

## **ANNEX A: MELGARVE CLUSTER PROJECT: STATHSPEY & BADENOCH HERALD ADVERTISEMENTS AND THE PRESS AND JOURNAL ADVERTISEMENTS**



SCHEME: Dorothy Pritchard stresses the spaceport project will involve peat restoration.

# 'Space crofter' puts peat on COP26 agenda

CHRIS MACLENNAN

**A** crofter behind bringing the UK's first spaceport to Sutherland is to address the COP26 conference about the importance of restoring peatlands.

Melness Crofters Estate chairwoman Dorothy Pritchard will speak at The Rights and Cultures of Peat event at the global conference on Friday.

She will share a pre-recorded presentation before taking part virtually in a live question and answer session.

The restoration of peatlands is considered crucial in combatting climate change.

Peatland restoration has been made a top priority in the Scottish Government's bid to become a net-zero society by 2045.

In Sutherland, the new spaceport is aiming to become the world's first carbon neutral facility of its kind.

In a bid to offset the impact of construction, more than 76.9 hectares of peatland will be restored.

Peat removed in construction will be reused at different sites, including areas where historic

extraction has taken place. It will also be used in areas where drains have been constructed.

Floating roads will also be created, sitting on top of the peat and minimising disruption to the valuable resource.

Only around 10 acres of the estate's 10,700 acres of land will be impacted by fencing to create the exclusion zone, allowing native wildlife to move freely on the peninsula.

Other areas will be rewetted to reverse the environmental impacts of drainage.

Previously the announcement of the spaceport's creation on the A' Mhòine peninsula arguably put the area on the map.

Now, Mrs Pritchard believes the inclusion of the project at the conference is "putting it on the global stage".

She said: "Peat cutting played a big part in community life and culture here in Sutherland as hard-working crofters once used peat to heat their homes."

"However, we now know that healthy peatland plays a crucial role in reducing the impact of global warming.

This is an opportunity to shine a light on the hard work, commitment and dedication of those who are bringing the world's first carbon-neutral spaceport to life while ensuring peat restoration is considered at each stage.

"I'm confident that Space Hub Sutherland is going to be a good example of how development, sustainability and protecting our natural environment can go hand in hand."

Mrs Pritchard hopes the Sutherland spaceport can be used as an example at the global summit of the input of a small community in driving forward a sustainable development.

She added: "I would like communities to see that they can engage in a development and can still mitigate against their carbon footprint in a way that is sustainable if they galvanise as a community and come together."

"To me it is about engaging with local communities and not just paying them lip service."

The first launch at the Sutherland spaceport is scheduled to take place in 2022.

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## Positive climate summit outcome remains to be seen, says Lennox

Singer Annie Lennox has said she is "proud" that the COP26 climate change summit is taking place in Glasgow - but warned that the outcome "remains to be seen".

The Aberdeen-born musician, who was one half of Eurythmics in the 1980s before finding solo success, said if nations such as India and China "do not get on board" with action on climate change the world could be "in real jeopardy".

And she issued a plea for world leaders to "walk the talk" when it comes to tackling global warming.

Lennox, who is Chancellor of Glasgow Caledonian University, said: "Being around COP26, everyone is focused on climate change but afterwards, when everyone leaves, one has to walk one's talk."

"If large countries such as India and China do not get on board and really genuinely try to reduce



Annie Lennox.

their emissions, we are in real jeopardy."

She added: "I am very proud it's taking place in Scotland but I really have this terrible sense of dread."

"The latest UN report says we are missing the opportunity to build back better after the pandemic and, if we don't, we face disastrous temperature rises of at least 2.7C if

countries fail to meet their climate goals. That is really sobering. COP26 is not about the talk - it's about meeting the pledges, so the outcome remains to be seen."

The singer and campaigner revealed she has stopped eating meat as part of her personal efforts to protect the environment.

Lennox, who now lives in America, said: "My one change is becoming vegetarian and not eating red meat."

"I live with despair, I am dreadfully anxious about our future. Every day I feel 'Oh my god, we're stuck.'" She said: "I'm living here in America. Everything is plastic. To be quite frank, it haunts me."

Lennox also spoke about how she inherited her "passion for social activism" from her father's relatives, who she said were "working-class shipyard workers and socialists".



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# Monument to spy in the sky heroes backed

RACHEL AMERY

They have been described as “turning the tide” of the war and have one of the worst death tolls of any military unit in the Second World War – but little is known of the Photographic Reconnaissance Unit (PRU).

That could soon all be about to change, after MPs agreed to look at a campaign for an official memorial to the unit.

The PRU performed clandestine missions to

take photographs from the sky of enemy operations and installations during the war and provided vital same-day intelligence on major operations such as the D-Day landings and the Dambusters raid.

Between 1939 and 1945, the PRU physically captured 26 million images.

Many now say that without the success of this unit, the outcome of the war could have been very different.

The PRU also has the second-lowest survival rate

of any Allied aerial unit during the conflict, with 452 casualties.

However, these crews have never been officially recognised for their heroic work.

Since 2018, the Spitfire AA810 Project has been fighting to get formal recognition of the sacrifices the unit made, and wants to challenge the UK Government to recognise the role they played in securing an Allied victory.

The project is named after the PRU Spitfire



UNsung HEROES: The project to create the memorial is named after the Spitfire AA810 shot down in March 1942, which was piloted by Alistair Gunn, from Auchterarder.

discovered on the side of a Norwegian mountain after more than 76 years.



The Spitfire AA810 plane was flown during the war and was responsible for monitoring movements of the warship Tirpitz off Norway in 1942.

It was shot down in March 1942, and its pilot, Alistair “Sandy” Gunn from Auchterarder in Perthshire, went on to take part in the Great Escape.

He became a digger in the Stalag Luft III, a Luftwaffe-run prisoner of war camp located in modern-day Poland, and escaped in 1944, but was murdered by the Gestapo on direct orders from Adolf Hitler when he was recaptured.

Andrew Bowie, MP for West Aberdeenshire and Kincardine, brought up the campaign group’s pleas at Westminster.

He told his fellow MPs the unit had connections to RAF Leuchars in Fife, and in the middle of the war had a full photographic recon training unit established in Fraserburgh, which later moved to Dyce in Aberdeen. At the debate, UK Defence Minister Leo Docherty agreed to discuss how the Ministry of Defence can be involved in creating the proposed memorial.

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POSTPONED

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CAUGHT: Jaydon Eka was chased on foot by police officers after being stopped.

# London man caught with £100k drugs

DANNY MCKAY

A man has been given a jail warning after being caught with more than £100,000 of heroin and cocaine he'd transported from London to sell in Aberdeen.

Jaydon Eka hired a BMW sports car to drive to the Granite City but appeared "nervous and evasive" when police spotted and questioned him on Burnbrae Crescent in Aberdeen.

