

# seatonscene

Winter 2017



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GARDENING INITIATIVE  
AWARD FOR WETLAND  
LEARNING CENTRE NEWS  
'BACKIES' PHASE TWO

[www.shmu.org.uk/press](http://www.shmu.org.uk/press)

Image: Natalie Hood

Winter Edition 2017

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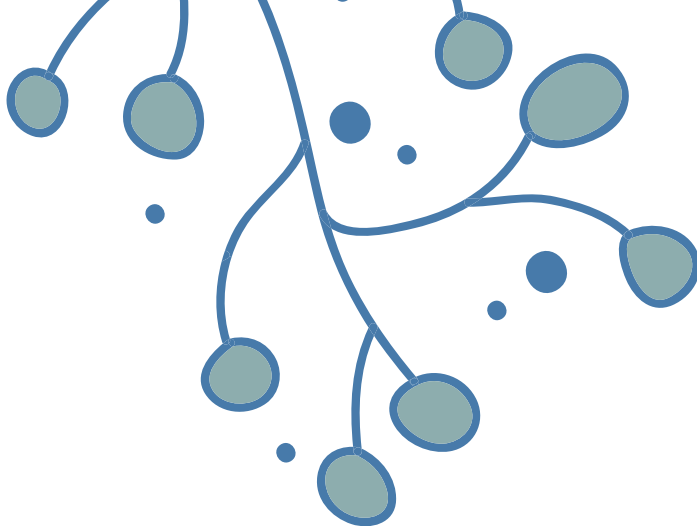


## New Manager at Brig O' Don

Aidan Campbell has been promoted to general manager of the Brig O'Don restaurant and lounge in King Street, Aberdeen

Aidan (22) has been with the owner - the Greene King conglomerate - for the past two years and before that worked at the Holiday Inn in his home town of Westhill.

Greene King has 3000 pubs, restaurants and hotels in the UK and employs 44,000 staff. Keep a look out for future community links with the Brig o' Don in future editions of Seaton Scene.



## editorial

### Welcome to the winter edition of Seaton Scene.

Seaton Scene is YOUR quarterly full-colour community magazine produced by Station House Media Unit (shmu), and is one of seven community magazines produced for Aberdeen's seven regeneration areas with the printing costs being met by the Fairer Aberdeen Fund. In this issue we have articles covering more prestigious awards for Seaton Park, Lord Hay's Court gardening feature and initiatives by the Seaton community development team and activities within Seaton Learning Centre.

If you would like to get involved and join the editorial team or if you have ideas for articles, you can easily get in touch with us. Please phone shmu at 01224 515013 or email our editorial co-ordinator Laura Young: [laura.young@shmu.org.uk](mailto:laura.young@shmu.org.uk) The staff at shmu are able to support and train anyone living in Seaton who are interested in developing their ideas and skills in either writing, photography or proof reading.

Editorial team: Hamish Mackay, Wendy Laing, Murdoch MacLeod, Alan Parker and Serish Salwa.

Meetings are held at the STAR Flat at 14A Seaton Drive on Fridays at 12.30pm and you are very welcome to attend in what is a very informal setting. In planning our next issue, we will meet on the following dates:

**First meeting – 23rd March**

**Second meeting – 6th April**

**Content deadline – 20th April**

**Proof – 27th April**

*The Seaton Scene team would like to wish all our readers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year*

Supported by







## Lord Hay's Court residents enjoy an exciting new outlook

Hamish Mackay

An already well-landscaped part of Seaton is now even more horticulturally and environmentally friendly and attractive thanks to a significant home-grown community - led project.

A small team of residents in Lord Hay's Court has spearheaded an initiative to transform the large frontage of their multi-storey into an attractive garden area which is also much appreciated by the residents of the cluster of multi-storeys nearby - Inverdon Court, St Ninian Court and Balgownie Court.

The Lord Hay's Court Gardeners group was formed early this year - an idea developed at the informal Thursday Afternoon Tea Group - and led and nurtured by Janice Hutchinson, Hilda Farman and Meg Turner.

Aberdeen City Council Environmental Services department, in the shape of area supervisor Mike Chalmers, was quick to help out by donating seven large wooden planters which came already containing perennials and annuals. The Seaton Small Sparks initiative chipped in with a grant of £250 and a number of residents,

friends and family donated various tools.

