

Community Futures

Groups Update

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Strathard Futures for Recreation

The group held their AGM on 11th December and have formally adopted their constitution. The group are working on getting the play park in Aberfoyle refurbished and incorporating a skate park. Stirling Council will produce a design and they will take on the management of the project. Both the Council and the group are fully aware of the importance of the site at the entrance to Aberfoyle and this will be reflected in the design. The design will be done professionally. Once a plan has been drawn up it will be shown publicly for comment. The contact for this group is Melanie Chocolek 382 997

Social and Community Issues

This group have worked to get the Strathard News up and running again. After a shaky start the News is back on track. Your input is vital to ensure the future of the newsletter. We need to fill the pages with local news and articles. So c'mon Strathard, let's hear from you! Contact Jimmy Campbell (Chairman) 382 210 or Marion Back (Newsdesk) 01301 702972

Roads, Transport, Safety, Paths and Trails

This group has a wide remit so they have divided the priorities and action into 4 headings: Transport, Paths and trails, Traffic Calming, and Roads. Work is progressing on all fronts, much of which involves building alliances with other groups, and undertaking a campaigning role. A transport survey has been sent out to collect information on specific services people would use. The results of this will inform discussions with public transport providers. With the Community Council, efforts are being made to secure funding in the first instance for a technical study and secondly, for the building of a footbridge over the Forth. This will be located near the road bridge. When there are definite plans these will be made available for comment. Contact for this group is John Digney 382 636

The Community Futures Action Groups are working towards the priority projects identified by you, the community. The Steering Committee, which is made up of representatives from each of the Action groups, is finalising the Community Action Plan and a copy will be sent out to each household in due course.

Gartmore House

What are you doing on Tuesdays?

Conference & Activity Centre



Let us entice and enthuse with our Tuesday activity days

- Computing skills
- Cookery demonstrations
- Aromatherapy
- Plants for health
- Computer aided gardening
- Writing skills
- Silk painting
- Country crafts

Each Tuesday has a different theme and you are welcome to join us for coffee by the log fire and take part in two activities around a heart-warming two course lunch in our library – all for £9.50

Perfect for individuals or group outings – come and share in a fun filled day.

Enjoy Treat Yourself Tuesday, every week at Gartmore House

Gartmore House, Gartmore, by Aberfoyle, FK8 3RS
Tel: 01877 382 991 Fax: 01877 382 725
e-mail: mail@gartmorehouse.com
www.gartmorehouse.com



It is with great sadness that the Executive Committee

Abbeyfield

of the Abbeyfield Society, Aberfoyle gives notice that this house will close at the end of March 2003. This is due entirely to changing social needs. Be rest assured that all possible steps have been and will be taken to safeguard the welfare and needs of both residents and staff. The Committee would also like to express our grateful thanks to all who, over the years, have assisted in any way in the management and day to day running of what was a very happy home.

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Aberfoyle Medical Centre

In the last issue we touched briefly on the subject of funding, as we are attempting to improve the emergency equipment available both at Buchlyvie and Aberfoyle surgeries. There is particular need for defibrillators. Defibrillators can save lives, especially out in rural communities such as ours, where we are some distance from hospital emergency care. Dr Maclaren's expertise in the field of emergency medicine has enabled us to utilise his skills in training and effective use of such equipment. Practice Staff have been involved in emergency

resuscitation training and the doctors have been sharpening their skills in this area as well.

How can the community help? Does anybody have any good ideas for raising funds for this worthwhile initiative? Aberfoyle has a superb reputation for its generosity and in the past we have received many welcome donations from patients and businesses. Could we ask for your help again?

Tel. 382 421

Inversnaid Primary School

We are pleased to announce that Inversnaid Primary has received a Bronze Award in the Eco Schools programme. The children have been looking at ways to improve the environment and save energy by recycling and reducing waste and litter. The Eco Committee, comprising of staff, parents, pupils and Countryside Ranger meet on a regular basis to review the Eco programme and the school grounds.

The school has been collecting paper salvage for recycling (magazines, old newspapers, etc.) for some time now. We are very appreciative of the many people in the community who have been collecting for us, not least Abbeyfield. We were sorry to hear that they will be closing, and would like to thank them for their support. If you would like to help save the rainforests, then pass on your paper salvage to us, we will arrange collection. Please call the school, 01877 386 218, for more information.

Miss Dorothy Wilson has been teaching at the school in Mrs Neufeld's absence. As Miss Wilson travels from Ballat every day, she was concerned about being unable to reach the school during inclement weather. So it was a big relief to see the roads gritted during the bad spell of weather recently.

The children had a great day out at Christmas time when they went to Loch Lomond Shores to see the pantomime, Mermaid Cinderella. They particularly enjoyed their lunch at McDonalds! 😊

We recently had a visit from Bill Oddie, who was filming in the area with a BBC camera crew. After sitting up for 2 nights in the barn at Inversnaid Lodge trying to film the pine martin as it came for its nightly feed (an egg), they gave up and decided to film the Highland cows instead. Predictably, the pine martin returned on the third night. Shame! However, the children had a chance to play with the camera equipment, and the school received a signed copy of Bill Oddie's book.

Finally, the Tesco vouchers for schools promotion is running from January until April. If you have not pledged your vouchers elsewhere Inversnaid Primary will gladly take them off your hands.



Reading Room

Well, winter is here (or has the worst still to come?) and the Reading Room is once again open for business. Now some of you will ask, what and where is the Reading Room? The answer is that the Reading Room or Village Club is the small building joined to the block of flats now known as Hillside, opposite the Memorial Hall on Trossachs Road. This club belongs to the village of Aberfoyle and for over one hundred years it has provided a venue for a variety of local activities. Before the Memorial Hall was built it was used by groups like the Masons, Eastern Star and WRI etc. Now it gives a venue for locals to take part in the old game of summer ice. This game is basically miniature curling on a long highly polished wooden table, using small metal stones. It used to be played in every village west of Stirling but now survives only in Aberfoyle, Gartmore, Kippen and Buchlyvie. As well as a summer ice table the room has a three-quarter-size snooker table, a dartboard and a television. Generations of Aberfoyle youngsters have enjoyed membership of the club and this continues to the present day.

