



June 2021

Hi everyone!

In the last month, we have seen torrential downpours, +20 degrees Celsius, the moving of the yellow legs in the Firth, and now all of a sudden the 1st of June is upon us... I suppose that means another newsletter has found its way into your inboxes!

We've got a lot to cover this month, so quick: grab a cuppa!

Cromarty & District Community Council

The CDCC writes:

Victoria Hall Plans for Possible Reopening

The C&DCC said it would review the situation after the use of the Hall for the Scottish Elections on 6th May. Once all the necessary protocols and precautions were put in place (one way systems, social distancing etc.), this proved to be a useful exercise in understanding what will be necessary for the Hall to reopen. In addition, we are taking guidance from the HTSI (Highland Third Sector Interface) as to how we might be able to reopen the Hall, as well as seeking Highland Council support. Obviously, Scottish Government decisions will impact this whole process, but it is clear that (sadly) the previous welcoming, flexible way we rented out the Hall is likely to be a thing of the past. We are responsible for not only establishing clear guidance as to what is required but also making sure that a hirer follows that guidance. These requirements make no allowance for whether the Hall is

run by volunteers or paid staff. Health & Safety is the priority and cannot be ignored.

What does this mean for the Victoria Hall?

Our Obligations

- A. We have to ensure that the way we run the Hall has to keep people safe and stop the spread of the virus.
- B. We have to ensure that use of the Hall is in line with all Health Protection guidance.
- C. We have to ensure that all users of the Hall follow and practice the guidance that we establish for the use of the Victoria Hall.

What Must Happen

- A. To calculate the PDBC (Physical Distance Based Capacity) for the Hall, based on all users maintaining the required social distancing (currently 2m).
- B. We will complete a full Venue Risk Assessment of the Hall, which will include the PDBC, how the space will be used, how entry and exit points will be used, what cleaning routines are required, what gaps between lettings are needed, what signage is required and, given the extended closure of the Hall, what health considerations need to be addressed (e.g. required building repairs, water supply hygiene etc.)
- C. We will create a completely new Booking Form to reflect all aspects of the Venue Risk Assessment results. This new Booking Form will require all hirers to accept all the Hall's guidance and responsibilities for ensuring the delivery of this guidance by all users. All hirers will be required to complete their own Risk Assessment that covers their particular activity or event and to submit this to the Hall with the Booking Form. The Hall will then hopefully confirm that the booking's risk assessment conforms to all the Hall's requirements. Currently all users of the Hall will be required to wear face masks, except when consuming food/drink and for medical exemption reasons.

D. The cost of cleaning between lettings will probably need to be added to the hire cost.

E. The hirer will be required to keep accurate Test & Protect records (details to be supplied) with verified contact details. We will be required to make sure the hirer is following the conditions of hire.

Practical Timetable for Reopening

A. As soon as possible, calculate the PDBC for the Hall.

B. Accept that there is little point in reopening the Hall before we are in Level Zero (currently planned by the Scottish Government for 28th June). Too many restrictions, for indoor use, before then.

C. Use July (post 28th June, if confirmed by SG) to trial Youth Cafe bookings in support of their Summer Programme (as per WHAT MUST HAPPEN above).

D. From Sunday 1st August restart bookings (as per WHAT MUST HAPPEN above).

This plan will be monitored on a weekly basis, and any update will appear on the Cromarty Live website. The C&DCC, at its meeting on 28th June, will review, update and confirm/alter this timetable/plan.

Cromarty (Still) Needs You: Litter Pickers Ahoy

We still have an urgent call for volunteers of all ages! With the visitor season really upon us now, we are assembling litter picking teams to help keep the town clear. If you are interested in helping, please do contact Peter Ratcliffe on cromartydistrictcc@gmail.com. For full results of the recent Cromarty and Black Isle litter surveys, please see [Cromarty Live](#).



Our Updates: Continue to Follow Us Online

Please keep following our updates on our [Cromarty Live website](#) (Home & Latest News page) and our [C&DCC Facebook Page](#). At the moment, we have around 15 to 20 new stories and updates each month between these monthly newsletters. We use those platforms to keep everyone informed, so please do take a look!

Cromarty Community Development Trust

The CCDT writes...

Whitedykes Campsite ([this item first published on CCDT Facebook page](#))

The Cromarty Community Development Trust was formed in November 2017 to take forward various projects in the town that have been highlighted as priorities by the community of Cromarty: protecting the Townlands Barn, pushing to get new housing built and fixing the ferry slipways. The issue of more and more campervans using the links with no services was also

highlighted as a huge problem and became more of an economic issue when Highland Council said the Links must be closed to overnight vehicles.

