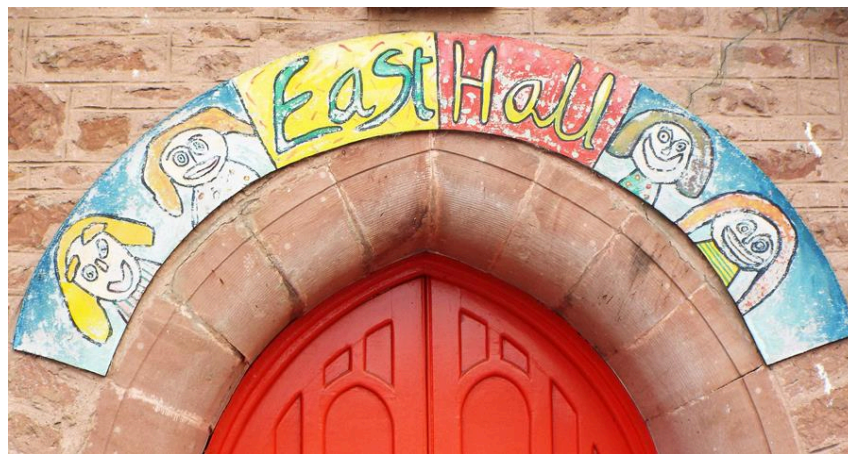


Welcome to another busy month  
in our wee Highland town.

No Images? [Click here](#)



## Focus On Young Families



### After School Club Faces Uncertain Future

Local parents and the wider community look set to secure the continued operation of the Out of School Club, after several weeks of intensive fundraising. But the search is now on for a longer-term solution.

Parents had been informed by the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), which organises the club in the old church hall beside the East Church, that it was running at a £10,000 loss. CALA had proposed closing it on Mondays and Fridays, unless £5,000 could be raised to fund the gap in the meantime.

The club is used by 25 of the 51 pupils at Cromarty Primary School. With no alternative provider in or near Cromarty this would have made it impossible for many parents to hold down a full-time 9-5 job. There is already some concern over the future of Cromarty Primary, which has lost over 40 per cent of its roll in the last couple of decades. A reduction in childcare options would make

moving to Cromarty less attractive for any working families.

Despite having a little over a month to achieve the target figure, the campaign led by the parents whose children use the club was launched. It received an early boost with the commitment of funds from Global Energy at Nigg.

This was followed by funds from the George Craigie Urquhart Trust. This local charity assists deserving causes in Cromarty. The trust is chaired by Black Isle Councillor Gordon Adam who told the Newsletter:

“We thought the facility is a really good one. So this grant is a bit of pump priming to support the efforts of parents and others who are working towards making it sustainable in the long run. It is important for working parents who may have no other options for looking after their children in Cromarty after school hours. We wish them the best of luck and will be following developments with interest.”

Olympian efforts were made to raise the remaining balance, and as the Newsletter was going to press it looked as though the target may be very close to being met.

Margi Campbell, who has been active in the fundraising, said: “We think we are almost there. We have to thank all those who have helped us. As well as Global and the Craigie Urquhart Trust, we have had fabulous support from Caintech and from the Clinging to the Wreckage group (who are a local support group who return all the funds they raise in the community to local projects) along with some other local organisations and businesses. With their help and that of so many local people, we hope we will do it.

“But the message is clear, we must secure the future provision. Last year the Highland Council funded the gap. This year we had to. We simply can’t approach next year without new funding arrangements and/or alternative plans in place. What would help is if more pupils would use the club. It could come to the point whereby more of us use it, or we lose it. In the meantime we are exploring all options and looking at any and all ideas for the structure and funding for the future.”

## Affordable Housing

CCDT directors met Helen Cameron, Asset Management and Investment Manager of Albyn Housing and John McHardy the Highland Council's Housing Development Manager, to discuss the pressing need for more houses to be built in Cromarty.

The CCDT reported the deep concern within the community over the dramatic fall in the primary school roll, and that it underlined the urgency of attracting people with young families to settle here. The clear demand for holiday/second homes in Cromarty has served to exacerbate our predicament.

John and Helen said they had experience of other communities facing similar problems. Helen explained the different options that Albyn could offer Cromarty which might attract younger families. These included social housing, mid-market rent and shared equity homes.

Albyn still owns the field beside the park and behind the High Street and Church Street. Helen agreed that it was time to look again at building houses on it. As a first step Albyn would commission an architect to visit Cromarty and take a fresh look at how best to proceed. A report with options would be prepared, which would be circulated for the whole community to consider.