A new flower border and a circular flower bed were created, and preparations have been made for the Winter and Spring with bulbs and other plants, and all the open earth will be covered in bark.

Janice told Seaton Scene: "A casual discussion at our informal Thursday Afternoon Tea Group has so quickly developed into a most attractive and appealing feature and we are very, very grateful for all the help and encouragement we have received. Although a number of our residents are not really able to help us physically, they are very vocal supporters from the sidelines. All in all, it has been an exciting and rewarding project."

Aberdeen City Council's local Councillor Jim Noble commented: "All credit to everyone involved in this stimulating and literally 'ground-breaking' community improvement project. This is Seaton residents at their very best - seizing the initiative to roll up their sleeves and enhance the environment. Congratulations all round!"

### Small grants but big possibilities

The Seaton Small Sparks programme has renewed its appeal to apply for grants of up to £250 to help people do exciting things in the community.

The programme has recently given out grants to two local initiatives. Lord Hay's Court Gardeners group received a grant to help finance their work to make the frontage of their multi-storey more attractive and give residents a pleasant outlook.

And Friends of Seaton Park were given a grant for the recent ParkFest3 event which enabled local folk to have a free go on the Segways for the afternoon which went down especially well with local youngsters.

If you live or work in the Seaton area and have an idea that will involve others and make the community a better place to live, learn, work or play, a Seaton Small Sparks grant could help.

For more information, please get in touch with Louise Farmer on: 07786 041802 or email: [louise.f@in-controlscotland.org.uk](mailto:louise.f@in-controlscotland.org.uk)

# 'Backies' project moves into its second phase

The enterprising and innovative Seaton Backies improvements project has now moved on to its second phase.

The initiative to tackle areas of poor environmental quality within Seaton first came about from a group of young mothers who were concerned that their children had nowhere safe to play. This led to the Seaton Backies steering group being formed in 2012.

These "Backies" are well used for clothes drying and children playing. The amenity of these Backies is, however, greatly reduced by substantially dilapidated wash houses.

These wash houses and accompanying coal cellars are not

let by Aberdeen City Council (ACC) to any of the residents. Some cellars have been blocked up - others are being used in an ad hoc manner.

It should be noted that the scheme of proposed environmental improvements has been developed in consultation with the residents. A resident engagement event was undertaken along with online and door-knocking consultations.

The community will be encouraged to develop during the course of this project and become empowered to make increasing use of their environment and take increasing control. It is envisaged that the works, and the city council's Communities and Partnership

Team and housing officers, will help establish resident groups that will facilitate:

- \* Making decisions as to the detail of what is to be implemented in their area.
- \* Self-police the use, misuse and maintenance condition of their area.
- \* And lead on future developments.

This project will assist the enhancement of local identity, which will, in turn support the regeneration of Seaton.

**For more information get in touch with the communities team at seaton learning centre on 01224 277930**



*Pleasing play areas created by phase one of the 'Backies' project*



# Entrepreneurship in Seaton Park

Sheila Gordon, Chair of Friends of Seaton Park

Seaton Park is much more than just a play area and some nice flowers! There is the Park's Wetland, lots of lovely walks by the River Don and the "secret" Walled Garden.

Over the summer months we also have had the opportunity to buy locally -grown fruit and veg. The Allotment Market Stall (TAMS) has been in the park every Friday from 10.30am-2pm from July to October. This is the second year TAMS has been in the park and it has proved very successful. This year it was joined by Aberdeen for a Fairer World (AFW).

We had hoped this would mark the start of our Mini Market, but it was not to be. We had funding for gazeboes (necessary in this northerly climate) but nowhere to store them. The storage issue was not successfully resolved until too late in the season for this year.

However, we have high hopes for next year and that the Mini Market

will take place every Friday. If you have a small business idea, this is your opportunity to test the waters: if you have ever thought of selling something you make but not had the courage to do anything about it. For more details, please be in touch at [chairoffosp@gmail.com](mailto:chairoffosp@gmail.com).

TAMS has been the seed for the Mini Market and the ideas just keep on coming. We have been fortunate enough to secure financial support from Aberdeen University Students Association Raising and Giving Disbursement Fund.

