



# Drumoak & Durris NEWSLETTER

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June 2020

**Welcome to the Summer edition of the Drumoak and Durris  
Newsletter.**

## [From the Editor](#)

As we are living through a period in our lifetime never encountered before, our daily lives have all had to alter to comply with the government advice on the pandemic. This has also caused us at the newsletter to change the way we distribute the latest edition but as in the title of Patt Morrison book, "Don't Stop the Presses!".

The issues with printing and getting the edition distributed within government guidelines were going to be very tricky and so the decision was taken to make this issue (and subsequent issues) an online edition. This will continue until it is deemed safe to once again go back to print and get the distribution network back up and running.

As to eagle eyed readers you will notice that this current issue is numbered 99.5, the reason being I did not want us reaching the 100<sup>th</sup> edition as a digital version and would like issue 100 to be a full print run. If that means over the coming weeks, we have to crawl forward to issue 100 by small increments, that's what we will do so issue 100 can be the return to some sort of normality!

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed articles to the current edition. As you read through the articles, there is a wide band of topics from Mesolithic Deeside to the latest news about Park Bridge and the results from the recent survey on the proposed IBA facility next to Park Quarry.

If you wish to contribute to the next edition of the newsletter, please just send me an article at the following address

[editorddnews@btinternet.com](mailto:editorddnews@btinternet.com)

Many thanks

Kevin McPhee-Smith

## Message from the Manse - Rev Jean Boyd



Our Church buildings might be closed but Church is most certainly open! During lockdown with the COVID-19 we have been producing an online service and many are watching. The worship service is available on the Drumoak-Durris Church web-pages – just follow the link to <https://www.drumoakdurrischurch.org/> or you can access the link via the Drumoak-Durris Church Facebook page. You will see that the web-pages and the Facebook page have lots of information about the current activities of Drumoak-Durris Church and there are suggestions too of how you can get involved.

The online services have been well received. Each service includes a time of reflection, prayers and a link for children to watch a short clip about the Bible. There are contributions from the congregation each week and I know many are saying how much they are enjoying seeing friends during the service each week. As with most churches at this time, we are finding that many more people are visiting our on-line sites and people are listening from far and wide. We know for example that people are watching from Inverness, Edinburgh, USA as well as locally. Why not visit the web-pages and recommend this to a friend?

For those who do not have internet access, you can still join in with worship on the TV and radio. The Church of Scotland participates in the weekly Sunday TV programme called 'Reflections by the Quay' and there are regular services on the radio.

In these last few months our local church has been raising awareness of many issues, including mental health awareness, the work of the local foodbanks, prayer as well as international work such as Christian Aid and WaterAid. The church buildings might be closed but the Church is most certainly open!

Here is a short prayer you might like to join me in, a prayer for a time like this:

Lord everything is upside down  
Much of what we have relied on is not as it was  
We are in the middle of a pandemic and nothing is the same  
We miss our friends and family  
We miss our normal activity  
And yet Lord  
You are the same  
You are there with us during all of this  
And so, we come before you at this time, knowing that you make a difference  
Thank you for your presence with us  
We ask that you will stay with us and be with those we love  
Give us strength and courage to go forward  
Be with those who need you most this day

*(we pray in silence for them now)*

Guard our hearts and help us to serve others at this time

For we ask this all in Jesus name.

Amen

Yours in Christ Jesus

Jean

*In God's grace, opening our doors and reaching out  
to bring God's love, peace and joy to all.*

*Why not taste & see?*

## **Messy Church**

A big Messy Hello from all the team at Messy Church.



We hope that you are all well and staying safe at this challenging time. We at Messy Church were so sad at having to cancel the Messy Easter and the VE Day celebration. We hope you have been using your time cycling, walking or being out in the community enjoying the beauty of the countryside around us. At present everything is on hold but to bridge the gap meantime we thought we would offer a couple of activities you might like to try.

### **Activity 1**

You need to ask your parent's permission and may need their support. You will need: cooking oil; water; food colouring; washing-up liquid; plastic bottle. Try mixing oil and water. Pour 2 tablespoons of oil into a bottle. Fill it up about half full of water. Add a drop or two of food colouring. Put the lid on tightly and shake until you think it's well mixed. Let it settle. What happens? It just separates again. What happens if you add a few drops of washing-up liquid?

The washing-up liquid reacts with both oil and water to form an emulsion – it joins them together (very useful when you're washing your hands with soap and water to get rid of dirt). Opposites can be brought together if something else is added that reacts with both.

Talk about how, when people quickly take sides and refuse to come together to solve their differences, Christians are called, like Jesus, to be peacemakers who break down those differences and bring people together again. How easy do you find it to be a peacemaker?



### **Activity 2**

Starting with the letter A and using all the letters of the alphabet in order make up a story. For example: A boy called David edged forward grasping hold .....

You could try to include names and places from the Bible.

Good luck from the Messy Church team.



## Drumoak-Durriss Friendship Group

Amy and the Committee hope you are all getting through lockdown safely. The weather has been kind to us, so we hope you have been able to get into your garden and get out for a walk. In the meantime, keep safe.

Blessings to you all. Amy

## Craft, Coffee and Chat



Sadly, our last get together in early March seems like a lifetime ago and we hope everyone has been keeping well since then. Such a difficult time for everyone, especially those living alone, but we hope that continuing to knit, crochet, embroider or sew has brought some relief and comfort during isolation. Some of our group have been helping by sewing scrub bags and facemasks which is our contribution, in a very small way, to the NHS key workers.

We hope that when restrictions ease further, we may be able to restart our group on alternate Tuesday mornings in Drumoak Church Hall but till then, Norma and I send our best wishes to everyone. If you do need to make contact, you can call Norma Menzies on 01330 844542 or Marion Nixon on 01330 811663.



## SPLAT and Jolly Tots

We are missing seeing the children who attend Splat and Jolly Tots growing up and playing together, and hope once the lockdown is lifted a little that we will be able to have some sort of playtime in the sunshine, and see how much they have all developed and grown.

