funding to over 50 projects/organisations

in the regeneration areas. These projects include the Community Flats in Seaton, Tillydrone and Cummings Park, Pathways, shmu, St Machar Parent Support Project and the credit unions etc. Further details of the projects can be accessed in the following link: www.communityplanningaberdeen.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Fairer-Aberdeen-Annual-Report-2014-15.pdf

The Regeneration Matters group also co-manage the Community Support Fund, this fund is for community individuals/groups to access small amounts of funding for training, travel to conferences, awareness days, galas etc. It also funds the printing and delivering of the community magazines in the seven regeneration areas.

If you wish to place any information in the magazines, then please contact Laura Young at shmu on laura.young@shmu.org.uk. Remember the community magazines go out to 23,900 homes covering the seven regeneration areas, three times a year.



OUR PLACE, OUR PRIORITIES

Community Planning in St Machar

The Communities team would like to thank everyone who gave up their time to come along to the Our Place, Our Priorities event on the 8th of October.

We were delighted at how many local people, agencies and volunteers that came along.

At the event the participants were asked to identify 3 key priorities themed under the headings Our Place, Our People, Our Economy and Our Technology. These priorities will lead to a draft of a Locality Plan for Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton.

Some of the priorities were identified as:

Place

Need to improve the bus routes and regularity
Safe / improved play spaces and hang out areas

Fly tipping and mess in the community

People

Widening the knowledge of what is currently available

Strengthening and building better communication links

Improved access to cheap / healthy food and healthcare facilities

Economy

Employment

Modernisation and redevelopment of the area

Youth activities

Technology

Free Wifi

Support and education of how to use the internet safely

Make technology relevant to all

As part of the process of drafting

the Locality Plan for Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton, we programmed a series of visits and meetings where we checked with community members that the priorities identified reflected their views.

This was to give those who didn't attend a chance to comment and gave those who were at the event an opportunity to share more views.

You can find out more about the Locality Plan for Tillydrone, Woodside and Seaton by visiting our TillyWoodSea Facebook page. If you would be interested in taking part of the new locality board please contact emcpherson@aberdeencity.gov.uk or call 01224 346 372



Buggy Walk

The Seaton Park Buggy and Sling Walk has been running for around three months now. Claire moved to the area in March and walked through the park a lot during her pregnancy. Like many first time mums-to-be she was a bit concerned that she didn't know that many people with young babies to relate to. She knew her social life was about to change dramatically and thought she better start widening her social circle! She was inspired by Constance Hall's blog, an Australian mum of four who empowers women and families through friendship and positivity. Fast forward a few months and we now have a little tribe of babies and their adults walking around the park on a Tuesday morning, there are about twelve families who dip in and out of the walk. It's great to get some fresh air and exercise and to chat with other people going through similar experiences - all those gummy smiles, endless nappies and sleepless nights! One of the highlights is definitely going for a free coffee or tea at the Brig O'Don afterwards, the business

kindly supports the initiative by providing a free hot drink.

The group is very relaxed and supportive. We meet at 10am at the Don Street entrance, we wait until 10:15 because we know how difficult it can be to be on time with little ones, and we walk for 45 minutes to an hour before refuelling. We usually part ways around midday.

We link in with the Friends of Seaton Park which is a registered charity who dedicated to the development and enhancement of the park and we advertise the walk on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/seatonparkfriends/

When you come for the first time you can be sure of being introduced to everyone before we set off, a warm welcome and plenty of chat. You don't need to commit to coming along every week, you can dip in and out as you please. So...if you're free one Tuesday morning and you fancy some fresh air and friendly faces come and join us!