## Cromarty In Europe

A group of residents have declared Saturday 30th March 'Cromarty in Europe' day. There will be a gathering in

Victoria Hall in the afternoon (1.00-4.00pm) where you can drop in and partake of food, games and other activities all associated with celebrating the town's links with mainland Europe past, present and future. In the evening the group is also planning a film screening of 'The Brand New Testament' (an award-winning surreal Belgian comedy) at the Old Brewery. It is hoped that as many people as possible will mark the day by flying flags of different European nations around the town and celebrate links that may be anything from personal background, family relations or simply a happy memory of a foreign holiday. The idea for the day started with an exercise at the February market where people were invited to stick pins into a map to show just how many links the town has with other parts of Europe. If you have ideas for games, or wish to contribute food for the event, please contact Patsy or Sandy Thomson Tel: 600708. A more detailed programme of the day will be advertised nearer the time.

## Have You Spotted Them Yet?



The Cycling Without Age trikes have arrived in Cromarty! At the moment we are concentrating on pilot training and will start taking out passengers in April.

We have a number of volunteer pilots, but would welcome more. If you want to train up as a trike pilot, or just want to have a try and see if you like it, contact Cycling Without Age Cromarty on Facebook. You could speak to Ian Mitchell (McZappa) or phone Shirley Matheson on 600451 or email [shirley.matheson@btinternet.com](mailto:shirley.matheson@btinternet.com)

Both trikes will be given names and there will be a competition to guess what they are. These names will be revealed during the Cromarty Care Project Pub Quiz on March 23rd at the Cromarty Arms.

## Feeling Thrifty?

Jon palmer writes: 'This month we will be preparing the Old Dairy to open as The Friendly Shop in time for Easter. We can't store items for sale just yet so if you're doing some early Spring cleaning and have things you would like to donate please hang on to them just for the time being. We will be arranging collections in April. In the meantime, if you have any old paint (water-based) that you no longer need we would love to have it for brightening up the shop. If you want to actually help slap it on even better! Talk to Rosemarie Hogg or Jon Palmer to find out more.'



The last time the building was used as a shop was in the 1960's - when Jane Duncan (r) ran it as The Little Café. Pictured with her are (from left) Miss J Duff and Christian Sinclair. Image c/o Cromarty Archive.

## Forthcoming Events

### Seed Swap/Tattie Day

Following TBI's Potato Day at North Kessock Hall on 2nd March, Cromarty's market on the 9th will have an allocation of seed potatoes as available. 15p per tuber. Please bring your own bags. There will also be seeds

available at the market - a brilliant way to get growing your own veg.

## Cromarty Arts Trust

MIXED MEDIA MANDALAS - 2 March, The Stables, Cromarty. 10.00am - 4.30pm

Join our international artist-in-residence, Rachel L. Gibson from Tennessee, in making mandala variations using watercolour and embroidery. Learn how these traditional sacred circles of meditation can serve to help focus your creative energy and use colour and mark-making as a tool of personal discovery. And accidentally learn a little about painting and embroidery whilst having fun! Suitable for all abilities. £55. Tea/coffee provided; bring packed lunch. Contact:

[info@cromartyartstrust.org.uk](mailto:info@cromartyartstrust.org.uk) or 01381 600354 to book.

ANDREW MCTAGGART & LAURA MCINTOSH - 3 March, The Stables, Cromarty. 4.00pm

The first in our Sunday afternoon classical music series for 2019. Baritone Andrew McTaggart and pianist Laura McIntosh perform a programme of English song including Finzi's 'Earth and Air and Rain' and music by Howells, Britten and arrangements by Derek Clark. Andrew will be known to many in Cromarty either through his performances in Inverness and Strathpeffer with Opera Bohemia as Gianni Schicchi and Falstaff or with Cromarty Youth Opera as Noye in 'Noye's Fludde'.

£13 / £11 Book in advance or purchase on the door. Tea & coffee on sale.

AHMED DICKINSON & EDUARDO MARTIN - 22 March, The Stables, Cromarty. 8.00pm

Following a successful Scottish Tour in 2018, Grammy nominee Eduardo Martin, one of the most prominent contemporary guitar composers and his former student, Ahmed Dickinson-Cardenas, hit the road again. With their uninhibited Cuban exuberance, they have created a fresh approach to African, jazz and classical music. Bridging the gap between two generations, these guitar virtuosos transport you to Cuba with their irresistible duets.

