



The Rabbit Spring 2023: Welcome from the Editor

When I was little, at this time of year my dad would take me for walks around Finzean looking for signs of Spring. Well, February was even more of a Spring-deceiver this year than she usually is giving us early hope before March arrived with a blizzard. Hopefully by the time you read this, you are seeing more definite and lasting signs of Spring!

There is a lot to read about in this edition, with much going on in the community, and dates for the diary including the Community play. There are also updates on the work of the Community Council and Birse Community Trust. We have so many willing volunteers in our community who make these things happen. So if you're interested in learning more about the topics covered here do get in touch with the named contact – there are always opportunities to get involved!

Please also contact me (dalsack@outlook.com) if you have any items for future editions, or want to be added to the Rabbit email list.

Emma Forster, 12 March 2023

Birse and Feughside Parish Church

We meet for worship at 11am every Sunday, with activities for kids and young people (Junior Church) during the service every week during term time.

Our **Holy Week Services** this year will be joint with Mid-Deeside Church in Torphins

Maundy Thursday Communion - 7.30pm, Thursday 6th April, Birse and Feughside Church

Good Friday Service - 7.30pm, Friday 7th April, Mid-Deeside Church, Torphins

On **Easter Sunday, 9th April**, we serve an Easter Breakfast before our worship service at 11am.

All are very welcome!

Amy Pierce, Minister
(acpierce@churchofscotland.org.uk)



FINZEAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION HALL REPORT

We have had another busy past 6 months at the hall with stunning weddings, private functions, wee kids and big kids parties, corporate meetings, workshops, seminars, literary event, talented dancers and music performers and more. Plus local community groups, our weekly badminton players, dancers, bowlers and footballers and the youngsters in the U5s continue to use and support our lovely hall. The long awaited Fermer's Ball in December was another fantastic evening. Plans are now underway for this year's Ball in December.

"KING'S CORONATION CELEBRATIONS"

As part of the Kings Coronation celebrations, **Monday 8th of May** is "The big help out day" which is trying to encourage communities to come together and volunteering. So, we are suggesting a Hall maintenance day at Finzean Hall followed by some community path tidying. This will run from 10am to 2pm and is open to all the community, Finzean community Association will be providing refreshments. Hope to see you all there!

Keep in touch with what is happening at the Hall, including regular food takeaway van visits, by following the [Finzean Hall Facebook page](#)

Morag Thomson, Hall Manager

Donna Thow, Finzean Community Association

Finzean Badminton Club

After two and a half years we finally got back to playing badminton in hall on Monday nights again! We have all enjoyed the first season but like all good things, it has to come to an end and we finish at the end of March. The new season will start on Monday 9th October and all from secondary school age up are welcome.

For more information please do contact me – I look forward to seeing you there!



June Whyte
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BOULERS O' BIRSE PÉTANQUE CLUB

Following on from the lockdowns and limitations of the past couple of years, the Boulers o' Birse continue to enjoy playing pétanque on Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings outside the church at Finzean - such a scenic environment for the game.

Pétanque, probably better known as boules in English, is the French game where metal balls are lobbed towards a small target ball called a cochonnet or jack. It is now widely played throughout Scotland and indeed the rest of the world. With a very active and enthusiastic membership, the Boulers o' Birse club is fairly unique in Scotland in that we play all year round. We are a hardy lot!

Of course, there's always room and time for more folk to come and try the sport whether as a beginner or for the experienced to rekindle old skills. The Boulers o' Birse is a friendly and welcoming club. Do stop and meet us if you are passing, or get in touch with our Membership Secretary for full details (info.boulersobirse@gmail.com). Age is no barrier, we range from primary school age to folk well into their retirement years!

Come and see if you'd like to be a Bouler o' Birse too.

We play in the car park at Birse and Feughside Parish Church, Finzean.

Saturdays: 10:00 - 12:00

Tuesdays: 1:30 - 3:30pm (winter); 4:00 - 6:00pm (summer).

Chris Caldwell

Performance in Finzean!