Email: themamaclara@gmail.com if you have any questions

A walk in the park

Seaton park, Seaton Park
Where children play
And dogs bark
Seaton Park where Mr Therm sits
And mums gather to watch their children
Have a good day

Beautiful flowers
Leading up to the church towers

Many birds can be seen
Even on the ground
Birds of prey
Kingfishers too
A photographer's dream
And make their day

Ducks, seals and otters for all to see
Up and down the river they go
Perhaps with a fish or two
Herons, swans
Beautiful to see
With wings outstretched

A rest you may need
So have a seat
And give the kids a treat

For all can be seen
From the Brig of Balgownie
Right down to the beach

The park has so much to offer
Sightseeing to photography
A walk with the dog
A game of football
Or a go on the swing
And a slide down the chute

Students go to study
And have barbecues with their buddies

What can we say about our beautiful park
But a big thank you
To all the friends of Seaton Park
And all who took part
For making the park
A beautiful place to go

Rosemary Splaine



Triumphant trio. From left: Sheila Gordon, chair of Friends of Seaton Park, head gardener Derek McKay and assistant head gardener Kat Myslek collect the discretionary Royal Horticultural Society Award for Overcoming Adversity at the Beautiful Scotland awards ceremony at Aberdeen's Beach Ballroom on September 15. This year is Beautiful Scotland's 50th anniversary.

SEATON PARK GETS BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM ITS FRIENDS

BY HAMISH MACKAY

The winsome face of Aberdeen's Seaton Park is set to be smiling fairly frequently in 2017 as much-needed regeneration projects reach fruition or are set fair to, as part of a £400,000 investment programme led by Aberdeen City Council.

This year began with much subdued wailing and gnashing of teeth as the River Don spectacularly and very damagingly burst its banks and brought very serious flooding to much of the Park.

Yet, astonishingly, by late summer Seaton Park was again back in the headlines but this time with a distinctly rosy hue for playing a pivotal role in

Aberdeen winning four major trophies in the nation's most prestigious community gardening awards.

And, as Seaton Scene was going to press, Friends of Seaton Park (FOSP) had staged another new event - an "Update Meeting" and CraftFest - to add to its portfolio of off-Park events, primarily CakeFest and Parkfest. The first success of the year came in winning the prestigious Green Flag Award which recognises high standards and the provision of quality outdoor space.

Then came two awards at Keep Scotland Beautiful's Beautiful Scotland awards ceremony held this year at the Beach Ballroom in Aberdeen. The city emerged as the winner in the Top City classification

under the title "Growing Smarter, Granite City Aberdeen". And there was a new award - the Royal Horticulture Society (RHS) Scotland Discretionary Award for Overcoming Adversity which came to Aberdeen in recognition of the massive post-flooding clean-up in Seaton Park.

And more was to come, Councillor Jean Morrison made the long round trip to Birmingham for the RHS's Britain in Bloom UK awards ceremony to be rewarded with Aberdeen winning the gold medal as Top City and the RHS's discretionary award for overcoming adversity at UK level.

At the Scottish event Liz Stewart, the Development Worker for RHS Scotland commented: "As is often the way in times of adversity, the

Friends of Seaton Park and the local community rallied with the Aberdeen City Council staff to restore the Park to its former glory. Hundreds of volunteers turned out to clear the debris left by the floods - many from groups who use the Park regularly but also people from the local community who just wanted to do their bit."

And there was to be yet another award, and perhaps the one most appreciated in Aberdeen. The judges of the Keep Scotland Beautiful "It's Your Neighbourhood" campaign described Seaton Park as "outstanding" and gave it the remarkably high mark of 91%.

Meanwhile, away from the glitz of the awards scene, the face of Seaton Park is irrevocably changing. The Seaton Park Wetland Project should mature in the early summer. It involves draining the former football pitches area on the north side and embraces additional signage and benches, and repair work on paths.

Aberdeen City Council leader, Councillor Jenny Laing, declared that it was only "right and proper" for the local authority to invest in Seaton Park and praised FOSP "who have committed so much energy to the various projects" and the Evening Express, pointing out that the Wetland Project would "hopefully attract an abundance of wildlife" also praised FOSP "who have put so much into turning this vision into a reality."

And as remedial work spruces up the ornamental fountain, just yards away some 70,000-snow white and purple crocus bulbs planted in the fall should provide a splendid crocus carpet come Spring.

COMMUNITY CORNERS TO BE GIVEN GREEN MAKEOVER

Certain areas of Seaton are to be given a green makeover by the Council's environment team.

The underused spaces will be brought to life with landscaping works including hedging, shrubs and trees. There are also further plans to install bird boxes and benches to improve the look of the area.

The work undertaken by the Seaton Backies Project to improve the back gardens in the area has inspired the creation of 'pocket parks' in the community.

