

LAGGAN MATTERS

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

Contents

What's on in Laggan

March to July 2024

Orienteering for all

Andy Llewellyn

Vet Talk

Smile please... Dental
Disease

Laggan Heritage

Old Hall Ceilidh

Pipe Major

Chris Thomson

Ian Macgillivray

Obituary

The New Normal

Ian Hall's radio show

The Laggan Dragon

Graham Grant

And much much more ...



Welcome to Laggan Matters

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

Welcome to the spring edition of Laggan Matters...what a long, cold, wet & windy winter it has been!

Thanks to Phil at Ardverikie for continuing to print hard copies for those unable to download electronic ones.

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



Laggan War Memorial Remembrance Sunday 2023



Around 25 members of the Laggan community gathered at the Laggan War Memorial on Sunday 12th November to commemorate and remember those from the Community who had served and fallen in wars around the globe in the past century. As ever a poignant day with sunshine gently illuminating the Laggan landscape.

Three wreaths were laid, from left to right:

Highland Council , Laggan Community & Badenoch Shinty Memories.



Smile Please ...

Trevor Warner MRCVS

Dental disease is a common problem in older dogs, and it can cause many problems e.g.

- a) Bad breath
- b) Difficulty eating
- c) Infection that can spread elsewhere in the body e.g. the heart.

As vets we often see cases when they have progressed quite far and often expensive treatment including extractions is necessary BUT regular teeth care from an early age can make a big difference

Maintaining healthy teeth

- Feed the right food: Dry food can have the added benefit of exercising the chewing muscles and provide a mild cleaning effect on the teeth.
- Brush their teeth regularly: It is essential to only use toothpaste designed for use in dogs and cats. Never use human toothpaste as dogs can not rinse their mouths afterwards and the swallowed toothpaste can cause stomach problems. Specially shaped toothbrushes and finger brushes are available.
- Whenever possible start brushing when they are a puppy as they will then get used to it and will be happy for you to carry it on regularly.
- Dental chews and treats: Can help to keep your dog's teeth clean but some brands do contain a lot of sugar which may actually be detrimental.
- Bones, Antlers and hide chews: the use of these is controversial as although they will help clean the teeth, they can cause serious problems:
 - o Bones: Can cause teeth fractures, constipation and cooked bones may fragment and cause internal damage
 - o Antlers: I have seen several cases of fractures of the large back teeth after chewing antlers and this often needs surgical extraction of the affected teeth
 - o Hide chews: I have had a few cases where these have softened and either got 'stuck' in the mouth or more seriously, in the throat.

When to seek Veterinary advice

Some signs to look out for are:

- Build up of tartar (brown deposits) on the teeth,
- Red and sore gums,
- Smelly breath,
- Sensitive mouth and reluctance to eat.

Dental Disease Treatment

This may simply be ultrasonic cleaning (as we have done at our own dentists) but these days many other options are available depending on how bad the teeth are. These include dental X-rays, simple extractions, more complicated surgical extractions and even orthodontic procedures.

The lovely Ellie Bagnall smiling and showing off her lovely clean teeth.



The Orient-eering Express arrives at Creag Meagaidh

The Laggan valley's first permanent orienteering course has arrived at Creag Meagaidh! This course will allow families and individuals to try orienteering whenever they wish.

Orienteering is about finding your way between a series of checkpoints marked on a map. The map is a specially drawn orienteering map which is more detailed than an OS map. At each checkpoint, there is a plate mounted on a post to confirm you have reached the correct location. The course at Creag Meagaidh follows the existing path network and is targeted at those new to orienteering. There is a longer 2.8km course and a shorter 1.4km course. Both involve some elevation gain and some great views.

Maps can be downloaded for free from <https://www.goorienteering.org.uk/course/creag-meagaidh> and printed at home. Alternatively, there is a small supply of professionally printed maps on site for free (though availability can't be guaranteed). Donations are encouraged to Creag Meagaidh to help cover costs.