We plan on using the funding for a pop-up café. It would definitely be open on a Friday when the Mini Market is on. This is very much a work in progress, so we will keep you up to date via Seaton Scene. In the meantime, please support the students in their fundraising – the more money they raise, the better will be our café in the Park!



## Look out for the Blue Pearls in the Spring

Margaret Sleeman

As I went down to Seaton Park with a stock of 2000 crocus bulbs and paraphernalia for planting I passed the circular beds in the Formal Garden with their faded begonias.

Further on, some maples gave a splash of brilliant colour. The weather was overcast but mercifully dry. It was the last day of Summer Time - a time to face up to the approaching winter.

At the planting spot opposite the fountain it was not long before the volunteers arrived. Friends of Seaton Park and others who had seen the notice on Facebook.

One group lifted sections of turf while others collected a flowerpot full of bulbs, planted them, replaced the grass and tamped it down. All the activity was accompanied by companionable conversation, and with 11 people involved, the planting of the 2000 bulbs took just over an hour.

Come March, look out for a display of crocus Blue Pearl, silvery white flushed with lilac and with an orange centre, as you turn from the Formal Garden and walk in the direction of the children's play area. Insects will visit these early flowers, and, over the years, their number will increase.



# SEATON LEARNING CENTRE

## Is a hive of new activities

The Communities Team has now been based in the Learning Centre for five months. In that time the staff have been busy meeting community groups, individuals and partners which has resulted in collaboration and the creation of activities within the centre. As conversations increase the range of activities become more expansive as we work to meet the identified needs of Seaton. All activities go hand in hand and sit alongside current provision provided by some of our partners, Seaton Community Church and the Early Years Team.

The Communities Team have already run three open days; one for the generic programme that operates within the Centre and two for Seaton Recovery Project.

On all occasions there has been an opportunity for the team to be available for partners and members of the public to ask questions and put forward suggestions for activities that they'd like to see in the centre or discuss wider community issues.

### Art History

This is the second Art History group; the first involved walking around Seaton looking for ideas to paint or draw, the second one is based within the Learning Centre with the use of various methods / mediums to create art pieces. The group will be running next year with a view to progressing to creating a piece of public art at Seaton Park.

### Seaton Recovery Project

Seaton Recovery Project has moved into the Learning Centre from the Hut on School Road.

The project supports individuals currently in recovery from substance use by offering a diverse range of activities and practical support to complement any medical support they may be receiving. Should you know anyone who might benefit from staff support please contact either Gillian Anderson or Nick McKenzie on 01224 77930.

### Gardening

The Communities Team are currently looking for keen gardeners in Seaton to get involved in the creation of a community garden. The garden will initially utilise raised beds at the Learning Centre that will incorporate food growing and a seated flower area. How the garden evolves from these early thoughts will depend on attendees and what they see it developing into.

### Seaton Store

Seaton Store is a free food outlet located within the Learning Centre and is open during office hours. You do not need a referral form or be attending a community group to access the store. The store has a selection of dried and fresh produce provided by CFINE, Fareshare and Tesco Food Cloud, which is delivered throughout the week. Please drop in and have a look (bring your own carrier bag).

### Summary

The range of programmes and activities are constantly changing and being updated; to find out more about the above groups please come into the Centre and speak to any member of staff or follow us on

Facebook - @tillywoodsea. If you have any suggestions, thoughts or ideas please come and speak with us or message us through Facebook.

The Centre has rooms and facilities that can be let to the wider community for a variety of uses, ask at reception for details.

### Contact:



**Graham Donald – Community Development Officer**



**Marion Watson – Community Development Worker**

**Tel; 01224 277930**





*Amber and Aimee having fun playing on the new equipment*



# NEW PLAY AREA IS PROVING A BIG HIT

*Hamish Mackay*

The new St Ninian Court play area in Seaton is proving to be an outstanding success with its “customers” and local opinion is that the £60,000 cost of the upgraded and enhanced play arena is money very well-spent.

During the recent school holidays, at times, up to 50 children were using the eight pieces of equipment and sitting on the surrounding benches. Seaton Scene spoke to more than a dozen mums who were fulsome in their praise and pointing out that it had got their kids really excited at the prospect of going out to the play area.