The aims of the committee are to provide a venue for summer ice and to provide a safe, warm environment where the youngsters of the village can meet and integrate. Historically the Reading Room has been almost solely the domain of male members of the community and some past committees have not discouraged this anomaly. The present chairperson and committee members, some of whom are of the female gender, are determined to encourage girls of all ages to become involved in the running of the club and to enjoy its facilities.

The building itself is in need of some repairs and the members are looking at ways of raising some much-needed funds. The Christmas raffle is on going and a Valentine Ceilidh Dance will be held in the Memorial Hall on February 15th. The younger members are also looking at ways of raising funds and I am sure the village will support them in their efforts.

As the name would suggest the Reading Room was indeed a room where people went to read. We would like to re-establish this facility by taking in second hand books donated by you and offering a book swap service. We would charge a small fee for this, probably 50 pence. Anyone who would like to donate some books should either hand them in to the Aberfoyle post office or contact Jimmy Ferguson on 01877 382 266 to arrange uplift.

The centre offers a multitude of activities to groups and individuals. All activities are under the supervision of qualified staff, and all necessary equipment can be provided for a safe and enjoyable day out.



open to everybody....with something for everyone!

EQUIPMENT HIRE

There is a wide range of equipment at the centre available for any activity which you may wish to pursue.

BOAT HIRE

Sailing Boats - Wayfarers, Toppers, Optimist, Dart, Laser II and RS400

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On 20th November I received a nice letter from Sheila Harris, MP from Abingdon, who expressed her appreciation for the warm and friendly welcome that she received during her stay in the Aberfoyle area. She asked me not to publish her letter but to pass on her comments and thanks to everyone who made her stay a happy and memorable one. The mushroom festival was for her one of the highlights of her holiday. (Ed.)

Residents win Play Park Fight

Play Park Action Group

Via the Strathard News, The Old Kirk Loan *Play Park Action Group* are pleased to announce that they are now working with Stirling Council to design a Play Park that meets the needs of not only the residents of Old Kirk Loan and its surrounding areas but all the children who will use it. Stirling Council have agreed to spend in full the £11,250 put aside on equipment for the Old Kirk Loan Play Park, as well as covering the cost of designing the Play Park. We now have an opportunity to create a unique Play/Community area (albeit with limited funds).

It has always been the intention of the *Play Park Action Group* to create a Play Park that not only meets the needs of the children, but is also a community area. With Old Kirk Loan now complete and fully occupied, with a mixture of family homes and single person residencies, along with purpose built homes for 'pensioners', we recognise that the Play Park must take into consideration the needs of the many residents of Old Kirk Loan and its unique and inclusive design, as well as the surrounding homes.

At the beginning of December the *Play Park Action Group* met with Sue Gutteridge of Stirling Council and their Play Park Designer. It was agreed at this meeting that the original plan (produced by Stirling Council) for a Play Area at Old Kirk Loan did not fully meet the residents and children's needs, and that it would be re-looked at and re-worked in conjunction with *Play Park Action Group*. The re-worked design should be ready in the New Year.

It was also recognised at this meeting that the bridge (and the car park) connecting Manse Road to Aberfoyle was a danger point for the 60+ children living on this side of the bridge attempting to reach the existing Aberfoyle Play Ground; it was therefore necessary to design and build a Play Area that met the needs of many different age groups of children who now live 'over the bridge'.

The safety of the children has always been paramount, and it was this common cause that made a diverse group of individuals join together to "have our voices heard". As stated in the Stirling Observer "Crusading villagers in Aberfoyle united to defend their children's safety in an astonishing display of people power". By joining together in a common cause the residents of the newest housing estate in Aberfoyle have become a community out of a diverse group of individuals.

The *Play Park Action Group's* remit has now expanded to make the Old Kirk Loan Play Park into a Community Area. It is our ambition to persuade the residents this side of 'the Bridge' to assist us in landscaping and maintaining the 'Play Park' in the future for every one to use.

The *Play Park Action Group* would like to give particular thanks to the Forth Inn and Forest Prints who gave immediate support to a group with no funds of their own by providing a meeting place and printing materials. Via the Strathard News we will keep you informed of any developments in our aim to attain a safe and stimulating play area for our children along with an enjoyable community area for all our residents.

Ruaridh Campbell

Winner of the Glenfiddoch Scottish Fiddle Championship.

On Sunday 27th October 2002 Ruaridh won the Glenfiddoch Scottish Fiddle Championship. This competition is a championship of champions, highlights of which were broadcast on Radio Scotland on Saturday 2nd November at 8pm. Ruaridh lived at Kirkton in Aberfoyle up until the age of 16, attending our local primary school. He began learning to play the fiddle under the enthusiastic guidance of the late Mrs Jaquie Menglar, whose boundless enthusiasm and energy played a very important roll during his early years. Ruaridh has just finished recording his first album, which should be released early in the New Year. I'm sure that you will all join me in wishing Ruaridh every success in the launch of his first album.

First let me say how pleased I am to see the Strathard News back in circulation, and congratulations to all concerned; its no small task to produce all this in your spare time and hopefully the committee will continue to receive the support it needs.

To update everyone on our activities since November, lets start with winter road gritting on the road to Kinlochard. As you will all know by now, the council decided to remove the priority one rating from this and several other roads in the district to cut costs. Thanks to everyone who lobbied, both individually and through local groups, to have the priority rating restored. Our thanks also to Sylvia Jackson, MSP, who took up the issue with Stirling Council. We were delighted to hear that the decision had been reversed, particularly bearing in mind the number of children who now travel the route daily to school.