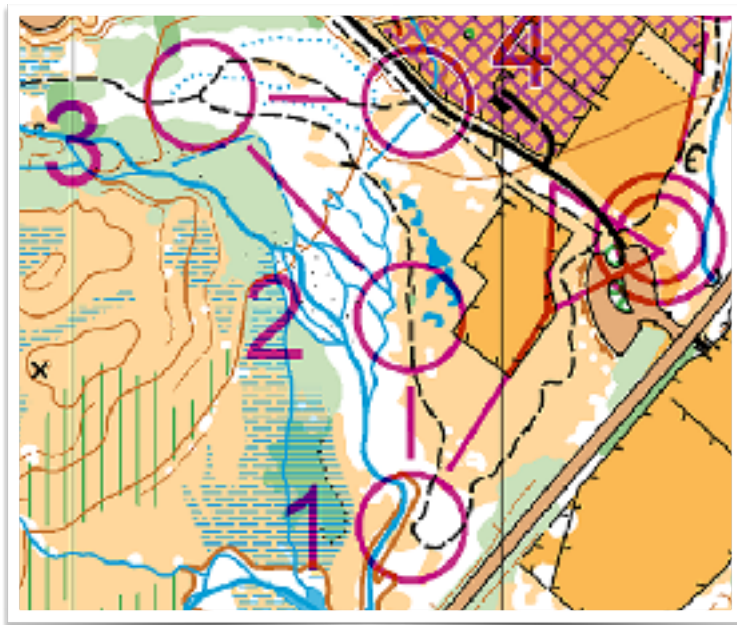
The course opened during the summer 2023 and over 150 groups have used the course so far, including families, adventure groups and experienced orienteers.

More information about orienteering more generally can be found at www.scottish-orienteering.org and an introduction to permanent courses is available on YouTube under "[Permanent Orienteering Courses | Discover an Outdoor Adventure](#)".

Many thanks to:

- Creag Meagaidh National Nature Reserve
- Funding from a micro-grant received from the Laggan Community's Stronelaig Community Fund.
- Support of the Scottish Orienteering Association and orienteering clubs.
- Funding from local orienteers.





Map Extract from the short course. The triangle indicates the start. At the centre of each circle is a checkpoint on the ground - you choose your route between them but it is best /driest / quickest to follow the existing paths. A full legend is provided on the maps.



The course is ideal for children and their furry friends.

Andy Llewellyn

Recycling Blister Packs



Superdrug in Inverness has a Terracycle drop off point for all your empty blister packs. It's situated at the back of the store beside the pharmacy.

Please let us know if you are aware of anywhere nearer to recycle them.

Laggan Heritage Old Hall Ceilidh

Laggan Heritage

"THE OLD LAGGAN HALL"

This song was composed by ISOBEL GEDDES and sung by her pupils of GERGASK SCHOOL at the "DEMOLITION CEILIDH" in 1984 of the original DR MACDONALD MEMORIAL HALL built in 1930.

CHORUS: LAGGAN HALL LAGGAN HALL , THE DR MACDONALD MEMORIAL HALL

Right here in our village a long time ago
 The people were hurrying all to and fro
 T'was the opening night of the old village hall
 A ceilidh was held here for one and for all.
 Chorus.

Since far 1930, it's been very clear
 The spirit of Laggan has been very dear.
 For some fifty years folk have sung on this stage.
 Remember them all? you're showing your age.
 For some fifty years it is hard to believe
 That people have eaten these great Laggan teas
 With shortbread and pancakes and sweet apple-pie
 Provided by Laggan's own WRI

The list of activities people have shared
 Will show you how each generation has cared
 With badminton, ceilidhs and young people's clubs
 And a great football team that might win the cup..

A whist drive in Laggan was really all go
 You'd think you were playing way down in Glencoe
 Each time you would move at the ding of a bell
 You'd meet a Macdonald or else a Campbell.

We've had lectures on forests and expeditions
 And experts on Matters of Opin-i-on
 And Ken Taylor's Disco's were a big hit
 And for ladies with bulges we had some 'keep fit'

There are certain occasions we will never forget
 At Christmas, the party with tables all set
 And can you remember the party's first host
 The man on the bicycle -- Jimmy the Post

The farmers of Laggan they are very loyal
 Through blizzards and floods they constantly toil
 We'll always remember though far may we roam
 The wonderful, marvellous, grand ' Harvest Home'.