Aberdeen City Council's Communities, Housing and Infrastructure Committee convener Councillor Neil Cooney said: "It is absolutely vital that we continue with the movement inspired by the community of Seaton to improve their underused spaces and enhance the environment of the area.

"More and more as our city and communities are developed, it is important to protect greenspace and ensure that our families have access to parks and can engage in outdoor activity."

Led by Aberdeen City Council, the initiative has already seen the first phase completed.

The areas were separated from the backcourts to improve security and provide safer access to the parks.

Grant funding for the remainder of the project is now being sought to complete the works.

The SUEZ Communities Trust is donating £20,000 towards the cost of the project and a further £3,500 is being sought from the council's housing revenue account.



one of the corners that may receive a makeover

The lonely heron ups its profile

After much deliberation, Friends of Seaton Park (FOSP) has chosen the heron as the centre piece of its new logo. Here, in two articles, Seaton Scene records the thinking behind choosing the heron for the logo and a snapshot of the life and times of a solitary and enigmatic bird.

FOSP opt for the heron as its new logo

Lekky Shepherd

Friends of Seaton Park (FOSP) has much grown from our early beginnings in the spring of 2012. We have now held three successful CakeFests, two ParkFests and a CraftFest along with numerous weed-a-thons, bark-a-thons and bulb-a-thons culminating in this October's planting of 70,000 crocus bulbs to flower in time to mark the Park's 70th birthday under Aberdeen City Council ownership next year.

All of these events have been aimed at raising awareness of and support for the park while at the same time gathering funds to help maintain all that is needed to keep the park at its very best. From an early stage, it became clear that a striking logo that could represent FOSP would also help with the work of raising funds and the Park's profile. Now that we have achieved charitable status an identity on which to focus would be really helpful.

So, for more than a year, the Friends have been looking for ideas and trying to develop something that would represent what Seaton Park means to the Friends and everyone who uses it. Easy you would think with a place that offers

so much and is so loved – but no, that's the difficult bit!

For some folk, the best attraction of the park is the play area with Mr Therm, the retired gas engine (away at the moment for his wash and brush up) at its heart. For others, it's the Long or Cathedral Walk - the long formal gardens with their line of circular flower beds leading from the slope below St Machar's Cathedral to the ornamental fountain.

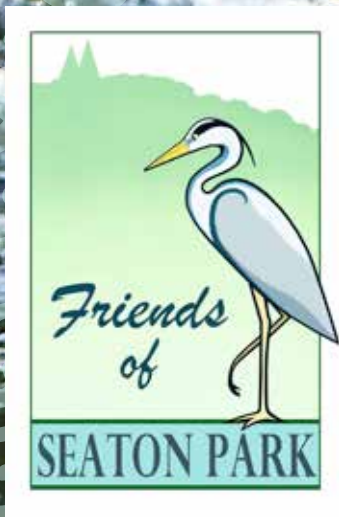
Some people prefer the River Don with its wonderful wildlife, and others the quiet peace of the Walled Gardens and their riots of azalea colour in May. For nearly everyone the great, green spaces of the park are so important - whether it's for kicking a ball around or for the joys of walking the dog.

But no logo could encompass all of these facets of the Park and we have been back and forth over ideas trying to decide what was best. The conundrum was solved for us with help from Sandy Menzies of the Slopefield Allotment Association, who developed the logo for the association and offered to help in our struggles to find the right image.

He suggested basing it on the heron which is so much a part of Seaton Park - often to be seen standing patiently fishing at the edge of the river. A heron would make a good representation of the natural wonders of the park, and, at the same time, could stand for its more formal aspects since two herons are the main part of the decoration around the memorial fountain.

This seemed just the answer we had been looking for and since then I have worked on developing the image of Mr Heron as we've come to call him (though it may well be Mrs Heron we see). He is set against a green background representing the natural landscape, trees and plants of the Park rising up to the twin spires of St Machar's Cathedral. The blue band with 'Seaton Park' at the base gives a suggestion of the waters of the River Don that flow around its edge.

We aim to produce mugs and bags imprinted with this image to use as a fund-raiser and to raise the park profile. We hope they will be something for all Friends to buy as a means of supporting the park.