The Senior Citizens Dinner took place at the beginning of December at Forest Hills and what a good evening it was! Many thanks to the management and staff at Forest Hills Hotel for an excellent meal in beautiful surroundings; to the Kinlochard Ceilidh Band for their entertainment, and to Aberfoyle Motors for the transport. Thanks also to everyone who contributed to the success of the evening, whether by donations of money, raffle prizes, or of their time. Can I remind readers that we do try to make sure that no-one is left off the invitation list for the dinner, and I apologise if we have forgotten anyone! If you do reach pension age this year, why not let one of the Community Councillors know and we can update our list?

We were sorry to receive notice that our former chairman, James Kennedy, is unable to continue to represent Kinlochard on the Community Council due to work pressures. James fought long and hard on our behalf over several issues, including the closure of Kinlochard School; the building of the sewage treatment plant; planning conditions at Kirkton Farm; and the removal of the sheep from Loch Katrine. On behalf of us all I would like to offer him our thanks for his hard work and commitment.

Sitting alongside James at all those meetings was our then secretary Iona Cowderoy. Iona has worked quietly away on behalf of the Community Council for many years, taking care of correspondence and the administrative chores. She has recently told me that she would like to stand down at the next AGM. in April, and she too will be a great loss to us. Many thanks also go to Iona for putting in so many years on our behalf.

So, residents of Kinlochard, you are now short of not one, not two, but three representatives on the Community Council! Your community needs you! Unfortunately we are only allowed one more 'co-opted' member at present, (ie: we could appoint one person without an election), the other two will have to wait for the next round of elections in the Autumn. However, if we are unable to fill our quota of councillors it is possible that we might need to take advice as to whether we need to maintain the 'ward' system of 3 members from Inversnaid, 4 from Kinlochard and 4 from Aberfoyle, or whether we can simply become one ward of 11 representatives, irrespective of where they live. Please give it some thought.

Our next meeting in Kinlochard Village Hall on February 6th, will include discussion of plans for traffic calming on Lochard Road, past the Primary School. Stirling Council has £20,000 available to spend for this purpose which must be allocated before 31st March. Meetings have already taken place involving the School Board, the headteacher, Strathard Community Futures Roads and Transport Group, and the Community Council. Speeding along here has long been a matter of concern and we are working to find a satisfactory solution.

Please come and join us at any of our meetings, first Thursday of every month, rotating between the three wards. We are always pleased to see new faces, and remember, if you don't tell us of a problem, we can't do anything about it. A full copy of community council minutes can be obtained from Ros at the Post Office, and in future will be available on the website, www.aberfoyle.co.uk, on the community pages.

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MAIN STREET ABERFOYLE

EDITORIAL

This being our New Year edition provides us with an opportunity to reflect over some of the highlights of 2002.

The establishment of *The Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park* on 8th July followed by the official opening at Balloch by The Princess Royal on July 24th. We are fortunate to have two National Park Ranger Teams based here in the Discovery Centre at Aberfoyle, all of whom will need no introduction especially to our younger readers who attend the local primary schools.

Lets not forget the excellent work of the *Trossachs Seasonal Field Wardens* who worked quietly and almost unnoticed clearing and tidying our Loch shores, lay-by's and picnic areas, crossing boundaries sometimes even taking to boats to clear and tidy the rubbish and filth that people discard and leave behind.

The launch of the *Strathard Community Futures Programme* was directly responsible for establishing a number of committees including The Strathard News; as you will have read in our previous editions, each of the action groups are making substantial progress and will therefore play a very important roll in the future of the Strathard Area.

October was probably the most memorable month in our Calendar of events, beginning with the *Mushroom Festival* which ran from Thursday 24th until Sunday 27th. A weekend absolutely jam packed with events, involving all sectors of our community, including special events by Country Pursuits of Strathard, and a spectacular fireworks display on Loch Ard, followed by a grand Ceilidh in the Kinlochard Hall.

Alcobreed, as featured in our October issue, could be Aberfoyle's young up and coming band. Unfortunately they had to suspend band practice for a while after their drummer, Roddy Aitken was injured in an accident. We hope he'll be back on top form soon.

The *Kinlochard Ceilidh Band* has just returned from Prague, the latest in a long list of International Venues and *Ruaridh Campbell* is now the Scottish Fiddle Champion.

What more can I say!

Jimmy Campbell
Editor

THE ABERFOYLE BUTCHER

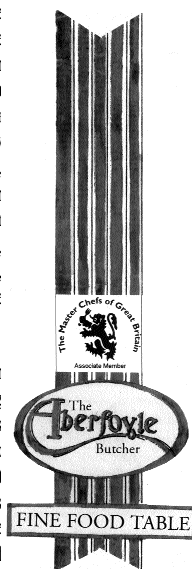
We are a family business, which has been established in Aberfoyle for over 10 years. We offer a feast of delights, which have won us awards, and recognition from the very elite in the food industry and thus have a very loyal clientele, both locally and throughout Scotland and England through the Mail Order Service we provide.

All our meats and game are very carefully selected from native or rare-breeds such as Highland Cattle, Aberdeen Angus or Blackface lamb, all from producers who comply with the strictest health and hygiene codes and animal welfare.

We produce a large range of charcuterie, manufactured and home cured products from our own stock using traditional time honoured methods with no additives or artificial ingredients and specialist products imported from France and Italy.

Scotch Smoke is our very own smokehouse where we produce a range of home smoked produce of exceptional quality. The supporting products come from the Aberfoyle Fine Food Table, a side of our business supplying a range of products from quality artisan cheeses, pâtés, wines, coffees and much more through to Gourmet deluxe hampers for that special occasion or gift, which, when all brought together, culminate in the ultimate gastronomic experience.

