



woodside
free press

Winter Edition 2023

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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.

Celebrate with us! Read on to hear of Fersand's and shmu's success at the celebrate Aberdeen Awards, get up to date with the Gateway Feature and toddlers groups in the area.

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.

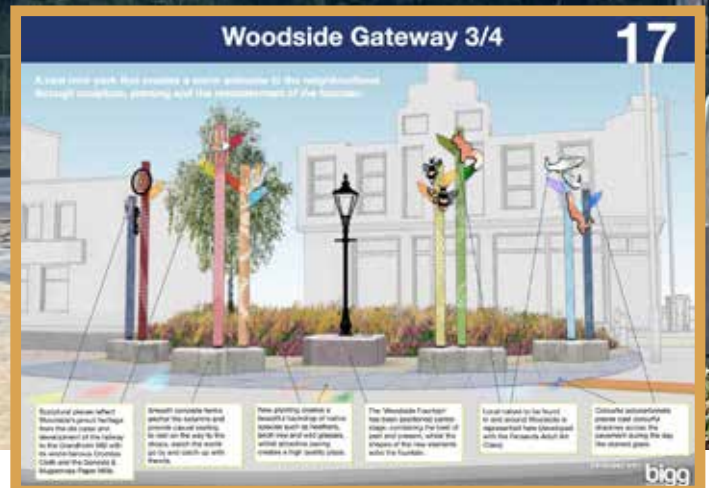
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Home sweet home for the Woodside Fountain.



The infamous Woodside Fountain has finally been restored to its rightful place on the corner of Don Street and Great Northern Road. This comes as the latest advancement in Woodside's Gateway Feature Project.

In 2018, Aberdeen City Council secured funding from Sustrans Street Design Programme and launched the project to enhance the Tillydrone and Woodside areas. The aim of the project is to make Woodside and Tillydrone more attractive areas to live and work and focusses on the entrances to each neighbourhood.

Since then, work has been done to transform the Muggers' Brig underpass and sculptures installed on Hayton Road in Tillydrone. Now, work has begun on the Woodside part of the project on Don Street.

The Fountain, a landmark of Woodside, now stands alone on the site like days gone by. When the installation is complete, it will stand front and centre of the scene, representing Woodside's history.

Next for the development, designer Hamish Biggs will begin work on the project's accompanying art feature, a range of sculptures representing

different aspects of Woodside. The sculptures, alongside the fountain Woodside's heritage. From the canal, railway and the Grandholm and Paper Mills. There will also be depictions of local nature, which were developed with Fersands Adult arts class.

A mini-park will be created with seating and greenspace, inhabited with new plants of native species.

The artwork and green space will be installed in the coming weeks, so keep an eye out for the new editions to the feature.



IT WAS US

WHAT WON IT!

It wasn't quite the Oscars, but when it comes to the local voluntary sector, the Celebrate Aberdeen Awards were the only show in town.

With scores of entries from all over the city, the staff and volunteers at the Fersands and Fountain SCIO were delighted to find themselves among the three finalists of the 'Small Organisation of the Year Award'. Our friendly competitors were SensationAll and Abernecessaries. As these organisations do great work, we knew victory would be an uphill task.

The grand night at the Chester Hotel came round, and a selection of local stalwarts were there to enjoy the event (along with the slap-up meal!). The Aberdeen Rock Choir were there to keep us entertained as we eagerly anticipated the big moment.

STV North Editor David McKenzie took to the stage, and after giving a glowing account of the work of all three finalists, announced our project as the winners. A frenzy of screaming and hugging ensued (especially from Mark). Our whole group took to the stage to take a bow

and enjoy a well-deserved moment in the spotlight.

Charlene K, Trustee of the project said "Fersands is always there for everyone in the community and deserves this recognition for all their great work."

It wasn't quite the Oscars, but I would like to thank my mother and father, my friends and everyone that knows me.....

Well done, Fersands!

And Campaign of the year goes to.... shmu!

We at shmu are delighted to have won Campaign of the year at this year's Celebrate Aberdeen Awards for our 2022 Challenge Poverty Week Campaign.

