

CURRIE ◦ BALERNO ◦ JUNIPER GREEN ◦ BABERTON MAINS ◦ COLINTON

C&B News

Championing Our Communities

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PENTLANDS CELEBRATE UKRAINE

Currie Community Centre hosts
successful Festival of Europe event
and The Sunflower Gathering

517 ◦ JUNE 2026

INSIDE: NEWS ◦ VIEWS ◦ WHAT'S ON ◦ LOCAL HISTORY ◦ SPORTS

Picture News



Above: The surfacing of the new Muir Wood Field path has now been finalised, writes Gert Rijdsdijk, Senior Project Manager, Active Travel at The City of Edinburgh Council. "Bollards, benches and a bin have been installed, and we're waiting for two way-finding signs to be put up. Depending on availability, Edinburgh and Lothian Greenspace Trust will work with local primary schools to plant trees along the path in the coming weeks. Lighting columns will be installed along the south side of the path and Bloomiehall Park at the end of the summer." Editorial Note: some C&B News Facebook respondents are already complaining about speeding cyclists, ski-mask clad e-bike riders—and cracks allegedly appearing in the path surface. Photo: The City of Edinburgh Council.

Right: Huge congratulations to Toby Lam, of 31st Pentland (Juniper Green) Scouts (Friday) on being awarded his Chief Scout's Gold Award, writes Scout Leader Allan Leal. This is the highest award you can earn in the Scout section (10 - 14-year-olds). Toby had to put in the work to gain all of his challenge badges (including "Outdoor", "Adventure", "Expedition" and "World Challenges") as well as obtaining a number of Activity Badges during his time in the Scout Troop.



Above: Congratulations to Balerno resident Lara MacDonald, who succeeded in raising £180 for her favourite charity, Guide Dogs Scotland, from selling the chocolate cake, lemon curd squares and cookie bars she baked



Going, going... gone! The last of the "old" Currie Community High School (opened 1966, and extensively refurbished between 1996 and 1998) came down at 3.30pm on Tuesday 12 May, writes local resident and parent Caroline Brown, who admits to "mixed emotions" about the demolition. "Well done to the school community for fighting for the new school—looking forward to the new playing fields, running track, community gardens and outdoor Learning spaces on the site. Let's make that happen!" Photos: Douglas Ramsay.



We're pleased to note that C&B News continues to receive recognition during the publication's 50th anniversary year. In March we received an official letter of congratulations from Robert Aldridge, The Rt Hon Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, who praised the "great energy, dedication, ambition, talent and engagement" needed to keep the publication going for so long. Then, as this issue was being compiled, the C&B News management team received an "Inspiring Volunteer Award" certificate from Volunteer Edinburgh, "for outstanding volunteering" with The Currie and Balerno News". Nice!



Above: A team of 35 people gathered nervously at the Clubhouse bar at Currie Rugby Club on of Sunday 26 April to prepare themselves for a mind over matter challenge—a Firewalk! writes participant Ross Cowe—pictured, walking the walk! In front of a crowd of friends and families, the volunteers walked over the hot coals (twice!) to help raise £5,400 for the Christopher Cowe Memorial Fund, while marking what would have been Christopher's 21st birthday. This means we have now achieved our target of funding a fifth heart screening event. With a fourth already booked in May 2027, we are now looking at options for a further local screening in late 2027/early 2028. This will ensure that between, June 2024 and early 2028, one thousand local young people will have had the opportunity to be screened. We have already screened 590 young people with 22 referred for further tests or GP follow up.

Launched in February 1976, C&B News is a volunteer-run, independent, non-profit-making community magazine written by and for the residents of Currie, Balerno, Juniper Green, Baberton Mains, and Colinton.

We publish 10 monthly issues each calendar year, including two "double-month" editions (July/August and December/January) marking our traditional summer and winter breaks.

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the management. We reserve the right to edit or reject submissions.

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DEADLINES FOR NEXT ISSUE

ADVERTISING & LISTINGS: 16 JUNE

EDITORIAL: 21 JUNE

IN THE SHOPS: 3 JULY

BRIEFLY 'THANK YOU'

• **Lorna Butler writes:** "Lorna, Scott and Fraser would like to sincerely thank everyone who reached out with love and support following the recent sudden passing of Gerry Butler. Gerry was well-known throughout the community, particularly through his involvement with Currie Football Club and Oriam Walking Football, and it has been a great comfort to know how well-regarded he was."

NEWS

• **NEW MSP:** Following the Scottish Parliament Election poll on Thursday 7 May, Simita Kumar (Scottish National Party) was elected as MSP for the Edinburgh South Western constituency. (Read her first column for C&B News on page 33.) Elected as MSPs for the revised Edinburgh and Lothian East region were: Kate Nevens, Q Manivannan and Kayleigh Ferguson Kinross-O'Neill (Scottish Green Party); Irshad Ahmed and Katherine Sangster (Scottish Labour Party); Miles Briggs (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party); and Angela Ross (Reform UK).

• **NUMBERS:** According to the 19th *Edinburgh By Numbers* for 2025, published last month by The City of Edinburgh Council, the Scottish capital has the highest life-expectancy of all Scottish cities (82 years for women, 78 for men) with 86% of us participating in some kind of sport or fitness activity (including walking). Meantime, we assume a fair number of the 900 people (0.2% of the Edinburgh workforce) involved in "agriculture, forestry and fishing" work within south west Edinburgh.

• **NEW CHURCH NAME:** The five final choices of name for the union of Balerno Parish and Currie Kirk congregation are: "Balerno and Currie Parish Church", "Currie and Balerno Kirk", "Currie and Balerno Parish Church", "Kirk of Currie and Balerno", and "West Pentlands Church". The final choice will be made by both congregations

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• Colinton Mains Tesco
• Oxfangs Library
• Sighthill Library
• Colinton Library
• Currie Library
• Chesser ASDA

*No issue is too big or too small, so if you think I can help, please get in touch to check this month's locations and arrange an appointment.
Please note there are no surgeries in January or August.*



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Castlelaw Cubs have been on a mission to grow sunflowers in their very sheltered "Cubs Corner" within the Campbell Park community orchard in Colinton, writes *Shona Harrower of the Friends of Campbell Park*. They've succeeded in creating a stunning display of over two dozen flowering sunflower stems way earlier than you would normally expect to see these growing in Scotland. The indoor seed sowing, pricking out and potting on started in early February, and the beautiful blooms were moved into their final position on 12 May. At the time of going to press they had survived an unexpected afternoon hailstorm on Thursday 14 May and were being given some fleece protection for a frosty night on Friday 15 May.

BRIEFLY...

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attending the church services held on Sunday 24 May.

• **THE 'HORTIE'**: The printed schedules showing the classes for the 2026 Currie Horticultural Society Show (to be held at Balerno High School on Saturday 29 August) are now available free from various outlets around the area. Details also available online: www.currieshow.weebly.com

• **BALERNO LOCAL PLACE PLAN**: Balerno Community Council is summarising the results of a local survey which attracted more than 250 responses. Documents relating to the questionnaire, and all the proposals are available via the Balerno Community Council website and BCC members will present summary proposals at the Balerno Farmers' Market on Saturday 13 June. A full public meeting discussing the proposals for the Local Place Plan will be held at 7.30pm on Thursday 9 July, at Balerno Community Centre, Main Street.

• **WOOD WORK**: Last month saw renewed work by local volunteers at Dr Mackay's Wood, Juniper Green: this included some weeding at the Lanark Road entrance and clearing around the juniper besides the steps. The team also added some gap-filling material to the dead hedge and gave the pavement a good sweep along the length of the external verge. If you'd like to get involved, email: michael.muirhead1@gmail.com

• **LOCAL PLACE PLANS**: LPPs are the big thing across Edinburgh's numerous community councils at the moment: with those within C&Bshire at various stages of development. At their May meeting, Currie Community Council confirmed 176 responses so far to their LPP Questionnaire, with various awareness events planned to be held in Currie Library and the community café within the coming weeks.

• **DOG ATTACKS**: It was reported at May's meeting of Currie Community Council (CCC) that the owner of a dog involved in several local attacks on other dogs (and one owner, who attempted to

Balerno 'Not Anti-Change But Anti-Expansion'

BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Local residents in Balerno want better schools, healthcare, facilities, affordable and appropriate housing, and environmental enhancement.

That is the overriding finding of a recent survey conducted by a Balerno Community Council working group preparing a Local Place Plan (LPP) to submit to the City of Edinburgh Council by September.

Balerno is not anti-change but clearly anti-expansion. Residents firmly oppose green belt development, large-scale housing lagging behind development.

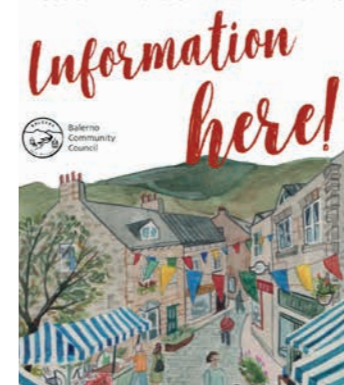
Locals want preservation over expansion, better basics (roads, access, healthcare) before new development and a more inclusive, accessible, and community-focused village.

The responses on the Main Street point clearly toward physical prevention and consistent enforcement—a real change as, without both, rules are ignored and safety concerns persist.

The feedback for Balerno High School is unusually consistent and this is not a "minor upgrade" situation. The community expects either a new school or a transformational overhaul, combined with safer transport and stronger community integration.

Physical infrastructure in Dean Park School is also lagging behind population growth. Traffic is the most urgent day-to-day problem and people want

Balerno Local Place Plan 2026



a modern, community-focused, future-proof school.

The biggest opportunities are youth provision, upgrading of existing assets (parks, school, library) and the creation of a true community hub.

On the potential proposal for a church being built opposite Balerno High School, residents want any future proposal to demonstrate careful consideration of alternative sites, robust mitigation of traffic and parking impacts, and clear justification for development on green field land. Failure to address these issues is likely to result in continued and significant local community opposition.

The Pentlands are highly-valued, but visitor pressure is now exceeding what current management can handle. People are not asking for major development, they are asking for stronger protection, better basic infrastructure, clear rules with

real enforcement and careful balance between access and preservation.

Ravelrig Quarry, operated by Tarmac, produced a layered opinion. The community isn't divided and everyone wants green/nature, most want access, some want activities, almost none want housing or landfill. The safest and most supported direction is a re-wilded, accessible country park with carefully integrated recreation.

Overall, the view appears to be that Balerno's infrastructure hasn't kept up with development, and what exists needs modernising.

Residents are not asking for major transformation: they overwhelmingly want protection of what exists, along with better maintenance and targeted improvements (paths, play, trees, amenities). Any strategy going forward should focus on "protect, maintain, enhance" rather than "develop."

Next Step: Balerno Community Council want to thank everyone who responded to the consultation and a working group has been tasked with reviewing all responses. They will put forward draft proposals based on comments submitted.

BCC aim to have these available for viewing on our website, at the Gala Day on Saturday May 23 and also at Balerno Farmers' Market on Saturday 13 June. A public meeting will be held on Thursday 9 July. (Details to be confirmed.)

After this, the LPP will be written and agreed by the BCC and made available for public viewing before submission to CEC.



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Former MSP Says 'Thank you' to Voters

PAUL FISHER COCKBURN
 C&B NEWS

Former Lothian Region MSP Sue Webber has described representing the area she grew up in as “an honour and a privilege”, in a letter published in this issue of *C&B News*.

Although placed second on the Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party's list for the revised Edinburgh and Lothian East region in last month's Scottish Parliament election, a widespread drop in public support for her party ensured only her colleague Miles Briggs – first on the list – was re-elected.

Ms Webber, formerly a city councillor representing the Pentland Hills Ward, admitted she was still coming to terms with the transition from busy campaign to losing her seat in Holyrood. “After nine years serving this community, it's a big change—but one that many in public life experience.”

In her letter to *C&B News*, Ms Webber wrote that she was “touched by the kind messages from residents across Currie, Balerno and beyond. They have meant more than I can properly express, and they've reminded me that public service is, at its heart, about people and community.”



One for the Beer Connoisseur!

HAZEL LUMSDAINE
 CURRIE, BALERNO & DISTRICT ROUND TABLE

With the Beer Festival only a few days away now, we thought it was a good time to whet your appetite and give you a sneak peak at what you can expect to be tasting when you come to the bar.

Whether you like to strategise with a beer buddy, plan your priorities, start at the top and get as far as you can or just go by what the labels look like, there will definitely be something that you like. We have some firm favourites returning so you can expect to see names like Cromarty, Campervan, Pilot and Edinburgh Beer Factor; and also some newer names like 71 Brewing, Burnt Mill and Khaos.

To cater for the ever changing clientele we will, again, be offering

a selection of alcohol free beers, so Iver the driver can join in the fun. We are trying very hard to source some gluten-free options too. There will also be a great selection of ciders, prosecco and wine if beer is not your tippie.

We are still trying to secure some even newer names so there will be a great selection for you to add to your “Tried that” list.

New for this year, you will have the opportunity to share your thoughts as we introduce a new interactive tasting notes app. This is your festival, so why not help us shape future events? Tell us what you loved and what you didn't.

This genuinely is our favourite event on the calendar and we can't wait to party with you!

• *The Currie Beer and Curry Festival runs at Currie Community Centre from 6pm to midnight on Friday 5 June and Saturday 6 June.*

BRIEFLY...

ps>>>
 intervene and required hospital treatment) was in court in late-April to be formally charged. The owner was then released on bail, subject to strict conditions including control of the animal—any breach of which would be considered a criminal offence and see him back in court. The case has been scheduled for trial in June.

• **WATER:** The changing rooms at the new Currie Community High School swimming pool are apparently being flooded—because no drains have been installed in the area where the showers are located! (D'Oh!)

• **MORE WATER:** The path from Kirkgate along the bank of the Water of Leith has been washed away by water cascading down the slope. CEC are trying to find out who owns the land that the water is coming from, with a view to prevent the flooding reoccurring.

• **QUERY:** Do any readers of *C&B News* remember a professional photographer called David Simpson, active in the 1970s/1980s? Email: editor@candbnews.com

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

You can view plans, forms and other documents connected with individual planning applications on The City of Edinburgh Council's Planning and Building Standards Online Services website: <https://tinyurl.com/dz8atrcd>. Under statutory legislation, comments on recently registered planning applications should relate to “material considerations” connected with the use of land and buildings—such as adherence to City Plan 2030, appearance, residential amenity (eg, noise/overshadowing) or traffic/parking/access issues.

Note: C&B News now regularly publishes lists of new and current local planning applications and decisions on our Facebook page every Wednesday.