In the meantime, there have been ideas for activities posted on the Splat Facebook page, and also the Drumoak Durriss playgroup Facebook page has some great activities. Another good place is Earthtime's Forest School nursery, in the Duffus Estate, near Elgin, they have lots of lovely ideas for outdoor adventures and learning.

There are lots of 'music for kids' videos to play along to, on YouTube, and Cbeebies.iplayer if you need inspiration too, while picking up a saucepan lid and wooden spoon to bash from the kitchen cupboard!

Look forward to seeing everyone once we are back to socialising. Enjoy the summer sunshine and see you soon!



## Thank you!



You may remember that we were collecting money for Water Aid throughout the period of Lent by putting something in a jar instead of eating sweets, chocolate etc. Some folk put the money in the jar and ate the sweets anyway while others put money in their jars each time they flushed the loo! Whichever way the money was collected we have raised the fantastic sum of £780-09 for Water Aid.



Many thanks to all who helped us to donate so much to Water Aid.

**Water Aid** is an international not-for-profit charity, determined to make clean water, decent toilets and good hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere, within a generation ...

## Thank you to the Congregation



Thank you for your continued support of Drumoak-Durris Church throughout the present shut-down restrictions. So many of you have realised the regular costs of maintaining the Church's presence within the community still have to be met and have continued with your



contributions; either through a standing order payment, or by donations posted through my door. It is very much appreciated.

Hopefully, soon things will change, and we shall be able to open up the church buildings, and return to our regular worship programme, but in the meantime, take care and keep safe.

Marion McNeil, Session Clerk

Have a look and see what's going on.  
Click on the logo on our website –  
[drumoakdurrischurch.org](http://drumoakdurrischurch.org)

Find us on 

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### [Need Advice or Help during the current pandemic?](#)

A website is available the Grampian Coronavirus (covid-19) Assistance hub, [www.gcah.org.uk](http://www.gcah.org.uk) which can give advice to individuals and businesses on a multitude of topics during the current crisis.

Also, there is a local Drumoak and Durris Support Group which can offer help with shopping, prescriptions, dog-walking etc which is listed further on in this edition.

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Doreen Fowlie – Link worker for South Aberdeenshire.

Alzheimer Scotland calls on local

communities to get involved in Dementia Awareness Week: 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Dementia Awareness Week is an opportunity for local communities to help support the 90,000 people living with dementia in Scotland and their families and carers. Alzheimer Scotland want to ensure nobody faces dementia alone.

Lockdown has been particularly challenging for many of the people the charity supports. Staff are doing everything they can to make sure local services and structures remain in place to help minimise the impact of this.

Dementia is not on lockdown. Social isolation, loss of networks and disrupted routines are a huge challenge for those people living with dementia and their carers during this crisis, particularly since they will face restrictions for an extended period of time. Alzheimer Scotland have adapted how they work as a charity to boost their 24/7 Freephone Dementia Helpline capacity and deliver online support groups, digital reminiscence and therapeutic sessions. Virtual 'visits' by Link Workers and Dementia Advisors ensure that no one is facing this crisis alone.

Please support Dementia Awareness Week by following the conversation on social media (#DementiaAwareness) and reach out to your fellow citizens living with dementia and their carers.

**Get involved with Scotland’s Dementia Awareness Week (1-7 June 2020) by:**

- Support at this time could make a real difference to the lives of people living with dementia and their carers, many of whom are already at crisis point and are relying on Alzheimer Scotland as a lifeline. Help will go a long way to supporting our local frontline services and for any donation we are deeply grateful. To support Alzheimer Scotland visit [www.alzscot.org/donate](http://www.alzscot.org/donate)
- Become a Dementia Friend online at [www.alzscot.org/dementiafriends](http://www.alzscot.org/dementiafriends)
- Support our Fair Dementia Care campaign here [www.alzscot.org/fairdementiacare](http://www.alzscot.org/fairdementiacare)

If you have any questions about dementia or want to find out about support in your area, call Alzheimer Scotland’s 24 Freephone Helpline on 0808 808 3000.

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**THE PARISH OF DURRIS**

**This is a notice to say that only a dozen copies of the above book remain.**

**There will be NO further reprints, so anyone anxious to purchase a copy should let me know as soon as possible. Cost: £15.00**

**Robin Jackson**

**01330 811264**

**robin@deevview.myzen.co.uk**

### Virtual Walking by Peter Richardson

The lockdown has affected us all in different ways. Here in Durriss and Drumoak we are fortunate in being surrounded by miles and miles of tracks through forests or beside rivers which we can reach without having to drive. The local walking group – we don't have a name - of course has been unable to get onto the hills but we've been remembering our past walks through the medium of a weekly photo quiz.

The writer had the idea on the day of lockdown and produced a quiz using photos from walks going back several years. Some 17 of the regular walkers agreed to subscribe £1 for every quiz they received which has allowed us to continue to support the Braemar Mountain Rescue Association, ARI A&E and the Samaritans. Over the course of a few years of walks, the writer has taken hundreds of photos, often to the exasperation of his companions; they have certainly come in useful now. With tools embedded in apps such as ViewRanger, OS Maps, PeakFinder it is possible to create 3D maps of routes and to see a panorama of the hills visible from a given point: these permit a variety of challenging questions.

Each quiz had ten questions some of which had multiple questions so that there were usually 20 points on offer, and we all know what points mean; however, there were no prizes but some of the contestants were very competitive. Each question would take the form of a photograph of a hill, a glen, a loch, a bothy, a bridge, a well or a memorial or sometimes simply something like "if Carn a' Gheòidh is bearing 200° and is 6.8km distant where is the photographer standing?" Sometimes a map reference was given and sometimes the lat and long coordinates so access to OS maps was needed.