It was an absolute honour to be nominated alongside The Archie Foundation and Camphill School, as well as all the other brilliant organisations and services celebrated this year.

shmu are immensely proud of our campaign and all who took part and helped make it happen! Lucy our Communications officer

said, "Thanks to all the incredible shmu volunteers, staff and all the organisations who took part, especially Cfine, ACVO and Abernecessaries.

"In the 21st century we shouldn't have to be tackling poverty, but the third sector is wonderful in Aberdeen and hopefully we can create a society that's equal for all. Thank you so much for the support."

Tanya, who played a key role in the campaign also took to the stage at the Celebration. She said "We were presented with an opportunity to discuss something that is so often kept secret. We were at a point where everyone was struggling; our parents were struggling, and everyone was trying their best to keep their heads above water.

"We thought we had to share our voices for those who couldn't, for those who didn't have a platform and for those who thought no one was listening. We are listening!"

Thanks again to Celebrate Aberdeen for honouring both shmu and Fersands and the community for supporting us.

WOODSIDE LIBRARY TURNS 140!

Woodside Library, which opened in 1883, is Aberdeen's oldest Library and celebrations were in order for it's 140th birthday.

Save the Libraries Campaigners threw a birthday bash for the Woodside Library and a crowd gathered outside the building to celebrate its history.

As the Library has been closed since March, the party had to take place outside, in the building grounds, but

thankfully the weather was kind.

There was music provided by the Gurana Street Band, children's games and a conga line. Some of the campaigners also took the opportunity to address the crowd and encourage attendees to take part in the consultation survey.

The library, alongside five other Aberdeen Libraries closed its doors in March after Aberdeen City Council Budget cuts and campaigners and

residents have been fighting fiercely since to save them.

A consultation regarding the closure of the libraries and Bucksburn Swimming Pool was launched by the council in August which closed on the 6th of November. Campaigners urged everyone to complete the survey and have their say.

A report on the outcomes of the consultation will be presented to the Council in December.



Join us in Challenging Poverty

The Poverty Alliance's Challenge Poverty Week is extremely important to us here at shmu so we had to take part again this year.

This year the week ran from the 2nd to the 8th of October and is incredibly relevant today with persistent poverty on the rise in Scotland.

The Scottish government estimate that around 21 percent of Scotland's population were living in relative poverty between 2019 and 2022. Poverty is an issue which effects every aspect of one's life. Figures from March 2023 suggest that 49% of Scottish adults reported their mental health being affected by the Cost-of-Living crisis, which is why it is so important that we tackle this issue.

Shmu volunteer, Kerry, kindly shared her story with us. "I wanted to share my story, just to get it out there that, although I'm working, I'm still struggling and I'm still in poverty. Things need to change."

Kerry said, "At the moment, I'm really struggling, I'm having to use the

foodbanks at the Community Centre and that's something I never thought I'd have to do."

For this year's Campaign, The Poverty Alliance have five key policy asks of the Scottish Government, each day of the week will represent one of the key asks.

One thing that the Alliance is asking for, is to ensure that everyone has access to an adequate income. This policy addresses the need for a minimum income and for benefits to cover all of people's needs. Employers can also commit to providing adequate income by pledging to pay the Real National Living Wage.

"Society makes me feel like I'm worthless." Kerry shared, "Like 'Oh she's got a job but she's still moaning.' Yes, because, I may have a job but it's still not enough to live on. I work in a part time job, so I live from paycheck to paycheck. I don't always earn the same amount every month, making it quite difficult to budget."

Many more, like Kerry, understand the pain and stress this causes.

"I am working, I'm still struggling, and things need to change, for the better, not just for me but for everyone. shmu has been a great help, just by getting this information out, is going to help a whole host of people. "

If you didn't manage to join us throughout Challenge Poverty Week 2023 as we addressed these issues, please look at our social media where we have signposted amazing organisations and services, shared more of our volunteers' stories and short films throughout the week.

You can read more about the Poverty Alliances Policy asks at <https://www.povertyalliance.org/cpw/>



Getting Old (for all ages)

One day I woke up to find myself sixty-six years old. A pensioner. And it was never going to happen to me. In my twenties I laughed at the thought of pension. There was just too much life going on. Yet, here I am, a pensioner. A 'senior citizen'. An old person. 'But I'm not!', I protest. I am a young person, it's a well-known fact. But who's this old boy in the mirror? Might as well phone the funeral home now.