BALERNO
 • Remove eucalyptus

New Look for Balerno High School Spaces

JONATHAN DAVEY
 PENTLANDS MEN'S SHED

The Pentlands Men's Shed and Balerno High School are working together on an exciting project to rejuvenate several inner courtyard spaces at the school.

It is an opportunity for the pupils to redesign and landscape these areas so they can relax, socialise, and even enjoy a game of outdoor chess. Members of the Pentlands Men's Shed are supporting the pupils by sharing their woodworking and gardening skills.

At the shed, members will also repair a garden seat and prepare wooden planter kits for the pupils to assemble.

Because school budgets are stretched, the Men's Shed are asking for help with donations of the following items: seven large ceramic pots around 40 cm (16



inches) wide and at least 10 cm (four inches) tall, four bags of multi-purpose peat-free compost (50 kg each), and three bags of horticultural grit (20 kg each).

We are also looking for suitable shrubs for containers, especially acer palmatum, brachyglottis 'Sunshine', choisya ternata, dwarf rhododendron, fatsia japonica, hebe 'pink elephant', lavandula 'hiddcote', pieris japonica, pittosporum tenuifolium (eg silver queen), sambucus nigra (black elder).

lium (eg silver queen), sambucus nigra (black elder).

• Donations can be dropped off at Pentlands Men's Shed, 98 Forth View Crescent, Currie EH14 5QP on Monday or Friday mornings from 10am to 12:30 or by prior arrangement. Phone Rab Mason 07927 518766.

• For further enquiries email: hello@pentlandsmensshed.org.

Photo: Rab Mason

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No 'Art in the Park' This Year? Never Fear...

MIKE SCOTT
THE COLINTON TUNNEL

Last issue, *C&B News* reported that the biannual "Art in the Park" summer fete would not take place this year. You may feel disappointed, but don't be!

We are working with Colinton Village Enterprise SCIO to create an alternative event, which will involve painting, performance and partying in Spylaw Park.

Chris Rutterford, our team and our community will be creating lots of new work to add to the mural over the weekend of Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 August, besides CVE's developing Hub building.

We will be inviting local youth groups and schools to book groups of up to 15 people for two-hour sessions, as well as offering drop-in facilities for those who are able to paint independently. We will also have our small range of quality souvenirs, including the new Balerno Pug jigsaw, available to buy.

All proceeds go directly towards keeping the mural bright and to making new artwork. Donations will be welcome.

CVE also plan other events alongside the painting. More details about how to book and what's happening will follow.

We also expect lots of art-minded people to be around during the weekend, as it's also the weekend for this year's Pentlands Open Studio Art Trail. Fingers crossed for sunny weather!



A film partly shot in and around Balerno Community Centre in 2024 will be released in UK cinemas this month. *The Fall of Sir Douglas Weatherford*, the debut feature from writer-director Seán Dunn, stars Peter Mullan (*My Name is Joe*). Described as "a darkly comic exploration of grief, identity and cultural legacy", *The Fall of Sir Douglas Weatherford* will be released in selected UK cinemas on Friday 12 June.



Last issue, we ran an article on a new sensory garden (above) at Currie Primary Nursery, which stated that it was partly funded by a donation from *C&B News*. The hired help would like to issue the following correction: While *C&B News* did donate, in November 2025, towards a sensory garden at Currie Primary School, this was not the same project as featured on page 9 of our May 2026 edition. The garden at the Nursery was supported by generous funding from Currie, Balerno & District Round Table. The editor apologises to the Nursery and CBDRT for any confusion.

Locals Welcome to Join The Sunflower Gathering

NATALIA DUNCAN
PENTLANDS UKRAINIAN SUPPORT GROUP

Pentlands Ukrainian Support Group (PUSG) would like to invite local residents to their summer community event, the Sunflower Gathering, which takes place on Saturday 14 June from 1pm to 4pm at the Currie Community Centre.

Organised in partnership with Currie Balerno Rotary, Mission of Innocents, the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB) Edinburgh, and High Flyers Basketball Academy, the free community event will celebrate Ukrainian culture, music, arts and traditions.

Visitors can enjoy live Ukrainian music, arts and crafts activities for both children and adults, traditional Ukrainian baking and café refreshments, along with a range of family-friendly activities.

While the event celebrates Ukrainian culture and heritage, it is very much intended for everyone across the local community. The organisers warmly welcome people of all backgrounds to come along, meet neighbours, enjoy the activities and learn more about Ukrainian

traditions in a friendly and inclusive setting.

The event has been created and delivered by local Ukrainians who wish to share their culture, art and traditions with the wider community. Everyone is welcome to attend and donations are appreciated.

The Sunflower Gathering (Saturday 14 June, 1pm - 4pm) forms part of The Refugee Festival Scotland, funded by the Small Grant Scheme. <https://www.refugeefestivalscotland.co.uk/events/event/the-sunflower-gathering/>

Booking visa Eventbrite: <https://tinyurl.com/2w83drxp>



BRIEFLY...

p7>>>

tree before it gets too big for location; 3 Ravelrig Wynd. (26/0320/TPO) Registered: Wednesday 6 May.

COLINTON

• 3 metre reduction of Sitca Spruce as tree has a lot of dead wood and has recently shed large limbs; 38 Woodhall Road. (26/0363/TPO) Registered on Monday 18 May.

• Lift crown of Sycamore by 5 metres to protect property below while maintaining upper crown health; Woodfield Park. (26/0353/TPO) Registered, Friday 15 May.

• Fell Ash tree; 48 Woodfield Park. (26/0350/TPO) Registered, Wednesday 13 May.

• Application for the issue of a Certificate of Lawfulness confirm existing use as short-term let accommodation is lawful; 455 Lanark Road. (26/01982/CLESTL) Registered on Thursday 7 May.

JUNIPER GREEN

• Section dismantle of Silver Birch, 15 feet crown reduction on Lawson Cypress; 565 Lanark Road. (26/0347/TCO) Registered Wednesday on Wednesday 13 May.

• Demolishing existing non-original rear extension and replacing with new slightly larger extension; 12 Baberton Avenue. (26/01897/FUL) Comments by Friday 5 June.

PLANNING DECISIONS

Information provided by The City of Edinburgh Council.

BALERNO

• Extension of two-storeys to side and one-storey to rear; 173 Curriehill Castle Drive. (26/01284/FUL) Granted, Wednesday 13 May.

• Demolition of existing conservatory and lean-to utility, erection of ground-floor rear extension with roof terrace and glazed balustrade; 6 Harlaw Road. (26/00845/FUL) Granted, Wednesday 13 May.

• Remove existing conservatory and replace with sun lounge;




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Community Celebrates Official Opening of Refurbished Tennis Courts

PAUL MURPHY
JGTC COMMITTEE CHAIR

The local community came together on Sunday 17 May to celebrate the official opening of the newly refurbished tennis courts in Juniper Green. Guests enjoyed complimentary strawberries and cream, of course, served with a glass of fizz, as families and local residents gathered to mark the special occasion.

One of the club's longstanding supporters, Sue Webber, officially opened the new playing facilities by cutting the green ribbon ahead of play commencing on court. The special event showcased not only the transformed tennis courts but also the strong community spirit surrounding the historic club, with the venue filled with happy faces



and enthusiastic players of all ages.

Local MP Dr Scott Arthur was also in attendance and praised the redevelopment, describing the venue as "a fantastic facility that brings joy, connection, and real value to so many lives".

Club representatives expressed their gratitude to everyone who attended and helped make the day such a memorable success.

• Membership information: <https://tinyurl.com/mww99buj>

Currie Community Council are working hard on a Local Place Plan (LPP) for Currie, writes *Maira Peterson*. Local Place Plans are a formal way to inform the City Council of what the community wants. What's most important to our community? What's missing from our community? How can we make Currie the best place to live?

In order to put the LPP together we need to know what the community thinks about Currie and how we might improve

it so we've put together a questionnaire covering topics such as Housing, Business, Young People and Transport. The questionnaire will take around 20 minutes if you fill every question. We'd rather you completed it though, so just pass by any questions you don't know how to answer.

• If you have further feedback not covered on the questionnaire, please feel free to email: curriecengagement@gmail.com separately.

• Access the questionnaire here: <https://tinyurl.com/3jetpnr> or by scanning the QR code.



New Chapter for The Kinleith Mill

TOM WILDING
THE KINLEITH MILL

The historic Kinleith Mill, on Lanark Road in Juniper Green, has officially entered a bright new chapter, with experienced Edinburgh publican Tom Wilding taking the helm of his third long-term lease.

While Tom brings his expertise from city favourites like The Caley Sample Room (Angle Park, Dalry) and Greenmantle (West Crosscauseway, Southside), the real star of the show at the Juniper Green local will be his 18-month-old daughter, Freya.

The toddler has already become a familiar face at the pub, making regular appearances to the absolute delight of guests and patrons. Her presence underscores the "village local" atmosphere Tom is cultivating—a place where family values and community spirit are at the very heart of the business. Supporting Tom is his wife, Jill, as they



embark on this new journey together as a young family and see this as a new chapter as a now Family Business.

"We are so proud to be part of the Juniper Green community," says Tom. "It's a privilege to run a business with such history, and seeing how much our customers enjoy the family atmosphere we've brought here makes it all the more special."

From walkers coming off the

Water of Leith to local residents looking for a friendly corner, the welcome at the Kinleith Mill is warmer than ever. Whether you're there for a quiet pint or a family lunch, you're likely to be greeted by Tom or his friendly staff! If you're lucky, a cheerful wave from little Freya.

• The Kinleith Mill is officially open and ready to welcome neighbours near and far home.

BRIEFLY...

p9>>>
28 Newmills Road, Curriehill. (26/01025/FUL) Granted, Tuesday 12 May.

COLINTON
• Replace existing timber windows with new white PVC, window profiles all to match existing; 15 Bonaly Steading. (26/02006/WINPA) Approved, Thursday 14 May.

SCHEDULED ROADWORKS & ROAD CLOSURES

Start dates indicate earliest anticipated beginning of work; finish dates represent conclusion of formal notice periods—actual work may finish earlier or be extended due to circumstances. Information provided by The City of Edinburgh Council.

Note: C&B News now regularly publishes lists of scheduled roadworks and road closure updates on our Facebook page, usually every Wednesday. Information provided by The City of Edinburgh Council.

JUNIPER GREEN:
• GILLESPIE CROSSROADS: Off-peak four-way temporary traffic lights for telecoms infrastructure; Tuesday 11 - Wednesday 12 August.

OTHER:
• REDFORD ROAD at The Galilee: two-way temporary traffic lights for installation of mast and cabinet (telecoms company); Wednesday 1 - Friday 3 July.

LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES



Daring Abseil Raises Funds for Harmeny Play Appeal

ELISENDA REINES
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, HARMENY

On Sunday 10 May, a team of brave supporters took on a thrilling 131 feet (40 metre) abseil from the roof of The Port of Leith Distillery, in aid of Harmeny's Play Appeal.

Staff from NatWest, TwentyOne Health and Social Care, and Harmeny faced the challenge together, stepping well outside their comfort zones and over the edge of the world's tallest whisky distillery. The atmosphere was full of encouragement and good spirits (!) as each participant completed the descent, cheered on by colleagues, friends and family.

Together they are well on their way to raising £3,000 which will provide essential upgrades to play and activity areas at Harmeny. These improvements will help strengthen the outdoor and social environments where our children and young people can build confidence, develop connections and enjoy inclusive spaces designed to support their wellbeing.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who took part and donated. Their courage and generosity will help ensure that the young people at Harmeny have the spaces, opportunities and support they need to reach their potential and thrive.

• You can find out more about Harmeny's Play Appeal at <https://harmeny.org.uk/playappeal/>



Festival of Europe comes to Currie

NATALIA DUNCAN
PENTLANDS UKRAINIAN SUPPORT GROUP

On Saturday 2 May 2026, Pentlands Ukrainian Support Group (PUSG) hosted a Festival of Europe event at Currie Community Centre.

The Festival of Europe aims to strengthen the ties between Scotland, the UK, Europe and Ukraine, bringing people together who believe that cooperation and shared values can shape more peaceful, democratic, sustainable and free Europe.

This was the second year that the Festival was welcomed in Currie. To celebrate it together, local Ukrainian residents offered an amazing concert of Ukrainian dancing, singing, culture and music to the local community. It

was a warm and deeply touching evening, expressing solidarity for Ukraine.

The wonderful concert was designed by creative director Natalia Khomenko, from Mission of Innocents. The event was a great collaboration of many organisations and huge gratitude to all the organisers, volunteers, performers and funders—including Currie Balerno Rotary, C&B News, the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain Edinburgh and Dundee branches, Mission of Innocents, and Currie Community Centre.

It was an absolutely amazing performance—beautiful costumes, powerful voices and meaningful messages—possible to understand even without knowing Ukrainian language, longing for peace and home with a keen desire to express and share Ukrainian culture and traditions.

This is particularly relevant as the Russian aggression against Ukraine has entered its fifth year.



Children and their mothers, who chose Scotland as their home – most men cannot leave Ukraine – came together to share their culture, express solidarity with defenders who fight daily on the front line, protecting values of democracy and freedom in Europe today.

The result was the strong message that Ukrainian culture is live and strong and that no aggression can break it. We stand with Ukraine and this support means a lot for Ukrainians.



LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES



Pentlands Men's Shed Help Nursery School

STEWART STILL
PENTLANDS MEN'S SHED

Pinocchio's Children's Nurseries at Heriot-Watt University were looking for stools to enable them to read stories to youngsters in their woodland playground.

Retired teacher Linda Hazelwood, who lives opposite their premises in Currie, called for help from Pentland Men's Shed.

A few weeks later, shedders arrived at the nursery with 12 stools which had artificial grass



seats, plus a readers chair for a teacher.

They also mounted fairy-shaped plaques and fairy houses on trees in the extensive woodland playground.

Stewart Still, Alistair McKenzie

and Nigel Duncan created the images using pallets and scrap wood and the three amigos were delighted with the reaction from the children and teachers.

A three-way result for Linda, the nursery and the Shed.

'Little Free Library' at Merchiston Castle School

RACHEL GIBB
LIBRARIAN, MERCHISTON CASTLE SCHOOL

To celebrate World Book Day 2026 the Reading Leadership Team at Merchiston Castle School have installed a new "Little Free Library" at the school gates (294 Colinton Road) for the use of the local community.

Also known as "community book boxes", these "Little Free Libraries" aim to support and spark curiosity in

reading and enable readers to browse, take away and share books.

Launched to commemorate 25 years of the school's Spawforth Library, the "Little Free Library" is also dedicated to the memory of David Spawforth and all those connected to the library who are no longer with us. It is also a "green" venture. With help from our design technologies and school facilities teams, a tired and battered cabinet (previously used to store paint) has been up-cycled and modernised, ready to begin its exciting new role serving readers.

