



CONON CRAIC

May 2017

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Read online at www.cononbridge.org.uk

Could this be Summer at last?

Ben Wyvis Primary School **SUMMER FAYRE 2017** Saturday 27th May from 10am

Fantastic Raffle - Bottle Stall - Bouncy Castles - Mascots
Emergency services - Classic Cars - Food and Craft stalls
Class Stalls - Chocolate Tombola - Teddy Tombola
Highland Dancing 10.15am - Hockey Pupils v Parents 11.30am



Come and enjoy home baking, tea and coffee,
music, hot dogs, ice cream and much more!



FREE
ENTRY FOR ALL



BEN WYVIS PRIMARY SCHOOL are having their Summer Fayre on Saturday 27th May this year from 10am-1pm. Come along and enjoy a great morning of entertainment, classic cars, craft stalls, emergency services, inflatables, teas and home baking, music and fun for all the family. Two local young pipers will start the fayre, followed by a Highland Dancing display by Marion Munro's dancers. Join in with the Tug-of-War just for fun then head over to the MUGA to see the Parents v Children Hockey match. There will be a variety of craft stalls indoors as well as many stalls outside including the bottle stall, teddy tombola, class enterprise stalls, chocolate tombola, beat the goalie, water and wine stall and more. Enjoy a sit down with your tea or coffee whilst listening to some live music. The raffle with wonderful prizes is drawn on the day at 12.15pm so make sure you get your tickets at the fayre to be in with a chance of winning one of the top prizes, a weekend pass to Belladrum for the family. Tickets are also now available via the school office. Thank you to everyone in the community who has given a kind donation to our bottle stall, tombola or raffle and we hope to see you there for a great day.



CONON BRIDGE'S CO-OP

On 16 March 2017 the eagerly awaited opening of the new Conon Bridge Co-op food store on Elder Lane took centre stage in the village.

Our picture shows Co-op store manager Trina Murray with Ben Wyvis Primary School pupils and ribbon cutter, four year old Angus Mowat.

[Photograph courtesy of the Ross-shire Journal.]

Read more on page 4.



CONTACTING YOUR COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Fiona Mackintosh (Chair)	07810 356865
Jim Attwood (Vice-chair)	864052
Jane Attwood (Secretary)	864052
Hazel Bushell	861247
Alister Mackintosh	861663

or by email at cononcommunitycouncil@gmail.com

Note: The Community Council AGM is on 21st June.

CONTACTING YOUR HIGHLAND COUNCILLOR

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FIBRE BROADBAND

We are pleased to say that orders are now being taken for fibre optic broadband connections from the new cabinet 7 at the War Memorial. As explained in a previous issue, such connections give a much faster download and upload speed for internet access and are long overdue in this area. However, don't expect your existing broadband connection to be automatically switched to the faster service. You must contact an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to request and arrange a transfer of service. The most widely used ISP in this area is probably BT but you may also like to consider other ISPs (Sky, EE, TalkTalk, etc.)

As the increase in capacity in this cabinet is unknown you would be advised to place an order now for a new fibre connection. The new cabinet number 8 near the roundabout is at the 'Connect' stage where power is supplied to the cabinet and the existing copper network is connected to new fibre lines. It is hoped that this cabinet will be at the 'Accepting Orders' stage very soon and we would anticipate considerable demand when this happens. Please keep checking the status on this cabinet by entering your postcode at:

www.homeandwork.openreach.co.uk/OurNetwork/Supervise.aspx

ROSS-SHIRE FLOWER CLUB

Our club meets in the church hall at the car park on the second Thursday of each month, with the exception of August, and the programme of guest speakers and presenters is as follows:

June 8th Christine McKenna from Dundee

July 13th To be arranged

Sept 14th Kathleen Gibson from Tyne and Wear

Oct 12th Derek Morgan from Morecombe

Nov 9th John Dalton from Carlisle

There is a common misunderstanding that ladies actually have to arrange flowers at these meetings! Rest assured - the aim of the meeting is to allow us to relax and watch and enjoy others demonstrate their abilities with flowers. A welcome cup of tea is provided after the demonstration. Please think about coming along if you love flowers and gardens. We learn so much more about plants and foliage as well as flowers and gain many useful tips.