The 26-year-old then legged it and was seen "running frantically and flailing his arms about", before tripping and falling over, allowing officers to catch up with him.

Officers found two sets of car keys on Eka, and a search of the BMW and a Seat Leon uncovered drugs worth the six-figure sum.

Advocate depute Scott McKenzie told the High Court in Aberdeen that Eka hired a BMW i18 sports car from a rental dealership in Croydon on October 17 2019.

Around noon on

October 22, police on mobile patrol spotted the vehicle, and Eka standing next to it, on Burnbrae Crescent in Aberdeen, and approached to speak to him.

Mr McKenzie said: "The accused appeared to be very nervous, was evasive about answering simple questions and could not provide a reason for being in Aberdeen."

The advocate depute went on: "Police cautioned and detained the accused for a search. However, before he could be searched he ran away."

Police gave chase on foot, and a witness described seeing Eka "running frantically and flailing his arms about" before tripping and falling.

He was seen to be trying to hide a car key under his body. He was then handcuffed and arrested.

Officers then searched the area, discovered the second set of keys was for a Seat Leon and searched both vehicles.

Mr McKenzie told the court a large number of

packages, described as "street deals" of cocaine and heroin, were found.

The maximum potential value of the cocaine recovered was £74,940, meanwhile, the heroin was worth up to £28,350, giving a total value of £103,290.

Eka, of Albert Carr Gardens, London, pled guilty to charges of being concerned in the supply of cocaine and heroin.

Defence counsel Iain Paterson said his client was 24 at the time and "had not been in trouble with the police ever before".

Judge Johanna Johnston told Eka: "You have accepted your responsibility for being involved in the trade of class A drugs."

"The courts have repeatedly said the trade of deadly drugs, which is what these are, will be met with custodial sentences unless there are exceptional circumstances."

She deferred sentence until next month and ordered a background report to be prepared.

Eka was remanded in custody.

## Paedophile caught after young victim told her police officer dad

A 38-year-old man who sent sexually explicit messages to three 14-year-old girls was caught when one of his victims told her dad - a police officer.

Grant Morris - who exchanged a total of 59,000 messages with one girl - pretended to be a teenager from Edinburgh when he contacted the young girls on social media.

He has now pleaded guilty to sending sexually explicit messages to the schoolfriends during a 15-month period.

Between May 1 2018 and March 19 2019 at his home address - in Voieside, Bressay on Shetland - and elsewhere, he sent the messages via social media to the first victim.

And between January 1 and December 31 2018 he sent sexually explicit messages to a second 14-year-old and did the same between January 1 2018 and March 7 2019 to a third victim.





Grant Morris appeared at Lerwick Sheriff Court.

In all three cases he told the girls that he was a 19-year-old Edinburgh resident called Grant.

Mr Mackenzie said there was never any suggestion from Morris of attempting to meet up with any of the girls in person and there were occasions during the exchanges when he made excuses to avoid doing so. Sheriff Ian Cruickshank

deferred sentence for a criminal justice social work report and restriction of liberty assessment to be prepared.

Morris will be subject to notification requirements related to sexual offences and bail was continued until 8 December - when his defence agent will offer a statement in mitigation.



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PROUD: Rachael Johnstone, from Lewis, is now a professional goalkeeper for Celtic.

# Teen goalie is living her dream after leaving home

CHRIS MACLENNAN

For most 17-year-olds, passing a driving test is the milestone of the year.

However, one Western Isles teenager has a little bit more to celebrate.

Rachael Johnstone, who hails from Balallan on Lewis, has recently picked up her first silverware as a professional footballer with her childhood heroes Celtic.

For goalkeeper Rachael, it rounds off years of hard work and dedication, often leaving her native island on lengthy trips for training and matches.

It was only in November 2020 that she moved from Lewis to Glasgow, a year after she joined the now League Cup champions.

Rachael was reliant on her parents, in particular mother Rhona, to transport her to matches.

Rachael said: "It is something you dream about as a kid, lifting a cup with Celtic.

"It definitely is a dream come true and I am really happy that I have managed to accomplish that dream.

"This is the first step and hopefully there are more to come with Celtic."

Rachael said the move from home was tough, but her teammates' help made a difference.

She currently shares a flat in Paisley with five of them, something she and her mother have said has helped create a "family away from home".

Her move came just months after Rachael completed her studies, with her focus at present on her footballing ambition.

Rachael added: "It was pretty tough at first but I kept reminding myself why I was there and that was to be a professional footballer.

"I have settled in now and I have got a great bunch of flatmates with me. The coaching staff are really supportive because they know I am young.

"The views in Paisley outside my apartment are a lot different to the views in the Western Isles!"

Currently the 17-year-old dons the number 52 kit in homage to the number of her family home on Lewis.

Despite relocating and adopting Scotland's biggest city as her home for now, her pride for her island shines through.

Rachael added: "I am extremely proud of where I come from.

"It is a big part of me so it means a lot to say I have come from the Western Isles and I used to travel this amount of miles to get to training and that is why I am where I am.

"I managed to achieve a dream that looked so impossible two years ago so what is stopping me now?"

Rachael is the latest of a few youngsters from the Western Isles to pursue footballing careers on the mainland.

Other notable players include Rangers youth James Graham, who hails from Back, and Brora Rangers loanee Matthew Wright.

Rachael is keen to encourage others to dream big. She said: "It doesn't matter whether you are from an island or not, you can still go and play professional football."

## Club vows to continue mission to make sport more inclusive

Aberdeen's first inclusive rugby club has vowed to continue its mission of making the sport accessible to all despite a first season impacted heavily by the pandemic.

In 2018 Aberdeen Taexali was founded as an LGBTQ+-friendly club, aiming to encourage people who may not have otherwise taken up the sport to do so.

Bosses spent two years building a squad ahead of months of gruelling training sessions before the club played its first competitive match in September.

However, after just two games, the team was forced to pull out of the local league due to fixture call-offs and injuries.

Despite not being able to see the season through to its conclusion, they are still hailing the year as a success after playing at Murrayfield and welcoming more than a dozen new players.



Stephen Williamson and Rob Clunas of the club.

"Our club represents players who identify as gay, straight, queer and trans, and we're very proud to provide a safe, inclusive and welcoming space in the sport of rugby union," said Stephen Williamson, a founding member who serves as chairman.

In the new year Aberdeen Taexali plans to focus on actively

promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion in sport.

The club already has plans to host an Easter tournament featuring teams from International Gay Rugby (IGR) and the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU).

"There's lots still to come from Taexali, and I can't wait to see what we achieve next," said Stephen.



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# Accuser has 'waived right to sue duke'



UNDER PRESSURE: The Duke of York has denied all allegations of sexual assault.

TONY JONES

The Duke of York's accuser waived her right to sue him for sexual assault when she signed a 500,000 dollar (£370,000) settlement agreement, a US court has been told.