The Reading Leadership Team, who led the school in achieving the prestigious national gold award for reading, are in charge of maintaining and monitoring the "Little Free

Library" and offer an invitation to the local community to come and take a look, pick up and share books.

The team have been delighted to discover that readers are already making good use of this incentive and hope that enjoyment of this great free resource continues.

• The Little Free Library at Merchiston Castle School is located on Google Maps and charted officially at www.littlefreelibrary.org/map number #223545.

• For updates on usage and interactions, visit: www.instagram.com/merchilibrary

• For more information please contact rgibb@merchiston.co.uk

On Thursday 14 May the Currie and Balerno Guild left unexpected rain and sleet behind in Edinburgh and made their way to Bankfoot, Perthshire, for "A Taste of Scotland" stop, writes Isobel Webber of Currie Guild. Certainly recommended if you are looking for a morning stop—the scones and pots of tea and coffee awaiting us on our arrival were delicious!

The sun shone as we then travelled on to Pitlochry, though it was rather chilly, but had some retail therapy time and some of the ladies walked to the Fish Ladder. Our meal was held in the Green Hotel in Kinross. Camaraderie and fellowship during the meal made this a very enjoyable day.

With the Union on the horizon the Currie and Balerno Guilds will be offering a full programme next Session which begins in September. Look out for more details in future issues of C&B News.



LOCAL UPDATES • LOCAL UPDATES



New Fridge for Wester Hailes Foodbank—from Currie Balerno Rotary

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

Holy Trinity Church at Wester Hailes runs a weekly foodbank providing essential food parcels and hot meals. During the course of a year they help more than 1,000 members in nearly 400 households.

Every Thursday, Currie Balerno Rotary volunteers assist with the preparation of food parcels and the cooking of hot meals—skills they didn't know they had. Photographed is Rotary member Brian Smith, who's now been promoted to chopping duties. I think his wearing a foodbank apron means he's fully trained but, in any case, he's under Rita's supervision – that's Rev Dr Rita Welsh and she's in charge.

To improve the provision of its services the foodbank needed to increase its refrigeration capacity for fresh food and full fat milk, which is especially important for the development of the 42 children that are helped each week. Rotary offered to help and donated £2,600—half from Currie Balerno Rotary and half from a Rotary District grant. This meets the cost of the fridge and keeping it well stocked.

The fridge is now in place, fully stocked, and greatly appreciated—as is the practical help given by Rotary members.

• More details: cbrotary.org



Special Donation for Currie Community Centre

LOUISE SCRIVENS
CHARITY AND CENTRE COORDINATOR,
CURRIE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Currie Community Centre is delighted to receive a beautiful and deeply meaningful artwork created by the Ukrainian Children's Club in Edinburgh through the charity Mission of Innocents.

The work, entitled *And There Will Be Peace*, was purchased during the Festival of Europe events which began at the Centre on Saturday 2 May and has now

Currie Balerno Rotary Celebrates 45 Years

MIKE ROWE
CURRIE BALERNO ROTARY

It's our birthday this month. We received our Charter as a Rotary Club within Rotary International on Friday 17 July 1981, with Bill Strang as our first President.

It was all a bit different then, though, as Bill, still an active member, remembers.

"We were all-male then, as was Rotary across the world. And such formality: suits and ties (remember ties?), grace before dinner and a toast to the Queen.

been generously donated to Currie Community Centre.

The acrylic painting and collage was created, under the guidance of lead artist Alina Seliuk, by children displaced from Ukraine. It incorporates floral appliqué elements and carries a powerful message of hope, resilience and peace.

The painting depicts a flock of cranes flying across a deep blue sky from west to east, symbolising the journey home, hope for return, and the wish that Ukrainian children will once again live freely and peacefully in their homeland. Beneath the sky, a golden wheat field represents Ukraine's fertile land, life and the resilience of its people. Together, the blue sky and golden wheat form the colours of the Ukrainian flag—a symbol of freedom and dignity.

We had to apologise if we couldn't be at a meeting and records were kept of our attendance.

"All of that has changed but we still have the same aims of serving our local community and providing help where help is needed across the world."

Through Rotary International and ShelterBox, Currie Balerno Rotary continues to help people suffering in disaster areas across the world and also contributes to Rotary's hugely successful campaign to rid the world of polio.

Our principal aim, however, has always been to provide support for the local community: for the people, for young and old, for the less advantaged in our community, and also for young talent and for local schools and local clubs. We have worked to

The artwork stands as a heartfelt message from children affected by war, expressing their belief that one day peace will return to Ukraine, the cranes will come home, and the fields will once again sway beneath peaceful skies.

Currie Community Centre is proud to display the artwork and celebrate the contribution of local Ukrainian families within the wider community.

The donation also highlights the strong partnership between local community organisations supporting Ukrainian families across Edinburgh and the Pentland area.

• For more information about Mission of Innocents, visit: <https://www.missionofinnocents.org/>

maintain and improve the local environment.

We also work alongside, and greatly value our local Rotary Community Members, local businesses which want to make their own contribution to the community in which they work.

We are truly an integral part of our local community which we are proud to support. Why not join us?

• Currie Balerno Rotary serves the communities of Ratho, Kirknewton, Balerno, Currie, Juniper Green, Baberton, Colinton and Wester Hailes.

• To learn more, go to: cbrotary.org, visit: facebook.com/rotary1020 or contact Mike Rowe: PR@cbrotary.org



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Snapshots of the Past

Getting About in 1904



DOUGLAS LOWE CURRIE & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

When I was writing last month's article I began to wonder how my granny and great-grandfather travelled to the show ground at Damhead Farm in Gorgie to see *Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Congress of Rough Riders of the World*.

I had worked out that they must have visited sometime between Monday 8 and Saturday 13 August 1904, but you have to remember that Balerno at that time was a small village (population around 500), boasting a large paper mill, other smaller mills and surrounded by extensive farmland. Yes, there was (since 1874) the Balerno branch line of the Caledonian Railway, but there were no buses as yet—the first SMT bus service wouldn't run from Edinburgh's Waverley Bridge, via Slateford to Balerno until Saturday 15 July 1922.

From what I have read, it was only the more affluent residents, businessmen or professional folk could afford to use the

railway. The majority of the mill workers or agricultural workers simply couldn't afford it—even third class. (There was only first and third class tickets.) One of my colleagues carried out some research on mill workers wages in 1891: most earned between 1 shilling and 5 shillings per day, averaging around £1 per week whilst working 10-hour days, six days a week. Donald Shaw's 1989 volume *The Balerno Branch and the Caley in Edinburgh* (published by The Oakwood Press) goes into great detail about the planning and construction of the Caledonian branch line and also the times of the trains and the cost of the fares. In 1897 a third class single fare from Balerno to Edinburgh was 6d (half a shilling), with a return ticket being 10d.

Checking the census returns that contained both my great grandfather, Thomas Samuel, and my granny-to-be Elizabeth, I learned that they were living at the time in the Old Schoolhouse, Balerno, along with several other families. The old schoolhouse sat above and to the side of where the Scotmid Car Park is now. However, I am talking about people

Above: The first subscription school in Balerno was in use from 1814 until the public school opened in the village in 1878. (The building is, of course, long gone now.)
Below: Balerno c1904, with horse and cart.

long gone, three-to-four generations back, who left no written evidence: how would they have most likely travelled to Gorgie to see the show?

The clue is possibly in the 1901 Census, which showed that my Great Grandfather was a carter. So, would he have spent a significant part of his meagre wages on a train ticket? Unlikely! He would more likely just hitch up his horse and cart and go. It would be quite an exciting trip for a four-year-old. I just wish that I had spoken to my 60-year-old granny about this when I'd had the chance!

• For more information on Currie and District Local History Society, email: secretary@curriehistory.org or fill in the contact form at <https://www.curriehistory.org/contact/>




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Malleny Garden: Springing to Life

JAMES BELL
HEAD GARDENER, MALLENY GARDEN

Heading into June, our rose collection starts to flower. Rosa primula, the incense rose, is our first to flower in early May; it has yellow flowers with foliage which exudes fragrance of incense. It's followed by around 200 roses flowering over the coming months, peaking from mid-June to mid-July. Our Malleny Garden Plant Fayre, on Saturday 20 June will be backdropped by a National Collection of 19th century shrub roses in flower. We hope to see you here.

It's been a busy month in the garden, starting with a visit from SRUC Oatridge college students. The focus of discussion was around managing a nationally-important rose collection and the importance of doing so, while balancing the other work the garden demands. It'll help give them some insight into managing plant collections.

Mid-month we hosted pupils from Balerno High School at Malleny House. The purpose was to demonstrate the complexities of managing the conservation of an old building. The group spoke with the design team of surveyors, architects and structural engineers about the process of preserving this old house. Practical activities included: how to survey the building; the architects' process of designing the layout to work with modern living in an old building; and structural principles of how to keep a building upright, using spaghetti and marshmallows as a building material! A digestive biscuit exercise, demonstrating the pros and cons of harling for water protection, was quite successful. In the garden, everything is growing and

our volunteers are keeping ahead of the weeds. The tulips planted last year have flowered very well, adding valued colour to the green borders. Of 24 cultivars, just three or four have been lost to hungry squirrels. The remaining bulbs will recoup energy in the next couple of years before flowering again.

The other flowering highlight is our rhododendrons. They surround the fountain pond providing a striking display set against the green backdrop. Soon alliums and peonies will flower giving colour before the roses take centre stage. We have planted this year's sweet peas with new metal wavy obelisks: made by Musselburgh-based blacksmith Raymond Douglas. They will support the fragrant sweet peas through the rest of the year. In the greenhouse, rose headed plant supports, also made by Raymond, will support tomatoes through to fruiting. "Blue Bayou" and "Artisan Purple Bumble Bee" are our selection—and a tasty reward for volunteers later this year.

• *NTS Great Pumpkin Weigh-off 2026 update; Our pumpkin seed germinated and our 'Champion' Pumpkin has been planted out. It, and its siblings, are destined for great things—ie, to be massive!. Further update next issue.*

• *Volunteers make an enormous difference to the National Trust for Scotland and there are many benefits to volunteering with the Trust. If you, or someone you know, would like to volunteer with us, please get in touch at mallenygarden@nts.org.uk.*

• <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/malleny-garden>



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Cooking the Books



STEF LYONS



must admit: they were heavenly. So full of chocolate and moist for days. She offers possible ways to mix up the recipe if you want—for example, putting frozen Nutella inside the cookie dough before baking, or adding cornflakes and marshmallows to the recipe.



The next one I tried was a Greek biscuit called *Mehlepi Koulourakia*. They are usually eaten at Easter but, due to greed, I went ahead and did it anyway. I had to order a particular spice called mehlepi to make them. That's the ground up kernels of a specific cherry. It has hints of vanilla and almond and goes beautifully with the orange zest and juice you add to the dough. I only encountered one problem: I found the dough a little dry which made it hard to shape. You're supposed to roll them into sausages and twist them round. I added about 20g more butter and that seemed to sort it out and they stopped breaking when I tried the twist. I didn't have white sesame seeds to put on top, only black. So I sprinkled those on instead. Not traditional but still very, very tasty.

I also had a go at the *Triple Chocolate Cookie Bars*. The Youngest Lyons declared they were the best thing he'd ever eaten. So that was a win.

There are an unbelievable number of biscuits in this book. I plan to try the Blueberry Cheesecake Cookies next week. Even so, I'm still not convinced that the biscuit is entirely worth it. So far, these have been good. I'll have to keep baking and eating them and check back in with you in a few months. Forced to drink tea and have biscuits. Oh dear. I'll never stop wanting custard though. You will have to prise that jug from my dead hands.



Craft Corner



LUCIE NOVOVESKA

Bramble Bird Box

I recently attended a basket weaving workshop and created a willow basket. Before you ask (just like my husband), yes, the basket is intentionally asymmetrical.

Working with willow was a dream: willow rods are flexible, equal in size and easy to work with but it made me think about other natural materials used for weaving, especially bird boxes. I was surprised to learn there are quite a few: hazel, reeds, straws, dandelion stems, pine needles, etc. I settled on bramble runners. Why? I like the idea of going to the Water of Leith, collecting material and creating something new that would be returned back to nature.

The golden rule of foraging is to take only a few plants or fruits and leave the remaining plants undisturbed. Bramble runners are everywhere and are often considered a nuisance, especially if they are intruding onto paths, so use your common sense and go for it, but remember to wear gloves! Bramble runners need to be stripped of thorns and leaves. To do this, I squeezed the stem and ran a piece of hard cardboard along it a few times.

Once you have clean bramble runners, it is time for weaving. I started the birdhouse with the traditional six-rods at the bottom of the basket and made it narrower and narrower until it eventually closed at the top. Since the intended purpose is a bird box, you will need to leave an opening for the birds to get in. I was surprised how small the entrance should be: only 2.5 cm (an inch) for blue tits, 2.8 cm for great tits, 3.8 cm for sparrows and 4.5 cm for starlings.

I hung my new bramble bird box outside my window at work, so I can monitor it closely. It has now been a week and as yet, there are no new residents. I will keep you updated with any changes.



Nature's Medicine Box



URARA DONOHOE

Plantain

When people hear the word plantain, many think of unripe babana-look-alike in shops selling tropical foods. What I am writing about today is not that plantain, but a more common garden variety weed that grows absolutely everywhere, especially on sun-exposed waysides—perfect places to attract dog pee or poo. There are two different kinds of plantain in South Edinburgh: Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) with its narrow spear like leaves and Greater Plantain (*Plantago major*) with the round spinach-like leaves.

It is an old favourite amongst herbalists, with Nicholas Culpepper in the 17th century stating: "... plantains are singularly good wound herbs, to heal fresh or old wounds, or sores, either inward or outward". Its Gaelic name "San-Lus" means "all heal". It is a powerful detoxicant, used to treat snakebites. It has been observed in both India and North America that toads and frogs eat the leaves after spider bites. Next time you get a bee, wasp, cleg or even nettle bites, scrunch up a plantain leaf and apply it. You will feel immediate relief.

Its relative *Plantago psyllium* is sold in most UK chemists as "Psyllium Husks", the mucilaginous seeds used to treat constipation and to introduce fibre into the digestive tract. Leaves of both lanceolata and major varieties can be made into teas and decoctions (where you simmer the leaf for 10 - 15 minutes) to alleviate digestive discomfort of any kind.

Please go to my website for healing recipes using plantain. You can try eating the leaves like spinach, but this month's recipes will be wound- and bite-salves and herbal baths.

• Please forage responsibly, taking no more than 10% of any patch of plants/flowers/leaves/berries. Forage from area free from herb/pesticides, pollutants (e.g. heavy traffic), and mindful of dog poos!

• There are poisonous and deadly plants including lookalikes, so never consume any plant unless you are 100% certain of what it is.