I spent the last few years looking for a job, finding that the person on the other end of the phone is all enthusiastic about the job, until I told them my age, when an eerie silence fell. And yet I am fighting fit, have a healthy diet, and I am fitter than many, half my age. But I can't get away from the fact that I was sixty-something. They say that age is just a number, but I always find that phrase a little too close to 'your number's up.'

But I'm not going to take it lying down (so to speak). Stop smoking and drinking. Go vegan(ish). Hike up mountains. I'll show that God who's boss.

That's all well and good, but first there's the paperwork. And there's plenty of that. Endless forms. You have to reapply for all those things you already receive (watch 'bedroom tax'). And make sure all those 't's are crossed and the 'i's dotted. The whole thing is a bit of a minefield.

Take the idea of Pension Credit. After filling in the forms, it seems I don't qualify for it. I'm on the full state pension and so the dentist now must be paid, ditto the optician. And no Cost-of-Living Payment for you. Or Severe Weather Payment. I was thinking I must have missed something; it seems so unfair. And it took me three months to find out that one simple fact.

The point is that we all will face changes in our lives. Redundancy. Illness. Divorce. And often the rain will fall from a clear blue sky. To put it politely. Stuff Happens. And when it does it's important to make sure that you separate the finances from your personal situation. My advice is to get all the forms together, go to your local library (if you still have one), and work through it all systematically. And get as much advice as you can find. You always miss something, and it can save you some grief.

'What a drag it is getting old' sang Mick Jagger. Well, in your twenties it might seem that way, but when you get there, it ain't necessarily so. But it could be a drag if you don't get the paperwork right.

Dougie Thomson

All you need to know about Fersands right now!

Secret Woodside Store

discovered selling quality clothes for only one pound. Not a lot of people know about this little shop, it's hidden behind other services in the Woodside Fountain Centre. Every Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon the bargain hunters of Woodside unearth great value gems at the Fersands preloved shop.

Volunteers take in some fantastic donations and sort out and price all the articles. Jackets, dresses, suits, children's wear, homeware and toys. There is something in this shop you will need. Come along to the centre on Tuesday or Thursday to have a look around and see what's in store for you.

We are very pleased that the shop is providing great value to our customers and raising a little money to help pay for other services. None of this would be possible without the mountains of generous donations we receive every week from individuals, groups and businesses.



The poster features the Fersands & Fountain logo at the top corners. The main title is 'Fersands Preloved Charity Shop'. Below this, a blue box contains the opening hours: 'Tuesday 10-1pm' and 'Thursday 3-6pm'. The central illustration shows a person in a white shirt and brown trousers looking at clothes on a rack. To the left is a shelf with books and a plant. In the foreground, there is a box of toys including a teddy bear and colorful blocks. A purple starburst graphic says 'Come and grab a bargain most items £1'. At the bottom, a blue box provides the location: 'Woodside Fountain Centre, Marquis Road, Aberdeen, AB24 2QY'.



Meal Deals make sense at Community Café

Hungry customers are finding a good place to eat at the Woodside Café. For only one pound fifty, people passing Great Northern Road can stumble across the best value lunch in town. Every Monday and Tuesday Kimmy the Cook will conjure up a bargain hot meal or continental Breakfast for under two quid. After introducing the new café service last November, the café served nearly 4000 free meals and now we are offering a new meal deal that people can afford.

Kimmy and her team Musa and Sarah are experimenting with some baking recipes and food from different cultures too, so come along and have some food and support your Community Cafe

Dorothy takes over for the rest of the week and offers Wednesday breakfast, Thursday Soup and Sandwich and Friday Fry Up. It's great to see people meeting up with friends or just coming in alone and having a chat. Come along, have some food and support your Community Café.



Men Shed Woodside Style

What is there for men to do in this city nowadays, where can they go to socialise without spending a fortune or being asked to buy alcohol?

We at Woodside would like to start a group for men over forty. Offer a space where they can meet over a cup of tea and a chat. A friendly game of pool perhaps, maybe a game of chess or a mess about with table tennis.

