

Middlefield Mirror

Spring 2023



In this issue:

BLUEBERRY WELLNESS

HUB NEWS

BOOGIE IN THE BAR

NIGHTSTOP

www.shmu.org.uk/press

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Editorial

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Middlefield Mirror.

This edition has lots to offer, read on to get up to date with goings on at Middlefield Community project Hub, find out when to get your dancing shoes on for Boogie in the Bar. We also have pieces on activism and culture in Aberdeen, to take your fancy.

If you would like to get involved and join the editorial team or if you have ideas for this community publication you can easily get in touch with us. The staff at SHMU are able to support and train anyone living in the area if they are interested in developing their ideas, or their skills in writing, proof reading and photography.

So, please don't be shy, this is your magazine, written, edited and designed by folk from Middlefield and Heathryfold.

If you live in the Middlefield or Heathryfold area and would like to come along to the editorial meetings or submit an article then get in touch with staff at shmu on 07752586312 or email rose at rose.ross@shmu.org.uk.

The magazine is now on Facebook as well so you can search for Middlefield Mirror and like the page for regular updates.

You can also view this magazine, alongside previous editions on the SHMU website www.shmu.org.uk then click the 'PRESS' option.

Middlefield Mirror is a community publication and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the editorial team or of shmu.

Covid-19 has made many changes to our routines and life as we know it. Many of these changes have left us feeling negatively about the situation but there have been some positives from the lockdown Covid brought about. Whether it's getting to see more of your local area, reconnecting with family and old friends or having a slower pace we would love to hear from you about your positive experiences during the Covid-19 outbreak.

LIFE MAY NOT BE THE PARTY WE HOPED FOR
BUT WHILE WE'RE HERE WE MIGHT AS WELL DANCE



Supported by





**Social enterprise,
bringing all things
health and wellness
searches for
candidates for
second course.**

Aberdeen Blueberry Wellness (ABW) kicked off its mission of bringing wellness to every community, starting its first course in Tillydrone in January this year. ABW is now looking for candidates for a second cohort beginning in May.

Laura Walker, the founder of ABW is bringing fitness industry training and employment opportunities to Aberdeen's regeneration areas with the added bonus of delivery of more group fitness in communities.

Laura began her career in the fitness industry 27 years ago, after starting her family. She was encouraged by one particular fitness instructor, whose classes she attended regularly, to get started in the industry. Now she, herself, is encouraging others to take the leap.

Laura explained ABW is, "Blueberry Wellness is a social enterprise, and it is set up to do 3 things. One of

them is to educate people in the fitness industry, to become fitness professionals. The second is to employ the fitness professionals once they have qualified. And the third thing, which goes along with that employment, is the delivery of fitness for health, within communities like Tillydrone and other communities in Aberdeen."

One of the main benefits of the social enterprise is that it offers fully funded training. Laura said - "For anyone within Tillydrone and other regeneration areas in Aberdeen, the training is completely free of charge.

I will deliver the training over a fourteen-week period with four hours of teaching per week. The group fitness course is around about 250 study hours. 40 of which are in contact with me".

Once the course is complete and participants have passed three forms

of assessment, they are now fully qualified.

"I will say, whoever comes on board will pass. If you do the work you will pass, I will make sure you do. That's my job" Laura affirmed.

If you are as passionate about fitness and wellbeing as Laura and feel that you have what it takes to make a difference in your community, you can now sign up to the new course which will begin on the 2nd of May.

Sessions will be held at Tillydrone Community Campus between 9am and 12pm for 14 weeks but are open to those in the Middlefield area.

You can view the criteria for the fully funded course and download the application form by visiting blueberrywellness.co.uk/ or get in touch with Laura by emailing her on you@blueberrywellness.co.uk. Or call 07773 021851

Choices Aberdeen looking for volunteers

Choices is an Aberdeen-based charity passionate about supporting and promoting positive relationships in young people and vulnerable adults. Our work is centred around educating and equipping people with the tools that they need to enable them to make positive choices for their lives. Choices has two key branches of its work: Relationship Revolution, and pregnancy crisis counselling.

Relationship Revolution works with young people in S2-S4, delivering dynamic, creative and challenging youth intervention projects and educational workshops.