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Free Business Workshops

These workshops, run by Quirk & Co, are offered **FREE of charge** to traders in the Stirling Council area through the **NATIONAL PARK QUALITY RETAIL PROGRAMME**



VISUAL DISPLAY WORKSHOP

18th February 6 pm – 9 pm

Have fun learning how to increase business by attracting customers to your windows

THE NATIONAL PARK – KNOW WHAT'S ON YOUR DOORSTEP

21st February 10 am – 4 pm

A day packed with information to help you sell this area to your customers. Talks about the Folklore, History & Literary References, Wildlife & Natural History of the area PLUS a guided tour of the Queen Elizabeth Forest Park. Lunch is provided too!

COST-EFFECTIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

11th March 6 pm – 9 pm

Advertising can be expensive – you will learn better and cheaper alternatives

All workshops are held at Gartmore House.

For more information and to reserve a place contact **Mary Phillips** on 01877 382 696 mary@forthhouse.com

NB Places are limited for Workshop 1 so book **NOW** – only the first 12 will get a place!



Quirk&Co



Fire Safety Advice from Central Scotland Fire Brigade

DO YOU HAVE A SMOKE ALARM?

A smoke alarm will give you those precious few minutes of warning, which could help you and your family get out safely. They are cheap and easy to install and are widely available from DIY, Hardware and Electrical shops. Choose an alarm, which meets British Standard 5446: Part 1. Follow the manufacturer's instructions on how to fit and position the alarm, if you are still unsure of what to do then contact your Local Authority Fire Brigade for further advice. If your hearing is severely impaired, there are special devices available, which make use of a vibrating pad or flashing light (for further advice contact Community Fire Safety 01324 716996).

Checking your Smoke Alarm Once a week, press the test button to check that the alarm sounds. If the alarm does not work try fitting a new battery. If the alarm still does not work check the battery is fitted correctly and if still not working, replace the smoke alarm with a new one. Change the battery once a year or sooner if required. Alternatively choose a smoke detector that has a 10 year life battery fitted, or a mains wired alarm system

Cleaning the Smoke Alarm The outer and inner casings of battery operated alarms should be lightly vacuumed at least once a year. The outer casing of mains operated alarms should be lightly vacuumed at least once a year.

THE KITCHEN

65% of house fires start in the kitchen. Chip pans, grill pans and electrical faults are the main causes.

Do you use a chip pan? If YES, please take care as overheated fat and oil can catch fire spontaneously. NEVER Leave a chip pan unattended. Fill a chip pan more than a third full of oil or fat. Throw water on burning fat or oil. A safer option is a thermostatically controlled Electric Deep Fat Fryer

Do you cook fatty foods under the grill?

If YES you MUST clean the grill pan after each use. If you don't, fat deposits build up and can easily catch fire.

Do you leave plugs in sockets and appliances switched on when not in use?

Electrical appliance faults may cause overheating and a subsequent fire. You can assist in avoiding this by removing all plugs from sockets when equipment is not being used. E.g., Lamps, televisions, heaters, radio, tumble dryer, washing machine etc.

Do you have an electrical appliance or appliance cables near the cooker?

If an appliance or its cable is subjected to radiated heat it can easily suffer enough damage to result in fire. Site any appliances, or their associated cables, at a safe distance from your cooker.

Do you dry towels on top or near the cooker?

When dry, the towel can easily catch fire. Ensure all combustible items are kept a safe distance from your cooker.

THE BEDROOM

The largest single cause of fire in a bedroom is an electric blanket. Statistics show that most of these fires are caused by blankets over 10 years old. However, smoking and electrical faults are also significant.

Do you have an electric blanket? Do you leave it switched on whilst in bed?

If you do, the blanket must be of a type which is suitable for "all night" use and have "overheat protection". This will ensure the electrical supply is isolated if the blanket gets too hot. If in doubt check the blanket specification. If the blanket does not meet this specification, pull the plug out before getting into bed.

Is your blanket out of guarantee?

If it is, it is recommended that the blanket be inspected and serviced every year. Replace your blanket regularly and ensure it has a European certification mark.

Never use a blanket with scorch marks and / or exposed elements.

Do you smoke in bed?

It is so easy to drop off to sleep allowing the cigarette to fall onto the bed covers and cause a fire which may take your life. Never smoke in bed.



**Remember.....
WHEN YOU'RE OUT
STAY OUT!**

THE LIVING ROOM

14% of all house fires start in the Living Room.

Do you have an open fire? Never

- * leave an unguarded fire unattended and always use a guard.

- * use flammable liquids to light the fire.

- * dry clothes too close to the fire.

- * sit too close to the fire.

- * place any furniture closer than 1 metre to the fire.

Always

- * for your own safety, use a fire guard.

- * have your chimney swept at least once a year.

Do you have any electrical cables hidden under rugs or carpets?

Cables hidden under rugs and carpets may continually be walked upon. This may damage the cable and result in a fire. Re-route these cables thus removing the hazard.

Do you have a mirror sited above the fireplace?

A mirror sited above the fireplace will cause a person to stand too close to the fire with the possibility of clothing catching fire.

Site the mirror in a safer place away from the fire.

Do you leave the plug in the socket when an appliance is not in use?

Remove the plug from the socket when appliance is not in use.

Do you smoke?

If you do, make sure all cigarette ends are extinguished properly in ashtrays by quickly rinsing under a tap. Never leave ashtrays on top of soft furnishings. Empty ashtrays into a metal bin preferably positioned outside.

Do you have a portable heater?

Make sure heaters are placed far enough away from potential ignition sources, e.g., a chair or clothing. It is recommended that a heater should never be placed closer than one metre from ignition sources.

You should also ensure your own safety by sitting a safe distance from the heater.