Jim Splaine Senior

The grey heron is the sentinel of the River Don

Ian Talboys

The River Don is a fantastic wildlife haven which brings many animals close to people when they are visiting Seaton Park, Donmouth or the paths along the river from Persley to the sea.

One of the most frequently seen birds is the grey heron. They often stand motionless in the water - usually at the edge, just waiting for a fish to come past and which they will catch with lightning reactions, for their next meal.

Over the winter time there are more herons along the river - especially when the weather is icy as the River Don will remain free of ice so that the herons can continue to fish. Many of the ponds and lochs they use in the warmer weather will be frozen over.

On a walk from Seaton Park to Donmouth it is not unusual to see six or more herons in the winter and in the summer two or three is around average. Sometimes there

may be none at all or they will be hidden amongst the bankside vegetation or behind one of the islands or they could have just decided to fly away somewhere else!

The grey heron is the sentinel of the River Don so it is very appropriate that the Friends of Seaton Park have adopted this bird as their logo as sentinels of Seaton Park, sharp-eyed and always alert to what is going on!

Bringing Aberdeen City Libraries services to your own home

By Hamish Mackay

Do you know someone who is housebound or unable to use their local library?

Well, Aberdeen City Libraries may be able to help that person thanks to its Home Library Service.

The Home Library Service is a free personal service for people of all ages who live in Aberdeen and are unable to visit their local library due to disability, illness or because they are caring for someone.

The service is available on a permanent or temporary basis - for example while recovering from an operation or illness.

An Aberdeen City Libraries spokesman explained to Seaton Scene: "Our Home Library Service staff visit once every four weeks to drop off and collect items. Although use of the Home Library Service is free, there is a charge for borrowing CDs, DVDs and Blu-ray."

For further information on how to access the service, please telephone: 01224 498930 or email: Homelibrary@aberdeencity.gov.uk And for further information on what is available to you explore more at www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Library.

Notes from Northsea Court Residents Association

The Northsea Court Residents Association is now fully up and running. We have definitely seen a vast improvement to the building compared to the setup last year. We are now looking forward to the New Year and hope to get more residents involved. We now have bi-monthly meetings which are posted in the notice boards by the lifts on the ground floor.

Many issues in Northsea Court that residents have raised have now been resolved, thanks to our housing advisor Graham Walter, from Tillydrone Housing Office. We have seen our common room being renovated and have been told that it just needs new flooring to be laid, we are hoping to get this room up and running for residents in time for Christmas. We have now received Spree Books hoping to help raise funds for the Residents Association so we could host a variety of events for Residents of Northsea Court.

Cameras in the Lifts

Many residents had noticed that cameras were installed in the lifts which is an issue that the Residents Association had raised with Graham Walter. We thought that this was the Council's work, but unfortunately it was not and these had to be removed due to safety reasons.

Many residents in the building noticed a significant difference

to the cleanliness of the lifts and hoped that they were genuine. The plan is to get the lifts renovated and working properly with new cameras and circuit panels installed at the same time.

Tree Planting behind Northsea Court

Residents were not informed of the tree planting at the rear of the building and we raised our concerns with Aberdeen City Council. Our concerns included the possibility that reduced visibility could lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour and could block some residents' views.

We understand that this is a council project that is to plant a 'Tree for Every Citizen', We hope to hear from Aberdeen City Council about this issue and hope to resolve this.

Recycling with Northsea Court Residents Association

We have also received a recycling kit from Aberdeen City Council to keep and use in the common room. We have the black box, white bag (paper and cardboard) and a food waste caddy as well. We also have a box for batteries, as we know these could be recycled into other items. We hope that this will encourage residents to help recycle their waste.

Notes from St Ninian's Church

Contrary to what I wrote in the last issue of Seaton Scene, St Ninian's is still waiting for our new noticeboard to be put up – it seems that builders are in short supply! We wait in hope.

Waiting has been a common theme over the last few months as we have been called to vote in the EU referendum and wait for the results of the American election. Both results were very close and the seemingly inevitable aftermath of division can cause even greater splits to appear, even in our daily life in Aberdeen. Let's not be won over to either side by words which seek to put another person down but to really listen to each other, to try to see how things might be for others as we imagine stepping into their shoes every morning. Our city

needs to be a place where all are welcome, whether we agree or disagree.