So farewell dear old hall we greet you tonight
To keep Laggan's spirits shining and bright
Is for each young person a resolute task,
Goodbye dear old hall from the school at Gergask.
(OIDCHE –BHA)



Where Is it?

Do you know where the photograph below was taken? Answer in the next issue



Photographed by Jackie Ashworth within the Laggan Parish

Answer to last issue's photo:-

Kale yard at Crathie

Jill Warner



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

Pipe Major Chris Thomson

As told to Laggan Matters

To a whole generation of local pipers, Penguin biscuits will always be known as Pipers' Biscuits.

Like **Chris Thomson, Pipe Major of Badenoch and Strathspey Pipe Band and Schools Piping Tutor for Badenoch Strathspey and Inverness South**, they are all graduates of the famous Laggan School of Piping and learned their craft under the highly critical eyes and ears of the renowned Dr Mackay, either in the outbuildings at the old surgery at Creag a Bhile or latterly in his study in Newtonmore.

Prior to a rigorous session with the hardest of taskmasters, pupils were always relieved when Mrs Mackay appeared with a glass of milk/juice and a "pipers' biscuit", plus a kind word or two.



As a native of Laggan, Chris was initially taught by John MacDougall at Gergask Primary before going to Dr Mackay for additional lessons. He followed other Dr Mackay pupils into what was the Strathspey Royal British Legion pipe band, before joining the Glasgow and Strathclyde Universities Officer Training Corps band while studying aeronautics, perfecting the essentials of dress and discipline which he now shares with his pupils as they embark on their first public performances.

Still based in Glasgow, in the 90s, Chris began competing in Grade 2 with Strathearn and then Scottish Gas pipe bands, enjoying numerous trips abroad, before joining Strathclyde Police and becoming a member of their world famous Grade 1 Pipe Band in 1997. During his time with "the Polis", their international reputation saw the band invited to perform worldwide, from Jakarta to New York.

In 2001, Chris returned north with his young family, where they refurbished and ran hospitality businesses in Newtonmore for several years. But before even a single box had been unpacked, Pipe Major John Mackintosh had persuaded him to rejoin the local band. After their transition from RBL to the Badenoch and Strathspey Pipe Band, Chris was eventually convinced to relieve John as Pipe Major in 2009.



As PM Chris also manages the popular pipe band presence and hospitality at Newtonmore Highland Games, ensuring regular visits from other pipe bands to help entertain the crowds. He's been delighted to introduce the band to European piping culture, visiting Asturias in northern Spain, and manages a calendar of regular local performances and other engagements.

Alongside his band commitments, Chris has frequently travelled to the far east with his former bandmate, Spud The Piper, on promotional tours for whisky companies and still helps the busy Spud out with weddings and corporate gigs, where his ability to deliver an impressive full Address to the Haggis is a sought after part of his extensive repertoire.

In 2016, Chris became the local Schools Piping Tutor, teaching up to 100 pupils each week, from introducing the chanter in primary schools to coaching senior pupils through their SQA music exams. His working week starts in Drumnadrochit and he goes on to visit a further 12 schools, before the bell rings for the end of the day in Grantown Primary late on a Friday afternoon. Piping tuition even continued unbroken throughout the pandemic, conducted online instead from the kitchen table.

For the past couple of years, Chris has exercised his pipe major's privilege to play with two bands so keeps his hand in at the higher grades by competing in Grade 2 with Islay Kilchoman Pipe Band, whose geographically diverse members meet for monthly practices in Glasgow.

Through his role in local schools, and his extensive network in the pipe band world, Chris has been able to bring a strong youth development focus to the B&S Pipe Band, hoping to future proof the strong local piping heritage from which he benefited. He doesn't reward his pupils with Penguin biscuits but he does share stories of Dr Mackay to whom he says he owes his varied piping career and the worldwide musical experiences he's enjoyed as a graduate of the Laggan School of Piping.