Andrew's lawyer, Andrew B Brettler, argued during a video conference hearing that the confidential agreement Virginia Giuffre entered into with Jeffrey Epstein, who she claims trafficked her to have sex with the duke, ended her right to pursue anyone else.

The document, made public on Monday, detailed how Andrew's accuser received a 500,000 dollar payout in 2009 and agreed to "release, acquit, satisfy and forever discharge" disgraced financier Epstein and "any other person or entity who could have been included as a potential defendant".

The duke's lawyer said about the claim for damages brought by Ms Giuffre: "It is unfair, it is unjust, it should be dismissed."

Judge Lewis A Kaplan, who is presiding over the case, told the parties at the conclusion of the hearing convened to hear arguments about dismissing the civil lawsuit that he would give a swift decision.

He said: "I appreciate the arguments and the passion. You will have a decision very soon."

During the hearing Mr Brettler said of the settlement: "I don't know who would be included in other potential defendants - if it weren't all of the other people who...Giuffre alleged abused her."

"She could have sued them and she did not and therefore she waived her rights to sue them when she entered into the 2009 release agreement and accepted the money from Mr Epstein."

"She did not return that money when she decided to file this lawsuit."

Ms Giuffre is suing the Queen's son for allegedly sexually assaulting her when she was a teenager. She is seeking unspecified

damages, but there is speculation the sum could be millions of dollars.

She claims she was trafficked by Epstein to have sex with Andrew when she was aged 17, and a minor under US law.

Andrew has denied all the allegations.

During the hearing there was legal discussion about the meaning of "potential defendant", with Mr Brettler telling Judge Kaplan it was "someone who was not named as a defendant but could have been".

The lawyer added that a potential defendant would be someone Ms Giuffre, also known as Virginia Roberts, knew that she had "claims against at the time that she filed the lawsuit" in 2009 against disgraced financier Epstein, whose former girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell was convicted last week of procuring teenage girls for him.

In response, the judge said "potential" was a word in which neither he nor Mr Brettler could "find any meaning at all".

## Judge orders charges dropped against Epstein prison guards

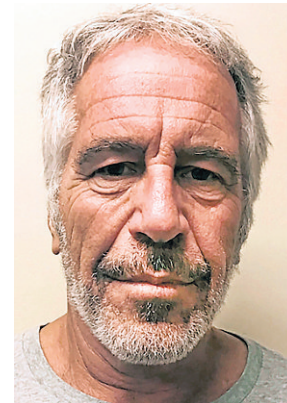
A judge has ordered charges dropped against two US prison guards who admitted falsifying records after Jeffrey Epstein took his own life in jail more than two years ago.

The guards - Tova Noel and Michael Thomas - had agreed to deferred prosecution deals last May that required them to admit their guilt with the understanding that charges in a federal indictment would be dismissed if they followed the rules of their agreement for six months.

They were also required to carry out 100 hours of community service.

Prosecutors last week requested the charges be dropped, and Judge Analisa Torres ordered the dismissal on Monday.

Epstein, 66, was awaiting a sex trafficking trial when he took his life in his cell at the Metropolitan Correctional Centre in August 2019.



Jeffrey Epstein.

The death, a major embarrassment to the US bureau of prisons, sparked intense scrutiny of operations at the federal jail adjacent to two large federal courthouses in lower Manhattan. It is currently closed.

In court papers, prosecutors said Noel and Thomas were at their desks just 15ft from Epstein's cell as they shopped online for furniture and motorcycles

and failed to make required rounds every 30 minutes.

The indictment alleged that both appeared to have fallen asleep for one two-hour stretch.

Their lawyers blamed their sleepiness on staff shortages that caused them to work excessive overtime.

Attorney Jason Foy said that Noel, his client, had provided the government with "truthful insight into the toxic culture, sub-par training, staffing shortages, and dysfunctional management of the now closed Metropolitan Correctional Centre".

He added: "In exchange for Ms Noel's co-operation, all charges against her were dismissed."

Mr Foy said Noel now faces administrative proceedings with the bureau of prisons.

A lawyer for Michael Thomas did not immediately comment.



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# Jubilee joy for council staff

KIRSTIE TOPP

Public servants in the Queen's cherished Aberdeenshire will mark the monarch's platinum jubilee with an extra day off.

Aberdeenshire Council yesterday voted to give staff an additional holiday on Friday June 3.

The long weekend will be filled with celebrations as the nation pays tribute to the Queen's record-breaking 70 years on the throne.

Schools across the region will also be closed for the day, too, following approval from the Scottish Government.

Members of staff who cannot take the day off due to their work commitments will instead get paid extra.

That will cost the council around £150,000 overall.

Despite the expense, the move was agreed

unanimously by the business services committee yesterday.

Back in November 2020, the UK Government announced that the late May bank holiday date was to be moved to Thursday June 2.

An extra bank holiday was approved for Friday June 3, to allow a four-day weekend to celebrate the historic event.

The Queen's platinum jubilee will make her the first British monarch to reign for seven decades.

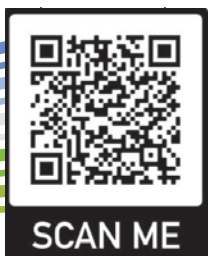
The Queen has a lifelong affinity with the north-east of Scotland, with Balmoral Castle in Deeside known to be her "favourite home".

Moray Council staff have also been given June 3 as an additional day of annual leave, and Highland Council approved likewise in November.



ROYAL CELEBRATION: Aberdeenshire Council workers will get an extra day off to mark the Queen's platinum jubilee.

Scottish & Southern  
Electricity Networks  
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House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth,  
PH1 3AQ

**Email:** louise.anderson@sse.com  
**Phone:** 01738 341 975

@ssencommunity

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[https:// bit.ly/2ZPwUMv](https://bit.ly/2ZPwUMv)

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Tuesday 11th January,  
4-7pm

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# THE DOG LOVER SHOW



PHOTO COMPETITION – FOR DETAILS SEE  
The Press and Journal TOMORROW



# public notices

www.highland.gov.uk

The Highland Council  
Committee on Consultations

**TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
PLANNING (LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREAS) (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997**

The applications listed below, along with plans and other documents submitted with them, may be examined online at <http://wam.highland.gov.uk>

Written comments should be made to the EPC at the contact details below within the time period indicated from the date of this notice. Anyone making a representation about this proposal should note that their letter or email will be disclosed to any individual or body who requests sight of representations in respect of this proposal.

