



Getting By Together

Cromarty Care Project has been running a community larder since mid-December 2020. It is there to help any households who need a helping hand during this unprecedented time.

A small team of volunteers check and restock the larder daily, and it is always open, so people can take whatever they have need of, at any time.

We generally provide a selection of dried food, tins and all kinds of toiletries. The bakery has also been donating items and we are very grateful to them for their support, and thanks too to Rose Farm for potatoes and eggs. We are grateful also to those of you who have left donations. If you too would like to donate, then any of the following items would be great:-

Tea, Coffee, Tinned fish or meat, Tinned Fruit, Baked Beans, Lentils, Rice, Toilet rolls, Toothpaste and Toothbrushes, Soap, Washing powder, Washing up liquid.

There is a box beside the larder for you to leave donations in.

If you feel you cannot come to the larder for whatever reason and would prefer a delivery then contact info@cromartycareproject.co.uk or text 07850889014



The larder - free for anyone to make use of - is on the High Street by Townlands Barn.

Fuel Payments

On top of the virus, this is proving to be an extremely cold winter. If you are struggling to heat your home the Cromarty Care Project are offering a one-off payment towards heating, of £50 per household.

If you would like to apply please email info@cromartycareproject.co.uk or text 07850889014

The Highland Council also offers fuel support for Highland Households, which you can apply for as well as the Cromarty Grant. See the information from the council below.

These are difficult times – none of us know when our moment of need will come. So please get in touch with us if you are struggling, we are here to help.

FROM THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Do you need help paying fuel costs for your home? Low income households within Highland experiencing fuel insecurities can apply for a non-repayable £60 grant.

What is the purpose of this fund?

The Scottish Government has made funding available to local authorities to support people experiencing financial hardship over the Winter period as a result of COVID-19 including providing a contribution towards your fuel costs.

The Council has introduced this fund for households in Highland who are struggling to pay their fuel bills during the current COVID-19 pandemic. Low income households within Highland experiencing fuel insecurities can apply for a non-repayable £60 grant.

Eligibility

The following criteria will apply:

After paying your rent / mortgage, you are spending more than 10% of your remaining income on fuel for your home (for example: oil, gas, electricity, coal, wood, biomass etc), and; You have entitlement to Council Tax Reduction (CTR)

If you are not in receipt of Council Tax Reduction we may still be able to help if you:

Are on a low income, and; Have less than £16000 of capital (savings, shares, property other than your main home); or Have no recourse to public funds.

We reserve the right to request further evidence in order to establish the individual circumstances of your household.

Apply online here: www.highland.gov.uk/fuelsupportfund

If you require help with your application please contact the Welfare Support Team

Welfare.support@highland.gov.uk / 0800 090 1004.

Business News

Sutor Creek

The latest lockdown has meant additional changes to how we operate at Sutor Creek. Although our deli is still open for picking up prepared and packaged foods, all our takeaway is now available via Click and Collect from our website www.sutorcreek.co.uk. Collections are made at our side entrance. If you prefer to phone in your order, call us on 01381 600 855 and we will arrange a time for collection or free delivery in Cromarty that suits you.

Graham and the team introduce new dishes weekly (including Curries and Vegetarian) in addition to our best-selling fish & chips and wood-fired pizzas. Give yourself a break from preparing 3 meals a day and let us cook for you - make it a Sutor Creek Date Night and don't forget Valentine's on February 14th - Graham will be adding in meals perfect for celebrating this special occasion.

We would also like to thank the community for continuing to support our **Pay It Forward** scheme. This has allowed us to treat folk to meals which has been really appreciated. If there is someone that you think a wee treat would make a big difference, contact us to arrange.

Thank you for your ongoing support,

Graham, Phoebe and the entire team at Sutor Creek.

Calluna

It has taken 3 years and 2 lockdowns but the day is nearly here. Calluna's website will be going live in February with all our clothes, accessories, footwear and gifts available to be viewed from the comfort of your own home. The Calluna Team have been attending Trade Shows virtually so there will be lots of new stock appearing both online and when we finally reopen. In the meantime, if there is anything you need (Birthday presents/cards etc) just send us a [message](#) and we will arrange to drop off in Cromarty.

The Cheese House

You will have seen and read in the news about the chaos caused by the final agreement on trading relations with the EU. This has impacted many of our local businesses who had come to rely on the simplicity of the single market. So spare a thought for our retailers who have been getting their heads around the new arrangements.

At one point The Cheese House thought the easiest solution might be to revert to the old Cromarty tradition of smuggling. (Thank you to everyone who offered to help with that!) However, a legal solution may have been found. To cover the costs of all the additional paperwork whilst avoiding an increase in prices for the customer they will be importing the maximum quantity in a single delivery. So, if you want to see what 650kg of cheese on a single pallet looks like keep your eyes on Bank Street around the 12th February.

