

LAGGAN MATTERS

Neoni as leith an t-sluaigh, gun aorta an t-sluaigh

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Welcome to Laggan Matters

‘Nothing on behalf of the people without the agreement of the people

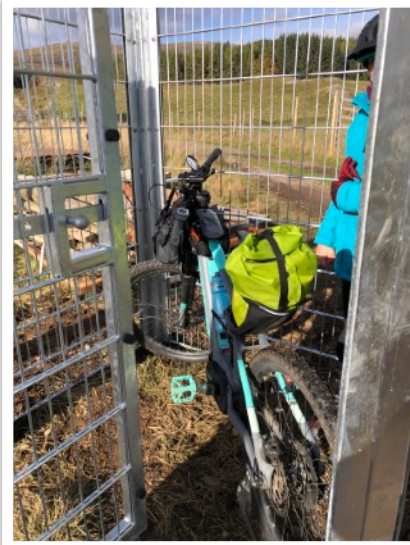
A huge thank you to Robyn Woolston for producing the previous 6 editions and to Phil at Ardverikie for printing hard copes for those unable to download electronic ones.

Spring is in the air and this edition celebrates all animals and their young...

As always we welcome your contributions as there wouldn't be a newsletter without them! Therefore please keep sending them in along with any ideas for articles to jillvn@aol.com or amandagallagher17@yahoo.com



Circular Bike Ride



There is something very satisfying about doing a circular walk or bike ride and even more so when we haven't been able to do it before! The views up The Glen are all special but the snowcapped hills looking back towards Laggan last October, were the icing on the cake.

Jo Walton

From Crathie To Laggan Via Garva Bridge

As soon as we heard the pedestrian access had been finished last October, Jill and I decided to cycle to Crathie to see if we could get our bikes through the new security gate at track 19.

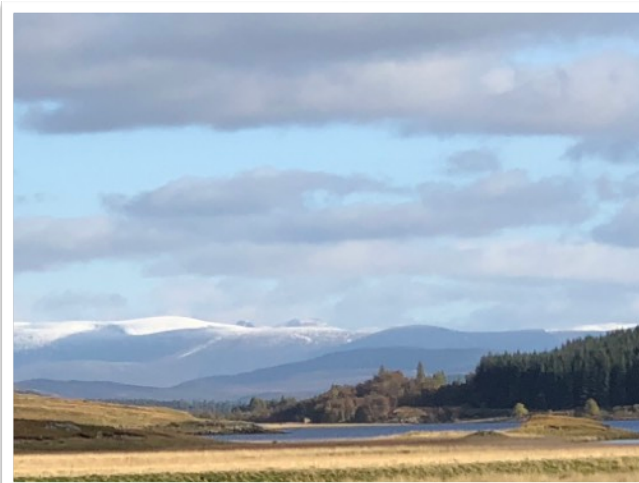


We were both able to push our bikes through the entrance but it was necessary to angle the front wheels of both our bikes to enable the gate to swing back to allow us to exit the gateway ...

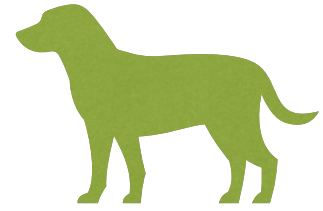
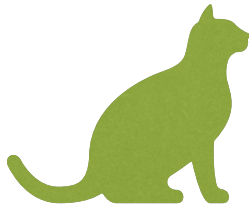
Our mountain e-bikes are heavier than normal road and mountain bikes, but for larger framed bikes it might be necessary to up-end them and wheel them out.

It's worth noting that there are often sheep and cattle grazing along this route so dogs should always be kept on a lead at these times.

There are potentially 4 closed gates to go through before reaching Garva Bridge.



Vet Talk Travelling Abroad With Your Pet Trevor Warner MRCVS



Hopefully we can all now look forward to getting away on holiday this year and going abroad is going to be on lots of people's wish list.

Many holiday makers are keen to take their dog(s) and maybe even cat(s) with them when travelling to Europe. However, be aware that the regulations for your pets travel have changed since the UK left the EU.

The pet passports are no longer valid if issued in the UK and instead an Animal Health Certificate (AHC) is required each time you travel and this certificate can only be issued and signed by an Official Veterinarian (OV).