There seems to have been some confusion about the history of the development of the campsite at Whitedykes, which we would like to address.

The project was pursued by the CCDT for two reasons. In the first place, there had been considerable local concern at the number of campervans using the Links without any management. There were complaints of some of these visitors simply throwing their waste onto the banks down from Braehead. The Highland Council eventually insisted that the area be closed to motorhomes as it had become an unlicensed campsite without any facilities. That decision was taken by the council, not the CCDT.

But there was another, more pressing reason the CCDT decided there should be an alternative for these motorhome visitors to use. Three years ago the CCDT was faced with a major challenge that had to be addressed immediately. The ferry slipways, particularly the one at Nigg, were in such a state of disrepair and decay that they would soon no longer be safe for the ferry to use. It was just a matter of time before they were condemned by the statutory authorities.

The development trust agreed that it was crucial to the economic prospects of the town that a ferry continued to operate and, if possible, using a bigger and better equipped vessel. This was supported by a survey of local businesses. But it wasn't going to be easy. The slipways were owned by the Cromarty Estate, who had no plans to upgrade them but would not sell them to the CCDT. Ownership, we were advised, would have made it easier to win funding. In the end, we were directed to the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF).

The council made the applications to this fund on behalf of community bodies, and officials made clear that an application for the slipways alone would have no chance of winning support. It would have to be part of an application which provided other new tourist facilities such as what was by then a much-needed campsite. Without the campsite, the slipways would not have been repaired, and we would have lost the ferry. We were

awarded £300,000 for the two projects and raised another £150,000+ in match funding.

However, in 2019, we faced a major crisis when VisitScotland officials administering RTIF tried to force the dropping of the slipways, leaving only the campsite and about £100,000. This could have led to the CCDT collapsing through insolvency as we had already hired/paid contractors. Only a major lobbying of the Scottish Government, led by our MSP Kate Forbes, saved us. The slipways were repaired and the ferry will shortly restart.

But one of the major problems we faced from the start was a site for the campsite. We scoured the area for options. Inquiries were made about the daffodil farm, an area near the slipway and we even approached the chief solicitor to the Church of Scotland about the Manse field. To try to buy local agricultural land, even at the lowest market value, would have required a great deal of money, which would have taken a lot of time to try to raise. We didn't have time. The initial RTIF applications had to be submitted within months. So the only option was to try to get publicly owned land. The only suitable publicly owned land was beside the Whitedykes industrial estate.

The Community Empowerment Act 2015 made it easy for communities to take over land and buildings in public ownership through a community asset transfer (CAT) if it wasn't being used. This has been used by community bodies throughout Scotland, with the transfer price normally being set at £1 to make it easy for them. There was nothing mysterious or suspicious about the £1 purchase price and the land is now fully in community ownership.

Initially, the CCDT looked at using the area of land to the east of the industrial units, where the spoil from the primary school extension work was dumped. But we were advised against it, and there was also local concern. Indeed when it was decided to seek ownership of the scrubland at the industrial estate, the owner of the nearest property told a CCDT director that she was pleased and relieved the campsite would not be behind her house.

There have been suggestions that there was a lack of transparency about the campsite development. These are

difficult to understand as the CCDT has given a monthly update on the progress of the project in the Cromarty Live Newsletter over nearly a 2 year period. It was discussed at an open public meeting, at the last three public AGMs, and there was some press coverage. We have also carried out 2 surveys of local residents and publicised the successful RTIF application widely.

The planning application was advertised by the council and stakeholders informed in the normal way. Notices were put up at the site, telling people how to object. The CCDT subsequently tried to adapt the plans to address some of the points raised by the nearest neighbour in an official objection. There were a total of 6 support comments and one objection submitted. The Council planner considered that the proposal accorded with the principles and policies contained within the Development Plan and was acceptable in terms of all other applicable material considerations. Planning permission was granted on 26 November 2020.

Originally the access to the site was to have been from the main road, but the council planning department insisted it be moved to share the access to the industrial units.

The tree removal programme is in line with the guidance given by the council's forestry officer. The existing trees were not in a good state as they were self-seeded and too leggy to allow thinning. There is a replanting programme planned once construction has been completed. This will provide shelter and screening of the site from the west entrance to Cromarty. A protected species survey has also been carried out on the site before any tree felling took place. And for the avoidance of any doubt, there will be provision for waste disposal.