Laggan Church

Alison Armstrong, Session Clerk

It will soon be three years since Rev. Catherine Buchan left, and we have finally been given permission by the Church of Scotland to call a new minister, which is good news. The process of electing a committee who will select the new minister has begun, and we will hopefully have someone in position by the summer.

Details regarding the sale of Laggan church will soon be available, but its important to remember that whilst the building will close, the church community remains active, and the new minister will have responsibility for Laggan and Newtonmore, linked with Kingussie.

As part of a major re- organisation of Church of Scotland administration, the small Presbytery of Abernethy which the church was part of, has been dissolved, and from 01/01/24 has been a member of the Presbytery of Highlands and Islands, which is slightly larger covering 40% of the land mass of Scotland and over 100 churches!

We all enjoyed singing carols in December followed by mulled wine, mince pies and Anne's delicious Cloutie Dumpling.



Laggan Helping Hands



We all enjoyed a delicious soup lunch in November and then the series of movie afternoons & evenings held in the church in November and December.



The jumble sale on the 10th February was a huge success and it was great to see everyone enjoying a blether too. We raised just over £371

We have added a 'Book Swap' and 'DVD Swap' section in the Food Share Shed ...

Thanks to everyone for coming along and supporting our events and we look forward to some more get togethers throughout 2024 ...

The money we raise supports:

- Laggan's Defibrillators
- Laggan Food Share Shed
- Community Lunches & Teas
- First Aid Training



The Helping Hands Team

The New Normal on Sunday's 17.00 - 18.00

Ian Hall



Your Host - Ian Hall

As things started to open up following COVID, I started running a Radio Programme for Speyside Radio. It's called **The New Normal** and explores life issues from a Christian Perspective. It goes on air on the **first Sunday of each month at 5pm.**

I chat to a range of people each week to check out what they think and feel about the week's topic.

The programme is a magazine one where chunks of chat are accompanied with all types of songs that relate to the topic being discussed. I've met many fascinating people during my time with **The New Normal** and I hope that you enjoy tuning in either on FM or the internet. If you have any comments or ideas for future programmes email me: ian@glentruim.com



107.1 FM Radio or www.speysound.com

Repeats: Tuesday 15.00, Thursday 13.00 & Saturday 02.00

the following week

The Laggan Dragon

Graham Grant

The Loch Laggan Inn was the only local hostelry c1960 when John Small was tenant.



Loch Laggan Inn



Above & right is the design of a beer label used at the time; one side has the Willow Pattern; the other has a verse with the location identified as "The Inn of the 69th Happiness". (VAT 69 whisky).

Loch Laggan Inn
THE DRAGON SONG

One for the road and here I go,
Heal to heel and toe to toe.
One for the road and here I go,
Home from the Inn at Laggan

Johnny's whisky was too strong.
Or I stayed there far too long
For at the corner of the brae
I me the Laggan Dragon.

Eyes a blazing, snorting fire,
Now I'm really in the mire.
Round back on my heels I go
Back to the Inn at Laggan.

Four double whisky down my
neck,
Out then on the road I go,
To fight the Laggan Dragon.

Breathing fumes of "69",
Brought the Dragon into line.
Now he's quite a pal of mine
Up in Kinlochlaggan

You'll often see me dancing there
For the dragon is no square.
Joins all the Ceilidh's we have
there
Joy! Is the Inn at Laggan.

INN OF THE 69th HAPPINESS



Bothy Bar 2022, now disused



"Peter Campbell, Barman, Bothy Bar.

What's On In Laggan March to July 2024

Laggan Community Council Monday 18th March

- Monday 18th March
- 6.30 pm Laggan Community Hall

Helping Hands Easter Tea Wednesday 20th March

- Wednesday 20th March
- 2.30pm to 4.00pm Laggan Community Hall



Quiz Night Saturday 23rd March

- Saturday 23rd March
- 7.00 for 7.30 Laggan Community Hall



Easter Services Maundy Thursday 28th March

- Thursday 28th March
- 7.30pm Newtonmore Church

Good Friday 29th March

- Friday 29th March
- 7.30pm Laggan Church

Easter Day Sunday 31st March

- Sunday 31st March
- 10.30 am Kingussie Church (Joint Service)