Churches are recognised as holy spaces but most of us who walk into church are not particularly holy; we make mistakes; we say the wrong thing; but we make an effort to pray and we notice the difference that can make. Being holy is about recognising the presence of God in all of life, and in all people, whatever our differences. We come together as church to be encouraged to go out and play some small part in making our own community holy space – a place of welcome, sharing and friendship. My encouragement to you comes in a short poem by Lin Manuel-Miranda.

New Services at the STAR Flat

We now have several new agencies visiting the STAR Flat in Seaton who can provide help and support for the local folk.

Councillor Ramsay Milne is with us two afternoons a month to hold his constituency surgery. If you have concerns or problems regarding the local area why not pop past and see if he can help you. Councillor Milne can be found here on the first and the fourth Thursdays of the month between 12.30 and 1.30pm.

On the second Thursday of the month we have Penumbra with us. Penumbra provides a First Response Service. First Response is a service that helps people at crisis point who are feeling overwhelmed with their

problems. Penumbra can help tailor support to the individuals need.

iConnect North East also come to the flat on a monthly basis and are here on the third Thursday of the month between 12 and 1.45pm. If you or someone you know needs help with form filling or self-directed support iConnect can help and advise.

The flat also has leaflets, information posters and phone numbers for many different services and organisations and the administrator is always willing to answer any queries.

Contact 01224 524209 for more info.

Seaton Rehab/ Recovery Project getting along just fine

In the summer of 2016, project clients undertook a programme of exciting events, providing everyone with the opportunity to enjoy fun and action packed activities. Participants got the chance to try out new ventures, often as a team, whilst working on improving their own fitness and wellbeing.

Over the summer months, clients enjoyed swimming at Stonehaven Outdoor Pool, horse riding at Hayfield Riding Centre, handling and learning about wild birds at Huntly Falconry and archery and karting at Deeside Activity Park to name but a few of our adventures!

Everyone who took part in the 10 week programme had a fantastic time (staff included!) and feedback suggested people felt they had really achieved something positive for themselves and their work towards recovery.

Project staff now aim to build on the success of the summer programme, by undertaking a structured programme of fun and challenging events chosen by clients with the emphasis on helping people on their path to recovery.

The project was set up in 2006 by Aberdeen City Council, in response to widespread concerns in the community about drug and alcohol misuse. The project offers a service to those living in the community or with connections to the area who are looking for ongoing support and counselling. Experienced, friendly staff and volunteers are there to welcome you and give more information.

The project is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 10 am till 4 pm.



Can eye movements be used to diagnose psychiatric disorders?

Alan Parker

That question is currently being studied in Aberdeen. Eyes are fascinating, and medical science continues to make new discoveries about their workings. It is the fastest moving part of the body, moving up to 250,000 times a day. A simple eye exam can detect diabetes, lupus, high cholesterol, thyroid disease and tumours, hence why it's recommended to have an eye test every two years.

The link between different eye movement patterns and certain mental health conditions was discovered in the early 1900s, but until now the equipment to be able to measure and understand these differences did not exist. Advances in camera and computer technology mean the accuracy required to track miniscule eye movements is now available.

Currently a mental health diagnosis is based on observation. People have an episode and go to their doctor. What they tell the doctor, what the doctor sees, what the people around them see and, if they are admitted to hospital, what the staff see are all used in diagnosing the illness. The process can take years, is particularly stressful on both the patient and their family and comes down to a tick-box process as to whether you meet the various criteria for a particular condition.

More than 10 years ago Dr Philip Benson, an Aberdeen University lecturer in psychology and colleague Professor David St Clair, chair of mental health, began studying links between eye movements and psychiatric disorders. They are now conducting trials to check the trustworthiness of the

diagnostic tools they developed, and researchers from Aberdeen and Edinburgh Universities are trialling this equipment in a three-year study.

According to Helen Lemmon, who is conducting the study in Aberdeen, they are hoping to develop something smaller and less costly than the current equipment used for the trials. She added 'not to give a diagnosis, but to check if something's not quite right so we can refer on to secondary care. A person would have to have signs and symptoms and this eye tracking would help make a diagnosis.'