Urara Donohoe is a Medical Herbalist at the Rose and Yarrow Clinic and Dispensary in Balerno: <https://www.roseandyarrow.com>

Veterinary Tails



Dr RACHEL ROPER MRCVS

Pet First Aid

Emergencies with our pets can happen to anyone—even to us vets! Last New Year, I was enjoying a well-earned evening out with friends when my sister (the designated dog-sitter) phoned in a blind panic. Somehow, my mischievous spaniel Winnie had managed to snaffle an entire M&S raisin-studded scone. Safe to say, my celebration was cut short!

Recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming over 30 pet owners to our Pet First Aid evening. Together, we covered everything from dealing with simple cuts to practising CPR. If you weren't able to join us on the night, I thought it might be helpful to share some of the key messages here. Basic first aid is never a replacement for proper veterinary care but staying calm in a crisis and knowing how to prevent things getting worse can make a huge difference to the outcome of an emergency.

First and foremost: stay calm. When you phone your vet for advice, we'll often ask lots of questions. When you're stressed, this can feel frustrating, but it really helps us understand how serious the situation is and how best to prepare for your pet's arrival. True emergencies include breathing difficulties, severe bleeding that won't stop with pressure, repeated unproductive retching, or loss of consciousness. In these situations, start heading to the practice straight away, but do give us a call while you're on your way. And if you're ever unsure, it's always better to phone your vet for advice.

If you suspect your pet has eaten something toxic, please bring along any packaging available. The amount eaten often affects how we treat the problem. Never try to make your pet sick at home, as this can cause more harm than good and isn't always safe or appropriate. Chocolate, medications, rat bait and raisins are among the most common toxins we see.

As for Winnie, the raisin-eating scoundrel enjoyed a late-night trip to our emergency service in Loanhead and rang in the New Year regurgitating an impressive quantity of baked goods with the out-of-hours team. They took pity on her and fed her afterwards, though, so all's well that ends well!

Wellbeing



ANNETTE WILSON

Altruism: happiness in helping others

Regardless how much or how little you have in life, you can improve how happy you feel by helping other people. We are evolved to live in communities, and statistics show that the people who contribute to their communities, regularly help their neighbours and friends, or volunteer their time to support a local cause generally live happier, healthier and even longer lives. I found the local numbers quite surprising! According to figures from Volunteer Scotland, 25% of Scottish adults formally volunteer for an organisation, group or club; and 36% provide regular informal help to people in their community.

I was interested to find out more about what actually happens in our brain and body when we spend time giving to others, particularly after a long and exhausting weekend volunteering at a Pentland district scout camp recently! Why do I do it? And why does it make me feel happy, even when my feet are sore, hands are chapped, and my house is full of tents to dry? Well, it turns out that helping others triggers a cascade of chemical changes to the body that boosts mood, lowers stress and creates a lasting sense of connection. Even when offering help may feel a little stressful, the longer lasting impacts are enhanced feelings of wellbeing that lowers your stress levels.

The health benefits of helping only increase as we age. Studies show that adults over 60 who regularly get involved in their communities and help others may have a stronger sense of purpose in life, stay more physically and mentally active, and maintain social connections.

I love living in a country and a community where so many people are helpful, and when life seems full of negative news about differences and division, it can feel reassuring to remember the good things that are happening on our doorstep... and on every other doorstep too!

Annette Wilson is a health coach, teacher of mindfulness, complementary therapist and walk leader at Pond Wellness: www.pondwellness.co.uk

Dr Rachel Roper MRCVS is a Veterinary Surgeon and the Branch Manager at ICR vets in Currie & Balerno: <https://www.icrvets.com/branches/balerno-clinic>



The Train Now Arrived at Colinton...

MIKE SCOTT
THE COLINTON TUNNEL

Refreshing, brightening and maintaining the Colinton Tunnel Mural are our key priorities. We also continue to develop new work to gradually fill parts of the mural that were deliberately left with relatively minimal content.

One of our biggest challenges has actually been just outside the tunnel, though, rather than within it. It has been a real journey of discovery.

The huge brick abutment wall at the western end of the tunnel carries an image of the famous Balerno Pug blue train, arriving at a platform full of local people. The crowd part of the scene was painted on marine ply boards, which were then covered in three coats of varnish. The train, its carriages and the background illustrations were not done that way. Instead, it was painted directly onto the brickwork, using spray paints; working from a cherry picker because of the height of the wall. Unbelievably, it has now been painted three times.

Because it is on an outside wall, we were particularly conscious of the need to protect it from the elements, so the first version of the Balerno Pug was covered with a waterproof coating. It seemed like a great idea, but wasn't. Although the rain couldn't get to the images, moisture coming through the brickwork from behind passed through the paint and collected behind the coating,

gradually pushing the pictures and coating off the wall. We effectively killed it with kindness!

Chris Rutterford returned with more paints, bringing the cherry picker through the tunnel again. Having learned from our experience we decided that we should use water-based spray paints again, but not the waterproof coating. Our logic was that the acrylic spray paint would have some weather resistance, and that the moisture coming from behind would be able to pass through the paint and evaporate. We were wrong again.

The images in version two lasted fairly well but wind, weather and that irritating water penetration through the brickwork won again. The colours faded and various parts of the paintwork started to peel away from the bricks below. The Balerno Pug began to fade away.

It was clear that we couldn't keep repainting the train every couple of years, not least because of the cost of doing so. An alternative approach was needed.

Having used marine ply for the crowd, we decided to use it for version three of the blue train. Chris Rutterford's new studio was large enough to enable him to create the whole image in situ, though it wasn't easy. As you will imagine, getting the perspective right on an image of that size is hugely challenging and took several tries before he was happy. Our own Eddie Banks painted the carriages. There was the additional challenge of making the new image fit snugly onto the existing crowd scene, which meant taking a huge

paper template and cutting the pieces of ply as though they were pieces of a giant jigsaw.

Finally completed, the new blue Balerno Pug was fixed to the wall in March. We set out to use a cherry picker again, but quickly found that the new surface of the Water of Leith Walkway was inadequate to cope with the weight. We left the cherry picker in the car park and reverted to the more traditional approach of using ladders—quite challenging on a seven metre wall.

As you will see, using marine ply boards and painting with brushes and acrylic paint enabled Chris to achieve an amazing level of detail—far better than we were able to achieve in the two previous spray-painted versions. The whole thing is triple varnished, which should protect it for years to come.

The new image will shortly be appearing as a 1,000-piece jigsaw. It could not have been created without the various donations you make to our maintenance fund. We are particularly grateful to the Pentland Community Chest, which contributed £600 towards the overall cost. Keeping Scotland's largest heritage mural bright and fresh is a constant process, costing around £7,500 every year, which means that we are constantly seeking your help.

• Maintenance and refreshment of the Colinton Tunnel Mural costs around £7,500 a year. You can donate through our website: www.colintontunnel.org.uk—feel free to use the QR code below.



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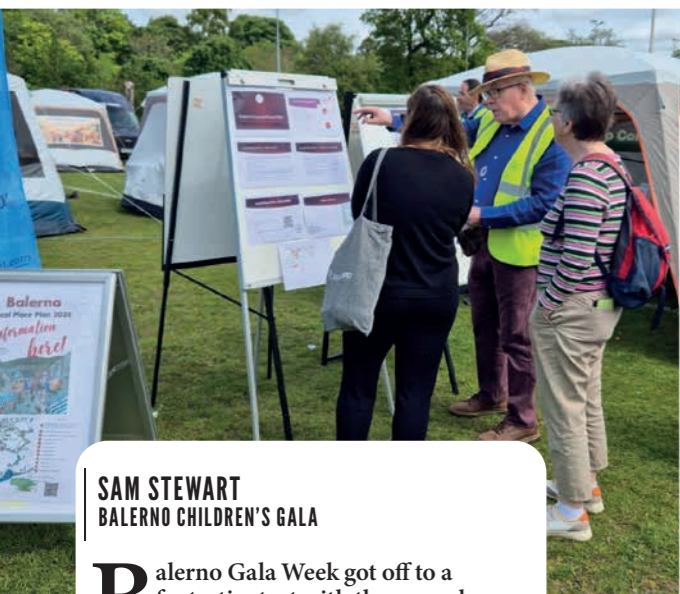
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BALERNO CHILDREN'S GALA 2026



SAM STEWART
BALERNO CHILDREN'S GALA

Balerno Gala Week got off to a fantastic start with the annual parade bringing colour, music and community spirit to the village streets.

The floats lined up along Main Street as crowds gathered in anticipation. Once the pipe band struck up, the parade made its way round Balerno – handing out sweets to children while also collecting donations to support the Gala.

Leading the parade was the Gala Court, with the children looking regal in their dresses and kilts. Close behind were the Dean Park Primary 7 walking group, proudly taking part as they prepare for the end of their primary school journey. This year's floats featured a wonderful variety of creative themes including "Under the Sea", "Bake Off", "Race Across the World" and "Horrible Histories".

The procession finished at Balerno High School, where excitement continued with the crowning ceremony and fancy dress competition. The hall buzzed with anticipation until the piper entered, followed by the Gala Court. After making their way onto the stage, the children confidently delivered their speeches before the highlight of the evening – the crowning of Gala King Daniel and Gala Queen Natalie.

The fancy dress competition was then judged, with prizes awarded for a range of imaginative costumes. Meantime, the winning float was Crosswood, whose David Attenborough-inspired "Under the Sea" theme impressed the judges with its creativity and effort.

The parade marks just the beginning of Balerno Gala Week, with a packed programme of activities planned for the week ahead, all building (at the time of writing) towards the much-anticipated Gala Day.



Rigg Race 2026

NIGEL DUNCAN
C&B NEWS

Corstorphine AAC runner Aaron Hoyle won the men's section in the tough, six-mile (9.7 km) Rigg Race in Balerno, during which an unprecedented six runners broke the 33-minute barrier.

Aaron covered the distance in 31 minutes 20 seconds, finishing 19 seconds ahead of runner-up, James Wright (Lothian RC).

Third was Robert Simpson (Edinburgh Athletics Club) with a time of 32 minutes 14 seconds.

The first Harmeny runner to cross the line in the men's race was Murray Duff, who was tenth.

Rachel Normand of Carnethy Hill Racing Club won the ladies race with a superb run, finishing in 36 minutes 39 seconds (16th overall), just ahead of local runner (and last year's winner) Rachel Caves (Harmeny AC) who clocked 37 minutes 37 seconds—the first local woman, and 20th overall.

An excellent performance by Corstorphine AAC saw them take five of the top 10 places which comfortably gave them this year's Club Trophy.

Entrants came from clubs including Portobello, Penicuik, Moorfoot Runners, JogScotland, JogPeebles, Wee County Harriers and Kinross Road Runners.

Congratulations were extended to all including the last runner to complete the course in 1hr 18min 43sec.

The race is traditionally held on the Monday evening of the Balerno Children's Gala week towards the end of May. The course starts in Malleny Park and runners head up through the village, along the Rigg Road a back down through Cockburnhill to finish at the rugby club.

It evolved from a post-war walking event for local Balerno Mill workers and became an official running race in 1963.

Steve Brown, the current race director, thanked all the 180 competitors who finished and he added: "Thankfully the rain held off which made for good running conditions, and there were some great performances throughout the field."

"It was a very tough competition in the men's, with an unprecedented six runners breaking the 33-minute barrier which is often enough to win the race, incredible running."

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Last month we held our annual May Fayre, organised by our PTA in school, writes Currie Primary School Head Teacher Sally Hourston. It was lovely to see school so busy with lots of our school families and friends coming along to support the event. We had a large variety of stalls and activities including "Beat the Goalie", laser tag, "hook the duck", "splat the rat", face painting, henna, and lots of stalls, toys and games, books, grab a cuddly, guess the dog's name, how many jellybeans in the jar, tombolas, plant sale, home baking, refreshments, and so on. Lots of fun for everyone. The day was a lovely opportunity to see some of our pupils performing with our school choir and dancing with local dance schools. Thank you to everyone who came along to support us..



Upcoming Walks

GAIL COUSINS
BALERNO RAMBLERS

WEDNESDAY 3 JUNE

• **LASSWADE TO ROSLIN VIA POLTON:** 6 mile (9.7 km) moderate to strenuous circular walk, starting at Lasswade Cemetery (EH18 1NB), walking to Kevock then along path toward Polton, climbing up to the path to Roslin, then dropping down into Roslin Glen toward the Maiden castle and following the path beside the river south Esk to Roslin Chapel.

SATURDAY 6 JUNE

• **PENTLANDS THREE RESERVOIRS:** From Pentland View Car Park via Poet's Glen, Whiteside Plantation, Maiden Cleugh, Harbour Hill, Bonaly Reservoir, Clubbidean Reservoir and Poet's Glen, Currie Kirk (stopping at Currie Kirk for Coffee/Tea and Home Baking—please bring cash with you for this), before returning to PVCP.

WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE

• **PENTLAND HILLS CIRCULAR:** Capelaw Hill and Bonaly Reservoir from Flotterstone; a moderate/hard 7.2 miles (11.6 km), ascent 971 feet (296 metres). Starting from Flotterstone car park, the walk gives fantastic views of the Pentland Hills (Fala Knowe, Allermuir Hill, Harbour Hill and Bell's Hill), reservoirs, East Lothian, Midlothian and Edinburgh.

SATURDAY 13 JUNE

• **SUMMER SOCIAL OUTING:** Visiting Calton Hill and the Palace of Holyrood House, Abbey and Gardens.

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE

• **ROSEBURN PATH TO NEWHAVEN:** 6 miles (9.7 km). 9.15am for 9.45am start from Currie Library; we will use the 44 bus to Gorgie Road (Duff Street) to access the Roseburn Path. Our first stop will be at Sainsbury's (toilet stop and coffee break), before making our way to Victoria Park for lunch (Note: no toilets in Victoria Park). We finish at Hathornvale to access trams/buses homeward.

SATURDAY 20 JUNE

• **PENICUIK TO ROSLIN:** Linear 7.5 miles (12.1 km) walk exploring the lovely grounds of Penicuik House before joining the path along the River North Esk back to Penicuik. Continuing down the valley, using the former railway route, we pass through Auchendinny, then over the Firth viaduct before descending to the remains of the gunpowder factory in Roslin Glen. The final stretch of the walk involves climbing a long flight of steps (Jacob's Ladder) leading to the chapel and the village. We will gather at the bus stop by the Original Rosslyn Inn to catch a bus to Penicuik town



Walking in Sunshine.
Photo: Gail Cousins

centre (near Lidl, B&M). Bus times are 9.32am or 9.42am.

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

• **LOCAL WALK** with a Midsummer picnic at Harlaw. Bring food and fruit to share. More details to follow.