If there is a group of guys out there who would like to meet, maybe we can find other things to do to promote a healthy mind and better physical wellbeing. Regular walks, Artwork or dabbling with musical instruments; guitars, drums etc. (we have all the equipment here for you to try out)

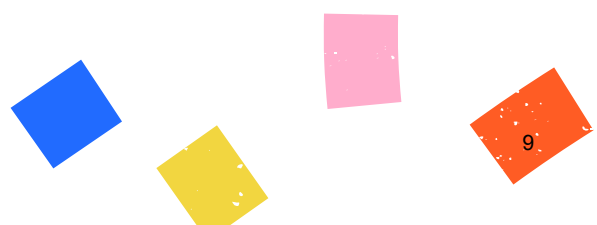
Come and let us know if you are interested, let us know what kind of things you would like to see offered?

Woodside Pantry (Scotland's first Community Pantry)

The local pantry is saving customers at least twenty pounds per week according to the latest survey of users. A hundred Woodside residents shop once a week at the service which has been operating since February 2019.

Usually, the customers pay two pounds fifty to shop once a week and select ten items. So, customers can only come once a week but still find they can save around twenty quid a week from the service, they save money and are helping reduce food waste in the country!

The money they pay helps with electricity bills for the running of the fridge freezers etc.



WOODSIDE BABY AND TODDLER GROUPS

If you're looking for groups to take your toddler to or are looking for childcare in your community, look no further. Printfield Community projects and Fersands and Fountain SCIO have services for you.

PRINTFIELD CRECHE

Printfield Community Project is based in two ground floor Council flats on Printfield Walk and since 1989 has served the residents of Printfields and Woodside. An important part of the work has been the establishment of childcare for local families and a Crèche for local children was established at the start and staffed by local parents.

It was agreed by the managing committee that the childcare would be free for all the families who wished to use this service as Printfield/Woodside area are seen by the Aberdeen City Council as a deprived area within the city with low income and high unemployment.

Over the years there have been many changes in the numbers and ages of the children.

At the establishment of the crèche many of the children were under 5 and pre-nursery. But with the changes in preschool legislation, it was decided by the committee to lower the attending age group to 1yr to 3yr olds. It was also agreed that the crèche staff would be paid and go through SVQ Level 2/3 in childcare. So that at present all the staff are qualified workers.

There has been a slight change in the cost of attending the crèche; and it was agreed by the management committee to start charging parents the cost of the children's snack, so that each child attending would pay one pound towards the cost of a snack, but this has not changed in five years.

Over the last couple of years, the attendance has declined, and spaces have become available for 1 to 3-year-olds from the Woodside/Printfield areas. So, if any residents have a 1- to 3-year-old and are looking for a place in the crèche, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Please Contact:

**Jim Duncan Family
Development Worker
11a/11b Printfield Walk
Tel 01224 276788
jim.duncan154@gmail.com**

PARENT AND TODDLER TIME ARE FERSANDS

Parent Toddler time is Tuesday morning at Fersands (Woodside Fountain Centre). There's a great atmosphere where mums and dads from all over gather to have a bit of energetic play in a safe setting. Kids can climb or scoot around the hall, play on mats or throw around a ball. There's always time for a coffee and a chat and we have a family worker who can advise you if you need any help.

In the winter months ahead, it will do you and your child good to get out of the house and be able to run around in comfortable safe and friendly place. The service runs every Tuesday from 9.30 till 11.30am and is £1.50 per child.





Spot the signs – Looking out for Generalised Anxiety

We all have mental health, but we don't all keep an eye on our mental wellbeing or know what signs to look out for which may indicate our mental health is declining.

In this edition, the editorial team would like to bring your attention to Generalised Anxiety. There are many different types of anxiety, from panic disorder, social anxiety disorder and more, however Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD) tends to be the most common.

Statistics from the Mental Health Foundation show that sadly, anxiety is not uncommon among adults in Scotland. From a report the Foundation published in May this year, around six in ten (70%) adults in Scotland experienced anxiety that had interfered with their daily lives in the two weeks prior to the research. On top of this, 30% of the adults

said they were not coping with those feelings and 44% said they keep those feelings a secret.

Having feelings of anxiety is nothing to be ashamed of, and although it may feel daunting, opening up may be the first step towards understanding these feelings.

WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR?

According to the NHS, GAD has both physical and mental symptoms, and everyone will experience them differently. Here are some of the symptoms highlighted by the NHS.

