



Auchenblae Messenger

Founded in 1999 by Donald B. Rennie

Spring Edition

VOLUME 27 ISSUE 1

MARCH 2025

From The Editors

Welcome to the Spring Edition (version 2) of the Auchenblae Messenger. Well Spring is upon us and despite the changeable weather the garden seems to be slowly waking up.

In this edition as well as our regular contributors we are pleased to welcome a new contribution from Auchenblae PreSchool.

In this edition the Youth Club and Friendship Club give us an update on activities and we welcome seasonal updates from the Bowling and Golf Clubs. Peter Morris, our resident poet, pens a few lines to welcome in the spring and Fiona Gammie gives us an update of activities on Westerton Farm.

Our local politicians talk about their work in the area. The Messenger is a non-political but when our local politicians are discussing local issues political viewpoints are inevitable. These views on topics such as pylons, farming and energy policy are welcome as they help us all to understand the various complex issues facing members of our community. And as we are non-political alternative views are also welcomed.

In the last Messenger we mentioned that it would be good if a local gardener would give us an insight into the various activities as we move through the year. Well unfortunately no one stepped forward so we have delved into the world of Artificial Intelligence, AI. Over the last year or so AI has made tremendous strides and there are a number of free systems available on the internet. We use it all the time and find it incredibly useful. You can now ask AI to produce an article, answer an email, write an essay or produce a picture, the uses seem almost endless. For an experiment we asked the following "*The Auchenblae Messenger is a quarterly newsletter for the village of Auchenblae in Aberdeenshire. Write an article for the spring edition on gardening*".

You can judge for yourself. Is our new gardening correspondent worth keeping on?

There's a lot of controversy around the use of AI and it is a tremendous tool but can it out think humans? Interestingly in the AI gardening article it doesn't mention the "No dig" method highlighted in Fiona's article. Once you ask it what "No dig" means it tells you very concisely, which

The Messenger— e-Newsletter

Due to costs & 'staying green' The Messenger continues to be published online at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/auchenblaenoticeboard>

The very few printed copies that have been requested are provided by the very kind assistance of **Hazel Horigan, Lynn Brodie** and **Alastair Macphie**.
All the best, Kevin (Publisher)

demonstrates the answers given are only as good as the question posed.

We will hear a lot about AI in the future and perhaps more than just gardening tips for the village.

On the home front our couple of hens are back laying but the bantams are still waiting for the warm weather. The problem with bantams is they make fantastic mothers so they lay a dozen or so eggs and then go broody and want to sit them out. The duck lays the odd egg and we are hoping she starts laying regularly again as the weather warms up.

Thanks as usual to our new and continued contributors and to Kevin for publishing, Jenny for distribution and Macphies for printing

Best wishes, Keith & Chris



PUB QUIZ & DISCO!

26TH APRIL

7PM - MIDNIGHT | DISCO FROM 10PM

AUCHENBLAE VILLAGE HALL

Teams of 4-6 £6PP

PREBOOK QUIZ TICKETS AT: auchenblaepca@gmail.com

Disco-only entry £3 on the door from 10pm

STRICTLY 18+ | LICENSED BAR | CASH ONLY

CHALLENGE 25 IN OPERATION

Hosted by Auchenblae Parent Council, raising funds for school activities & supplies

Please find the below contribution from Andrew Bowie MP for your consideration.

It has been a busy start to 2025! I have received a huge level of correspondence on the issue of energy infrastructure. This is an issue that isn't going away and that so many of you rightly feel strongly about. As you know I am extremely concerned about the sheer scale of energy infrastructure hitting our part of the country. With pylons, substations, battery storage, wind farms and solar farms, the impact is vast.



The stated purpose of the energy transition is to protect our environment, not concrete over it. The Mearns and Deeside should not bear the brunt of this in the way it is being expected to. I have had many meetings with local residents, business owners and action groups where concerns have been made clear. I have met with SSE and others to push home these points, particularly on offshoring and undergrounding. I will continue to speak up in Parliament about the importance of working with local communities, not against them, and funding agreeable solutions. If we are putting in infrastructure that will last for generations, we have a moral responsibility to do it right.

I have also been dismayed by the current government's approach to farmers. They are the backbone of rural communities like ours and do a huge service to the country, providing homegrown food at a fair price. The capital costs are high, and the returns are low, which makes an inheritance tax of this sort immensely damaging to family farms and our future food security. We need to encourage more young people into the industry, which has already been struggling with increasing costs and vanishing margins. I will continue to work with local stakeholders to raise concerns, including on our declining cattle numbers and the Fruit and Vegetable Aid Scheme.