Despite the documented importance of social connections

and relationships to our wellbeing, the UK ranks amongst the lowest in Europe when it comes to developing and maintaining these connections. The breakdown of positive relationships is more evident in communities and individuals where feelings of hopelessness, lack of confidence and low aspirations are widespread. These negative and isolating feelings often in turn lead to vulnerability, substance misuse, exploitation, unplanned pregnancy and mental ill health.

We work closely alongside guidance teachers across the city, and are currently delivering workshops in Northfield Academy, St Machar Academy and Lochside Academy. Our

team of youth development workers research and deliver workshops on positive relationships, sexual exploitation, and pornography.

At Choices we are truly passionate about what we do. We are currently looking for volunteers to join our youth development team and to assist with the delivery of our workshops. If you are interested, please contact us either via our website, or by calling our team: 01224 624900.

For counselling enquiries please phone us on the above number, get in touch via our website, or email counselling@choicesaberdeen.org.uk.

Housing

Concerns regarding Housing have been a prominent topic in the Middlefield area and across the city recently.

Some have had issues getting in contact with Aberdeen City Council's Housing team, including dealing with long waiting times on the phone.

Aberdeen City Council Housing Team explained some of the measures they have taken to tackle phone waiting times. "We have upgraded the phone in the

Tillydrone Campus, Mastrick Access Point and the Woodside Fountain Centre, so if calls are made from directly from these phones, then the customer should speak to a member of staff quickly. The call handler would then attempt to resolve the issue at the first point of contact but if they were unable to, then a request would be made for the Housing & Support Officer to get in touch with their tenant to discuss the matter.

"Customers can also contact us on on-line via our website to report a number of issues and further information is noted on Housing Online via Aberdeen City Council Website.

In addition, a number of monthly housing drop-in sessions are to run across the city, where community members can meet with housing officers without an appointment.



Boogie in the bar

I have been going to Boogie in the Bar at Sunnybank Football Club since before Covid, and I enjoy the music and meeting other people.

For anyone that doesn't know, Boogie in the Bar is a monthly event for people over 50 to come and have a dance, listen to music and have a light lunch. Run by a really friendly bunch, who make you feel very welcome. Me and my friends always have a brilliant time.

Although there are a few Boogie events held in different areas, Sunnybank is my go to. This is held on the first Friday of every month.

On Friday the 3rd of March, I went to the latest event and had a brilliant time. We had sandwiches and crisps and then I was up dancing most of the time.

They play lots of different music from the 50's, 60's and 70's, there's something for everyone. The atmosphere is great and always ends in a buzz with everyone gathering round for Scottish classic, Loch Lomond.

I would highly recommend that everyone comes along for a boogie, you won't regret it.

Boogie in the bar is held at:

Sunnybank FC – on the first Friday of every month

In Kincorth, at the Abbot Lounge on Provost Watt Drive on the last Thursday of the month.

At the Foundry on Holborn Street on the second last Thursday of the month.

Dee Swim Club on Gerrard Street on the second Wednesday of the month.

Contact SWSC@aberdeencity.gov.uk or call 07799 860899 for more information.

KEEPING UP WITH THE HUB

Supporting parents with school applications and the forthcoming transition to P1

This term we supported parents in applying for P1 at school. Next term we will look to build on this and organize visits to the different local schools in our neighbourhood and work in partnership with the schools to help support our children to have effective transitions to move onto their new setting. This will involve trips to the schools and visits to our nursery from schoolteachers to meet the children.

Therapets dog visit

We were very fortunate to have another visit from our friends Leo (the most beautiful rough collie dog) and his owner Fiona. Leo is a fully trained Therapets dog and very much used to going into a variety of different settings such as schools and nurseries to visit children. Fiona said he loves coming to see us. The children really enjoyed his visit and Fiona helped the children to learn about how to be look after dogs. It was great to see the positive and very much calming impact he had on the children. Animals are well known to have a positive impact on wellbeing. We are very much looking forward to him coming back for another visit next term.

Nursery projects

The nurseries enjoyed celebrating, Burns night. The children got actively involved in a variety of different arts and crafts activities including making tartan, trying haggis, neeps and tatties and listening to traditional Scottish music and Scottish dancing. They also enjoyed celebrating Chinese New Year making Chinese dragons, lanterns and having Chinese food. The children enjoyed making cards for Mother's Day. The children will enjoy participating in a variety of activities to celebrate Easter. We are grateful and thankful to the usual kind donation from a former parent of chocolate Easter bunnies for all our nursery children. In one of the nurseries small group outings on the minibus some of the children enjoyed going on a visit to the nearby Woodside Library where they enjoyed exploring all the lovely books.