The basic requirements for the AHC are:

- Pet is micro-chipped
- A rabies vaccine has been given at least 21 days prior to the AHC being issued and the vaccine is up to date. Most rabies vaccines in the country are valid for 3 years but some only last one year so it is important to check your vaccine certificate.
- The AHC cannot be signed and issued more than 10 days prior to travelling.
- If travelling to Ireland, Malta, Norway or Finland your pet will need a tapeworm treatment within 5 days of travelling. This must be given by a veterinarian.
- The AHC is valid for 4 months from the date the animal entered the EU and is only valid for one entry in the EU from the UK.
- The pets eligible for an AHC are dogs, cats and ferrets.
- 24 to 120 hours before landing back in the UK you must get your pet treated for tapeworms by a veterinarian. This does apply to travel from Ireland, Malta, Norway and Finland.

Please note that the above applies to travel to the EU and Northern Ireland. If travelling to other countries it is the owner's responsibility to check the requirements of the country to which they are travelling.

Also be aware that many areas in Europe have the potential for animal diseases not routinely seen in this country e.g. Leishmania, Babesia and heartworm.

In all cases arranging to discuss the requirements for your travel with your veterinary practices is advised well in advance. At the same time information can be obtained on ways of helping to prevent your pet getting these diseases. Happy Holidays ...

Creag Meagaidh

Wind, rain and mild temperatures, an unusual winter so far at Creag Meagaidh! With conditions allowing, maintenance jobs have been at the forefront of the activity on the reserve. Preparing for what we hope is another busy visitor season, improvements have been made to the access paths, public toilet and car park. Due to a lack of winter conditions on the hills, the Coire Ardair track has been quieter than usual.

Residential volunteers are returning as Covid lessens its grip, allowing Creag Meagaidh to maintain its status as a quality nature reserve. Current residential volunteers include Freddy and Joe from the south of England and Alexander from the North Highlands. They dedicate their time to help with all aspects of reserve life and are supplemented by a growing number of day volunteers.

The Rural Skills program has continued to be a success, as students from Kingussie High School visit most Thursdays. Path building at the end of last year, they have also been learning about livestock and deer management.

An increase in workers means that longer-term projects are analysed more seriously. For example, new technology called Cattle Collars are being considered for the reserve. Creating a virtual boundary via satellite, they would allow the resident Highland Cattle to roam and open up the ground layer, allowing other species to flourish without the need for fencing. Community stalking plans are in creation, allowing locals to gain stalking experience and providing a free source of venison! We also plan to increase and extend our venison sales in the area. Looking for suppliers nearby, we hope to make this sustainable food source a viable option for local businesses.

The fluctuating temperatures have had different effects on the reserves resident species. Mountain Hare and Ptarmigan stand out on the snow-less slopes in their white winter jackets and the Deer still linger on the upper hillsides. The Eagles should be nesting soon, returning to their traditional eyries that can be used for many years by the same or successive birds. The largest known nest sight in the UK was 4.6 metres deep!

Rory Richardson



Twins at Gaskbeg!

Janet our pedigree shorthorn cow had twins, two lovely heifers and did a very good job and managed to have them without any help, although she was closely watched!



It was easy to name them for once, Fiona who works with us, her mum is Janet and she has a sister Shirley.

Say hello to Fiona and Shirley!

Lucy Grant

Irish Whiskey

Ingredients:

1 tin of Nestles condensed milk

2 cartons of long life single cream

1 1/2 teaspoons of powdered coffee

1/4 bottle of whiskey

Mix the coffee with the whiskey then add the rest of the ingredients.

Mix together and enjoy!



Laggan Community Council

Colin Morgan Chair LCC

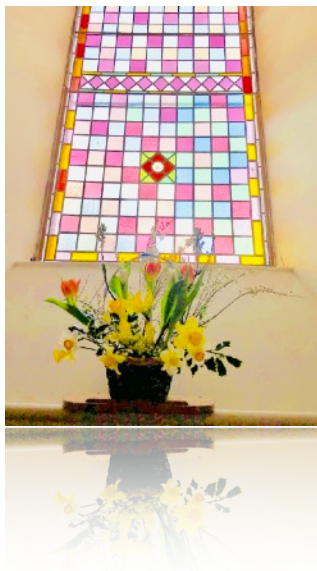
The Community Council re-started face-to-face meetings in February and in general, will continue to meet on the 3rd Monday of each month at 1900 up until June 2022 when its AGM will be held on Monday 20th. At that meeting, officers for the Community Council for the next 12 months will be appointed and meeting dates for the rest of the year determined.

Significant items that the Community Council expect to deal with in the coming year will be;

- 1) With SSE Renewables for the future operation of the Community Benefit Scheme and its uses locally;
- 2) With Forest & Land Scotland who we expect to issue and consult on their next 10 year Forest Development plan for the Strathmashie Forest estate;
- 3) SSE Networks on the potential expansion to the Melgarve Sub-Station and pylon installation to connect proposed Wind Farms – disruption to local roads are envisaged.
- 4) An emergency resilience plan for the community – recent power outages have impacted electricity and water supplies so these will be uppermost to secure;
- 5) Road improvements to A86 and A889 (Transport Scotland) - and on-going road safety issues to Police Scotland/BEAR.