It is a very relaxing evening from 7.30 to 9.30 approx. Actual Membership is optional as you can pay on each visit if you prefer. Do consider giving us a try; you will receive a very warm welcome.

Our motto is '*Friendship Through Flowers*'

CONON IN BLOOM

For the last few years we have been fortunate in having Andrew Hogg to plant out and look after the tubs, planters and hanging baskets in the village. Due to Andrew's work commitments this year, his time spent in Conon Bridge will be restricted but he has volunteered to plant out the tubs and planters. These, however, will still require watering and tending on a once or twice weekly basis. We are looking for volunteers to provide these services for the containers:

- at the junction of Wyvis Crescent and Leanaig Road
- beside the car park at the church
- at the junction of Riverford Crescent and Station Road
- at the junction of Fraser Street and Leanaig Road
- at the entrance to the village from Muir of Ord, and
- in the area of the notice board at the Spar shop

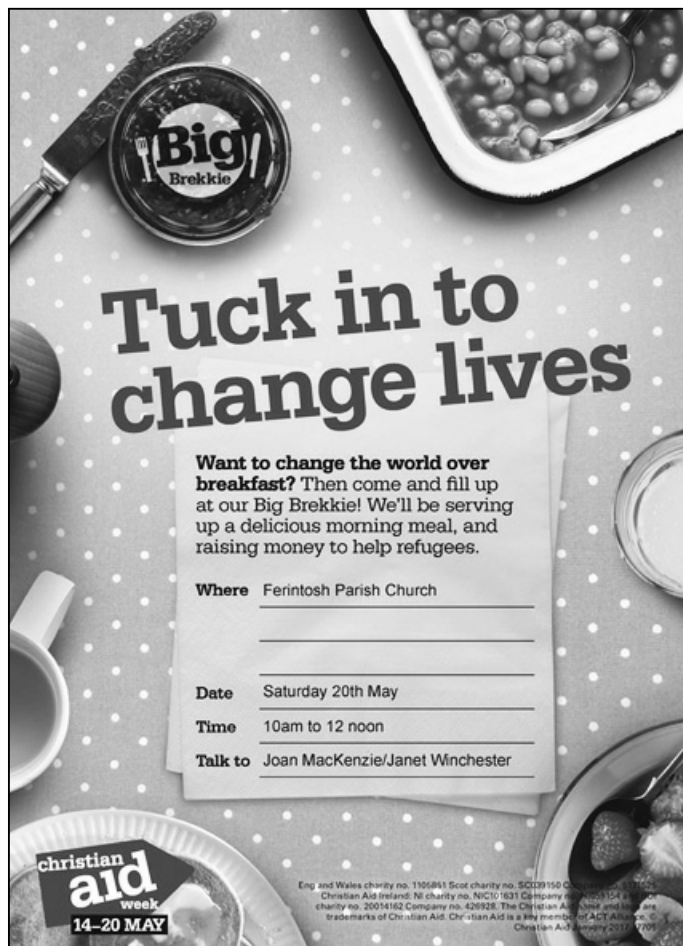
If you can help out, please contact either Fiona on 07810 356865 or Jim on 864052.



Ferintosh Church News

Christian Aid Week 14-20 May 2017

Local badged volunteers will be visiting households in Conon Bridge and Maryburgh hoping the community will help those in need through generously donating through collecting boxes and envelopes.



The Big Brekkie

The Big Brekkie, in support of Christian Aid, takes place in Conon church hall on Saturday, 20th May, 10.00 – 12.00, with bacon rolls and lots of other goodies to start the day. Please come along and enjoy more Conon *craic* accompanied by a sumptuous breakfast/brunch.

ALL WELCOME.

Morning Worship takes place at 11 a.m.

Sunday Club and FYF meet at 10.50 in the Church Hall and there is a creche for pre-school children. Please note there will be **NO** regular evening services until a new minister is appointed.

River Café The next River Café takes place in the Church Hall on Wednesday 14th June from 2p.m. -3.30 p.m. Come along for a chat while you enjoy tea, coffee and home bakes. You will find a friendly welcome.

THE LADIES WALK

Since the February issue of the Conon Craic we're pleased to report that some progress has been made with our community project. We were unsuccessful with our bid for project funds from The Highland Council Participatory Budgeting event held in Dingwall in March but, as you can read elsewhere in this issue, we have been successful with our application for funds from the Tesco Bags of Help Scheme.