Laggan Community Council Monday 15th April

- Monday 15th April
- 12 noon to 1.30pm Laggan Community Hall

Helping Hands Soup Lunch Wednesday 17th April

- Wednesday 17th April
- 12.00 - 1.30pm Laggan Community Hall



Laggan Community Council Monday 20th May

- Monday 20th May
- 6.30pm Laggan Community Hall

Helping Hands Afternoon Tea Wednesday 22nd May

- Wednesday 22nd May.
- 2.30 - 4pm Laggan Community Hall



Laggan Community Council Monday 17th June (Possible AGM)

- Monday 17th June
- 6.30pm Laggan Community Hall



Are you part of a local group that has a project, event or activity that takes place in Laggan area that could benefit from additional funds?

If you are a constituted voluntary group, with a bank account you might be eligible for funds through the Stronelairg Community Fund.

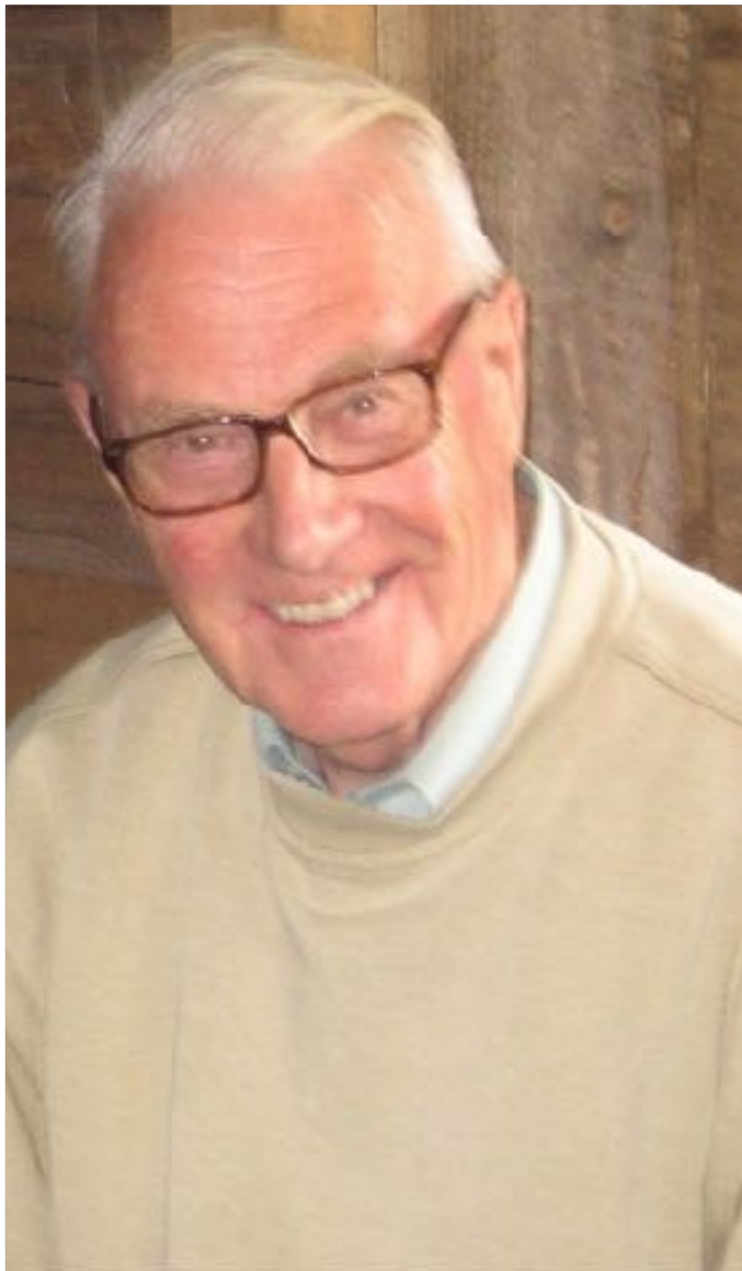
Main Grant and Large Funding - For applications from £1,001 up to £25,000.