Reference Number	Development Address	Proposal Description	Alternative locations where application may be inspected and time period for comments
21/05435/FUL	Land 50M NW Of Birch Cottage Boat Of Garten	Erection of house and garage	(14 days)
21/05422/FUL	4 AND 6 Auchroisk Place Cromdale	Erection of 2 houses	(14 days)
21/05341/FUL	Footbridge Aultmore Nethy Bridge	Removal of footbridge and erection of new footbridge	(14 days)
21/05312/PIP	Land 310M NE Of Mains Of Glenruim Newtonmore	Erection of house	(14 days)

ePlanning Centre, The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, INVERNESS IV3 5NX  
Email: [eplanning@highland.gov.uk](mailto:eplanning@highland.gov.uk)

**Renewable Energy Systems Ltd  
ELECTRICITY ACT 1989  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING (SCOTLAND) ACT 1997  
THE ELECTRICITY WORKS (ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT)  
(SCOTLAND) REGULATIONS 2017**

Notice is hereby given that Renewable Energy Systems Ltd, (company registration number **01589961**), with its Registered Office at Beaufort Court, Egg Farm Lane Station Road, Kings Langley, Hertfordshire, WD4 8LR, has submitted additional information to the Scottish Ministers in relation to the application for consent under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 to construct and operate the **Cairn Duhie Wind Farm** on land near Ferness, Nairnshire, and is approximately 15km south-east of Nairn and 13.5km north/north-west of Grantown-on-Spey. (Central Grid Reference E 297769, N 842856). The installed capacity of the proposed Wind Farm would be up to **67.2 MW, comprising 16 turbines with a ground to blade tip height of 149.9 metres**. The proposed development is subject to Environmental Impact Assessment. An EIA Report has been produced to accompany the application for consent.

The Company has also asked that Scottish Ministers give a direction under Section 57(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997 that planning permission for the development be deemed to be granted.

Renewable Energy Systems Ltd **has now submitted additional information to Scottish Ministers, which includes information relating to the setting of a scheduled monument and a change to abstraction of a private water supply.**

A copy of the application, including plans showing the lands to which it relates and the EIA Report, together with the additional information, is available for public inspection, free of charge on the application website <http://www.cairnduhie-windfarm.co.uk/revise-proposal/planning-process/> or on the Scottish Government Energy Consents website at [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot) under application reference 00003225.

Copies of the Additional Information may be obtained from Callum Whiteford (+44 1414 045 560, [callum.whiteford@res-group.com](mailto:callum.whiteford@res-group.com)) at a charge of £400 per hard copy and free on DVD/CD/USB.

**All previous representations received by Scottish Ministers in relation to the above application will still be considered.**

Any new representations may be submitted to Scottish Ministers via the Energy Consents Unit website at [www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx](http://www.energyconsents.scot/Register.aspx); by email to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit mailbox at [representations@gov.scot](mailto:representations@gov.scot); or by post to the Scottish Government, Energy Consents Unit, 4th Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow, G2 8LU, identifying the proposal and specifying the grounds for representation. Please note that there may be a delay in the Energy Consents Unit receiving representations by post.

Written or emailed representations should be dated, clearly stating the name (in block capitals), full return email and postal address of those making representations. Only representations sent by email to [representations@gov.scot](mailto:representations@gov.scot) will receive acknowledgement.

All representations should be received not later than **11th January 2022** although Ministers may consider representations received after this date.

Any subsequent additional information which is submitted by the developer will be subject to further public notice in this manner, and representations to such information will be accepted as per this notice.

As a result of a statutory objection from the relevant planning authority, or where Scottish Ministers decide to exercise their discretion to do so, Scottish Ministers can also cause a Public Local Inquiry to be held.

Following examination of the environmental information, Scottish Ministers will determine the application for consent in one of two ways:

- Consent the proposal, with or without conditions attached; or
- Reject the proposal

**General Data Protection Regulations**


The Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit processes representations under the Electricity Act 1989. During the process, to support transparency in decision making, the Scottish Government publishes online at [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot). A privacy notice is published on the help page at [www.energyconsents.scot](http://www.energyconsents.scot). This explains how the Energy Consents Unit processes your personal information. If you have any concerns about the processing of your personal information by the Scottish Government, please email [EconsentsAdmin@gov.scot](mailto:EconsentsAdmin@gov.scot).

**THE STRATHSPEY  
AND BADENOCH HERALD**

*Our representative can be contacted on*

**(01479) 872102**

Scottish & Southern  
Electricity Networks  
TRANSMISSION



Scan me

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**The events will be held both online and face to face and to allow for the festive period the consultations will be held across December and January to ensure sufficient time for all interested parties to be able to join one of our consultation sessions and provide feedback.**

The virtual consultation events will be held on the below date:

**Wednesday 8th December  
1-3pm and 5-7pm**

If you'd prefer to speak to members of the project team in person, the open-door drop-in face to face consultations will be held on 10 and 11 January 2022 in both Fort Augustus and Laggan.

**If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Community Liaison Manager:**

**Louise Anderson**  
SEN Transmission, Inverlmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ  
Email: [louise.anderson@sse.com](mailto:louise.anderson@sse.com)  
Phone: 01738 341 975

[f](https://www.facebook.com/asscommunity) [i](https://www.instagram.com/asscommunity) [in](https://www.linkedin.com/company/asscommunity) @asscommunity

To find out how you can join the interactive virtual consultation and for more information on the January face to face consultations visit the project website by scanning the above QR code, or use the following URL:  
<https://bit.ly/2ZPwUMv>

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# Presenting the festive stars of '21

By Tom Ramage  
tom.ramage@hnmmedia.co.uk

CHRISTMAS 2021 will be remembered in Badenoch for many things but surely none will strike a chord better than the advent of The Organ Facebook.

Here are two of the stars of the season.

First, Kingussie Parish Church's magnificent Evans & Barr pipe organ.

The congregation restored after an equally historic fund-raising campaign, not just to revive it but to bring the required specialists over from Germany to do it.

Secondly, the gifted organist, John Crombie had worked wonders with the instrument before it was restored, making it sound far sweeter than anyone



**MASTER OF THE MANUAL:** Mr Crombie in his element.

else could have done, but ever since the completion of the project he has had a much, much easier job and taken the music to new heights.

And new audiences. For the festive season, the kirk

was determined that Covid would not hold sway.

And they proved it, as organiser Eppy Mackay confirmed: "Where there's a will there's a way!"

With church life bearing no resemblance to pre-pandemic days - socially distanced, with face masks hampering singing, unable anyway to hold regular concerts, the season was looking like another mockery of what it should have been.

"But we changed that," said Mrs Mackay. "If the congregation and their friends couldn't lustily sing carols in church, the church would take the carols to them - and who better to do that than our own church organist John Crombie."

Over the advent period



**NOT BAD FOR NEARLY 100:** The magnificent organ was restored with the help of £30,000 Lottery money in 2016.

Mr Crombie recorded no fewer than 17 of the season's favourite carols and aired them on the kirk's Facebook page to an ever growing and ever more appreciative audience.

"They were much

enjoyed, providing a great deal of pleasure to our audience in the comfort of their own homes."

