

The background of the cover is a photograph of a woodland floor. In the foreground, there is a cluster of vibrant purple crocuses with orange centers, growing through a bed of brown, fallen leaves and dry grass. The background is filled with more green grass and some dry, brownish vegetation, suggesting a natural, outdoor setting. The lighting is bright, casting soft shadows on the ground.

woodside  
free press

Spring Edition 2022

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## Editorial

**Welcome to the Winter edition of the Woodside Free Press. This is YOUR magazine.**

We are here to help you find out what's going on in Woodside and connect with your community.

In our pages you will find news, views, reviews and features.

Within this magazine we have news from SCARF around the rising cost of living and the help available, Woodside Parish Church and local developments taking place at Jacob's Ladder and Mugger's Bridge.

If you have something you would like to say, some local issue you think deserves coverage, or if you would like to get involved by joining the happy band of volunteers that puts this magazine together, please contact

Laura at shmu on **07752586312** or  
email **[laura.young@shmu.org.uk](mailto:laura.young@shmu.org.uk)**.

All the content in this magazine has been produced and approved by members of the editorial team.

The staff at SHMU are able to support and train anyone living in the area who is interested in developing their ideas and skills in either writing, photography or proof reading.

Woodside Free Press is a community publication and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the editorial team or of shmu.

You can be reassured that our distribution company is taking every measure to ensure they are delivering your magazine safely and within government guidelines.



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# Identity Crisis

Not having photographic ID can make life really challenging for people. Often a lack of ID can make it difficult to apply for another form of ID, a job, a bank account, applying for benefits, amongst other things.

But most photographic ID options are very expensive. A passport will set you back £75.50 if you apply online and £85 if you apply using the paper form. A provisional driver's license is £34 when you apply online and £43 if you apply by post. Initially the provisional licence seems like a much cheaper option, however, the UK Government lists a provisional driver's license as one of the documents they will **not** accept as official ID, so you need to factor in the cost of lessons and passing your test to get a full license.

However, the Woodside Free Press Team spoke to Aberdeen's Citizens

Advice Bureau who told us that there is a cheaper alternative. You can apply for a CitizenCard photo ID at the following link: [www.citizencard.com/apply-for-a-uk-id-card-online](http://www.citizencard.com/apply-for-a-uk-id-card-online).

When a person applies for one of these cards, they can have a professional referee vouch for them rather than needing one piece of documentation to verify another. A standard application costs £15 which makes this process a lot cheaper and accessible for those who may struggle to get a passport or driver's license.

**Aberdeen's Citizens Advice Bureau are available to help anyone who needs support with their application and you can contact them on [abe-bureau@aberdeencab.casonline.org.uk](mailto:abe-bureau@aberdeencab.casonline.org.uk)**

*Who am I?*

*I am me*

*I am here*

*Who asks for proof?*

*No picture on a card*

*No Passport*

*No Driving Licence*

*Who am I?*

*Who am I?*

*I am me*

*I am here*

*No valid ID*

*No Bank Account*

*Coming soon*

*No Vote*

*Who am I?*

# Woodside Access Point

Woodside Access Point has been closed to members of the public since the initial lockdown in March 2020.

Fast forward to 2022 and access to services remains paused due to Coronavirus restrictions. However, people are being directed to Marischal College for face-to-face services.

People can make payments online, as well as at PayPoint outlets across the city. There are a variety of options in Woodside and the surrounding area including Marquis Dairy, Spar on Clifton Road and Nisa on Hayton Road. You can find the full list at the following site: [www.consumer.paypoint.com](http://www.consumer.paypoint.com)

Aberdeen City Council are currently looking into how in person services will look now that Covid restrictions are easing. Hopefully people will be able to book an appointment for face-to-face services at a range of settings, including Woodside Access Point and details of these will be shared with community members as soon as possible.

## We Have Moved

**Nicola Watson**

In its 204 years, Woodside Congregational Church has called many places home. Originally back in 1818, The Laird's Hoose in Society Lane, then the Cotton Chapel and improved replacement Church on Great Northern Road. Woodside School, the Aberdeen and North East Deaf Centre, the Burgh Hall, and until recently the Printfield Project's Portacabin.

We found a good home with the Printfield Project for 9 years but as our youth work and church membership has expanded, so has our need for larger surroundings. The decision was taken therefore to move our Church to the Hilton Community Centre where we had already moved our youth work back in 2017.

The welcoming church meets every Sunday with a family friendly Service

and Sunday Club 12noon till 1pm, with Communion on the first Sunday of the month. With restrictions lifting more events will also be organised throughout the year.

It's not just Sundays that we do! We also have a thriving youth work programme with Craft Club, Boys' Brigade, Girls' Brigade, Summer Playscheme, outings and more planned. Why not pop your head in one Sunday and say hello?