A big thank you

We would like to say a very big thank you to Katie who works at the Distilling house restaurant and bar at Aberdeen airport as she has very kindly been keeping and giving us lots of loose parts and resources for the nursery children to enjoy exploring and experimenting with. These include empty coffee tins,

corks and lots of other fab things. These are great for the children to enjoy building with and using to develop their creativity and imagination skills.

Positive wellbeing and mental health

Everyone has the right to physical, mental and social well-being, with options to learn, work, support themselves and their families to the best of their ability. Never has employee mental health been such a priority. The COVID pandemic has seen more individuals struggle than ever before. Supporting staff all-round wellbeing is so important and we want to prioritise that our nursery employees feel happy and supported. So, it is important to invest time in the employees' wellbeing. The nursery management team are evaluating and planning strategies for the ongoing and long-term wellbeing support for their teams' individual needs. Furthermore, through the planning of one-off events/activities to enhance staff feelings of feeling valued, respected and cared for. The first of these was a nursery staff wellbeing and team building day on the Inservice day on Friday 18th November. The aim of the wellbeing day was to give staff the opportunity to look at a holistic approach and to broaden their awareness of a variety

of different strategies and techniques to help them find ways of supporting their positive mental health and wellbeing.

The staff took part in a team yoga session looking at gentle stretch's and breathing exercises. Staff had opportunities to try hand and foot reflexology, Indian head massage, attend a talk about mood and food, try essential oils, have one to one health checks and nutrition advice and get their nails done.

All the staff had a team lunch together which was nutritional and healthy and kindly provided by our onsite Hub Cafe.

Furthermore, we had team building activities in the afternoon. Ron did lots of fun rhyme, music and movement activities. Most of all we all had some fun shared learning experiences together as a whole nursery team.

Staff appreciation day.

We have been looking a lot at the importance of supporting everyone to have positive mental health and wellbeing. The nursery staff celebrated staff appreciation day on Friday March 3rd by having a staff appreciation week. We thanked and acknowledged how grateful we are to all our nursery staff for all the hard work that they do. They received a small health and wellbeing gift bag. We also made appreciation certificates and gave these to all the wider project staff to thank them for all that they do to help the nursery team.

We also made appreciation certificates for all our nursery children and parents to thank them and show our gratitude, care and appreciation towards them.

Nursery places for August

We are now taking applications for nursery places for August. We provide a range of different Early learning and childcare opportunities for children aged 2-5 years. This includes the funded 1140 hours for eligible children for ME2 and children aged 3-5 years. Also fee paying childcare places for parents who may be working or in further education. Nursery session times can be flexible in order to meet parents needs and preferences.





It's never too late to learn..

Not everyone enjoyed school or was even able to make the most of any learning opportunities available there. But it's never too late to develop a passion for learning.

At the Middlefield Hub, on Manor Drive we believe in lifelong learning – that our learning never stops whatever our age.

Adult learning can help a parent support their child's learning or can support you if you've had a mental illness.

We've been busy these last six months developing some new adult learning opportunities for

local adults based in our community – running some new classes, groups and courses.

We've already asked some local adults living in the Middlefield and Heathyfold neighbourhoods

what they're interested in learning and have made a day-time programme to suit.

So far, we offer two hour sessions in sewing, beauty therapy, Indian head massage, yoga, coping with depression and anxiety and our popular arts and crafts group.

Also on offer is support and guidance so if you're not sure and have questions and you'd like

to discuss our learning opportunities more, please do get in touch. We're happy to offer some new groups and classes. We're friendly and welcome new people.

We also run regular 'Give it a Go!' days where you can come along and try out activities and meet our tutors before you sign up. Keep an eye out for our next one on our FaceBook pages or leave your contact details at the Hub and we'll be in touch. **Telephone 01224 697000.**

Just remember there is no end to learning...

Timetable

Monday

9.30am-11.30am, Youth Flat - Sewing with Rona

11.30am-1.30pm, Manor Room - Shiatsu with Hasan

Tuesday

9.30am-11.30am, Youth Flat - Art Group with Dorothy

11.30am-1.30pm, Main Hal - Yoga with Adrienn

Wednesday

Health Issues in the Community - Day and Time to be announced

10.00am-Noon, Manor Room - Coping with Anxiety and Depression and **1.00pm-3.00pm** with Sheena

Thursday

9.30am-11.30am, Manor Room- Healthy Helpings with Lesley and Helen

11.30am-1.30pm, Main Hall - Indian Head Massage/Beauty Therapy with Deborah and Sarah

DO YOU HAVE

ROOM TO HELP?