As Quiz nr 1 grew to Quiz nr 10 the compiler was getting more and more enjoyment out of delving into contemporary or historical records to discover obscure facts about the Grampians and Cairngorms: Davie's Bourach, Jock's Road, the link between Faith Hines and Glen Avon, the connection between Inchrory Lodge and Malaysia. There are a surprising number of wells on our hills, including one, Humphrey's Well, the origin of the name of which we can't discover. Similarly, some burns, such as the Burn of Mohamad, have interesting names with obvious origins but why is Duncan Gray's Burn, a couple of hundred metres downstream of the White Bridge, so named?

In a few weeks we anticipate that we'll be back on the hills, but the writer wants to express his appreciation to all the walkers who took part in the quizzes; it made his lockdown pass more quickly than it otherwise would have done.

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### Kirkton Hall Update

As you are all probably aware the Hall is closed just now due to Covid 19 and the Government guidelines put in place to deal with the spread of the virus. We will re-open as and when the Government advises us it is safe to do so.

Sadly, over the past few months we have lost two very special people who have been great supporters of the hall for many, many years.

Eric and Aileen Melvin, as well as being members of a number of the groups which are run in the Hall, were also our hall keepers for around 17 years. They took great pride in the upkeep of the Hall, opening and closing it up, sometimes into the wee small hours, showing potential hirers around and ensuring the Hall was kept to a very high standard. They were a much loved and well-known couple within Durriss and Drumoak and were always willing to help out someone in need. Their kindness and generosity was well known throughout the community and they will be very much missed by us all.

## [Mental Health Benefits by Rhona Blackhall, Deeside Fitness](#)

Keeping fit and healthy has never been so important, not only for our physical health but also our mental health and wellbeing. During these challenging times, it is natural to feel worried, stressed and anxious, however exercise is a great way we can help ourselves and others, to prevent these feelings taking over or becoming more serious.

Eating healthily and exercising is known to have so many health benefits, which is why the Government are encouraging and allowing daily exercise during this pandemic. Harley Jarvis from the mental health Charity Mind says "Being active is one of the best things you can do to help yourself bounce back in times of adversity. Getting out of your head and into your body can actually improve your ability to think clearly and break up your racing thoughts." Exercise stimulates positive endorphins and dopamines, happy hormones, which help improve your mood and energy levels. Taking part in exercise can also help relax and calm our minds and allows us to focus on something else.

When we exercise outdoors, we also get the added benefits of the fresh air and being in nature. We are extremely lucky to live in such a beautiful part of the world, so if you are able to get outside, make the most of it and go for a nice walk, cycle or run, exercise out in the garden, and if you're indoors exercising with a window open can really help, and will also help cool you down.

With many of us working from home and spending long periods sitting at a computer. It's vital to try and keep moving regularly. Here are 5 simple steps to get you moving:

1. Set a timer every hour, each hour get up and walk round the house or garden, climb the stairs, do 10 squats etc.
2. When waiting for the kettle to boil do burpee or lunges.
3. When watching TV, hold a plank during the adverts.
4. Try a new exercise, there are lots of YouTube videos, why not try some cosmic yoga with the kids, pilates or chair exercises (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJgZygWBKaE>)
5. Put on your favorite tunes and have a boogie!

Or if you fancy it why not join our Deeside Fitness virtual exercise classes via Zoom. Our classes are really fun and sociable, we end each class with 10-15mins of stretching and a catch up, as I truly believe that the social and mental benefits of exercise are just as important as the physical benefits.

Boxercise: Wednesday 6pm-7pm

Mum and Baby Fitness: Thursday 10.30am-11.30am

Bootcamp; Friday 9.30am-10.30am

If you are interested please get in touch with Rhona Blackhall at [deesidefitness@outlook.com](mailto:deesidefitness@outlook.com) or find us on facebook or Instagram.

Stay safe, healthy and active!

## LOCAL SUPPORT GROUP SPREADING ONLY KINDNESS

*If for any reason you are unable to ask family, friends or neighbours*

### CAN WE HELP YOU-IN ANY WAY?

We can pick up shopping for you.                      We can collect your prescriptions

We can post your mail                                      We can arrange for a friendly phone call

We can help you order your groceries online                      We can walk your dogs

We are a group of local residents and are representing the Editorial Team of the Drumoak & Durriss Newsletter, Drumoak Mums Facebook, Durriss Mums Facebook, Drumoak Durriss Church, Drumoak & Durriss Community Group and Crathes, Drumoak and Durriss Community Council.

Please make us your first call, if you need any help

We can be contacted on the following telephone numbers and have a team of local people who are happy to help

#### For Drumoak

Marion McNeil 811350  
Gillian McPetrie 810138/07791353346  
Linda Adams 811542/07989689280  
Heather Sim 811940/07974087575  
Donna Wallace 07763285252

#### For Durriss

Liz & Lynne Anderson  
844655/07919826912/07796711783  
Sarah Stewart 844077/07515381152  
Aynsley Watson 07581347842  
Elaine Ingram 844756/07974139721  
Helen Bisset 811748/07528574184

*Remember: Coronavirus is contagious. Please take every precaution to ensure you are spreading only kindness. Avoid physical contact (2m distance). Wash your hands regularly for 20 seconds.*

*Be aware: The Scottish Charities Regulator has issued a warning of scams which have started to appear in various forms, not just via e-mails. If you are in any doubt at all about recent communications, please talk to us – it's what we are here to do.*

### HOMEOWNERS – IMPORTANT NOTICE

In February 2019 the Legislation relating to smoke detection in your home changed.  
All domestic properties in Durriss/Drumoak could be affected.

You need to have the following: -

- One smoke alarm installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes.
  - One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallway and landing.
    - One heat alarm installed in every kitchen.
    - All fire alarms are to be ceiling mounted and must be interlinked.
  - Carbon monoxide detectors are to be fitted where there are carbon fuelled appliances (such as boilers, fires, open fires, heaters, stoves or a flue).

