

woodside free press

Spring Edition 2023



Contents

| | |
|---------|-----------------------|
| 3 | Save Woodside Library |
| 4 | Housing |
| 5 | Afterschool Clubs |
| 6 | Aberdeen Culture |
| 7 | Spectra |
| 8,9 &10 | Fersands |
| 11 | Nicola's Woodside |
| 12 | Blueberry Fitness |
| 13 | Elected Officials |
| 14 | shmu |
| 15 | PTP |



Editorial

Welcome to the Winter edition of the Woodside Free Press. This is YOUR magazine.

We are here to help you find out what's going on in Woodside and connect with your community.

In our pages you will find news, views, reviews and features.

In this edition, read on to find out about Woodside's new community garden and how they pulled off their Harvest festival in a whirlwind. We also have updates on Jacob's ladder, St Machar Credit union and Fersands.

If you have something you would like to say, some local issue you think deserves coverage, or if you would like to get involved by joining the happy band of volunteers that puts this magazine together, please contact Rose at shmu on **07752586312** or **email rose.ross@shmu.org.uk**.

All the content in this magazine has been produced and approved by members of the editorial team.

The staff at SHMU are able to support and train anyone living in the area who is interested in developing their ideas and skills in either writing, photography or proof reading.

Woodside Free Press is a community publication and the views expressed are not necessarily those of the editorial team or of shmu.

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Save Woodside Library

Comedian Alexei Sayle once made the quip that the 2008 financial crash was 'all the fault of librarians in Wolverhampton.' Like all good jokes there's a lot of truth behind it. While the billionaires are off to tax havens enjoying their ill-gotten gains, we citizens are left to pick up the proverbial dog mess.

And it's all much the same when it comes to local authority cuts. The latest concern, our swimming pools and six local libraries. And our historic Woodside library is one of them.

Woodside library has been threatened before, and the case for retaining it has often been made. Its use as a resource by the nearby primary school alone justifies its existence. Its Bookbug sessions are well attended and pensioners and others, with limited access to computers frequent the place. It is an important social hub for the whole community (and your local librarian can be a useful source of information). The building itself is a historic gem, utterly unique, and of cultural importance and interest to all

the citizens of Aberdeen and beyond. Its loss would be a tragedy. It's difficult to put a price on these intangibles.

But it doesn't even make much financial sense. Woodside library is lightly staffed, often with a single member of staff. Staff are to be moved sideways, so no savings there. The building is also used for storage, so heating will have to be maintained. It seems the only savings will be the use of lightbulbs. It's penny foolish, pound crazy.

The building can't even be sold. John Anderson, the founder of the library 140 years ago, specified in his will that the library belongs to the citizens of Woodside. To see the library boarded up and left to rot, like the Wallace Tower, would be a sad sight indeed. As the poet said, 'you don't know what you've got till it's gone.'

And so, the campaign to save our library and five other libraries across the city has begun. The protest meeting on Saturday 18th March to save the Woodside Library, was attended by well over a hundred people. You can find the links to each

of the library petitions here: linktr.ee/saveabdnlibs and you can contact the campaign team via the Save Aberdeen Libraries Facebook page.

When asked to comment on the Library closures and the Campaign to save them, an Aberdeen City Council spokesperson said: "Ten branch libraries in locations across the city are to remain open. People can also access services at the Central Library in the city centre and via our website".

Save the Libraries Campaigner Raquel Ojeda said "I have recently started treatment for cancer, I get tired very easily, but I know that a short walk to the library to join the book club will always cheer me up and help me find strength during this time.

"For those of us who can't walk too far or too long like me, we know the library is here for us."

Save Our Library!

Doug Thomson

Photos by Josh Pizzuto-Pomaco of the Guadie



Concerns regarding Housing have been a prominent topic in the Woodside area recently.

Staff at Fersands and Fountain Community Project shared that the project has been dealing with members of the public arriving at the centre looking for housing officers. The Fountain Centre is, of course, where the Housing Team used to reside, now located in the Tillydrone Community Campus.

Individuals have been making the trip to the Fountain Centre to reach out to the housing team, thinking this is where they are located, after struggling to get through on the phone.

Project Coordinator, Mark Lovie said, “We had one person come in claiming to have used £17 of credit, waiting on hold to get through on the phone. Eventually he arrived here, and I emailed housing on his behalf.