NIGHTSTOP – COMMUNITY HOSTING TO KEEP YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE.

Aberdeen Foyer is delighted to be launching Nightstop North-East Scotland in 2023. Nightstop offers emergency accommodation for young people facing homelessness. This accommodation is offered in the homes of trained and vetted volunteers, who are supported by professional staff. This provides an accommodation option which is youth focused.

The national Nightstop Network comprises over 30 services across the UK and is run by national homeless charity Depaul UK. In Aberdeen City and Shire, Nightstop is supported by The Foyer.

The nature of accommodating young people in private households means that the service can only offer accommodation to low risk young people. The level of risk is managed by a risk assessment and by obtaining two references for the young person.

Nightstop will deliver both crisis response for young people presenting as homeless and early intervention for young people who might benefit from respite. At Nightstop, we often work with young

people who are experiencing conflict within the family home but may be able to move back home with support. We can offer mediation and host the young person somewhere safe and secure until support with positive steps in their housing situation are identified.

Nightstop North-East Scotland relies on the generosity of volunteer hosts. These hosts offer their spare bedrooms, with a very flexible level of commitment: you decide when you're free to host can submit your availability in advance in case of any holidays or other commitments. Hosts receive a stipend of £15 per night as an out-of-pocket expense payment to cover the additional cost of having another person at home.

Hosts are asked to be able to offer a young person a spare room, access to a bathroom and to be able to provide a listening ear.

Megan Douglas, the Co-ordinator for Nightstop North-East Scotland is encouraging people to get in touch to find out more about Hosting.

“Nightstop runs successfully and safely throughout the UK. We have

had a great response in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire so far, as we continue to recruit hosts. We try to make Hosting as easy as possible; holding regular online information sessions so people can come along and find out a bit more. We're looking for people from all types of backgrounds - maybe your own kids have moved out, maybe you love the idea of volunteering from home or maybe you're really looking to help change a young person's life by giving them a bed for the night! Whatever your motivation, it would be great to hear from you. I'm getting a reputation for asking people if they've got a spare room, but if you do, you could host for just a short time and keep a young person safe.”

If you'd like to find out more about volunteering as a Host with Nightstop North-East Scotland, you can e-mail Megan.Douglas@aberdeenfoyer.com or call 07467 919813. More information can be found here [Nightstop – a bold new service that supports young people at risk of homelessness in Aberdeen City and Shire](#) | Aberdeen Foyer

Elected Officials

Councillor Donna Clark

Since my last update, it has been a very busy time in the Middlefield and Heathryfold areas.

I have received several queries regarding a number of housing issues including mould and damp, housing move requests/ requests to move to smaller accommodation with many individuals feeling they have to downsize due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

During the most recent period of snow, I was contacted by residents right across the ward regarding the gritting of the roads and pavements. Whilst I appreciate folks' concerns, I am aware that the gritting team have been extremely busy trying to get all primary routes gritted, followed by getting the secondary routes complete on top

of filling and topping up the grit boxes across the city.

I would encourage anyone who may require grit for the next winter period to apply to Aberdeen City Council for a salt bag to be delivered, with applications opening in late September.

I have been informed that First Aberdeen are set to increase all bus fares on the 2nd April, with the price of an adult day ticket increased from £4.70 to £5.10.

Therefore, I would encourage any people who have not yet applied, to submit an application for the under 22s bus passes, which ensures free bus travel to anyone under the age of 22.

I have recently been informed that the Treasure Hub on Granite Hill

Road, will be resuming open days, to allow members of the public to have a look around their facilities, it is definitely worth a visit if you have some free time. Visits are free of charge and is a great day out for the whole family.

I regularly hold surgeries every first Wednesday of the month at 7pm at The Hub on Manor Avenue. I do hold surgeries out with this time, by appointment only.

If you have any issues, questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to get in touch, I can be contacted via the following methods: email: donclark@aberdeencity.gov.uk, mobile: 07977 399622

Councillor Gordon Graham

Hi Folks, I am pleased to report that new play/exercise equipment has been installed at Heathryfold Park beside the Community Hub. This is ensuring that the park becomes a great resource for the Community.