And the joy will go on. Mr Crombie will continue to play, with more posts on a regular basis.

## How the Crombie Christmas played out

JOHN Crombie's Christmas programme was painstakingly put together over hours of recording at Kingussie's rare and cherished Evans & Barr pipe organ.

His enthusiasm and musicality has for years been appreciated by so many amongst the church membership and local community.

But over the festive season it reached a whole new audience through a varied programme of favourite Christmas pieces which including time-honoured carols and much loved popular songs.

The 'recital' began with 'O Little Town of Bethlehem'. As word spread and more tuned in, it went on to incorporate these other timeless standards:

- Once in Royal David's City
- The Angel Gabriel
- Good Christian Men Rejoice
- Away in a Manger
- Love came down at Christmas
- Still, Still, Still
- Bethlehem
- Sans Day Carol
- When a Child is born
- Hark the Herald Angels Sing
- In the Bleak Mid-winter
- Silent Night
- Sussex Carol
- See in yonder manger low
- Have yourself a Merry Little Christmas.




TRANSMISSION

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@ssencommunity



## Storms aren't all bad news!

FOR the young at heart Tuesday's blizzards just opened up the countryside for fun. These sledgers were soon making the most

of the Strathspey Lawn, bang in the middle of an Aviemore where the traffic was grinding to a halt just yards away.





CHARGED: Ann Gloag after being made a Dame Commander at Buckingham Palace.

# Ex-PM's wife slated for Ann Gloag tweet

AMIE FLETT

The wife of former prime minister Gordon Brown has been criticised for her social media support of Dame Ann Gloag in the wake of the Perth bus tycoon's "human trafficking" charge.

Sarah Brown's Twitter comments came after the Stagecoach co-founder was charged as part of an alleged human trafficking investigation.

The 80-year-old multi-millionaire and philanthropist is one of four people accused of immigration offences.

It's understood her husband, David McCleary, stepdaughter and daughter-in-law Sarah Gloag and son-in-law Paul McNeil have also been charged.

On Saturday, Mrs Brown wrote: "Gordon and I have known Ann Gloag for many years through her huge personal commitment to Freedom from Fistula and supporting girls' health and education.

"She is a remarkable campaigner and quietly generous charity supporter.



Sarah Brown.

"These charges just don't add up."

Mrs Brown's tweet was met with criticism from several observers, including Welfare Scotland chairman Rob McDowall, who questioned her decision to comment on the case and namecheck the ex-Labour leader and Fife native.

He wrote: "Surely as Sarah Brown is the wife of former prime minister Gordon Brown she shouldn't be commenting on the recent decision of police to charge Stagecoach's Ann Gloag?"

"How inappropriate. "I know Sarah is known in her own right but the

fact she mentions Gordon in the way she does, it makes this even worse."

A spokesman for Ms Gloag - interviewed by officers on Thursday - said she "strongly disputed" the allegations made against her.

He said: "While we cannot comment on the details of an ongoing investigation, Dame Ann strongly disputes the malicious allegations that have been made against her, her foundation and members of her family, and will vigorously defend herself and the work of her foundation to protect her legacy and continue her work helping thousands of people in the UK and abroad every year."

A Police Scotland spokesman said: "On January 19 2023, four individuals were charged in connection with an investigation into alleged human trafficking and immigration offences. A report will be sent to the procurator fiscal."

Stagecoach is one of Britain's biggest bus and coach firms.

## Probe into BBC chair appointment urged amid Johnson loan claims

Labour has asked for an investigation into the appointment of the BBC chairman amid claims he helped Boris Johnson secure a loan - weeks before the then-prime minister recommended him for the role.

Shadow Culture Secretary Lucy Powell has written to the Commissioner for Public Appointments asking him to investigate the process by which Richard Sharp got the job.

Labour has also written to the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards calling for an investigation into the claims.

The Sunday Times reported Mr Sharp, a Tory donor, was involved in arranging a guarantor on a loan of up to £800,000 for Mr Johnson in late 2020.

Mr Sharp told the newspaper he had "simply connected" people and there was no conflict of



Richard Sharp, left, and former PM Boris Johnson.

interest while Mr Johnson's spokesman dismissed the report as "rubbish" and insisted his financial arrangements "have been properly declared".

Ms Powell said it is "vital" the public and Parliament can trust the appointment process and that it must be "free from any real or perceived conflict of interest".

In her letter to William Shawcross, Ms Powell stated: "The BBC derives

its public trust and national standing from its independence and impartiality, something we hear a lot about from the government about the BBC.

"It is vital that the public and Parliament can have trust in this process, and it is free from any real or perceived conflict of interest.

"Accordingly, I urge you to investigate this process and satisfy the public and Parliament of its integrity."



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+44 (0) 1738 341975

SSEN Community

@SSETransmission



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# Success is pie in the sky for hapless Dons

ANDY MORTON

The football team might be in the doldrums but Aberdeen FC's famous Pittodrie Pie has won a top honour at the 2023 World Championship Scotch Pie Awards.

The Pittodrie Pie, made by Hatton baker Murdoch Allan and sold at the Aberdeen stadium every match day, took a silver medal in the football pie category of the prestigious awards, announced yesterday.

Proving to have a thicker

crust than the Aberdeen squad, which slumped to a dramatic 1-0 loss to non-league Darvel in the Scottish Cup this week, the pie beat out competition from all over the Scottish football league.

And it managed equal honours to the silver medal-winning pie from Heart of Midlothian, who last week trounced Aberdeen 5-0.

However, yesterday's Scotch pie awards risked further embarrassment for a club still struggling to

explain this week's cup exit.

The Pittodrie Pie was beaten to a gold medal by the stadium's very own macaroni pie - made by Glasgow baker Pars Foods.

Elsewhere in the championships, a lack of north-east representation in the top Scotch pie category was offset by awards in other categories.

Along with Murdoch Allan's silver medal for the football pie in the football category, Fraserburgh's Bruce of the Broch took



TASTY: The Pittodrie Pie, pictured here in 2022 with Murdoch Allan boss Paul Allan.

bronzes for its Fraserburgh FC fish pie and steak pie.

Inverurie's JG Ross won a silver in the vegetarian category for a chickpea curry pie while Pie Aroma in Fraserburgh also took a silver in the sausage roll section.

Pie Aroma went one better in the macaroni pie category, taking a gold. Charles Macleod bakers in Stornoway also bagged a gold for its haggis savoury.

The day's top prize went to Angus butcher James Pirie & Son, which scooped the World Championship Scotch Pie Award for the fourth time in six years.

The Newtyle butcher's Scotch pie ran out the overall winner following victories in 2021, 2020 and 2018.

James Pirie & Son also took the top prize for its sausage roll, winning a diamond title, making it

the best sausage roll in Scotland.