Psychological symptoms of GAD

- Feeling restless**
- Feeling dread or fear**
- Feeling of being “on edge”**
- Trouble concentrating**
- Feeling irritable**

Physical symptoms of GAD

- Dizziness**
- Tiredness**
- Strong, fast or irregular heartbeat (palpitations)**
- Muscle aches and tension**
- Excessive sweating**
- Shortness of breath**
- Feeling sick**
- Headache**
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep (insomnia)**

If you experience any of these symptoms and feel they cause you distress or interfere with your daily life, please speak to your GP.

Remember mental health is nothing to be ashamed of, don't suffer in silence.

KEEPING SAFE ON THE DARK NIGHTS

Autumn is definitely here, and with it comes the dark, cold nights that not many of us like. Something else can come with the early darkness. An unsettling feeling when we're out and about going from A to B. The potential fear that we're not alone and are being followed. It's an ancient defence mechanism that puts us on our guard because long ago we could have been the potential prey of a fierce animal. Nowadays, the main thing to fear is our imaginations getting away from us.

That's not to say we should not pay attention to that feeling. It's there to keep us safe and if something doesn't feel right, we should take steps to keep safe. Thankfully, 9.5 times out of 10 there is nothing to worry about, but we should all take steps to stay safe when out and about.

There are new apps that turn your smartphone into a safety device. One such app is Hollie Guard, although there are others available through the app stores. When you are out and about you can tap the app and it will start to track your location. If you find yourself in a situation you don't feel safe in, you can shake your phone. This sends a text message and e-mail to your emergency contact to alert them. As it does this, it also starts to record sound and video which could be used as potential evidence. If you still don't feel safe in the situation, you can shake your phone again and this will set off a loud noise and strobe light to get attention. It works in several languages and works worldwide. This app, and others, offer

reassurance that when you are out and about, help is close at hand. Be confident when you are out walking, take steps to keep safe and you can still enjoy your walk.

Be aware of your surroundings.

Trust your instincts.

Plan your route and let someone know.

Stick to main routes.

Can be intimidating walking past groups of folk, walk confidently.

Have your keys ready in your hand, you can get in your door quickly but can also use to defend yourself.

Download safety app like Hollie Guard.

For kids, it's not just about it getting darker earlier. Road safety is something that should be taken seriously at all times. We all had a near miss when a lot of our lollipop men and women were threatened with losing their jobs at what were deemed "not so dangerous crossings." Children are fast and naturally shorter so no wonder your heart goes in your mouth when you see a child dart out into the road to try and cross.

Be safe, be seen. It's an old catchphrase but it's still relevant today. Thankfully we still have our dedicated lollipop men and women to guide children safely across the road, but what about at other times?

Find a crossing point with not many cars (plenty of space to be seen)

Try to cross in a group if you can, you are more likely to be seen by drivers.

Stop – Come to a complete stop so you have time to look at the traffic.

Look – Look all ways that traffic is coming, how fast is it going?

Listen – This can tell you how fast traffic is going and from what direction.

Look again – Double check, to make sure no cars have sneaked onto that bit of road.

When safe, cross, but keep looking and checking.

For teens, yes, you've been doing it for years, but you still need to be wary of your surroundings and not take risks. A lot of teens wear dark clothing, and this means that it can often be the last minute when a driver spots you. Try and wear something a bit brighter, or if it interferes with your style, give drivers more of a chance to spot you. If you're wearing headphones then you need to be more aware of your surroundings as one of your senses is distracted.

Don't risk nipping out in front of moving traffic, just wait a bit.

Be visible.

Walk confidently.

If on a bike/scooter come off of it to cross the road.

A reminder to all regardless of age, it can be nice going for a walk in the afternoon, evening even when it is dark. Don't let the dark take away your freedom for 6 months of the year. Take action, be safe and enjoy your walk.

Nicola Watson

Neglected Woodside

World War Two left many cities in ruins, especially in Central and Eastern Europe. Yet it is impressive that so many of their citizens lovingly rebuild their devastated cities, getting them as close as they could to their original glory.

Aberdeen got off lightly compared to many, but the harbour took a beating, as did the Kittybrewster depot. Many bombs missed the rail junction, however, and hit Woodside. The children's playground in Ferrier Crescent now occupies the site of one of those unlucky buildings.