And the youngsters whom Seaton Scene spoke to were equally appreciative of their good fortune in getting a super-duper new facility. Said Amber Middleton (5), of St Ninian Court: “It is really good and great” adding wistfully “and its beautiful”. Seaton Primary School Primary Two pupil Amber and her wee sister Aimee (2) posed for Seaton Scene on a freezing Sunday afternoon when they were the only occupants of the play area - a very rare occurrence.

Aberdeen City Council Area Supervisor (Play) Yvonne McLeod said: “It is really heartening to get

such excellent feedback.” The new play area has been updated as part of the ongoing refurbishment programme which has already seen almost half of the city’s play areas upgraded over the last four years.

There is only one slight blemish in the posh new play area - the exterior brickwork of the original walls has become a bit dowdy and Yvonne is hopeful that some community group may come forward to offer to spruce them up.





# Seaton Park Wetland Project s

## *Hamish Mackay*

The Seaton Park Wetland Project has won a prestigious national award for Aberdeen City Council(ACC) - the second time this award has come to Aberdeen in recent years.

ACC has scooped the Herald Society Award for Environmental Initiative of the Year for Seaton Park's Wetland Project - the previous award was for the East Tullos Burn Environmental Improvements Project.

Aberdeen City Council communities, housing and infrastructure convener, Councillor Yvonne Allan, said: "The £90,000 Seaton Park Wetland Project turned a former floodlands into a feature which will be filled with wildflowers and nature. The wetland was created after the area had been badly flooded - including the football pitches - and rendered unusable.

"So it was decided to embrace the changes as large parts of the Park had originally been a swamp-like area before it was turned into a grassed area. A man-made wetland surrounded by natural plants and a wooden viewing point was created which will enhance the natural biodiversity, attract more wildlife to the space, and encourage greater community use. The works at the Park included digging out the wetland, repairing drainage and adding paths, signage and planting."

The key people involved in the Wetland Project included:

### **Aberdeen City Council:**

#### *Environmental Policy Team*

- Anne-Marie Gauld – Project manager.
- Karen van Eeden and Gordon McLean – support with path works and Sustrans funding.

#### *Environmental Services*

- Steven Shaw – project commissioner and sponsor
- Countryside Rangers especially Ian Talboys, who provided expert input and much project support
- Andy Kinghorn – Area supervisor, including for Seaton Park
- Flooding and Coastal team - especially Paulo Mata and Calum Clark
- Environmental Protection - Neil Stirling

#### **External input:**

- Friends of Seaton Park especially Sheila Gordon and Hamish Mackay
- SEPA – especially Annette Ross who contributed to the project team





## coops national award

Councillor Allan added: "This award is a testament to the hard work and effort to everyone involved in the Seaton Park Wetland Project - Aberdeen City Council staff, partners, the Friends of Seaton Park group, and all the volunteers who helped out.

"Well done to everyone involved and they can be proud of creating a new wildlife feature in one of our city's most popular parks with its beautiful formal gardens - right next to historic Old Aberdeen."

Aberdeen City Council led the Wetland Project in partnership with community group Friends of Seaton Park. As well as funding from the city council, some of the funding came from Aberdeen Greenspace Trust and sustainable transport charity Sustrans. The combined total for both projects at Seaton Park is estimated to be £200,000.

The Wetland Project involved landscaping of the existing flooded area to create some small deeper

pools and produce shallow slopes into these pools as well as planting these areas with native plants that are adapted to wet conditions. On the other side of the Park, the drainage was upgraded to help improve the sports pitch and make the paths accessible all year round.

It is not possible to create an instant ecosystem and everything in nature takes time to develop, so it will take several years for the planting around the wetland to fully establish.

The way a wetland works is that during the dryer months the water levels will be low and there will be less water in the individual pools that were created during construction. During wetter months, the individual pools will fill up and eventually create one large pool, containing the water in one area.

ACC will continue to monitor how the wetlands are performing and this will become more apparent once a few seasons have passed.

An Aberdeen City Council spokeswoman said: "The work to create the Seaton Park Wetland Project included digging a few individual deeper pools below the ground. Once these pools were dug, the water which had previously been lying on top of the ground filled the individual holes.

"The water levels were expected to drop as a result of the construction works and this has been more apparent during the drier summer months when lying water will naturally evaporate.

