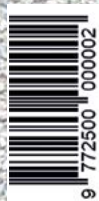


KYLE CHRONICLE

Independent quarterly news magazine for the communities of the Kyle of Sutherland

SUMMER 2025 ■ ISSUE NO 23 ■ ISSN: 2633-0946 ■ PRICE: £2



SAVING OUR CARE SERVICE

Bonar Bridge Bradbury Centre is one of the seven community health & wellbeing hubs in Sutherland and Dunbeath that have come together to demand proper NHS investment in their care services **PAGE 22**

Is the renewable developments planning system fit for purpose?

With nine new planning applications in and around our area for renewable projects in 2024, and five in 2025 to date, residents are finding it difficult to keep up with the pace and have meaningful participation in the planning process. **PAGES 8-12**



© Tain & District Museum

800 years of clan Ross in Ardgay

This spring Ardgay celebrated 50 years of becoming part of Sutherland, but its past has deep ties to the clan Ross. **PAGES 38-39**

What's on in the area this summer

We publish a selection of events, concerts, workshops, exhibitions and activities for all ages and tastes. **PAGE 42**





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COVER PHOTO © SILVIA MURAS. Bradbury Centre manager Lorraine Askew (right), and Lippy Ross have many years of experience in providing services for older people.

PHOTO OF THE SEASON



Wester Fearn

BY GREGOR LAING

Fearn Abbey, founded by Ferchar McTaggart, the Earl of Ross, was originally built in Kincardine at Wester Fearn, some time in the 1220s. The exact location was pointed as "above the high road, in the furthest west field of Ardcrone" (*Chronicle of the Ardcrone Children, 1893*). In 1238 "with consent of the abbot and brethren of the said place, for the more tranquillity, peace, and quietness thereof" transferred to its current location in the Easter Ross Peninsula, where it was called at first Nova Ferina, New Fearn, then simply Fearn. ■

The Kyle of Sutherland area in images throughout the year.
Send yours to news@kylechronicle.co.uk



FROM THE EDITOR

Stronger communities



by Silvia Muras, Editor

I'm proud to present the first of a series of articles under 'The Power Shift' banner, on how Scotland's green energy transition is reshaping land, communities, and power dynamics. Our focus is the renewable energy planning system, and how communities can feel sidelined by the number of applications, increasingly difficult to engage with. Our front page is for the dedicated staff at the Bradbury Centre at Bonar Bridge, who alongside another six social care providers around Sutherland and Dunbeath, are demanding proper NHS investment, as promised. Summer is a busy season with many events and things to do, browse our pages to make sure you don't miss out on what's on! We celebrate our children's efforts in sports, they have participated in many activities and competitions. We remember Morag Chalmers from Migdale, who passed away recently. She was instrumental in reinstating the Invercharron Highland Games in the 1980s. Jason Ubych from Tain Museum gives an impressive account of the history of Clan Ross in Ardgay, and we look forward to the future of Croick Church, now in the care of Historic Churches Scotland. ■

Hubs United warns that the loss of care services will have a devastating impact in our local area

OLD PLACENAMES



Gaelic, Norse, Brittonic? A look into the history and origins of place names in and around our area



Croick Church

© Gregor Laing

Croick, Croich and antlers

Croick in Strathcarron is widely accepted as deriving from the Gaelic phrase *A' Chròic*, which translates to 'a branching or side glen'. William Watson states that *gilleann na cròic* occurs in a Strathcarron song, so it may be a locative of *cròic*, 'an antler', possibly referring to a branch in the glen or river, which would suit the locality. In Glencassley, we find **Croich** across from Badin-tagairt on the western bank of the river Cassley. It was recorded by J. Mackay in 1897 OS, as *Croich a Crois* (with the meaning of 'cross' or 'gallows'). He said that "on a tump in the meadow the priest erected a cross, whence probably came the name." Some place names nearby, however, seem to corroborate the relationship with 'antler' rather than 'cross': **Cròic Uachdarach**, a flat level piece of pasture ground meaning 'upper antler', and **Allt na Cròice**, a large stream flowing North East into the River Cassley meaning 'burn of the antler'. ■ SM

KYLE CHRONICLE

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KYLE NEWS

A NEW CHAPTER FOR KYLE CHRONICLE MAGAZINE

AFTER five years of successful partnership of Carn Bren Publishing Ltd and Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust (KoSDT), *Kyle Chronicle* is now ready to “fly solo”! This means Carn Bren Publishing Ltd is in the process of transferring the ownership of the magazine to Kyle Chronicle Community Interest Company. We are extremely grateful to KoSDT for their support over the years.

The magazine remains the same and it will continue to be distributed for free. We also plan to relaunch our website, offering memberships, subscriptions, and opportunities to donate. If you haven't done so, please join our mailing list on <https://mailchi.mp/039f1e364c9c/kylechronicle> to receive updates.

In the next months, *Kyle Chronicle* will be applying to different funders to ensure we can continue bringing you the magazine. Your feedback will help them understand how much the magazine is enjoyed by the community. You can send comments of support via text (07444 299 136), email (editor@kylechronicle.co.uk), or by letter to: Kyle Chronicle Community Interest Company, Croft House, Dounie, Ardgay IV24 3BW.



At the moment, we have 40 volunteer distributors, but we could do with some more! If you are able to spare some time, once every three months, to deliver copies of the *Kyle Chronicle* to your neighbours, please get in touch.

THE POWER SHIFT
Scotland's green energy revolution is reshaping who holds the power. The Power Shift is a bold new collaborative

investigation uncovering how communities across the country are navigating the promise, pitfalls, and politics of renewables. The project is a collaboration between ten independently owned, community-based newspapers and magazines investigating how Scotland's green energy transition is reshaping land, communities, and power dynamics across the country.

The ten partners *Kyle Chronicle*, *Shetland News*, *Bylines Scotland*, *Glenkens Gazette*, *Forres Local*, *Am Paipear*, *The Bellman*, *Greater Govanhill*, *Fios* and *Lochside Press* are all members of the Scottish Beacon project. Over the next six months we will be working collaboratively on investigations about the positive and negative impacts of Scotland's next energy boom, and will be cross publishing our work under the Power Shift banner. We'll also be releasing an accompanying podcast. To know more about the project, and to tell us how the renewables industry expansion has impacted your community, please visit <https://www.scottishbeacon.com/regions/introducing-the-power-shift-a-collaborative-investigation-into-impact-of-scotlands-green-energy-boom/>. ■

Alongside Peter Newman, Catherine will be writing book reviews for Kyle Chronicle. We are delighted to announce this new collaboration with St Duthac Book & Arts Festival.

Meet our new contributor Catherine Williams

Hello everyone, I am delighted to be writing this edition's book review. Some of you may know me already as I worked for the mobile library service for 28 years, driving and staffing the mobile library



the St Duthac Book & Arts Festival Group, planning and producing an annual Festival in and around Tain. I am never far from books, and in the coming months myself and colleague Peter New-

man will take turns reviewing a book and hopefully introducing you to authors you have not yet tried. ■

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR TALKING NEWSPAPER

Kyle Chronicle and KoSDT have been exploring the possibility of setting up a “talking newspaper” in our area. Such a project will remove barriers for the visually impaired and print-disabled, enabling them to access local news. Volunteers would need to record themselves reading articles from the magazine, with the voice recordings later uploaded and accessible via an app. All equipment and technical assistance will be provided. If you are able to help, please get in touch! To know more about the talking newspaper service, please visit <https://tnf.org.uk/> ■



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KYLE NEWS / THE POWER SHIFT

IS THE CURRENT PLANNING SYSTEM FOR RENEWABLES SIDELINING COMMUNITIES?

The growing amount, complexity, increasing fast pace of the process, and the way decisions on applications are reached - with some given the green light despite widespread local opposition - are **some of the challenges faced by the local communities around the Kyle of Sutherland.**

“It seems [Scottish Ministers Alastair Allan and Gillian Martin] are completely detached from the reality of what is being faced here in the broadest terms, which at the last count is 171 turbines, 100 of them 200m or over, plus BESS installations, plus a 23-hectare solar array, [...] in a rural landscape, adjacent to a Significant Area of Conservation, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protected Area and wild land. It is hard not to feel completely detached from Government. The process of local democracy is not being listened to.” Tisi Dutton's opening remarks at a well-attended meeting held in Ardgay between Maree Todd and her constituents on 9th May mirror what many are now voicing in our communities.

The meeting, organised by No Ring of Steel - Kyle of Sutherland (NORoS), touched on a variety of subjects, including cumulative impact, standing charges, compulsory purchase orders, constraint payments, adherence to National Planning Framework 4 (NPF4) and the effects on mental health faced by members of the community “as they grapple with the relentless flow of wind farm applications, appeals and reappli-

cations”. While campaigners saw their proposal of a meeting with the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero & Energy, Gillian Martin, and the Minister for Climate Action, Alasdair Allan declined, as “it would be seen as prejudicial to the outcome of the planning process”, Maree Todd agreed to pursue the idea of a meeting with CC members.

A spokesperson for NORoS, said: “NORoS is disappointed that Government ministers are unwilling to engage with us over the pressure experienced by our local communities enduring a relentless barrage of new and ever larger wind, solar and BESS proposals. We believe that plans to build up to 171 turbines within an area just 10 miles by 2 miles are excessive, and that a planning system which allows this process to continue without checks or limits breaches the government's responsibility to its citizens and to the natural environment.

“If ministers will not engage with us, they could surely meet our elected community councillors from the Kyle of Sutherland. It is essential that, as part of the democratic process, communities are represented in the planning process and that politicians appreciate the scale of what is happening. The Minister for

Public Finance has stated that “The decision-making process hinges on the quality and validity of objections”. These criteria are not fully transparent at present and should be made explicit to assist local communities in maximising their representations.”

Speaking about these concerns, Maree Todd MSP Caithness, Sutherland & Ross, said: “I'm a strong supporter of clean, green energy and the benefits it can bring— not just for the climate, but for our communities and the economy too. That said, I've always been clear that developments need to happen in the right places, and local voices absolutely have to be heard.

“NPF4 is a policy that gained cross-party support, although it was brought forward by the Scottish Government, it gained support from Labour, the Greens and the Lib Dems. Only the Conservatives opposed it. Under NPF4, things like the impact on local communities, the environment, and the landscape all need to be properly taken into account when decisions are being made.”

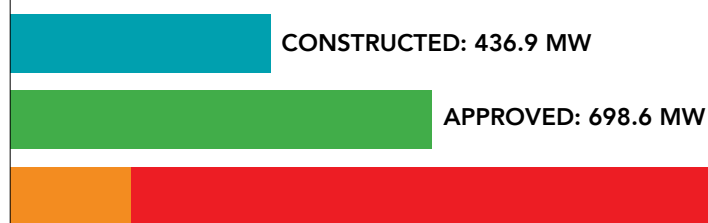
“Planning decisions are made through a quasi-judicial process, which means they must follow the law and

CONTINUES ON PAGE 10 ►►

NEW PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR WIND FARM DEVELOPMENTS IN AND

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Gordonbush Beinn Tharsuinn	Kilbraur	Achany Rosehall	Lairg	Beinn nan Oighrean		Kilbraur extension	Braemore	Glencassley Glenmorie Sallachy	Coire na Cloiche Tressady Dalnessie Creag Riabhach	Tressady Balnacail Gordonbush extension Creag Riabhach	Croick Caplich

INSTALLED CAPACITY BY STAGE OF PROJECT



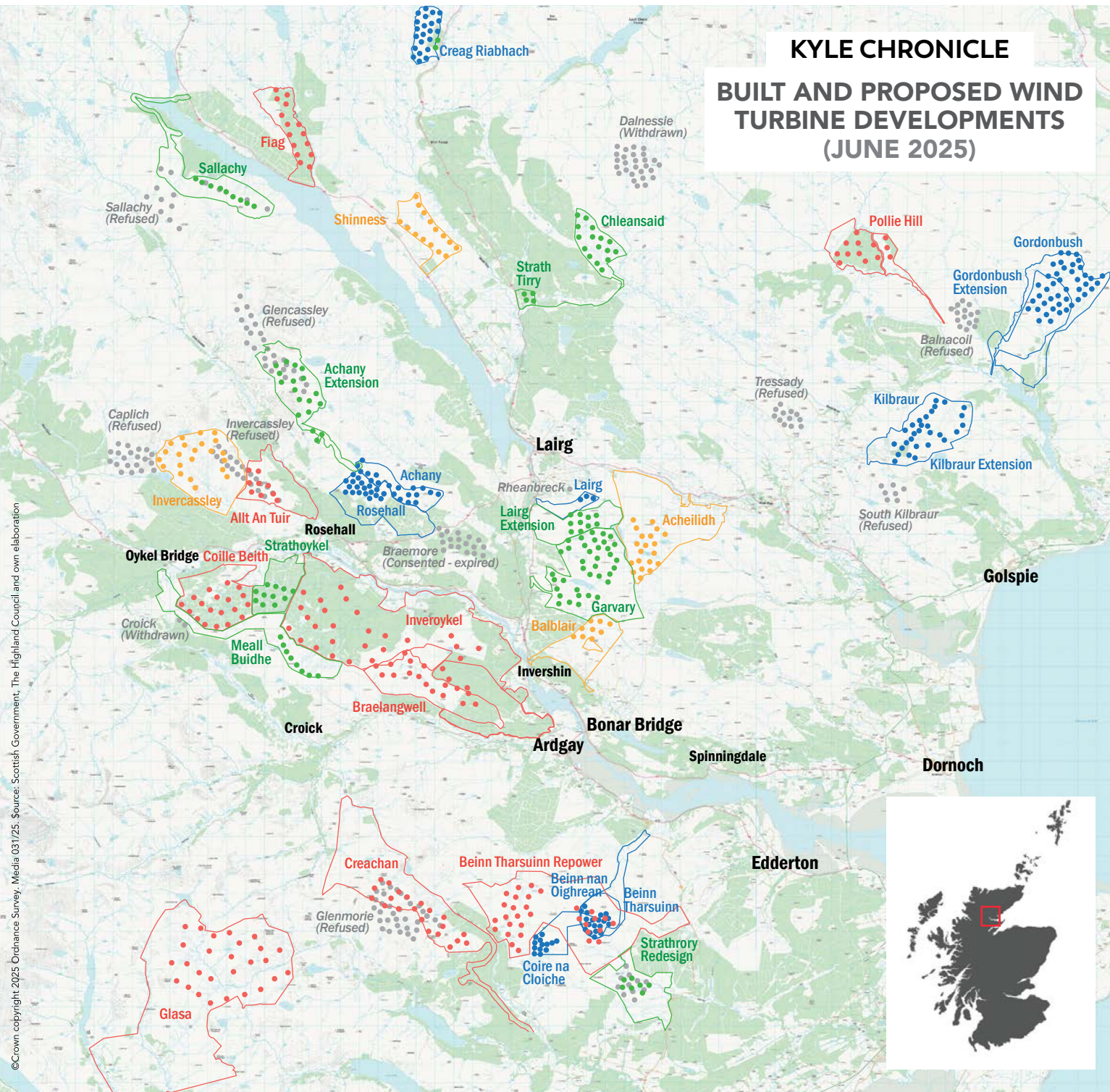
39.7
MW
Average capacity of constructed wind farms

148.9
MW
Average capacity of wind farms in scoping

IN PLANNING: 201.4 MW / SCOPING: 1,191.5 MW

KYLE CHRONICLE

BUILT AND PROPOSED WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENTS (JUNE 2025)



Site boundaries Wind turbine constructed Wind turbine approved Wind turbine in planning Wind turbine in scoping Refused / withdrawn

AROUND THE KYLE OF SUTHERLAND AREA - INCLUDING RESUBMISSIONS

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Caplich		Braelangwell	Meall Buidhe	Gordonbush extension	Lairg 2	Sallachy	Chleansaid	Creag Rhiabhach extension	Balblair	Pollie Hill
Gordonbush extension			Rhenabrech	Strathory	Strath Tirry	Strath Oykel	Strath Oykel		Shinness	Alit an Tuir
			South Kilbraur	South Kilbraur	Meall Buidhe	Garvary	Strathory Redesign		Acheilidh	Balblair
						Achany Extension	Lairg 3 (Acheilidh)		Invercassley	Beinn Tharsuinn Repower
							Shinness		Fiag (Coille Linne)	Glasa
							Allt an Tuir		Coillie Beith	
									Creachan	
									Inveroykel	
									Braelangwell	

LEGEND

A wind farm development may appear in this timeline more than once if a new application was submitted, e.g. with changes in the layout: location, number of turbines, height, etc.