Finding out he won the pie championship again, champion butcher Alan Pirie said: "I was delighted to have won the competition twice and to take the Champion of Champion title, but to have once again been judged alongside literally the best pies in the land and to have come out on top is beyond my wildest dreams."

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[SSEN Community](#) [@SSETransmission](#)



# Green Comet in skies after 50,000 years

CAMERON ROY

A comet that has not been seen in 50,000 years will soon be flying across north and north-east skies.

Astronomy lovers are celebrating as Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF), which is also known as the Green Comet, will be arriving for the first time since the Stone Age.

So far it has only been seen through a telescope, but soon even the naked eye will spot it as it draws nearer to Earth.

It won't be visible again for another 50,000 years.

In March, astronomers using the wide-field survey camera at the Zwicky Transient Facility in California discovered it.

Since then, the new comet has been sweeping across the northern constellation Corona Borealis in predawn skies.

But it is on a voyage through the inner solar system and will be closest to Earth on February 1.

The brightness of comets is notoriously

unpredictable, but the green comet could become the first comet visible to the naked eye since NEOWISE in 2020.

Torcuill Torrance, 50, is a committee member of the Aberdeen Astronomical Society and has been tracking the comet for over a month with his team.

He gave The Press and Journal his top tips for catching a glimpse of the comet in Scotland.

"You need to be in a dark place to see it, and away from any cities or places



NIGHT SPECTACLE: The Green Comet will be closest to Earth on February 1.

with light pollution," he told us.

"Right now, it is quite close to the North Star, otherwise known as Polaris.

"People will be able to use an app on their phone which will point them in the right direction, but failing that a pocket compass will do the job.

"If people look up at around 60 degrees, it should be there in the sky."

If you follow those steps there should be a "faint green glow", but he warns children might have a better chance of seeing it with their younger eyes.

Mr Torrance believes coming out with a warm drink to watch "the building blocks of the solar system" is a great night out.

However, he recommends staying away from alcohol as it can affect night vision.



Torcuill Torrance.



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SSEN Community @SSETransmission

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## Royal godmother joins service at Sandringham after racism row

Lady Susan Hussey has joined the King and the Princess Royal at a church service at Sandringham – two months after resigning in a racism row.

The 83-year-old was pictured smiling after attending St Mary Magdalene Church on the royal family's Norfolk estate yesterday.

It comes in the wake of her stepping down from an honorary role after asking Ngozi Fulani, a black British domestic violence campaigner, where she “really came from” at a Buckingham Palace event in December.

Lady Susan wore a dark-coloured coat and hat and in one photo appeared to be clutching a white rose and grinning, as members of the public looked on.

The Prince of Wales's godmother resigned from the royal household and apologised after she repeatedly challenged Ms Fulani, when she said she



King Charles and the Princess Royal at the service and, below, Lady Susan Hussey in attendance.

was British, at the Queen Consort's reception highlighting violence against women and girls.

Lady Susan later apologised in person to Ms Fulani, founder of the charity Sistah Space, after she expressed shock at her treatment by the late Queen's lady-in-waiting.

In December, the two women met at Buckingham Palace again.



OBAN INSTITUTION: The town has 'lost some of its colour' with John Ogden's death.

# Tributes as 'Oggy John' dies, aged 74

LOUISE GLEN

John Ogden, owner of famous eatery Oban Seafood Hut – also known as the Green Shack or Oggy John's – has died from cancer, aged 74.

His death was announced on social media.

Tributes have been paid to a good boss and friend to many for his unwavering belief in Scotland's fishing industry and for being at the very heart of Oban's Seafood Capital slogan.

In a tribute made by colleagues on the business Facebook page, staff members said: “It's with a heavy heart we have come to the end of an era here on the pier. Sadly we say goodbye to the head of our Seafood Hut family and one of the most well-known characters of the town, John Ogden.

“He passed away peacefully in the early hours of Tuesday January 24 after a long, brave and courageous battle with cancer. Donations to RNLI in lieu of flowers.”

Andy MacArthur wrote: “Larger than life wouldn't even begin to describe

John. Seldom do you see anyone with both such drive and passion displayed in absolutely everything they set out to achieve.

“I was lucky enough to have worked with John on the Girl Norma some 40 years ago in my first ever real job and still dine out on some of the stories to this day.

“I'm sure the Green Shack will continue to thrive, but Oban has definitely lost some of its colour.”

Tim Leahy wrote: “I was stood in the queue some years ago when an American gentleman asked if the seafood was fresh. I pointed out a couple of langoustines walking across the display trying to escape. It's my hope that someone who is as strong as John keeps the Green Hut going.”

Tasha Hanmer posted: “We were lucky enough to go to the Seafood Hut a few years ago on holiday and he happened to turn up, jumped out of his Land Rover, had a load of beautiful dogs with him,

gave us a really friendly broad smile.”

Oban shopkeeper Tracy Black wrote: “Very sad to hear. Condolences to Marion and John's family.

“One of the very best, albeit grumpy, employers I've ever had, and that's why we loved John as a boss.

“What a character, and a very big loss to the town. I do hope his legacy lives on in the wee Green Shack. It will always be known as Oggy John's.”

In 2019 Mr Ogden became the surprise star of luxury clothing brand Belstaff and became a model for its outdoor casual wear.

Caledonian Oysters posted: “John will be so missed – one of the characters in this world.”

Under the name of Mike Lebowski, one man wrote: “What you have created was wonderful and you are a main reason why we come to Oban.”

Mr Ogden's funeral will be held on February 10 at noon in Oban's Argyllshire Gathering Halls.



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MURDER TRIAL: Bennylyn Burke, 25, and her two-year-old daughter, Jellica.

# Killer placed mum's body 'under floor'

JAMIE BUCHAN

Double murder accused Andrew Innes told police investigating the sudden disappearance of Bennylyn Burke: "She's under the kitchen floor."

Officers went to the Aberdeen University graduate's Dundee home as part of their inquiries into a "high-risk missing person".

PC Gavin Burns, 33, told jurors at Edinburgh High Court 52-year-old Innes initially told him he had driven Ms Burke to a service station outside Glasgow.

But later, he made a statement that the missing woman was beneath the floor adding: "It wasn't premeditated."

The trial also heard from Mrs Burke's estranged husband, Lexington Burke, who told of the "mystery" around her and his daughter Jellica's vanishing in February 2021.

PC Burns said he and fellow constable Rhianna Brogan went to Innes' home at 21 Troon Avenue as part of a missing persons inquiry on March 5 2021.

"As soon as I mentioned Bennylyn Burke's name, he said I know her but she's in

Glasgow," he told the trial. Innes said he had met Mrs Burke on an online site and brought her and Jellica from Bristol to Dundee, the court heard.

However, he claimed he had broken off the relationship after finding "flirty" messages from men on her phone.

He said he then drove her to a service station in Cumbernauld, where she was met by an "unknown white male".

PC Burns said there was a young child in the house, who Innes claimed was his daughter.

