



## **The Rabbit Autumn 2022**

### **Welcome from the Editor**

Photo of the year must be Mel Shand's image of the jubilee beacon lighting (see back page)! This summer has been strangely bookended by historic events. What was so special about the lighting of the beacon was being in such a lovely place with friends and neighbours. And that's the community you will read about in these pages—our events, our groups and our hall.

Please send any ideas and contributions for the Spring 2023 edition to me (850483; dalsack@outlook.com (or paper contributions in the mail box at the end of the Dalsack track) by February 2023. And if you know of anyone who wants to be added to the Rabbit email list (new neighbours or anyone else who feels left out!) please let Wendy Hector know at wendy.hector@btopenworld.com.

*Emma Forster, 9 October 2022*



*A walk into the Aven, looking back to Finzean*

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## Community networks

A reminder to anyone new to the community that we have various helpful networks that can put you in touch with all aspects of community life.

There is The Finzean Community Council, responsible for representing our community's views to Aberdeenshire Council, the current Chair is Guy Haslam, [haslam@finzean.com](mailto:haslam@finzean.com).

The Finzean Community Association deals with all matters concerning the Hall as a community resource which includes the Under 5's Group, Badminton Club and any theatrical events happening in the Hall. The Hall is managed by a committee of volunteers, some of whom have been involved since its refurbishment 20 years ago! The current Chair is Roy Cowie ([roy@roycowie.co.uk](mailto:roy@roycowie.co.uk)). The day to day management of the hall and bookings is organised by Morag Thomson, ([finzeanhall@gmail.com](mailto:finzeanhall@gmail.com)) and any community events for the hall facebook page can be sent to Mel Shand ([melshand.artist@gmail.com](mailto:melshand.artist@gmail.com)),

Mel also administers the Need a Neighbour Whatsapp group, this group was established during the pandemic and helped with isolation, shopping, prescription collection and general help, since then during power cuts and storms we have established a protocol for opening the hall and various useful alerts. If you wish to be added please email Mel your mobile number.

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## Birse and Feughside Parish Church

Our weekly Worship Service takes place every Sunday at 11am in the church building. All are welcome!

### Messy Church

Our next Messy Church session will take place on Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, from straight after school (3.15pm) until 5.30pm. At Messy Church we have a snack, play some games, share a story, do some crafts and activities, and end with a meal. Messy Church is for children of any age, accompanied by an adult.

### Warm Welcome

With the steep rise in fuel prices, we are aware that many in our community may feel the pinch this winter. We are planning to open the church building as a place to come and keep warm. There will be space for a bit of peace and quiet, or to share social time with others. Days and times are still to be confirmed, but if you want more information, or would be interested in helping out, please do contact me on the email address below.

*Amy Pierce, Minister*  
([acpierce@churchofscotland.org.uk](mailto:acpierce@churchofscotland.org.uk))

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## Finzean Hall update

Absolutely fantastic the hall is once again buzzing with fun and laughter, with local and not so local families and friends coming together and sharing magical moments at Finzean Hall.

It's been a very busy 6 months at the hall with beautiful weddings, private functions and children's parties and most were able to enjoy the sunny and warm weather in our wonderful asset, the community garden. There are still quite a few weddings and parties booked this year and hopefully the weather will also be kind for them too. We have several weddings already booked for 2023, a few of the brides are our own local lassies. The hall continues to impress everyone. Thanks to the team of community volunteers who help to make this possible.

The Under 5s group continue to meet regularly (see next page) on Thursdays as well as our Finzean Community Council (FCC) and Community Association with regular meetings (an FCC report is later on in The Rabbit). Our local football team continues to use the facilities. We welcome back the Badminton Club restarting on Monday 3 October - more details later on!

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Party was an amazing evening. Great company, great food, great fun, great ceilidh band - the floor was packed whenever they played. Could have danced all night!! Well done and many thanks to the Jubilee Party team for organising this successful evening.

Several other organisations have returned to the hall for their forums and AGMs. Total Energies used the hall and surrounding area a couple of times for their team building and are so impressed with our lovely hall, they will be back again. Birse Community Trust (BCT) with a volunteer group used the hall facilities for several days (more information about BCT's recent activities later on!). They visited local sites and helped with some repairs and on the Saturday they enjoyed a successful ceilidh evening. The volunteer group had a great time, loved the hall and really enjoyed staying in Finzean. Banchory Youth FC also used the changing rooms and Farquharson Park for their home games. There have also been health and wellbeing workshops, line dance class, piping experience plus a pupil concert.

Dave the Fish and Chips Man with the Van is back again first Sunday each month Oct to Dec, 4pm to 6.30pm. 2023 dates to be advised.

Finally, as always a huge thanks to Hector Riddell for the continued beautiful display of flowers in front of the Hall!

Enquiries please email [finzeanhall@gmail.com](mailto:finzeanhall@gmail.com).

*Morag Thomson, Hall Manager*

# Finzean Under 5's

Friendly playgroup for parents, carers, babies and children.

£2.50 per family. Includes cuppa and biscuits for adults.  
Bring your own children's snack.