Wind farm refused / withdrawn / expired / replaced with new application

Wind farm operational

Wind farm approved

Wind farm in planning

Wind farm in scoping / preapplication

KYLE NEWS / THE POWER SHIFT

► STARTS ON PAGE 8

the rules set out in planning legislation. MSPs can't intervene or influence the outcome of individual applications. When councillors or Scottish Ministers make a decision, they have to apply the law as it stands and assess each case within that legal framework.

"I know there are local concerns about how the policy is being applied, especially around things like cumulative impact, and I'm raising these directly with the Scottish Government and pushing for clearer guidance."

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Consent for electricity works including above ground electric lines and electricity generating stations with a capacity greater than 50MW is given by Scottish Ministers via the Energy Consents Unit under the Electricity Act 1989; if they don't meet these criteria, they are considered under the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997, and are usually a matter for the relevant planning authority, in our case The Highland Council. Where planning permission is required for development which is classed as 'national' or 'major' development, applicants are required to undertake formalised pre-application consultation with communities.

When making considerations, planners need to weigh what is "material" and relevant, defined as what should serve or be related to the purpose of planning, and what fairly and reasonably relates to the particular application. Planning framework (eg. NPF4), views of statutory and other consultees, and Scottish Government and UK policy are on the top of the list of material considerations, alongside others such as visual appearance, environmental impact, archaeology, nature conservation, listed buildings, nuisance (noise, smell, fumes...), adverse safety impact, compatibility with existing uses, economic benefits, and suitable access and transportation.

Items that are not considered material considerations include:

- private impacts on 3rd party (eg. devaluation of property);



View 745ft (225m) above Achintoul in Altass, with the proposed sites for several wind farm developments, from left to right: Inveroykel, Strathoykel, Collie Beith, Allt an Tuir and Invercassley. Of the 88 turbines projected in these sites, some have a height of about 225m.

- private interests (eg. loss of a view);
- moral or religious considerations;
- political considerations or ideological dislikes;
- cost of the development and financial means of the applicant;
- issues covered by other legislation (eg. health & safety, licensing).

Some of the NPF4 policies that are discussed surrounding renewable energy planning applications are:

Natural Places Policy 4: "a) development proposals which by virtue of type, location or scale will have an unacceptable impact on the natural environment will not be supported". However, it includes exceptions to approving projects affecting National Scenic Areas, Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Natural Nature Reserves "if the overall integrity of the areas will not be compromised, and if "it's outweighed by social, environmental or economical benefits of national importance."

NPF4 Policy 5 (Soils) aims to "protect carbon-rich soils, restore peatlands and minimise disturbance to soil from developments", and proposals on peatlands can only be supported if it's for "essential infrastructure and there is a specific locational need and no other suitable site" and for "the generation of electricity from renewable sources that optimises the contribution of the area to greenhouse gas emissions reductions targets". They are also subject to a detailed specific assessment.

Regarding Energy, Policy 11 states: "Development proposals for all forms of renewable, low-carbon and zero emissions technologies will be supported." There are, however, some exceptions: "Development proposals for wind farms in National Parks and National Scenic Areas will not be supported." And "Development proposals will only be supported where they maximise net economic impact, including local and community socio-economic benefits such as employment, associated business and supply chain opportunities." Project design and mitigation will demonstrate how a series of impacts are addressed (from visual impact, noise and shadow flicker, landscape, public access, impacts on aviation, defence, telecommunications, road traffic, historic environment, hydrology, water environment, flood risk, biodiversity - including impact on birds, trees, woods and forests, proposals for the decommissioning and site restoration, and cumulative impacts. "Where impacts are localised and/or appropriate design mitigation has been applied, they will generally be considered to be acceptable."

In practice, and as a result of these thorough assessments, most applications now have around 250 documents (which may mean several thousand pages), and that excludes comments from consultees and other documents, which can easily raise the number to 400 documents per application.

The volume, but also the complexity of the documents themselves, seem to be a barrier for community participation in the planning process. Residents are saying, for example, that “noise assessments just look like numbers in a table. Unless you can read and have an understanding of what they mean, it's just like a foreign language.”

Some councils are asking that anyone seeking planning permission must declare whether AI was used to help create any documents supporting their application. Although applicants are not required to declare their use of traditional AI technology such as grammar and spellcheck functions, North Norfolk Council Planning warns that some large language models (LLM) have “been trained to produce longer answers to demonstrate their intelligence”, and that this can produce “AI-driven bulking” which can “adversely impact the ability of decision makers to reach conclusions on planning” and will “likely have an adverse impact on the public’s ability to participate in the planning process”.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT & MAPS

There are now several online maps for local people to track energy developments: The Highland Council's wind turbine map (typically updated twice a year) on <https://www.highland.gov.uk/>

[info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/energy_projects/4](https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/energy_projects/4)

The Energy Projects map, pushed for by Councillor Helen Crawford, that went live on 30th April: https://www.highland.gov.uk/info/198/planning_-_long_term_and_area_policies/152/energy_projects

And finally, The Scottish Parliament Information Centre's map: <https://spice-spotlight.scot/2024/06/17/renewable-energy-map-of-scotland/>

COMMUNITY BENEFIT

The Scottish Government Guidance on good practice principles for community benefits from onshore renewable energy sets the expectation of £5,000 per installed megawatt per annum, index linked for the operational lifetime of the project. However, these are voluntary arrangements, not considered a material factor in determining whether or not to grant planning permission.

But this might change. The UK Government has published a working paper (closing date 16th July) in which it is considering mandating the provision of community benefit funds for low carbon energy infrastructure. This, they say, would create a level playing field across developers and communities, ensuring consistency and fairness in application.

The Kyle of Sutherland and sur-

rounding area have been attracting renewable energy generation developers since the early 2000s, with the first planning applications received in 2003. Over two decades later, there are 11 operating wind farms, 10 projects that have been granted planning permission, and another 13 wind farm development projects in planning or scoping.

Wind farms are not the only proposed renewable projects around our area. There is a large operating hydro scheme (Shin), plans for a Cromarty green hydrogen plant near Edderton, a recently approved biogas anaerobic digester plant near Tain, plans for a solar array in Allt an Tuir (Rosehall), and several energy storage systems (BESS), either in conjunction with wind farm developments, or on their own (West Saval, Lairg, Clynelish).

In addition, the area in one of the “nodes” of the SSEN transmission 400kW overhead line Path to 2030, which will see 60m pylons crossing the Kyle and the straths, and a new substation (Carnag) beside the existing one at Loch Buidhe. The project is to connect Spittal in Caithness with Beaully and Denny, with onshore developments feeding in along the way. ■ By Silvia Mura

This project was made possible with support from the Tenacious Journalism Awards.

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KYLE NEWS / THE POWER SHIFT

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE IMBALANCE OF WHO BENEFITS FROM THE GREEN ENERGY BOOM

A new report on the social value of the renewable energy boom in the Scottish Highlands and Islands has confirmed what most people living in the area had already suspected: there is a wide disparity in how host communities benefit from such projects. The report, written by Tom Wills and Erin Rizzato of Lerwick-based Equitable Energy Research, and commissioned by social change campaigners Platform London, makes the point that community and local authority-led renewable projects “consistently return substantially more value to local people than entirely commercial ventures”.

Wind power now produces enough electricity to power 10 million homes, yet many communities near these developments remain in fuel poverty.

The *Social value from renewables in the Highlands and Islands* report has already sparked renewed calls for a shift toward community and public ownership.

A number of case studies from the around the area reveal that community-owned projects are generating as much as 100 times more wealth for local people than privately-owned wind farms.

Yet, just 0.5 per cent of these projects – around 85 MW in capacity – are owned by local communities.



The Garth Wind Farm in Yell.

- The 4.5 MW Garth wind farm in Yell, owned by the North Yell Development Council (NYDC) and generating around £2 million annually for the small community of around 250 people, is showcased as one example of how a different ownership model can create wealth and transform lives for local people.

Other examples are:

- Tilley, the Tiree Community Wind Turbine, returns over 100 times more economic value to the community than the privately-owned Beinn An Tuirc 1-2 Wind Farm, despite being around one per cent of the size.

- Orkney Community Wind Farms, wholly-owned by Orkney Islands Council, are set to deliver £5.5 million in revenue each year, helping to support public services across the islands.

Public energy campaigner at Platform Flick Monk said: “There’s a staggering imbalance in the distribu-

tion of profits generated by renewables. It’s imperative that we join the dots and realise community ownership at scale. Local people deserve the lion’s share of wealth generated on our doorsteps and real control over our vital energy infrastructure.”

Community projects officer at Tiree Community Development Trust Emmie Martin added: “Tilley – our community-owned wind turbine – has been the cornerstone of our community for over 15 years. The wealth she generates goes straight back into the island through our Windfall Fund, which has awarded more than £1.3million to local projects. Tilley is proof that when renewables are community-owned, they create real power for local people — not just electricity, but money to fund vital services where they’re most needed.”

Co-director of the Future Economy Scotland think tank, Miriam Brett, said: “The Highlands and Islands are undergoing a rapid growth in renewable energy generation. But we risk replicating fault lines embedded in the fossil fuel era by funnelling disproportionate benefits to shareholders. Instead, we must reimagine the ownership and operations of renewables. This means embracing community stakes, community ownership and local authority-led renewable development so that we can share the wealth and democratise our energy industry.”

Equitable Energy Research is a consultancy founded last year to provide advice on renewables to communities with the aim to help negotiate a fair deal for all. Their report can be downloaded here: <https://platformlondon.org/app/uploads/2025/05/Social-Value-from-Renewables-EER-280525.pdf>

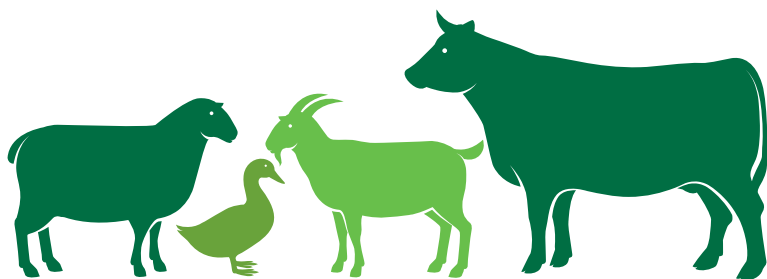
■ By Hans J Marter, *Shetland News* Editor

SCOTLAND'S COMMUNITY ENERGY GROWTH FUND

Community energy is also a major strategic plank of the UK's Great British Energy, a £8.3 billion publicly-owned body aimed at meeting clean power 2030 goals. Following its first major project to invest in rooftop solar and community energy, GB Energy allocated almost £5m to Scotland to build community and renewable energy and support the roll out new renewable infrastructure. Support for community-ownership of renewable energy projects is available in Scotland through CARES' Community Energy Growth Fund, which provides chosen projects with advice, toolkits and project guides, as well as helping them access capital to fund the projects. The fund aims to drive Scotland's goal of having 2GW of community or locally-owned renewable energy in play by 2030. ■

This project was made possible with support from the Tenacious Journalism Awards.

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KYLE NEWS

ARDGAY - 50 YEARS IN SUTHERLAND

It was a fantastic weekend of celebration, with community-led events for all ages.

A seed sown sometime ago certainly came into full bloom at the weekend of the 17th -18th May. The Ardgay & District Golden Jubilee, marking 50 years since becoming part of Sutherland (in a major local government re-organisation), gave a small team of local people the reason to organise a community-led event for all ages. To reflect on, and learn from, the past; and support each other in moving into the future with an interest in keeping the Highland spirit of looking out for each other alive.

Supported by Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust and Ardgay & District Community Council, both of which provided funding to cover the costs of the weekend event. Events began earlier in the week with a badminton competition and a schools' treasure hunt, colouring-in competition and badge-making. The celebration on Saturday began with the raising of the Sutherland flag by the Lord-Lieutenant, Major General Patrick Marri-



(Left) From left to right: Angus Watson DL, Christine Mackay DL and Lord-Lieutenant Patrick Marriott. (Right) One of the boards displaying local memories of the last 50 years.



ott, assisted by young Tyler Macleod. Deputy Lieutenant Angus Watson from Ross & Cromarty Lieutenancy was in attendance as was Christine Mackay, Deputy Lieutenant from Sutherland. Local piper Angus Smith played several well-known tunes to everyone's delight. Jason Ubych, curator of Tain and District Museum, gave an interesting report on the Ross Clan in the Ardgay area. With the sun shining brightly, everyone enjoyed looking round all the stalls and joining in the activities for

all ages. In the hall display boards full of interesting history from past years were enjoyed by all. The boards were created by Fiona Macdonald. The day continued into the evening with a ceilidh dance in Ardgay Public Hall, with music provided by Buttons and Bows. The weekend came to a close on Sunday afternoon with a Church Service held in Drovers Square conducted by Reverend Carol Anne Porter, followed by tea and cake in the Ardgay Public Hall.