Another important industry for our area, the North Sea oil and gas industry, is at a crossroads — and the decisions being made by the Labour government in Westminster are pushing it towards an accelerated decline. This isn't just about energy policy; it's about jobs, economic stability and the future of our communities in the North East of Scotland. In March, we saw yet another betrayal of our workforce. Labour's announcement that the Energy Profits Levy will remain in place until 2030 (which means a total tax rate of 78%) is disastrous for the sector. Their refusal to issue new North Sea drilling licenses only worsens the uncertainty. This isn't a "managed transition" — it is a deliberate, reckless dismantling of an industry that has powered Britain for decades. And as a result, investment is drying up, projects are being shelved and skilled workers are leaving.

These decisions will cost the UK economy £12 billion in lost tax revenue and another £12 billion in lost capital investment — throwing away money that could be used to fund a better path to net zero ambitions. Worse still, shutting down our own domestic production doesn't reduce emissions — it outsources them to foreign suppliers, increasing reliance on imported liquefied natural gas (LNG), which has a far higher carbon cost. We are already too reliant on imports (which make up over 40% of our energy mix), and while demand for hydrocarbons exists to heat our homes and power our transport network, we should maximise domestic production and tax revenue.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact me on andrew.bowie.mp@parliament.uk (or 01330 705013) if there is ever anything I may be able to assist you with.

Andrew Bowie MP

Member of Parliament for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine
Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland | Acting Shadow Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero

Auchenblae Friendship Group



We have had a good start to 2025 in the Group and we haven't had to cancel any of our meetings due to adverse weather conditions!! We have had sing-a-longs, and have been introduced to the art of quilling thanks to one of our newer members, Michelle Forster. Sandra Cooles whisked us away to the Island of Domenica in the West Indies via a talk she gave to the Club in February. We enjoyed basking in the sunshine during this talk! In March we have had visits from two favourite entertainers of ours, Ray Milne and Phil Smith. We finish our Winter/early spring session on 26 March with our usual monthly Games morning.

As I type this short report, I am still putting the finishing touches to the Spring/Summer programme. The Group recommence their meetings on **16th April 2025** at the Auchenblae Church Hall at 10.00 a.m. with one of our members, George Wilson, presenting a Pub Sing-a-long session. We are also welcoming Adam talking about his amphibians and Michelle will be leading us in more crafting sessions. If any of you within the area wish a bit of company on a Wednesday morning during school term time then the door is always open to you. We do make a nominal charge of £3 per session to cover costs but this does include a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits, entertainment and friendship. Please do come and give us a try.

Karen Martin



Auchenblae Youth Club



🌟 Auchenblae Youth Club Update – March 2025 🌟

What a fantastic term it's been at Auchenblae Youth Club! We've had a busy and exciting few months, packed with new faces, fun activities, and great achievements. Here's a roundup of what's been happening and a sneak peek at what's coming next!

Growing Attendance and Engagement

Auchenblae Youth Club (AYC) has had an incredible couple of terms, with attendance soaring! We now have **67 young people registered** as members, and over the past 8 weeks, more than **50 individuals** have joined us – totalling an impressive **214 visits**. Our average weekly attendance is **30 members**, contributing to an amazing **428 hours** of personal, social, and educational development. That's a whole lot of learning, laughing, and connecting!

Incredible Volunteer Support

We're lucky to have a brilliant team of **10 volunteers** (all PVG registered) who make the club such a welcoming and fun place to be. Every week, between **8-10 volunteers** show up to support, and we're thrilled that some parent helpers have joined the team! Last term, our volunteers gave over **140 hours** of their time – we couldn't do it without them.


★ Club Highlights


Here are some standout moments from last term:


- ✅ **A Paid Youth Worker:** Ginette has brought so much energy and commitment to the club. Clare and Julie are especially relieved to have her on board to help with planning, supplies, and communication.
- ✅ **Virtual Quiz Night:** When bad weather hit, we didn't let it stop the fun! We switched to an online quiz on MS Teams with games on Kahoot – and it was a hit!
- ✅ **Saltire Awards:** Several AYC members earned recognition from the Scottish Government for their contribution to the club and the wider community.
- ✅ **Laurencekirk Christmas Parade:** AYC was thrilled to be selected as the chosen charity – and we received a generous donation from LCP!
- ✅ **New Faces:** We've welcomed new members from the wider area almost every week – the club just keeps growing!
- ✅ **Increased Youth Involvement:** Young people are playing a bigger role in planning and running the club – it's great to see!

December Fun

December was packed with festive cheer!

 **Pre-School Christmas Fayre:** We kicked off the holidays at the Church Hall and then strolled down to a cosy community fayre with stalls, hot chocolate, and biscuits.


 **Christmas Movie Night:** The last session of the term on 20th December was a relaxed movie night – perfect for winding down after a busy term.


 **Community Christmas Card Delivery:** On 23rd December, AYC members spread some festive spirit by delivering cards around the village – and even earned a donation for their efforts!