"It should be remembered that the project was creating a wetland, and not a pond, so the water level is expected to fluctuate depending on the time of year with less water in the summer and more in the winter. These works will require a number of seasons to become a fully-functioning wetland and we have placed an information panel at the site to explain this process."



# ALL GOOD FUN AND GAMES AT SEATON'S PARKFEST3

Sheila Gordon, chair of the Friends of Seaton Park (FOSP) reports on ParkFest3, a memorable day in the history of one of Aberdeen's best-loved major green spaces.

ParkFest3, on Sunday, September 10 was organised by Friends of Seaton Park (FOSP), in partnership with Aberdeen City Council, to celebrate 70 years since the park came into public ownership.

And FOSP group, itself celebrating its 5th birthday, seized on this excuse to pleasantly surprise the folks who attended the event by handing out scrumptious slices of cake to all concerned!

Also celebrating its 70th birthday this year is Bucksburn and District Pipe Band and we were fortunate enough to have its Novice Juvenile Pipe Band get proceedings underway in style.

It was a great start to the day, but we would have preferred some sunshine!

Among the many organisations represented in the ParkFest3 arena were Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue. Scottish Fire and Rescue had enlisted the help of the Sandpiper Trust to demonstrate CPR, and since our first aiders for the day (F1 Training) were also demonstrating CPR, there was no excuse for not being able to save a life!

The ever-popular Northern Lights Dog Agility Demonstration Team took over the arena to put on a most entertaining display for us.

We had face painters, jumbo inflatables, a bouncy castle

and the balloon mannies.

Segways came along to offer the opportunity of a free taster session, kindly funded by a Small Sparks Grant. Among those who tried it out was our VIP guest - Aberdeen's Lord Provost Barney Crocket.

The RSPB and the Countryside Rangers provided on-the-spot information on the wildlife and natural features in Seaton Park. There was the opportunity to sit in a kayak with Aberdeen Kayak Club and get a feeling as to what it might be like to steer one down the River Don.

We are very grateful to the gardeners and other ACC staff for the help they gave us on the day. Kathleen had a craft stall to raise funds towards converting a bathroom at a nursing home. When hunger struck, there was a cookery demo at The Allotment Market Stall (TAMS) or you could enjoy an ice cream from Casa di Gelato or a burger from C&L Catering.

We would like to thank everyone who came along to enjoy themselves and also the many volunteers who helped out. We would not be able to put on the event without financial support from the ACC Community Grant Fund.

We had a great time on the day and have provisionally booked the Park for Sunday, September 9.

2018 so we can do it all again. Organising ParkFest is fun and very rewarding. If you would like to contribute, please get in touch at [chairoffosp@gmail.com](mailto:chairoffosp@gmail.com).







# Seaton Park is crowned top park in the UK

**Hamish Mackay**

Seaton Park, now crowned as the UK's top park, has for the second year running had outstanding success in major Scottish and UK gardening events in its own right, and it also played a pivotal role in Aberdeen City Council winning three top awards.

Seaton Park's top honour came in the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) Britain in Bloom UK awards in October when it won a gold medal as a discretionary award from the judges who voted it the top park and green space in the UK.

Earlier in the year Seaton Park retained its Green Flag Award status which recognises high standards and the provision of quality outdoor space, and was judged as "outstanding" in the Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) "It's Your Neighbourhood" scheme with a stunning mark of 95 out of 100.

The Park played an integral part in Aberdeen winning the gold medal in Keep Scotland Beautiful's annual awards as top Scottish city and also the Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society discretionary award as Growing Smarter, Granite City Aberdeen. A great year was rounded off by Aberdeen City Council winning the prestigious Herald Society Award for Environmental Initiative of the Year for the Seaton Park Wetlands Project.

On Seaton Park's superb triumph in the RHS's Parks and Green

Spaces category, the official citation explained: "The judges noted that in addition to the look and feel of a 'pristine park', Seaton Park includes a range of flood mitigation measures and an 'impressive range of trees and shrubs across the whole park, wide successional planting and some outstanding specimen trees.' It also hosts a suite of activities to suit people from all parts of the community."

Summing up Seaton Park's year, Friends of Seaton Park's chair Sheila Gordon said: "2017 was a year of celebration as we marked the 70 years since the Park came into public ownership and it has been a great year in many respects.