You can also visit our website [www.woodsidecongregationalchurch.com](http://www.woodsidecongregationalchurch.com) to find out more.



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## Looking for Committee Members

**Nicola Watson**

Hilton Community Centre, despite the building being owned by Aberdeen City Council, is run by a group of volunteers by committee which is independent from the council. The committee are currently on the lookout for more volunteers to join them and help make decisions and run the centre. It is not a huge commitment and offers the chance to have a say in what goes on in your community.

You don't need to have any previous experience, all you need is a few free hours a month, a willingness to participate in decision making and a drive to help your community have access to facilities and groups which enrich their lives.

**A Committee Member:**

***Upholds the values and objectives of the organisation***

***Offers their time and energy to duties***

***Meets new people***

***Is part of an organisation with similar ideas***

***Above all has a good experience***

It's such a small thing that can make such a huge difference to our community. Think this could be for you? Then get in touch with Tommy via the details below.

**Hilton Community Centre, Hilton Road, Aberdeen AB24 4HS**

**01224 277025**

**[Hilton.centre@gmail.com](mailto:Hilton.centre@gmail.com)**

**[www.hilton-community-centre.org](http://www.hilton-community-centre.org)**



## WOODSIDE PARISH CHURCH

The kirk with the clock tower. The present congregation of Woodside Parish Church was formed out of a union of the former Woodside North and Woodside South Churches forty years ago. These legacy congregations served the community of Woodside and its environs for many decades.

The current building has been open for worship and to serve the community with organisations and various events in the Church Halls since 1849. We have a strong, welcoming congregation and have maintained links with our good friends at Woodside Congregational Church.

We are facing an uncertain future due to proposals in the Presbytery of Aberdeen and Shetland Mission Plan. This may mean that there will no longer be a Church of Scotland congregation meeting in and making outreach into our community from our present buildings. Buildings of course do not make the Church, the people do!

Our Church bell has been silenced recently due to an infestation of pigeons in the bell tower. Matters are in hand to rectify this.

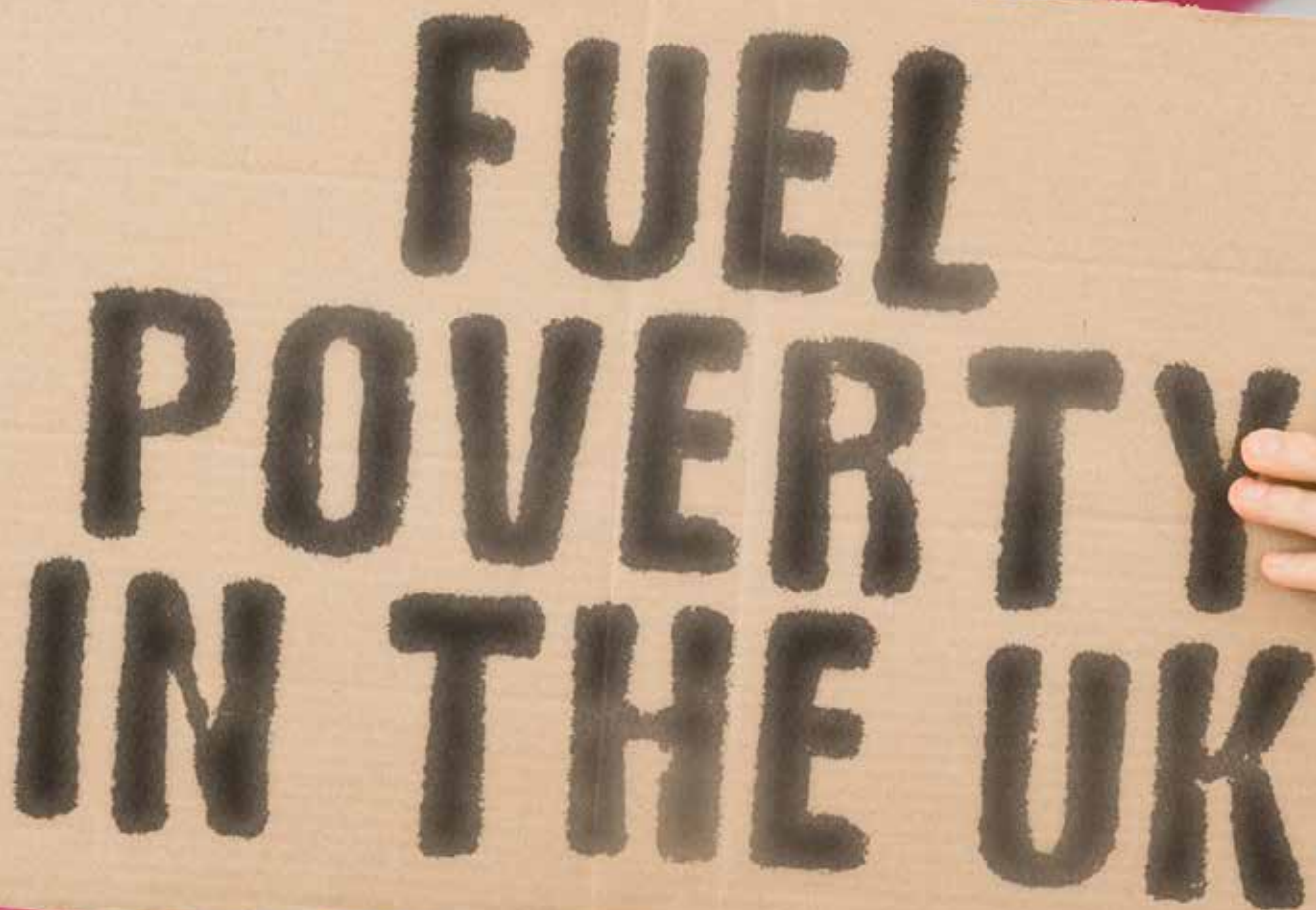
In the meantime, we are still open for public worship each Sunday from 11am until it has been determined otherwise.