Development Trust Latest



Townlands Barn before recent reclamation...

Townlands Barn has been given a much-needed facelift - or a bit of a tidy up at least – and made more secure as result.

It has been obvious for years that ivy was encroaching upon its stonework, weakening the fabric of the building, while covering more and more of the rusting corrugated iron roof. The weight of the growth on the upper part of the building posed the biggest threat.

The Development Trust was established specifically to save this building, and find a new role for it in the community life of Cromarty. It became a matter of some urgency, therefore, to address the ivy problem and that of the nearby sycamores. Although there were volunteers keen to wield their secateurs, the Trust felt that the dangers to them (and the building!) were too great and specialist help and equipment was needed.

Step forward Alex Graham, with the necessary equipment and machinery. Alex started work two weeks ago and completed it in a matter of a few days.

Some loose mortar did come away, but nothing substantial. There were some ivy stems tucked in where the roof meets the wall, where there was once a gutter. They have been severed and cut back as much as possible. The main ivy stem was cut and dosed with glyphosate root killer using "eco plugs". These keep the chemical contained so there will be no harm to bees or the rest the environment. The sycamores have been cut and dosed as well.

The work was completed on time and on budget. The CCDT directors would like to thank Alex and his team for making the barn look a little more respectable and safer for the future.



and after.

Whitedykes

There has been an unexpected hiccup in the CCDT's acquisition of the woodland at Whitedykes, planned as the site for motorhomes. To be more precise, the problem concerns access to the site.

As we reported before Christmas the Highland Council granted the trust planning permission for the planned campsite at Whitedykes, amongst the trees around the industrial units.

We had been waiting for the Highland Council to finalise the sale of the site to the CCDT for £1, as a Community Asset Transfer (CAT). The trust's lawyer, however, alerted us to a potential problem. This concerned the point of entry for motorhomes visiting the site.

Originally it had been planned they would come off the main road directly into the site. At the behest of the council planners, however, that was changed. Visiting motorhomes were to come off the short existing roadway to the industrial units. This was subsequently approved in planning consent.

We were advised subsequently that despite the council's involvement, a confirmed legal right of access was still required. Our solicitor is currently working with council officials to resolve this issue. He doesn't believe it to be too problematic, but it is taking time.

Office Bearers

At the CCDT board meeting on Wednesday 27th January, Jacquie Ross was re-elected as chair. Greg Fullarton was voted in as vice-chair. Sheila Currie was re-elected as secretary and Estelle Quick as treasurer.

A Younger Looking Community Council

Report from Alan Plampton:

At the January meeting of the C&DCC, new appointments joined the team.

Tilly Grist has been appointed as a Youth Member. She joins Gregor giving us our full compliment of 16-18 year old representatives. A member of the Highlands Youth Parliament, Tilly has said how she "is looking forward to getting involved". Youth Members are full voting Members who can be appointed in addition to the Elected Members, in an attempt to make sure this younger age group of the electorate is fully represented in local matters.

In addition, we have eventually found a replacement for the 'irreplaceable' Gillian McNaught, as the Minutes Secretary. Claire Fraser will take up the role at our February meeting and, along with Tilly, brings a younger fresher look to the team. Claire is already known to many with her many involvements in Cromarty life and she too cannot wait to be involved.

Without betraying personal details, with these new appointments, Cromarty now has a Community Council with an average age under 40!!



Claire Fraser and Tilly Grist bringing more youthful representation to local democracy.

Vandalism

It is with great sadness that it is necessary to report vandalism at the Hall. Everybody knows how frustrating life is in these very challenging times, but this mindless act only hurts people in the community even more.

As the winter nights started, and there was less daylight for the young folk to exercise, the Hall invested in PIR Security lighting, covering the multi-court space and the area around the oil tank/Sheddie. This was not only intended to keep folk safer, but also provide longer hours in the Park for youngsters to exercise. Unfortunately someone has decided to take a wooden batten and smash the PIR sensors on two of the lights. Damage also included pulling wiring out, brackets off the wall and breaking the LED lights on two of the three units. The total damage will cost over £250 to repair.

It is a shameful act and we can only hope this is a one-off incident. This is not how people in Cromarty behave.

Thanks

Alan

James' Support Group Social Media Campaign

We started our campaign “it’s ok not to be ok” to highlight mental health struggles, at the beginning of January, kicking off with the first minister Nicola Sturgeon saying on video “it’s ok not to be ok”.

We are releasing a new video each day until the end of March which is the end of the peak period for suicides, and you can help.

The videos go onto the James Support Group Facebook page initially, and we then share across other Facebook groups to cover as much of The Highlands as possible.

If you could send your video to us that would be really great. Send to : p.mullery61@gmail.com, or message via messenger or WhatsApp to 07754 271983 which is our 24/7 Helpline.