£13 / £11 Book in advance or purchase on the door. BYOB

CROMARTY UKULELE WEEKEND - 23 & 24 March, The Stables, Cromarty

A weekend of workshops and sessions led by Finlay Allison, senior tutor with Glasgow Fiddle Workshop. Brand new, varied workshops throughout the weekend including Complete Beginner class on Saturday. Book as many or few as you wish and lunch/dinner/residential options too. The Saturday afternoon workshop prepares you for joining in with Finlay and Jimmy Ross's musical tribute to Pete Seeger on Sat evening - 'Which Side Are You On? The Life & Times of Pete Seeger'. See the website for prices, timings and booking form.

[www.cromartyartstrust.org.uk](http://www.cromartyartstrust.org.uk)

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON? THE LIFE AND TIMES OF PETE SEEGER - 23 March, The Stables, Cromarty.

8.00pm

Folk legend, songwriter and campaigner Pete Seeger was born 100 years ago. Finlay Allison and Jimmy Ross present their ukulele-friendly musical tribute to this tireless campaigner for social and environmental justice. This uplifting, entertaining and inspiring show portrays the turmoil and triumphs of the period Pete lived through and the soundtrack he provided to those who experienced it alongside him.

£13 / £11 Book in advance or purchase on the door. BYOB

## History Society

The next meeting of the Cromarty History Society will be on Thursday 21st March when local resident Liz Broumley presents 'Hector the Hero - Evidence, Interpretation and Musical Judgement!' 7.30pm

Visitors are always welcome and the meeting takes place, as usual, in the West Church Hall, Cromarty. Our website is [www.cromartyhistory.scot](http://www.cromartyhistory.scot)

## More Development Trust News

Cromarty Community Development Trust (CCDT) hosted a meeting in the second week in February, to provide a forum for ideas on what role Townlands Barn should play in the life of the community.

The well-attended meeting certainly offered a wide range of suggestions from an intergenerational space to a recycling centre; a bunkhouse to a green energy

generating base; a gym to a gin distillery; a tourist information point to an exhibition on the history of Cromarty's oldest building; and many more. Simply securing and conserving the building remains an option.

Dave Newman of Plexus Media, reported that he had already been approached by a man who works creating film sets. He had told Dave he thought the barn would be an ideal location for an exhibition of the different sculptures/models he had created for different movies. He was convinced this would draw more visitors to Cromarty, particularly those with young families.

There was a discussion as to whether the barn should be used to attract more tourists, or whether it should be a facility contributing to the day-to day life of Cromarty, which everyone could enjoy.

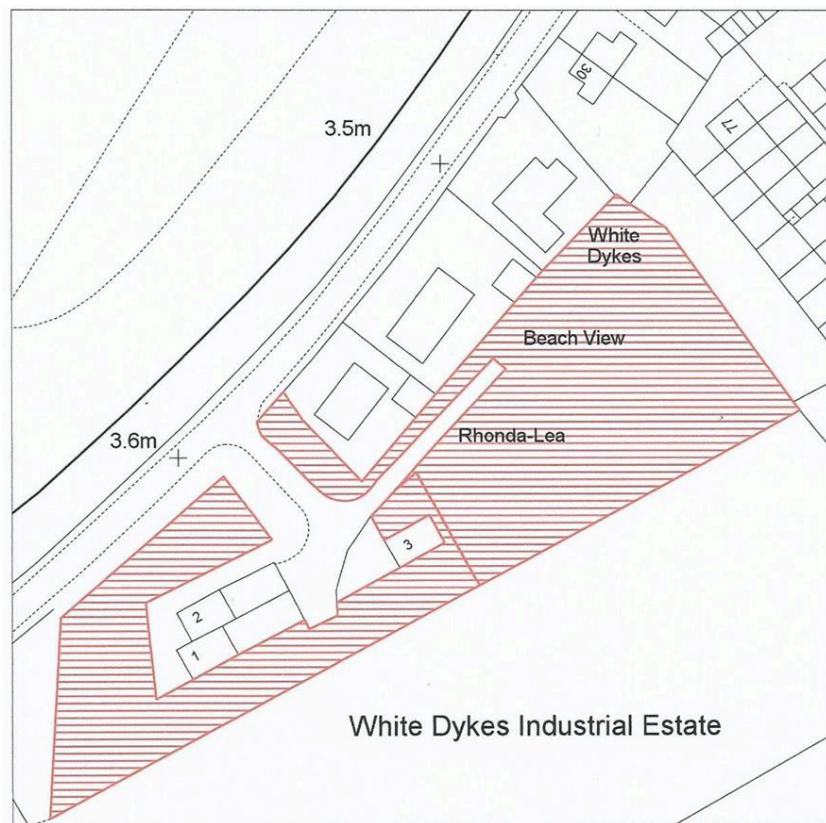
The CCDT's barn working group has been asked to assess the different proposals, and whether they meet the basic requirement that the barn be self-financing. The CCDT board will then consider further the suggestions, and the conservation option. It is only once the barn's new role has been agreed, that the process of raising money to pay for it can begin.