In our survey of local businesses the findings were very clear - the local economy suffered severely when there was no ferry in operation and when camper vans didn't have somewhere to park up. In our community survey, we also found that one of the key concerns around camper vans was the use of the links (which locals wanted kept free of vans for community use) and the lack of facilities causing huge issues with waste. The RTIF funding allowed us to find solutions to all of these issues.

On a final note, these projects will also create employment for locals. The ferry operator employs locals to run the service during the season and we hope to generate enough income from the campsite to employ a Manager/Town Officer who will manage the campsite and, if finance allows, oversee youth employment opportunities and carry out general maintenance around the town - another priority highlighted during our public meeting.

Cromarty Gin

You'll have maybe heard about the Cromarty Gin being launched (by the company behind Sutor Gin - see poster in Post Office window) and heard about possible links with the Townlands Barn and the Development Trust.

To bring everyone up to date... The Cromarty Gin is a new venture being developed by the Sutor Gin people. They have made a new gin and are looking for shares in a new business (see their poster in the Post Office window). They have chosen the name 'Cromarty' as a positive and attractive name. Anyone can name a product after a place – you can't patent the name of a town or prevent anyone using it as a marketing brand.

The Community Development Trust is not involved in any way with the development of the Cromarty Gin and the new business share offer.

If the new Gin takes off and if their new business takes off, they want a presence in Cromarty in due course. They've had a few very broad discussions with the Cromarty Community Development Trust over the last year or so about possible use of the Barn (which is owned by the Trust) at some point, with their idea being as a distillery and visitor/tasting centre; and the Development Trust has made it clear there must be strong community benefit.

Nothing has been agreed or even discussed in any detail. If or when any ideas are firmer, the Development Trust will work with the people of Cromarty to get the best community benefit for the town and protect the Barn for the future. Any further news will, as always, be shared via the Cromarty Live newsletter.

The Development Trust wants to preserve the Barn, find new uses for it, and bring money & work into the town,

but the Development Trust will not make ANY deal with the Gin people that doesn't benefit the community.

Thrift Shop

We don't know when the Thrift Shop will re-open. We need to be sure it is safe and follows the Covid rules. It's not possible to keep 2m separation in the Old Dairy after all!

The volunteers who run the thrift shop will decide when things are right, and when they do, we'll let you know. It may well be that a bigger space for the Thrift Shop is needed, so if you have any ideas, please get in touch.

Reeds Loop Path

The CCDT applied for funds from NatureScot Better Places Green Recovery Fund in early April to renovate the Reeds Loop shore path, and we heard we were successful in mid-May. The work will involve two phases.

The first will clear the path to its original width of roughly one metre, by cutting back the grass etc which has grown over the path. The second phase will be to surface the path and repair some of the Gabion baskets.

Negotiations have started over the start date with the construction company Hitrak Ltd. We will keep you posted with progress.

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The Development Trust is a community trust made up of volunteers and we are grateful that a large number of people living in Cromarty are members and support the work of the trust. If you would like to contribute to the Trust in any way please email cromartydevelopmenttrust@gmail.com

And if you want to know anything about any of the projects the Trust is doing for your benefit, please speak to any of the Directors directly or email the address above.

The rumour mill is rarely accurate!

The Cromarty Courthouse



Step Back In Time With Us, a poster created by local artist Izzy Thomson

Mary Bowers writes...

The Cromarty Courthouse continues to make history! In readiness for the opening of the museum this summer, a distinguished group of locals (some with family connections going back generations) recorded the voices for two trials, the prisoner in his cell and the literary ramblings of Sir Thomas Urquhart.

Preparations for the recordings were challenging, with all rehearsals conducted online. But, the cast made it to a recording studio in Inverness over two weekends in early May and the techy wizards from Limelight Event Services edited everything together just in time for the Courthouse re-opening on Saturday 29th May. All credit to Black Isle author and history interpreter Vee Walker for making it happen and congratulations to the cast for their contributions. Thanks to them the unique Cromarty dialect remains alive!

So, come and reacquaint yourselves with, or meet for the first time, our Courthouse characters - hear some stories from Cromarty's past and witness some tough Highland justice. You might even pick up some useful local insults!

Find out about our historic town and the neighbouring parish of Resolis through our exhibitions. The temporary exhibition this year is called "*Coastal Cromarty*" and celebrates our coastal waters as a place of work, play and natural resources. Incorporated in the exhibition is the display of "*The Sea Inside*" sails - a Lockdown project of last year that created a large community artwork in the form of two patchwork sails. This had a very brief airing at

the end of our short season in 2020 and definitely needs to be seen by more people!