■ By Christine Mackay

Kyle of Sutherland Gala Weekend 2025

The Gala Committee are busy making plans for this year's Gala weekend, taking place Thursday 14th to Monday 18th August! We are delighted to be welcoming back Ardross Pipe Band again this year for a Thursday evening parade, as well as attending our Queen's crowning!

We plan to have a few new events this year including a Family Colour run, a Dance and village treasure hunt as well

as the popular, regular events: paddleboarding, pet show, flower and veg show, fun run, duck race, pub quiz, kids cookery and more! Look out for the full programme coming out at the end of June!

It was wonderful to have Katie Smith as our Queen last year and we have begun our search for this year's Gala (Salmon) Queen! See the poster on next page (15) for more info. Are you interested? Get in touch asap! ■

Survey to consider options for the future of TRACC

The Highland Council is seeking views of the community on a range of options for the future of leisure services (particularly its swimmingpool) currently provided at the Tain Royal Academy Community Complex (TRACC). The facility is now 50 years old, and the building is reaching the end of its natural lifespan and would require substantial investment to continue operating in the future. An assessment has been made of potential options for the future of the TRACC building and five options are proposed for the local community to consider. A short survey is live, and a series of engagement events are planned, to enable the views of the local community to be captured. Currently there is no funding allocated in the Council's capital programme for any of the five options contained within the survey, available here :

<https://www.highland.gov.uk/tracc>

The consultation will close on 1st August 2025. ■

14th - 18th August 2025

GALA QUEEN WANTED!

Do you live in the Kyle of Sutherland area?

Are you 16-25 years old?

Would you like to be the 2025 'Salmon' Queen?

**** If 'yes', get in touch today! ****

Duties:

Your picture will be included on the Gala programme!

Attend & support gala events

Present any prizes / trophies etc

Assist with judging [if required]

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KYLE NEWS

NEW STAIRS FOR BONAR BRIDGE HALL

WE started the year with a lot of activity in the Community Hall, including a new early morning exercise class on Mondays, led by Neil which is very popular!

The Community Hall has been busy during the spring, hosting several public enquiries giving our residents the chance to discuss topics of interest. In May we welcomed a team from the Highland Council to discuss proposals which could affect the villages in the Kyle of Sutherland. SSE has once again booked the main hall on May 28th to present their energy proposals. Please come along to see what is being planned for our area.

At the time of writing, major work has been undertaken on the entrance steps. This was a task passed on from the previous committee who identified the need for the steps to be replaced. It has been a long time in the process, and I would like to thank Ron and Carolyn Wyvill for their stewardship of the project. We were very lucky to secure SSG Ground Works based in



Ardgay. Stephen steered us through a complicated process and has done an excellent job. The Committee also plan to paint the exterior of the Hall, a task not undertaken for some time. The colour 'taupe' has been chosen by members of the community, and works are to start soon.

On 6th May we hosted our AGM. Posters were dotted around the village

and two notices placed in the Northern Times. I am pleased to say that we will have a new Committee member at the next meeting on 1st July at 7 pm in the tea room.

Thank you once again to all the members of the Community Hall Committee who have worked extremely hard to maintain the Hall and related services. I would like to congratulate Ron and Carolyn who recently got married, and even though occupied with their arrangements, have been very supportive throughout our building works.

The Bonar Bridge Community Hall is always looking for new volunteers to bring along new ideas as to how best to serve the residents. Perhaps you are new to the area and would like to meet people and contribute to the community? Or you might have a couple of hours a month to help with looking after the building and events. Anyone interested who can make a contribution can email info@bonarbridgecommunityhall.org.uk. ■ By Michele Easom

Whist Club news

The Kyle of Sutherland Whist Club concluded a successful season at Bonar Bridge in mid-April. As well as a series of enjoyable evenings, over £3,000 was raised for 22 different charities and local groups. Club champion was Graham Mackinnon, with Jean Mezzetti the runner-up.

During the summer there will be monthly whist drives in Bonar Bridge Hall, starting at 7.30pm, on Wednesday 21st May, Wednesday 18th June, Wednesday 16th July and Wednesday 13th August. Visitors and players new to the game will all be very welcome.

The 2025-2026 season of weekly whist drives will commence in the early autumn. If any local group is interested in hosting a whist evening, or any person wishes to do so to support a charity, please contact Rosemary Logan on 01549 421282. All that is required of the host(s) is to take entrance money and sell raffle tickets, provide tea/coffee at the interval, and biscuits/traybakes, plus some small prizes. The host(s) retain all profits from the evening, after the hall hire has been paid. ■ By Patricia Hannah

Scottish Country Dancing

Ardgay Country Dancing Club finished for the summer, but will be starting again on Tuesday 7th October. Sad to be saying happy retirement to Doreen Bruce, who has been our teacher for 14 years. Thanks for your patience and perseverance in trying to teach us so many Scottish country dances, and for supporting and encouraging us all to participate in dances and rallies of other clubs. We hope you will come back and dance with us when Patricia tries to fill your (dancing) shoes in October. Club classes are open to all, from absolute beginners to resting dancers. Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or other responsible adult. The club class starts at 7 pm and finishes at 9 pm with a break around 8 pm for tea/coffee. This is a club and all members are encouraged to participate and help out, not leaving everything to the teacher. If you need any more information, please contact David Hannah (Secretary/Treasurer) on 01863 766 061 or dhannah559@hotmail.co.uk. Information about Scottish country dancing "locally" is available on the RSCDS Inverness & District website. ■

Ardgay Public Hall plans for this summer

Well, what a great start to spring and summer. We were delighted of course to be part of the fantastic Ardgay in Sutherland 50th Celebrations. Such fun and a lovely sunny day too. Thank you to everyone involved.

Our next big Ardgay Hall day to get excited about is the Long Distance Walkers Coast to Coast walk on the 28th June where 200 hearty folks will walk from Ullapool to Ardgay, dipping their toes in the water on both coasts. Please look out and cheer them on their way. The hall has been booked as the 'base camp' and we're very happy to be hosting such an amazing organisation on this Highland Coast to Coast venture. You can read more here: <https://ldwa.org.uk/North-WestGrampian/W/9911/highland-coast-to-coast.html>

COMMUNITY MARKETS:

Our May market kicked off the season with a well timed Garden Swap. Lots of plants brought, swapped and bought by happy gardeners, and plenty garden discussions too. We just love helping to get more food and flowers growing here. It's super to be able to support new businesses along with our regular good friends. On 14th June we are focussing on Green Health, 12th July will see our regular Plastic Free July themed market. We're always happy to support other local charities too via our market cafes. Please get in touch if you'd like to run the cafe for one of the markets.

REPAIR CAFES:

We're continuing to work with RE:-Circulate Sutherland and Planet

Sutherland, hosting repair cafes every 2 months. We held one on the 7th June and we'll look out for a date in August.

Did you know that we have several groups who regularly meet for sport, music, crafting, and kiddies? Please do have a look at our website <https://www.ardgayhall.co.uk/> for more info. Perhaps there's something you'd like to join? As always, we're also keen to expand and grow activities. Please get in touch if you would like to organise anything new or have any thoughts or questions (anna@ardgayhall.co.uk).

FUND RAISING:

Thank you again to everyone who has joined Easyfundraising and/or The Highland Lottery. We're very grateful for the donations coming through from this. ■ By Anna Patfield



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KYLE NEWS

CELEBRATING LAIRG

How do you sum up what life is like in Lairg? The easy answer is you don't, but it's been a lot of fun trying. David McNeish brings *In On The Act* to Lairg, in collaboration with Lairg Learning Centre.

In On The Act is a dynamic range of events from Eden Court Theatre taking place in community venues across the Highlands this May and June. The Lairg celebration takes place in Lairg Community Hall on the 28th of June at 7.30pm. With events in Skye, Balmacara and Morvern, as well as Lairg. Each place has had a community artist working with the local community to create original live performances that reflect local voices, experiences and hopes for the future.

As the community artist for Lairg, I've been speaking with local people at a range of events, from craft fairs to Winter Fest. The Lairg Learning Centre have been a key partner in this and I've also been working with both Lairg Primary School and Golspie High School to ensure that all ages have been a part of the process.

What comes shining through is how proud folk are of their village and the surrounding area. There are challenges living in a rural setting, but also great rewards and, again and again, people mentioned others in the community who make the place more enjoyable. The wildlife, views and, of



course, Loch Shin all featured strongly. At the same time concerns about property prices, increasing numbers of wind farms, and transport connections were frequently raised.

What I've really enjoyed doing is trying to capture both the joys and frustrations of Lairg life in drama, film and music and give voice to all of it. For the Golspie students, the school bus is a frequent source of frustration – so we're giving the audience a flavour of a morning bus journey with a surprise ending. We've also captured some stunning drone footage of Loch Shin as part of film-maker Ben Hastings' contribution, both to the evening performance and to a documentary chronicling the development of the four projects.

I used to live in Orkney and some of the issues facing Lairg are very fa-

miliar – the need for better transport links, the concern over planning for windfarms and how to ensure there is genuine community benefit, and also great pride in keeping sheep. I spoke to primary school pupils about their efforts and found them to be incredibly passionate and knowledgeable about the chal-

lenges of keeping sheep – from lambing to showing sheep. Their insights will form a part of the performance, alongside some very special footage of some local sheep.

Once you accept that you can never sum up a place, or fully do it justice, then it's liberating to just take a tiny snapshot of life and offer it back to people in creative forms. I've thoroughly enjoyed being part of *In On The Act* and hope that the audience enjoys it just as much as I have. There is a lot to celebrate about Lairg and it's great to get an opportunity to do just that on the 28th of June.

Lairg: A Celebration takes place in Lairg Community Hall on the 28th of June at 7.30pm. Tickets are available in advance from Eden Court Theatre, <https://eden-court.co.uk/event/welcome-to-lairg> ■ By David McNeish

Rosehall Village Hall update

WE are delighted to let everyone know that our AGM in January was very well attended and we have several new committee members. At present, we are discussing our plans for the coming year and how that may shape up. If you have ideas or are inter-

ested in helping out, please do get in touch by email to rosehall18@gmail.com.

Over the past couple of months we have had some amazing musicians visit, including Ricardo Pes, Duncan Chisholm & Hamish Napier, and Eilidh Shaw & Ross Martin. We really appreciate that these

super-talented folks are happy to bring their live music to the Highlands and are looking forward to setting out our plans for the coming year, hopefully suiting many interests. Please watch on our Facebook page, website and notice boards for up to date information.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES:

Please look out for our traditional Summer Ceilidh to be held on the 15th August with Susie Simpson, the Church Sale on the 13th September, and the Lucie Hendry Trio on Thursday 25th September.

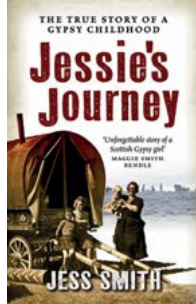
■ By Anna Patfield

FROM 9TH TO 14TH SEPTEMBER 2025

St Duthac Book & Arts Festival

This will be the 5th St Duthac Book and Arts Festival, based in and around the town of Tain and we are thrilled with this year's line-up. At the time of going to press the Group has not yet announced this year's line-up – we like to keep people guessing.

However, at the recent very well-attended AGM, the Group was delighted to announce that returning by popular demand is the delightful Jess Smith, a much-loved author, speaker and member of the Travelers Community. Back in 2021, Jess was the opening evening speaker and she beguiled audiences with her



tales of a way of life fast disappearing. Those who were in the room felt she was speaking just to them.

Dates for the 2025 Festival are 9th to 14th September, brochures will be in shops and online from mid July and tickets will be on sale towards the end of July. Keep watching www.stduthacbookfest.com for full details of all events and how to book. I promise you, there is something for everyone – suspense, intrigue, crime, prize-winning poetry, art competitions and music galore. See you there! ■ By Catherine Williams, Volunteer Vice Chairperson



Historic photographs inspire new Estate owners to launch archive search

Cambusmore Estate owners Gordon Adam, who purchased the estate in 2022, and his partner Esme, discovered the photographs depicting various moments in the life of Sutherland Estate before it became Cambusmore Estate, from snapshots of its early days to family portraits taken during holidays spent there, dating as far back as 1902. Anyone with historic photos or information related to Cambusmore Estate is encouraged to contact cambusmore@spey.scot ■



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KYLE NEWS

SUTHERLAND RESILIENCE INITIATIVE COMMUNITY CAR

Covering the Lairg, Rosehall, Shinness, Bonar Bridge and Ardgay area, we can also now take people from Rogart who are not eligible for the service Go Golspie provides.

Lairg Community Centre is now in possession of an electric powered community car that can take patients to medical appointments where they have no other way of getting there. Use of the car is dependent on both the car and a volunteer driver being available on the required day. We also ask that you are able to get in and out of the vehicle unaided.

Whilst we have had wonderful feedback from the passengers who have already benefitted from the using the car, we are always looking to improve the way we run the car for the community.



Here is what one of our drivers has to say about why they chose to volunteer, "It helps with getting used to an electric vehicle, which is obviously beneficial to the environment. Whilst you are waiting for a passenger you can shop,

even if it is just window shopping, you get to meet some lovely people from the area you might otherwise never meet. It feels good to be putting something back in to such a supportive and welcoming community."

We rely solely on vol-

unteers to drive people to their appointments. If you feel that this is something that you might be interested in doing, please let us know.

To book the car, ask about volunteering or for more information please either call 01549 402843 weekdays between 9am and 11.30am (there is an answerphone outwith these times) or email lairgcommunitycentre@gmail.com

Donations towards the upkeep and running costs of the car are always gratefully received, thank you. ■

By Ros Fleming

Kyle of Sutherland Men's Shed

YOU may have heard rumours about a Men's Shed starting right here in the Kyle of Sutherland. Well, it's true. It exists, albeit shed-less at the moment!

There's been overwhelming interest and we now have a small team sorting out the start-up admin and looking around for appropriate locations for the actual shed.

Mens' sheds are not only about 'fixing stuff' or making things, they are a place where men can come together, share skills, help each other and most importantly, reduce loneliness and social isolation. The Scottish Men's Shed Association defines a Men's shed as a "shared space where men – from all walks of life – attend voluntarily to work on practical projects or simply find camaraderie, conversation and friendship."



Membership is free and open to men over the age of 18 in the Kyle of Sutherland and Lairg area.

Over the next few months we will be arranging to visit other Men's sheds in the Highlands and organising some informal gatherings to keep

folk updated on developments. To find out more, or if you have an ideal location for a shed, look out for the "pop up Men's Shed" at various markets and the Repair Cafes or email stewart.mccarroll@icloud.com ■ Stewart McCarroll, Chair Kyle of Sutherland Men's Shed

POEM

EMPTY CAT
AND DUNLIN

By Dave Goulder

South Uist – keeping low.
Crawling in the rocket range;
diligent for dunlin,
find and check nests, weigh and tag chicks
that lie motionless
like stones.
It is their defence.