#### The Regulations come into effect in February 2021.

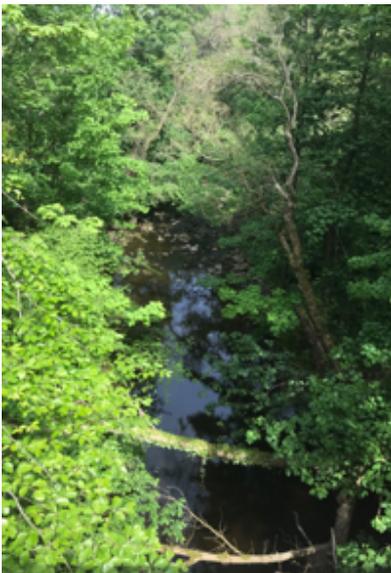
For a free survey and quotation, please contact: -  
Cumming Fire and Security Ltd  
01467 643917 or email [cfs.ltd@dial.pipex.com](mailto:cfs.ltd@dial.pipex.com)  
For Peace of Mind in your Home – contact us now

## Roads Less Travelled by Kevin McPhee-Smith

What is this life if, full of care  
We have no time to stand and stare.  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

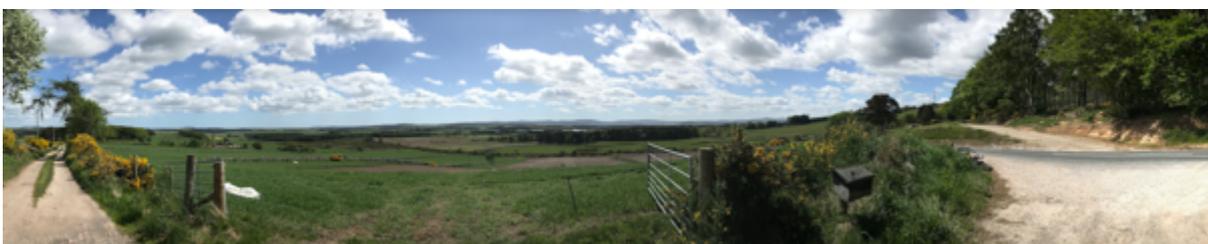
This is the opening of the poem called Leisure by W.H. Davies. It warns that the hectic pace of modern life has a detrimental effect on the human spirit. With the pandemic lockdown being eased in Scotland so we could get out more than once a day for exercise I could finally get my bike back out. I had not been able to get out on it due to the lockdown as my once a day exercise was to take the dog a walk but now, I could go and ride again.

My first day I foolishly thought a trip along the Deeside way was the way to go but soon I found it was as busy as the M25, lots of people, children, dogs and very hard to social distance so I decided to explore the backroads around the Dee Valley. And what a wonderful experience it was.



Every day brings new experiences and each day is fresh. When you get off the main drags and you certainly find it is quiet, you then realise how much you miss by always having to rush places as W.H Davies said. The little things you start to notice, rolling past and smelling the whin in bloom, watching a red kite majestically soar while being worried by a gull but it's like the red arrows v the Wright brothers, it is just toying with the gull. Looking out over the rolling hills and seeing Scotland's scenery at its best in the glistening sun and only hearing the animals. It is stunning and right on our doorstep. You only meet a couple of other cyclists on the routes. At this strange point in our time, it is essential to keep exercising and keep your mind stimulated and to do both on your bike is just breath taking at times.

So sorry W.H., I took time and I stared, open mouthed!



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**Rebecca.Stripling@btinternet.com**

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or email

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## [Deeside Defilement? By Mike Greaves, Tilbouries](#)

Over recent weeks, during COVID19 lockdown, I have restricted much of my daily exercise to the vicinity of our home at Tilbouries, on the banks of the Dee, and Craiglug wood, immediately opposite and parallel to the South Deeside road. Within just this few acres I have moved through woodland including 'native' Scottish trees -majestic beech over 100 years old, honeysuckle-girdled birch surrounded by unfurling ferns, oak, rowan, scots pine, willow and holly as well as sycamore, ash, larch and towering Douglas fir. The forest floor has been blessed with luminous white carpets of wood sorrel, wood anemone and wild garlic as well as patches of bright yellow primrose and delicate viola, and latterly glorious deep blue spikes of bugle, native bluebells, swathes of cuckoo flower and forget-me-not, and eye-catching red campion. The orange-yellow gorse has been spectacular, with the lemon-yellow vanilla-scented broom now competing. Almost every day I spot red kite, buzzard and recently arrived swallows and hear the drumming of a woodpecker; soon, swooping bats on an insect feeding frenzy will grace the evening sky. I see badger sets and scrapes, with an occasional sighting of these shy mammals, and frequently catch a fleeting glimpse of red squirrel, roe deer and hare. On very special occasions otters can be seen cavorting by the riverbank.

My favourite outlook is from a point just 100 yards or so beyond the southern border of Craiglug wood and on the minor road running steeply downhill from the vicinity of Upper Ashentilly farm. From here a panorama suddenly and dramatically opens up which exemplifies the true glory of Deeside, the meandering river flanked by agricultural greenery and woodland, the valley often swathed in mist in the early morning. On a clear day the dramatic view to the west includes the summits of Scolty Hill, Kerloch, Clachnaben, Mount Battock and Morven, the last two spectacularly snow-capped until very recently. The ridge of Hill of Fare by Raemoir

forms a dramatic backdrop to the north, and a few strides downhill Mither Tap and Oxen Craig of the Bennachie hill range come into view to the northeast.