SUNDAY 28 JUNE

• **FALLS OF CLYDE:** Beautiful 7.5 mile (12.1 km) walk starting at UNESCO heritage site of New Lanark, the mill community funded by Robert Owen. It passes along one bank of the River Clyde before crossing to the other, where we walk past the spectacular Corra Linn and Bonnington Linn waterfalls. We then return to New Lanark where if time, we

will be able to explore a little of the exterior. The site merits a whole day trip in order to enter the buildings and we will be unable to do a tour at this time.

ADVANCE NOTICE: FRIDAY 24 JULY

• **SUMMER CROQUET AFTERNOON:** A fun social afternoon at Balgreen Croquet and Bowling Club, including coaching, games and post competition refreshments. More details to follow.

NOTES:

- For all walks Ramblers should have adequate wet and windproof gear, and a packed lunch for the longer walks. In addition, you should have a Ramblers ICE (In Case of Emergency) card on the walks. Be prepared for the unexpected.
- With Ramblers walks please register with the walk leader to attend and advise if you have a medical condition relevant to your walking.
- Remember to bring your ICE card.
- We regret no dogs are allowed on our walks.
- Please do not come on the walk if you are feeling unwell.
- For more details of our upcoming walks please click the link to access the Balerno Ramblers page on Ramblers Scotland website (<https://www.ramblers.org.uk>)
- New members are always welcome. We offer you three "trial" walks as a non-member, hoping that your experience with us will encourage you to become a member.
- If you are interested in joining us, we have a mailing list which you are more than welcome to join to receive the information on forthcoming walks. Email: balerno-ramblers+subscribe@googlegroups.com

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Illustration: Marjorie Beaumont

LETTERS etc!

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the management. We reserve the right to edit or reject submissions.

Green Belt is Green Belt

Thank you for having an article that raised many of the concerns about the building proposed by St Mungo's in green belt, opposite the High School. Eric Adair seems to be saying that being "very conscious" of the new build being sited in green belt makes it okay to build there, but doesn't mention the fact that it is also in Balerno's Conservation Area (Paul Morris does). The guidance from The City of Edinburgh Council is that "the Council must protect these areas".

Planning permission for three houses in the field opposite the proposed St Mungo's development was refused in 1998, because of contravention of green belt regulations, plus access works would result in the loss of part of the wall, to the detriment of the Conservation area.

In addition, when a "Change of use from dwelling to general offices for church use" proposal was approved in 2003, it was noted that the building fell within an "Area of Outstanding

Landscape Quality", as per the Rural West Edinburgh Local Plan. Should the St Mungo's proposal be accepted, this would set an unfortunate precedent, and who knows what subsequent loss of yet more green belt in our conservation area might happen?

Green belt is green belt. Full stop.

Sally Cheseldine
Balerno Resident

Reform UK Claim

In your election issue you printed a statement from the Reform UK candidate containing the following sentence: "Holyrood legislation currently prioritises illegal arrivals over locals when it comes to housing." This is seriously misleading.

The truth is that there is no special provision for immigrants/asylum seekers on the homeless list, let alone "illegal arrivals".

If asylum seekers/immigrants are given leave to stay they may declare themselves homeless. They would then join other homeless people. The Local

Authority has a legal duty to house homeless people and obviously uses various criteria to allocate them to certain types of accommodation.

To say that one of these criteria is to prioritise illegal arrivals over locals is just an attempt to mislead voters and has no basis in fact.

Graham Dane
Currie Resident

Corslet Place

I noticed Archie Clark's column asked for ideas of local recreational spaces that could do with some sprucing up.

I've often thought the square grassed area across from the Corslet Place Scotmid could be a lovely community facility.

Some play equipment? Allotments? A community orchard? A bike "pump" track for the kids? Or just some paths and benches to better define and enjoy the space?

E Thompson
Currie Resident

Thank You

Going from a busy campaign to losing my seat at the count in a matter of hours is, I'll admit, something I'm still coming to terms with. After nine years serving this community, it's a big change—but one that many in public life experience.

What I feel most strongly, though, is gratitude. It has been a real privilege to represent the area I grew up in and care so deeply about. I'm proud of what we achieved together, especially the effort to save Currie High School—something that showed just how powerful a determined community can be.

Over the past week, I've been touched by the kind messages from residents across Currie, Balerno and beyond. They have meant more than I can properly express, and they've reminded me that public service is, at its heart, about people and community.

While I'm naturally disappointed not to be continuing the work I had planned – particularly around supporting families and improving healthcare – I leave knowing I gave it my all and always tried to put local voices first.

For now, I'll take some time to reflect on what comes next. But I will always be grateful for the support and encouragement I've received over the years from such an amazing community. I also know I'll be bumping into so many readers over the next few weeks and months, where there will be a quiet nod and exchange of glances.

Thank you for allowing me to contribute each month to such a super local paper.

It has truly been an honour and a privilege.

Sue Webber
Former City of Edinburgh Councillor and Lothian Region MSP

Bench of the Month



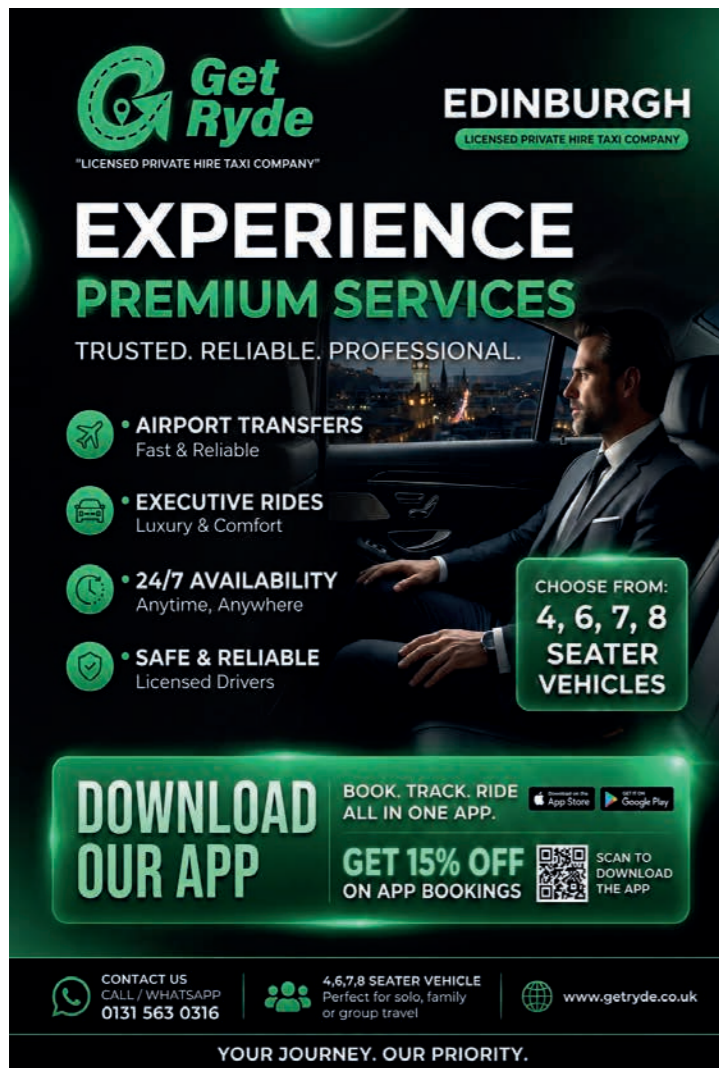
Currie Library

Second in an occasional series.

Unlike our inaugural subject (*C&B News*, April 2026), our second may well be among the newest public benches found within the boundaries of C&Bshire, dating back barely two years to the summer of 2024. It's also, arguably, the most "petite" public bench you're likely to find across the city—to the extent that it's been tied to a nearby railing to ensure no one unceremoniously carries it away. Uniquely (at least as far as we know), it's also constructed out of both wood and metal.

This particular bench was intended to provide a flower-potted resting place for those (especially young children) either entering or leaving Currie Library.

It is, reassuringly, the result of concerted voluntary efforts by local people. As reported in the September 2024 issue of *C&B News*, the bench – made by the talented gentlemen at The Pentlands Men's Shed – was funded by Charity Crafters, a local community group of crafters based in Currie Library, and was intended as a "thank you" for the much-appreciated support received by the group from the library's staff and many local residents.



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PLANNING, ETC BY ARCHIE CLARK

Planning and Climate Change—12: Oil is Still an Essential Resource

Days after war broke out in the Middle East, when one mighty nation moved its destroyers to wreak havoc on another's distant territory (whether justified or not), we discovered the choice of battlefield affected the fossil fuels we depend on, with traffic at Covid levels.

Different sources report that the UK imports 75 - 78% of its fossil fuels. In 2023, we bought oil from over 20 countries, Norway and the United States being among the main suppliers. Similarly, most UK gas comes from Norway, the North Sea and the US. The UK's limited reserves are insufficient to hold oil prices down in a crisis.

Back in *C&B News* 395 (April 2014) I said my larder contained food from 30 countries. While food may be plentiful, the vessels and planes that carry it need fuel so any interruption to energy availability quickly impacts on our "just in time" society. Let us not forget that without fossil fuels, industry slows down and much of the land transport we depend on – buses, trains and cars for the weekly supermarket shop – are affected. Anything dependent on electricity needs a suitable and reliable supply, and that

infrastructure is far from existing. So much of the heavy shifting depends on oil; hence when it is in short supply, or rationed, goods transport slows and prices rise.

In the third article in this series (*C&B News* 506, May 2025) I described how the City of Edinburgh Council's finalised definition for 20-minute Neighbourhoods diluted the original intention by changing the "10-minute walk" between house and destination to include wheeled transport, without explaining what the "20 minutes" means. 10 minutes by bus will take you from Cockburn Crescent to Currie Library but walking will only get you as far as Scotmid in Bavelaw Road.

If Edinburgh were hit by repeated oil shortages, then town planning based on a 10-minute walk to the wide variety of essential places we use, including banks, must be our starting point. Planners need to seriously consider how multi-functioning communities are laid out instead of relying on public transport to convey us between housing estates, schools, shops and workplaces. Local Place Plans could identify where walk-to village hubs should be.

• Information published prior to the War in Iran: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69cd1451b5210036050bc625/Energy_Trends_March_2026.pdf

Cycle Lanes

Last year, we learned that the 114th edition of "Le Tour" will start in Edinburgh on Friday 2 July 2027. That will be followed by the Tour de France Femmes avec Zwift that will start in Leeds on Friday 30 July 2027.

I hope they stick to the cycle lanes CEC has created (for our safety) and that, by that time, the faded road markings

across the city will have been restored.

By the way, Rule 69 for cyclists says "You MUST obey all traffic signs and traffic light signals" (thereby including speed limits) and Rule 64 says "You MUST NOT cycle on a pavement". These experienced racing cyclists could teach our own bikers a thing or two.

• <https://scottishcycling.org.uk/news/edinburgh-to-host-2027-tour-de-france-grand-depart/>

• <https://www.letourgb.com/>

Local STL applicant invokes Case Law

As Short Term Lets (STLs) are essentially administrative procedures, unlike seeking permission from trained planners for a house extension, one might expect them to be processed quickly by The City of Edinburgh Council. However that was not the case with 25/01445/FULSTL which was lodged on Wednesday 19 March 2025 and refused on Monday 22 December, nine months later.

The property is a two-room flat at 455 Lanark Road. There was a petition with 21 supporting signatures, and no objections. The applicant's agent advised that the flat was currently operating under a short term let licence and that the use of the property did not necessarily represent a material change of use. The agent added that there had been no complaints regarding the use of the property.

CEC's response asserted, without obvious evidence, that "the proposal is contrary to Local Development Plan Policy Hou 6 in respect of Inappropriate Uses in Residential Areas, as the use of this property as a short term let will have a materially detrimental effect

on the living conditions and amenity of nearby residents" and that "the proposal is contrary to National Planning Framework 4 Policy 30(e) in respect of Local Amenity and Loss of Residential Accommodation, as the use of this property as a short term let will result in an unacceptable impact on local amenity and the loss of a residential property has not been justified."

The applicant's agents said that Edinburgh's 97.2% refusal rate for "traditional" STL applications indicated there was "a strong policy presumption against converting residential property to short term lets" adding that "the vast majority of these have been previously granted full STL licences by the City of Edinburgh Council".

The applicant has now submitted 26/01982/CLESTL to confirm its use as a short term let is lawful. The original application included 30 documents. The new one has 12, including a 110-page English Case Law decision and three substantial "Relevant Decisions". The applicant questions whether planning permission is actually required. This will be a most interesting case to follow.

From the Weekly Lists

In recent months, the Planning Lists have carried a number of applications for 2.8m (9'0") high galvanised steel advertising drums 1.5m (5'0") in diameter, fixed to concrete bases.

The proposals are described as "Arts and Culture Advertising Structures", the applicant being Build Hollywood Ltd, Trading as Jack Arts Scotland, and while submitted from a Glasgow address, appear to be directed by an organisation based in London.

The Planning Statement says: "Jack Arts Scotland hold a contract with the City of Edinburgh Council to provide Arts and Culture Advertising Drums around the City to support low-cost, affordable and financially accessible advertising for Arts and Cultural organisations

within the City of Edinburgh throughout the year. The contract provides that some of the advertising space may be used for Council-led campaigns and community groups etc." The statement adds: "An essential part of the contract is that our company provides Clean-Down services within a 30-metre radius of each Arts and Culture Advertising Drum which removes unauthorised advertising such as flyposting, poster/ railing boards, cable ties, stickers and graffiti, tagging etc, therefore enhancing the amenity of the area."

Maybe these drums, which require planning permission, could replace the untidy cardboard cutouts round lampposts that seemingly don't. An example of the proposals can be found on the planning portal at 26/00746/ADV.

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DR SCOTT ARTHUR MP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WEST

NEW REPRESENTATIVES

I have to be honest and say that the outcome of the Scottish parliamentary elections was not what I had hoped for. However, as a democrat, I fully respect the result, and I warmly congratulate those who have been elected.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Edinburgh South Western candidate, Catriona Munro. She ran an excellent campaign, achieving a strong second-place result. I am confident we will see her again, hopefully as a candidate in next year's council elections.

I would also like to express my thanks to Sue Webber for her five years of service as a regional MSP. She was well known to many across C&B News land, and I believe we can all recognise and respect her contribution to the community. It was a pleasure to catch up with her at the official opening of Juniper Green Tennis Club's refurbished courts in May, and I wish her all the very best for the future.

Across the two Holyrood constituencies which overlap with my Westminster seat, we now have two new MSPs: Simita Kumar and Lorna Slater. I have great respect for both, and I look forward to working with them to make Edinburgh South West a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

The reality is that, across political parties, we often have more in common than we might think. I am confident that Simita, Lorna and I will find meaningful areas of agreement, whether in tackling the cost-of-living crisis, addressing housing challenges, improving our roads, strengthening education, or reducing NHS waiting times in Edinburgh South West.