I am still trying to get further improvements to Auchmill Community Woodland and hopefully I can advise in the next issue.

The Heathryfold Park Group would welcome new members, and anyone interested can contact me by email, ggraham@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

I regularly attend Middlefield Community Project Management Meetings and was delighted to attend an open day when each aspect of the project gave a presentation.

It was very impressive, and they are going from strength to strength. As a board member of the Fairer Aberdeen Fund, I ensured that both Middlefield Community Project and Cummings Park Flat got the funding requested and I look forward to working with them next year.

The Golf Season is about to start, and I will be busy at Auchmill Golf

Club ensuring that we have a course and clubhouse that is very welcoming and I look forward to meeting people there.



Jackie Dunbar MSP

Since my last update, I have been very busy in both the Scottish Parliament and in the Aberdeen Donside Constituency. I now hold regular advisory surgeries at my Constituency office in Mastrick on Monday mornings. Please do not hesitate to get in touch, if you would like to make an appointment to discuss any issues or concerns, which you may have.

A significant amount of the casework which my office has been receiving has related to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, which has impacted on many families across the Aberdeen Donside Constituency. If anyone is struggling to pay their bills, please do contact my office and my team will be able to help ensure you receive all the help and support which you may be entitled to.

In Parliament, I have recently had the opportunity to speak in a number of debates including on the dementia strategy, LGBT+ History Month, vacant and derelict buildings and Women's and Girls' safety on Public Transport. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions to Scottish Government Ministers on topics such as whether

an update could be provided on efforts to recommence operations at Stoneywood paper mill in Aberdeen.

I have had the opportunity to meet with a number of organisations including Jak's den, Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust, Shelter Scotland and Grampian Regional Equality Council (GREC) to name but a few. Through these meetings I had the opportunity to discuss the work these organisations have done/ are doing within the Aberdeen Donside Constituency and how their work benefits all communities not just within Aberdeen Donside, but across Aberdeen as a whole.

I am in Edinburgh from Tuesday to Thursday, however, my office remains open and are more than happy to assist with any issues or concerns that you may have, please do not hesitate to get in touch via the following: email:

Jackie.dunbar.msp@parliament.scot, by phone: **01224 011 936** or by post: **12a Mastrick Shopping Centre, Greenfern Place, Aberdeen, AB16 6JR.**

All you need to know about the under 22's buss pass.

Did you know, in Scotland, you can travel by bus for free under the age of 22.

You are entitled to a bus pass for free nationwide bus travel between the ages of 5 and 21 using your Young Scot or National Entitlement Card.

You can apply online or through your local council. For those aged between five and fifteen, a parent or guardian must apply for the pass on behalf of the young person.

To apply you must provide proof of identity, for both parties if applying for someone else, and proof of relationship to the young person.

To apply online, follow the link <https://freebus.scot/contact-us/contact-your-local-authority/>

If you do not have all the required documents, you can apply through the local council.

If you're 16 and over, already have a Young Scot card or NEC issued after 2016, you can add the pass to your card without having to apply. Do this through Transport Scotland's Pass Collect app.

Make your summer more accessible and get an under 22's bus pass!

A quick history of shipbuilding in Aberdeen

We built ships in Aberdeen from the 15th century until 1992.

While reading about Aberdeen's contribution, I was surprised just how big and popular Aberdeen's shipbuilding industry was around the globe. Also, the quality of the vessels which were admired and well sought after.

This city was believed to be building ships in the 15th century and perhaps before, it's on record that in the 1470's, three royal ships and one royal naval ship was fitted out with guns and ammunition by Aberdonians with over 20 of its crew young local men.

Before steam and diesel arrived, boats called Smacks were the workhorses up and down the coast and in winter time working on these was a perilous occupation which required a lot of courage, shipbuilders in those days had no real yards or slipways building on the beach or on spare bits of land alongside the river Dee had to be used but they managed somehow.

Over the years things improved and yards sprung up with bigger and better ships being built around Torry, Footdee and other places. Well-known names like the Hall family, the Duthie's, Walter Hood & Co started putting Aberdeen on the map with a reputation for building fine seaworthy ships.

Alexander Hall introduced the building of a sleeker design ship, long and a bit narrower with a more acute bow with this, the Clipper ship as it was called would prove a fast and efficient craft. In 1839 Alexander Hall built the 140-ton Scottish Maid clipper ship which was used to demonstrate how her sharp lines would give extra speed, this proved popular and soon Aberdeen shipbuilders became famous for their building of Clipper ships.