Anything to help cut down the traumatic time between a first episode and diagnosis can only be beneficial and, having been diagnosed bipolar several years ago, I was keen to participate in the study. Ms Lemmon is looking for other volunteers to take part.

She said: "If you are trying anything you have to have controls, people who do not have the conditions. We're still looking for men aged 16 - 35 who do not have a mental health condition, to take part in the study."

The test will take around 2½ hours and you will be asked to complete some questionnaires about your health and background. You will also be asked to view images and moving targets while a camera records your eye movements, along with undertaking some problem-solving tasks. It is not strenuous and might make life better for somebody with an undiagnosed condition.

To find out more information about the study, contact Helen Lemmon on 01224 557959 or helen.lemmon@abdn.ac.uk



Louise & Neil McIvor (bench design & painters), Catherine Cowie (Erskine volunteer), Lord Provost George Adam, Michael Parkes (Erskine community fundraiser), Jim Mitchell (Erskine volunteer)

Erskine bench unveiled by Lord Provost of Aberdeen

The second Blooming Big Aberdeen friendly bench was launched in Seaton Park by Lord Provost, George Adam and veterans' charity Erskine in their centenary year.

The bench is located on Cathedral Walk and is painted the colours of the medal ribbon which features on the charity logo. The purpose of the ribbon is to connect Erskine in a clear way to its core focus – provision of care to members and ex members of the armed services.

Erskine has four care homes in Scotland, providing nursing, residential, respite and dementia care to veterans and their

spouses. The charity supports over 1,000 veterans and their spouses each year.

The friendly bench project is one of the most recent initiatives to have arisen from the Big Aberdeen Event in September 2014 and is supported by ACVO TSI in partnership with Aberdeen City Council. Third sector organisations were invited to claim and design a bench in the city to raise awareness of the support and services they provide, with Erskine jumping at the chance to get involved.

Anyone interested in supporting Erskine locally can contact Michael Parkes

Pathways in Seaton

Pathways has been assisting people across Aberdeen City for over 16 years to find suitable employment, consistently helping over 250 people into work every year!

Pathways follow a process to help you find the work you are most suited for and work with you on a weekly basis to create a CV, open an email account and Universal Jobmatch accounts and assist with job search and completing application forms, along with

coaching for interviews. The service is free, private and completely impartial.

The Pathways Keyworker's based in your area is Stan Smith who meet people at STAR Flat on Tuesday's between 10am and 2pm.

Please phone 01224 643 697 to arrange an appointment or to find out more about how Pathways can help you!

PATHWAYS – Start Your Journey With Us

Cash in your Pocket

As the winter approaches Cash in your Pocket have identified some issues, you may wish to consider, where we may be able to get you the help you need.

Controlling and reducing your heating costs over winter: simple actions can reduce your bills. You may also be eligible for £140 Warm Home Discount.

Thinking about borrowing money: you have to be fully aware of all the options available to you. We may be able to identify a more affordable source of help from one of the Credit Unions. You do not always have to be a member.

Don't sign up to re-payment agreements for goods or Christmas presents: less expensive or free options may be available

Looking for work in the New Year: We can quickly put you in touch with organisations to help and support you.

Responsible for a funeral: this is a difficult time. A short discussion with one of our team will point you in the right direction of any help that might be available and avoid any problems that may arise.

Children leaving school, or going to college: what happens to your benefits/tax credits/allowances? Are they entitled to anything if they are not starting work? You can sometime lose benefits if you do not take the required action. Always seek advice.

Benefit Changes leaving you with little or no money for food or household essentials? You may be eligible for a Crisis or Community Care Grant. We may also identify other sources of help available to you.

For free and impartial information or advice call Cash in your Pocket Freephone 0800 953 4330. All calls are free from a landline or mobile or visit www.ciypp.co.uk.



The BIG shmu Celebration

The first ever Big shmu Celebration Event was held on Tuesday the 13th of September at the Northern Hotel. This was an opportunity for us to showcase the brilliant work that all our staff and volunteers do and say thank you to the volunteers for all the time they put into making shmu the success it is.

The night was full of surprises, from musical chairs to comedy videos and the shmu staff team performing the evolution of dance. We had a variety of testimonies from volunteers of all ages which were very moving a lovely reminder of why we do what we do here at shmu.