My companion is a professional
and though we note
other birds,
his motto remains:
“The existence of passerines
is not to be admitted.”
He is a specialist;
for dunlin.



I find a clutch of starlings
in a stone dyke. The chicks
are filthy with nest debris.
Jim is revolted, but dutifully
weighs and tags them.
I am reprimanded.

We return to our base,
a half-ruin in the village.
Nearby is a primitive hostel
with a thatched roof, the occupants
two Germans
and a very pregnant cat.
The Germans emerge.
They are fascinated.
“We wait all day for you.
What is dunlin? Can you eat?”
There is a pause at the arrival
of a slim cat
with centrefolds.
“Oh, ja – the cat is now empty.”

In 1973 I was enlisted by a pro ornithologist I'd met
on an island off the coast of Iceland the previous
year. He specialised in wading birds and dunlin at
that time was our most common shore bird. No
man's land on the South Uist rocket range gave us
the chance to assess the predation by larger gulls.

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HEALTH & WELLBEING



© Gordon Spirling

As part of a coordinated protest, on 27th May, the community gathered at the Bradbury Centre in Bonar Bridge to demand proper investment.

SAVING OUR SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Health & Wellbeing Hubs in Sutherland & Dunbeath are facing financial crisis due to over a decade of standstill contract funding from NHS Highland. They condemn the **loss of care homes and independent community care service providers in Sutherland due to chronic underfunding.**

Hubs United Group (HUG) members the Assynt Centre in Lochinver, the Bradbury Centre in Bonar Bridge, Brora Hub, Ceilidh House in Kinlochbervie, Kyle Centre in Tongue, and the Dunbeath Centre, are asking to be taken seriously as partners in providing care, and to be fully included in planning for the future. In 2023 the Health & Wellbeing Hubs contacted NHS Highland raising serious concerns about their sustainability. They are now concerned that progress is yet to be made, and warn that the loss of these services will have a devastating impact in our local area. The situation is further exacerbated by the poor performance of NHS Highland Golspie-based Care at Home service, with the Care Inspectorate serving an improvement notice citing several areas of concern, and the lack of progress in the North Coast Redesign project.

Bradbury Centre Bonar Bridge Chairperson Alasdair Gaskirk said: "Over decades the Bradbury Centre has grown to become one of the pivotal organisations at the heart of Creich and Kincardine. The services it provides are seen as critical in the community and enable older people locally to live independently, whilst also providing that much needed personal care and support. The management and staff are fully

committed and work tirelessly to deliver a high-quality service to all who personally attend the Centre and for those who rely on it to care for their loved ones.

"Like so many, they are doing so in a very difficult financial climate with rising costs throughout, which is exacerbated with NHS Highland and their lack of budget uplift over many years that goes towards paying for statutory services that the Bradbury Centre deliver on their behalf.

The activities on Tuesday the 27th May at the Bradbury and other Centres in Sutherland and Caithness were to further highlight the value and service the Bradbury Centre offers for the community but also reach out and raise awareness of the financial situation with NHS Highland. All those connected to the Bradbury Centre thank you sincerely for all your support."

Andrea Madden, Chairperson of the Hubs United Group, said: "No more quick fixes. Enough is enough! We need a root and branch review of social care in Sutherland, actions not words."

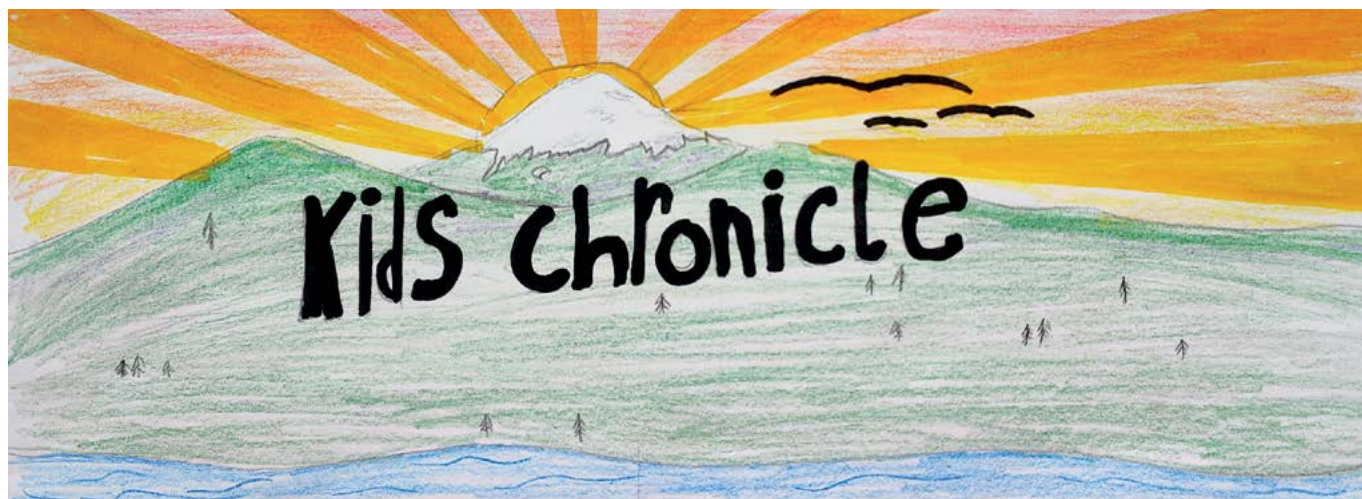
Rhoda Grant, Highlands and Islands Regional MSP, explained: "I continue to be concerned about the future of the Health and Wellbeing Hubs in the North of Scotland. For 10 years they have been going beyond expecta-

tions to deliver services to the vulnerable living in the area. Over a decade ago they stepped up to provide the care and support the public services were no longer able to.

"At the time NHS Highland and the Highland Council gave assurances that a partnership would be developed where the Hubs would be treated with dignity and respected as valuable contributors to the health and well-being aims of both organisations.

"Disappointingly, promises of adequate funding based on agreed contracts have not been forthcoming. We are now in the perilous situation where Hubs are drawing on their own cash reserves to keep services functioning. This is unacceptable.

"I met with both the NHS Highland and Highland Council Senior Management on the 19th May, seeking assurance that they are serious in addressing the current crisis. I also wanted to be shown they are serious in meeting urgently with the Health & Well Being Hubs and conclude their negotiations that will see the Hubs adequately resourced to meet the needs of the people of Sutherland and the North Coast. I am glad this meeting has now taken place but will keep a close eye on developments." ■ By Silvia Muras



Quarterly magazine curated by and for the Kyle of Sutherland children



Bonar Bridge Primary girls and boys teams both have had lots of success in recent local football competitions!

Football!



Children from our local primary schools have been practicing this high energy, fun game and participating in football competitions. Well done everyone!



Gledfield & Edderton Primary boys and girls teams played in football competitions in Alness. "We had Jodie in goals, Elowen and Adabeth in defence, Aria in midfield, Annabelle and Rebekah in right and left wing and me as striker. Jodie and Annabelle had a last minute swap for goals and Jodie played amazingly!" (Brooke, P7) "It was fun playing against lots of different teams" (Owen, P4) "It was a challenge but we didn't give up" (Jay, P6) "The P6 teams were evenly matched" (Vinnie, P6) "It was hard, but fun" (Bailey, P5)



Neil came to **Rosehall Primary School** to help the kids with their fitness and football skills ahead of their football competitions

Lambing this year

Most years I help with lambing. Some ewes are inside, and some are outside. It's a lot better to lamb outside. They get more room. It's cleaner outside too. It is satisfying when a lamb slides out. If they're born inside you have to spray their belly button with iodine. Lambs are soon strong and fast and difficult to catch. This year the weather has been a bit hot. They need water taken to them in a big drum on my quad. Lambing is my favourite time of year. **By Cohen, P4.**



Gledfield Primary



Lambing 2025

This year we started lambing on the 6th of April and finished on the 19th of May. The first lamb we had was a set of triplets! At the start of lambing it went fast then it slowed down a bit. On the 3rd day of lambing we had 8 sheep lambed in 1 day! This year I lambed 5 sheep! And we have 2 pet lambs. Their names are Chase and Darcy. We had a tiny lamb! The weather was really good. It was sunny the whole holiday! My black sheep Zoe had a black lamb for the 2nd time! His name is Marshall. We were lambing for 1 month and 13 days! **By Olivia, P7.**

Gearrchoille woods

We went to the woods and we made slingshots and it was really fun. Ian Patterson showed us how to make knots. It was because it was Health and Wellbeing week. We made a base with sticks and rope knots and then we made a stretcher with rope and two sticks. I went on it and so did Owen and Santi! I loved it so much.

By Aria, P4



Swimming lessons at TRACC

The first time I went swimming with my class I was scared when I had to jump in the pool but I did it. The next Thursday we jumped in the pool again. It was much easier! But when I was under water - bang! I crashed my knees against the bottom of the pool. Ouch, that hurt! I swam back up and was in pain but I ignored the pain. The next Thursday we played sinky toys when we had to jump in, then if you see a heavy toy on the bottom of the pool pick it up. I was the last one who did not sink to the floor. The next thing I'd love to try is diving into a deep pool. **By Adabeth, P4.**

Dingwall school badminton competition March 2025

Every year there is a badminton competition for lots of schools around Scotland like Ben Wyvis or Dingwall or Locharron and many more. In this tournament there was boys singles and doubles then there was girls singles then doubles. There were lots of games. I played in singles but unfortunately I lost in the quarter finals, then I played lots in doubles with Owen. We did so good until losing in the semi finals. The games were amazing with ferocious smashes or massive lobs; they all seemed to have really long, good, no, great rallies! With power in smashes and skill in defensive shots. The badminton competition was really fun and I enjoyed playing at Dingwall that day. **By Santiago, P5**



Ardgay 50th Celebration

On the 17th of May there was a celebration to celebrate when Ardgay officially became a part of Sutherland. When I arrived it was scorching hot, a shiny sun, and the trees were rustling in the wind. It was busy. There was a bouncy castle, food trucks, and inside the hall there were stalls, a bouncy thing. Then we went into the hall and looked at the stalls. I got my face painted as a butterfly. I went to a food truck that had doughnuts that were freshly made with sugar. The sugar melted in my mouth and it was still hot. Yum! I also bought a cake for my mum. Then I won a toy from a toy truck. **By Elowen, P5**

Bonar Bridge Primary



Landmark

Bonar Bridge Primary enjoyed a trip to Landmark. The sun shone and lots of fun was had!



P7 Trip to Alltnacriche

P7s had a brilliant time pushing themselves in various outdoor activities, including rowing, ziplining and archery, at their annual transition trip with Dornoch Primary to Alltnacriche.



Generation science

Generation Science hosted an Energy Explorers session with P4-7. We learned about different types of energy and how humans have harnessed these with renewable and non-renewable sources!



Sports

The girls and boys have had lots of success in recent local football and running competitions!



By Lowena (P7) and Rosalie (P7) Rosehall reporters

Dissecting Term 4

Our topic this term was all about the fascinating human body, so P1-7 went on a day out to the Newton Rooms in Dingwall to take part in their Health Science workshop. We had a really scienterrific day learning about the Respiratory, Digestive and Lymphatic Systems. Whilst there we made our own poo (don't worry it was fake!), pretended to be surgeons and even had the chance to dissect an animal that previously oinked! Some people had stronger stomachs than others!



Fun Fitness

In March, we began working with Neil to help us improve on our running skills for the Cross Country Competition. We had an excellent time working with him and taking part in all the different exercises and activities to work on stamina, muscle strength and endurance. Thankfully we were all a nice bunch and didn't scare him away, so he agreed to come back and help us work on our fitness and football skills for the upcoming football competition. It has been a real privilege to work with such an experienced runner and fitness coach. We have really enjoyed our sessions, thank you very much Neil!

Casting for Candy

For the last few weeks, Joey, from Lower Oykel Fisheries, and his wife Ruth, have been visiting us for fishing/casting sessions. We had a blast learning how to hold the rod, working on power, aim and accuracy. We also took part in the longest cast competition. Everyone won something and were rewarded for taking part. Joey and Ruth certainly knew how to 'catch' the attention of all the Rosehall pupils - casting for sweet treats is much more interesting than waiting for a fish!



We're Spinning Around

Rosehall had an astronomical visit from Generation Science's Jack and Benny, to learn about day and night across the world. Everyone got a chance to get involved in the fun and games - it felt like we were at a panto! We all learnt some songs, moves, travelled to several countries and even got to touch the sun **Safety Disclaimer** Those involved wore appropriate safety gear, of course! We learnt lots about the importance of the Sun and the movement of Earth and the Moon. It really was a spinning good time!



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For local eateries and places of interest please see: www.heartofsutherland.co.uk • Onsite accommodation 'Am Batach' on Rural Retreats: www.ruralretreats.co.uk

KYLE OF SUTHERLAND DEVELOPMENT TRUST

NEW PROJECT GARDENER JOINS THE KYLE FEEDS TEAM

STARTING May this year KoSDT has a new addition to the garden team on the Kyle Feeds project. We are delighted that Marieke de Jong has joined us as our new Project Gardener. Originally from The Netherlands, Marieke has lived in Culrain since 2019. Some of you will remember the baking box at Culrain & District Hall during lock-down that Kristina Fonseca and Marieke organised. She likes to come to work on her bicycle, so you may see her pedalling past with some plants in her saddle bags.

"The KoSDT has such a positive attitude and everyone there has made me feel so very welcome. I am happy to be part of the team and grow with the community. There

are several projects running in the current gardens already, and more to come in the coming seasons!"

Marieke will be team-mate to our amazing community gardener Gordon who has achieved great things in the polytunnel in Ardgay and the kitchen garden in Bonar. Remember to keep an eye on the Veg Shed over the summer months for available fresh produce.

If you'd like to contact Marieke you can either email her at marieke@kyleofsutherland.co.uk or find her when she's pottering in one of the community gardens.