While we may not agree on everything, I both hope and expect that we can work together in a constructive and collaborative spirit - finding common ground where possible, while always respecting our differences.



SIMITA KUMAR MSP
EDINBURGH SOUTH WESTERN

INTRODUCTION

It is a real honour to introduce myself as your new Member of the Scottish Parliament (MSP) for Edinburgh South Western.

Representing this constituency is a responsibility I take very seriously. During the election campaign, I met people from every part of the community and heard directly about the issues that matter most to them — from housing and healthcare to education, transport, and the rising cost of living. Those conversations reinforced, for me, the importance of listening, being visible, and working constructively on behalf of everyone I represent.

In my acceptance speech, I made clear that whether you voted for me, the SNP, another party, or did not vote at all, I am here to serve the whole constituency. Public service works best when it is rooted in respect, openness, and a willingness to engage with different views. I believe strongly in civility in politics and in having honest discussions even where we may disagree.

I also want to pay tribute to previous MSPs who didn't return or retired, particularly Gordon Macdonald, Sue Webber and Jeremy Balfour, who were well known for their presence within the community and their commitment to local people.

As a new MSP, I believe there is an opportunity to bring fresh energy and a renewed focus on community engagement. Edinburgh South Western is a diverse constituency with a wide range of experiences and needs, and I want to ensure every voice feels heard. I am especially mindful that those who need support the most are often the least likely to ask for help.

Over the coming months, I will be recruiting staff and establishing a constituency office. In the meantime, residents can contact me directly at Simita.Kumar.msp@parliament.scot. I look forward to working with and for our community in the years ahead.



CLLR GRAEME BRUCE
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

BARRIERS FOR GOOD

A lot of the casework I have received this month is more personal than across the ward in more general terms.

One of the more general concerns in the ward was the state of the wall that runs parallel to the path from Curriehill Drive to Curriehill Railway station. After much discussion with the council they appear to be in agreement to reinstate the wall that was knocked down by strong winds and a huge tree leaning against it. This is great news to hear and I'm sure everyone will be delighted to see the area tidied up and the stone back in its place in the wall. However, this will involve a contractor and it could be some time before these works commence.

Staying in Currie, but in Muirwood Park, I was alerted to an infestation of ivy around many trees in this area. I have chased up the Forestry department and await their response.

I was also made aware of concerns that a fence that was put in place around the perimeter of the former Currie Community High School (especially around the north side) to deter gangs of youths from entering and causing havoc in this area, would be taken down once the old school was demolished. I can confirm that the latest update from the council is that the current plan is to keep the new fence in place. It may require some minor alterations (eg, insertion of lockable gates for tree maintenance purposes) at the end of phase 2. If this changes they will let me know.

Yet again, I have chased up for an update on the Dalmahoy junction. CEC are still awaiting information on traffic signals sequence/junction layout which will form such things as timescales for construction etc. Hopefully I will have more substantial news on this project in the coming months.



CLLR FIONA GLASGOW
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES

It was a busy period over the past weeks and, as such, I missed out on telling you about the wonderful evening at Balerno High School just before the Easter break.

Well, what can I say about "A Night at the Movies"? I had the pleasure of attending Balerno High School's Easter concert and what a night it was, full of amazing singers, actors and musicians performing a variety of songs, instruments and sketches from a wide range of films over the years including *Saturday Night Fever*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Star Trek* and *Mamma Mia!*, and many more.

The pupils were amazing and it was quite emotional to see and hear young people who were performing for the last time at their high school, many of them going on to the next phase in their lives. I wish all of them the best of luck in their exam results and their chosen career paths as I do for all our young people in the area.

Summer is around the corner, and we can all get involved in little activities to keep our area looking good. Maintaining our outdoor spaces and taking part in litter picks, weeding etc. It is a busy time for our great volunteers who are doing this, thanks to all of them!

Place plans are coming together, and your ideas and suggestions are important as these plans drive forward the future of our communities. You can find information about your local place plans by contacting your local community councils. They address big issues like planning and design as well as services for the community. The more local people involved the better, this can be used to argue for funding and prioritisation of locally led projects. Remember: if you don't have *your* say, someone else will!

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CLLR NEIL GARDINER
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

WOODS, HUBS & BENCHES

Roley's Wood, adjacent to Currie Community High School, was discussed at May's Currie Community Council (CCC) meeting. I agreed to contact the Council's estates department to confirm which ownership account this tremendous community asset is held. (There are separate accounts for education, parks and green space, etc). Following confirmation, if the community wishes, it may be possible to ensure that the woodland is held in the parks and green space account and receives appropriate levels of maintenance while supporting its long standing relationship with Currie CHS and Woodlands School.

Concern has been raised about motorbikes on the new Muir Wood Path; I raised this with council officers, who confirmed this is a police enforcement matter.

The longstanding issue regarding a dog attacks was also raised at CCC. The matter is now before the Procurator Fiscal, with the outcome awaited in the near future.

Holiday Hubs, set up to ensure disabled children and children with additional support needs can take part in activities, are open for applications; please contact: holidaysupport@edinburgh.gov.uk, but please be quick, the deadline is Wednesday 3 June.

C&B News has indicated to each community council it covers that it would like to mark its 50th anniversary by funding a bench for each community. If you've suggestions about benches locations, or other ideas, please contact the community councils or C&B News.

I have contacted the council about a broken step in Currie Kirk graveyard. I am continuing to liaise with officers about Bloomiehall Park approach wall.

Congratulations to my colleague Simita Kumar MSP (who now represents the Edinburgh South Western constituency) and to all departing parliamentarians. Commiserations to the "Jam Tarts" who ran a close-run campaign in the Scottish Premier League.



CLLR STEPHEN JENKINSON
PENTLAND HILLS WARD

POST-ELECTION

The recent Scottish Parliament election was an important moment for communities across Pentland Hills and the wider constituency. Elections are always an opportunity to hear the views of local residents, debate the future direction of our country, and renew the focus on delivering for the people we represent.

I would like to thank Gordon MacDonald for his service to the constituency during his time in the Scottish Parliament. Representing local communities is a significant responsibility, and I wish him well for the future following his departure from Holyrood.

I would also like to welcome Simita Kumar as the newly elected MSP for the area. I know Simita through local government and I look forward to working constructively with her on issues that matter to residents across Currie, Balerno, Juniper Green and the surrounding communities.

While political parties will always have different priorities and different visions for Scotland, I believe local people expect their representatives to work together where possible in the interests of the communities we serve. As a Labour councillor, my focus remains firmly on the everyday concerns raised with me by residents—improving local services, supporting investment in our area, tackling the cost-of-living pressures facing families, and ensuring our communities have a strong voice at every level of government.

There are real challenges ahead, both locally and nationally, but there are also opportunities to deliver meaningful improvements for local people if representatives are prepared to engage positively and focus on practical outcomes rather than political point-scoring.

I look forward to continuing to stand up for Pentland Hills and working on behalf of all residents.



RICHARD M HENDERSON
BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL

NOT JUST ABOUT BIRDS

There have been suggestions of a drop in Balerno's wild bird population this year, although observers still report a good variety of birdlife in this area. Swallows are certainly back, with reports of returns to usual nesting spots in garages and the like.

So, what's that to do with *A Local Place Plan for Balerno*?

Responses to Balerno Community Council's recent consultation indicate that among the greatest perceived threats to Balerno is unchecked over-development, and the strain imposed on local infrastructure. People worry that development has outstripped our infrastructure's capacity and could threaten Balerno's character and sustainability.

Balerno's population at the 2022 census was 6,755; it's possibly nearer 7,000 now, taking into account completion of two major housing developments in March 2022 which contributed 346 houses to Balerno's housing stock. The village's population therefore has risen by about a quarter from the 2011 figure of 5,486. Yes, there has been some consequential investment in classrooms but little evidence of anything else in terms of infrastructure.

The green belt is there to help preserve the distinct character, identity, and separation of communities. It must be protected. And, in addition, where there is any development, that must also involve proportionate infrastructural improvement.

BCC are not surprised by the responses to the LPP consultation; nor should The City of Edinburgh Council be.

The songbirds may be back for 2026, but it is our job to ensure that they are able to keep on returning: just as it is our job also to try to ensure that our roads are safe, medical facilities are accessible, schools are properly resourced, and government supplies all the things communities need to supply.

Listening to the community, and preparing a Local Place Plan is part of the task.



NIKODEM GOSZCZYŃSKI
CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

CCC KEY UPDATES

Among the many items discussed at the recent Currie Community Council (CCC) meeting, the most notable were the update on several dog attack incidents and progress on the Local Place Plan.

An update confirmed that the case relating to several dog attacks is now before the court and awaiting outcome. CCC continues to ensure that residents' concerns are heard and properly considered by the relevant authorities. To support this, representatives from Police Scotland, the City of Edinburgh Council Housing Department and the Council's Dog Warden were invited to attend the meeting; however, they were unfortunately unable to do so.

Good progress is being made on the Local Place Plan, with 250 responses received to date. Engagement has been supported through local groups, social media and community networks, with further awareness events planned at Currie Library and the Community Café ahead of the closing date. The Muir Wood Field Path is now open, and residents are encouraged to indicate in their questionnaire responses whether they wish the field to remain in its current form. This continued participation is helping to shape a shared vision for the future of the area.

Other matters included grass cutting and maintenance within local green spaces, including activity at Muir Wood Park and community-led improvements to paths between Currievale and Newmills. Concerns were also raised regarding erosion of the path from Kirkgate to the Water of Leith, which has been partially washed away. Investigations are ongoing to identify land ownership and consider longer-term solutions. The community is also invited to submit suggestions for naming the Muir Wood Field Path.

For full details on these and other matters discussed, residents are encouraged to visit the CCC Facebook page, where full meeting minutes are available



During his final few weeks as a member of the Scottish Parliament, C&B News spoke with Gordon Macdonald about his 15 years as a local MSP.

When you were first elected in 2011, what surprised you most about the constituency?

The one thing I didn't anticipate was the extent of the rural communities in terms of farms. I was obviously aware of the main housing areas throughout the constituency, but I wasn't aware that I was suddenly going to represent a number of farms, predominantly in the Pentland foothills. Bob Barr, who used to be the Midlothian NFU [National Farmers Union] rep, who did farm just outside Currie, contacted me just shortly after I got elected and asked me to come up and visit him, and, he explained the problems that they've faced, and so on.

I've kept in contact with Bob on and off over the years and he's been, you know, a really interesting guy to understand the issues that the farming community faced, whether it's problems like - during Covid - when the roads were congested because they were wanting to get out the fresh air and farm vehicles couldn't get along the country roads because of parking. So, you know, it was an interesting thing.

My colleagues in the parliament are jealous, especially those that represent large Highland constituencies where it takes them a substantial amount of time to travel from one end to the other. I can do one end in my constituency to another in roughly 20 minutes, which means it's fairly accessible.

The 2011 Scottish Parliament election ended with the SNP gaining - apparently despite the proportional representation system - an overall majority. Did that make things easier for you?

I've been involved in politics since I was 15. I joined the SNP in 1975, and I fought every election since 1975 as a volunteer. I even was involved in the very first Scottish Parliament referendum in 1979. So I've always been involved in politics and to be elected in that majority parliament for the SNP, it made us feel that an independence referendum was winnable because the momentum was with us. We had not only won, in the run up to 2014, the majority of Scottish seats at Westminster and a majority at Holyrood, but we were also the largest party in local government as well.

So the public had indicated as much as they possibly could through the ballot box that they were behind where we were

going, the direction of travel.

So 2014 was a massive disappointment, I have to say. I put my whole adult life into achieving something that I thought was just around the corner. But what changed that was the huge increase in the SNP membership. You know, we went overnight from 25,000 members to 125,000 members. So that gave you the impetus to keep going because it showed you that there was a substantial amount of the population that was behind you.

Were there any aspects of the Scottish Parliament that, as an MSP, you found frustrating?

It's "silo working". We're in a situation where, traditionally, most of the parliamentary committees reflect the responsibilities of the Cabinet Secretary. I've been on the economy committee

for 10 years and everything impacts on an economy: the availability of housing, good transportation links, energy, and so on. It's all intertwined into the economy, and you have to tick all of those boxes to make sure the economy is going in the right direction. But, as an economy committee, we couldn't look at housing because it was part of local government. We couldn't look at energy in recent years because it was moved into Net Zero Committee.

So the one thing that we agreed from a report from the standards committee is there should be more joint working between committees. Personally I would like to see the economy committee have a more roving remit similar to the finance committee, because silo working... you're not getting the full picture. So, that's hopefully a problem that's now being resolved. Maybe it removes one of the frustrations that I had so that the new intake won't have that same level of frustration.

Any memorable, particularly memorable experiences of your time in Holyrood?

I think the biggest satisfaction that I get out of it is representing my constituents. I made a conscious decision, back in 2011 when I was first elected, not to have any people in Parliament. So I've never had staff in Parliament. What that allows me to do, especially in the early days when the budget for staff was really tight and you could only employ two-and-a-half staff, was that my office operated as a drop-in centre.

So if people picked up the phone and said: "I want to speak to Gordon about A, B or C"; we could say to them: "Well, Gordon's in Monday

and Fridays, but if you want to come down this afternoon, we'll try and help you out, because I'm Gordon's case manager." That proved a good model because you were in a situation where you could act quickly on behalf of somebody.

One of the first cases that I had was in Kingsknowe; it was about a retired lady whose husband had died and her garden kept flooding with sewage. Scottish Water kept saying it's a one-in-a-hundred year event. But she had documented it. Now, it took me well over a year to get there, but I got Scottish Water to replace the pipe work.

Or the elderly lady that lived in Oxbgangs who had a wet room installed and the workmanship wasn't up to standard, which

meant that they couldn't use the bathroom properly to get washed. We eventually got the whole bathroom replaced by the company

that initially did it, and she got compensation and a really nice bunch of flowers and a card from the managing director.

Now all of these things are achievements that wouldn't have happened without my staff. I couldn't do this job without my staff, intervening and trying to provide a service for the community. And I think, you know, we don't always get it right. We're human, like everybody else. But I think we have made a difference in the community.

Do you think that's why, each time you were re-elected, you received an increased share of the vote despite an increased turnout? A bigger slice of a bigger pie, so to speak.

I'm very good at recruiting staff with good skills. Once you've got a good team round about you, and they know the parameters of how far they can go, then you allow them to operate on their own initiative. Giving people that level of responsibility gives



"I look forward to working in the interests of all the residents of Edinburgh Pentlands over the next five years. We are moving into an exciting period in Scottish history and I am greatly honoured that you have placed your trust in me."