As we reported last month the Press and Journal revealed recently that Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is poised to designate the military bases on the South Sutor, as a scheduled monument. This could herald public access to some of the buildings on the site.

Documents released to the P&J under freedom of information laws showed that the landowner, John Nightingale, and HES officials have discussed ways to "provide public interpretation and access" to some of the "more accessible parts of the site".

The CCDT has contacted HES and asked to be kept informed of developments, with a view to a possible future role for the community body. HES has acknowledged the CCDT's approach.





The CCDT has officially noted interest in land at Whitedykes, as the first step towards seeking a Community Asset Transfer from the Highland Council, under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

This legislation introduced a right for community bodies to make requests to all local authorities, Scottish Ministers and a range of public bodies for any land or buildings they feel they could make better use of in the future. They can request ownership, lease or other rights as they wish.

The CCDT is seeking to take over the land (marked in red on the map above) where the spoil from the Cromarty Primary School extension has been deposited, to the east of the industrial units. It has also requested to wooded area around the units.

The plan is to relocate motorhomes from the Links to a purpose-built site on this land. This depends on the CCDT being successful in its bid for money from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund (RTIF). It could see up to £400,000 invested in Cromarty, which would also be used to carry out the necessary repair work to secure the long-term future of the slipways and ferry operation. An

announcement on the RTIF application is expected in April.

## A Call Out From Cromarty Rowers

### WE NEED KNITTING WOOL AND MATERIALS

Gill McZappa, Lynn Adam and Jane Hale have had a brilliant fund raising idea for the club. They are going to use their sewing and knitting skill to knit beanies and mitts and sew yards of bunting in the colours of the clubs competing in our regatta in August.

Anyone interested in joining the effort please contact any of the three.

ANY CLUB MEMBER WHO HAS WOOL OR FABRIC REMNANTS OR COULD CONTRIBUTE TO GETTING SOME PLEASE NOTE THE COLOURS WE NEED:

Cromarty and Orkney - Red and White; Sutors Skiffies - Orange and Turquoise; Helmsdale - Red hull, Yellow sheer strake; Lochcarron, Findhorn and Wick - White with Black sheer strake; Fortrose - White and Dark Blue; Avoch - Yellow and Black; Ullapool - White and Dark Green; Achiltiebuie - Blue hull; Portsoy - Pink and Black; Broughty Ferry, Golspie - White and Sky Blue.

All contributions can be given to Corrie or left in the glass porch behind Wellington House.

## Job Opportunities

The Cromarty Courthouse is looking for enthusiastic, customer-focused staff to contribute to another successful season. Please consider joining our team of **Museum Assistants**. These vital roles are the welcoming face of our museum. Good and friendly communication skills with the ability to interact with our visitors, on a single-manning basis, are needed. Duties include shop sales and cash handling, training will be provided.

**Saturdays & Sundays, also Thursdays during July & August**

Our positions are part-time (4.5 hours a day) and we aim to be flexible to suit individual circumstances – even if

you can only commit to one day a week or part of the season. You may be a parent with young children and only able to work limited hours or someone who has retired, looking for a new interest and to use your skills gathered over the years. Perhaps you've recently relocated here and would like to contribute to the community, or are students looking for some work during the holidays. You may prefer to work as a volunteer or a paid member of staff. Whoever you are – we would be delighted to hear from you!

If you would like to apply or have a chat and a look around, please contact: Mary Bowers 01381 600819 [marybowers554@gmail.com](mailto:marybowers554@gmail.com) or Christine Cameron 07902 068471 [reachfar10@gmail.com](mailto:reachfar10@gmail.com)

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](mailto:editor@cromartylive.co.uk)

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

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