No doubt, a number of other questions and issues will arise for the Community Council to try and address on your behalf. Comments on any matter can be sent at any time to our various e-mail contacts chairlcc@laggan.com , secretarylcc@laggan.com or info@laggan.com

Laggan, Newtonmore & Kingussie Churches



Easter Events & Services

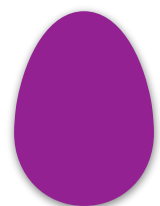
Newtonmore Church

- ◆ Thursday 14th April 2pm - Messy Easter for families
- ◆ Sunday 17th April 11.30 - Joint Laggan & Newtonmore Service

Kingussie Church

- ◆ Friday 15th April 7pm - Good Friday Service

Have you ever wondered who started the trend of tucking into chocolate-shaped eggs on Easter Sunday? It was during the 19th Century that the Fry family of Bristol ran the largest chocolate factory in the world and produced the first chocolate egg, in 1873. It was two years later in 1875 that Cadbury's made their first Easter Egg.



Jahama Highland Estate

1. The lambing season is fast approaching, and we will be expecting up to 2,000 lambs this year across the whole of the Jahama Highland Estates Farming operation. The main locus of operations for this will be at Garvamore Farm and we'd ask that members of the public be mindful of this and keep their pet dogs under control when visiting the Garva bridge and Garva farm area.
2. Sadly, we have experienced some deer poaching near to the Garva Bridge area, which we have reported to Police Scotland. We would be very grateful if any residents see anything suspicious that they immediately contact Police Scotland on 101. Under no circumstances approach anyone, just call Police Scotland.
3. We have been holding meetings with the Spey Fishery Board and SEPA as we continue to maintain progress with developing solutions to enhance the Salmon run up past the dam.
4. We are in discussion with the Badenoch Heritage Festival event organisers and will support another event this year.

Jonathan Hart

Where Is It?



Do you know where this photograph was taken?

Answer in the next issue

If you would like to send one of your photos for this regular feature, please email it to jillvn@aol.com

Photographed by Jackie Ashworth within the Laggan Parish

The Goats @ Creag Dhu

I always know spring is near when you start seeing goats and their new kids on the slopes of Creag Dhu near the road. They are a wonderful sight and so exciting to see the latest offspring. But along with the excitement comes the usual warnings that at some point a family troupe of mixed ages will be found to have "escaped " their side of the road for the excitement (and fresh grazing) of the land around Lochan Uvie and further along the road towards Newtonmore. Not only do they meander across the road in front of traffic but also they surprise travellers not used to such cuteness who stop for a photo opportunity....

Getting killed on the A86 is not the only risk to young goats. Last spring Becca Cameron came across a kid being attacked by a loose dog up at Biallid. She intervened and nursed him back to health from his injuries.

Unable to return him to the herd Becca has become his "mum" and McGoatee Cameron is living the high life with his own Facebook page....and a tendency to take himself off to the pub!

So when and where do the goats come from? There are herds of feral goats all over the Highlands most likely descended from domesticated goats abandoned during the clearances. Unfortunately, despite being a much loved spectacle for some, to the International Union for Nature Conservation feral goats are regarded as one of the 100 worst invasive species globally because their grazing can cause damage to native woodlands and scrub.

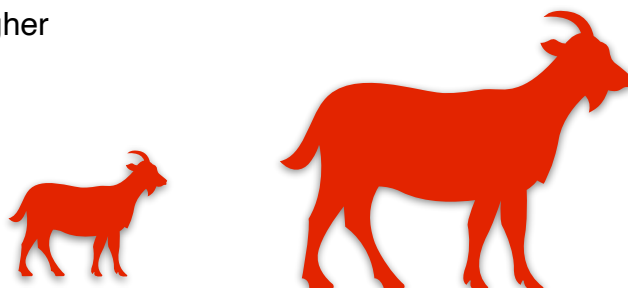


The history of the Creag Dhu goats dates back to the 1950s when the owner of Cluny purchased some goats from the Isle of Islay. Fed up with losing sheep or having to rescue them from the cliffs and ledges of Creag Dhu the plan was that the goats which are naturally attracted to the cliff edges without coming to any harm, would eat the grass thereby preventing the sheep from getting into trouble. The goats thrived and are now a self sustaining and totally wild population.