"The summer months saw the outstanding colours of begonias and osteospermums in Cathedral Walk impress the judges for Green Flag, Keep Scotland Beautiful, Britain in Bloom and It's Your Neighbourhood. Other areas of the Park also impressed the judges as can be deduced from our several major awards this year.

"In late October we planted 2000 crocus bulbs. They will flower in Spring - bringing the life of the Park full circle again. And in 2018, look out for an Open Meeting on January 22nd, CakeFest on March 24th and ParkFest on September 9th"

## Poets corner

### *Ode To The Daffodils*

*As I went through the park,  
I saw flashes of gold,  
as I went they made a mark,  
all of them were very bold,  
they were yellow like the sun,  
in a shape of a bun.*

*All of them like a star,  
in a constellation,  
but all of them look very far,  
very small like a raisin,  
all of them like gold and shine,  
in a patch of a never-ending line.*

*They dance like a wave,  
A very beautiful flower,  
they danced night and day,  
all look like a tower,  
then suddenly on the hill,  
I remember: It's a patch  
of daffodils.*

**Written by:**  
**Pawan Suman**  
(Aged 10)

# A Pakistani family have fallen in love with Seaton

**Hamish Mackay**

Although Sehrish Salwa and her young family have only recently moved to Aberdeen and a new home in Seaton she has already joined Seaton Scene's advisory editorial committee and she also works as a volunteer at Grampian Regional Equality Council's (GREC) Language Cafes which are held at various community centres in Aberdeen.

A vivacious lady with an engaging personality, Sehrish, who lives with her family in the Seaton area, is already so impressed with Seaton and all that it offers that she has been moved to put her thoughts on paper and conveyed them to Seaton Scene.

She tells me: "I like living in Seaton because it is so safe to stay in but there are many other very strong reasons that I am so happy here and I list some of them here."

Love for Seaton Avenue: "My love for Seaton Avenue is not one-sided. I have found the tranquillity here in Seaton which world-famous poet William Wordsworth couldn't even find. I feel peace of mind and peace of soul."

## **Seaton residents:**

- \* **Simply loving.**
- \* **Caring but a little reserved.**
- \* **Really helpful.**
- \* **Cheerful and full of life.**
- \* **Fond of travelling.**

## **Prominent places:**

- \* **Seaton Primary School and its nursery.**
- \* **Seaton Learning Centre.**
- \* **Seaton Park.**
- \* **STAR Community Flat.**

Sehrish worked for 10 years as a teacher back home in Pakistan and did her Masters degree in English literature at Bahauddin Zakariya University, in Multan, South Punjab.

She has two children – Sudais (5) who is a pupil at Seaton Primary School and Adeera (3) who attends Seaton Nursery. Sehrish points out with a big smile: "The children are still worried about the Scottish accent and English language as it is all so new to them."

Sehrish is meantime recovering from a nasty fall while crossing a rain-soaked grass slope behind Seaton Primary. She sustained a



double fracture to her left ankle and spent a week in hospital.

She recalls: "It was initially extremely painful, but Allah is with me. I was seriously impressed by the care shown by the staff of ARI including the Halal meals specially prepared for Muslims.

"I might have to spend two months in plaster depending on how well the fractures heal, hopefully it will be removed after six weeks insha Allah."

If any readers have comments on this article, please email Hamish Mackay at: [mackay858@btinternet.com](mailto:mackay858@btinternet.com)

## Pathways in Seaton

Since our last update there have been many changes at Pathways. In September we had a team of canvassers conducting a neighbourhood survey around Seaton asking residents questions about employment, skills and training as part of a European Social Fund (ESF) project being administered by Aberdeen City Council and Pathways called

Progress Through Positive Partnerships (PTPP). Aberdeen City Council is working to help city residents facing a range of difficulties to improve their lives and job prospects. We completed a lot of forms on the doorstep and would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who participated. If we missed you or you didn't have time to complete it on the day the

forms are now available online and we would encourage as many of you as possible to complete it. You can find the form at <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YDTFWT3>

Pathways have also moved premises and are now located on the first floor of Powis Community Centre at 11 Powis Circle. Our phone number remains the same, 01224 682 939.