On Wednesdays you are always very welcome to join us for our gardening session 10:00 -12:00 in either the Ardgay Polytunnel and Garden,



Marieke de Jong.

or the Community Kitchen Garden in Bonar Bridge. Gardening is not mandatory, there are nice seats for you to sit and watch us work. ■ By **Miranda Jones**

KoSDT says goodbye to Kelly

After three years with KoSDT we are sad to bid farewell to Kelly Raven, our Office Manager, who has decided to relocate to West Sussex to be nearer her family. As part of her leaving gift, to make sure that she wouldn't forget the Kyle of Sutherland, she received a lovely piece of artwork from Culrain's Louise Worthy. Kelly has been a fantastic member of the team and will be missed greatly. We wish her well in the future and she has promised not to be a stranger. Hopefully see you soon Kelly. ■



Community Café and Larder

Our community café continues to be a popular fixture every Monday from 12-2pm: we offer a freshly cooked 3-course meal with payment by donation. We have been happy to host the Sensory Centre, CAB and Age-Friendly Communities at the café over the past few months to offer advice and guidance to our

customers. Keep an eye out for news of future visitors to the café. On Tuesdays and Fridays, the community food larder is open from 10am to 2pm for tea, coffee and a blether. Surplus food, fruit and larder items are available to all Kyle of Sutherland residents and help keep good food out of landfill. ■

Legs 11: Every step is a positive step for health and wellbeing

Every Tuesday throughout the summer why not join us for a 30-minute walk from the Bothy in Ardgay to Gearchoille Community Woods. We meet at 11am and enjoy tea, coffee and biscuits on our return.

Walking is just about the best exercise, not only does it burn calories, but it also strengthens the heart, helps lower cholesterol, lower blood sugar, eases joint pain, improves mood, and boosts energy levels. If you feel you could benefit, join us for a gentle stroll and a chat. ■



Ardgay Golden Jubilee celebrations

With sunshine brightening the day, everyone enjoyed exploring the stalls and participating in activities suitable for all ages.

The Staff and Trustees of KoSDT wish to thank the voluntary committee of local volunteers that worked so hard to pull together the program of events for the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the community of Ardgay and District becoming part of the county of Sutherland in 1975.

Although the KoSDT team of Miranda Jones and Fiona Macdonald undertook a lot of the background work to pull the day together, the day was planned by a local committee led by Deputy Lieutenant of Sutherland, Christine Mackay.

On the day we were lucky to have some lovely sunshine, and it was lovely to see Drovers Square full of people enjoying the activities and celebrations. Maybe we should think about having more events in the Square in the future...

■ By David Watson



From left to right: Angus Watson, Deputy Lieutenant (Ross & Cromarty), Christine Mackay, Deputy Lieutenant (Sutherland) and David Watson, Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust manager.

Introducing LEGS@11

A weekly health walk from the Community Bothy in Ardgay, to Gearrchoille Woods, and back again for elevenses*

Meet at the Bothy, Drovers Square, Ardgay every Tuesday at 11am throughout June & July

*Tea, Coffee & Biscuits



Would you like to get some fresh air, light exercise, and meet some people?

The growing season is under way and our community garden is in need of some helping hands



We grow produce for the local community in our kitchen garden in Bonar Bridge, and our polytunnel and garden in Ardgay,

Tea & Coffee provided!



KYLE FEEDS

FOOD
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If you'd like to join our friendly groups of volunteers call us on 01863 766190

All welcome



KYLE OF SUTHERLAND DEVELOPMENT TRUST

COMMUNITY FITNESS

Reflecting on six months with the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust

AS I approach the six-month mark of delivering fitness classes with the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, it feels like the right time to reflect on the positive impact these sessions have had within the local community.

Among the various classes I run, Boxercise has been a standout success. Initially, there was some uncertainty about how it would be received, so we began by offering two 30-minute sessions alongside a one-hour class. As expected, the beginning classes were a little slow as participants learned the foundational punches and techniques. However, after just a few sessions, everyone began to progress rapidly. Boxercise offers a dynamic full-body workout, engaging the arms, core, and legs, and as participants develop their skills, the sessions become increasingly challenging and rewarding.

The 30-minute class serves as a perfect introduction—fast-paced, energetic, and a great way to build a sweat through focused drills, pad work, and movement techniques. The one-hour session in Culrain has grown especially popular, providing more time to hone technique and build endurance. I've been genuinely surprised by the response to Boxercise, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. With the better weather approaching, we may even take the classes outdoors—so don't be alarmed if you see a spirited



group in Culrain; it's just your local Boxercise team in action!

Beyond Boxercise, the circuit training classes in Rosehall and Bonar Bridge (previously Invershin) have also been very well received. I vary the exercises and equipment each week to ensure continued progression and engagement. Participants have the opportunity to try different equipment such as trap bars, battle ropes, landmine bars, TRX straps, and stability boards—often for the first time. Every station is adaptable, making the classes accessible to all fitness levels. It's incredibly rewarding to witness individual progress, whether it's someone mastering a plank or achieving a personal best deadlifting 70kg on the trap bar.

These past six months have been incredibly fulfilling—meeting new

people, helping them improve their fitness, and seeing the camaraderie that grows within each group.

Looking ahead, I'm excited to introduce a new circuits class tailored for seniors, focusing on exercises designed to improve strength, mobility, and flexibility in a supportive environment. I'm also developing a core strength class, centred around bodyweight movements that promote better posture and overall stability.

I make a point of speaking with all participants to gather feedback and suggestions. While I understand it's not possible to cater to everyone's preferences, I am committed to accommodating requests wherever feasible.

This summer, I plan to host a series of pop-up classes to test new ideas—these may include an introduction to running, outdoor boot camps, or even a mystery fitness session. I'll ensure there's plenty of notice and that all information is shared through our social media channels.

Ultimately, the aim of these classes is to bring people together. You don't need to be an experienced athlete, run a sub-20-minute 5k, or have boxing experience—just come along, get involved, and see where it takes you. You might just surprise yourself. Stay up to date with our fitness classes by following us on Facebook. ■ By Neil Graham, Kyle Feeds Project

**Kyle of Sutherland
Development Trust**

The Barn, Drovers Square
Ardgay IV24 3AL

01863 766 190

development@kyleofsutherland.co.uk



Development
Trust



If you wish to become a member of the Trust so you can be kept up to date with our community support initiatives then please scan the QR code to sign up





WEEKLY PLANNER



MONDAYS

7-7.30AM QUICK HIIT | BONAR BRIDGE HALL
7.30-8AM QUICK BOXERCISE | BONAR BRIDGE HALL
12-1.30PM COMMUNITY LUNCH | BONAR BRIDGE HALL

TUESDAYS

9.30-10.30AM STRETCH | ARDGAY HALL
10AM-2PM FOOD LARDER | THE BOTHY, ARDGAY
11AM LEGS 11 HEALTH WALK | ARDGAY
7PM-8PM CIRCUITS | ARDGAY HALL

WEDNESDAYS

9.30-10.30AM CORE STRENGTH | CULRAIN HALL
10AM-12PM BADMINTON GROUP | ARDGAY HALL
10AM-12PM COMMUNITY GARDENING

THURSDAYS

10-11AM CIRCUITS | ROSEHALL HALL
2-3PM T'AI CHI GROUP | ARDGAY HALL
7-7.30PM QUICK HIIT | INVERSHIN HALL
7.30-8PM QUICK BOXERCISE | INVERSHIN HALL

FRIDAYS

9.30-10.30AM BOXERCISE | CULRAIN HALL
10AM-2PM FOOD LARDER | THE BOTHY, ARDGAY

development@kyleofsutherland.co.uk



WINDFARM BENEFIT FUNDS

BETWEEN £2,000 AND £10,000+

SSE Achany Community Fund

Currently closed. It will re-open in January 2026. Contact: Kirsty Partridge, Community Investment Manager.
Email: Kirsty.partridge2@sse.com
Tel: 07493 882 554

Next deadline: **30 April 2026**

KOSAS (SSE)

Support towards the cost of recruiting and training an apprentice. More info: <https://www.lairglearningcentre.org.uk/kosas/>

BETWEEN £2,000 AND £25,000+

RWE Rosehall Com. Fund

Apply online: <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/rosehall> Contact Chris Lee, Community Funds Adviser by email clee@foundationscotland.org.uk or call 0131 510 1246.

Next deadline: **31 October 2025**

PROJECTS UNDER £2,000

The Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit - Ardgay

Application form: <http://ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk>
Send your completed application form to phil.tomalin@highland.gov.uk.

SMALL GRANTS

The Beinn nan Oighrean Windfarm Awards - Ardgay

PROJECTS UNDER £5,000

The Coire na Cloiche Community Benefit - Ardgay

These funds are expected to reopen if Ardgay & District Community Council reforms. To re-establish a dissolved community council, 20 or more electors can submit a requisition to the Highland Council. The next round of community council elections will be held in October 2025.

PROJECTS FROM £300 TO £1,500

Rock-by-Sea Awards Creich

Towards costs incurred when taking up training or employment opportunities.
secretary@creichcommunitycouncil.org.uk

PROJECTS UNDER £3,000

The Coire na Cloiche Community Benefit - Creich

Visit creichcommunitycouncil.org.uk or email secretary@creichcommunitycouncil.org.uk for funding application and guidelines. Deadline: Two weeks before any CC meeting.

PROJECTS UNDER £5,000

The Beinn Tharsuinn Community Benefit - Creich

Application form: <http://www.community-council.org.uk/creich/index.asp> Send your completed application form to phil.tomalin@highland.gov.uk. Deadline: two weeks before any CC meeting.

Your local representatives

CREICH COMMUNITY COUNCIL

www.creichcommunitycouncil.org.uk

Meetings usually on 2nd Monday of the month

**ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

www.ardgayanddistrictcommunitycouncil.org.uk

The community council has been dissolved.

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WILDLIFE / NATURE



NEW SEATS AT THE GEARRCHOILLE

If you have been out and about enjoying the sunny spring days and strolling through the Gearrchoille, you may have come across the two new seats. Hopefully you can rest a while and chat to others passing by, or take some time to enjoy the woodland. The benches were bought with funds from Coire na Cloiche Wind Farm Community Benefit fund via Ardgay & District Community Council and were installed by our band of volunteers during our monthly work session, some of whom can be seen in the photo enjoying a well earned rest. Frank's steam powered barrow was most useful.

We have hosted two treasure hunts in recent



weeks – one Easter Bunny trail organised by Kyle of Sutherland Gala week

and another as part of the Ardgay 50th celebrations, when all the pupils from

Gledfield walked along to the wood and did a scavenger hunt and made badges in addition to the nature trail. Many thanks to Fiona and Miranda from Kyle of Sutherland Development trust for organising that.

Although the hot dry days we have been experiencing are each glorious and to be enjoyed, as we go into the summer we really have to hope for rain to keep our woodlands and rivers healthy – the ground we disturbed when installing the seat was incredibly dry and several of the trees in the woodland pasture end of the wood do not look as healthy as they should having developed the 'Stags Head Oak' look.

■ By Betty Wright

PLANET SUTHERLAND'S TIPS FOR THIS SUMMER INCLUDE WATER-SAVING MEASURES

Water, water everywhere...

This Spring has been the driest in over a century! Wow! No doubt many of us were enjoying the warmth, but I'm sure I was not alone in worrying about the crops trying to grow in the garden with little watering. Having recently moved house, I didn't have the usual rain water capture volume set up and things were certainly suffering. And, with ongoing extreme wildfire warnings still in place, and water scarcity warnings, I'm sure we were all grateful for the rain.

All of this along with the recent supermarket security issues leaving shelves empty, leads to more thoughts on building our food resilience.

Gosh that all sounds dreary – but now for the fun part. My dream and vision is that we have community gardens in every locality. Just imag-

ine wandering through or sitting by your very own local orchard, with fruit bushes growing around and lots of fresh herbs, vegetables and insect-friendly flowers, picking a crisp apple, a few salad leaves for your lunch and some carrots to add to a stew for dinner. Amazing!

Our next set of Climate Cafes will be focussing on just this topic. What



ideas do you have to build and support local business and communities in increasing food production right here? Please get in touch and look out for the summer climate cafes.

Top tips for summer:

- stop using insect and weed killers
- use mulching to reduce watering needs
- install some rain water capture as soon as you can
- get growing with your own local community gardening project

Please do get in touch (anna@planetsutherland.com or planetsutherland.com) if you'd like to join Planet Sutherland activities, or just want to know more. We'd love to see you at our events and joining the facebook chat. Thank you. ■ By Anna Patfield



(Left) Bonar Bridge Primary boys team came second in the Small Schools category at the ESSSA Cross Country competition in April, with the Bonar Bridge Primary girls team being winner of the Small Schools category!



(Left) Bonar Bridge PS Winter Running Series boys team. (Centre) Pupils from Bonar Bridge and Gledfield met Tom Stoltman at the Alness Winter Running Series event. (Right) Bonar Bridge PS Winter Running Series girls team.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS ACTIVITIES

High Life Highland's East Sutherland Active Schools continues to provide more and higher quality opportunities for children and young people to participate in sport.

ACTIVE SCHOOLS WINTER RUNNING SERIES

Pupils from Bonar Bridge and Gledfield Primaries took part in the 2024-25 Winter Series of Cross Country races which was held across Mid Ross and East Sutherland from November 2024 to February 2025. There were a total of six races: Fairburn, Invergordon, Alness, Culbokie, Inver and Dornoch. Weekly after-school running sessions were held at Bonar Bridge Primary school with the Gledfield pupils joining when they could. It was great to see all

the pupils doing their best in each race, enjoying the routes and not being put off by the cold conditions! This was great training for the East Sutherland Cross Country in April!

GOLF SESSIONS

Active Schools continue to work in partnership and support Bonar Bridge / Ardgay Golf club with their junior section. After the indoor winter sessions at the UHI came to an end, Summer golf sessions back at the Golf club have started with sessions split into

P1-3 and P4-7. Again it's great to see pupils from both schools attending, the sessions are led by UHI Golf student Izy Edwards. The club have also signed up to the Golf Sixes competition which will take place during the summer holidays. For more info contact Nigel Baird on bonarbridgeardgaygolfclub@gmail.com or Elissa Stevenson, Active Schools on elissa.stevenson@highlifehighland.com.

ESSSA CEILIDH DANCING COMPETITION

All eight East Sutherland schools came together at Brora Primary School to compete in the Ceilidh Dancing Competition on Friday 21st February. They took part in four dances: Virginia Reel, Strip the Willow, Britannia Two Step & Canadian Barn Dance. It was a great

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers. If anyone would be willing to deliver a short block of sessions (extra-curricular) in any sport/activity then please get in touch with me directly (elissa.stevenson@highlifehighland.com / 07825 116498). Support and training will be given. For all info please visit my Facebook page - East Sutherland Active Schools.



evening and the Bonar Bridge team danced well!

ESSSA BADMINTON TOURNAMENT

This year the tournament was organised with a slightly different format from previous years, firstly with an increase in players per school from 2 girls and 2 boys to 3 girls and 3 boys per school and secondly a round robin instead of an elimination draw. The tournament is aimed at P6&7 pupils and they played full court singles. A draw was made prior to the event with the girls and boys being split into 2 groups each. Each game was played to 11 points with the players accumulating their points across all the games they played. The top 2 players from each group then played a semi-final which then led onto the final girls and boys match. A big well done to Hannah, Seraphina, Ruby, Danny, James and Adam who took part in the tournament and had some great games!