Highlights from Jan–March 2025

We've had some visitors and exciting activities on the go this term:


 **Tall Ships Talk** – Hollie visited and shared stories from the Tall Ships on **17th January**.


 **Heritage Society Talk** – Jenny Thomson gave a talk on Auchenblae's history and Dan from Cearngall promoted the digital project on **7th February**.

 **My Scotland Digital Project** – A full-day session on **8th February** to create digital content about Auchenblae. Check out our website at: <https://my.scot/auchenblae>

CHECK IT OUT!!!!


Upcoming Activities

 **Tenpin Dundee Trip** – We're heading to Dundee for bowling and fun on **21th March** – don't miss it!


 **Auchenblae's Got Talent** – AYC members have been working on their first community fundraising event!


New Resources

Thanks to generous donations from parents and members, AYC now has:

 **101 board games**


 **Jenga**

 **Stacking chair game**


 **Juggling balls**

Challenges & Solutions

Like any club, we've had a few bumps along the way:

 **Behaviour Issues:** A situation involving inappropriate mobile phone usage has highlighted

the need for a **Mobile Phone Charter** – and we created one for the club and KMYC.

 **Class4Kids:** We've sorted out our previous issues with attendance tracking – accuracy will be improved for future terms.

Volunteer Training

Ginette has completed her **Get Ready for Youth Work Training!** We now have **three trained volunteers** and there is an upcoming local training weekend with YouthScotland for the remaining volunteers at the end of April

Funding Success

💰 Funding Success

We've secured some amazing funding recently:

- ✅ **£1,513** from LCP's Christmas Parade donation
- ✅ **£50** for delivering Christmas cards
- ✅ **£300** from Community Dan for the digital project
- ✅ **4x £50** from Youth Scotland for young people's project ideas
- ✅ **£2,562** secured from Auchenblae Community Fund for the 'Out and About' programme – expect more fun trips soon!

🚀 **Application Pending:** We're on a reserve list for funding from the Young GameChangers Fund for 'The Blooming Together Project' – fingers crossed!



📄 New Ideas & Feedback

We've introduced a '**To Be Honest**' (TBH) Box where members and volunteers can share feedback and suggestions. Weekly member meetings now include discussions on the ideas raised – already leading to positive changes at the club.

📣 Shoutouts & Thank Yous

- 🌟 Thank you to our incredible volunteers, supportive parents, and of course, our brilliant young people – you make AYC the vibrant, welcoming place it is!
- 🌟 Special thanks to LCP, Auchenblae Community Association, and our generous funders – your support makes a real difference.

❤️ **See you at AYC – where friendships grow, ideas spark, and everyone belongs!**



West Mearns Parish Church



Dear Friends

Easter Services & Auchenblae Church Update

Easter is fast approaching, and this year we are delighted to be joining with the parishes of Aberluthnott and Laurencekirk for our Easter services. All are warmly invited to share in this significant time of worship:

- **Maundy Thursday Service** – 17th April at 7:00 pm (Fettercairn Church)
 - **Good Friday Service** – 18th April at 7:00 pm (Laurencekirk Church)
 - **Remembrance Service** – 19th April at 7:00 pm (Fettercairn Church)
- Easter Sunday Service with Communion** – 20th April at 9:30 am (Fettercairn Church)

Auchenblae Church – Your Input Needed

We continue to explore ways to keep Auchenblae Church open, considering how the space might best serve both the congregation and the wider community. To help us in this process, we would greatly appreciate your thoughts. A short survey follows, and your input will be invaluable in shaping our next steps.

A Special Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to **Jamie Hendry**, who faithfully winds the church tower clock each week. Your dedication is much appreciated!



Auchenblae Church of Scotland needs your help!

The people of Auchenblae Church of Scotland have been serving our wonderful community for many years, and want to continue doing so for many more years to come. But the way we work in this village will need to change in the coming years, as a new future will need to be found for the way the Church Buildings operate.



To help us do what we can to ensure the Church can continue to contribute to the good of our community, and to understand the best options for the buildings, we would love to hear from you through our small survey.

To complete our survey, please go to tinyurl.com/AuchenblaeSurvey or scan this QR Code.

If you would prefer to complete this manually, or require any survey support, please contact info@communitydan.co.uk



West Mearns Parish is a registered Charity SC016193 www.WestMearns.com or www.facebook.com/WestMearns
This survey is being conducted by the Kirk Session of West Mearns Parish
with support from Dan Rous of CommunityDan

Biodiversity

Aberdeenshire Council is now exploring different areas where we can see areas of biodiversity develop, and with budgets being stripped bare, it would be more for communities to maintain and bring these forwards.