“This is something which has been happening a lot, our workers have to spend time greeting members of the public, finding out what they want and directing them to the appropriate place, but we don’t have the training to do this.”

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.

Regarding the issue of community members visiting Fersands for Housing Advice, the team said “We are aware that some customers are still visiting the Woodside Fountain Centre assuming that Aberdeen City Council staff are still located at this building, and this is something that we will work with the community to raise awareness that this is no longer the case and promote the above means of contact should they need to speak to an officer. “

Mark Lovie was pleased with the Council’s response. “I think the priority phone line will help improve waiting times and will be a great help to those unable to wait on the line on their own phones. The priority line

and the monthly drop-ins beginning at the centre will allow us to easily point community members in the right direction.”

A number of monthly housing drop-in sessions are to run in the area, where community members can meet with housing officers without an appointment.

Drop ins will be held at each of the following locations on a monthly basis:

Laura Ferns – visits shmu from 10am to 12pm

Kate Fincham visits Woodside Fountain Centre between 10am and 11am

Kevin McDonald visits Clifton Court from 10am to 12pm and Fountain Grange between 12:30 and 2:30pm.

Keep an eye out on social media for dates for these drop-ins. If you are a tenant living in any of the Housing Block’s mentioned, you should receive a text informing you of drop in dates and times in your building.

shmuPRESS want to hear from the Woodside Community, please get in touch by emailing rose.ross@shmu.org.uk or call 07752586312 to share your experience and thoughts on the matter.



WOODSIDE PARTNERSHIP AFTERSCHOOL CLUB & KITTYBREWSTER BREAKFAST CLUB

Hi all! If you still haven't heard about us, we are a professional childcare service based in Woodside Community Centre. We provide afterschool care for p1-7 children who attend the Kittybrewster or Woodside primary school.

We collect children after school and escort them to our centre, where fully qualified staff take care of children and provide healthy snacks. We offer children a range of fun and stimulating activities. We do cooking, dancing and art and craft, we play games and sports in the gym hall. Our children love Zumba and Fitness sessions, musical games, challenges, and movie nights. All

our activities are based on children's ideas and interests.

Our children enjoy working on different small projects such as Health and Well-being, Healthy eating, Environmental awareness, and Anti-bullying topics. The children create rules for the club which are easy follow.

We have a close partnership with Aberdeen Science Centre, which brings its exciting activities into our settings and provides us with free family tickets on special occasions.

If your child goes to Kittybrewster or Woodside Primary School and you are looking for professional

childcare, we are here for you!

The breakfast club is open for Kittybrewster children only as we run it in Kittybrewster Primary School.

Also, we ran an October Holiday Club in 2022, and we are planning to run an Easter Holiday club 8am to 5pm, for those parents who are looking for childcare when the school is closed.

If you would like to register your child with us, please drop us an email at almas.asclub@gmail.com, we will send you a registration form as well as answer the questions you might have.

Thanks!

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 are closing, 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



TRIPPING THE LIGHT FANTASTIC

Nicola Watson

Spectra came back to Aberdeen for its annual visit between Thursday 09 and Sunday 12 February 2023. With it, it brought some world and Scottish premieres which illuminated three main areas of the city, Union Terrace Gardens, the Art Gallery, and Marischal College/ Square. The dark Winter nights were filled with otherworldly light which transported people to a land, reminiscent of Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory.

From Union Terrace, you ventured through "a world of pure imagination." Viewing gumball trees, giant flowers, butterflies, sleeping giant, unicorns and lunar cycles. Then onto the Art Gallery where another giant towered above it all, and to Marischal College with its giant, and where spectators could walk through the Stargate and end up in a Scandinavian folktale, where they were brought face to face with the Nøkken. It was truly beautiful. The granite of The Silver City lent

itself with ease to the palette of blues, greens, pinks and purples. As well as a host of other spectacles.

Unfortunately, I can't write about them all for you as there was one bug bear that spoils this wonderful sight. There were too many people! I never went into the quadrangle at Marischal College, nor the Gallery, or Union Terrace Gardens as I went on the last night, Sunday. The queue for Union Terrace Gardens started at the entrance to Marischal College, which when you've got kids with you is not my idea of a fun night out. Don't get me wrong there wasn't the hint of trouble or grumbles. Folk happily queued and the rest of the streets flowed with the ebb of people coming and going. There could have perhaps been more volunteers to keep you right, but it's hard to get folk to help out sometimes and those who were there were top notch.