# Donside Park

## Plans to create Donside Park attracts initial £55,100 funding boost

*Sinclair Laing*

Donside Village Community (DVC) has been successful in our bid to raise funds for the purchase of the riverside land parcel surrounding the Donside Hydro scheme to support the creation of Donside Park.

The Scottish Land Fund, funded by the Scottish Government and facilitated by the BIG Lottery and Highlands and Islands Enterprise, has approved £55,100 funding to Donside Village Community.

This is broken down as follows: £38,000 towards the land purchase; £5700 for conveyancing / legal fees; £1900 towards training the community on invasive species management; and £9500 towards a village park landscape design and delivery plan.

The £55,100 represents 95% of the immediate funding required to allow us to move to the next stage. The remaining 5% (£2400) match funding had already been raised by the community through a range of initiatives involving the entire community including running the

Aberdeen 10K, donations from guests at the Donside Hydro, to car boot sales and many other ways.

The landscape design and delivery plan will allow the DVC to translate its wishes for facilities into a designed, phased and costed masterplan for the Village. We will then seek funding for delivery of the various elements. Some of these elements are already underway - such as riverside seating and shelter, repair of the heritage walls, and the community garden and wild orchard. The remaining elements are part of a longer-term plan.

Aberdeen City Council's local Councillor Jim Noble commented: "This is extremely welcome funding news for the Donside Village Community's exciting and innovative plans for the creation of Donside Park. The community highly successfully reached its goal of creating a fully operational community-owned hydro scheme which has won many kudos from the UK and internationally. I am confident that the Donside Park will

be equally exciting and successful and even further enhance the picturesque River Don Lower Valley."

*Sinclair Laing is the chair and founder of Aberdeen Community Energy (ACE) and Donside Hydro scheme. He also serves on the committee of the Donside Village Community (SCIO).*



## The BIG move

In our last edition we updated you on the shmu extension and our move to the former Rosehill Day Centre. Work to extend the existing shmuHQ building is well underway and staff and volunteers are all settled in at our temporary home.

The preferred contractors, CHAP, started work on the development in August this year and have made great headway as you can see from this photo. We have secured a significant amount of funding to pay for the fabric of the building, but we are currently working hard on a fundraising strategy to ensure we have enough money to pay for the equipment to turn it from a fantastic building to a state of the art community media centre.

Our aim is to enhance the facilities we already have so we will install two new radio studios and we will have a big communal social area, similar to what we had in the old building but we're also going to have an IT training room and a TV studio with a control room. We want to use the expansion of the building to expand our existing programmes to reach new people in our target areas.

Murray Dawson, Chief Executive of shmu said: "We identified a need for this state of the art

facility in our 2012-2017 strategic plan as we have been short of space for several years. Our new space in Rosehill Day Centre is much bigger than shmu so we're able to trial some of the new programmes we would like to run and use it as an opportunity to grow into the new space before moving back to Woodside."

We are aiming to be back in our Woodside building by August next year where we will then look at phase two of the redevelopment. Our aim for the existing building is to make it into a multipurpose space which can be used for cultural events in the evening, for example a small cinema or theatre and for workshops or teaching during the day.

Murray added: "The building was a core part of our strategic plan and it will allow us to develop other aspects of that plan. We want to do more of what we already do, we don't always need to be expanding and increasing in size but with the work we are currently doing in Aberdeenshire we need to look at what that means for us as an organisation. We need to have a clear sustainable financial plan for this and make sure that we don't take our eye off the ball with the key core work that happens in the regeneration areas of the city."





# Active Schools Coordinator St Machar Associated Schools Group (ASG)

**Name:** Kim McRobbie,  
**Contact:** [KiMcRobbie@sportaberdeen.co.uk](mailto:KiMcRobbie@sportaberdeen.co.uk)  
**Mobile:** 07825 228173,  
**Office:** St Machar Academy, PE Dept.



**Sport:** I like to challenge myself and try every sport at least once. My main interests are playing netball and walking football!

**Other Activities:** I enjoy volunteering as a football coach with Aberdeen FC Ladies. This has increased my confidence and skill base and given me the opportunity to see many different parts of Scotland. To relax, I can often be found exploring the beautiful walks and parks in and around Aberdeen - especially on a sunny day!