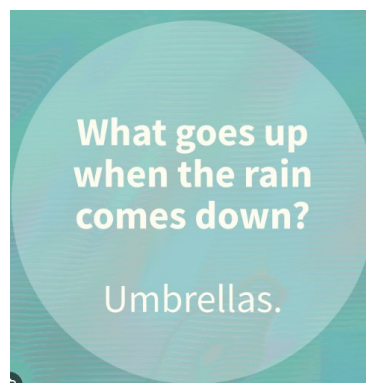
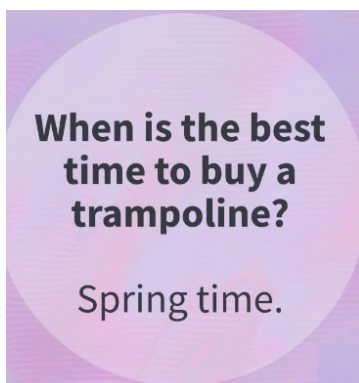
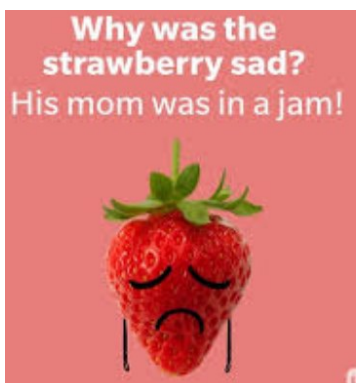
Some of these directives are coming from Scottish Government, but representing a rural Council area, we are surrounded by a combination of managed and wild landscape. Even areas where we wish to create a wild habitat, that needs to be managed so that it will not get overwhelmed by aggressive natural species like couch grass, docks, nettles, willow herb or ragwort which although colourful is poisonous to many animals.

Similarly on mammal loss, we need to re-examine species which have been protected in the past, and for good reason. Badgers were protected to encourage numbers to rise and to return a bit of balance to our countryside, however that needs to be monitored. Numbers are increasing at a rate where we are now seeing the carnage on our roads at night of adult badgers and cubs. The suffering to these iconic creatures to my mind is now unacceptable and numbers need to be reviewed. Also it is well known that hedgehogs are a delicacy for badgers where they eat them, leaving only the skins, so we cannot blame climate change or farmers on their decline when we have altered the balance of nature. Similarly these of us who live and work in the countryside see the effect on underground bumble bee nests as they again are a dug up and eaten by badgers.

All of us who are born and bred in the countryside are well aware of these balances, and especially our game keepers who understand the need to create space for all species. Lately my inbox has been filling up with complaints on seagulls, again a protected species that also needs reviewing.

So the lesson is if we alter the balance of nature, be careful what we wish for.!

Cllr George Carr
Conservative
Mearns Ward



Spring Gardening Tips for Auchenblae

GROK AI

The Auchenblae Messenger is a quarterly newsletter for the village of Auchenblae in Aberdeenshire. Write an article for the spring edition on gardening.

As Spring unfurls its green tendrils across Aberdeenshire, Auchenblae gardeners are itching to dig into the season. With the frost retreating and the days getting longer, now's the perfect time to breathe new life into our village plots. Whether you're tending a sprawling garden or a few pots by the doorstep, here are some tips to make your spring a blooming success.

First, let's talk soil. After winter's chill, your garden beds might be compacted and craving attention. Grab a fork and gently loosen the earth, mixing in some well-rotted compost or manure—local suppliers often have plenty to spare. This'll give your plants a nutrient-packed start. If you're growing in containers, refresh that tired old potting mix with a fresh batch to keep roots happy.

March and April are prime for sowing hardy annuals like marigolds, sweet peas, and calendula. These beauties thrive in our cool spring air and add a splash of colour by summer. Indoors, get a jump on tomatoes, peppers, and courgettes—pop them on a sunny windowsill until the last frost passes, likely mid-May for us. For those with a polytunnel or greenhouse, you're already ahead of the game—start your salads now and enjoy fresh greens by Easter.

Don't forget the veg patch! Early potatoes—think Rocket or Pentland Javelin—can go in once the soil warms to about 6°C (stick your finger in; if it doesn't feel icy, you're good). Carrots, parsnips, and broad beans are also tough enough to handle our temperamental spring weather. Sow them direct and watch them sprout as the days lengthen.

Pruning's on the agenda too. Tackle those overgrown roses and fruit bushes before they burst into growth—cut back to healthy buds to encourage vigorous blooms and berries. And while you're at it, give your tools a once-over. A sharp pair of secateurs makes all the difference, and a quick scrub keeps rust at bay.

Pests are waking up too, so keep an eye out. Slugs love our damp climate—beer traps or a ring of crushed eggshells around young plants can deter them without fuss. Aphids might also fancy your new shoots; a blast of soapy water usually sends them packing.