Stirling Enterprise Newsletter

Evening / Lunchtime Seminar Programme

Conducting Your Business Over The Internet: An Overview of the Law

This seminar will outline the legal implications of e-commerce, including online retailer obligations, security, branding, copyright and web promotion.

The Employment Act 2002: New Rights for Working Parents

The new Employment Act 2002 has the potential to impact on every employer and employee. This seminar will focus on how the main provisions of the Employment Act will affect *your* business.

Further details of these seminars will be available shortly, however you can register your interest in these by contacting:

Mairhi Gibson on 01786 463 416

or e-mailing mgibson@stirling-enterprise.co.uk.

TRAINING

Places are still available on the following IT and Business Skills courses here at Stirling Enterprise during the month of February: (These courses, unless otherwise stated, are charged at £10 for new businesses and £50 for those who have been trading for longer than 12 months, inclusive of all materials and catering.)

Advanced Word: 5th February: 09.30 - 16.30

This course is charged at £125, inclusive of materials and catering.

The Web: Getting Started: 6th February: 09.30 - 16.30

Intermediate Excel: 12th February: 09.30 - 16.30

Computing for the Terrified: 13th February: 09.30 - 16.30

Intermediate Access: 19th February: 09.30 - 16.30

Beginners Web Design: 21st February: 09.30 - 12.30

This course is charged at £10 for start up businesses and £25 for those who have been trading longer than 12 months.

Beginners Web Marketing: 21st February: 13.30 - 16.30

This course is charged at £10 for start up businesses and £25 for those who have been trading longer than 12 months.

Health and Safety: 24th February: 09.30 - 16.00

Beginners Word: 26th February: 09.30 - 16.30

Introduction to Dreamweaver: 27th February: 09.30 - 16.30

To reserve a place on any of these courses, or for more information, e-mail me at mgibson@stirling-enterprise.co.uk, or call 01786 463 416.

PROPERTY

As well as the management of 120 workspace and office units at Stirling Enterprise Park, STEP act as Letting and Managing agents for Enterprise House (Springkerse Business Park), Stirling Business Centre (Wellgreen Place) and The Old Town Jail. A variety of workspace and office suites are available in these locations and units range from 200 sq ft to 4,000 sq ft. STEP offer flexible leasing terms - the standard minimum lease being of twelve months' duration. Conference and Meeting Room facilities are also available for hire at these locations. To request further information on current available units and prices, or to view a unit, please contact Alison Davidson, Property Manager, on 01786 463 416 or email adavidson@stirling-enterprise.co.uk

Sage Instant Accounting

The object of this course is to teach candidates how to use the Sage Instant Accounting Programme. It is not designed to teach the intricacies of accounting.

2-day Course: 12th /13th March: 09.30 - 16.30

Evening Course: 12th /13th /19th / 20th March: 18.00-21.00

The two-day Sage course is charged at £225 while the evening course is charged at £200. Course fees are inclusive of all materials and catering. Please contact Caroline Humphrey on 01786 463 416 or e-mail: chumphrey@stirling-enterprise.co.uk for further information.

Stirling Enterprise, the Small Business Gateway provider for Stirling District, works with Enterprise Consulting and Falkirk Enterprise Action Trust to provide business support, advice, training and property throughout Forth Valley. Further details can be found on our web site:

www.stirling-enterprise.co.uk

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Loan Action Scotland

Loan Action Scotland is a project funded by the Scottish Executive that provides interest free loans, from £5,000 to £50,000, for businesses that want to cut energy costs. To be eligible, companies must have been trading for more than 12 months and the loan must be used for investments that lead to energy savings. Most companies who have already benefited from the interest free loan have saved more on their monthly energy costs than they have paid in their loan repayments, resulting in companies reducing their overheads at no cost. For more information on Loan Action Scotland, visit www.energy-efficiency.org. If you are unsure if your project will be eligible, or if there is any aspect you would like to discuss, contact the Loan Action Scotland helpline on 0800 092 9002, or e-mail loanactionscotland@glasleac.co.uk for guidance.

Forthcoming Training Opportunities funded by Stirling Council

The following courses are due to appear within Stirling Council's Training Programme. All Training Programme costs will be heavily discounted by Stirling Council, with assistance from the European Social Fund.

- **European Computer Driving Licence**
- **Marketing For Profit**
- **Health & Safety/ Risk Assessment Management**
- **Sales & Marketing Development Training**

Mirror of the Soul

Oh, dark eyed woman, with your long stony face,
Can you not smile, would it look out of place?
Can you not soften that cold icy stare,
Has life been that bad that you don't seem to care?
Grey lonely maid, where is your light,
Has it been hidden to all in your sight?

Irene Rolland



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Aberfoyle & Port of Menteith Kirk News

Some of us can look back on 2002 with pleasure, a wedding, a new birth, a promotion at work: for some of us we just wanted to see the last of 2002. It was not worth talking about. Now the New Year is another thing – 2003, what will it bring? Hope, generosity, happiness, love and peace, if you want such things in your life come and help us find them together. 11.15 a.m. on Sunday's at Aberfoyle Kirk, Bairns of all ages welcome, 6 months to ninety nine. When you reach a hundred we come to you!

A short tale: Jock was busy in the Kirk until he reached forty, the bairns had gone their own way, and Maggie had her friends in the Guild. So fishing and bowling became Jock's sport and demanded most of his free time. He went to Kirk for his daughter's wedding and the grand-bairns Christening. But other than that, especially after retirement, he couldn't sit for too long. But two hours on the green would put him right, and the 'crack' was good. Eventually time was called and Jock found himself in a strange place, and it wasn't Kippen. Then he heard a loud voice (it would have to be, his hearing aid never worked) "Jock, well done my good and faithful servant, here is your reward for all those years devoted to me" There was a bang and a flash, and on the ground in front of Jock lay a bag of bowls and a carbon fibre fly rod with the latest Hardy Spicer reel. An hour later there was a roar from Jock. The *bools* did not come with a *jack* and the reel did not have any line, and Maggie had always to chivvy him to change his socks because he had never had a sense of smell. But he could smell now, and it was strong, dense sulphur and brimstone.