### **All are welcome at our place.**

Many past and present Woodside folk will have memories of this kirk. The question is, does the community have any strong views as to whether the Church of Scotland needs to provide a live, active presence in Woodside?

**For more information or to get involved with the church you can email Malcolm on [mamaclennan@yahoo.com](mailto:mamaclennan@yahoo.com) or phone 07919106665.**

**Malcolm MacIennan  
Session Clerk**



# FUEL POVERTY IN THE UK

## Charity on hand to help with the fuel debt crisis

With fuel bills on the rise and the cost of the living crisis escalating, Scarf is on hand to help householders who are in or at risk of fuel debt.

In recent times many of the queries coming through the phones are from people who have no credit on their meters or have had their gas or electricity cut off. In this case, the first point of call is your energy supplier. But there are a few things you should have to hand before you pick up the phone:

- **A copy of your most recent bill**
- **Proof of any benefit you receive**
- **A pen and paper to take notes**

If you need help talking to your supplier about your bill you can contact Scarf and a member of the home energy advice team will support you. **Visit [www.scarf.org.uk](http://www.scarf.org.uk) or call free on 0808 129 0888.**

Lawrence Johnston Co-Chief Executive said: 'This is a worrying time for lots of us as prices continue to increase. With news of the cost of living crisis hitting the headlines on an almost daily basis, it's no surprise we're seeing increasing numbers of customers calling us for help.

'At Scarf we have a range of measures to help support you if you're in or at risk of fuel debt

including the ability to access financial support.

Although it's always important to remember that the cheapest energy is the energy you don't use which is why energy efficiency is a key part of our home visits.

For more advice on how to make your home more energy efficient and help get you in control of your bills take a look at our website **[www.scarf.org.uk](http://www.scarf.org.uk) or Home Energy Scotland [www.homeenergyscotland.org/reduce-home-energy-bills-tips-support-funding](http://www.homeenergyscotland.org/reduce-home-energy-bills-tips-support-funding).**

# Woodside, 130 Years and Beyond

**Nicola Watson**

You may already be aware of how a scattering of cottages back in the early 1800s became the village of Woodside when in 1834 the areas of Tanfield, Cotton and Woodside merged. They then became a Police Burgh in 1864, and in 1891 became part of Aberdeen City. But quite often we can spend too much time looking back and lose track of what is happening around us and where we want to be going.

Back in the day the Woodside Fountain outside Strachan's Bakery (now Coral next to the Fountain Bar) was the hub of the community. Everyone's horses would stop for a drink while their owners had a news and kids would eagerly wait for the ice cream man to go past. Now it's just a car park that doesn't get a second look. But what of it? Yes, the past is in the past and it cannot be changed. What we can't or shouldn't do however is forget where we came from.

In remembering where we came from and who we are, it is easier to live with ourselves and know what we want to bring into the future. Not everyone was happy with Woodside becoming part of the city. They liked how things were and liked that they were their own wee corner of the world. But staying as we are doesn't allow room for growth, both in the size of the community, its economy, but also of the people who live there. For a long time, it has felt like Woodside has been forgotten. Walls and buildings are crumbling, shops closing, trees, plants and branches are reclaiming what was once theirs. People weren't staying in the

area because, well, what was there to stay for?

When the pandemic hit and lockdown came into effect back on Monday 23 March 2020 it felt like the world stopped. But on Tuesday 24 March the community of Woodside came back to life! Neighbours checked on neighbours. Folk made sure no-one was alone in our isolation. That sense of community has stayed and been joined by new buildings and positive growth. A new housing scheme down by the rugby pitches, the completed shmu extension and the new Woodside Nursery are but a few. How do we keep the momentum going? By keeping the conversations going.