For myself, I suffer from social anxiety and find it difficult to cope in situations where there are a

lot of people and noise. Coupled with bright lights, these crowds, confusion, unknown sounds were a recipe for a potential panic attack. So why did I go? I wanted the experience. I wanted to take my children somewhere to see something different and be part of something in their city. I wanted to try and see if it was achievable and for me, I would say it was a 60% successful outing. We didn't get up close and personal with the exhibition, but we still immersed ourselves into this other world, albeit on the outskirts.

Next year, I would hope for more planning so that more people are able to engage with Spectra without the bottlenecks and confusion of what queues are for which element. It would be great if it could be on for longer but that's the nature of these sorts of festivals. I will be trying again next year and hopefully will get some close-up photos of the installations rather than viewing from afar.

Fesands and Fountain Centre

Fesands Free Food Services

Due to the Cost-of-Living Crisis, Fesands have been offering new services!

Free Breakfast and Lunch every Monday and Tuesday; Continental style breakfast Tea, Coffee, Toast, Cereal, Fruit and Fruit Juice. Lunches can be soup and sandwiches, paninis, baked tatties, pasta dishes etc. Everyone is welcome to come along and enjoy some food in our Warm space cafe.

We have also restarted our monthly free evening meals. In January, we served up over sixty portions of Haggis

Neaps and Tatties, with a veggie alternative too. And in February we served around eighty covers of Spaghetti Bolognese and Pizza Salad. It is so great to see the volunteers get back into the kitchen and create a great community event that so many people enjoy. Families, youths, older people all come along and meet friends and have a nice social gathering with nice food and save a few more pounds.



Shopping Trip to Beach Retail Park

Not everyone has a car or a friend to take them shopping. If you're reliant on buses, it can restrict where you go in the city and what shops and supermarkets you visit. Less options can also mean less bargains, so our committee asked us to do something about it!

Now, every Friday, around ten households have been getting aboard the project's minibus at 11am to travel

down to the beach where they can shop at a range of supermarkets and other specialist stores. Saving money on shopping and transport. We are looking for a volunteer minibus driver to take on this role so please get in touch if you think you could help one or two mornings per week.



Fersands Secondhand Store

A new Secondhand shop, or Pre-Loved Store at Woodside is recycling looked after items and giving people great value for money. The shop inside the Woodside Fountain Centre is open Tuesday 10-1pm and Thursday 3-6pm, the same time as the Pantry. Run by volunteers, the shop is becoming a popular stop off for those in the know. You can visit the Pantry, have a rake around the charity shop and have a free breakfast or lunch. With the money you save on lunch, you might find an exclusive brand name garment for your wardrobe or an essential household item.

Our volunteers will be there to assist. Of course, if you're having a clear out at home and items are too good to throw away, you can donate to a good cause on your doorstep. So come along and save some money on food, spend some money to support the community and recycle goods to help the environment!

Adult Classes, Activities & Opportunities in Woodside

You're going to love Yoga! Stretch, breathe and relax in a peaceful setting. Running from 10:30 on Wednesday mornings. Ester our experienced instructor will guide you through this enjoyable exercise moving at your own pace and learning the basic techniques of YOGA.

Art & Craft group is an informal and friendly crafty type of group working with all sorts of materials from wax to wood, glass, clay, water colour and oil paints. Thursday evenings from 6.30pm

If you want to exercise and move your body to a Rhumba Zumba rhythm then come along and meet Gillian your instructor on a Friday morning. Rest when you want to rest and move when you want to move, this can be exhilarating or gentle exercise.

All through May, you can use these free tickets for an adult Class at Woodside Fountain Centre. Simply cut out the ticket and present it at the class for free entry.



FREE TICKET FOR ART & CRAFT CLASS

6:30pm every Thursday
at Woodside Fountain Centre

FREE TICKET FOR ZUMBA CLASS

10am – 11am every Friday
at Woodside Fountain Centre

FREE TICKET FOR YOGA

10:30am every Wednesday
at Woodside Fountain Centre

My week at Fesands

There are no shortage of groups and activities running at the Woodside Fountain Centre and living nearby, I find that I'm never short of something to do throughout the week.

This is what my week at Fesands looks like, if any of these groups interest you, why not pop along to the centre and join in with us!