Micro Grant Funding - For applications up to £500 (administered by Community Council)

Next grant deadline is **31st March 2024 for the Main and Large funds.**

To find out if your group is eligible to apply contact Carol Masheter, Community Investment Manager Tel: 01738 351576 or Mobile: 07721 443044 Email: carol.masheter@sse.com visit the website <https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/community-fund-locations/great-britain/stronelairg/>

Ian Macgillivray 25th January 1933 - 30th December 2023



Ian Macgillivray was born on Burns day 1933, an only child on Pitmain Farm, Kingussie, where his father was the tenant. He attended Kingussie School, where at that time there were pupils from the Western Isles. They were not allowed to speak their native Gaelic, and if they did they "got the belt".

After school Ian would help the crofter's boys, who had cattle down on "the Acres", to take them back up and when they got to the High Street, the cattle would split up and go their separate ways. Ian was a keen shinty player for Kingussie with the mottoes "Thou shalt not pass!!"

On leaving school he went to Aberdeen University and got a BSc in Agriculture and then to serve his two years National Service in the Army. He then spent two years at the Macauley Research Hill Farm at Sourhope, near Kelso. Both there and in the Army he was frustrated by the amount of free time that they had!!

In the year 1958, Ian with wife Joey, daughter of the Laggan Doctor, Kenneth Mackay and two children Elspeth and Donald, became Manager of Cluny Mains Farm. At that time as well as the 900 sheep with two shepherds there was also a herd of a well established pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle. Over and above his farming duties, he was responsible for the forestry operation with sawmill. The Sporting operation which included grouse and red and roe deer. was also under Ian's supervision. There was a sizeable market garden, which warranted a full time gardener and assistant through the growing season. It produced wonderful strawberries for the clipping! That followed after Ian's large dram, Joey's broth, mince and tatties and Margaret's girdle scones!

Campbell Slimon

Goats Galore!

Photos Jill Warner

The first of the spring kids have recently been born and can be seen both day and night on the main road between Laggan and Newtonmore. Take care...



Laggan Community Council

Karen Threw

Laggan Community Council have held 2 meetings since the election of the new committee and we will continue to meet on the 3rd Monday of the month at 6.30pm in the Laggan Community Hall. For dates see 'What's on in Laggan'.

Karen Threw is Chair with Amanda Gallagher Secretary and Cath Hamill as treasurer. Thanks to Jill Warner, the outgoing treasurer, who has continued to monitor the finances during the transition period. We still have vacancies for 3 more co-opted Councillors. Please get in touch if you are interested.

One of the jobs of the community council is to engage with and monitor planning applications which could have an impact on the Laggan community. The CC has already responded to several "big" consultations including Culachy windfarm and overhead cabling from Cloiche to Melgarve, and the Earba Pumped Storage scheme which we have been advised will be putting in a formal planning application very shortly. These will continue to be monitored to ensure community interests are represented.

On a lighter note, looking towards spring, the village amenities group will be mustering with a view to a park tidy up and village (and surrounding areas) litter pick. They will be looking for volunteers to get involved. Any dates to be notified on Facebook and other media.

In the same vein any suggestions for improvements that you would like to see in the village let us know and we will see what we can do.

As always agendas and minutes from our meetings can be found on the village notice board and at Laggan.com and if you need to contact us you can email: Chairlcc@laggan.com Secretarylcc@laggan.com

The Laggan Forest Trust

Spring 2024

Forest Management Planning

One of the Trust's key roles is to provide feedback to Forest Land Scotland, on behalf of the Community, on their management and activities that impact on the Forest estate in and around the Laggan Area. This should include both "Forestry" operations and "Visitor" Management. FLS are in the middle of consulting on their next 10 year Forest management plan. The first consultation session was held in November in the hall and was attended by around a dozen people. A second, and likely final, consultation session is expected in the Spring and will be advertised.

Much of the first consultation feedback from the community focussed on improving the forest paths network in and around Laggan with frustration expressed that felling activity over recent years had not resulted in any reinstatement of the "circular walking routes" enjoyed historically by the community and visitors alike.