Alexander Hall's yard was being run by his two sons who built the well known Schomberg for James Baines & Co. of Liverpool. It was 260 feet. long and about 2500 tons in weight. The clippers were often used for racing on the trading routes to China for cargoes of tea, hence the name tea clippers were given to them, the two most famous clippers were without a doubt, the Dumbarton Built Cutty Sark which broke many records on the China run and is at this moment being restored at Greenwich back to her former glory.

There was also another fast clipper, The Thermopylae Built in Aberdeen by Walter Hood & Co. On her maiden voyage from Gravesend to Melbourne she completed the journey in 68 days which broke the record for that trip by a good margin, although described and used as a tea clipper she often had cargoes

of wool from Australia. During a race against the Cutty Sark back to Great Britain she won by seven days but that was the only time she beat The Cutty Sark. After serving the Aberdeen White Star Line, it was sold to Canada and then on to the Portuguese navy as a training ship. In 1907 she was blown up by the gunners on a firing exercise.

The design of the clipper's bow was known as the Aberdeen Bow, the yards in the city were numerous and they began building large amounts of steam trawlers which helped put the Northeast of Scotland's fishing industry the biggest in Europe. During the 1830-40s the enterprising Aberdeen men (nicknamed The Three Wise Men) travelled down to Tyneside and became the pillars of the Shipbuilders on the Tyne, John Coutts, John Ronald and John Vernon.

There is a great deal more to be said about Aberdeen's involvement in shipbuilding and our right to be proud of our city is certainly there, we always hear about Clydeside and the building of ships there and yes, they did build some wonderful ships but try reading about Aberdeen's and other shipbuilding ports in Scotland, all equal in importance.

Jack A. Norrie



YOUTH MEDIA TAKE ON SOCIAL ACTION



At shmu, we have no shortage of creative and passionate young people, who want to make positive differences to the world and our environment. Which is why our youth media crew are delighted to be exploring the world of youth social action, with the help of funding from Children in Need and the Hunter Foundation.

shmu's young activists are impassioned about a host of social issues, especially climate justice.

The Youth Social action fund has created a wealth of opportunity for the young people to explore their passions, act for the future and learn from others doing the same. The group had the amazing opportunity to interview Climate activist Lee of the global environmental movement, Extinction Rebellion.

Lee joined Extinction Rebellion, after taking part in the Just Stop Oil Campaign and meeting other activists in the city. Both groups operate through non-violent disruptive protesting. Lee has been involved in various disruptive protests from oil terminal occupations to roadblocks and throwing paint at buildings.

"One of my favourite protests I've been involved in, is the first disruptive protest that I ever took part in where

I occupied an oil terminal." Lee explained, "that was a very scary one. I had to get up at stupid o'clock in the morning and climb through these bushes behind this oil terminal to get up to this really tall fence.

"We had ladders and everything and we had to hop over the fence. There was a security guard with a dog as well. It was terrifying. I managed to climb over the fence after a struggle, grab my backpack and leg it through the oil terminal up to the loading bay.

"So, I climb up into those pipes that are high off the ground and basically hunker down for as long as possible because they must get heights teams to come in to take you down. We were there for about six hours which is on the shorter end of how long oil terminal occupations tend to last. The police were ready, and the heights team came quickly so we were taken down by early afternoon and were just in a jail cell for the rest of the day.

"That one was one of the more intense actions I've done. It was just so insane."

There is often lots of risk involved with disruptive protesting, from legal ramifications to danger to personal safety and it's important to be aware of and prepared for all the risks before taking part.

"I'm currently dealing with two different court cases. If taking part in climate activism in that way is something that people are interested in, then it's important to think through those risks and be sure that's a risk you're okay taking."

Lee's advice for anyone who would like to get into activism is, "You have to really go for it. One of the things with activism is that if people can ignore it, they will so you have to make yourself as un-ignorable as possible. Shout as long and as loud as you can to the chants and just really belt it out. I think those are my two biggest tips."

Taking part in disruptive protests, of course, is not the only form of activism, there are plenty of other important roles when it comes to making change for a cause you're passionate about.

If you're between the ages of 12 and 17 and have a passion for activism or would like to find out more about Youth Media, Email shelley.mackenzie@shmu.org.uk for more details. If you would like to hear more of Lee you can watch Youth Media's interview with them on our Youtube channel, shmuTV.