If all of this sounds to be an idyllic rural environment with precious and accessible flora and fauna in a stunning rural landscape which we are all fortunate to experience on our doorstep, indeed it is. This renders it immensely disappointing and frustrating when, from this same fabulous vantage point and looking down into the valley bottom immediately to the north, the carbuncle that is the CHAP Park quarry reluctantly but irresistibly draws the eye away from the splendour of Royal Deeside. Of course, we all can recognise the need for sources of sand and gravel for construction and essential infrastructure, and that the geology of the river valley provides a copious supply of these materials. However, I have to assume that, in relation to planning applications, decision makers were reassured by stipulations that upon closure, scheduled for 2016 I believe, the site would be reinstated. It is difficult to identify any evidence of this restoration from this vantage point. Rather, alternative arrangements for the further development of the site have been proposed and, so far resisted, entirely fittingly. Against this background it is absurd that we are faced now with a Proposal of Application Notice by Rock Solid BV, a Dutch company, to establish an industrial Incinerator Bottom Ash Storage and Processing facility on the south bank of the river Dee adjacent to the CHAP quarry. As such, this industrial facility, which I presume is dependent upon the quarry, would be established, scarcely credibly and presumably permanently, beside a designated Special Area of Conservation in relation to Atlantic salmon, otter and freshwater pearl mussel and within the Dee Valley Special Landscape Area. The proposed site is located fewer than 200 yards from Craiglug wood, with its wonderful flora and fauna, and less than half a mile from the waymarked entry, in Warren wood, to the ancient track and driveway, Elsieck Mounth. The proposal is for the ash to be transported to this rural location on a regular, presumably daily basis, stored on site adjacent to the riverbank, with processing lasting for 6 to 8 weeks carried out annually. Any residual risk, despite proposed mitigations, of potentially damaging runoff from this site adjacent to the river Dee must be a concern, as must the environmental impacts from transportation and processing of the material.

I foresee that my unease about this proposal might attract the allegation of 'Not In My BackYardism' and would understand that, at a superficial level at least. My response is that, in truth, I am unclear based on the information provided to date what, if any, direct impact on our home might be, although there will undoubtedly be increased heavy duty traffic on the South Deeside Road with the potential for even more dust generation. Rather, my principal concern centres around the establishment of an industrial unit in such a treasured rural location when more appropriate brown field sites must surely take priority. I am aware that several of my immediate neighbours share these concerns. An objection for legitimate environmental reasons does not represent NIMBYism but rather apprehension about the potential further defacement of a landscape which is a source of pleasure to locals and visitors alike. No doubt others, including the Dee District Salmon Fishery Board and River Dee Trust, also will have views on the potential for short- and long-term damage from the proposed industrial facility in a designated Special Area of Conservation.

I am truly appreciative that the newly formed Park Bridge Action Group have added opposition to this manifestly inapt proposal to their portfolio of activities, again principally on the grounds of negative environmental impact. Their alternative propositions for environmentally friendly uses of the land currently occupied by Park quarry which will be of benefit to local communities as well as visitors to this beautiful, bountiful, protected location should surely add significant weight to the self-evident arguments against industrialisation of the landscape, if or when our elected decision makers are required to consider any full planning proposal from Rock Solid BV. When they deliberate on the issue I would offer a warm welcome to all of them to accompany me on a tour of the immediate vicinity so that they can experience that which it currently has to offer to us all as a natural wildlife habitat and environmental asset in a splendidly picturesque and protected setting which should surely be safeguarded from encroaching industrialisation.

## Mesolithic Deeside

Mesolithic Deeside consists of an enthusiastic group of archaeologists, students and local volunteers investigating the river Dee area during the Mesolithic period, immediately after the last Ice Age 8000 – 4000BC. The inhabitants of Scotland at the time comprised of mobile groups of hunter-gatherers who left little trace of their passing so that the archaeological evidence is formed mainly of stone tools of flaked flint. The River Dee runs from the mountains and glens of the Cairngorms to the coast at Aberdeen, ancient stone tools found along its length attest to 10,000 years of human activity.

Mesolithic Deeside aims to combine the study of known Mesolithic material with new material obtained from fieldwalking. The fieldwalking season is from January through to March and I would imagine many of you will have seen us out in the ploughed fields in the area at that time and may have wondered what we were up to. Well, we are looking for flint tools or signs of flint working in these fields. Flint is not naturally found locally so when we do find flint, we can be pretty sure it has been brought in by people many thousands of years ago. Once a flint is found we use a Global Positioning System (GPS) to quickly and accurately map the location of the flint, the flint is then bagged. Later we can plot the finds on a map to give us an overall picture of the lithic scatter in that area. The flints are then sent off to a lithic specialist for analysis. If there is a high density of flints, we then may go on to test pit, digging a series of pits in the area to see if we find any traces of the people who have gone before us. We are so grateful for the local farmers for supporting us in our mission.

Being part of this group for a couple of years now I have loved every minute of it. I have always had an interest in archaeology, and this was the perfect way to get started. I am learning all the time and the more I learn the more I want to learn. We are a very friendly group, all ages, both men and woman and I have made some lovely friends through being in the group. I get out in the fresh air and get some exercise too which is a bonus.

You can find out more by going to our website [www.mesolithicdeeside.org](http://www.mesolithicdeeside.org) or our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/groups/979549128814393/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/979549128814393/)

We are always looking for new volunteers so if you think this is something you would like to be involved in then you can contact archaeologist Ali Cameron, at [cameronarch@btinternet.com](mailto:cameronarch@btinternet.com) It would be great to see you!

For further information you can see what we do on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPiHRgICCeEIXkRJO9yawg>



Flint found on a dig



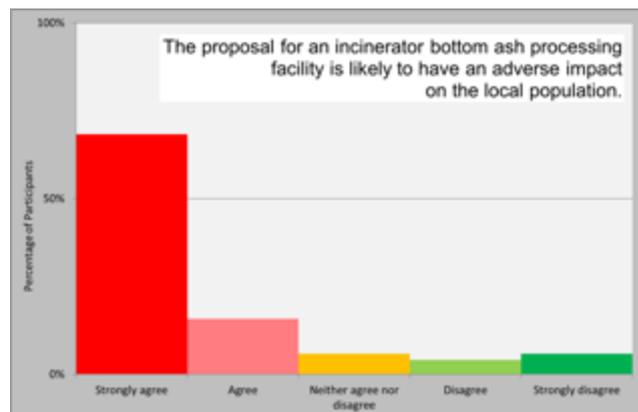
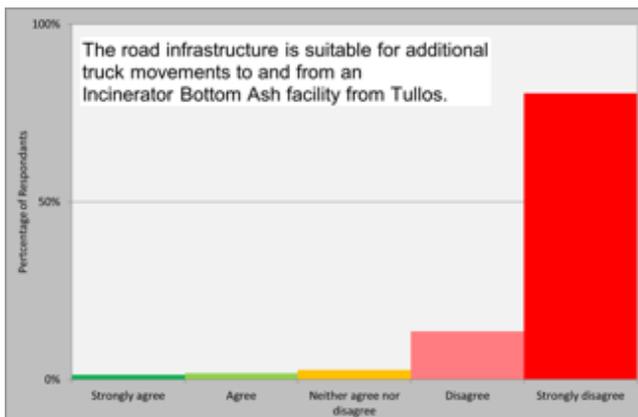
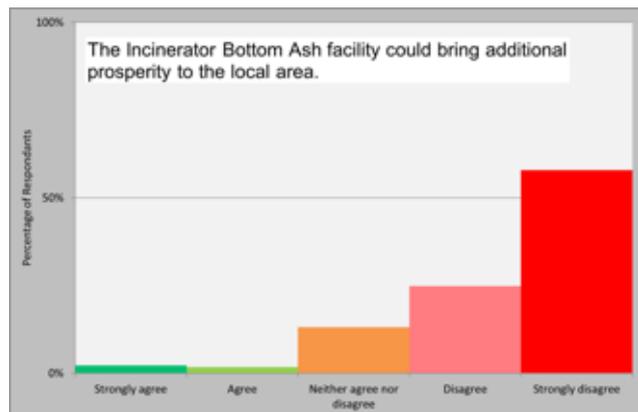
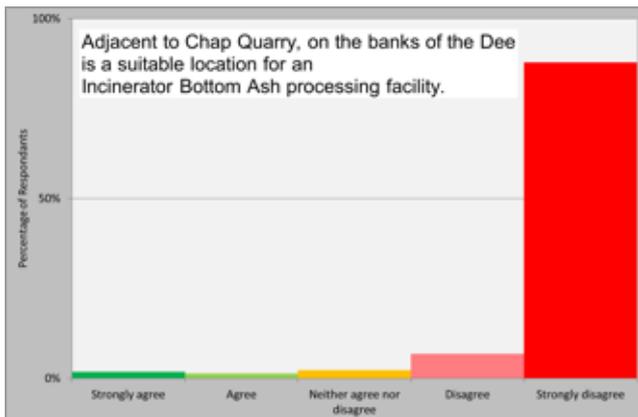
Field Walking

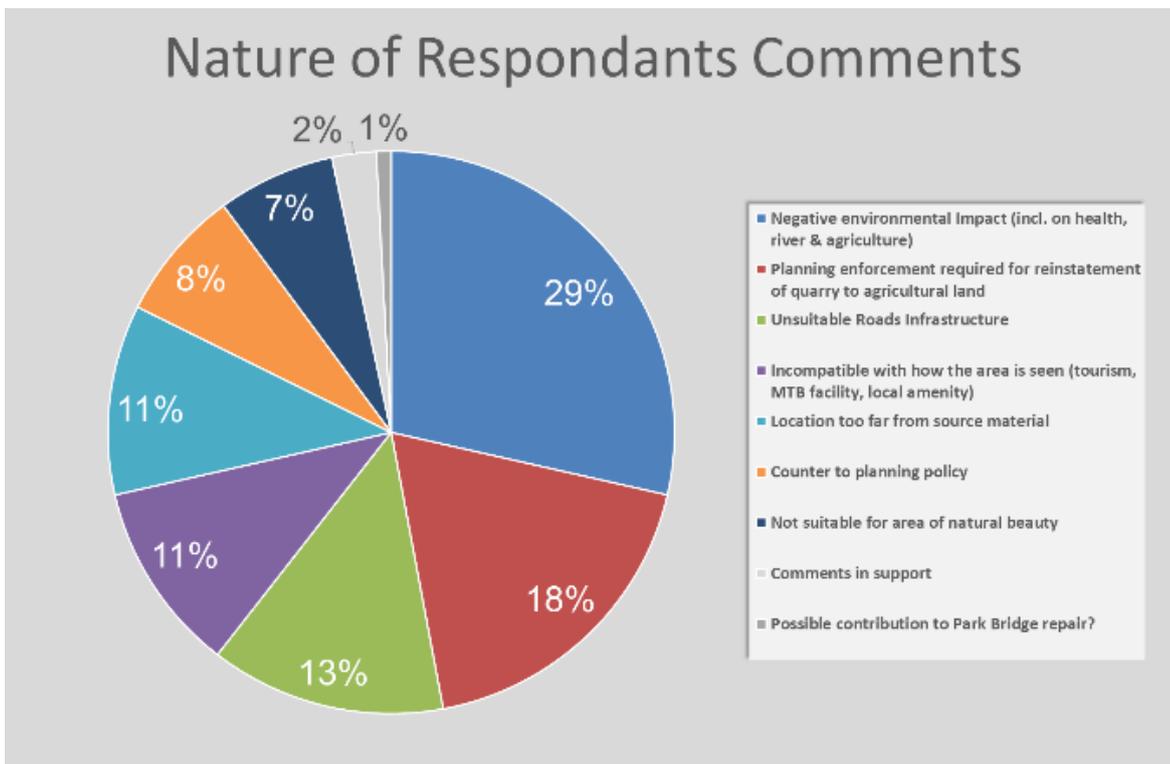
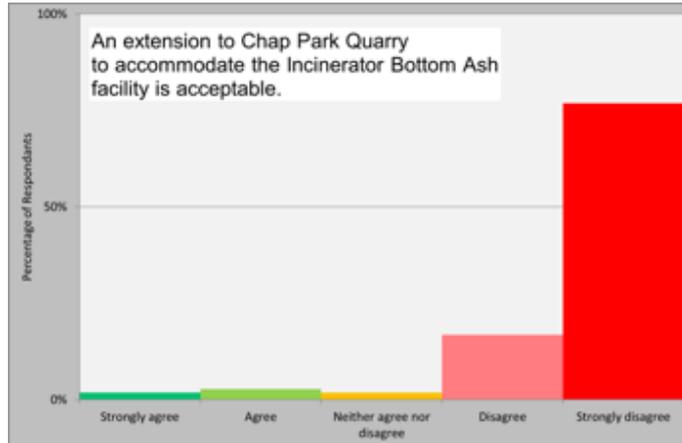
[Community Council Survey with respect to the Rock Solid Inc. POAN for IBA Facility in Deeside](#)

Thank you to everyone who took part in the Community Council (CDDCC) survey to determine local views on the proposal to site a toxic incinerator bottom ash processing facility next to Chap quarry (see Mike Greaves' article – Defiling Deeside).