Finally, embrace the wild side. Leave a corner of your garden for nettles or wildflowers—our local bees and butterflies will thank you, and it's one less spot to weed! Speaking of community, if you've got spare seedlings or cuttings, why not share them at the next village gathering? Auchenblae's gardens thrive when we swap tips and treasures.

So, dust off your trowel, soak up that spring sun, and let's make this season a cracker. Happy gardening, Auchenblae!

And for those who don't fancy digging there is also "No dig" gardening as mentioned in the article from Fiona at Westerton.

What is No dig gardening? Answer thanks to Grok.

No-dig gardening is a method of growing plants without tilling or turning the soil. Instead of digging, gardeners build up layers of organic matter, such as compost, mulch, or manure, on top of the existing soil. This approach mimics natural soil-building processes and aims to preserve soil structure, encourage beneficial microorganisms, and reduce weed growth.

Here's how it typically works:

1. **Start with a base layer:** Lay down cardboard, newspaper, or another biodegradable material to smother weeds and grass.
2. **Add organic layers:** Pile on compost, straw, leaves, or other organic materials to create a nutrient-rich growing medium.
3. **Plant directly:** Sow seeds or plant seedlings into the top layer, allowing roots to grow down into the decomposing material.

Maintain: Keep adding mulch or compost over time to feed the soil and suppress weeds.

The benefits include less physical labour, improved soil health, better water retention, and a reduction in soil erosion. It's popular among organic gardeners and those looking for sustainable, low-maintenance gardening techniques. Charles Dowding (<https://www.charlesdowding.co.uk>) is a well-known advocate of this method, if you're curious to dig deeper—pun intended!

Auchenblae Golf Club

The new golf season will start on the 1st of April, with the winter tees being removed and the main tees returning to full use. A lot of winter maintenance work has been done to ensure good playing conditions during the summer months.



Gary Tough, our Greenkeeper, left for pastures new on the 11 of March. A big thank you to Gary for all his work over the past five years, and we wish him well in his new venture. Our new Greenkeeper, Niall Bruce, joined us on the 10th of March from Montrose Golf Links. Niall brings with him a wealth of experience, having worked at St Andrews and Carnoustie. We wish him well at Auchenblae.

Bob Cattanach
Golf Course Convener

SPRING STROLL

When spiders busy their lacy webs
along the dewy hedge,
And to the teasel bows the wind
blown sedge;
When the song of spring comes
skipping on the breeze,
And from long rest a warm Sun
the dapper daffodil has teased;
When Sun reclines from an open
sky,
'Tis then, along a narrow lane
to the woods stroll I-
To clamber o'er a rustic style,
And there to savour the peace
of the woodlands for a while.

© Peter Morriss
© Peter Morriss 27.05.2014

SPRING AWAKING

Where grey faced outcrops
a lone vigil keeps,
The clapping wind across
a lonely moor sweep's;
A landscape awakes
from winter's long
unforgiving icy grip,
Among gentle contours
new born lambs gaily
skip;
Throughout the Mearns
the wild broom sports
her vibrant colour,
Who's golden showers
extol spectacular.
At Pitnamoon now, the
lilac blooms,
Her floral sprays to a
spring day brightly illumine.





Mearns FM have been entertaining the local community since 1993. Run entirely by volunteers, broadcasting from the Portlethen studio.

Presenters at Mearns FM enjoy the privilege of showcasing their own personal styles, preferred genres of music and local interest stories. Anything from Popular classics, Country music, Indie, disco and heavy Rock. There are talk shows too; movies, politics, sport and local affairs. You'll find it all at Mearns FM.

Just visit www.mearnsfm.org.uk, for details of the weekly schedule.

We also launched our new schedule, with a number of new shows together with a host of new presenters. However, we are always looking for new on air presenters and background crew. If you fancy having a go and or helping out with general day to day running of Mearns FM, please get in touch on volunteers@mearnsfm.org.uk. Full training will be provided.

We are also very excited to announce that Mearns FM are reinstating their DAB coverage, which will cover the whole of Aberdeen. We hope to launch in early April this year. Mearns FM are kept very busy assisting at local events, providing sound systems, music and announcers for galas, fetes, discos' and shows. If you have an event that needs help in this regard, or you simply want your event advertising on the airwaves, just get in touch and we'd be pleased to assist – 01569 766406 or events@mearnsfm.org.uk

Auchenblae listeners are invited to tune in on the FM frequency 107.3 or listen online. We are pleased to say that our bookings for outdoor events are looking very healthy this year:

Inverbervie Burgh Hall art show - April 12th

Gourdon day disco – April 12th

Auchenblae Disco (tbc) - May 23rd

Gourdon party in park - May 31st

MFM fundraiser, Dickson Memorial Hall Laurencekirk – May 31st

Feein Market Stonehaven – June 7th

St Cyrus 10k fun run – June 22nd

Stonehaven half marathon (tbc) – July 6th

Stonehaven open air pool, Midnight Disco – July 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th, and August 6th

Chapleton 10k run – July 13th

Edzell Gala - August 2ND

Portlethen Gala - August 9th

Johnshaven fish festival – August 9th

Laurencekirk gala - August 16th

Stonehaven Harbour Festival – August 31st

Mearns FM is a registered charity and like most charities it cost us money to stay on air. Unlike a lot of the bigger charities all of our presenters and background staff are volunteers. All revenue is spent on keeping MFM on air.