Sunday Service

10am in Port of Menteith and 11.15am in Aberfoyle

Open to All

With every good and perfect blessing for 2003
Reverend Danny Gibb

William Topaz McGonagall was an eccentric figure who was born in Edinburgh. He later moved to Dundee where he remained for much of his life. He was revered as "The World's Worst Poet". Judge for yourselves!

Beautiful Aberfoyle

by

William McGonagall

(1830-1902)

1. The mountains and glens of Aberfoyle are beautiful to sight,
Likewise the rivers and lakes are sparkling and bright;
And its woods were frequented by the Lady of the Lake,
And on its Lakes many a sail in her boat she did take.
2. The scenery there will fill the tourist with joy,
Because 'tis there once lived the bold Rob Roy,
Who spent many happy days with his Helen there,
By chasing the deer in the woods so fair.
3. The little vale of Aberfoyle and its beautiful river
Is a sight, once seen, forget it you'll never;
And romantic ranges of rock on either side
Form a magnificent background far and wide.
4. And the numerous lochs there abound with trout
Which can be had for the taking out,
Especially from the Lochs Chon and Ard,
There the angler can make a catch which will his toil reward.
5. And between the two lochs the Glasgow Water Works are near,
Which convey water of Loch Katrine in copious streams clear
To the inhabitants of the Great Metropolis of the West,
And for such pure water they should think themselves blest.
6. The oak and birch woods there are beautiful to view,
Also the Ochil hills which are blue in hue,
Likewise the Lake of Menteith can be seen far eastward,
Also Stirling Castle, which long ago the English besieged very hard.
7. Then away to Aberfoyle, Rob Roy's country,
And gaze on the magnificent scenery.
A region of rivers and mountains towering majestically
Which is lovely and fascinating to see.
8. But no words can describe the beautiful scenery.
Aberfoyle must be visited in order to see,
So that the mind may apprehend its beauties around,
Which will charm the hearts of the visitors I'll be bound.
9. As for the clachan of Aberfoyle, little remains but a hotel,
Which for accommodation which will suit the traveller very well.
And the bedding there is clean and good,
And good cooks there to cook the food.
10. Then away to the mountains and lakes of bonnie Aberfoyle,
Ye hard-working sons and daughters of daily toil;
And traverse its heathery mountains and view its lakes so clear,
When the face of Nature's green in the spring of the year.



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Home is where the hard drive is!

The concept of 'working from home', or 'remote working', has been around for what seems like a long time now. Why has it not taken off and revolutionised the way we work as promised? There are a number of reasons and we will explore these in this article and hopefully clarify the continuing mystic that surrounds this working practice.

The main purpose of this discussion is to provide information as to what is possible from a technological point of view should you, or your employer be considering introducing working from home. Firstly, there are personal/social implications such as:

- Is there space in the home to set up a dedicated working area?
- Can you discipline yourself to be self-motivated?
- Can you work on your own, or do you really like having colleagues around about you?
- Will the hours work around your personal needs?

These are often points that people are unsure about at first. Working from home can conjure up images of stress-free, highly productive, socially rewarding work environment. There are other factors to consider.

- Will there be distractions from other household members (e.g. the kids)?
- Will others respect that when you are working you need to be left alone?

At home the distractions can be the children, delivery people, repair engineers, shopping, the housework, making the meals, just catch the latest news, and all sort of things. One positive piece of feedback often quoted by people who have started working from home is that they can be a lot more productive. This is often due to the fact that they are not being distracted and interrupted by colleagues at work. We forget how often we are interrupted at the office and with the social chats at the coffee machine etc. So, there are gains to be made. The gains can be significant.

For the home worker,

- reduced stress
- no travelling time and fatigue
- reduced pollution
- savings on commuting costs
- flexibility to balance work and home demands

For the employer,

- The opportunity to retain experienced staff
- reduce premises costs,
- offer flexible support to their customers
- increase productivity and they can be seen as being environmentally friendly

It all sounds encouraging, but how would it work technologically?

In the beginning of home working, or tele-working as it is sometimes referred to, the best that could be offered was a separate phone line into your house, and as PC capability developed, then you could dial into your office network to collect files and e-mails. This method is clumsy, slow and costly.

A real workable solution was to have a dedicated line between your home and your company that would at least have a live, real-time link for e-mail and other data. You could then add the telephone traffic to that as well.

Nowadays, the principal is the same, but the method of connectivity is more varied and much faster. The link to your company can either be what is known as a fixed line, or you can link through the internet using secure 'tunnels' into your company, via

Virtual Private Networking. This secure and available software is already built into Windows™ and in conjunction with a ADSL or Cable Broadband connection, can be set up in a short time at both the client and server end possibly without the need for additional hardware expenditure.

Regardless of the chosen medium, the next key consideration is the level of functionality that is available. It would be time consuming and demotivating, if at home, you do not have the same capabilities and access to information as if you were still in the office:

- Imagine not being able to dial an extension number to get hold of a colleague.
- Imagine having to wait ages whilst e-mail downloads.
- Imagine not having a phone messaging service.
- Imagine not having access to company files and information.

Virtual offices are the solutions. You can have workers connected to the parent company via one of the methods listed above and treat them as if they were at the end of an extension of the phone system, and plugged onto the company network. Internet dialling, E-mail, Internet access and company files are all easily accessible. As soon as you 'sign on' then the network can monitor your activity, pass calls to you, and log your work. With lower charges, Broadband always on connectivity, then it is becoming more cost effective to consider this way of working.