Monday

On Monday's, I go to Meditation and mindfulness.

This starts at 10am and is led by Lynne Digby. The session includes coffee, tea etc with a chance to chat and be supportive of each other.

There are often special workshops on essential oils, tarot readings and celebration of special occasions such as, full moons, Easter and Halloween.

Tuesday

Tuesday is Pantry Day at Fesands, I will venture across if I am needing food that week.

Wednesday

I go to Yoga with Ester on a Wednesday.

Mats and blocks are supplied but remember to bring water and a blanket.

We usually start with a chat about how we are feeling that day. Waking the body and mind with tapping and small movements. Some asanas on the topic of the day.

One of the best bits of the session is the relaxation at the end, under your blanket with cushions. I am always reenergised after this.

Thursday

This is the day for Reiki sessions.

Healing sessions start at 11am so we gather beforehand to catch up and set the room to be conducive for healings. There is always the chance to give healing to each other before or after client sessions.

This is another energising morning.

Friday

For my last session of the week, I attend Zumba with Gillian

I enjoy dancing and moving with the music so really I enjoy Zumba.

Lately have been unwell so couldn't make it. Sometimes I would use a chair for a few tunes as you can still move your arms and legs!

Margaret Aisbitt





Nicola Watson

NICOLA'S WOODSIDE

Well, this is it, where it all began, well for me at least. I was a wee Woodside quine in the early 1980's.

Folk have been living on and working on this land since the 15th Century, but Woodside formed officially in 1834, joining Aberdeen City in 1891.

The folks in Woodside are hard grafters and have a strong sense of community. 1881 saw nearly 6000 folks living here. My mum worked at the Crombie Mills Yarn Store Office from 1974 to 1980.

Woodside has a proud industrial heritage, going back to the 16th and 17th century spanning cotton spinning, calico printing as well as iron-founding, a copper mill and paper mills, to name a few.

The hours were long, the work physical and exhausting and the wages? Well not worth the paper they were written on. Poverty was rife and Woodsiders were not to reap the benefits of their work.

Education has always been important to Woodsiders, with several mill-run schools, merging into the now closed Borough Hall, before moving to Woodside School in 1990. They have produced many bright

lights, including Sir John Anderson, who gifted the Woodside Library. The land still bears the rusted, crumbling scars of it's past and nature has started to claim it as it's own.

Back in 1818, a group of folks got together and formed Woodside Congregational Church, the first of many churches in the area. They Built on the Great Northern Road and called it home until 1993, when it too became a casualty of progress. But they continue to meet every Sunday and run youth groups. That's where I fit in again.

I moved back into Woodside in 2006 and started helping with the Church and in 2020, became their minister for a period.

You can almost see the tiredness of Woodside seeping from the grey granite streets, lined with shopfronts and house windows. But new growth is bringing new life back to the area. New builds are popping up, bringing new opportunities. Hopefully this time, Woodsiders will benefit from these investments for decades to come.

So that is a whistlestop tour of my Woodside, you've seen a bit of the history and a bit of the present and I

hope you can glimpse the future that Woodside can have. Hopefully the future will be better for the next generation.

This is my Woodside.

What's yours?



**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 Woodside 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

Elected Officials

MSP Jackie Dunbar

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 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.

As a member of the Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee, I, along with my fellow committee members have responsibility for scrutinising the Scottish Government's policies and

progress towards meeting climate change targets, transport, energy, net zero and the circular economy as well as aspects of environmental policy. Some of the areas which the NZET Committee have looked at within the previous year include the energy price rises, the Scottish biodiversity strategy, air quality as well as an inquiry into Scotland's ferry system and how best to secure a ferry system that is future-proofed, compatible with Scotland's net zero goals as well as ensuring the ferry services across Scotland meet the needs of all service users.

In Parliament, I have recently had the opportunity to speak in several 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.

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!



Pete the Punk

ROBERT PLANT, THEN AND NOW

IT'S MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY since a starry-eyed, 15-year-old me had the privilege of witnessing a young Led Zeppelin storm Aberdeen with their own definitive brand of rock and roll.

Already recognised in America as the best band on the planet, they had yet to convince the punters at home, consequently touring the UK with fire in their bellies, a burning determination to right what they perceived as a grievous wrong.