**Career:** After graduating from Robert Gordon University in 2013, I worked with local schools, clubs and organisations to increase football opportunities for girls within the area.

Promoting fun based sessions and running weekly festivals, allowed me to see first-hand the benefits that children get from participating in sport. This gave me the desire to work with Active Schools, helping make sport more accessible to all.

**Statement:** Recently becoming the Active Schools Coordinator for the St Machar ASG has highlighted the positive sense of community within the area. I am excited to work with all 7 Primary Schools, St Machar Academy and local community groups to continue supporting and growing the activities on offer. My main goal is to work with volunteers, schools, parents and children to offer a wide range of activities, helping

many children and young people become more active, more often!

**Volunteering:** Help me achieve this goal by volunteering with one of our exciting activities! Ongoing training and support is provided. Aged 12-25? Why not get rewarded by signing up to the Saltire Award Scheme!

To keep up to date with the activities on offer, like the 'Active Schools St Machar' Facebook page. Sessions will also be promoted within each school.

I look forward to meeting and working with you all throughout the year.

**Thanks,**  
**Kim**





## Duncan's delight in AFCCT's major European honour

Aberdeen FC Community Trust (AFCCT) will in March next year celebrate its fourth birthday as the official partner charity of the Dons.

As an important participant in Scotland's national game Aberdeen FC recognises its high profile and influential position nationally and especially within Aberdeen and the North East of Scotland.

There was delight at Pittodrie when AFCCT recently won a major European Club Association award in the best community and social responsibility category for its dementia-friendly programme - no more so than the Trust's chairman Duncan Skinner who points out: "What makes it even sweeter is that we are in the company of other category winners such as Real Madrid, Sporting Lisbon and Monaco."

Duncan has been spotlighted in the current edition of Trend magazine in an interview by Aberdeen journalist Peter Mitchell. He attended Dunecht Primary School and Cults Academy before his father's career as a vet took the family to Stornoway where he was a pupil at the Nicolson Institute.

He returned to Aberdeen to study for a business degree at the then Robert Gordon's Institute of Technology (RGIT). He explains: "I then went on to

enjoy a terrific career in the oil and gas industry as a chartered management accountant for 34 years but after calling a halt in 2013, I wanted to put something back into society."

Peter Mitchell writes: "Duncan is a great believer in the power of sport, and quotes him explaining: "Although I am also a non-executive director on the main board of Aberdeen FC, the Trust is quite separate from the football club and we are able to use its powerful brand to raise substantial funds to deliver change in the community, through the efforts of 20 full-time staff and many volunteers involved in more than 60 activities. The great Denis Law is a patron of the Trust, and former Aberdeen and Scotland manager and AFC board member Craig Brown is an ambassador."

Since its introduction AFCCT has significantly increased football participation programmes, catering for children aged 3 upwards, people living with disability, and individuals from ethnic and religious minorities. Utilising their Scottish FA Football Development Officers, AFCCT enhance local grassroots football and now facilitate primary school football league activity in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

## Dons in free season ticket initiative

*Hamish Mackay*

Youngsters in Seaton and Tillydrone have scored thanks to an initiative by Aberdeen FC on season tickets.

Following almost 11,000 season tickets being sold for this season, the Dons directors wished to give something back by giving more people the opportunity to share in the feel-good factor that can be felt at Pittodrie on a matchday.

The new supported season ticket initiative, "Aberdeen For All", allows Aberdeen FC supporters to contribute to a fund which is being used to provide support to families, children and members of the local community by providing them with season tickets in the Merkland Stand. The Dons directors kicked-off the initiative by providing £50,000 for the cost of 200 season tickets.

The Dons executive vice-chairman, George Yule, explained: "AFCCT are deeply involved in the community and will ensure these tickets get where they need to go."

The first batch of 40 tickets was issued to Seaton Community Church's Pastor Barry Douglas, who is also AFC's chaplain, to distribute to targeted individuals and families in Seaton and Tillydrone.

Pastor Douglas pointed out: "It's been great to see the reaction when I have been handing over some of the season tickets. The people that this scheme is helping out are from under-privileged backgrounds and who would not normally have access to football - and you really get to see the joy being brought out in them when they receive their tickets.

"There are more people out there who could also benefit from this scheme and it can really put a smile on people's faces ...so I hope that it is a great success."