But what the Luftwaffe missed has been more than made up for by the powers that be. The post war destruction of historic Aberdeen amounts to systematic corporate vandalism. The fate of many of our historic buildings has been documented in such books as *Vanishing Aberdeen*. Take the Guest Row for example. This fine piece of 17th and 18th century inner city landscape disappeared

under 1950s 'slum clearance.' Even the former slum Provost Skene's House only missed the might of the bulldozer by the intervention of the Queen Mother.

And the litany of minor disasters has continued. Thankfully not in direct unthinking demolition, but through neglect. A building becomes a problem in some way, is boarded up, then follows several years of gradual decay, until there is no option but demolition.

And it's sad to see this fate fall in some of once proud constructions on Donside. The once proud Grandholm mill, home of the world-famous Crombie cloth, has long been shut down (the last nail in the coffin was the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Politburo all sported Crombie coats). The site was redeveloped, but the surviving industrial archaeology is crumbling away. Jacob's ladder and the old Grandholm Mill Bridge are boarded up, becoming more and more dangerous as the years pass. The

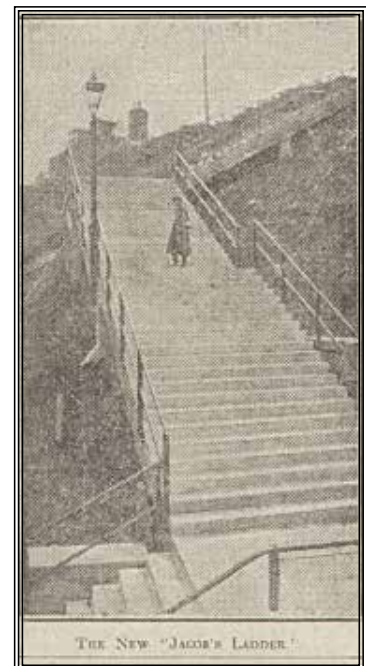
pathways in that area could do with some work as well.

Local group, The Friends of Jacob's Ladder and Riverside Walk are working to restore the historic steps, which opened more than 100 years ago, to provide a safe route for textile workers, machine operators, men, woman and children to make their way to and from work at Grandholm Mills.

Of course, money is tight everywhere, and it might be questioned whether the allocating of resources to the riverside would be money well spent. But our green spaces are becoming ever more important in our cramped cities. The riverside is also a great alternative to the main road for walkers and cyclists. Finally, it's about time we began to appreciate the value of our surviving historic sites.

To quote the greatest line in popular music: you don't know what you've got 'till it's gone.

Dougie Thomson



Sweet 16 for shmuFM

This October, our shmuFM strand turned 16 years old! We launched our community radio station in 2007 and have had a brilliant time over the years, making radio, expanding our studios and working with our communities.

shmu's Chief Executive, Murray Dawson wanted to say "I'd like to take this opportunity, on our radio station's 16th birthday, to thank all our wonderful volunteers (past and present) who have given so much of themselves to share their stories, provide insight into our communities, and celebrate the wonderful city that is Aberdeen. Happy Birthday shmuFM - here's to the next 16 years!"

Unfortunately, due to the stormy weather our birthday party was put on hold, however, we look forward to our 20th birthday later this year. We'll celebrate our 20th year as a charity with a big bash, so keep an eye out for details.



Hate Crime Awareness Week

Did you know shmu is a Third Party Reporting Centre for Hate Crime?

Not all victims are comfortable with reporting their experiences directly to the police. Some victims may find visiting police stations intimidating or daunting, some may not be aware of alternative ways of reporting, or they fear being outed in terms of their sexuality or disability.

Third party reporting centres (TPRCs) overcome these barriers by providing an alternative way to report a hate crime. They give confidential advice, help you report it, and support you along the way. You can remain anonymous if you wish, and you don't need to have contact with the police if you don't want to.

If you would like to report a hate crime, you can visit shmu during Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm.

We recently participated in Hate Crime Awareness Week. Sarah Igesund, Shmu's Adult Services Development worker said "Our campaign for National Hate Crime Awareness Week was important in sharing the issues that many people face. Hate Crimes are underreported, and we need to be making sure people are aware there are alternative ways to report a hate crime if they feel uncomfortable going to the police.