We are a sociable bunch, so let's look at what is available in our community and use it. There are a lot of groups going on, events to be organised, and ideas to be brought into reality. Let's use our voice to say what our community needs and find the people who can make it happen. Let's keep the spirit of Woodside alive and see what the next 130 years can have in store. We don't have to settle; we don't have to accept that this is all there is. If we work together, and make sure that no-one is left behind, we can keep building Woodside into a thriving, bustling, and energetic community fit for the future.

Don't build a shrine to the past, but don't forget it either. Use the good you have learned to improve now and the future. Instead of Carbon Footprints, let's leave Golden Footprints for the next generation to follow.





# Jacob's Ladder Progress

We have been given some funds from Aberdeen University Community Fund for equipment for clearing and cleaning the stairs and the paths but unfortunately, we cannot ask for volunteers quite yet as we do not have public liability insurance. The office bearers will continue to do this work on a voluntary basis as we do at the moment.

We are very grateful to have been given litter pickers, gloves, bin bags, and florescent jackets, from Lorna Graham Development Officer within Aberdeen City Council.

We have applied to the Common Good Fund for money to have a comprehensive survey report on the stairs carried out to determine whether it is viable to have them repaired or replaced. This will consist of extensive tests being carried out on the integrity of the stairs and the possible costs involved to bring them back into public use. We should know if we have been successful in our bid sometime this Spring.

Meanwhile, we have set up a basic survey to determine the strength of feelings the community has to having the stairs restored and we would urge readers to link into and complete the survey as it will help us with future funding applications. You can reach the survey through our website [www.jacobsladderrestoration.com](http://www.jacobsladderrestoration.com).



Christian Bews

Artistic impression of the concept for the underpass entrance from Hayton Road



## Mugger's Bridge Update

**Over the last few years there has been talk in the Woodside community about improvements that need to be made to Mugger's Bridge.**

In November 2021 the bridge was shut for 10 weeks in order for these improvements to be made. This included better visibility, the installation of mirrors, improved lighting and upgrading the condition of the steps.

The bridge reopened two weeks later with two of the major issues at the location being addressed. The drainage issues and the surfacing of the path and the

steps being fixed, and the walls had been painted but the project was not finished and residents of both Tillydrone and Woodside were left unimpressed by the lack of communication from the council.

Elected member for Tillydrone, Councillor Ross Grant chased up the issue with council officers and the community council received an update confirming that installation of lighting and panels to the underpass will take place in early 2022. At the time of printing the bridge was to be closed for the majority of March for the work to be finished.





# LET'S GO FOR A WALK!



## Info:

<b>Walk name:</b>	<b>Donside Walk</b>
<b>Start Point:</b>	<b>Persley Walled Garden (car parking available)</b>
<b>Walk Type:</b>	<b>Linear</b>
<b>Distance:</b>	<b>Around 2.5 miles return</b>
<b>Public Transport:</b>	<b>Hutcheon Low Drive</b>
<b>Difficulty:</b>	<b>suitable for beginners with no steep sections</b>
<b>Accessibility:</b>	<b>suitable for beginners, with some gradients and uneven surfacing</b>

## Review:

This is an interesting and relaxing walk which takes in part of the Donside Heritage Trail with all its' industrial history and pretty riverside views. I started this walk from North Anderson Drive, but the walk can be started from the Persley Walled Garden (car parking available).

As you walk down to the walled garden, it's definitely worth taking a peek inside to admire this beautifully landscaped Victorian garden. You won't be disappointed!

From here take the sign for the River Don Path and you will soon see Persley Castle (now a nursing home) coming into view on the upper path and some interesting old industrial equipment from the old Grandholm Mill on the lower path. The path follows the riverside and takes in some lovely views, and some great nature! I walked along to the Jacob's Ladder steps (now closed) and returned the same way.

# Project news

## Fersands Youth Work wins three years of Funding

The youth work team at Fersands are ecstatic as they have secured another three-year funding deal from Young Start (National Lottery Grants). In total the grant will amount to just over £95,000.

This will help keep the youth flat open for our local teenagers. It will cover for the rental and running costs of our youth flat. It will pay for our youth workers and enable us to put on exciting youth groups such as girls, boys and transition groups as well as Youth Committee, Young Promoters, sports club and the Youth Café. This grant ensures that all of these services are provided to young people free of charge, so families that are struggling don't have to think about costs for attending the youth clubs. Hopefully these resources will provide informal learning, confidence building and help young people gain new skills, meet friends and deal better with difficulties that may come their way. We are sure that we will be providing support to young people that they don't get anywhere else.