We'd like to thank Kenny Fraser and Simon Logan for all the hard work they've done with their chain saws to clear the bigger tree branches which were blocking the route. We've already started to assess the workload over the next couple of months and hope that we can get all our volunteers together for a few hours on Saturday afternoons when the weather is a bit warmer.

We would like to see more community involvement so if you have experience of using a brush cutter, can use a pair of loppers or would just like to get involved, please speak to any of the Community Councillors, email cononcommunitycouncil@gmail.com or send us a message through the Conon Bridge Community Council Facebook page.

PLEASE VOTE FOR US - TESCO BAGS of HELP

Having been unsuccessful with our application for a grant at The Highland Council Participatory Budgeting event in March, Conon Bridge Community Council are now delighted to announce that we've been successful with our application to the Tesco Bags of Help Scheme for a grant for the Ladies Walk restoration project.

Tesco supermarket has teamed up with environmental charity Groundwork to launch its community funding scheme, which sees grants of £4,000, £2,000 and £1,000 – all raised from the 5p single-use plastic bag levy – being awarded to local community projects. Voting is now open in Dingwall Tesco and will continue throughout May and June. You cast your vote using a blue token given to you at the check-out in store each time you shop. There is no minimum spend to get a token. If you are not offered a token at the check-out, please ask for one and pop it into the slot for the Conon Bridge Ladies Walk project in the Bags of Help voting box on your way out of the store. Naturally we would like to get the highest funding of £4,000 but if that's not to be, as the slogan goes, 'Every Little Helps'.

LUNCH CLUB

Contributed by Lily Urquhart

Conon Bridge Lunch Club meet every second Friday in the primary school. As there is no community hall as such, we have to wait until the children finish their lunches and then zoom in to set up the tables ready to serve the meals. Between 16 and 24 members attend the club and at the moment we have 10 ladies on the committee to make and serve the meals. Generally, it is soup and home baking but Tesco now have a scheme called "fareshare" which donates groceries going out of date to charities rather than bin it. Thus, we have had mince, casseroles, pasta dishes all made from this food. Wonderful variety! After lunch, we hold an activity of some sort. Boccia, which is armchair bowls, whist, dominoes, colouring in or a speaker. Last spring, we went on a trip to Mackenzie & Cruickshank's garden centre in Forres for a wander around their wonderful plants and had lunch followed by tea and cakes. Our next outing is also to Mackenzie & Cruickshank's which has now been doubled in size. Hopefully no-one will get lost!

Just before Christmas our trip was to Simpson's garden centre in Inverness. Once again, a great day out! And talking of Christmas, we were given a magnificent Christmas dinner by the staff of Dingwall Tesco and each member received a Christmas hamper as well. The following week we held our own



The Lunch Ladies celebrating at the Victoria Restaurant

Christmas dinner in the school which was also a smashing success much enjoyed by everyone.

Then we had a lovely surprise from the lunch club members. Somehow, under our noses, they bought and, signed by them all, a bonnie Christmas card and

collected together £150 to send the helpers off to the Victoria restaurant for a lovely meal!! Oh much appreciated!!!. Superb bunch of men and women.

If anybody would like to join the senior citizens lunch club in Conon, do please come along and if anybody would like to help out, either by doing a wee bit of baking or making a pan of soup or joining us to serve meals, you would be more than welcome. Contact Margot Smith on 01349 862347.

RECOGNITION FOR LUNCH CLUB

We're happy to report that in the first Participatory Budgeting event for the Dingwall and Seaforth Ward on 11th March, in which 26 groups participated, the ladies of the Conon Bridge Lunch Club received an award of £500.


Our heartiest congratulations go to Margot Smith for her winning presentation.

CONON BRIDGE'S CO-OP

(Continued from front page)

The new £1.5 million food store with a large car park and free-to-use cash machine will give employment to 19 people.