Each member of the band was indispensable and I looked on, mesmerised, as rhythm section John Paul Jones and drummer John Bonham laid the foundations on which guitar maestro Jimmy Page conjured a huge wall of sound, all while a bare-chested Robert Plant – his voice a gift straight from the gods - prowled the stage in all his maned magnificence, wailing like a banshee on his way to becoming the frontman by whom all subsequent rock singers would be measured and judged.

An hour of block-busting pyrotechnics in, the band withdrew for a quick break, Plant and Page returning as a duo to deliver a short but exquisite set of acoustic songs drawn from the recently released Led Zeppelin III, a reminder there was much more to them than straight-ahead rock and roll.

Jones and Bonham then reappeared for another hour of mayhem, including one of the earliest live readings of *Stairway To Heaven*, finishing with *Whole Lotta Love*, leaving the crowd to wander out to the street dazed if not confused, knowing we had just experienced one of the great gigs of our lives.

The subsequent release of Led Zeppelin IV confirmed the band's place at the pinnacle of rock's pantheon, a position it retains to this day despite the group disbanding soon after the sudden death of Bonham in 1980.

I had abandoned rock music for punk by then but still had a soft spot for my old favourites, watching from afar as Plant in particular reinvented himself over the years, cannily retooling the folkier elements of his former band with distinctive North African touches of his own, delighting audiences with occasional Zeppelin classics updated with wild Arabic flourishes.

Having heard nothing of Plant in a long time, the news that he's coming to the tiny Tivoli theatre with new band Saving Grace comes as a very welcome surprise. That an artist of Plant's stature should tour smaller venues at a time they need all the help they can get is not only heartwarming, it's a fine example to the likes of billionaire/self-styled 'man of the people' Bruce Springsteen, who bizarrely chose to demolish his own reputation recently by signing a Ticketmaster deal that exposed him as just another unprincipled, money-grubbing sell-out.

With the big night finally upon us, however, we take our seats with no idea what to expect. Plant wanders casually onstage to huge applause and, though not quite perhaps the svelte figure of yore, the charisma remains undimmed, that famous mane miraculously intact for a man well into his eighth decade.

Opening with what I later discover is an old African American spiritual, Plant, co-frontperson Suzi Dian and the rest of Saving Grace weave together a captivating set of bluesy, folk and gently psychedelic songs, the majority unfamiliar to the crowd though in all truth nobody cares as we drink in every last drop of what is a spellbinding performance.



Plant has definitely mellowed with the passage of time but wears his years lightly and it's a joy to see the old warrior relaxed, cracking jokes between songs and sharing tales of the last time he was in the city (1973), when none other than Lulu was starring in the HMT panto.

The band eventually launches into the one song I do recognise and it's a personal highlight: a joyful, blues-soaked version of Donovan's much-covered *Season Of The Witch*, tonight featuring playful digressions into David Crosby's *Almost Cut My Hair*, Diana Ross's *Upside Down* and there's even - sshhhh! - a wee snatch of Zeppelin tucked quietly in there.

As the show reaches its finale, I realise the magic we've seen tonight is no different from that I first experienced all those years ago: a great band with an exceptional frontman, a perfect venue and willing audience combine to deliver something far greater than the sum of its parts. For many of us, this has been the best show of the year, rightly rewarded with the most sustained, heartfelt ovation I've seen in the city for a long, long time. Amen to that.

Community Contacts

Aberdeen City Council Helpline - 0800 0304 713

Virtual School Helpline - 01224 523322

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 Carers Support 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

Penumbra First Response 0800 234 3695

Fersands and Fountain Community Project

01224 524925

Printfield Community Project

01224 276788

Woodside Fountain Centre

01224 485983

Woodside Community Council

woodsidehiltoncc@gmail.com

Woodside Medical Practice

8am – 6pm

Contact: 01224 492828

Woodside Network

Contact: printfield@printfieldproject.co.uk

or mark@fersands.org

St Machar Credit Union

Info: Credit Unions are financial co-operatives owned and controlled by their members, that offer savings accounts, low cost loans and other services.

Phone: 01224 276994

Councillor Hazel Cameron -

hacameron@aberdeencity.gov.uk 07977399518

Councillor Neil Copland -

NeilCopland@aberdeencity.gov.uk 07768 427392

Councillor Deena Tissera -

dtissera@aberdeencity.gov.uk 07977399589

DOMESTIC ABUSE

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