It's not too late to join in with the Community Play! If you would like to be involved in any way please do contact me on melshand.artist@gmail.com. It's a fantastic way to meet folk you might not otherwise have the opportunity to meet! We will be performing it on the evenings of 6 and 7 October plus a matinee on 8 October and there is also a **Story Development Workshop** planned on 26 March – further details below!

Other diary dates for 2023:

15th March @7pm NEAT play, **Done to Death by Jove**, a comedy with Gavin Robertson who entertained us with his Bond parody not so long ago. Tickets available <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/neat/done-to-death-by-jove-finzean/e-zamrmz> Gavin has also kindly agreed to give us a **performance workshop on the same evening**, highly recommended to anyone interested in stagecraft and performance, or just wanting to hear Gavin talk, he is very entertaining. The timing of the workshop is to be confirmed, but likely to be around 5pm/6pm in the Hall.

26th March 3pm Woodend or Finzean Hall **STORY DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP for the Community Play!** If you are interested in hearing how the story for the play is all coming along, and/or would like to have some input or just fancy getting together for a fly cup and a chat! Meeting will either be at my house - Woodend, Forest of Birse, AB316NE if fewer than 10 or at the hall if more. Please advise asap your intention to come so the hall can be booked if required.

April May June POSSIBLE DANCE/MOVEMENT WORKSHOP This is a work in progress, but writer producer and director Jen Wren from Slanjavaa Dance company offered to come and assist us with our play and we are currently negotiating some funds to make it happen. More to follow. Let me know if you are interested in taking part - all levels.

Mel Shand

Finzean Community Council – Spring 2023 Update

GETTING INVOLVED

The FCC is an elected body the purpose of which is to represent the views of Finzean residents to relevant authorities such as Aberdeenshire Council. The FCC meets around 6 times a year and any Finzean resident can attend. The current members of the Community Council are: myself (Chair), Andrew Douglas (Vice Chair), Zoe Mason Reid (Secretary), Alison Bell, Jim Buchan, Donna Duncan, Stuart Christie, Stuart Gordon and Davie Hector. There is space for a new Community Councillor if anyone is interested in joining, including a youth member aged 14 or 15. If so, please contact me by-mail below.

Our primary forum for communication and discussion is the FCC Facebook group, which at the time of writing has 149 members, although we also post notices of meetings etc on the noticeboard by Farquharson Park.

TELECOMMS MASTS

Like London buses, there were no applications for telecomms masts in the Finzean Area and then we had the “site 16” mast application, which has now been followed by an application for a potential second mast up the Forest of Birse.

The first proposed mast (Site 16) was the subject of the public meeting in September last year. There were 6 supporting comments and 11 objections to the application which is currently being reviewed by the Council Planning Engineers, who have requested some additional information. It is likely that the application will go to the next available Marr Area Committee Meeting. If it does go to the Area Meeting, then Finzean Community Council (FCC) have requested to speak at the meeting. We will support the application, based on the local poll conducted at the end of last year, which had an 84% majority in favour of the mast.

In February, there was a planning application for a 25 metre tall mast in the Forest of Birse, about 1 kilometre north on Burnfoot (details are in the Aberdeenshire planning portal – search on Birse). We were not aware of this potential application before their pre consultation letter arrived on 10th February. Since then, there have been a number of discussions on the proposal and Cornerstone (the agent) have agreed to move the date for comments on the proposal to be submitted back from 23rd March to the end of April. Cornerstone have also agreed to provide photomontages of the proposed mast from 4 different sites in the area. The Community Council intend to hold a public meeting on the proposal once we have received the photomontages.

Cornerstone were aware of the Site 16 application and have provide a coverage map which shows that the 2 masts cover different areas. Therefore, we do not believe that the new proposal impacts the site 16 application.

SPEEDING IN FINZEAN VILLAGE

The Community Council continue to be concerned about cars speeding through the village. After many e-mails, and meetings, Aberdeenshire Council have informed us that they will be replacing the radar controlled speed signs at either end of the village in the near future. We have also been putting up PC Speedy (the cut out policeman) up at regular intervals to try and encourage people to slow down when they are in Finzean Village.

FCC update continued

THE WALL AT FARQUHARSON PARK

The wall at Farquharson Park has been repaired and a new gate installed in order to help prevent small children straying onto the road while they are at the playground.