ESSSA CROSS COUNTRY

On Friday 25th April, 100 runners came together at Bonar Bridge / Ardgay Golf Club. The P4-5 pupils girls race went first, followed by the boys race then the P6-7 girls race and then finally the boys race. All 8 schools from East Sutherland were represented as well as North West Sutherland Schools and Gledfield Primary School, giving a total of 10 schools competing! Placings were given and times recorded for the first, second and third in both the boys' and girls' races across all the schools; Adam Ross from Bonar Bridge PS came 2nd place in the P4-5 race in a time of 6.17mins! The East Sutherland Schools competed for first and second place for the small and big schools categories, split between boys and girls. In the Small Schools category the Bonar Bridge girls team were first and the Bonar Bridge boys were second! Medals and trophies were presented by Valerie Graham, who lives locally and is a keen runner. Also she has recently joined the High Life Highland Trading Board and her husband is an Active Schools volunteer! ■ By Elissa Stevenson

Ardgay Badminton Club news

On Saturday 26th April our pub quiz raised an amazing £255! A huge thanks to our quizmaster Kirstin, and to everyone who came along.

On Saturday 10th May we ran a competition among our adult members. There were two competing teams, led by captains Liam and Kirstin, winners of this year's Struie League. Captain Liam's team was the winner (Liam, Steven, Iain, Caron, Silvia and Lesley), with captain Kirstin's team finishing runners up (Gregor, Brian, Roy, Kirstin, Jackie and Elissa). A big thank you to the team captains and all the players who made it such an enjoyable evening!

On Sunday 11th May we held our annual club tournament. The day started with (P4-P7) girls singles: winner, Ruby Stevenson, in 2nd place Olivia Allan, and 3rd, Annabelle Macrae). In girls doubles, the winners were Annabelle Macrae and Olivia Allan with runners up Nixie Macdonald and Ruby Stevenson.

The (P4-P7) boys singles competition was won by Santiago Mackenzie,

with James Jack 2nd, and Adam Ross in 3rd place. In doubles, the winners were James Jack and Harry Jack, 2nd Harry Macnab and Adam Ross, and 3rd place Owen Allan and Santiago Mackenzie.

The teen singles fixture was won by Magnus Macrae, 2nd Conor Douglas and 3rd Innis Macdonald. In teen doubles, the winners were Conor Douglas and Lee Holden, 2nd Innis Macdonald and Magnus Macrae, and 3rd Charlie Macnab and Holly Holden.

We also had an intergenerational competition, with adult members playing alongside juniors and teens. The winners of this fun competition were Harry Macnab and Liam Munro, with Adam Ross and Brian Thornton finishing runners up.

A huge thank you to all the players and their families, to those who donated delicious food, to the club members and parents who helped in the day, to the adult players who came to play with our juniors and to all those in the community for their support to our club throughout the season. ■ SM



(Top) All the junior (P4-P7) boys taking part in our competition. (Bottom left) All our teen (S1-S6) competitors. (Bottom right) This year we had a junior (P4-P7) girls competition!

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MORAG CHALMERS

06/10/1926 - 09/04/2025

Sarah Gray (Morag) Chalmers (nee. Cameron) of Migdale Mill farm, Bonar Bridge, Sutherland died peacefully at home on 1st April **after a long and varied life aged 98 years.**

THE last five years had seen her spend time in Raigmore Hospital on various occasions, but she always bounced back and although she was confined to a wheelchair and had limited vision, she would sit in the kitchen, listening to Peter May CD's and chatting to the neighbours and family who dropped in.

Special thanks must go to the team of carers from Highland Homecare who looked after mum over the last few years. Gemma, Emma and Malcolm regularly went above and beyond their duties to keep her comfortable. And thanks too, to staff at Raigmore and Migdale hospitals, where she kept nurses on their toes.

Morag had a complex character. She was determined and stubborn, could be very hospitable, but also sometimes disparaging, and quick to judge.

There is plenty sadness and tragedy from the beginning of Morag's life. She was born in Colmonel in Ayrshire on the 6th of October 1926, and her mother, Sarah Gray Drynan, died 18 months later, after giving birth to James, who also died. Her older sister Christina had earlier died of Meningitis. Her elder brother Lachlan was born in December 1924 and lived a full life, moving to New Zealand in 1959. Her widowed father, Angus Hugh Cameron gave her to his parents to look after. Angus Cameron (senior) was over 70 then, and he and his wife Christina (who had been cleared from South Uist to Eriskay), lived, along with other relations, adding up to 9 people, crammed into a small, rented



Morag in 1955 at the Haining, Largs, Ayrshire.

farm cottage in the hills above Kilbirnie.

They were obviously very poor, but resourceful, and my Morag told a story, about when she walked home from school one day to find the windows of the house blacked out with newspapers. Inside, old granny Cameron was butchering a sheep by candlelight. Maybe the sheep had died anyway, but they at least ate well for once. In fact, this happened more than once, and although the farmer could not prove any wrongdoing, they were obliged to move on.

Not long ago she was asked about any memories she had about the Second World War. She was 13 when it started and 18 when it finished, so it must have been a stressful time for everyone. However, she said she didn't know much about it, as she was so isolated. Her granddad occasionally got a newspaper, but she wasn't allowed to read it! She later regretted not staying on at school but had to leave to earn money for the family.

She worked for a while at the NAAFI canteen near Largs, and it

might have been here that she met William Emms, a Royal Navy sailor and they were married in March 1947, and their first child Jennifer was born in 1948. William spent a long time at sea, and mum moved to stay with his parents in Suffolk but apparently was not happy there. A second daughter, Deirdre was born in 1952, but the couple separated around that time.

Morag met William Chalmers, who was working as a woodcutter, using horses to extract timber, at the Haining Estate near Largs, and they were married, and their son Colin was born in 1958. They moved to Wullie's smallholding near Kilmarnock in 1959 and second son Hugh was born in 1960. There was always lots of drama with my older teenage half-sisters and half-brothers, with up to seven in the small house, which had a bath under the kitchen worktop, and ice inside the bedroom windows in winter.

At the smallholding, she was always kind to strangers, and in those days, there were a succession of 'tramps' who stayed overnight in the barn, having been well fed and watered. In the summer, she would open up the house toilet to the annual taxi run of disabled children from Glasgow to Troon. She was a great supporter of the local Boy's Brigade where her sons spent many happy years.

Morag had always wanted to be closer to her dad and his new family, and he was working and living at Eribol farm, on the north coast of Sutherland, and she was delighted in 1976 when they got the tenancy of a small farm in Sutherland, at Migdale.



(Left) On her wedding day to William Emms, in 1947. (Centre) Morag and Wullie on a day out in 1966. (Right) Morag at Migdale Mill in 2001.

At Migdale, Morag quickly embraced the role of farmer's wife, although it soon became apparent that this was not enough. She had made butter from goats in Kilmarnock, and she soon began making butter from the two jersey cows which Wullie milked each morning for 25 years, as well as growing tomatoes and potatoes for sale in Bonar. She would make some great steam puddings on the Raeburn, with a stewing teapot on top as well, and always had a wholesome feed of tatties and stew to feed hungry friends who often turned up at teatime!

About that time, there was discussion about the possibility of storing nuclear waste in the area, so both Wullie and Morag became part of the Highland Anti-Nuclear Group – HANG. Luckily, or perhaps due to strong opposition, this idea was never followed up.

Morag researched the Invercharron Highland Gatherings which started in 1888 – she became obsessed with the idea of reinstating the games, and, by marshalling local talent, the new Invercharron Highland Games began in 1981, and was on the official Scottish Highland Games circuit, attracting big name athletes from all over the world.

For the next 26 years, Morag's life

revolved around the games. As the Games Secretary she pulled everything together, and it became a great focus for community effort. Even Wullie was roped in to sort out the marquees and to measure how far the hammer was thrown! Morag's forceful and uncompromising nature came to the fore at the many meetings of

Morag became obsessed with the idea of reinstating the Invercharron Highland Gatherings (started in 1888) and by marshalling local talent, the new Invercharron Highland Games began in 1981

the games committee, and as someone said recently, "she would tell you exactly what she thought!" She also became involved in judging the highland dancing and piping competitions. There were many busy nights at the Mill where competitors, judges and chieftains were entertained.

When Wullie died in 1999, aged 75, she continued to work the sheep for quite a few years but eventually she let out the grazing. She managed to travel with her son to the Faroe Islands, Shetland, and Orkney, although she was getting less able, and her

eyesight was failing. She particularly liked Shetland, where she could feel the sense of a close-knit agricultural community. She was always a keen gardener, and the local garden centres will miss her regular trips to buy up all sorts of fruit trees and shrubs, and hundredweights of daffodil bulbs. She also became engrossed with the story of her ancestors, and travelled to South Uist, Eriskay, Barra and Ardnamurchan, looking at places where her grandparents had lived. As she said at the time, with her pension and disablement payment, she had never been so well off, and spent some money on getting a professional genealogist involved. I can email the reports to anyone interested.

Morag achieved her stated goal of 'being determined to only leave Migdale in a box'. She hung onto life, even though it was not very comfortable for her for the last few years. It was touch and go for at least the last five years whether she would see her beloved daffodils again, but she did see them this year after all.

Over 50 close and extended family and local friends attended her funeral in Inverness Crematorium, and her wishes were that part of her ashes be scattered at Migdale Mill, and some on her mother's grave in Ayrshire. ■ By Hugh Chalmers

HERITAGE

50 YEARS OF SUTHERLAND... ... AND 800 YEARS OF CLAN ROSS

We reproduce here **Jason Ubych's talk on the story of Ardgay & District** that he was invited to read at the Ardgay in Sutherland Golden Jubilee celebration in May.

I'VE brought something with me today: the Balnagown estate books from the 1920s. They're full of names I think many of you will recognise – Rosses, Munros, Grahams – so many Ross families, in fact, that most had to adopt family aliases just to tell them apart: the Watts, the Roys, the Beckies, the Bains, the Burkes, and many more.

I wouldn't be surprised if a few of you find a grandfather, great-aunt, or neighbour listed in here. These aren't just estate records – they're reminders that this land has been shaped by your families, your names, for generations.

But why are there so many Rosses here? Why do those names appear again and again across the centuries?

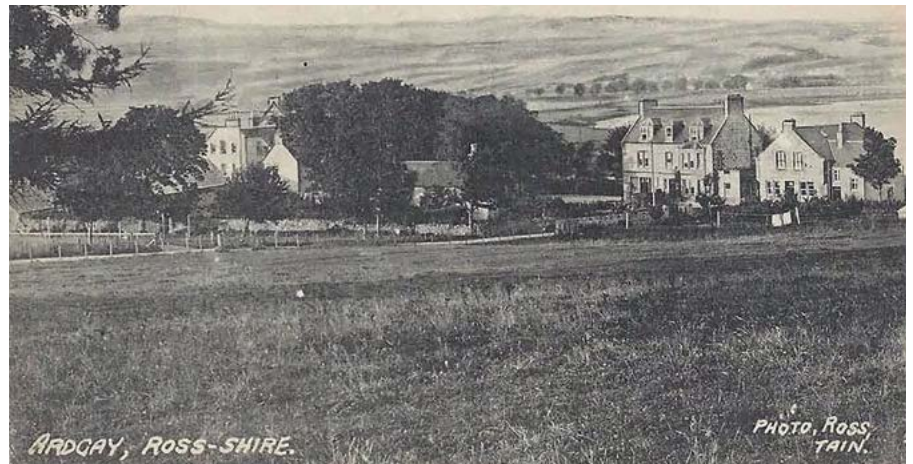
Let me explain why.

Ardgay has always been central – to the Earldom of Ross, to Clan Ross, and to the peninsula itself. Its importance stretches back even before the time of the Earls. The remarkable Pictish art we associate with Tarbat in the 8th century has also been found here at Kincardine, reminding us that this was likely a place of shared culture, belief, and power long before the age of chiefs and charters.

From these beginnings, we learn that this was the original home of Fearn Abbey, founded in the early 13th century. When the Abbey moved east to Easter Ross in the 1230s, the lands here – Ardgay, Kincardine, Wester Fearn – remained central. They were granted to the new Abbey and became part of its permanent endowment.

These ties were old. For centuries, these lands funded Fearn Abbey, which became the burial place of the Earls of Ross and the chiefs of Clan Ross.

Indeed we find, there are several place-names in Kincardine and Strathcarron thought to honour Walter Ross, son of the Earl of Ross – one



of only two knights recorded by name as dying at the Battle of Bannockburn in 1314 – including Leaba Bhàltair (“Walter's Bed”) and Walter's Forest.

After the loss of the Earldom in the 15th century, the Rosses of Balnagown retained their power through land. John Ross of Balnagown, the leading figure of his time, held extensive estates across Easter and Wester Ross – including Westray (Edderton), Strathcarron, Strathoykell, and Invercassley. Though the title of Earl passed from the Ross family, their dominance on the ground remained intact.

It was to these lands – Edderton, Strathcarron, and Invercassley – that the Rosses turned in 1487, when the Mackays of Strathnaver raided south across the marches. But here, at Alt Charrais, they suffered their darkest day. In the battle that followed, Chief Alexander Ross of Balnagown and many of the leading men of Easter Ross were killed. It was a devastating blow – a turning point that marked one of the bloodiest episodes in the Ross–Mackay feud, which would continue for years.

Then, in the early 1500s, Abbey lands at Kincardine were granted to William Ross of Ardgay, who served as Clan Chief from around 1528 to 1540, during the minority of his nephew.

William built a tower house here and began a lasting branch of the family. He is buried in the Collegiate Church at Tain, just beside our museum.

By the end of the 16th century, most of the land here was in the hands of Rosses, and to a lesser extent Munros, who continued to pay rent to the Abbey – even as church power waned.

But Ardgay's story didn't end with land charters for grazing and fishing.

Throughout the 17th century, these lands supplied men for war. Local Rosses and Munros fought in the 30 Years Wars in Germany, the Civil War – at the Battle of Carbisdale, not far from here, and later at the Battle of Worcester in 1651, against the forces of Oliver Cromwell.

The cost was steep. The Chief of Clan Ross died imprisoned in the Tower of London. Others – Rosses and Munros alike – were captured, shipped to America, and sold at auction in Boston. From the banks of the Kyle to the battlefields of England – the story of Ardgay is part of a much wider history.

Even your legends reflect this. Stories tell of the ghost of Captain William Ross of Invercarron, who died fighting in “the High Germanie,” returning to warn a boastful young lad on the banks of the Oykel.