In summary, the survey has demonstrated that the local community strongly objects to this development proposal. In addition, many are dissatisfied with the lack of progress on the reinstatement of the Park Quarry to agricultural land.

There were 221 responses to the survey overall of which 111 respondents also contributed comments. 24 respondents live outside the AB31 area, the remainder within. The block charts below show the responses to the 5 statements in the survey. The colours chosen for the bars follow a traffic light system, albeit a 5 colour traffic light. Green shows responses that favour the proposed development and pink/red those that do not. The amount of pink/red in the charts compared with the greens show just how strongly local opinion is against this development on all five statements. In this respect little more can be added by further analysis. However, some more insights can be gained from analysis of the comments section of the survey. The points raised in the individual comments have been broken out and categorised and shown in the pie-chart below, 119 in all. The percentages shown are the percentage of points made in each category compared with the total. The first point to notice is that 2 of the categories support the development (shown in greys) and 7 of the 9 categories are essentially reasons for objection (shown in colours). In terms of the total number of points made that amounts to 97% against the development and 3% in support. Points against the development include concerns for environmental impact, unsuitable road infrastructure, incompatibility with how the community, visitors and tourists see the area in terms of its amenity and future development. Many have expressed bewilderment at the idea of such a development in an area of natural beauty such as Deeside. The comments also revealed dissatisfaction that the Park Quarry has not yet been reinstated to agricultural land which the community feels is a 'promise' (planning conditions) now long overdue.





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## [Park Bridge Update](#)



A new community group, Park Bridge Action Group, has been formed to set out and deliver an alternative future vision for the Park Bridge and Quarry locality at the centre of the Durris and Drumoak communities.

The Park Bridge Action Group is a response to four major challenges which the community is facing, each of which could irreparably damage our community and environment:-

- The prospective permanent closure of the Park Bridge by Aberdeenshire Council, a key part of our infrastructure and a Category A Listed Asset in its own right;
- The extension of the planning permission for Park Quarry despite assurances that it would close after 30 years in 2016 and be re-instated to agricultural land;
- The repeated attempts by the Chap Construction Group to seek planning permission for a major housing development on the site - 1500 houses on two occasions and 900 houses most recently; and
- The new proposal by Rock Solid BV, through a UK subsidiary, to seek planning permission for an incinerator toxic bottom ash storage and processing facility at Park Quarry and adjacent to the River Dee.

Our original objective was to achieve the re-instatement of the Park Bridge, but it became clear that a wider range of objectives was called for: an alternative vision for the area. We call this initiative – “**Park Bridge & Kincluny Vision 2054**” - as we look out towards the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bridge.

Our objectives can be summarised as follows: -

- The re-instatement of the Park Bridge for use by vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians and the securing of 10 years planned maintenance programme;
- The development and promotion of the concept of the Park Bridge and Keith’s Tower as heritage assets in consultation with Historic Environment Scotland;
- The re-development of the quarry site as a community heritage centre – the **Park Bridge & Kincluny Heritage Centre** – in consultation with Scottish Natural Heritage, celebrating the Dee Valley Special Landscape Area and the River Dee Area of Special Conservation; and
- The promotion of the Park Bridge & Kincluny Heritage Centre as a gateway to Royal Deeside and the Cairngorms National Park and drawing economic benefits to the wider community in accordance with Visit Scotland’s “Visitor Economy” strategy and vision; and
- The lateral promotion of other community ventures which provide other economic benefits to the community including Mains of Drum Garden Centre, the Deeside Railway Centre at Milton of Crathes, the proposed Gravitare North East Outdoor Adventure Park project, the proposed Bogenraith Equestrian Centre and the National Trust for Scotland castles at Drum and Crathes.

Park Bridge Action Group will consider and implement a range of options of policy and legal solutions including: -

- The development of a Local Place Plan for the area which meets the approval of the community to steer the Aberdeenshire local development plan 2021;
- The co-ordination of effective professional opposition to planning permission applications which are inconsistent with the community's local place plan and the local authority's development plan;
- The registration of community interests which give community interest companies the right to buy land and buildings;
- The development of feasibility studies and business plans for the key elements of the vision;
- The co-ordination of fund-raising efforts; and
- The implementation of community asset transfers.

Park Bridge Action Group has been formed by a dedicated group of volunteers combining legal, financial, engineering and project management expertise to deliver our vision statement. Membership is open to anyone living in or with links to the community and along with the community council (CDDCC) we will be consulting with you on how you would like this plan taken forward. We would like a wide range of members to join in order to get broad representation across the community. Please let us have your views on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SaveParkBridge/> or to become a member contact Anne Shearer on [skylarksolutions@btinternet.com](mailto:skylarksolutions@btinternet.com).

Anne Shearer

=====



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Tales from the Riverbank by Robert Harper

As with so many things throughout the country and indeed very much the World, on hold, grieving and sadness, social distancing, other health problems, many lost jobs, perhaps a second wave of the virus? Difficult and hard times for so many ahead, uncertain future, the fishing industry will not escape, it is very much part of the tourist economy, hotels and jobs will also suffer.