I'm sure that there are many more tales to tell and share. For instance does anyone know how many goats there are? If you have any more information please get in contact with me amandagallagher17@yahoo.com

In the meantime in an effort to improve road safety the Community Council have asked Transport Scotland if we can have some goat warning signs strategically placed along the Creag Dhu section of the A86....let's hope it won't take too long for the request to be granted.

Amanda Gallagher



Soay Sheep at Druim An Aird

Graham Grant

Soay sheep are a breed of domestic sheep descended from a population of feral sheep on the island of Soay in the St Kilda Archipelago, about 40 miles from the Western Isles of Scotland. They have been allowed to become largely feral and the breed is listed in Category 4: At Risk by the Rare Breeds Survival Trust.

Although a bit wild, they are hardy wee sheep, extremely agile and don't need a lot of attention, and they taste good!

I kept them up there for several summers during which time they made a great job of clearing the long vegetation, which grew after the trees were felled, obscuring the site. This helped the interpretation of the archaeological survey which identified the 18th century village - c12 houses, 2 corn kilns, platforms and walls etc.

Unfortunately the forestry preparations for, and construction of, the Beaully/Denny pylon line made access difficult; also the fence was damaged by windblow, so the sheep were removed and the site has now reverted to obscuring wilderness.

Someone could always do it again !!



Windfarm Developments near Laggan - Glenshero

“Early in March, the Community Council was notified by the developer (SIMEC) that the Glenshero Wind Farm had been refused planning consent by Scottish Ministers primarily because of the visual impact on the mountain landscape and wild land areas, including the Cairngorms National Park. This was the position that many in the Community had supported during the planning process. What was not at issue was the need for such a development to assist in meeting climate goals for Scotland and its potential economic benefit locally, but rather it was being proposed in the wrong place. This also means that any potential future Share Ownership agreement with SIMEC and any Community Benefit proposals for the Community will lapse.

A second Wind Farm planning application - Cloiche - submitted by SSE Renewables - and proposed mostly to the west of the present Stronelaig site, is presently being assessed by the planning authorities. This proposal aims to reinstate some turbines which were excluded from the original 2014 Stronelaig plan.

A third Wind Farm proposal at the Cullachy estate by Fred Olsen renewables, to the west of Cloiche, and bordering the Corrieyarick pass is presently in its scoping phase with the preparation of an environmental impact assessment report - a precursor to a full planning application.

Given why the Glenshero proposal has been refused will probably now call into question the future of both these proposals.

After the February 2022 CC meeting, SSEN Networks promised to return to the Community with their updated proposals to extend the existing Melgarve site with 2 additional transformers and related overhead connection lines for both Glenshero and Cloiche. No doubt these plans will be re-assessed and we wait to hear from SSEN.”

Colin Morgan



Arts for Health & Wellbeing Q & A with Robyn Woolston

Q: How are things developing with Your Art Safari Highland Programme?

A: I started the creative workshops back in September 2021 and we are currently working towards an exhibition at the Highland Folk Museum that will run from the 1st to the 31st May. Members of the group will produce paintings that coming to create and 'A-Z of Mental Health' that contain personal reflections, anecdotes and advice. The letters themselves will be situated throughout the buildings (which form Britain's first open air museum) and a hand-out and online listing will reveal things like 'Q is for quiet contemplation and time-out'. By siting the works within a number of the 35 historical buildings onsite, it's hoped the visiting public will be encouraged to think about both contemporary and historical perspectives of mental health within personal, family and work settings, whilst also forming their own trail across the eighty-acre site. The exhibition is timed to coincide with the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival 2022.



Q: Can you tell us a bit more about the wider festival?

A: Yes indeed, the theme for this year's Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) is 'Gather', led by the Mental Health Foundation, SMHAF 2022 will be a hybrid festival combining live events and online programming:

Our theme of 'Gather' was chosen to recognise that bringing people together has always been vital to our work; we use the arts to connect communities, reduce social isolation, and challenge mental health stigma. After two years at a distance, we want to explore what it means for people to come together. How does sharing a space influence our mental health and our experience of art? And when we cannot or choose not to come together physically, how else can we gather in a way that is truly inclusive? As always, SMHAF is an opportunity to gather stories, artworks, performances, thoughts and conversations scattered across Scotland, creating an important public dialogue on mental health.

Entry to the exhibition is free but donations are very gratefully received.

Opening hours are 10-5 seven days a week.

Address: Highland Folk Museum, Aultlarie Croft, Kingussie Road, Newtonmore PH20 1AY

Programme website: <https://www.mhfestival.com>

Art Safari: <https://www.artsafari.org>

Lead Artist: <https://www.robynwoolston.com>



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