As a community radio station we rely on our public events for some of the funds but, we also rely on advertising revenue to boost the coffers.

Our advertising rates are by far the cheapest of any radio station in Scotland. However, there will be a small increase in April this year, so now is the time to contact us. I think it is worth mentioning that the price quoted includes the production of your advertisement.

For more information please contact MFM on: sales@mearnsfm.org.uk

Or visit our website: www.mearns.org.uk and click on advertising.

Paul Hayworth (Vice Chairman MFM)

TESS WHITE MSP

My Annual Report 2024/25 will have dropped through your letterboxes by now, and it is my honour as a North East MSP to be a voice for local residents in the Scottish Parliament and to share with you some of the local issues I have been responding to.

Communities across Angus and Aberdeenshire have been blindsided by plans to industrialise our countryside with monster pylons and huge substations. For the past two years, constituent correspondence on new energy infrastructure in the North East has flooded my inbox. No other issue—not a single issue—has come close. I have attended town hall meetings on the plans, met with campaign groups, including Angus Pylon Action Group and Save our Mearns, visited constituents and heard firsthand the impact this is having on their homes, health and livelihoods. I believe this is the wrong kit in the wrong place and I will do everything I can to oppose the industrialisation of our beautiful land.

From having a career in the Energy sector, safety is always at the heart of everything I do. Both physical and psychological safety. In my role as Shadow Minister for Equalities I will continue to fight for the legal requirement for single sex services in our public buildings



such as schools, hospitals and leisure centres, to be upheld. Inclusion must not come at the expense of the safety, dignity and privacy of women and girls.

During my last meeting with Councillor George Carr and Councillor Tracey Smith at the Clatterin' Brig we discussed a wide range of local issues such as primary and secondary healthcare, the Invercarron Resource Centre, the Fordoun and Laurencekirk Junctions and council funding shortfalls. On local issues your local councillors are always there to help.

It seems like such a long time ago now but my Christmas card design for last year was a real community effort. Mearns and Coastal Healthy Living Network was the chosen local charity, and they submitted photos from their many groups and activities across the Shire. Pupils at Glenbervie Primary School then voted for their favourite image and the winning design appeared on my Christmas card sent to homes and businesses across the North East. I was delighted to attend a special assembly at Glenbervie Primary School and hand deliver their winning Christmas card design.

Last month I joined the community café in Inverbervie as they hosted an afternoon of Tai Chi in the local Scouts Hall. After the pace of Holyrood, it was a wonderful way to balance both body and mind. Health matters, especially rural health, are still a major concern. Pressures on the NHS, Scottish Ambulance Service and Health and Social Care teams grow and with services stretched our hardworking rural GPs and staff need our support.

Recently I was invited to speak with pupils at Mearns Academy in Laurencekirk and Mackie Academy in Stonehaven. Their Modern Studies classes have been learning all about The Scottish Parliament and the



Tess White cont.—role of an MSP. The Q&A sessions at the end were especially interesting, and we might just have some future MSP's or maybe even a First Minister in our midst.

A real highlight of being an MSP is getting to bring forward cross-party parliamentary motions recognising success or raising awareness for local groups, businesses or individuals across our community. It was a delight to submit a motion for Poppies Pre-school Nursery in Laurencekirk as they were nominated for Nursery of the Year at the Nursery World Awards 2024, and the only nursery from Scotland to be selected. Poppies were recognised for demonstrating excellent practices in every aspect of care.

If there are any issues you feel I may be able to assist you with, you can contact my office. My team and I would be happy to help where we can. If you need advice and support, please feel free to contact me at Tess.White.MSP@parliament.scot

Auchenblae & Dist. Heritage Soc.



In **February** members of the Auchenblae Heritage Society enjoyed a very interesting and informative talk from Neil Warnock who spoke about the Montrose Air Museum and it will be "Chocks Away" for the members as we are going to the Museum for our Members outing in June.