During the Jacobite Wars, the Rosses played a key role in the early stages –but by the time of Culloden, Balnagown had fallen into the hands of strangers, and the clan was broken and splintered.

David Ross of Midfearn fought on the government side at Culloden in 1746. But not all Rosses stood together. Young Malcolm Ross of Pitcalnie, whose father should have inherited Balnagown, joined the Jacobite cause. He was wounded at the Battle of Littleferry, just days before Culloden.

Fleeing the field, wounded and hunted, Malcolm was said to have been rescued by Ann Graham, who carried him to safety. He found refuge at Amat, hiding out in the hills above Strathcarron before finally fleeing into exile. He died abroad, far from the lands his family once ruled.

We know what happens in the 18th and 19th centuries –the Year of the Sheep, Glencalvie, and Greenyards.

And after all this, in the 1920s, Ross, Munro, Graham are names that feature heavily in the Balnagown Book, which I've brought with me today.

Today, we're here to celebrate something genuinely good: the coming together of two communities – Bonar Bridge and Ardgay – whose histories, families, and futures have long been intertwined. That unity is something to be proud of, and marking it today is both right and overdue.

But while this partnership is cause for celebration, there's also a quiet truth worth remembering: moving the geographic boundary of Sutherland into Ardgay –into the heartland of Clan Ross – feels a little off. For hundreds of years, this land was Ross country. It was here that abbeys were founded, battles were fought, and chiefs were buried.

So perhaps, as people come across the bridge heading south, they should be met with a sign that says:

Welcome to Clan Ross Country.

Because that's what this place has always been. ■ **By Jason Ubych, Curator, Tain & District Museum & Clan Ross Centre**
Tain Museum (Tower Street, Tain IV19 1DY) is open 10am - 4pm, TUE - FRI, April - October.



A new chapter for Croick Church

Historic Churches Scotland will secure the preservation of the building and its significant history.

WE are pleased to share with *Kyle Chronicle* readers the good news that the care of Croick Church has been transferred from the Church of Scotland General Trustees to Historic Churches Scotland. This milestone secures the preservation of the building and its significant history after a long period of uncertainty following a decision to close the church.

Croick is considered to be the most important of the 32 churches known as 'Parliamentary' or 'Telford' churches, built in Scotland following an 1823 Act of Parliament and overseen by the celebrated engineer Thomas Telford. But it is the church's association with The Clearances which gives Croick outstanding historical significance and made its safeguarding by Historic Churches Scotland – a national building conservation charity – a priority.

Founded in 1996, Historic Churches Scotland saves churches of national importance at risk from closure, disuse, or decay, and works in partnership with communities to preserve, protect and manage build-

ings for local benefit. Croick is the ninth church to come into the charity's care.

Survey work commissioned by Historic Churches Scotland and supported by the Church of Scotland General Trustees identified serious failings with the structure of Croick Church, and work will begin shortly on an initial scheme of urgent repairs to make the church safe and weathertight. In time, further major repairs will be needed together with specialist conservation of the unique etched window glass and other artefacts.

Later this summer, once the initial work has been completed, the church will reopen with a community open day. The team from Historic Churches Scotland is looking forward to seeing everyone with an interest in the church, past or present, and we will keep you updated as work progresses and a date is set.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like to get involved at Croick Church, please get in touch with Victoria Collison, Historic Churches Scotland's director: victoria@historicchurches.scot or 0778 068 2961 ■ **By Victoria Collison**



PUZZLES

Sudoku

Easy

Grid n°214748432 easy

				7				
	3	2		6		8		7
6	5						3	
				9		1		
			1				5	2
						9		
			8			2		
		1		2	5		7	
9							1	6

Medium

Grid n°100008625 medium

						7		
				2				5
					7	6		8
	6			9		8		
	9	5				1		4
	8		5	4	1	9		
					4			
	5	1	9				7	
	4		2				9	

Hard

Grid n°58782 hard

		9		7			8	5
			8		5		9	
						6		
				1		8		
	3		9			7		
						4	1	
		3		6	7			
	9	6	1	4				3
1				9				

A number may not appear twice in the same row or in the same column or in any of the nine 3x3 subregions.

Wordsearch

Countries Can you find the hidden 29 words?

G	A	B	O	N	U	X	M	H	S	A
Q	A	T	A	R	A	T	O	G	O	Q
N	E	M	E	Y	A	I	U	S	A	T
R	L	P	N	L	N	E	S	R	L	A
C	E	E	O	I	I	S	I	S	O	B
A	K	G	A	J	U	T	E	M	U	U
N	N	P	I	R	I	O	A	L	H	R
A	S	F	U	N	S	N	I	L	A	A
D	N	A	L	E	C	I	D	L	Y	W
A	N	I	H	C	H	A	D	I	A	E
E	Z	I	L	E	B	Z	G	U	A	M

Kakuro

Just like in sudoku, fill in the grid with the digits from 1 to 9. Each group of digits must add up to the number that is just to the left or above it. No group can repeat the same digit twice.

	4	17	11			19	5	
13					13			
11					9			
			6					
		7						
	9							
	11				13	9		
8				7				
9				22				

Codeword

Each number in the Codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. In this puzzle, 3 represents I and 8 represents T, so fill in I every time the figure 3 appears and T every time the figure 8 appears. Now, using your knowledge of the English language, work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you discover the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and the control grid.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
		I					T					
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

		13		10		13		17				
17	16	9	18	21	19	2	13	8	T	24	16	
	8		21		19		23			18		
3	I	21	11				26	24	24	12		
	9		6		13		14			25		
20	18	3	5	11	6	3	14	7	24	16		
	7		18		11		24		1			
	24	13	8	6				6	3	4		
	13		8		14		14		6			
12	18	22	14	3	5	24	21	24	1	15		
			24		19		17		6			



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Fri & Sat 10 am - 4 pm Dinner: 5:30 pm - 9 pm

Sunday: 10 am - 6 pm



WHAT'S ON

27

JUNE

9pm -
10:30pm
FRI**Bat Walk***Gearrhoille Community Wood, Ardgay*

Hosted by High Life Highland Countryside Rangers. Come along and find out what bats eat, where they live and other interesting facts about these wonderful creatures. If the weather is unsuitable on the 27th we will aim to try again on the 4th July.



28

JUNE

7:30pm
SAT**Lairg: a celebration***Lairg Community Centre*

Celebrate the village with an evening of drama, short films and music, all inspired by local voices and experiences. Written and created by David McNeish. Bookings: <https://eden-court.co.uk/event/welcome-to-lairg>

18

JULY

7:30pm
WED**Whist Drive***Bonar Bridge Community Hall*

Organised by Kyle of Sutherland Whist Club, summer monthly whist drives. Visitors and players new to the game will all be very welcome.



26

JULY

10am
-9pm
SAT**Dornoch Beer Festival***The Meadows*

Dornoch, are you ready to raise a glass? We're thrilled to announce we're bringing Dornoch's very first beer festival to life! Music, fun and community. Tickets: <https://www.dornochbeerfestival.co.uk/>

10

AUG

10am -
6pm
SUN**Tain Highland Gathering***Glenmorangie Ground, Tain*

Highland Dancing, Piping, Track & Field Events, Cycling, and, of course, the Heavies! Adults £10, Children £5; Toddlers free; Family Ticket £30; Car Park £5.

FROM
14

AUG

THUR

Kyle of Sutherland Gala Weekend*Various venues*

Ardross Pipe Band parade, Queen's crowning, family colour run, dance, village treasure hunt, paddleboarding, pet show, flower and veg show, fun run, duck race, pub quiz, kids cookery... and much more! Full programme coming soon.



15

AUG

7pm
FRI**Rosehall Summer Ceilidh***Rosehall Village Hall*

With Susie Simpson. Come along for a great evening of music and dance. Visit <https://www.facebook.com/RosehallVillageandHall> for more details.



16

AUG

11am
SAT**Summer Fun Day***Davochfin Farm, Dornoch*

Family-run working farm and recreation space: golf, fishing, games... More info on <https://www.facebook.com/Davochfin>



© Graham Hogg

24

AUG

10am
SUN**Portmahomack, Tarbat Ness, Ballone Castle & Rockfield Walk***Organised by Sutherland Walkers*

OS 21 NH 914 843. 16km / 10 miles, circular, coastal walk. Leader, Bill Lockyer: 07507 674161. Optional short walk, Portmahomack to Tarbat Ness, return by car. 6.5km / 4 miles. Both walks start from Portmahomack car park at 10am.

FROM
9

SEP

TUE

St Duthac Book & Arts Festival*Various Venues*

From 9th to 14th September 2025. Many events in and around Tain and the Easter Ross Peninsula. Visit <https://www.stduthacbookfest.com/> for full details of all events and how to book.



Kyle of Sutherland Community Resilience Plan

FOR CREICH AND ARDGAY & DISTRICT COMMUNITIES

1 Bonar Bridge

- Bonar Bridge Hall
- Bonar Bridge Post Office

2 Ardgay

- Ardgay Hall

3 Rosehall

- Rosehall Hall

4 Invershin

- Invershin Hall

5 Culrain

- Culrain Hall
- Culrain Phone Box

6 South Bonar

- The Hub

7 Cherry Grove

- Bradbury Centre

8 Invercassley

- Achness Hotel

9 Oykel Bridge

- Oykel Bridge Hotel

10 Strathcarron

- Braelangwell Lodge

11 Falls of Shin

- Visitor Attraction

12 Amatnua

- Phone Box

13 Croick

- Croick Estate Deer Larder

14 Spinningdale

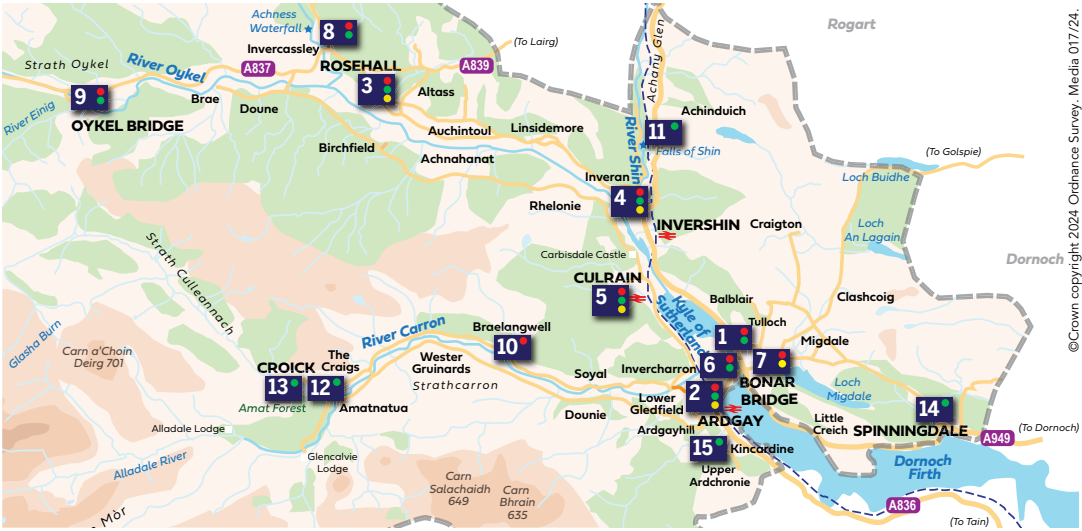
- Crossroads

15 Kincardine Hill

- KMS Training Solutions

KEY SAFE LOCATIONS

In cases where there is a direct risk to life (such as flooding, explosion/fire, major accident) an emergency plan will be activated and managed by the emergency services. Community involvement and support may be important or vital. In cases where there is no direct/immediate risk to people's lives (such as prolonged power outage caused by severe weather) the local Resilience Group will stay in contact with the emergency responders.



MAP KEY: ● SAFE PLACE ● DEFIBRILLATOR ● GENERATOR



SSEN Priority Services Register: A power cut can be distressing and difficult. SSEN offers extra help and support to vulnerable people during a power cut. To sign up, please call 0800 294 3259 or visit www.ssen.co.uk/priorityservices/ for more information

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

POLICE SCOTLAND (Non emergencies)	101
NHS NHS 24 helpline www.nhs24.com	111
WATER Scottish Water	08000 778 778
HIGHLAND COUNCIL Health & social care out of hours	08457 697 284
Roads, parks, flooding & street lighting	01349 886 690
ROAD INCIDENT TRUNK Road maintenance - BEAR:	01738 448 600
www.trafficscotland.org	
TRAIN INCIDENT British Transport Police	0800 40 50 40

FLOODING SEPA floodline www.sepa.org.uk/scottishflood-forecast	03459 881 188
SEVERE WEATHER www.metoffice.gov.uk	
POWER OUTAGES For all electricity providers	105
BROADBAND & TELEPHONE OUTAGES Highland Wireless	01862 808 077
BT Customer line	0800 800 150
EE support	0800 079 8586
TalkTalk help	0345 172 0088
Plusnet helpline	0800 432 0200
Vodafone	03333 040 191
PHARMACY Bonar Bridge	01863 760 011

POLICE / FIRE / AMBULANCE: 999

LOCAL HEALTH CENTRES Creich Surgery	01863 766 379
The Health Centre, Lairg	01549 402 007
Dornoch Medical Practice	01862 810 213
Migdale Hospital, Bonar Bridge	01863 766 211
Lawson Memorial Hospital, Golspie	01408 633 157
Raigmore Hospital, Inverness:	01463 704 000
CYBER SCAMS Report Fraud	0300 123 2040
www.actionfraud.police.uk	
Police Scotland	101
www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/scams	

RIVER INCIDENT Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust	01863 766 702
www.watersafetyscotland.org.uk	
ENVIRONMENTAL SEPA pollution hotline	0800 807 060
www.ep-scotland.org.uk	
MENTAL HEALTH Samaritans	116 113
CROCUS	01463 714 568
NHS24	111
Mikeysline	07786 20 77 55
Breathing Space	0800 83 85 87
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE Caithness & Sutherland Women's aid	03454 080 151
NSPCC	0808 800 5000

PUBLIC TRANSPORT & SERVICES

Train times

LAIRG → INVERNESS

MON TO SAT

SUN

LAIRG

-

06:26

08:52

10:38

15:12

18:35

-

14:33

INVERSHIN

-

06:34x

-

10:46x

15:20x

18:43x

-

14:41x

CULRAIN

-

06:35x

-

10:47x

15:21x

18:44x

-

14:42x

ARDGAY

06:13

06:43

09:07

10:54

15:30

18:51

19:29

14:49

INVERNESS

07:45

08:12

10:39

12:27

17:08

20:14

21:01

16:15

INVERNESS → LAIRG

MON TO SAT

SUN

INVERNESS

07:00

10:41

14:00

17:12

18:31

-

17:54

ARDGAY

08:33

12:05

15:29

18:40

20:02

-

19:23

CULRAIN

08:37x

12:09x

15:33x

-

20:06x

-

19:27x

INVERSHIN

08:38x

12:10x

15:34x

-

20:07x

-

19:28x

LAIRG

08:53

12:21

15:45

-

20:18

-

19:42

x: Request stop. Passengers are advised check scotrail.co.uk or National Rail Enquiries for up to date travel information before travelling.