All this, and you get to choose the colour scheme and furniture of your work environment!! There needs to be an element of trust between employer and employee to allow this to work properly. This is possibly the next hurdle to overcome before VPN is widely accepted in the workplace! It is the quality of work produced that is important, not just the amount of time on line. There are a lot of people who do currently work at home, though they are mainly self-employed. Current statistics suggest that 56% of self-employed people work at home versus 4% of directly employed staff!

If the future predictions are correct, then there will be an increase in home working. If it suits your personal circumstances then there are now no technological barriers to making it happen. There are the environmental commuting considerations as well as the time and cost factors.

Home or work, is definitely where the hard drive is.

Now –what colour would I like my office to be?

Help File – see page 12



Loch Lomond
& The Trossachs
National Park

National Park News

Pàirc Nàiseanta Loch Laomainn is nan Tròisichean

Background

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park, Scotland's first, took up its full powers, which include planning and development control, on 19 July last year. It has four main aims and a duty to deliver them in an integrated way: to conserve and enhance the cultural and natural heritage; promote sustainable use of natural resources; promote enjoyment and understanding of the area and to promote the social and economic development of the communities in the area.

The National Park Authority (NPA) has set up several administrative and themed committees to take forward policy and business. All NPA and committee meetings are open to the public.

There are 25 members of the NPA including 10 nominated by the local authorities in the area, five elected by local communities and 10 appointed by Scottish ministers. The Convener and Deputy Convener were elected by the NPA.

Further information from:

Sheila Winstone
Communications & PR Officer
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
National Park
Tel: 01389 722 667
Mobile 07734 736577

Final Step for National Park

The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Interim Committee, predecessor to the National Park Authority and the organisation charged with paving the way for the park, held its last meeting on Monday 16 December 2002 at West Dunbartonshire Council's offices. The two organisations have been running side by side since July, with the staff technically employed by the Interim Committee.

The staff were officially transferred to the National Park Authority and the recently appointed management team led by Chief Executive Bill Dalrymple took up their posts.

Gillie Thomson, Chairman of the Interim Committee and elected Convener of the National Park, said after the final meeting in Dumbarton, "This is the last step in the birth of the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. We have established the Authority's structure and now have our own staff. We are well placed to get on with the challenging tasks ahead, not the least of which is developing a first draft of the National Park Plan by late next year.

I want to pay tribute to everyone who served on the Interim Committee or contributed to its reporting groups. I thank them for their commitment in ensuring that the Park Authority has got off to the best possible start."

Bill Dalrymple, formerly Park Officer to the Interim Committee, now Chief Executive added, "The Interim Committee will be formally wound up at the end of March 2003 as its work is now complete. It was a great pleasure for me to work with every one of its members, and I am grateful for their contributions. I am now looking forward to leading this new organisation to deliver a very new kind of National Park in this very special part of Scotland."

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or
Ginny
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It seems a long time ago but the joint Nursery and Playgroup Christmas Party seemed to be enjoyed by all the children. As usual the children were very excitable and many did not want to take part in the organised games. At a meeting with Nursery Staff it was suggested that we take tidy up music with us in future as this does make it easier to gathering all the children together in one area. Also at this meeting we discussed laminating photos of the contents of each box at the sand and water areas. This has now been done and the photos are attached to the boxes. Could rota parents please encourage children to sort the equipment into the appropriate box when they have finished with it and at tidy up time. This helps develop independence, responsibility and early maths skills.

It was agreed that we would speak to Terry McCabe our Early Years Link officer about the sharing of Policies with the Nursery. Terry will be visiting our Setting on Wednesday afternoon and the Nursery on Thursday morning. Sharon and I are meeting on Wednesday morning to develop a joint Behaviour Policy. This makes good sense when the children are using both settings and often the same equipment. It would be too confusing to have different sets of rules.

The children are learning about Weather and the changes it has on their environment. Last week because of the Frosty weather we were looking at ice. This complemented with what the children were learning in Nursery i.e. hot and cold. Mr Forrest (a student from Jordanhill) has been helping us and doing a variety of activities with the children.



This week we look set to be covering wind and rain, making weather charts and feeding the birds.

Ginny and I will be attending a training session at the end of the month on Development planning. Ginny also has training sessions on beginners and children on the PC and Language and Communication. There is a training session on Writing Policies 20.02.02. It would be beneficial if a committee member or two could attend. A booking form will be needed for this.

Thank you to Caroline Carranza for the use of her laminator, which she kindly leant us for over a year. She now has it back. Is it possible for us to buy one, as it has been very useful? We have put in an order for card, glitter and other arts and crafts material, an airport, new aeroplanes, kitchen equipment for the house corner and some duplo vehicles. Playgroup sweaters also need to be ordered as we have had a few more requests for them. Development Plan - date needs to be organised this month for a parents workshop to explain Starting Points.

Lesley



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PC Help File

Q. I recently got an error message when my computer started up that the CPU fan was not working and so I went out and bought a new one, having checked the processor I had fitted. I'm fairly confident about doing this stuff myself, so I opened the box and replaced the fan and the heat sink as they came as a matching pair. However, on restarting my computer I got no response, not even a beep. How could such a simple DIY repair stop my computer responding? I don't know where to start looking as to what could be the problem. Help!

A. I would remove the new heat sink and fan and remove the thin slither of paper that is on the underside protecting the heat-reducing compound during transit, and then purchase a new processor as this sudden rise in temperature has probably burnt out your processor. A very silly and costly mistake!!

That's all for this month. Next month "Don't settle for a kingdom, get a Domain" How a Domain Name can solve problems with changing ISP, and then losing your e-mail address.

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Announcements

Port of Mentieth Kirk.