Gordon Macdonald, C&B News, July/August 2011 (issue 368)

Gordon Macdonald

them the freedom to get a good outcome for constituents.

Now, partially it is about what we talked about, about providing a service to the community and getting good outcomes that people can live with, but I'm also a firm believer that if you don't tell people what you've done, they'll never know. So I've always done an annual report that's went around every single door. I don't attack my opponents. I don't talk about my opponents. I just say: this is what I've done, this is what the Parliament's done, and this is why we're trying to make your life better.

I also do a monthly newsletter, that has been coming out for 15 years, every month apart from a few



occasions when I've been ill or whatever. But it's about providing a service and highlighting to people that you are providing a service.

I think Covid-19 worked really well in the sense that, when it hit, there was a desperate need for information. The number of emails we got went through the roof, and I sat down and I thought to myself: we physically cannot cope with this level of emails. What can I do about it?

I noticed that there were social media groups forming, like Balerno Cares. So I contacted 30 organisations that had popped up, that were trying to provide support during Covid, and I said: "Look, I'm not going to use your page for anything other than information from the Government about what you can and cannot do and how to get support". Only one organisation refused.

Of the rest, I was covering 28,000 membership. Now there was a bit of

duplication in that, because people were members more than than one organisation, but I was able to post a daily or twice-a-week update and we saw the emails going back down to the level where they were because people were obviously getting the information they required. That took the heat off my staff. It meant we were putting out a consistent message, and I think the people appreciated that. I think that was part of the reason why the 2021 election went so well for me because people realised that I was providing a service.

Any frustrations with your time in the Scottish Parliament?

My friend Bill Henderson was a local councillor, if you remember, between 2012 and 2017. Bill had worked extremely hard to get funding for the Dalmaohoy Junction, and we've been pushing for it ever since. It seemed to have been a problem in acquiring the land in order to make the junction bigger. We'd think we're there, but I would really have liked

to have seen something that we started off - in 2012/2013, between Bill and myself - actually come to fruition before I stood down

And similarly... A number of years ago I wrote to the council about a crossing on Lanark Road, just at Dovecote Park. We've been told that work was about to begin and it still hasn't happened. If you remember, there was an accident there a few years ago where a car came down and spun

180 degrees. The only good news on the horizon is I saw from The City of Edinburgh Council last week that they've now put funding in place to complete the missing bit of pavement leading to Currie Nursery, which is something I've been pushing for as well. So I might

achieve one out the three before I retire. But that's my frustration.

So, do you have any plans for the future that you're willing to share?

At the moment I'm really looking forward to just having a few months off over this over the summer. I've only ever been unemployed once in my life, and that was when I graduated in 1982. I was unemployed for three months and it was soul destroying. I've always worked 50-60-hour weeks ever since. I'm now 66 years old and I cannae do it anymore.

So I'm looking forward to two or three months of just doing very little, but then I'm going to have to find something to do because I can't imagine me sitting watching daytime TV or sitting in the garden, or sitting in a pub. I really need to find something to do, to keep me busy. But it'll be on my terms. It'll probably be some form of volunteering, I would think.

I've made good friends over the years. In the SNP, a lot of us knew each other anyway because we all worked around areas and came together for conference. But I've made a lot of good friends in Parliament and in the community that I

serve. Somebody said to me at Balerno Farmers' Market: "Does that mean we're never going to see you again?" I said, well, no. I've been made welcome by the vast majority of people in the community and, you know, I've tried to support them in return because I've made been made so welcome.

So, you know, I need to find something to do. It might be volunteering in this constituency - it might be out with - but somehow I'm gonna have to find something to do. Just to keep my mind active if nothing else.





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Forth Valley Chorus are 2026 Barbershop Champions



A vibrant ensemble of talented singers, with seven members living in the Currie and Balerno area, has proudly achieved gold at the Women's Barbershop Convention in Manchester, writes Louise Jarman. This remarkable accomplishment places the Forth Valley Chorus first in the UK and Netherlands to achieve the magical 700 points at contest,

qualifying the chorus to compete in Seattle in October 2027. The event brought together elite barbershop groups celebrating harmony, vocal precision and artistry. Forth Valley's success reflects years of dedication, teamwork and passion for the craft. "FVC have made history again," said David Sangster, Musical Director

of Forth Valley Chorus and now a Master 700 Director. "It's a stunning achievement and a fabulous reward for all the work we have put in. Being awarded 700 points is an honour and we couldn't be prouder."

• For more information visit www.forthvalleychorus.org Photo: Eric Ideler

Pentland Choirs Sing Out

ROWENA STEWART
PENTLAND SINGERS

As heralded in last month's *C&B News*, Pentland Junior Singers made a super contribution to the fundraising efforts of Musical Director, Isabella Gonzalez Diaz, with a concert at St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in April. The concert and other fundraising activities were successful and Isabella is currently in Uganda furthering her commitment to music education there through her charity Musica Unita.

Attentive readers of *C&B News* will also remember that Pentland Junior Singers are joining Pentland Singers for their summer concert, "Songs from Stage and Screen" from 7.30pm on Thursday 11 June at Balerno High School. Both choirs have been practising hard, the Juniors under the leadership of Rhianna Inwood (for Isabella), the adults with Ian Munro. Ian has taken on the additional work of arranging "Over the Rainbow" for the screen theme. During the concert, the adult singers will be looking up to him and singing medleys of James Bond film theme songs and Lloyd-Webber favourites. The programme also includes arrangements of



the theme tunes to *The Vicar of Dibley* and *Rosemary & Thyme*, stage classics from *Oliver!*, *Oklahoma!* and other shows, plus some classical Mozart and Jenkins. A concert that doubles as a quiz - "What was that from?" - has added home baking, a raffle and refreshments.

• Tickets are £12 but free for under 13 year olds and available from our website (<https://www.pentlandsingers.org.uk>), members of the choir, or on the door on the night.

Pentland Singers will sing again

on Saturday 20 June in a free lunchtime concert at noon in the New Town Church at the east end of George Street, after which there will be a summer holiday for both choirs with rehearsals resuming in September. Before then, all the Singers are looking forward to welcoming their June audiences and performing programmes that have something for everyone.

• More details: <https://pentlandjuniors.org/>; <https://www.pentlandsingers.org.uk>; <https://www.isabellagonzalezdiaz.org/musicaunita>



This year's Pentlands Open Studios (POST) Art Trail in August will feature 25 respected and professional artists and makers spread across 12 locations, ensuring a great mix work and experiences, writes *Ruth Forbes*. Two of our new contributors this year are: Dorothy Black (above), a post graduate of Edinburgh College of Art who has exhibited widely in the UK and abroad; and Marianne Hazlewood (below), an RHS award-winning botanical artist who studied Botanical illustration at the Royal Botanical Garden Edinburgh.

• This year's Pentlands Open Studios Art Trail is on Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 August. For more details, visit POStudios.org, or @POStudios



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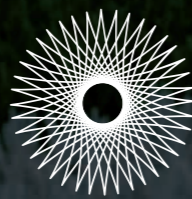


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Currie FC 2019s—the Journey Begins

WILLIS SCOTT
CURRIE FC

Currie FC 2019s have just started playing matches against teams from all over Edinburgh at the ESSDA Fun 4s at Sighthill on Sunday mornings, writes Willis Scott. They've been working hard at their Tuesday training sessions and Sunday Fun Football,

honing their skills in readiness for Fun 4s.

The weather hasn't been overly spring-like but, fortunately, the kids have all been kitted out in new zip tops to keep them warm, as well as a new Currie FC playing top for every player. The Club is very grateful to Recess Padel Club for sponsoring the new kit. Recess is a new lifestyle padel club in Melbourne, Australia—a

first of its kind for the city. This is the first time that Currie FC has had backing from a non-UK sponsor, and we wish them all the best in their new venture.

• Our latest intake – year of birth, 2020 – are now meeting every Tuesday and Sunday at Currie Community Centre. If your 2020 kid would like to join us, please email: willis.scott61@gmail.com



Currie Primary School Sent a team to last month's Interscholastics event held at Meadowbank (on Monday 11 May), writes PE Teacher Ally Donaldson. "There were 33 schools competing in the different events. Our team did extremely well, coming third for the Boys 4 x 100m, second for the Girls 4 x 100m and first for the Mixed 4 x 100m Relay." (Pictured above.)

More Women Picking Up a Racket

KHADIDJA MERAKCHI
MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY & LADIES' TEAM CAPTAIN, BALERNO LAWN TENNIS CLUB

I fell in love with Balerno the first time I visited. It was a Friday lunchtime, right in the middle of school and nursery pickups. My children were six and seven, and I was struck by the atmosphere. Walking past the tennis courts, I could picture my kids walking down there on their own. No more endless driving and waiting in car parks while they trained.

Then Covid hit. A year later, the first sports to resume were outdoor ones, and I found myself enjoying walking around the courts picking up balls for my kids, breathing in the freedom of being out again while trying to hit the 11,000-step mark. (I hate even numbers.)

My daughter wanted to quit because she was fed up with losing to her brother all the time and because he had been



admitted to the NexGen — invitation-only, mind you! — and she had not. I replied with all my parental authority and feminist conviction (in other words, puffed up like a peacock, as Mum says) that everyone could get better with some practice. I think the fatal phrase was: "Even me, who has never played tennis!" She jumped right at it, demanding proof.

That's how it all started. Beginner classes, one-to-one sessions, social tennis games, hours alone on the courts hitting balls after work. A lot of frustration, let alone the embarrassment at social tennis when I was very conscious I was slowing everyone down; worse, ruining the general mood, although everyone kept saying I was not.

I guess that kindness and magnanimity were what made me take over as membership secretary! That and all the praise and encouragement from the wonderful coaches, Wendy and Eoin (who are just as great with adults as they are with kids) and fellow club members. I became so fond of the game, I wanted more people to enjoy it too.

I could not help but notice the club had more male than female players, so I made it my mission to recruit more girls for junior coaching, establish Tennis Xpress for ladies, and enter a ladies' team into the East of Scotland League. Although we stayed at the bottom of the league, we truly enjoyed playing against other clubs. And, of course, we took catering to the next level

too! We made such a good impression, we were invited for friendly matches after the league ended last year.

We do understand that not everyone wants to play competitively, and we have two great social tennis sessions to which all members are welcome. We have worked hard to set up an adult coaching programme that caters for everyone's needs—beginners, improvers, ladies-only sessions.

Yet stubborn as I am, I believe women could enjoy competing too. You do not need to be graceful, talented, or fearless to belong on a court. Some of my most memorable moments have been the gloriously undignified ones. And I like to think that looking grotesquely ridiculous has done wonders for my popularity.

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Colinton-based studio





Following the successful refurbishment of our tennis courts last year, Juniper Green Tennis Club now turns its attention to another important part of its heritage—the Clubhouse, writes JGTC Committee Chair Paul Murphy. The vintage wooden building, which has stood at the heart of the community for more than 100 years, is in urgent need of repair after a recent condition survey identified a number of serious issues caused by water ingress. Damage to the external cladding and canopy posts has raised concerns about the long-term future of the structure if essential work is delayed.

To help safeguard the building, the Club will begin a programme of essential external repairs over the summer months. The planned work will focus on weatherproofing the Clubhouse to prevent further deterioration and so preserve one of Juniper Green's best-known local landmarks, which has served the community since 1907.

To help fund the repairs, a community fundraising campaign has now been launched with a target of £4,500. Every contribution, large or small, will help preserve an important part of Juniper Green's sporting and community heritage.

To donate, email: junipergreentennis@gmail.com



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Latest News from the Chieftains' Camp

TABATHA MCCREE-COX
 OPERATIONS MANAGER, CURRIE
 CHIEFTAINS

Post the exciting end to the 1st XV season the Chieftains are not hanging up their boots.

The Chieftains teams have a busy 7s season ahead of them, with the senior mens team already in action taking part in the King of the 7s series competing at Kelso and Selkirk—where they reached the final.

Looking forward (at time of writing) we have our ever expanding home tournaments happening on Saturday 30 May (Men and Women's teams) and Saturday 6 June (Girls 7s tournament).

Details of the day, vendors and events can be found on our website and Facebook pages. Please come along.

If you would like to become a sponsor for one of our events this summer or join us for the 2026-2027 season, please check out our new sponsor portal: <https://tinyurl.com/mpz94y3>

YOUTH RUGBY

The Currie Chieftains youth rugby groups have been representing the club with distinction while touring in April, creating lasting memories both on and off the pitch.

The U11 squad travelled to Tynedale in Northumberland, the



U13s toured Armagh and Belfast in Northern Ireland, and the U15s ventured further afield to Gouda in Holland. Each tour delivered fun, adventure and high-quality rugby, while strengthening player bonding, building new friendships and reinforcing core rugby values.

Sincere thanks go to our players, dedicated coaches and generous local sponsors: CBDRT, Floored Ltd, the Whiteford and Pretorius families, DM Hall, Exclusive Scottish Visits, Spar Scotland, Cyberhawk and our fabulous Chieftains members (whose support made these fantastic experiences possible).

Meantime, Tartan Touch season has kicked off and will be running throughout the summer for 10 weeks on Fridays, 6pm - 7pm. Tartan Touch is designed to provide a simplified version of rugby with the aim of attracting players of all abilities, ages and levels of experience who are looking to improve their fitness through simple and social activity.

More details: <https://tinyurl.com/4wv9ba5y>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The Chieftains Clubhouse is also going to be busy with events during the coming summer months, including a car boot sale on Saturday 20 June, an Andy Chung evening on Friday 26 June, an American-themed BBQ and line dancing Desmondo evening on Saturday 4 July, and a "Bingo, Bubbles & Boogie" evening on Saturday 25 July.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page and our website (www.curriechieftains.org) for further updates. If you would like tickets or to book a stall, email: communications@curriechieftains.org

Organising an event and looking for a venue? The clubhouse has lots of facilities and is right at the heart of our community. Email our clubhouse manager: clubhouse@curriechieftains.org



June 2026

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What's on...

Community and not-for-profit listings are free of charge. Email whatson@candbnews.com, including: Day/Date, Event Title, Venue, Time, brief details, and contact phone/email as appropriate. Details correct at time of going to press; please check to be sure. Inclusion is not a recommendation by C&B News.