Wellbeing Cafe and Community

Engagement Wellbeing Walks

Come and join our Adult Services Team's Wellbeing Café!

The Wellbeing Cafe is held every Thursday between 2pm and 4pm at shmuHQ on Station Road in Woodside.

The group is open to everyone. Come along to meet others, play a game, take part in wellbeing activities or just have a brew and a blether.

Are you looking to get more active? Meet new people? Socialise? Share stories of Aberdeen? Our community Engagement Wellbeing Walks may be for you!

Join us to explore the fascinating and beautiful city of Aberdeen and all it has to offer!

Starting on Thursday the 27th of April and then running the last Thursday of Every Month. Meeting at 12:45 for a walk from 1pm to 2pm, followed by tea and coffee. Keep an eye out on our socials for where to meet!

No sign up required, but if you'd like more information contact Sarah by emailing sarah.igesund@shmu.org.uk or by calling her on 07592 355 131.

Youth Media

Our shmu Youth Services are expanding! We are welcoming applications from young people aged 11 – 18 who are resident in Torry for our existing Youth Media Team as well as our exciting NEW Young Film-makers Club and Friday Film Club!

All our youth activities run at shmu HQ, Station Road, Woodside.

Youth Media provides an introduction to radio presenting, tv production, music technology and journalism. No prior experience required, just an interest in the creative media and a willingness to have a go! This group meets on a Tuesday evening and a Saturday morning and is the perfect introduction to the different media platforms.

Young Film-Makers Club is a new group with a focus on all elements of creating film content, from script writing, shooting, creating a score, lighting and editing. Young people with a genuine interest in trying out the various elements of film-making are welcome to join us, whether

any prior experience or not! This group meets at shmu on a Thursday evening.

Friday Film Club is open to young people interested in watching and talking about films of all genres, from thrillers to sci fi, comedies to westerns and everything in between. Each Friday evening participants will watch a film in our screening room at shmu, followed with a discussion group focusing on different elements of the film.

All activities are free to attend but do require an application to be submitted.

For more information and details of how to apply for a place in any of these groups, please contact us by sending an email to reception@shmu.org.uk

We also have a range of school holiday sessions, if you'd like to be amongst the first to hear about these sessions, please pop us an email so we can add you to our mailing list!

ACCESSIBILITY TO ABERDEEN'S CULTURE

It's time we had an uncomfortable conversation about accessibility to culture in Aberdeen. Not just in light of the City Council's meeting on the Fairer Aberdeen Fund, which thankfully did not result in the loss of all funding to creative and cultural resources but in more general terms too.

Whilst the recent City Council meeting could have ended differently, this doesn't mean it ended really well, either. Big Noise, the music project within Torry, lost its funding from ACC, although has now secured funding from the Scottish Government. Bucksburn swimming pool is now closing its doors, likely forever. Several of our community nurseries are gone. Libraries have closed too.

What hope is there for a vibrant, healthy city, when cultural projects lose their funding? When people cannot easily access swimming lessons? When the youngest members of our society aren't being provided with good quality nursery education near their homes?

In a world in which we strive for mental health awareness, for overall wellbeing, it is incredibly short-sighted to close or restrict access to things like swimming pools. It is incredibly narrowminded to believe that access to musical tuition "only" gives us some ability to play a musical instrument — as if it does not also give us social skills, methods to deal with our anxiety, ways to practice fine motor control, problem solving abilities, a creative outlet for our emotions. Access to art, culture and exercise has far further reaching benefits for our community, beyond "just" the obvious skills.

A quick Google search confirms that the science is there — access to green spaces, to exercise and leisure activities, to a sense of community and belonging, overwhelmingly improve the wellbeing of people. They create a city that people are proud to live in, a place they want to look after, a place they feel they identify with. This brings us benefits at every single level.

However, looking at a larger picture, beyond the recent funding cuts, Aberdeen has a big problem with access to culture. The Spectra Festival was plagued with stories regarding access for those using wheelchairs or other mobility aids. The queues were incredibly long, some people weren't being told there were other, additional access points available, and some exhibits became inaccessible to those using mobility aids due to crowding or layout. Several tales emerged of Autistic or other neurodiverse people feeling either unable or nervous to attend and enjoy the festival due to the crowds, loud noises and enormously bright lights. Personally, frustration took over then. If other art galleries, music festivals and events can have a "quiet viewing", during which the lights are slightly dimmed and the numbers are kept lower, why couldn't Spectra?