Our shop has a range of locally produced goods and items specially made for the Courthouse from elsewhere in Scotland. We are also selling the new Cromarty Heritage jigsaw puzzle.

Don't forget that our tranquil walled garden has the community orchard and this year we've incorporated a further flower border. You can sit here and enjoy the peace and hopefully the sunshine this summer.

We rely on your support to continue to protect the memory of this area, so pay us a visit and bring your friends, family and visitors along. The Museum is open on the following days: Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and also on Bank Holiday Mondays. Opening times: 12.00-16.00. Free entry. The season runs through to 30 September this year.

Look out for the article in the summer edition of *Chatterbox* on how we managed to produce the new soundscape for the building – in difficult times.

In line with Government recommendations, we are limiting numbers within the building this year and continuing to follow all Covid-19 protocols.

Cromarty Cinema



Cromarty Cinema

Early June 2021 Programme



| Date | Time | Film | Rating | Duration |
|-------------|-------|----------------|--------|----------|
| June | | | | |
| FRI 04 | 19:00 | Minari | 12 | 1h56 |
| SAT 05 | 15:00 | Peter Rabbit 2 | U | 1h35 |
| SAT 05 | 19:00 | Minari | 12 | 1h56 |
| SUN 06 | 11:00 | Peter Rabbit 2 | U | 1h35 |
| SUN 06 | 15:00 | Minari | 12 | 1h56 |
| THUR 10 | 19:00 | Minari | 12 | 1h56 |

Adults - £7.50 Under 26 - £5.00 Friends - £6.00

Tickets available **IN ADVANCE** at Cromarty Cinema 12-2pm Wednesdays
OR from

Eden Court box office: <https://eden-court.co.uk/booking-information>

Visit Eden Court website for further details on all films

For information on Friend's Membership, please visit our website.

Covid protocols in place for your safety & comfort. Audience numbers restricted to a
max of 15 per screening due to social distancing; max of **5 tickets per person**.

More films may be added – keep an eye on web and social media for updates!

WELCOME BACK!

www.cromartycinema.com

Harbour Access Road, Cromarty, IV11 8XZ info@cromartycinema.com

Fraser Mackenzie writes:

The Cinema opened on 26 May with a full programme,
and we can't wait to welcome everyone back!

COVID regulations are limiting the numbers of tickets we
can sell and complicating how we can sell them, so please
bear with us as we hopefully get back to “normal”. You
can book through Eden Court in advance, although there
will be a few tickets available on the door at
performances.

Even while closed, our volunteers have been busy with
film projects – below is a summary of our schools
programme supported by the Middleton Trust!

*"As a volunteer at the Cromarty Cinema and a former
primary school teacher, I was delighted to be involved in
the school's programme organised by Cromarty
Cinema. I was lucky enough to be at several of the
Google meets with the p6/7 classes, mainly during the
weeks of the animator Victoria Watson's involvement
with the group. There was clearly a real buzz of
enthusiasm in the classroom, and it was great seeing the*

children doing something genuinely exciting and different after the last 18 months.

'Having Victoria Watson involved was fantastic, not only for her expertise but also for the group to see a successful and ambitious woman working in film. She shared her career path with the group, and it was valuable to hear how she became involved in film and her advice to take any opportunities that come along and work hard - great advice for any career and all ages!

Another high point was the culmination of the programme when the children showed the films that they had made themselves in small groups on the big screen in the cinema. They had organised themselves into the necessary roles - director, producer, artist, sound effects etc. - valuable experience in working cooperatively for a purpose. The children used their chrome books to film their short productions, achieving some fantastic effects using the techniques they had learnt over the previous weeks. Although they had followed an exemplar short film as a starting point, the groups all made very different films that well illustrated the different personalities and interests within the classes.