WEEKLY

MONDAYS

- **THE MEN'S SHED at the Scout Hall: 99 Forthview Crescent, Currie; from 9.30am.** We offer various activities and a chat over a cuppa with new and old friends. Come on down! <https://pentlandsmensshed.org>
- **ST CUTHBERT'S CHURCH PLAYGROUP: St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 10am - 11.30am.** (Every Monday during School Term.) Play, craft, refreshments, singing. All Welcome. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.
- **MONDAY MAHJONG: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10am - noon.** The group is almost full, please get in touch if you'd like to join or pop along to our relaxed monthly sessions on Wednesday afternoon instead. Email: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com
- **THE MEETING PLACE: Currie Scout Hall, Forthview Crescent; 10am - 4pm.** A community cafe for those 65 and over, all carers and anyone looking for good company. Free exercise class, refreshments and games. For further information email: themeetingplacejcb@outlook.com
- **MONDAY MORNING POP IN CAFÉ: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon.** Community Cafe. Come for a cuppa every Monday morning, our volunteers will welcome you for a cuppa, a chat and an optional game of scrabble.
- **COFFEE, CAKE & COMPANY: Redeemer Church Edinburgh, 64 Bridge Road, Colinton; 10.30am - noon.** Drop in for free coffee, tea, a cake and a chat every Monday morning. All welcome. For further information see: www.redeemeredinburgh.org/ccc/
- **LUNCHTIME RELAXATION: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 12.15pm - 1pm.** Guided relaxation to calm the mind and ease stress. No booking required - please drop in.
- **BALERNO BRIDGE CLUB: Gibson Craig Halls, 156 - 158**

Lanark Road West, Currie; 1.20pm for 1.30pm start.

Contact 07999 528524 if interested.

- **BOOKBUG AND BABY GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 2.45pm.** Stories and songs for babies and toddlers. Drop in to meet other parents/carers for friendship, peer support and share a cuppa. Lovely warm and welcoming space.
- **BABERTON SCOUTS GROUP: Juniper Green Church Hall; 7pm - 9pm.** If you want some more information or would like to join, please email: cubs@babertonscouts.org
- **MONTHLY BOOK GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7pm - 9pm.** Please email to enquire, as we may have an opening for this group: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

TUESDAYS

- **KNITTING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 10.30am - noon.** Our knitting group is so popular, we've opened a waiting list for newcomers! Please email Anne at colinanne7@aol.com
- **ACE IT DIGITAL SKILLS: Currie Library; 10am to noon.** Digital Skills Coaching for Over-50s. Free, friendly one-to-one sessions help people over 50 gain confidence online.
- **COMMUNITY YOGA CLASS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1pm - 2pm.** Spaces may be available for this popular lunchtime class with Monica from Karma Tree yoga. Cost £6. Please enquire by email: karmatreeyoga@gmail.com
- **PENTLAND JUNIOR SINGERS: Balerno Parish Church, Main Street; 6pm - 7pm.** Fun, friendship and singing for ages 8 - 14. New members welcome! For more information, visit: pentlandjuniors.org
- **PENTLAND SINGERS COMMUNITY CHOIR: Balerno Parish Church, Main Street; 7.30pm - 9.30pm.** Come and share the joy of singing! New members welcome. For further information, visit: pentlandsingers.org.uk

WEDNESDAYS

- **BALERNO RAMBLERS MIDWEEK GROUP: Meet for walks in the Lothians, Fife, the Borders and further afield.** For walk details contact P. Harper 07738486416. Follow Balerno Ramblers on Facebook.
- **PENTLANDS SPORTING MEMORIES CLUB: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 1.30pm - 3pm.** Sports blether with a group of enthusiasts who enjoy a great sports story both old and new, questions and laughs. The group is popular. Anyone interested in joining, please contact Donna Mackey on 07340 560306 before coming along.
- **THE OCTAGON CLUB for Adults with learning disabilities: Gibson Craig Halls, 136 - 138 Lanark Road West; 7pm - 9pm.** Contact Claire Maloney: 07999 410721

THURSDAYS

- **BOOKBUG @ CURRIE LIBRARY (ENGLISH): 210 Lanark Road West; 10.30am - 11am.** Booking now required. Call (0131) 529 5609 to book your space.
- **ACCESSIBLE YOGA COMMUNITY CLASS: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 2.45pm - 3.45pm.** Accessible Yoga community class (free, donation welcome) Join experienced yoga teacher Bijam who offers a fully accessible class, suitable to anyone including wheelchair users or those with chronic health conditions who may find benefit from gentle exercise, breathwork and meditation. Class now full but please contact us to join the

waitlist: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

- **65th EDINBURGH COMPANY, BOYS' BRIGADE Anchor Boys (P2 & P3) and Junior Section (P4-P6): Gibson Craig Halls, 156 - 158 Lanark Road West; 6pm - 7.30pm.** For more details, contact Bill Brown: bill.brown53@yahoo.com
- **PENTLAND BRIDGE CLUB: St Margaret's Court, Juniper Green; 7pm.** We play competitive bridge in a friendly atmosphere. Less experienced players welcome. For further information visit: www.bridgewebs.com/pentland/ or email: mthkjb@gmail.com

FRIDAYS

- **THE MEN'S SHED at the Scout Hall: 99 Forthview Crescent; from 9.30am.** We offer various activities and a chat over a cuppa with new and old friends. Come on down! <https://pentlandsmensshed.org>
- **BABERTON BEAVERS AND CUBS: Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church Hall, Juniper Green; 6pm - 7pm (Beavers), 7.15pm - 8.45pm (Cubs).** Please email for more information @ babertonscouts.org

SATURDAYS

- **BOOKBUG @ COLINTON LIBRARY: 14 Thorburn Road; 11am - 11.30am.** No booking required.

SATURDAYS/SUNDAYS

- **BALERNO RAMBLERS WEEKEND WALKING GROUP: a busy walking group with a programme of interesting walks in a variety of locations.** Some walks may

be more challenging than the mid-week programme. Visit: www.ramblers.org.uk/balerno, www.facebook.com/Balerno-Ramblers, email: enquiries@balenoramblers.org.uk

SUNDAYS

- **65th EDINBURGH COMPANY, BOYS' BRIGADE Company Section (P7 - 18 years old): Gibson Craig Halls, 155 - 158 Lanark Road West, Currie; 6pm - 8.30pm.** For more details, contact Bill Brown: bill.brown53@yahoo.com

FORTNIGHTLY

FRIDAYS 12 & 26 JUNE

- **BOOKBUG @ CURRIE LIBRARY (EN ESPAÑOL): 210 Lanark Road West; 10.30am - 11am.** No booking required.
- **FRENCH CONVERSATION GROUP; the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 12noon-1pm.** Meeting fortnightly at the Hub for people who would like to practise and improve their French. Newcomers are welcome. For more information see our Facebook Page @The Hub at 531 or email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com
- **TABLETOP GAMING IN JUNIPER GREEN / BABERTON / CURRIE: Juniper Green Parish Church; 6pm-9pm.** Play board-games, card games and wargames. Everyone welcome, adults, children and their families. For more information contact Eric Ducreux Juniper Green Board-Gamers@boardjg - www.boardjg.co.uk

MONDAYS 1, 15 & 29 JUNE

- **FORGET ME NOTES GROUP: St. Cuthbert's Church Hall, Westgarth Avenue, Colinton; 2pm - 4pm.** Sing and socialise with old friends and new. Contact: stcuthbertscomms@gmail.com for more information.

DAY BY DAY

FRIDAY 5 JUNE

- **GARDENING GROUP: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 11.30am - 1pm.** Gardening Group (first Friday of each month) All Welcome—experienced or novice, pot planters or allotments. A friendly group that welcomes enthusiasts to share common love of gardens and gardening. Please email for details and to join us. hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com
- **FAMILY CRAFT SESSION: the**

hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green, 2.30-4 pm. Pebble art (ages 5+). Join us to decorate pebbles, all materials provided, children must be accompanied by an adult please. Online booking is available at <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SATURDAY 6 JUNE

- **SCOUT JUMBLE SALE: Scout Hall, 45 Lanark Road West, Currie; 2pm - 4pm.** 31st Pentland (Juniper Green) Scouts' annual fundraiser is back, including bric-a-bracelet, small furniture, gardening equipment, toys, books, nearly new and clothes. (Donations will be accepted 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Monday 1 - Thursday 4 June; no donations on Friday or Saturday morning.) CASH ONLY—and please bring small change if you can!
- **HERIOT-WATT CHAMBER CHOIR: Currie Kirk, Kirkgate; 7.30pm.** Heriot-Watt Chamber Choir present a diverse programme for a summers evening. Music will include Brian Bonsor's Robert Burns song cycle There was a Lad, sacred music by Shirley Thompson and Bob Chilcott, songs from the shows and some popular classics including "Build me up Butterfly"! Free entry with retiring collection for the Kirk.

SATURDAY 13 JUNE

- **BALERNO FARMERS MARKET: Main Street; 9am - 1pm.** Selection of local and independent producers and groups. More information: <https://balernovt.org.uk/farmers-market>
- **MONTHLY FLOWER WALK: The Pavilion, Campbell Park, Colinton; 10.30am - noon.** Learn to recognise edible plants, grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees with the help of biodiversity officer Jonathan Davey of the Friends of Campbell Park.
- **SCOUTS SUMMER FAIR: 108th Scout Hall, Spylaw Park, Spylaw Street, Colinton; noon - 4pm.** Raffle, tombola, games, craft activities, cake stall, plant stall and more. All funds raised will go towards the 108th Pentland (Colinton) Scouts' trip to Haarlem in the Netherlands next summer.

SUNDAY 14 JUNE

- **THE SUNFLOWER GATHERING: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; 1pm - 4pm.** A free community event celebrating Ukrainian culture, music, arts and traditions—including family-friendly activities for all ages, plus traditional Ukrainian baking and café refreshments. Come

along; meet neighbours, enjoy the activities and learn more about Ukrainian traditions in a friendly and inclusive setting. Part of Refugee Festival Scotland 2026.

- **CAMPBELL PARK'S 90TH BIRTHDAY: Campbell Park, Woodhall Road, Colinton; 2pm.** Help the Friends of Campbell Park celebrate the Park's 90th birthday. Meet by the main entrance at 2pm for the unveiling of an attractive and welcoming new history board and map. There will be three more attractive permanent display boards to view as well as a newly installed butterfly bank. Free cake at the pavilion and maybe a party in the orchard if the weather is nice. For updates visit: <https://friendsofcampbellpark.wordpress.com/>

WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE

- **THE SECRET BOOK SWAP: Craws Nest Collective, 350B Lanark Road West, Currie; 7pm - 9pm.** Bring a wrapped up book and pick one to take home. Guest author Lee-Anne McAulay. Find out more at www.thesecretbookswap.com

SATURDAY 20 JUNE

- **MALLENY GARDEN PLANT FAYRE: Malleny Garden, 4 Malleny, Balerno; 10am - 3pm.** Plant sales, Community and Horticultural groups, Fabulous stalls and refreshments. For more information visit <https://www.nts.org.uk/visit/places/malleny-garden>

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

- **SUMMER TREATS: St Joseph's Centre, Balerno; 7pm.** A fundraising event in aid of The Guild Project: traybakes, home bakes, refreshments and music. All welcome. Suggested donation: £5.
- **MONTHLY COSY CRAFTING (adults): the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 7.30-9.30pm.** All materials provided. Online booking is available at: <https://hub531.appointedd.com/> or by email hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

THURSDAY 25 JUNE

- **MONTHLY MAHJONG: the hub@531 Lanark Road, Juniper Green; 4.30pm - 6.30pm.** A new open mahjong session that welcomes newcomers as well as regulars. Come along to find out more about this ancient Chinese tile game. Please email for details and to join us: hub531lanarkroad@gmail.com

SATURDAY 27 JUNE

- **HERIOT-WATT INCHCOLM NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE: St. Cuthbert's Church, Lothian**

Road; 7.30pm. The ensemble presents a programme inspired by "space" including a premiere of a work about the Voyager probe by Gerard Delaney, "Ad Astra" by Jacob Narverud, "Duel of the Fates" from *Star Wars*, and "Night Piece" inspired by the William Wordsworth poem. Tickets available from www.ticketsource.com/heriot-watt-university

MONDAY 29 JUNE

- **COLLY BOOK CLUB: The Colinton Inn, 12 - 14 Bridge Road; 7.30pm.** Friendly and welcoming book club. For more details, including future choices of books, email: louisejeffrey14@gmail.com

TUESDAY 30 JUNE

- **PALM DEMENTIA CAFE: St Joseph's Centre, Balerno; 3pm - 4.30pm.** "Therapy Pets". The cafe serves the communities of Currie, Balerno and Juniper Green providing a space for people with dementia and their carers to meet others for support and social contact. For more information please contact Clare Dow on palmafebalerno@gmail.com
- **BALERNO FOLK CLUB: Balerno Bowling Club, 5 Ladycroft.** This month, the welcome return of the hugely popular North Sea Gas. Doors open 7.30pm for an 8.15pm start. Members and guests welcome.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

THURSDAY 4 JUNE

- **BALERNO COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Community Centre, Main Street; 7pm - 9pm.** www.balerno-communitycouncil.org.uk; balernocc@gmail.com

TUESDAY 9 JUNE

- **COLINTON COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Venue to be confirmed; 7.30pm - 9pm.** AGM and monthly meeting. <https://curriecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com>

WEDNESDAY 10 JUNE

- **CURRIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL: Gibson Craig Halls (rear), 156 - 158 Lanark Road West; 7.30pm - 9pm.** <https://curriecommunitycouncil.wordpress.com>

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

- **JUNIPER GREEN & BABERTON MAINS COMMUNITY COUNCIL: the hub@531 Lanark Road; 7.30pm - 9pm.** <https://jgbmcc.org>

LOCAL COMMUNITY CAFES

SATURDAYS*

- **COMMUNITY CAFE: Currie Community Centre, 280 Lanark Road West; 9am - noon.** Barista coffee and delicious home baking. *DURING TERM TIME.

- **COFFEE STOP!: Currie Kirk, 7 Kirkgate; 2pm - 4pm.** Coffee, tea, home-baking and a warm welcome. CASH ONLY PLEASE!

TUESDAYS - FRIDAYS**

- **THE MILL CAFE: 2 Main Street, Balerno; 9am - 2pm.** Balerno Parish Church Community Cafe provides a sociable warm space with home-made baking, Fairtrade barista-style coffee and a light breakfast and lunch menu. Last orders: 1.30pm.

**OPEN ON FARMERS' MARKET SATURDAYS.

TUESDAYS - SATURDAYS

- **THE SWING CAFÉ: Colinton Parish Church, Dell Road; 10am - 2pm.** Nestling in a quiet corner by the Water of Leith is a lovely setting to enjoy hot drinks and home-baking with friends, or our breakfast and lunch menus. Last hot food orders: 1.40pm.



FREE!

C&B News



LUCAS FROM CASTLELAW CUBS HELPS GROW SUNFLOWERS IN THE SHELTERED "CUBS' CORNER" WITHIN THE CAMPBELL PARK COMMUNITY ORCHARD. PHOTO: THE FRIENDS OF CAMPBELL PARK.