## Bedroom Project

Thanks to Northsound Cash for Kids fund we have been able to offer 8 local young people a bedroom renovation. This project has been running over the last 6 months and can help out families and have a huge impact on a teenager's life. Not all teenagers have cosy comfortable bedrooms, some don't even have beds!

We support young people and their families to create a warm comfortable bedroom space for their children. This can help young people sleep better, give them a place for homework, a place to take friends and help promote good mental health. A simple idea but one that takes time and costs money. This project has been supported by Northsound Cash for Kids and we believe has already been so important.

Through this project we have identified a common problem of damp and mould in local housing, an issue we are now raising with the local authority and hopefully we can help families get some answers in the near future.

## Woodside Walk About

Aberdeen City Council have organised "a walk about" around different communities in the city. The city council Participation Officer worked with community members to organise a community led approach where residents lead officials around a neighbourhood to physically see the problems they are facing on a daily basis. A large gathering met at Woodside Fountain Centre on a frosty March morning for coffee before heading off. Three or four residents pointed out a long list of issues to seven officers headed by chief executive Andy McDonald. Impressively as the group walked around, council "hit squads" were arriving to pick up several mattresses, furniture and general rubbish that had been dumped. The residents reported drainage problems, fallen trees, streets full of potholes, parking shortages and damp housing.

Issues and possible solutions and difficulties were discussed and shared as the group walked and talked.

The group also spoke of positive improvement ideas that they would like to see in the area. They would like to increase the size of Fersands Nursery Garden. They spoke of a new pathway between Ferrier Gardens and Western Road and future improvements at the Western Road Underpass (Mugger's Brig). They also suggested new steps behind the centre to the Marquis Road play area. Another idea was a tree planting project in the community.

It is hoped now that a two way dialogue will continue between residents and officials to see what improvements can be delivered in the months ahead.

## Empty Homes in Aberdeen: Furry boots?



**Latest figures show there are over 43,000 long term empty homes in Scotland. Approximately 6,000 of these homes are in Aberdeen. At the Scottish Empty Homes Partnership, we support owners to bring empty homes back into use.**

We often work with owners whose houses are lying empty, but the process of unlocking it seems too difficult. They may have inherited it and there is an emotional attachment; a renovations project has not worked out; or a relationship has broken down. Owning an empty home, whatever the circumstances, can be a financial drain and source of worry. Empty homes can also negatively affect neighbours and surrounding communities. Neighbours tell us that living near an empty home can become a living nightmare...

For example, in Aberdeen a neighbour shared concerns about the property next door. The house had been empty for years after the owner had suddenly moved out. It

was falling into a state of disrepair- and more recently, had attracted antisocial behaviour. The neighbour told us they had felt isolated and frightened, watching vandals break into the house, damaging it further. They were concerned about the deterioration, and how this could affect the insurance and value of their home. Living near to an empty property is not just a case of blight, but also a source of worry, discomfort and safety for those trying to enjoy their own home. Empty homes can have a detrimental effect on people's wellbeing and sense of place. They send out negative messages about a neighbourhood and can become the focus of anti-social behaviour. This can have a spiralling effect, with more people leaving, homes remaining unsold and remaining residents feeling trapped in a declining neighbourhood.

Making empty houses homes again can help to reverse this trend, making areas feel safer, healthier and livelier, and once more making people proud to call it home. It

can create a positive feel about communities, drawing new people towards them and helping to support wider regeneration. We know that an empty home is a wasted resource. Bringing them back into use can not only offer someone a home, but also help a community to thrive.

Since the beginning of the Partnership, over 6,000 empty properties have been brought back into use. Through working with owners and community groups, our advice service can assist in all aspects of bringing an empty home back into use. Whether you are looking for help in formulating a plan, would like to know what discounts you might be entitled to, or simply you want to share the burden of your empty home, please don't hesitate to contact the Scottish Empty Homes Advice Service. We would love to hear from you.

**Email:**  
**[emptyhomes@shelter.org.uk](mailto:emptyhomes@shelter.org.uk)**

**Tel: 03445151941**

*On 27th May 1964 the Aberdeen Press and Journal published this public information article during the early stages of the city's typhoid outbreak.*

## TAKING TERROR OUT OF TYPHOID

ALAN JOHNSTONE

"The importance of preventing public panic during a typhoid outbreak was stressed by Dr I.A.G. McQueen, Aberdeen's Medical Officer of Health, when he gave a statement on the disease and the precautions to be taken.

"Typhoid engenders terror" he declared. "Prevention of public panic is very important. Even in the worst outbreaks more than 49 out of every 50 people escape."

Dr McQueen said the symptoms of the disease appear after 10-15 days' incubation (during which germ is multiplying in the body). Early symptoms include persistent and severe headache, weakness and languor, abdominal pain and intestinal upset. Over a period of six or seven days the individual feels worse and worse, generally takes to bed, temperature rises bit by bit and face becomes very flushed, abdomen becomes distended, and spleen enlarges and can be felt by doctor's hand.