The recent news from Scottish Government about substantial budgetary cutbacks to FLS funds in the coming financial year is concerning, but could be an opportunity for the community (and Trust) to explore more direct involvement in managing some of the present FLS assets in our area to the benefit of the community. With FLS becoming more centrally organised in recent years, the Trust has had little or no effective involvement and participation in managing the Forest for many years now.

Some immediate ideas are how the community could be able to secure better use of any of FLS's redundant assets along with opportunities for improving visitor management at the Wolftrax Car Park & Bike Trails. The board of the Trust have agreed to start its own long term planning and will look forward to having inputs from all members of the community in the coming months. If you have any comments or suggestions now on any aspect of FLS or LFT activities, please send us your comments to the Laggan Forest Trust office - support@lagganforest.com

The series of winter storms fortunately had little impact or wind blow damage in the area, but the rain, snow and frost have certainly curtailed any productive activity. The centre and toilets remained open when possible, although the café was closed and will remain so until into March with some work required on our water supply.

As Spring approaches, and from comments already received about the new Blue Trail, we expect the Easter holiday period to be a busy one. The last weekend of April will see a return of an Enduro Mountain Bike event to Laggan Wolftrax. The licence for this event was granted by FLS to the organiser and our own team is assisting in the very early planning of this event. Some volunteering and marshalling activities will be required. If interested to help, please contact the LFT office - 01528 544366 or business@lagganforest.com

The "Connecting Laggan" project

This project was initiated after the first Community Action Plan in 2019 and the same community priority was reinforced in the 2022 version. LFT had volunteered to progress this activity on behalf of the Community Council and we will be providing a verbal update during the next CC meeting on 19th February 2024 and will publish this on our website.

The project cannot progress without agreement from Transport Scotland regarding possible design and safety changes to the carriageway over the main Bridge over the Spey. This has been outstanding for over a year now, and the lack of response from TS continues to frustrate all involved. The project appears to fit well into the recently announced CNPA Horizon 2030 project to encourage "active travel" in the Park, so we will ensure early contact with CNPA to understand how this project could support Laggan.

A reminder of the present LFT Board Members - David Narro, Donald Cowan, Angus Armstrong and Michael Sharp are member directors with Megan Griffiths and Colin Morgan as Co-opted Directors. The trust expects to hold its AGM sometime in late May/early June and will always welcome any member of the community to participate.

On behalf of The Laggan Forest Trust

Laggan Community Housing Ltd Sheena Slimon, secretary

Improved water supply

The residents of Strathmashie are still waiting for an improved water supply as are Highland Council's Environmental Health Officers.

The LFT's Deed of Servitude is still not finalised, but with thanks to Cristian, the ground works for the new tank have progressed.

HighWater carrying out their due diligence noted that Ben Alder Estate owned part of the road that we regularly access but of course with the alterations/ additions required for bringing in a sizeable tank the estate had to be notified. Ben Alder's factor, Mignonne, (congratulations on her new position) has promised to get the necessary permission as soon as possible, but lawyers letters take time.

However Richard and Phil are doing their best to keep the project going ahead, but now the end date is likely to be March.

Picnic Site proposals

We are still waiting to hear if our pre-planning application is acceptable to SEPA, Roads Department & Scottish Water, but as Highland Council Planners have still to assess our application and cannot say when they will consider it, we might be waiting for some time.

Contact Information

Church of Scotland

Contact: marythompson835@icloud.com www.kingussielaggannewtonmorechurch.com

Telephone 01540 667226

Community Website

www.laggan.com

Laggan Community Council

Contact: info@laggan.com chaircc@laggan.com secretarylcc@laggan.com or
treasurerlcc@laggan.com

Laggan Community Hall

Contact: cathyslimon@hotmail.co.uk

Telephone 01528 544309

Laggan Community Housing Ltd

Contact: sheena.feithbuidhe@icloud.com

Telephone: 01528 544722

Laggan Forest Trust

Contact: business@lagganforest.com

www.lagganforest.com

Telephone: 01528 544366

Laggan Heritage

Contact: info@lagganheritage@gmail.com