Turning to our next meeting which will be held on **Monday 7 April 2025** Dr Fiona-Jane Brown from Aberdeen will give a talk about Smuggling along the Mearns Coast. The Mearns Coast has been designated as a Site of Special Interest. The talk will begin at 7.30 p.m. at the Auchenblae Church Hall. There is a nominal charge for visitors of £3 to cover our costs. We look forward to welcoming members and visitors to this meeting.

This is the **Society's 25th anniversary year** and we are holding a **Cheese and Wine Evening** in the Auchenblae Village Hall on **Saturday 10th May at 7.30 p.m.** Tickets are **£5.00 each**. We are also hosting a Gin making/testing demonstration from the Dundee Gin Company. We will also be paying tribute to the 80th anniversary to V E Day with background music and artefacts from that era. Please feel free to come along in 1940s costumes. There will be a raffle. Tickets will be on sale at the next Meeting in April but we feel that in the present economic climate a ticket price of £5.00 is very reasonable indeed. The price includes your first glass of wine! The Committee are still finalising arrangements and we will keep you posted on the Community Facebook page.

As you can see its all go for the Society. The present committee members are already making plans for 2025/2026 season but we welcome any suggestions for local speakers (and suitable topics), and interesting places we could visit.





Auchenblae Preschool Group is a setting in the heart of Auchenblae, providing education, learning and childcare for children from 2 – 5 years old.

What we stand for...

A – Aims - to keep every child safe & nurtured by providing an inclusive, home from home environment.

To deliver individual care by understanding the holistic development of the child.

To provide quality experiences indoors and outdoors, taking the lead from the child's play.

P – Promote – outdoor learning, risk taking, social skills, curiosity, self-exploration and the rights of the child.

To promote healthy eating by providing children healthy food in relaxed eating moments.

S – Support – our professional, passionate staff, strive to develop their knowledge and understanding.

Building positive relationships with families, children and the community.

Ensuring the environment is rich and stimulating.

G – Grow – encouraging our children to be independent, resilient, empathic and have an understanding of the world around them.

Building on the skills they will need for life and thrive.

Where....

Auchenblae Village Hall and Old Curling Rink



When....

Monday – Friday

2 year olds – 9am-1pm

3-5 year olds 9am-3pm

(term time)

Includes snacks and hot lunch, all dietary preferences and allergies are catered for.

How to get in touch...

If you would like to find out more about the setting please email the Manager Amy on:

apsgadmissions@gmail.com

Spaces available for August 2025

From Councillor George Carr

Dear All

For your information.

Kind regards

George (Carr)

From: CommunityDan <info@communitydan.co.uk>

Sent: 22 March 2025 12:36

To: Cllr George W. Carr <george.carr@aberdeenshire.gov.uk>

Subject: Laurencekirk Parish Church - engagement

Hi George

It was good to chat with you this morning at the Parish Church coffee morning in Laurencekirk's Dickson Hall. Thank you for your time.

As mentioned, I'm currently supporting the churches across the Mearns in Fettercairn, Auchenblae, Glenbervie, Luthermuir, Marykirk and Laurencekirk with their development needs. This is including community engagement processes through varying means to help reconnect churches and communities. Although driven by faith, this is not necessarily about that, but is a way to remind people that the church is there for more than just Sunday worship or life's events. I'm doing this with communities across Scotland and in some cases, helping with developments of facilities and programmes to provide what the community are needed, and in others, facilitating a discussion with a community group who may wish to develop their own things from within the premises.

At present, I have survey's running in Laurencekirk, Auchenblae and Fettercairn. We did Luthermuir at the end of last year along with Fettercairn, but have extended the Fettercairn research for various reasons. I've taken the liberty of putting the links to the survey's below if you ever come across any reason why it might be appropriate to pass these on.

<https://tinyurl.com/LaurencekirkSurvey>

<https://tinyurl.com/AuchenblaeSurvey>

<https://tinyurl.com/FettercairnSurvey>

As we discussed, I'm not looking for anything from the council - certainly not money! But help with visibility and any engagement opportunities would be beneficial if appropriate. I'm not sure where things will end up with Laurencekirk at this point, but with Luthermuir and Auchenblae a little further advanced, there could be exciting development plans there to engage, support, and benefit the local communities. We may need to pick your brains at some point on these!

I won't take more of your time here, but if you wish to know any more, have more information, or need a further chat, please just let me know.

Thanks for your time in reading this.

Every blessing

Dan

DAN ROUS cont.....

Dan Rous

Church and Community Developer

- Community Development
- Faith and Ministry Development
- Church Building Development
- Broadcast Ministry
- and a bit more besides

www.CommunityDan.co.uk

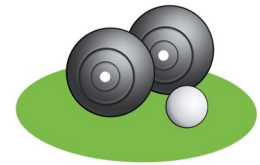
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Auchenblae Bowling Club



Not much to report on the bowling club I am afraid as we have had our winter layoff. But the good news is It's not long now until the start of the new bowling season. Hopefully the green will open in the Den on Tuesday April 22nd this year, weather permitting.