A Grand Concert Spring Aires

Is to be held in The Port Kirk on Wednesday 26th February at 7:30pm. Where we will be entertained in some style by The Callander Choir, "The Ledi Birds", The Blackford Fiddlers & Alec Monteath. Tickets on sale at the door

Adults £5
Concession & Children
£3

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Milton the Otter

Hello Children,

It was lovely to see some snow, we all went to play in it. On the top of the hill, high above Aberfoyle Quarry, the snow was quite deep. There we made a very long, very twisty snow slide. Otters are perfectly designed for sliding, with long bodies covered in short fur, and short legs. George the hare, on the other hand, found things a bit more difficult. His long legs just got in the way and his long ears just kept filling up with snow. George soon looked like a snowball on legs. Suddenly, he remembered something he had noticed earlier, so off he hopped to look for it. The twins were having so much fun that they wished they could slide in the snow every day, even in the summer. Duke and Katrine had never had so much fun. Even our grumpy sister, Braeval, was enjoying herself. George was soon back with his mystery object – a co-op carrier bag, which someone had left as litter. The plastic bag would make a super toboggan. The idea was fine – except George kept falling off! Braeval suggested that George got inside the bag, that way he couldn't fall off. So that is how our friend broke every snow-sledging record; World, Olympic and Aberfoyle. Off he zoomed, round the first corner, picking up speed, round the next corner and the next, faster and faster and faster! He never looked like stopping at the end of the run – and he didn't! On he went, a white blur with blue writing on the sides, away down the hill and quite out of sight.

George eventually came to a very bumpy stop amongst big pieces of blue slate sticking out of the snow. By the time we caught up with him he was carefully folding up what was left of the carrier bag, to put into a bin at home. It was here that we made an amazing discovery. Duke saw them first, a set of very strange, very fierce looking footprints in the snow.

That, said George, is a dragon! We all agreed that it was time to go home for tea – and to tell Grandpa Otter about the dragon of Aberfoyle Quarry. Grandpa Otter knows about a lot of things, especially dragons.

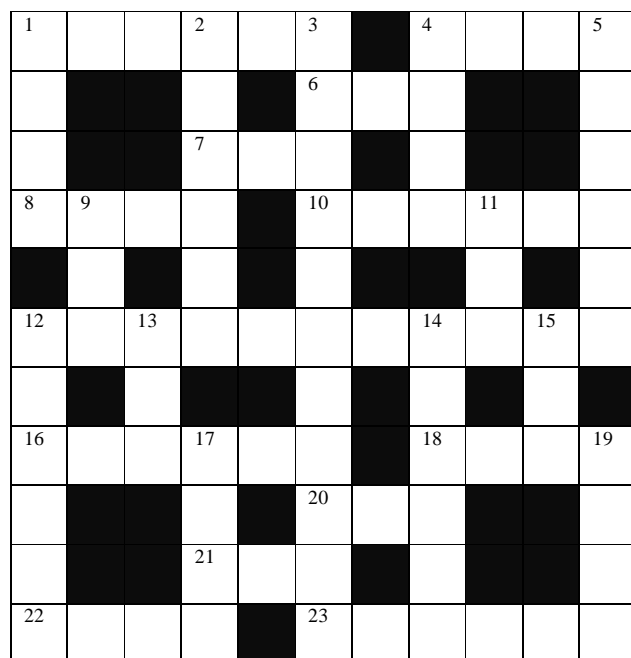
Bye for now

Milton



A2Z

Prize Crossword



Across

1. Returning soldiers involved in squabble over tax levy (6)
4. A pellet – pellets needed! (4)
6. No opening cry from this bird (3)
7. Endless church leads one to drink (3)
8. Bendy expert in yoyo gyration (4)
10. Twelfth man left out of this team (6)
12. A clever electrician might achieve this (6,5)
16. Story about 5 down, for example (6)
18. A monk might wear it – about 6! (4)
20. Squid juice found in kettle (3)
21. An African race hidden among the caribou (3)
22. Little pest leaves strong smell around (4)
23. Mesh little Edward was caught in (6)

Down

1. Ancient city of Asia Minor (4)
2. Annoying (6)
3. Tree planting (11)
4. Sour berry (4)
5. Polish port (6)
9. Paddle (3)
11. Through (3)
12. Exposing (6)
13. Sprite (3)
14. Parcel (6)
15. Uncooked (3)
17. Leave out (4)
19. Burden (4)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

**All the clues across are cryptic:
all the down clues are straight.**

A £5 A2Z gift voucher will be awarded to the first correct solution drawn on the closing date of the 1st March. Send or hand in completed entries to A2Z, Main Street, Aberfoyle FK83UG

Help us to keep the Strathard News going!

We have been greatly encouraged by the positive feedback on the first 2 issues of the Strathard News your words of support are much appreciated. However, can we appeal to each and everyone one of you? We need your help to keep the Strathard News going. In order to produce each edition we need articles written, typesetting, adverts sold and help with other jobs. If more people help it means less work for the few.

It is very time consuming to distribute copies to every household and that is why future editions can only be obtained by picking up a copy from key locations in the village. However, you can ensure a copy is delivered to your door ahead of everyone else take out an annual subscription for only £10. Please give this serious consideration, as you will also help to ensure the financial viability of Strathard News. Alternatively, when you pick your copy up make a donation of 50p this at least will cover our costs. If you have a business, place an advert we have both a display and a classified section at very reasonable rates.

You are all welcome to attend our meetings to find out more about Strathard News and how you can help. Contact any committee member for the date of the next meeting.

We all believe that Strathard News plays a vital role in our community use it or lose it. Tell us what is happening; write us a letter on any issue and maybe it will generate debate and action. Everyone has something to offer if you have a good story we can arrange for someone to talk with you, you do not even have to write it.

If you wish to take out a subscription please complete the information slip and post it to:

**The Treasurer, Strathard News, Glencleland House,
Lochard Road, Aberfoyle FK8 3TJ,** or
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