We would like to thank the Northern Hotel for letting us use the venue free of charge and putting on all the catering. Thanks must also go to AVC media for lending us equipment to help the night run smoothly. The biggest thank you of all must go to our Board of Trustees and the volunteers who are here day in and day out – your commitment and hard work is truly inspiring.





SNOW WHITE AND THE SEVEN DWARFS

Alan Parker

The Oxford Living Dictionary defines Pantomime as 'a theatrical entertainment, mainly for children, which involves music, topical jokes, and slapstick comedy and is based on a fairy tale or nursery story'. Often a person's first experience of seeing live actors on stage, panto regularly triggers an enduring love of theatre.

Considered one of this country's great traditions, the word pantomime can actually be traced back to ancient Greece. The characters, a hero, their mother, their love interest, a clown and a villain, are based in the 16th century Italian tradition 'Commedia dell'arte', which arrived here in the 1700s as an exotic entertainment.

This year ACT Aberdeen, formerly Aberdeen Arts Centre) continues the tradition with a show co-produced by Ed Littlewood Productions Ltd. Ed told me 'ACT and the creative team wished to present a high-quality family-friendly production of the traditional tale of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, showcasing Aberdonian and Scottish talent.'

Fresh from producing 'Hector' in London's west end, Ed is joined by a first-class creative team, including multi-award-winning director Kate

Nelson, writer Stephen Docherty and composer Pippa Murphy, who created work for the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. They are joined by ACT's technical and backstage teams in the complex task of creating a magical theatre experience.

Following auditions in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Edinburgh, River City's Joyce Falconer was cast as the evil queen, with Rod Matthews, last seen in ACT's The Pillowman, playing Bosie the eldest and most affable dwarf. They are joined by handsome prince Ewan Petrie, also The Pillowman, and star of stage and screen Annabel Logan playing Snow White.

Ed said: "We're delighted the talent comes from the local area. We spread the casting net wide and found ourselves coming back to Aberdeenshire performers."

Joining Annabel, Ewan, Joyce and Rod is a company of almost 30 young people in what promises to be a unique experience for those on stage and in the audience. Auditions were held from the massive pool of young Aberdeenshire talent.

Ed said: "The response was phenomenal. There are two troupes, both are completely

committed and incredibly hard-working!"

ACT Programme Director Paula Gibson said: "We've created a unique opportunity for young people to allow their talent to shine alongside true theatre professionals. We're really looking forward to panto this year."

I asked three young cast members why they auditioned. Max Paterson and Anna Seaman recently starred in Oliver! at ACT and joint Dance Captain Rhiannon Knight participated in a Disneyland Paris street dance competition.

Anna said: "I thought it would be exciting to be in a professional show as I haven't done one."

Max agreed, adding: "I thought it would be a good experience. I'm looking forward to seeing what it's like in a professional production."

Rhiannon said: "It's really fun, and a great experience being with the professionals."

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs is at ACT Aberdeen from Saturday 3rd - Saturday 24th December 2016, with a relaxed performance on Thursday 15th December.

Tickets are available at the ACT box office or online at www.act-aberdeen.org.uk

COMMUNITY CONTACTS

Alcohol & Drugs

Drugs Action 01224 594700

Crime

Crimestoppers 0800 555 111

Dentist

Emergency - G-Dens 0345 45 65 990

Doctors

NHS 24 Emergency 111

Electricity

If you have a Power-Cut 0800 300 999

Family Planning

0345 337 9900

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Gas Emergency 0800 111 999

Gas Emergency with a Meter 0845 606 6766

Housing

Emergency Repairs 03000 200 292

Call Centre Emergency 0845 608 0929

Police

Non-Emergency 101

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Need to talk 01224 574 488

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Social Work Duty Team 0800 7315520

Emergency Out-Of-Hours 01224 693 936

Water

Scottish Water Emergency 0845 600 8855

Terrence Higgins Trust 0808 802 1221

LGBT Youth Scotland

ehpburn@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Seaton STAR Flat 01224 542209

Seaton Project 01224 277930

Seaton School 01224 277920

Emergency Christmas Contacts:

Housing Repairs 0845 608 0929

Roads and Street Lighting 08456 08 09 19

Housing Advice 01224 219281

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