Kind regards,
Patrick & Wendy Mullery

Always Immoral, Now Illegal

Judith Macdonald writes:

As part of Cromarty Peace Group's commitment to global peace and justice, on Friday 22nd January, at 12 noon, the bells rang out from the East and West Churches and the Cromarty Courthouse Museum in celebration of the Entry into Force of the United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. They joined similar bells ringing out throughout the country and indeed the world.

The Treaty was adopted by 122 countries at the UN in July in 2017. For their contribution to this ICAN (The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons), a grassroots, civil society organization, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in December of that year. The Treaty was required to be signed and ratified by at least 50 countries for it to come into force. To date, 86 countries have signed and 52 have ratified the Treaty with the 50th

country ratifying on 24th October 2020 which meant the Treaty became law 90 days later on the 22nd January.

For those countries that have ratified the Treaty they are no longer able, under any circumstances, to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or any other nuclear explosive devices. The State Parties also undertake not to transfer, receive, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons or allow any stationing, installation or deployment of nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices in its territory or at any place under its jurisdiction or control. This is a huge step forward in ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

Although the nine nuclear states, including our own, have not participated in the negotiations or signed up to the Treaty, the global norm has shifted.

75 years after the horrific bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki there is still much work to be done to rid the world of nuclear weapons but this is a significant step along the way and Cromarty Peace Group is pleased to be part of it.

You can watch, and listen, to a youtube video [here](#).



Struan Newman and Ben Flieger at the East Church, ringing the bell for peace.

Cinema

From Fraser Mackenzie:

We are of course disappointed to be closed once again due to the COVID regulations but are encouraged by the response we received to our brief opening and public screenings in December and will be back when we can legally and safely reopen.

On a more positive note, one of 2020's highlights was Cromarty Cinema hosting two special screenings for Cromarty Primary School just before Christmas. These visits were carefully planned and organised with Julie Dinwoodie, Cromarty Primary School's Headteacher. These screenings also acted as the launch for a two year

partnership between the school and the cinema which is being supported by the Middleton Trust. The Cinema's fledgling Young Programmers group will also be involved in this programme. Ideas are developing which will be exciting to realise when the cinema is able to open again. The schools' visits were fun and really uplifting for everyone involved. Extra icing-on-the-cake was the first showing of a short animated film which the pupils produced with Cat Bruce and Keith Duncan for the Cromarty Film Festival. Although the 2020 Festival had to be cancelled for global pandemic related reasons, it's great that something creative and new was able to happen. The film and more info can be accessed on the website: <https://www.cromartyfilmfestival.org/>

Feedback from Headteacher, Julie Dinwoodie:

'...beautiful and very poignant at the moment!'

'...a huge thank you to all of you for your support, enthusiasm and encouragement getting this together.'



Shoes off at the cinema.

Courthouse News

From Caroline Vawdrey:

Everyone involved in running Cromarty Courthouse Museum was thrilled when we were successful in our funding bid to Museums Galleries Scotland, who are administering Scottish Government Funding to help museums survive the impacts of Covid-19. Thanks must

go to the Courthouse's Chair of Trustees, Mary Bowers, for all the hard work she put in to make this happen.

AND NOW WE NEED YOUR VOICES!

Now that we have funding, we can install a new digital sound system, which will bring a whole soundscape into the museum building. It means that we can create a new recording of the Cuthbert Mackenzie trial that has enthralled visitors since the museum opened (the original one was lost, when old equipment stopped working) and we also have the funding to record a new trial, and to give new voices to Sir Thomas Urquhart, and the poor prisoner, who has been silent all of these years.

We'd like the people involved in the trials to have local accents, and we're looking for willing volunteers. We're very grateful to those who have already offered, but we'd like some more to join them - both men and women - but particularly men!

Please do get in touch with Mary and help us to tell some of the history of trials in the Cromarty Courthouse. You can get in touch by email: courthousecromarty@gmail.com, phone: 01381 600819 or via the [Facebook](#) page [here](#).

Cromarty Rising

Here is the link to the Public Petition Committee page for Cromarty Rising's case: <https://www.parliament.scot/GettingInvolved/Petitions/shiptoshiptransfers>

There have been new submissions from the Cabinet Secretary and PoCF, together with CR comments on those submissions.

History Society

Some Lockdown thoughts from Sheila Currie:

'Another Historic Year...and another when we're no closer to knowing when the History Society talks will resume

(one day, this will all be history and we'll put on a talk about 'Cromarty and the Pandemic'...)

For now, those seeking a history fix have a wealth of online talks they can watch – here's a selection of recent ones.

* UHI – History Talks Live

* Society of Antiquaries Scotland you tube channel

* Picts in the Highlands

Most of this is thanks to ARCH – Archaeology for Communities in the Highlands – who have an excellent monthly newsletter promoting all things history and archaeology.