PC Burns told Innes he had established the girl was not his daughter, and he said "I miss my daughter, I'm lonely," the trial heard.

PC Burns said he told Innes there could be a murder inquiry if they could not prove Mrs Burke was alive.

"I took my notebook out and as I was typing away, he turned and said to me 'she's under the kitchen floor.'"

Lexington Burke said he met Filipina national Mrs Burke on an online dating site in 2015 and the pair were married three years later.

The relationship later broke down.

On February 12 2021 he picked up Jellica to take her to a birthday party and made arrangements to meet her the following weekend.

Asked by prosecutor Alex Prentice if he managed to meet her that day, as arranged, Mr Burke said: "No. That was a mystery."

Innes admitted killing Bennylyn and her child but denied murder because he was of diminished responsibility.

He then wrapped their bodies and buried them in concrete under the kitchen floor where they were found by police in March 2021, about a month after being reported missing from Bristol by Mr Burke.

Innes is further accused of covering his tracks by telling police he had dropped the pair, alive, at a cafe in Cumbernauld and never saw them again.

He denies attempting to defeat the ends of justice and raping, sexually assaulting and abducting a second child in Dundee between February 20 and March 5.

The trial, before Lord Beckett, continues.

## City homelessness surges as more children in temporary housing

Aberdeen has seen a significant rise in the number of people being left homeless, including children without permanent homes.

New data showed a 20% rise in homelessness applications, from 708 to 851 in the six-month period to September last year, compared to the same period in 2021.

An additional 25 children ended up within temporary accommodation in the year leading up to last September, equal to a 31% rise.

The worrying regional snapshot is contained in national figures showing record levels of homelessness across Scotland during the cost-of-living crisis.

Homeless charity Crisis said youngsters are being "robbed of a childhood".

Figures from Aberdeen also showed there had been a 22% overall increase in the number of



Homelessness is a growing problem in Aberdeen.

families who had been forced into temporary homes.

In Highland, the picture was more mixed. Over the whole year there was a 21% rise in homelessness applications, but there were 40 fewer children without permanent accommodation.

SNP housing chief Shona Robison admitted the new figures are "unacceptable and concerning".

Reasons for

homelessness included being unable to pay a mortgage or landlord evictions.

Poorer families across Scotland are struggling to pay their energy bills, a rent freeze is in place to stop tenants from having to pay more to their landlords, and homeowners have been hit by rising interest rates.

Citizens Advice warned the latest homelessness figures are the "tip of the iceberg".



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OVER THE LIMIT: Lewis Smith was unsteady on his feet as he got out of his car.

# Police caught drink-driver at his house

KATHRYN WYLIE

An Aberdeen drink-driver was caught when he pulled into his driveway and found police at his home on an unrelated matter.

Lewis Smith, 43, parked his vehicle and officers could tell he was unsteady on his feet and smelling of alcohol.

Aberdeen Sheriff Court was told how the stepdad almost immediately came clean, telling police: "I have been an idiot and I have been drinking and caught drink-driving."

He claimed he had only driven a short distance in his red Ford to get away from his Aberdeen home after an argument with his stepchild on November 27 last year.

Fiscal deputy Eabha Sweeney said police had been called at 10.30pm regarding an unrelated incident and, while inside, saw him park in the drive.

"Officers exited the house and observed him switch off the engine and exit the vehicle from the driver's side," she said.

"There was nobody else with him. They observed him to be unsteady on his feet and smelling strongly of alcohol from his breath and clothing."

A breathalyser reading taken at Kittybrewster police station gave a positive result of 125mcg of alcohol in 100ml of breath, the legal limit being 22mcg. Smith was almost six times the legal limit.

Smith admitted a charge of drink-driving.

Defence agent Neil McRobert said: "For what it's worth it would appear that he drove only a short way.

“I have been an idiot and I have been caught drinking and driving

"It was just a relatively short distance away from the house to get away from the home following a disagreement with a stepchild.

"He was drinking to excess at the weekends at this time. This offence appears to have given him a shake as to how he was acting at weekends.

"He has stopped drinking since the end of last year."

Sheriff Margaret Hodge told Smith he could have killed someone or himself.

She said: "You made a choice on that day which, in light of the amount of alcohol you had consumed, was extremely foolish and could have resulted in death or injury to you or someone else despite it being over a short distance."

She fined Smith, of Stewart Crescent, Aberdeen, £640 and placed him on a six-month supervision order.

She also banned him from driving for 12 months and deemed him suitable for a 25% reduction in his ban if he completes a drink-driver rehab course.

## Drug trafficker claims he thought £93k worth of cocaine was 'cash'

A drug trafficker who was caught with £93,000 of cocaine has been remanded in custody after claiming that he thought he was transporting cash.

Jason Hawe was stopped by police in Aberdeen after officers spotted a car that intelligence indicated was being used in the illegal drugs trade.

Police recovered nearly half a kilo of cocaine which was above average purity and could have been adulterated to bulk it out for onward supply.

Hawe, of Fountain Grange, Aberdeen, admitted being concerned in the supply of the Class A drug in December 2021 at Seaton Road in the city and elsewhere when he appeared at the High Court in Edinburgh yesterday.

Advocate deputy John MacPherson said that, on December 28 2021 a Seat car was seen parked up in an Aberdeen street and

kept under observation after police intelligence indicated the vehicle was being used in the supply of drugs.

The prosecutor said the car was later stopped, with unemployed Hawe, 46, in the driver's seat and a plastic bag was recovered from the car.

Hawe was detained and, during an interview, admitted being involved in couriering drugs or drug money.

He told officers: "I didn't know it was crack

in the bag. I just thought it was cash."

Mr MacPherson said that the drugs recovered could be worth up to £93,500 if adulterated.

The court heard that Hawe was previously jailed when he was aged 27 for a drugs offence.

David Moggach, counsel for Hawe, said the earlier drug crime involved cannabis.

The defence counsel said it was "inevitable" that a jail sentence would be imposed on Hawe but urged the court to get a background report.

He said Hawe had physical and mental health issues and added: "He led a fairly isolated and lonely life."

The judge, Lord Lake, continued the case for the preparation of a report and remanded Hawe in custody. He was previously on bail.

He will be sentenced next month at the High Court in Livingston.

“I didn't know it was crack in the bag. I thought it was cash



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## A HELPING HAND

# Community show Kingussie bound

By Tom Ramage  
tom.ramage@hmedia.co.uk

SCOTLAND'S community tourism network has just launched a nationwide roadshow to climax in Badenoch, to encourage more communities to take a lead in providing grassroots owned tourism facilities and services.

SCOTO, which launched last year and now has more than 100 members across Scotland, is hosting a series of events across the country in a bid to raise awareness of the extent of community tourism across Scotland and promote networking.