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT PRESENTATION ON Fri 31st MARCH

FCC have been contacted by a company called Broadway Partners who are looking to provide an improved level of Broadband service in this area. They gave an initial presentation to around 30 local residents in November last year and are coming back to Finzean to give a presentation in Finzean Hall at **7.00 pm on Friday 31st March** for around an hour, in order gather more support for their proposal. You can register your interest (which does not commit you to anything) on their website -<https://www.broadwaybroadband.co.uk/search-page/>. We will provide an update on the Facebook page if this progresses.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

The generator which will supply emergency power to the Hall is now in place and we have an outline plan for providing support to those that need it in the event of another incident. If there is a major event, please go to the Hall if you need support or are able to help out other more vulnerable people. We intend to communicate via notices in the hall, on our Facebook group and the two noticeboards in the event of a future emergency situation.

Please do contact me on haslam@finzean.com if you have any questions or comments on this update.

Guy Haslam, FCC Chair



Photo courtesy of Mel Shand

Birse Community Trust Update

At the time of writing BCT is concerned about the siting of the proposed telecommunications mast in the native regenerating pinewoods on the North Hill Forest of Birse ("Site 16" as described in the FCC update on the previous page).. As things are moving quickly, we would refer you to our website for the latest information: <https://www.birsecommunitytrust.org.uk/>

It has been a busy winter for BCT with some exciting new developments. First however we have to say thank you to Martin Ferris for his amazing work on resurfacing the section of Finzean Community Path at Boghead. What a difference he has made, and thank you to everyone for such positive feedback. Thank you especially to Paths for All and the Scottish Government Healthier Scotland Project, for funding part of the project.

We have also been working with Aberdeen City Ranger Service to uplift young pine seedlings from the tracks in the Forest of Birse, where scraping is due to take place. The Rangers are transplanting the pines on Elrick Hill where they are trying to re-establish native Caledonian pinewoods. They needed a local provenance source of pine trees, we needed the tracks scraping to allow access in case of fire so the timing was perfect.

John Threlfall's Art Classes at Finzean Old school are continuing in popularity this term with a new class, A Gentle Guide to the Art of Drawing / Seeing, plus the popular Mindfulness of Drawing class, Pastels and Advanced Drawing. Birse Art Club also meets at Finzean Old School each Friday morning with a more informal remit to help and encourage each other, new members are always welcome.

At the beginning of March, we held our Community Consultation and Open Afternoon at the Old School to give people an opportunity to meet the architects and share ideas, and join in with family activities. It was a cold day so thank you to all who came out to meet us and join in, taking part in Rubbish Archaeology, sifting through the Old School midden for treasure, making bug hotels and helping to plant yellow rattle seeds in our fledgling meadow area.

Wild About Birse are running various events. The popular Night Sky talk was on a damp cloudy night but Sam Robinson of Tomintoul and Glenlivet Dark Skies Park gave an excellent talk.

Still to Come

We are hosting a **Traditional Signwriting** course here at the Old School run by Owen Bushell which we are very excited about on 19th March.

On 30 April we will be running **An Introduction to Birdsong** at Slewdrum Forest.

We also have a **Family Friendly Badger talk** on Saturday 29th April from Scottish Badgers, with different talks and activities from 4.30: There is no charge but Scottish Badgers welcome donations and there will be badger merchandise to buy at both events.

- 4.30 p.m. - Scottish Badgers talk for adults and children of all ages, 'The life of badgers - where they live, what they eat, what they do' - the biology and ecology of badgers. Slides, photos, and video, plus demonstration of artefacts.
- 5.30 p.m. – break - we would love to display your badger pictures on our Facebook page so please bring your badger works of art to show us and the badger experts!
- 6.00 p.m. - Badgers, the Law and types of persecution – suitable for adults and older children only
- 6.45 p.m. – Finish

Booking is essential for these events.

All our events are advertised on Facebook and on the village notice boards but we also have an email mailing list to send out detail of events and activities, please let us know if you would like to be added to our emailing list. BCToffice@birsecommunitytrust.org.uk