The Co-op has long held a reputation as a retailer with a strong sense of community and was very generous with a donation of £1,000 to Ben Wyvis Primary School. You may already be aware of the benefits of Co-op membership but for those of you who aren't, members get 5% back on purchases of Co-op branded products to spend on future purchases and earn 1% for local causes when they buy Co-op branded products in food stores. Nominations for local causes are expected to open again later this month and this can be a great source of funds for your organisation. Either go to <https://causes.coop.co.uk/> or give them a call on 0800 023 4708 for more details.

1st CONON BRIDGE & MARYBURGH SCOUT GROUP		
	<p>Are you over 18 years? Enthusiastic? Sense of humour? Reliable? Trustworthy? Work well with both adults and children? Would like to volunteer in your local community but not too sure what to do?</p>	
<p>If you answered YES to any of the above, 1st Conon Bridge & Maryburgh Scout Group would love to hear from you. We are currently looking for adults to assist us in our Beaver (6-8yrs), Cubs (8-10½yrs) and Scouts Sections (10½ -14yrs). Even if you have never been involved in Scouting, we will provide the skills and training needed.</p>		
<p>For further information please contact Group Scout Leader, Corinna Lonnen 01349 867880 email neens365@btinternet.com</p>		

BEN WYVIS PRIMARY SCHOOL REVISITED!

Editorial

Once again we are sad to report that disruption is being caused to both school and community activities, this time by work to improve the heating system in the main hall. Investigation work started during the October 2016 school holidays but really got under way in February 2017. It continues to this day.

The main hall is currently a construction site and as such is a no-go area for school pupils and community members. The school cannot hold morning assemblies and use the area for indoor sports. A team from the school took part in the J Rock challenge at Eden Court for the first time this year and put in an excellent performance to take 3rd place. (Read more on page 6.) This was in spite of their team not being able to use the main hall to practise their routine. School staff had a logistical nightmare in getting rehearsal facilities for the team at Dingwall Academy. The community is affected by the lack of access to the sport courts for the Badminton Club and Highlife Highland have had to move badminton coaching to Dingwall Leisure Centre. Fitness classes organised by Highlife Highland have also had to be moved to several locations in Dingwall. Community fundraising events have had to be postponed or alternative premises found while The Highland Council sponsored Participatory Budgeting event which was due to be held in the main hall on 11th March had to be switched to Dingwall Academy. How's that for planning by The Highland Council?

If you are a parent or carer of a child at the school you may well be aware of and concerned by this situation. If you have read previous issues of the Conon Craic, you will be aware of the history of problems experienced at the school. The Head Teacher and her staff are doing a superb job in educating the children and preparing them for secondary school. They have been let down by the poor standard of workmanship of the main contractor at the school and just as importantly by the poor design of the building. You may have seen the 3rd March 2017 issue of the Ross-shire Journal where the front page headline reads *Fears on safety shut hall at 'crisis' school*. The safety concerns relate to the wall panelling in the main hall and an issue with

the fixings used on the railings to mount the floor-to-ceiling plywood cladding. This was revealed during the installation of high-level radiators to improve the heating in the main hall.

The school made front page news again in the Ross-shire Journal on 28th April 2017. It had been anticipated that the main hall would re-open at the end of the Easter holidays but we are now given to believe that work may be ongoing until 3rd July. While we would not wish to take risks with the health and safety of the school children and community users, this prolonged unavailability of facilities is totally unacceptable. The school has an Awards Assembly for the whole school scheduled for 28th June and a P7 Leavers Assembly and party scheduled for 29th June before the school closes for the Summer holidays on 30th June. We sincerely hope that the contractors can complete and have their work signed off before then so that these events can take place in the main hall where they belong.

Not for the first time, we urge The Highland Council to take all possible measures to ensure that financial recompense is sought so that already hard-pressed Council Tax payers are not left to bear the cost of the inadequacies of the design consultants and building contractors. No doubt The Highland Council will once again proclaim their "lessons learned" mantra but one would have to question this given the recent problems with the new builds at Inverness Royal Academy and Wick Joint Campus.

Post Script

In an article on the new Conon Bridge school carried by **The Architect's Journal** in November 2012, Robert Ferrier, the consultancy manager for Highland Council wrote, "*We are of the view that we have developed an appropriate design approach to create a family of buildings in the Highlands, which are sympathetic to context, respond to tradition, are sustainable, robust and cost effective. They also delight.*"

Appearance is one thing, function quite another! To read such blind and misplaced optimism as this inevitably begs the question — are we really being best served by our architects and planners?