*For a group of children with little or no prior experience of filmmaking, it was amazing to see how far they have come in just a short time by building on the practical guidance they received over the duration of the programme. The fact they were actually able to see the films they had made on the big screen on a school trip to Cromarty Cinema to see *Fantastic Mr Fox* was also great for them. As a parent of a P6 child who I know enjoyed the programme, I have also spoken to other parents and heard such positive comments, including a parent who mentioned that their child is constantly making films these days. Future collaborative programmes like this to build on the children's obvious enthusiasm would be so valuable for many learning outcomes and highly recommended.'" – Jenny Pyle.*

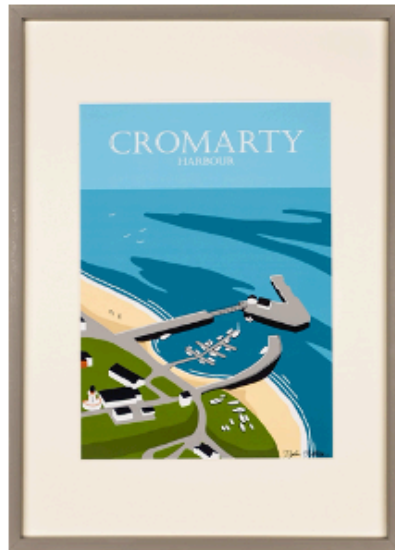
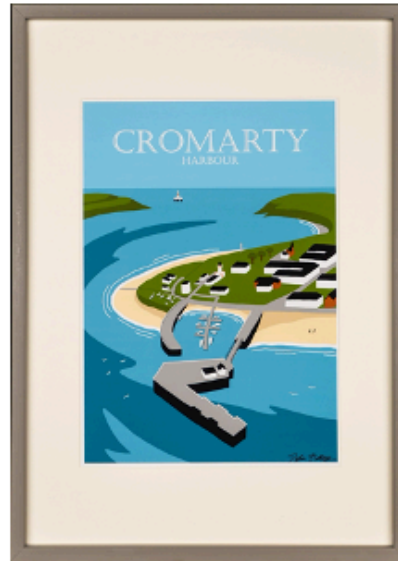
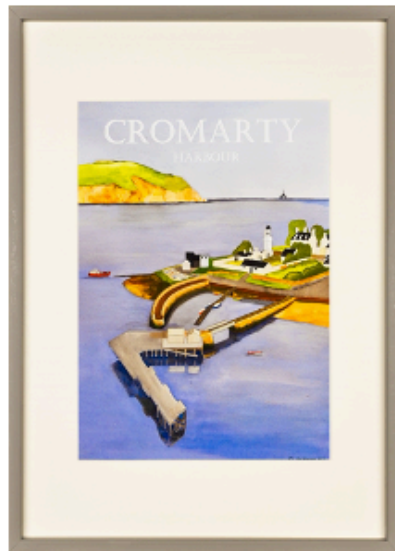
Cromarty Harbour Trust

Colin Dickie writes:

We are working hard to continue to sustain the harbour for our community, both physically and financially. As you will be aware, the recent repairs to the West pier and Smeaton Mole were completed in late March. However, you may have noticed that the lime mortar in the Mole area has not set and, as such, is now in need of some remediation. Having briefed our funders, we are now working with our consultant engineers and contractor to rectify this over the coming weeks. No date has yet been made because of some on-going commitments around the use of Inner Admiralty Pier berthing area. In the meantime, please do take care when walking in this area.

On commercial activity, we have attracted a number of local vessels to use our harbour, bringing in much needed fees. We also look forward to seeing a full harbour again with leisure users coming in over the next few days and the return of the ferry, which will start operating again at the start of June.

On fundraising, we hope you will also have seen the launch of the suite of Cromarty Harbour posters. The trustees of the charity – Arthur B, John G and myself – have been delighted with the initial take-up and the support from local businesses. Thank you. What has been particularly pleasing is how the charity and businesses have worked together to ensure we all benefit from a successful sale. Most of our shops have taken elements of our offering, whether it be posters, jigsaws, cards or the history booklet. Whilst supporting the harbour, it also helps the local economy with the local community and visitors buying through the shops and the harbour website dealing with online and postal sales.



Newly launched (get it...?!) posters available to buy, with proceeds going towards the Cromarty Harbour.

Hugh Miller's Birthplace Cottage and Museum



Alix H. J. Powers-Jones writes:

So much to do! Who would have thought that we would remain closed to the public for SO long? We closed for the season at the end of October 2019, and because of the pandemic, the museum has been sleeping ever since.

However, slowly, slowly, the "Kraken wakes" (with apologies to fans of John Wyndham). Preparations are underway, at last, for reopening the museum to the public in July and August - hurrah!

A mass of ordinary property maintenance has been undertaken - not quite a swarm of workers, but the trades have certainly been busy bees with checks on alarms, roofs, heating and lighting. A thorough MoT to ensure that we are fit. Plus, the inevitable adaptations for covid-

compliance, to keep our staff, volunteers and visitors safe and well.