Recently, I took a community art class group I work with to the Aberdeen Art Gallery for a field trip. Some of the attendees are not native English speakers, and some are currently attending 'English as A Second Language' classes. I wrote ahead of time, determined that they would be able to enjoy the field trip just as much as any other attendee and that language should not have

been a barrier, only to be informed by Aberdeen Art Gallery that they simply do not offer gallery guides in different languages. The largest public museum in Aberdeen city centre only offers guides in English. If galleries and museums in Edinburgh and Glasgow can offer guides in several languages, why can't Aberdeen? Are we ignorant enough to believe every resident of our city is a fluent English speaker?

Personally, I find the closure of libraries is the scariest part of this — it shows truly how little value we place on cultural community. Libraries provide so much more than just somewhere to check out books. They provide a connection to the culture and heritage of a city, a link to archives, a place to find family records and local history. They provide human contact. They provide Internet access, computers, and printers, for everything from job searching to research projects. And of course, books — they provide a place to escape the world, into a new world of imagination, for free. In a library it doesn't matter how much money you or your family have. They're so incredibly important.

All of this is important. And we do not have to accept these access barriers. We could all write to Aberdeen Art Gallery and demand they provide more accessible gallery guides. We could write to our councillors and demand they reconsider closing our libraries, swimming pools and nurseries. We could ask questions about why our festivals assume no one has additional access needs. And I think we should, because these things were ours all along.

Megan Bellatrix Archibald

Community Contacts

Aberdeen City Council Helpline - 0800 0304 713

ALCOHOL

Alcoholics Anonymous - 0800 9177 650

Drinkline - 0300 123 1110

CRIME

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

DRUGS

Alcohol and Drugs Action Helpline

01224 594700 or 07927192706

Narcotics Anonymous

0300 999 1212

DENTIST

Emergency - G-Dens - 111

DOCTORS

NHS 24 Emergency - 111

POLICE

Non-Emergency - 101

ELECTRICITY

If you have a power-cut - 105

GAS

Gas Emergency - 0800 111 999

WATER

Scottish Water Emergency - 0800 0778 778

HOUSING

Emergency Repairs - 03000 200 292

Family Planning - 0345 337 9900

Mental Health Aberdeen - 01224 573892

Breathing Space - 0800 838 587

Samaritans - Need to talk

01224 574 488 or 116 123

SOCIAL WORK

Adult Protection - 0800 731 5520

Joint Child Protection Team

01224 306877 or 0800 731 5520

Aberdeen City Carers Service- 01224 914036

Age Scotland - 0800 1244 222

CFINE 01224 596156

Financial Advice at **CFINE** 01224 531386

Pathways 01224 682 939

Citizens Advice 01224 586255

St Machar Credit Union 01224 276994

Northfield Medical Practice 0345 013 0740

Woodside Medical Group 01224 492828

Penumbra First Response 01224 276994

OUR LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS ARE:

Councillor Donna Clark

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Councillor Ciaran McRae

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Councillor Gordon Graham

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Area MSP

Jackie Dunbar

– MSP for Aberdeen Donside

Aberdeen office: 01224 011936

Jackie.Dunbar.msp@parliament.scot

Area MP

Kirsty Blackman

– MP for Aberdeen North

Aberdeen office: 01224 633285

kirsty.blackman.mp@parliament.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SUPPORT

Domestic Abuse is not acceptable. It is not your fault and you are not alone. Domestic Abuse is when you are hurt, bullied or frightened by:

Your husband or wife. Your boyfriend or girlfriend

Your current or ex-partner

Their behaviour can be; controlling, physical, sexual, financial or emotional.

Help and support

There are services available to support you, and they are still open. You do not have to wait for an emergency to get help. Tell someone you trust or contact:

Police Scotland

If you are in danger and it is an emergency, call 999.

For non-emergencies call 101

National Domestic Abuse Helpline Free and confidential advice. Open to all. 24 hours a day.

Telephone: 0800 027 1234. Website: sdfmh.org.uk

Grampian Women's Aid

Telephone: 01224 593381. Website:

grampian-womens-aid.com

Rape Crisis Grampian Telephone: 01224 590932.

Website: rapecrisisgrampian.co.uk