JUNIOR ROCK (J ROCK) CHALLENGE

Story by Holly Black and Beth Fraser, P7.

For 3 nights in a row the Safer Highland events, sponsored by the Safer Highland Partnership and Police Scotland's Choices for Life, were performed to a sold out audience at Eden Court Theatre.



A team from Ben Wyvis Primary School took an excellent 3rd place from the 7 primary school teams participating and considering this was their first entry into the competition, they deserve hearty congratulations for their theme, Growing our New School. 'Our school is 4 years old. We watched it being built. The grounds were bare, birds had gone. We encouraged wildlife into our gardens. Watching birds return and Rhea's cat, Belle, exploring. Our new school is continually exciting. One winter a lot of snow melted and our gardens were flooded. But like the circle of life they're once again beautiful'.

Here's what some of the children had to say about their experience:

On Wednesday the 5th of April, some of our school took part in the Junior Rock Challenge! (J-Rock!) We had been rehearsing since August 2016, but the day rolled around so fast! We were all super nervous, however, when the day DID come, we were super'nervcited'! (Nervous and excited.) We'd spent so long making our costumes and props, painting the scenery, and practicing hair and make-up!

On the actual day, we got to rehearse on the actual Eden Court stage! It was so exciting; it also gave us a taste of what it would actually be like when we were performing. Surprisingly, when we were rehearsing, we couldn't really see the audience because the lights were shining on us, instead of the auditorium.

When we were performing, we were really nervous! We won nine awards that we will share with you now:

The award for Concept, Soundtrack, Set Design and Function, Costuming Character, Visual Enhancement, Lighting, Stage Crew, and Video Performance. We also came in... 3rd Place!!!

Now we will have the point of view from some people that took part.

"I thought it was an amazing experience, and I would love to take part in Rock Challenge in the academy!" *Holly Black, P7.*

"I really loved being involved in such an amazing performance because everyone was so nice and I'll definitely do it again!" *Beth Fraser, P7.*

"I really loved it and I would definitely do it again!" *Eilidh Will, P5/6.*

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Highland Community Planning Partnership Board agreed at their meeting on 29th and 30th June 2016 to establish nine local partnerships across the Highlands. Conon Bridge is covered by the Mid Ross community partnership. Under the terms of the Community Empowerment Act, community planning is to become a shared duty facilitated by Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, NHS Highland and The Highland Council. Community planning will also involve quite a few other partners and agencies. The Community Partnerships replace District Partnership arrangements and their core remit will be to:

- Develop local plans for children and adults
- Develop Locality Plans/Community Learning and Development plans focusing on communities facing the greatest level of inequality as a result of socio-economic disadvantage
- Identify local actions and priorities

As Conon Bridge Community Council had not been involved in the District Partnership and knew nothing of its purpose, Jim Attwood volunteered to attend the inaugural meeting of the Mid Ross Partnership in Dingwall on 8th May 2017 to find out more about the Community Partnership.

You may or may not be aware that Conon Bridge is deemed to be a deprived area. One of the aims of the Community Partnership is to get the various agencies working together to reduce local inequalities and deprivation. As such, it is important that members of the local community make their voices heard about local services and what can be done to improve these so that Locality Plans can be designed.

The next meeting of the Mid Ross Community Partnership is being held in Conon Bridge on Monday 10th July 2017. Keep an eye on the notice boards at the Spar shop and the Co-op for further details. In the meantime, please contact us with your concerns about community matters and local services to cononcommunitycouncil@gmail.com or by phone to any of the Community Councillors or Ward Members. We can only identify local actions and priorities with your help.

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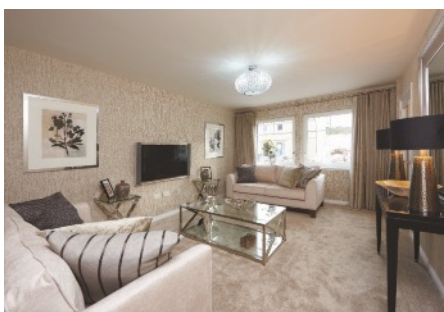
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To have your business listed, email Jim Attwood on: jim.attwood3110@btinternet.com

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