And the Am Baile website has thousands of images from the highlands – searching for Cromarty brings up some well-kent faces. Every picture could tell a story, or a future talk at the History Society?

And did you know there is a Ross & Cromarty Heritage Society? They have – of course! - a section on Cromarty. Check it out. And if it inspires you to want to know more about anything you read about, check out OUR website and get in touch if you want to follow up anything in more detail, or if anyone is thinking about history projects they might want to do.

Brilliant news that the Courthouse has gained some funding help now to progress some desperately needed improvements there. They are on the lookout for locals to record voices for court cases and the various character models around the building - a great way to support your local museum and become part of its history!

And finally.... While reading Mary Beith's excellent book "Healing Threads" about the traditional medicines of the Highlands & Islands, I found this curious reference to Cromarty when, in 1922, a Donald Mackenzie reported seeing, as a young boy in Cromarty, "a woman cutting the liver from a mouse to give to a neighbour's baby who was desperately ill, and the baby recovered" Ancient Egyptians did the same thing apparently.

Always something fascinating to find out in our history.
Not suggesting anyone tries this nowadays of course...!'

Arts Trust Latest

Though previously programmed events in January and February have been postponed (such optimism we had in December!), we hope our socially-distanced arts and crafts courses may be able to resume from the end of March, depending on guidelines/restrictions. Please do take a look at our website – www.cromartyartstrust.org.uk – where you can browse the workshops coming up later in the year, from sewing to jewellery-making; stained glass to landscape painting. More are being added all the time and live music will make a return to the Stables just as soon as possible and all are available to be booked NOW.

Please remember, if you wish to make keeping up to date with our activities easy, you can sign up to receive our regular Enews. Just complete the Sign Up form on the left side of many web pages.

Georgia Macleod

And Finally...

A first for the newsletter... **A Free Prize Draw!**

Local author Nicola White writes:

This time last year I was preparing for the launch of my novel *A Famished Heart* and looking forward to a busy year, with appearances at book festivals around the UK lined up by my publisher. Well, you can guess how that turned out. The modest launch of the book at Cromarty Library on the 17th of March – St. Patrick's Day – was a last minute cancellation as lockdown seemed suddenly inevitable, but in those early days, kind of unbelievable too.

In crucial ways, my life has been unaffected by the circumstances of the pandemic. I still sit in front of my laptop day by day, mumbling words to invisible people as is perfectly normal. I know I am lucky to be able to keep

working. But I really miss browsing in bookshops and meeting actual readers at events.

On the plus side, people are apparently reading more than ever during lockdown, and independent bookshops have adapted and survived. Festivals moving their programmes online has meant that I have managed to 'attend' more events this year than ever before, including the wonderful selection at Edinburgh International Book Festival. I also appeared on panels at Bloody Scotland and Wigtown book festivals, but don't ask me about the nightmare of getting lost between the virtual greenroom and the virtual stage during one of them.

But let me tell you about the books. I write in the genre of crime but these are as much novels of character, of secrets, and of atmosphere. All the books are set in Dublin in the 1980s. *A Famished Heart* featured the aftermath of the death of two sisters by self-starvation in a Dublin suburb. *The Rosary Garden*, which was first released in 2014 was published in a new version as a follow-up book to *A Famished Heart* last week. It opens with the finding of the body of an infant in the grounds of a convent school. This experience leads one of the teenage finders, Ali Hogan, back to her childhood, to a stay in Clare, when a similar, but only half-remembered, event happened. Two babies, two different places. Irish Times critic Declan Hughes described it as 'a pitch-perfect debut, a compulsive, page-turning crime novel, a haunting slab of Irish family gothic'

If that sounds like the kind of thing you might be interested in reading, I'm offering a hot-of-the-presses signed copy of the new edition of *The Rosary Garden* to a CromartyLive reader. Just email [Cromarty Live](mailto:CromartyLive) to declare your interest, and the esteemed editor will initiate an impeccably fair random pick.

Otherwise, the books are available from the usual online sources, like bookshop.org, or in the real life post office, thanks to the sterling support of Estelle Quick. Thank you, Estelle!

Nicola White is an Irish writer living in Cromarty. A Famished Heart was included in Irish Times Best 2020 Crime Fiction and was a Sunday Times Crime Club pick. The Rosary Garden won the Dundee International Book

Prize, was shortlisted for the McIlvanny Prize and selected by Val McDermid as one of the four best debuts of the year at Harrogate Festival.



We hope you've found our newsletter an interesting and informative read. Please let us know what you think, or send suggestions and ideas for articles via editor@cromartylive.co.uk

The Cromarty Live Newsletter team is Jon Palmer, Jeremy Price, David Ross, Laura Shepherd

The Newsletter is currently sponsored by Sutor Creek. Printed copies are available at the Stores for those unable to access the online version.

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