The 2020 fishing season started February 1<sup>st</sup> and went into lockdown with the rest of the country in March. It had been a difficult start to the season with just under 100 spring salmon caught till lockdown, very poor, many thought last, this and next season would be hard going due to the loss of the young fish during Storm Frank at the end of December 2015. Fishing has been allowed to resume with restrictions from 29<sup>th</sup> May. With little to report on the fishing front, I turn attention to dogs, sorry not the dogs but to dog owners, many, and I witness to the larger majority of dog owners that walk their dogs along the river banks, who don't and won't abide to the Countryside Access Code. Many owners leave their dogs to roam and poo where ever, giving a cry come back doggie when anyone else approaches, some do come back, not surprisingly in the dogs own good time and when you ask if owner has poo bags, "oh yes there in my pocket" exactly where they stay, day light or dog poo never to be seen, if in deed there at all. Before continuing with what we on the riverbank have to put up with, I do thank the responsible dog owners that walk regular, dogs under control, close by as they should be, on a lead or extendable lead and poo bags available and prepared to use and take away to dispose of properly. Thank you.

Part of my river bank duties are to cut roadsides and fishing pool areas, car turning areas and around huts, I do this by using a strimmer, several times a year I hit unseen dog poo, visor hit and worse poo below visor, overalls splattered, over the years I have tasted and smelt, Labrador, spaniel and any kind of terrier poo you care to mention. A funny paragraph I'm sure, not for me or my underghillie, what about the children and parents that have their walks, no dogs, but plenty of poo on shoes, and anglers' waders and wellington boots, cleaning this is no fun. Dog poo bags left on posts, hanging to barbed wire or branches, the dogs didn't leave them there.

Dogs out of control, owners totally at fault, looking at their phones, dog says thankyou I'm off, jumping up onto anglers, coming into river where fishing taking place or to be. We have areas where dogs can be put to swim happily without disturbing or harming our business or indeed the fish, we show dog owners these areas, but? What else, chasing wildlife, roe deer, rabbits, and mother ducks in desperate flight to draw dogs away from scattering ducklings, get dogs on leads. Several years ago, we used to have up to six pairs of oystercatcher's nests on the banks, if the eggs weren't taken by hoodie crows and occasionally flooded, the young certainly were killed by dogs, owners' fault. We still get an occasional bird nesting on banks, but they never succeed, why???

The Countryside Access Code is for everyone who wishes to enjoy the outdoors, everyone has to play their part.

Difficult times, for so many, loved ones lost, heart breaking times.

We are so fortunate in this area, and as we slowly come out of lockdown may we have a greater consideration for our neighbour.

Robert Harper.

=====

Drumoak Durris Crathes Bowling Club I hope everyone is looking forward



positively following the most dismal time in recent history. Whilst we have a long way to go we are beginning to emerge from this crippling crisis. Fingers need to be crossed, I fear!

During the lockdown, work continued on the Green to keep it in shape for a return to bowling. The club is fortunate to have a number of volunteers who put in a lot of time and effort to keep our club and its

surroundings in very good order. Beware any dandelions who dare enter here!

The bowling club resumed play on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May, albeit with severe restrictions on the number of players allowed on the Green, singles and pairs played on alternate rinks to conform with social distancing. Our younger players were raring to get going and many of our older players, over 70's, over 80's and one of 93 could hardly wait to get back on the Green. It just goes to show how bowling keeps us all young at heart, so do come along and join us. A warm welcome awaits you.

Our Bar and kitchen facilities will remain closed meantime. Please keep a watch on Social Media for any changes to this restriction. We will be guided by the authorities with regard to lifting the ban on the use of our Bar and other facilities which will provide us with a return to some sort of normality. We will then look forward to welcoming our Social Members back to the club and hopefully add a few more.

In the meantime, I hope everyone avoids the scourge that this virus brings and stays healthy.

Dave Stuart

Club President

=====

DURRIS WI

At our March meeting we all thoroughly enjoyed an informative, entertaining and inspirational talk by the Rev James Falconer, project coordinator of the rooftop garden project at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. He told us about the patient's rooftop garden and the proposed staff garden at ARI. We were all moved by his presentation and learned how being outdoors and amongst nature can improve well-being and help heal in so many different ways.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the rest of our meetings this season were cancelled indefinitely.

We have although managed to have our very first Zoom committee meeting. Members have been keeping in touch by communicating through emails and our own Facebook page. Many are trying out some new skills and picking up old projects to complete. Some have been making scrub bags for NHS staff and paired hearts for patients and relatives in the local hospitals. Others have been baking, cooking and sharing and trying out each other's favourite recipes. Some members have been busy in their gardens, enjoying the beautiful weather outdoors and spending time in the lambing shed. Everyone seems to be busy and looking after each other in these challenging times.

On a sad note, one of our long-standing members, Aileen Melvin passed away this month. Aileen had been part of Durris WI for over 60 years. She was a much loved and very talented member of our group and will be missed by us all very much.

# Gardening & Odd Jobs



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5m <sup>3</sup>	100m <sup>2</sup>	50m <sup>2</sup>	33m <sup>2</sup>
10m <sup>3</sup>	200m <sup>2</sup>	100m <sup>2</sup>	67m <sup>2</sup>
20m <sup>3</sup>	400m <sup>2</sup>	200m <sup>2</sup>	133m <sup>2</sup>
30m <sup>3</sup>	600m <sup>2</sup>	300m <sup>2</sup>	200m <sup>2</sup>
40m <sup>3</sup>	800m <sup>2</sup>	400m <sup>2</sup>	266m <sup>2</sup>
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This Newsletter has been published quarterly for over 20 years. Firstly as a community service by Drumoak-Durris Church of Scotland, and more recently by the Drumoak & Durris Community Group. It is produced and delivered FREE by volunteers to all households in Drumoak and Durris.

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#### Useful information

Drumoak-Durris Church [drumoakdurrischurch.org](http://drumoakdurrischurch.org)  
Drumoak & Durris Community Group [drumoakdurriscg.org](http://drumoakdurriscg.org)  
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