The germ comes from a patient, a recovered patient (about 3% of persons who suffer from the disease become carriers - mostly for a few weeks only), or a healthy carrier. Some people become carriers without previous obvious illness. The germ reaches the next person by passing from the discharges of a case or carrier (e.g. excreta, urine, blood or sweat) to the mouth of the next victim. Therefore, scrupulous

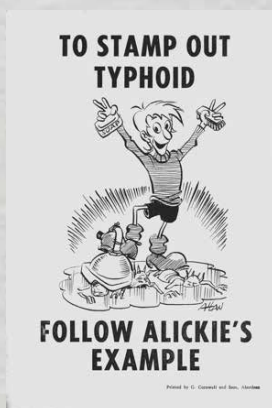
cleanliness before handling any type of food will protect even if the handler is a carrier or an undiagnosed case. Soap and nailbrush are the best weapons against typhoid. In food the germ is very quickly killed by boiling and killed by fifteen minutes at 46°C (133°F) or higher. Hence well-cooked food and pasteurised milk are safe, unless subsequently handled.

When typhoid is prevalent the potentially dangerous foods are those which are handled by someone outside the house and not subsequently cooked. Cream cakes could be dangerous if handled by a carrier. They are not afterwards cooked to kill the germ. If you eat a cream cake that somebody - baker, shop assistant, waitress - has touched by hand, you are in fact trusting that the somebody is not a carrier or else has absolutely perfect hygiene in respect of thorough hand-washing. Cold meats bought in a shop or restaurant could be dangerous in the same way. On the other hand your own roast, cooked at home and later served cold should be safe enough, unless your household contains a carrier whose hygiene is faulty. While salads from vegetables picked by yourself from garden or allotment should be safe, lettuce or tomatoes or cucumbers handled in shop or market might be dangerous

(though you could make the cucumbers safe by peeling off the skin and then washing your own hands thoroughly).

All persons handling food - in house or elsewhere - should wash hands carefully after using toilet and before touching food. Individual towels or paper towels are useful. If a household uses a common towel one infected hand insufficiently washed may contaminate the towel, and the food-handler may pick up germ when drying hands. In food shops, etc customers should insist on scrupulous food hygiene. If you are going to eat in a restaurant or canteen, take a few tissues with you to use when drying hands after washing them immediately before eating. Dr McQueen went on to reveal the precautions taken when a food is suspected. All the suspected food is removed from sale. The food-handlers who could have contaminated the food or who could have acquired the germ from the food are removed from all food-handling until proved free from the germ. Equipment, machinery, counters, etc are cleansed and sterilised.

For the people who have already eaten the food, no precautions will remove them from the at-risk group. Some of them will be lucky and escape, others, more unfortunate, will already be in the process of developing the disease.



In the Aberystwyth outbreak, for example, something like one per cent of the population developed typhoid. Obviously the earlier the source is detected the smaller will be the at-risk group - so in any outbreak the detective aspect must receive top priority. This is the absolutely first job of the medical officers, health visitors, etc. In respect of people who are already at risk when the source is detected, all one can try to do is to identify cases early (for quicker treatment) and to seek to prevent people at risk from infecting others.

If the food has been consumed by so many people that to trace them is impracticable, or if there is no means of identifying the people, the obvious steps are:- Try to protect the whole town by emphasising and re-emphasising the importance of scrupulous food hygiene during the ensuing weeks. When cases develop, try to identify and examine their contacts and to keep them from handling food until proved free from germ. This follow-up process inevitably depends in large measure on the numbers of doctors, health visitors, sanitary inspectors, etc available. A contact who works in a restaurant for example must be followed up at all costs but there may not be enough public health staff to deal with contacts at less immediate risk e.g. the neighbour who received one cup of tea from the newly identified case.”

## Instant Neighbour – Supporting the local community

Happy New Year from all of us at Instant Neighbour! We hope that you all had a lovely Christmas and New Year and managed to stay safe and healthy. We opened our doors for 2022 at our St Machar Drive HQ on the 5th of January and are full of enthusiasm for the coming year. Looking back, 2021 saw the message to ‘shop local to support local’ emphasised across all sectors; retail in particular as small businesses targeted local communities to help keep them trading. Charities have been crying out for volunteers and donations as increasing numbers of people have found themselves in need of support. We really appreciate the support from the local community both in AB24 and further afield from the wider Aberdeen community. We love catching up on your news when you pop into the shop to pick up a bargain and are eternally grateful to those of you who pop in with cakes and treats to keep us going. A huge thank-you to you all for your ongoing support and custom as well as your donations of items for reuse encouraging sustainability and helping AB24 go One Step Greener.