Every Thursday 10-11.45

Finzean Hall

We look forward to welcoming you!

Find us on Facebook: Finzean Under 5s

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## Finzean Badminton Club



We are happy to say that the badminton club started a new season on Monday 3rd October in Finzean Hall at 7.30.

Anyone from secondary school age upwards is welcome!

For information please contact June Whyte on [jwhyte31@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jwhyte31@hotmail.co.uk) or telephone 01330 850327.

## FINZEAN BURNS SUPPER

SAVE THE DATE!!

SATURDAY 28 JANUARY 2023

MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW!

### BONFIRE NIGHT - SATURDAY 5TH NOVEMBER 2022

Our annual Bonfire and Fireworks Display will take place on **Saturday 5th November**.

The bonfire will be lit at 6.30pm with fireworks starting at 7pm. Soup, Stovies, Hot Dogs, Vegetarian Sausages, Hot Drinks and Snacks will be on sale on the night for supper.



We are always grateful to the businesses and individuals in Finzean that make a donation towards the fireworks every year and if you are interested in making a donation, however large or small please do let Wendy Hector know (contact details below).

Please also let Wendy know if you are able to volunteer as this event seems to be growing in size every year which is fantastic but does mean we need lots of volunteers to enable it to run smoothly (car parking, stewards, first aiders, kitchen helpers, raffle sales).

Because of the number of spectators and for safety reasons there will be no parking along the roadside, therefore we would ask locals to consider walking if possible, car parking will be provided at the hall as usual and Farquharson Park. But if you require Disabled Parking on the night, please contact us in advance and a car parking space can be reserved for you.

We will have our usual "Hamper Raffle" on the night and if you would like to contribute anything for the Hamper, please drop off to Wendy or Donna Thow by Thursday 3rd November 2022.

If you are willing to help out in the peeling of the tatties to prepare for the stovies, please come along to the hall on Friday 4th November at 10am with your tattie peeler.

Finally we will be building the bonfire on Sunday 30th October at 1pm and if you are able to help please be at the hall at 1pm.

Wendy Hector  
850453/[wendy.hector@btopenworld.com](mailto:wendy.hector@btopenworld.com)

*Merry Christmas*



### **CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON TEA PARTY**

Following a short absence, Finzean Community Association, would like to invite “Those of a particular age” (over 60’s) to an afternoon of festive entertainment and a fly cup, on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December. This is an invitation only event due to catering So if you have not been invited before, or now fall into the above category, please email [donnathow73@outlook.com](mailto:donnathow73@outlook.com) or phone and leave a message on 01330 850421

**Finzean Farmers Ball 2022**

**Saturday 3rd December**

**Tickets now available**

**For an evening of dinner and dancing**

**£36 a ticket**

**Contact: [melshand.artist@gmail.com](mailto:melshand.artist@gmail.com)**

### **Christmas shopping weekend—Ironside Furniture**

Heartwood, Jenny Brand Handmade and Ellie Rattenbury Silversmith invite you to their annual Christmas shopping weekend at Ironside Furniture Group in Finzean. Come and browse wooden gifts made from locally sourced wood. Beautiful handmade silver jewellery and a variety of homeware and jewellery made from wood and textiles.

We are open from 10 - 4 on the 26th & 27th of November. We look forward to seeing you. Keep Christmas local this year!

## Community play!

A new Community PLAY launches on 27th November at Finzean Hall at 4pm.

For anyone new to the community, POOT (a Portrait Of Our Time), was established in 2010 to knit together creativity, culture and community. It began with 220 photographic portraits, a Jolly choir, regular film screening and the establishment of Finzean Hall as a venue for professional touring theatre with the support of NEAT (North East Arts Touring). Inspired by these shows we have also had three productions of our own, POOT stories, Alter-Nativity and the pre pandemic BEE-Kind. Always great fun and as an early cast member once said "I may have lived in Finzean all my life but I met more people during the play than I have done at any other time". We even won an award for community engagement with the arts and gathered a few new skills along the way.

Therefore **on the 27th November 2022** we launch the next community play - as yet unfinished, but already "loosely structured" it is dependent on, and waiting for YOUR input....so if you have ever fancied treading the boards - from full on diva to a chorus part - then one will be written for you, if you have a musical talent we will string your bow, and if you'd like to be part of the backstage team, selling ice cream, sweeping up glitter, getting hands on with the set and tech, prop making, setting up, or even if you just want to find out a bit more, come along on the 27th so we can tell you the plan. The actual performances are not until October 2023, but without first assembling the company, we can't move forward with the script!