A museum without visitors is just a store of "things"; a strongbox, a treasure box, but a store nonetheless. It is the visitors engaging with our store and its stories, which bring the museum to life. Visitors are inquisitive, they question, they learn, they laugh, they love (or sometimes loath?) the stories we tell, the sights (and sites) that we present. They leave, hopefully, attuned to the stories, to past lives lived, to futures to come, and to new stories as yet untold.

To all our friends and colleagues in Cromarty businesses who are reopening or have already reopened in this new, post-pandemic season, we wish you a joyful, bountiful and safe season.

Hugh Miller's Birthplace Cottage & Museum reopens at weekends in July and August. For further details, see [here!](#)

Flora's Travels



Flora Thomson writes...

I've taken up the challenge in aid of Poppy Scotland to cycle 1,921 miles for the 100 year anniversary of the Poppy. I started on January 1st 2021, and hopefully will be finished on November 11th. I have a FB page, '[Flora's epic cycle challenge](#)' and group, '[Flora's epic cycle](#)', along with posts on Instagram and Twitter. You can also follow me on Strava!

I have a [Just Giving page](#) for donations, and if people so wish, they can also donate cash to me. Poppy Scotland is

close to my heart as my late mum served as a Wren, her father, Valentine Charles Smith, was in the Royal Navy, and my dad's father, Alexander Young, was in the Royal Artillery. My cousins also served in the Queen's Own Highlanders, and I am a Sergeant Instructor and Detachment commander in Fortrose with 1 Highlanders Army Cadet Force. I have also been a Poppy collector for over 30 years.

Thanks for reading, and see you around!



Business News

Sutor Creek

We are back to having a one-way system so customers can now browse our deli (full of delicious goodies) when ordering or collecting food. We are also now open from 9am (Wednesday to Sundays for now) for coffee and home baking. Bacon and egg rolls are also available until 11.30am! Deliveries still available at weekends in Cromarty - just select the delivery option from our online ordering system or give us a call on 01381 600 855. Thank you for your support!

Calluna

Lots of lovely summer styles in at Calluna, including shorts, t-shirts and sandals for the sunny weather we hope to have! Pick a copy of this month's Chatterbox magazine,

and you will find a 10% off clothing Voucher - valid until 31/8/2021!

The Emporium

The Emporium is delighted to introduce WillSow Vegetable Seed cards for kids. These are clever storybooks with plantable covers filled with corresponding seeds. They are wonderful teaching tools for children about the Earth and growing vegetables. These have been recently seen on 'Shark Tank'. We also have pebble knitted animals and sea creatures back in stock and lots of new Scottish History and Scottish fiction. So, come by for a browse and bring the little ones!

Kiri Page Therapies

After such a successful opening month at Ardyne Studio, I am pleased to release my appointment availability for June. Contact me via [Facebook](#) or Instagram: Kiri Page Therapies, to book in for your Massage or Relaxing Vegan Tropic Facial. Available Tues 15th 11:45am, 1pm, Tues 22nd and Tues 29th. I look forward to meeting and treating you :-)

Cromarty Library

Lynn Anderson writes...

Great news, at last, as we are finally open again for browsing. To book a slot, please phone the library on 01381 600318 or email Cromarty.library@highlifehighland.com.

Opening times are Monday 10-12, Tuesday and Thursday 12-5. We look forward to welcoming all you lovely customers back!

Cromarty Arts Trust

Georgia Macleod writes:

We have ONE place remaining on our Drawing & Painting Outdoors weekend course with Jonathan Shearer, 5th & 6th June. Get in touch soon if you fancy giving this a go -

all abilities are welcome, and if the weather is poor, there is a plan B in the Old Brewery!

All our other events in June are now fully booked, but there are places available in our one-day writing workshop on 10th July that you might wish to consider: Writing Your Life Story. This is a fun, relaxed workshop that will teach you techniques for sourcing memories and turning your experiences into vibrant pieces of life writing. This is suitable for a range of abilities, from people trying creative writing for the first time to more experienced writers who want to try something new and get some inspiration.

You can buy tickets for our next two classical concerts, the Feis Rois Ceilidh Trail and much more! Check our [website](#) and contact us on info@cromartyartstrust.org.uk or pop by the office at Ardyne.



Some crafts made at our Willow Weaving workshop earlier this month.

Thanks!

That's all we've got for now, but stay tuned for next month's newsletter. Enjoy this wonderful sunshine!

- The Editorial Team

Forward

We hope you've found this 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 Catriona Mallows, Jon Palmer, Jeremy Price and Laura Shepherd.

The Newsletter is currently sponsored by Cromarty Rising.

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