We’re in the middle of implementing as many changes as possible to ensure that as a charity, we’re as green as we can possibly be. Our shops sell reuse items which are often one-off unique products. Every time you shop with us, upcycling these items, you’re not only potentially getting better quality items for less money, but you’re being kind to the planet by diverting that item from landfill.

We’re a local charity and we’re here to support the local community. The profits generated by selling reuse items in our shops are ploughed straight back into the charity to support our charitable enterprises - our Giving Tree, and our Food Bank. In monetary terms, every £20 spent in our shops equates to the cost of a basic food parcel. In December 2021, through the Instant Neighbour Giving Tree Christmas appeal and the gifts we received both from profits generated in the shop and from donations by the wider Aberdeen community, 3684 children were supported and received gifts to open on Christmas Day. Our Food Bank is open Monday – Friday all year, but in December, our food bank handed out 595 food parcels.

## Youth Media

The Youth Media Team have been working with a researcher from University of Aberdeen called Beatriz and have previously completed two science-based podcasts. For the third and final podcast the team have produced a creative story which has underlying themes about clinical trials but scripted in an accessible way that makes it easier to understand without all the scientific jargon that is often used. The team have collaborated well and shared ideas effectively and have now scripted and recorded their podcast which will be shared online for the public.

Two more young people have now completed their National 3 media courses. Many of the Youth Media Team

members are on track to receive certificates soon for their volunteering hours including one young person from our summer programme who has recently received their 50-hour volunteering certificate.

Youth Media member, Molly (who is from the Northfield area) has successfully been offered a volunteering role at Aberdeen Science Centre where she will be engaging with the public during clubs and workshops. For the last few years Molly has been presenting a weekly science themed radio show. Molly said: "I don't think I would like science if I hadn't done the science show".

## shmuTRAIN

Our current PT plus group has been busy even with Covid sometimes changing our plans.

We have had a session with Young Scot who were beamed into our Boardroom via Microsoft Teams videocall and spoke about funding and volunteering opportunities available for young people via their website as well as how the workers themselves got to where they are now, adding an employability side to the chat.

We have also had lovely Carol in from Bon Accord Care, who delivered a Skills for Care workshop for our young people. The session took place

in shmu and was very useful for our participants to learn more about the care sector."

We also have had a very productive time doing our CVs and cover letters, thinking about our responsibilities in workplace and how to conduct ourselves at work.

We also have some great news about work experience!

Two of our young people are starting their placements with Shopmobility/ AbleDeen in their Union Square office while other two are going to start work



experience at the Aberdeen University Zoology Museum of all places! We wish them all the best with this.

And that is not all! We are happy to share more good news from the previous Positive Transitions group. Another two young people have started their Sound Production School course with NESCOL and one has gained employment in a hotel in Aberdeenshire! Again we wish these young people all the very best!"



# Pete the Punk

## THE STRANGLERS & RUTS D.C.

With covid casualties in this country now 180,000 and counting, most of us know, or know of, someone lost to the virus: friend, relative, an artist who touched or inspired us in some way, the cost has been heavy. I was much saddened personally by the death of The Stranglers' keyboard wizard Dave Greenfield, the man whose fluid melodies lay at the heart of the band's unique sound.

But, as they say in showbiz, the show must go on, and though postponed several times due to the pandemic, The Stranglers finally roll into town on what is billed as their final tour.

A long queue outside the Music Hall tells us Aberdeen is more than ready for them. Inside, a packed venue buzzes in anticipation of what, for many, is their first gig in more than two years.

First up is Ruts D.C., a band that initially rose from the ashes of The Ruts following the death of singer Malcolm Owen in 1980. Having then split up in 1983, they took a few years off but now operate as a trio, getting crowds going everywhere by mixing old favourites like *In A Rut*, *Babylon's Burning* and *Something That I Said* with newer but no less exhilarating material. Unusually, most of the audience leaves the bar to see Ruts D.C. in action. They're rewarded with a blistering 45-minute set that has the crowd on its feet, effectively laying down the gauntlet to The Stranglers: "Follow that, lads!"

Never ones to shirk a challenge, the headliners hit the stage running with *Toiler On The Sea*, setting the tone for the mesmerising set to come. *The Raven* follows, Rattus Norvegicus opener *Sometimes* comes hard on its heels before we're brought bang up to date with *Water*, the first of several selections from latest album *Dark Matters*.

They're not messing about here and as the atmosphere ramps up with a great run of singles, there's a real sense of joy in the air, a collective recognition that this evening perhaps marks the first step towards something approaching normality. *Nice 'n' Sleazy*, *Strange Little Girl*, *Always The Sun* and *Peaches* bring us somewhat breathlessly to the effervescence of *Golden Brown*, a song as far removed from punk as one can get. Who would have thought, when The Stranglers burst onto the scene in 1977, that they'd go on to have a string of top 20 singles, receiving an Ivor Novello award for 1982's most played record on European radio, and with a song about heroin addiction at that? Not many, I'm sure.