"Third Party Reporting Centres are crucial in ensuring people have safe, inclusive places to report hate crime. Our action doesn't stop now the weeklong campaign is over, we will continue to work together with Police Scotland and other third and public sectors to make safer communities for all."

Visit <https://grec.co.uk/hate-crime/n> to find out more.



Pete the Punk

ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

I had been very much looking forward to a book signing event with Echo and the Bunnymen founder member Will Sergeant in Dundee, but the roads are blocked and, with no trains running either, that's been knocked firmly on the head.

Storm Babet is here, and with so many lives already upended or even swept away in its near-biblical floods, all I can do is watch the rain battering off my window, be grateful for such small personal inconvenience and count myself lucky to have seen Sergeant's band on their recent short but very special tour.

One of the great post-punk outfits of their time, Echo and the Bunnymen produced four great albums before fading quietly from the public eye, the last of which – *Ocean Rain* – was the culmination of years of hard work polishing their musical and songwriting skills. It is this album that will be the main focus of tonight's show at Edinburgh's Usher Hall.

Most pleasing to see is the broad spectrum of ages present and, as we settle into our seats, I drift back to a never-forgotten early '80s show at Aberdeen Capitol, the stage all decked out in camouflage netting, a young band performing right at the top of their game. It will be interesting to see how they are now they and many of their fans are – how shall I put it? - getting on a bit.

Showtime duly arrives and Sergeant takes up his customary stance at the left of the stage. Singer Ian McCulloch – never one to dodge the limelight – keeps us waiting before making his entrance to huge applause.

The first set kicks off appropriately enough with *Going Up*, the opening track from 1980 debut album *Crocodiles*, then it's onwards to favourites like *All That Jazz*, a splendid *Nothing Lasts Forever* segueing beautifully into Lou Reed's *Sweet Jane* and *Walk On The Wild Side*, closing out with stirring versions of *Never Stop* and *Bring On The Dancing Horses*. Though McCulloch's voice is first class tonight, his line in dodgy Scouse banter is as unintelligible as ever - no bad thing, perhaps.

The stewards, meanwhile, are already busy ordering an assortment of sweaty, middle-aged mannies back to their seats for committing the apparently cardinal sin of dancing in the aisles too early in the night, but peace is restored during the interval and we prepare ourselves for what we hope will be an epic second half.

The crowd's chattering gives way to an expectant hush as the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra makes its way onstage, followed shortly by the band. Sergeant in the interim has changed respectfully, if rather amusingly, bless him, into smart jacket, shirt and tie.

The point of tonight's big production is to play *Ocean Rain* from beginning to end, the symphonic pop of *Silver*

the perfect opener. There's no doubt the orchestral backing adds an almost palpable magic that uplifts even the weaker material, and so we make a safe and stately progress to *Thorn Of Crowns*, at which point Sergeant cuts loose with a withering guitar solo.

The Killing Moon, once described by McCulloch with jaw-dropping hubris as "the greatest song ever written," might not be quite that but it is a classic that finally gets the entire audience to its feet, there to shortly raise the roof with a jubilant approximation of the *Seven Seas* chorus.

Next comes one of their greatest unsung gems, *My Kingdom*, before the pace if not the temperature drops with majestic closer *Ocean Rain*, a contender for Echo and the Bunnymen's loveliest song and certainly one of their most loved, a fitting end to a wonderful set.



Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant 2023

Band and orchestra take thoroughly deserved bows before exiting but there's no way McCulloch and co. are getting away without an encore, eventually returning with a superb seven-minute version of *Lips Like Sugar*, never the most substantial of songs but one to which tonight's psychedelic treatment gives shimmering new life.

Off they go again, but we're not moving till they've played what we all want to hear. After an unusually long interval, the band finally returns, cello player in tow, and the crowd goes absolutely bonkers as he bows the unforgettable intro to *The Cutter*, one of the truly great alternative pop songs of the '80s.

Our patience has been well rewarded: more than half a century of gig-going has failed to blunt my appetite for those rare 'you had to be there' moments and this is one of the best in years, the music ebbing and flowing as more than two thousand of us roar along to every single word, transcendent in a way no amount of YouTube videos could ever capture, basking in the essence of how it feels to be right here, right now, band and audience joined as one in fierce celebration of art, community and the sheer joy of living. I'll take that, thank you.

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