Mel Shand says: *"I can't tell you how excited I am about this - an idea has been swirling about in my head to tell the story of the epic migratory journey undertaken by the salmon and the swallow as they leave the Feugh valley and make their way to sea and sunnier climes, and all the adventures along the way. Just as our youngsters grow up and leave the nest, we hope they return to "no place like home". I like best to work collaboratively, so although I've already written three or four chorus scenes, I can't string the story together without knowing who wants to be involved, and then I can write the parts for individuals depending on your availability and commitment - it really is a beautiful process - which you just have to trust. It not only makes the rehearsal process easier as folk can get together in small groups as the performances approach but it gives a sense of purpose to community engagement. In the past we have found that Sunday afternoons work well and we are very realistic about folks other time commitments (hence starting so early).As the momentum builds, driven by the cast's energy, everyone loves the performances! There really is something for everyone to be involved in, with, so you don't **need** any previous experience, and for those of you who have been in the other shows, PLEASE come back!*

Primary school age children need to be accompanied by a willing adult, other than that - no rules! We are hopeful to see you **on the 27th November at Finzean Hall at 4pm!**

Mel Shand

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## Finzean Community Council

The current members of the Community Council are: Guy Haslam (Chair), Andrew Douglas (Vice Chair), Zoe Mason Reid (Secretary), Alison Bell, Jim Buchan, Donna Duncan, Stuart Christie, Stuart Gordon and Davie Hector.

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 several times a year and any Finzean resident can attend. The primary forum for communication and discussion with the FCC is the Facebook group which at the time of writing has 133 members, however we endeavour to post notices of meetings on the village noticeboards as well. Guy can also be contacted at [haslam@finzean.com](mailto:haslam@finzean.com).

On 7th September approximately 70 people attended a public meeting at the hall to discuss the pending proposal by the Home Office and their agent to build an Emergency Services / Mobile Phone mast at a site off the Forest of Birse Road referred to as 'site 16'. Following the meeting and over the next week an opinion poll was conducted the results of which was that 84% of respondents support the proposal. It does not automatically follow that the mast will be built; the next stage will be more environmental impact and coverage assessments and then a planning application which anyone can support or object to. At this time the FCC's best estimate of when the mast would be built assuming that planning is granted would be mid to late 2023.

Earlier in the year the FCC also conducted a poll on support for the new windfarm at GlenDye and the proposed extension of the Mid Hill windfarm. The results indicated that we narrowly object to the windfarms however the very low participation in the poll would suggest that most folk don't have a strong opinion.

The FCC are concerned about the prevalence of speeding through the village. New signs have been added however we continue to lobby the council to repair or replace the radar activated signs.

Following the storms last winter the FCC and Finzean Community Association formed a resilience committee. We now have wiring to allow a generator to supply emergency power to the hall and we have an outline plan for providing support to those that need it. If there is a power cut this winter and you or someone you know are worried or vulnerable, please contact anyone in the FCC or FCA and we endeavour to coordinate some assistance. If there is a major event we will communicate via our Facebook group and the two noticeboards.

*Andrew Douglas*



## Birse Community Trust update

It has been another busy six months for us at Birse Community Trust, thanks to the commitment and help of the local community and the wider community of volunteers and supporters.

We have just completed a working party at the mills with SPAB, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. This is a chance for volunteers to learn new skills and is hopefully the first stage in a partnership with SPAB to work with the millers and BCT to support ongoing maintenance at the mills. This would not have been possible without the generous help and support we received locally, and of course without the encouragement of the millers, Davie Duncan and Stan Moyes, and their families.

We have also been lucky to have TotalEnergies coming back to volunteer with us and the mental health group Branching Out Plus. TotalEnergies have been tackling footpath work on Finzean Community Path, and cutting bamboo at the mills. Branching Out Plus have started to repair the fencing at the Bucket Mill and we have more work lined up for the future including better signage on Finzean Community Path, and both groups getting involved with local wildflower seed gathering to increase the habitat available for our native pollinating insects.

The Old School is continuing to be a busy place with the autumn start of Birse Art Club, open to everyone, art classes in Pastels and Mindfulness Drawing by a local artist, and of course use by Finzean Primary School in the library. Wild About Birse, an offshoot of BCT focussing on recording local wildlife, has also thrived over the summer with a botany walk at Craigbeg and a fungus walk at the Forest of Birse.

We would like to set up a Heritage Stories group over the winter to record local history and stories in the informal setting of Finzean Old School over tea and coffee. If you're interested, please let us know at [BCToffice@birsecommunitytrust.org.uk](mailto:BCToffice@birsecommunitytrust.org.uk).



BCT is also very grateful to have received support from Paths for All to improve Finzean Community Path by installing extra signage around the Kirk, surfacing the wet area of path and increasing the biodiversity of the path by increasing plants for pollinators. Further details of how you can get involved will be advertised locally and on social media.

With all our events and initiatives, we do rely on local support and we are very aware that we advertise on Facebook which not everyone uses. There is no easy way to reach everyone but we are starting to compile an email list for use for events and activities only, which we can use to let you know when we are developing new initiatives, events, guided walks or when we just want to reach everyone with an idea. If you would like to be added to our mailing list, could you email the BCT office at the address below and you can of course come off the list at any time.

*Toni Watt*  
[BCToffice@birsecommunitytrust.org.uk](mailto:BCToffice@birsecommunitytrust.org.uk)



Theatre at Finzean Hall:  
Wednesday 12 October, 7pm  
**6 Feet, 3 Shoes**



**Slanjayvah Danza**

**Ages 3+**

[neatshows.co.uk/events](http://neatshows.co.uk/events)



*Mel Shand*