As sole remaining founder member Jean Jacques Burnel prowls the stage, ripping out those fearsome bass lines like he's seventeen again, not 70, we're reminded that the band's historic refusal to conform to what had become suffocatingly restrictive punk orthodoxies is a major factor in their longevity - that, and the ability to adapt and survive major personnel changes across the decades.

The rest of the 22-song opening set digs deep into their back catalogue with classics like *Baroque Bordello*, *Nuclear Device*, the band's astonishing cover of Burt Bacharach's *Walk On By*, *Duchess* and *Straighten Out*, concluding with *Last Men On The Moon*.

As if to prove they're still capable of surprising us after nearly 50 years on the road, the first encore brings something entirely new to Stranglers' sets. Burnel and singer/guitarist Baz Warne return to the stage with a couple of acoustic guitars, sit down and play two of the more reflective numbers from *Dark Matters* – *The Lines*, a wistful note on growing old, then *And If You Should See Dave*, a touching tribute to Dave Greenfield.

Before the tour, there had been doubts about how the band would cope without musical mentor/spirit guide Greenfield, but replacement Toby Hounsham is a fine musician. Though there is the odd moment we miss the genius of his illustrious predecessor, the band sounds like The Stranglers throughout and that's the main thing.

Encore two kicks off with the evergreen *(Get A) Grip (On Yourself)* - as fresh today as when first released in 1977 – closing out with a triumphant *No More Heroes*.

What a night it's been. Despite many grey hairs and creaking bones, the mosh pit has undeniably moshed, the bands have had a ball and, as we file out of the hall, there's an optimism that maybe, just maybe, the worst of the pandemic is over. Music, eh? It does that to you.



Jean Jacques Burnel pic: Raymond Thomson

# Community Contacts

Aberdeen City Council Helpline - 0800 0304 713

Virtual School Helpline - 01224 523322

## ALCOHOL

Alcoholics Anonymous - 0800 9177 650

Drinkline - 0300 123 1110

## CRIME

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

## DRUGS

Alcohol and Drugs Action Helpline

01224 594700 or 07927192706

Narcotics Anonymous

0300 999 1212

## DENTIST

Emergency - G-Dens - 111

## DOCTORS

NHS 24 Emergency - 111

## POLICE

Non-Emergency - 101

## ELECTRICITY

If you have a power-cut - 105

## GAS

Gas Emergency - 0800 111 999

## WATER

Scottish Water Emergency - 0800 0778 778

## HOUSING

Emergency Repairs - 03000 200 292

Family Planning - 0345 337 9900

Mental Health Aberdeen - 01224 573892

Breathing Space - 0800 838 587

Samaritans - Need to talk

01224 574 488 or 116 123

## SOCIAL WORK

Adult Protection - 0800 731 5520

Joint Child Protection Team

01224 306877 or 0800 731 5520

Aberdeen Carers Support Service - 01224 914036

Age Scotland - 0800 1244 222

CFINE 01224 596156

Financial Advice at CFINE 01224 531386

Pathways 01224 682 939

Citizens Advice 01224 586255

Penumbra First Response 0800 234 3695

Fersands and Fountain Community Project

01224 524925

Printfield Community Project

01224 276788

Woodside Fountain Centre

01224 485983

Woodside Medical Practice

8am – 6pm

Contact: 01224 492828

Woodside Network

Contact: [printfield@printfieldproject.co.uk](mailto:printfield@printfieldproject.co.uk)

or [mark@fersands.org](mailto:mark@fersands.org)

St Machar Credit Union

Info: Credit Unions are financial co-operatives owned and controlled by their members, that offer savings accounts, low cost loans and other services.

Phone: 01224 276994

## DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT

Domestic Abuse is not acceptable. It is not your fault and you are not alone. Domestic Abuse is when you are hurt, bullied or frightened by: Your husband or wife, your boyfriend or girlfriend, your current or ex-partner

Their behaviour can be; controlling, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

### Help and support

There are services available to support you, and they are still open. You do not have to wait for an emergency to get help. Tell someone you trust or contact:

### Police Scotland

If you are in danger and it is an emergency, call 999. For non-emergencies call 101

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline Free** and confidential advice. Open to all. 24 hours a day. Telephone: 0800 027 1234. Website: [sdfmh.org.uk](http://sdfmh.org.uk)

### Grampian Women's Aid

Telephone: 01224 593381. Website: [grampian-womens-aid.com](http://grampian-womens-aid.com)

**Rape Crisis Grampian** Telephone: 01224 590932.

Website: [rapecrisisgrampian.co.uk](http://rapecrisisgrampian.co.uk)