Vets

Rogart Vets (currently closed)

Easter Ross Vets Tain:

01862 893 142

Johnston & Farrell Vets Tain:

01862 894 223

Pharmacies

BONAR BRIDGE PHARMACY

01863 760 011

Dornoch Rd, Bonar Bridge,

IV24 3EB. MON to FRI: 9 am -

5:30 pm SAT: 9 am - 1 pm

WELL Lairg, The Main St,

Lairg IV27 4AR 01549 402 374

MON to FRI: 8:30 am -1 pm,

2-5:30 pm SAT: 8:30 am -1 pm

Bonar Bridge Library

MON 10am-12:30pm 2:30-5pm

TUE 10am-12:30pm WED 10am-12:30pm THURS 10am-12:30pm

5:30-8pm FRI 10am-12:30pm

Tel: 01863 760083

Weather watcher

Mid Fearn Weather Station - By Gregor Laing

Temp °C - High

13.6

17.7

23.6

Temp °C - Low

-4.4

-3.8

-0.3

Average

4.2

7.3

9.2

Average 2024

4.6

5.7

7.5

Rainfall mm

18.53

34.31

17.28

Rainfall 2024

100.61

75.42

82.07

Presssure hPa - High

1030.14

1020.66

1020.66

Presssure hPa - Low

967.83

980.36

980.02

Rainfall for the period was just 70.12mm (2.76 inches) compared to the same period last year of 258.10mm (10.16 inches)

Local Venues for hire

ARDGAY PUBLIC HALL:

01863 766 602

BONAR BRIDGE HALL:

07842 076 274

BRADBURY CENTRE:

01863 766 772

CULRAIN HALL: 07972 310 389

INVERSHIN HALL:

01549 421 369

KINCARDINE OLD CHURCH:

01863 766 700

ROSEHALL VILLAGE HALL:

01549 475 080

THE BARN: 01863 766 190

THE HUB: 01863 769 170

Recycling Centre

Craggandhu, Bonar Bridge,

IV24 3AA. MON 1pm to

4:30pm. THURS 8am to 12pm

Citizens Advice Bureau

East & Central Sutherland CAB,

Golspie. Tel: 01408 633 000

THURS 11am-1pm at The Hub or

MON to FRI 9am-5pm at Golspie.

RAPSON'S

HIGHLAND

900 - MON TO FRI

TAIN → LAIRG

Tain Asda

10:05 12:52

13:02 15:32

16:36 18:25

LAIRG Main St

07:53 07:53

11:00 14:00

17:25

Edderton

10:18 13:15

13:15 15:55

16:51 18:40

INVERSHIN Old School House

08:03 08:03

11:15 14:10

Arday Hall

10:31 13:27

13:27 16:07

17:03 18:52

INVERSHIN Hotel

08:05 08:05

11:18 14:12

17:37

Bonar Bridge Migdale Hospital

13:30 13:30

16:09 18:55

Bonar Bridge Post Office

08:10 08:10

11:23 14:17

16:09 17:42

Bonar Bridge Post Office

10:34 13:31

13:31 17:06

19:00

Bonar Bridge Migdale Hospital

11:25 14:19

17:44

INVERSHIN Hotel

10:39 13:36

13:36 17:11

19:05

Arday Hall

08:13 08:13

11:26 14:20

16:11 17:45

INVERSHIN Old School House

10:41 13:38

13:38

Edderton

08:28 08:28

11:38 14:32

16:22 17:57

LAIRG Main St

10:53 13:52

13:52 17:23

19:17

Tain Asda

08:45 08:41

11:53 14:45

16:35 18:10

00:00 Mon-Fri Requested stop

00:00 School days only 00:00

Fri school days only 00:00 School

days not Fri. 00:00 School holidays

00:00 School days and holidays

except Fri school days

167 - MON TO FRI

LAIRG → DORNOCH

LAIRG

07:31

INVERSHIN

07:39

Bonar Bridge

07:46

Arday

07:49

Arday

07:59

Bonar Bridge

08:02

Spinningdale

08:10

Clashmore

08:19

Dornoch

08:27

LAIRG

16:42

INVERSHIN

16:34

Bonar Bridge

16:29

Arday

16:26

Arday

16:16

Bonar Bridge

16:13

Spinningdale

16:05

Clashmore

15:56

Dornoch

15:40

Bradbury centre bus

920 - TUESDAY

Bonar Bridge to Dornoch via Spinningdale

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

09:40

Spinningdale Layby at Post Box

09:48

Clashmore Carnegie Hall

09:54

Dornoch Sq

10:00

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

10:20

Spinningdale Layby at Post Box

10:12

Clashmore Carnegie Hall

10:06

Dornoch Sq

10:00

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

13:30

Spinningdale Layby at Post Box

13:38

Clashmore Carnegie Hall

13:44

Dornoch Sq

13:50

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

14:20

Spinningdale Layby at Post Box

14:11

Clashmore Carnegie Hall

14:05

Dornoch Sq

14:00

920 - WEDNESDAY

Bonar Bridge circular to Dornoch via Spinningdale, Tain & Edderton

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

09:30

Spinningdale Layby at Post Box

09:38

Clashmore Carnegie Hall

09:54

Tain Bus stop at Co-Op

10:02

Tain Lamington Street

10:04

Edderton

10:17

Arday

10:39

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

10:42

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

14:40

Spinningdale Layby at Post Box

14:31

Clashmore Carnegie Hall

14:19

Tain Bus stop at Co-Op

14:08

Tain Lamington Street

14:06

Edderton

13:53

Arday

13:33

Bonar Bridge Cherry Grove

13:30

Operates every Tuesday and Wednesday apart from Christmas and New Year weeks.

The minibus has a wheelchair lift which will be available as part of the service.

Bookings: 01863 766 772

Taxi

Ronnie's Taxis Arday

01863 766 422

Northern Sights (Lairg)

01549 402 399

Mobile Banking

ROYAL BANK OF SCOTLAND

THURSDAY

Bonar Bridge War Memorial

Arrive 12:15 Depart 12:30



MONDAY TO SATURDAY
All year round. Updated May 2024

805

DURNESS → INVERNESS

Smoo Cave Hotel	Smoo Cave Hotel
08:00	18:10** 19:10R**
Durness PO	Durness PO
08:05	18:08** 19:08**
Balnakeil	Balnakeil
08:10	18:05R** 19:05R**
Rhiconich	
08:35	
Kinlochbervie	Kinlochbervie
Post Office	Post Office
08:55	17:40* 18:40*
Rhiconich	Rhiconich
09:02	17:30* 18:30*
Laxford	
09:10	
Scourie	Scourie
09:20	17:30R 18:30R
Laxford	Laxford
09:30	17:20 18:20
Achfary	Achfary
09:40	17:10 18:10
Overscaig	Overscaig
10:00	16:50 17:50
Lairg War Mem.	Lairg War Mem.
10:25	16:25 17:25
Bonar Bridge	Bonar Bridge
Post Office	Post Office
10:40	16:05 17:05
Ardgay	Ardgay War Mem.
10:43	16:00 17:00
Ardross	Ardross
Crossroads	Crossroads
11:00	15:40 16:40
Tore Roundabout	Tore Roundabout
11:25	15:15R 16:15R
Inverness	Inverness
Bus Station	Bus Station
11:40	15:00 16:00
Raigmore	Raigmore
Hospital	Hospital
11:50	14:45R 15:45R
UHI	UHI
11:53	14:35R 15:35R

Up to 8 standard bicycles can be carried but must be booked 24 h in advance

00:00 Saturday return. R Requested
00:00* Approx 20 min later if requested stop at Scourie is used.

00:00** Service will be delayed by a further 5 minutes.

Service does not run on New Years Day, Christmas day or Boxing day. It is advisable to book. Text 07782 110 007

Animal rescue



Highland Wildlife Rescue:
07957 584 817
146 Ladies Loch, Brora
KW9 6NG (please phone first)

CHURCHES

Meet Rev Carol Anne Porter, new Minister for Dornoch Firth Parish

Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland is a new union of local churches which include the parishes of Kincardine (Ardgay), Croick and Edderton, alongside Creich (Bonar Bridge) and Dornoch.

FOR the last year and a half, we have been quietly going about the work of getting to know each other, spending time together, beginning to ask questions about who we are and what is important to us and, importantly, how we can serve and support our communities. As part of that process, we've been out and about across the Parish. Maybe you've spotted us or even joined in... at the Gearrhoille Community Woods that damp December day with Geordie and Jimmy the Christmas donkeys... or in Christine's shed at Dounie at lambing time... or more recently, at Drover's Square celebrating being part of Sutherland County.

It has been my privilege to have been Locum Minister here for more than three years, first for Dornoch, then for the new wider parish. In January, after preaching for the vacant charge, I was made Minister Elect and will soon be inducted as Minister for Dornoch Firth Parish, serving in the role, I hope, for the next seven years which is the duration of tenure generally being afforded Ministers of the Church of Scotland presently. I am really looking forward to getting to know more and more folk across the parish and to the church becoming more and more part of the communities it serves and maybe even becoming the beating heart it longs to be.

There are opportunities to worship in Dornoch Cathedral each Sunday morning at 11am. Additionally, because of a blip in the sale process, we have been



able to retain the Hall next to Kincardine Church, Ardgay, which gives us a base at the western end of our Parish in which we can worship. This is generally on the second and fourth Sundays of the month at 1.30pm but as we're still in the 'trying things' phase that can change - details are always on our website, facebook and on posters in shop windows locally.

Between Sundays there are opportunities to come together for one-off events like the popular 'Singing Waiters' meal which will return to Bonar Village Hall this autumn as well as regular meetings and activities which help us grow in faith and friendship. Please do keep an eye and ear out for what is happening on <https://facebook.com/dornochcathedral> and <https://www.dornoch-cathedral.com> and know a warm welcome will always be yours in joining in.

by Rev Carol Anne Porter

Contact details for all churches in the area:

Assynt, Rosehall & Scourie Church of Scotland

rosehallchurch@arascosf.org

Bonar & Dornoch - Free Presbyterian Church

Rev John A Morrison

01863 766157

jammorrison87@gmail.com

Dornoch Firth Church of Scotland

Rev Carol Anne Porter

07400 313 303

ca.porter76@icloud.com

Lairg & Bonar Bridge Free Church of Scotland

Rev John Mann

jtmklb@aol.com

Scottish Episcopal Church - Dornoch, Lairg Brora, Tain & Tongue

Rev Canon Simon Scott

07854 309339

episcopaldornochtain.org

BOOKS | NOVEL IDEAS FROM CATHERINE



Splendid isolation

Clear by Carys Davies



by Catherine Williams,
Vice Chairperson, St Duthac Book and Arts Festival

HE wished he could swim – the swimming belt felt like a flimsy thing and it had been no comfort to be told not to worry, the men couldn't swim either.

Each time the boat rose he glimpsed the rocky shore, the cliffs, the absence of any kind of landing; each time descended, the rocks vanished and were replaced by a liquid wall of grey."

The opening paragraphs of *Clear* by Carys Davies, leads the reader right to the heart of the remoteness and isolation that makes this short novel so compelling.

Set in 1843, John Ferguson is a young church Minister, broken away from the Church of Scotland to be part of the new Free Church; he is married, impoverished, and without a parish or flock. In desperation he turns to the only paid work he can find – evicting the last person remaining on a remote island off the North coast of mainland Scotland. Dirty work that is part of the so-called "improvement" of the land management of huge swathes of the north, later known as "The Clearances."

Leaving his wife behind, John is taken by boat and landed into another world, one of huge skies, towering cliffs, and the screams of thousands of seabirds circling overhead. Before going to meet the man he has been sent to evict, John has an accident, tumbling almost to his death, and is found by Ivar. As the one nurses the other, each man wary, bonds begin to form despite there being no common language.

This tightly told story of developing friendship has at its heart deceit, for John does not reveal what his real purpose is, that when the boat comes back to collect him, Ivar will be forced off the island to make way for sheep. Tense and tender in equal measure, with beautiful prose throughout, I am sure this novel will come to be viewed as a modern classic.

Clear was Waterstones Book of the Month earlier this year, and Pulitzer Prize winning author Hernan Diaz praised the work highly saying "Not since Silas Marner have I encountered such a poignant, profound depiction of both solitude and connection."

Edinburgh-based author, Carys Davies' novel, *Clear*, priced at £12.99, is published by Granta Books ISBN 978 1 80351 040 8 hardback and ISBN 978 1 80351 041 5 ebook and is available from all good bookshops and of course free from your local library. ■



FILMS



© Warner Bros Ent.

Sinners

Release date (UK): 2025
Country: US, Australia, Canada
Running time: 137 min
Genre: Period - Horror - Drama

Director: Ryan Coogler
Starring: Michael B. Jordan, Miles Caton, Saul Williams.
BBFC 15

RYAN Coogler, director of the *Black Panther* films, delivers an action-packed musical thriller that is the towering crescendo of his career so far.

Sinners nostalgically explores the peak of Blues music in the Deep South in 1932, with soulful melodies able to bridge the land of the living with the land of the dead. This leads to blood-curdling consequences, when vampires descend on a juke bar on its opening night; the film seamlessly evolving from a musical drama into a supernatural horror. Coogler balances numerous genre conventions with *Sinners*, but this functions in tandem with its musical themes, each thematic beat played at the same rhythm to create a cohesive cinematic experience.

Michael B. Jordan undertakes a dual-character role in *Sinners*, playing twin brothers Smoke and Stack with a skilful degree of separation. The brothers have entirely distinct personalities – one stoic and one carefree, so that an audience quickly forgets that the twins are played by the same person, even during their brawls. The cinematography is intoxicating, especially exemplified in the film's central long take while Sammie Moore (Miles Caton) performs Blues music. The camera pirouettes around dancing patrons, effortlessly transporting us through time to embrace all eras of black musical history; both past and future.

Sinners is a fantastical love letter to Blues music and proves that all films showing in the cinema don't have to be sequels or remakes to be successful. *Sinners* made £242M worldwide becoming a serious box office contender, which is reassuring for those of us tired of hearing "Chicken Jockey" in everyday conversation. ■
By Jack Weir. Jack Weir is a graduate of Edinburgh Napier University's Film BA (Hons) course.

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Spinningdale - Sutherland

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