Its members include museums, outdoor experiences, information centres, glamping pods, cafes, trails and numerous other tourism attractions and services owned and operated by local communities.

SCOTO membership has grown rapidly and as well as networking opportunities, its roadshow will offer practical support to local



**ON THE ROAD:** The SCOTO network is diverse and continues to expand as more and more community run tourism enterprises see the advantage of working together.

community groups looking to set up a community owned tourism enterprise.

The project, which began earlier this week, runs until March and will take in 25 locations, starting out in the Highlands, Moray, Speyside and Aberdeen-shire.

A series of virtual events are also planned. The first meeting took place at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore on Tuesday.

Carron Tobin, a director and founding member of SCOTO, said: "We are looking forward to engaging with potential new members across Scotland."

"The SCOTO network is diverse and continues to expand as more and more community run tourism enterprises see the advantage of working together."

"We would encourage anyone who is passionate

about supporting local tourism to join our roadshow.

"At this time of year, many people are thinking about booking short breaks."

"We want more people to think about touring Scotland and enjoying the many wonderful attractions we have that are owned and run by local communities."

"Every pound spent in a local tourism facility is a pound that benefits that local community, and everything that's spent is re-invested back into the local community, ensuring that some of our remote and rural facilities remain sustainable for the long term."

The roadshow is supported through Inspiring Scotland by the Scottish Government Rural and Island Communities Idea into Action Fund and leads up to a two day conference and learning exchange at the Duke of Gordon Hotel in Kingussie from March 2-3.

■ For more details on SCOTO and to book a place, visit [www.scoto.co.uk/b2b](http://www.scoto.co.uk/b2b)

## Help with diabetes

A NEW programme called Live It Highland is being provided by High Life Highland in partnership with NHS Highland to support people affected by type 2 diabetes.

The programme is facilitated by members of the High Life Highland team, sessions are either face-to-face in various community locations or online.

The sessions take place once per week over a six-week period and provide helpful information about type 2 diabetes to help people to manage the condition to fit in with their lives.

They are free and open to anyone with pre-diabetes or with type 2 diabetes.

Activities development officer at High Life Highland, Eilidh MacLean, said: "We started offering Live It Highland towards

the end of 2022 and the feedback has been really positive from participants."

"The small team of facilitators are really looking forward to providing more Live It courses during February and we are very grateful to our colleagues in NHS Highland who have provided the training and resources to enable the team to support people in the best way they can."

Fiona MacLeod, health improvement specialist at NHS Highland, said: "This programme is making a huge difference helping people understand about type 2 diabetes."

"Live It aims to provide recommended, evidence based information and support, delivered in a friendly, social format open to anyone who may benefit."

■ For more information email: [active.health@highlifehighland.com](mailto:active.health@highlifehighland.com)



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Morlich Hotel





# New pastures for stars of the show at Glenmore

PLANS have been lodged that will see a unique attraction in the UK get a new look if approved.

The Reindeer Company Ltd has lodged a full application with Highland Council's planning service in Kingussie for the demolition of the existing paddocks and replacement with visitor centre along with parking at Glenmore home.

The new building will incorporate a four-person office, staff canteen, visitor reception, retail and exhibition area, visitor WCs, access to paddock walkway, external interpretation with display and covered area for children's craft.

Reindeer Company boss Tilly Smith said: "It is really exciting and the local stakeholders - in particular Forestry and Land Scotland - are very supportive..."

"Our remit is that we want a new centre but we do not want it to be too architectural exciting. What the visitors really want to see is the reindeer.

"It has been a long time. Myself and Alan (husband)

took on the herd in 1989 and immediately used part of Reindeer House as our reception and retail area and the reindeer in the paddock.

"But over time it has become possibly dated and disjointed with people coming in one end and then having to come out and go to the other end of the house.

"We just felt that 33 years on the time is right to make something a little bit more special."

Mrs Smith said that if all goes smoothly then they would like to start work on the new visitor centre early next year.

"We would try and do the project in the late winter and early spring so that it does not disrupt business for ourselves and the area as well."

There will still be able to conduct hill visits to see the reindeer and the reception area will remain open. There are usually reindeer in the paddock from the beginning of April through to the New Year for visitors to see.

Mrs Smith said: "We will lose having reindeer in the paddock for a little while



AT THE PADDOCKS: Herders Fiona Smith, Lisette Walter and Lotti Brooks with Tilly Smith (right) at the proposed site for the new visitor centre.

but there is not a lot we can do about that if we want to build this centre. It is something that we have wanted to do for a long time."

There will be a single south facing slopes roof on the proposed development.

Mrs Smith said: "Everything will go into the new centre and Reindeer

House will revert to a domestic dwelling which is what it was built for in the first place."

Mikel Utsi had the house built in 1960 - before that the Sami reindeer herder had his animals for a couple of the early years where the Cairngorm Sleddog Centre is based. Mrs Smith said: "I think most people will

welcome this new building. It is a beautiful area Glenmore and it is only right that we have an up to scratch little visitor centre."

Planning agents Oberlanders have said the proposal will rationalise the facilities at Reindeer House with the aim being to improve the visitor experience

and upgrade the staff welfare provision.

They state in their report: "The scope of works includes a new visitor centre and paddock walkway with integrated interpretation to improve and update the visitor experience and upgrade the staff welfare."

The proposal includes the demolition of the existing walkway and visitor shelter. A proposal for the extension of the Old Logging Way has also been incorporated.

Aviemore Community Council is very supportive of the bid after discussing the application.

Watchdog chairman Peter Long has said: "It is recognised that the Reindeer Centre is an iconic local business and the need to upgrade the current premises is understood.

"The proposed development is sensitively designed and in keeping with its surroundings in a sensitive but high profile location.

"Our meeting welcomed the development and was happy to support this application in principle."



EXCITING NEW ERA: The proposed local larch wood clad building will be around 16 metres by nearly 10 metres but one of the challenges will be building into the site's slope.

## Man's nose badly bitten in Aviemore nightclub brawl

AN Aviemore tourist bit the end of another man's nose during a nightclub scuffle causing permanent damage, a court has heard.

Stephen Cosgrove (30) had been visiting the Vault club in the town when he was asked to leave, Inverness Sheriff Court was told.

He had ended up in a row with a man in the early hours of March 6 last year after an altercation while visiting the toilets.


After being taken out the fire exit a fight ensued in which the end of the man's nose was severely bitten, fiscal depute Robert Weir told the court.

The prosecutor said the man would require plastic surgery to fix the damage to his face.

Cosgrove, of Queens Crescent, Aberdeen, admitted punching the man on his head and body as well as biting him on the face to his injury and permanent disfigurement.

He also admitted assaulting a bouncer on the same night at the venue by punching him on the body. A third charge of culpable and reckless conduct was admitted by spitting in the presence of the doorman.

Sheriff Gary Aitken deferred sentence until March 10 for background reports to be made available.



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