In the coming season the Club hopes to enter all the "Champion of Champions" competitions and the Rennie Tailyour and Hutchinson Trophies, where we will play other clubs from the Region. This season we hope to welcome more new Members to our Tuesday afternoon (1.30pm) and Friday evening (6.30 pm) sessions. Tuesday sessions usually include time for a cuppa, a cake and a natter and Fridays a raffle in aid of club funds.

Last season we had an influx of new members and we intend to hold more "Try Bowls" sessions to attract more new members this season.

The club has spare bowls available for potential new members who would like to give it a go at any of our Tuesday or Friday sessions.



Farming Update Fiona Gammie

Hello from a sunny Westerton

Its been such a wonderfully weird spell of weather with frosty mornings and sunny days – lovely to have those days stretching now. Whilst the clock change is always a welcome time in the farming calendar, I do feel slightly aggrieved it is happening on Mothering Sunday this year!

Westerton has been busy these last few weeks with our sowing underway – Laurette Spring Barley going in the ground, destined for the malting market. We have a wonderful relationship with Fettercairn Distillery as part of their 200 club where we supply barley to that distillery specifically – the maltings keep all the 200 club grain separate from their other piles so we know that our barley is being used in the Fettercairn whisky which is a great piece of provenance. We use a combination of a more traditional sowing method with a one pass drill, and a minimum tillage drill. The minimum tillage drill gives much less disruption to the soil ecosystem and in theory should help promote active soils, which results in healthier crops.

Rosie is busy sowing seeds for the veg patch, we have managed to clear our second tunnel so we will be introducing our no dig beds in here. The no dig science is quite fascinating, and in theory should mean a lot less weeding and more plantable space. We will have our usual array of colour and variety including cauliflower, cabbage, kale, spinach, salads, beetroot, spring onions, carrots, sprouts, tatties, flowers and strawberries.

We had a very sad start to the year when it comes to our Animals. Unfortunately two of our Alpacas became very poorly and had to be put to sleep, and just a few weeks ago we said a very sad goodbye to our beloved farm dog Luna. She was such a big hit at the farm with all our visitors and we are really missing her. Our other animals are all thriving, we have 3 goats, 9 chickens, 2 Alpacas and 2 deer. We are going to be adding to our farm with the addition of cattle and more chickens this year too. We have animal experience days available to book onto where you can come and help us look after them, and interact with all the animals. We are also offering animal therapy sessions for local charities working with venerable young people/adults so if this is of interest to you or your charity please drop us an email – Fiona@Westertonfarmers.co.uk

We are going to be focusing a lot on wellness at Westerton going forward, we have loads of fun plans to help introduce ways to make our lives a bit healthier, happier and more balanced. We will be hosting a wellness day in June which will have a bunch of local wellness businesses, practices and activities for people to explore and try out. We are going to help show how introducing small changes into day-to-day life can really enhance our overall wellbeing. Keep an eye on our socials for more information on this.

As part of this wellness focus we will be introducing salads to our menu this summer, using our own homegrown veg, along with good protein sources and lovely home-made dressings – we will be moving away from ultra processed items and onto whole foods packed with nutrition and flavour. We are working with a local nutrition specialist to help us really make the most of what we grow.

Shop local and eat fresh

Fiona

FARMING LIFE



Dates for your diary

TBC



The
BLAE
your communities social network



Check out the social community network online, advertise events, book the hall, promote your group and lots more: [www.http://theblae.org/](http://theblae.org/)



Met Office

FORECAST COURTESY OF THE MET OFFICE

Monday 31 Mar - Wednesday 9 Apr

At the turn of the month, settled weather is expected to cover much of the UK. Most places are expected to be dry with clear or sunny spells and light winds. Inland areas will see a general day on day warming next week, but cooler near coastal areas, with an additional risk of mist or sea fog affecting parts of the east coast. Some periods of unsettled weather could develop at times. If this happens any rain or showers are most likely to affect southern or western areas. However the main signal is for dry and fine weather across the country. Temperatures will likely be around or above normal and feeling warm during the day, and some cold nights are still possible when skies are clear.

Wednesday 9 Apr - Wednesday 23 Apr

Slow-moving (or blocked) weather patterns are most likely through the middle of April. High pressure located to the N of the UK will probably be dominant for much of the time, bringing a lot of fine and dry weather. If wetter, more unsettled weather develops, this is most likely to affect the south of the UK. Temperatures are likely to be close to or slightly above average overall, although some cold nights are possible.

Messenger Production Team—Chris & Keith Ridgway, Kevin Newstead, Eddie Cairns

The publisher for this issue was **Kevin Newstead**