

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'.

Welcome to our Winter edition of Laggan Matters. We have had lots to celebrate so far this year and are looking forward to more village activities to come ...

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 or amandagallagher17@yahoo.com



Laggan War Memorial



Richard Spencer laying the Laggan Community Wreath (in the shape of a cross).



Photos: Jill Warner

Remembrance Sunday 2022

Around 30 members of the Laggan community gathered at the Laggan War Memorial on Sunday 13th 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.



Words and above photo courtesy of Colin Morgan



Laggan, Newtonmore & Kingussie Churches

It was great to have our annual church and community picnic at Ardverikie beach in the summer after a 2 year absence, and to see so many people come along. It was windy but that kept the rain away!

Another happy occasion was a local wedding which saw the church full on a beautiful sunny day.

We hope to soon be able to advertise for a new minister, but in the meantime thanks to our locum minister Rev. Mary Ellen and help from members of the congregation we have been able to continue with regular services.

There will be a Watchnight Service on Christmas Eve, led by Ian Hall with lots of carol singing, hopefully there will be a good turnout for this happy event. Thank you for all your support.



**Kingussie linked with Laggan
and Newtonmore Services**

Christmas Eve

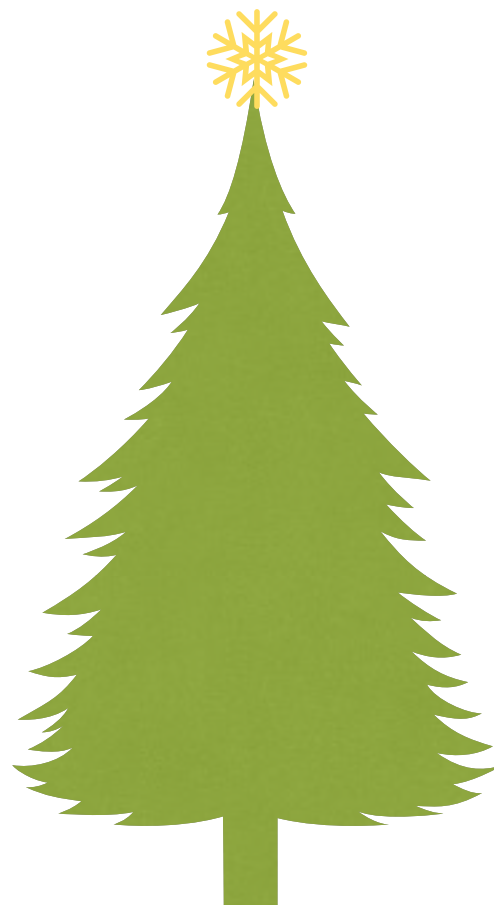
St Brides Newtonmore Church **7pm**

Kingussie Parish Church **11.15pm**

Laggan Church **11.00pm**

Christmas Day

Kingussie Parish Church **10.30am**



What's on December 2022

Laggan Community Council Monday 5th December

Community Council meeting

- Monday December 5th
- 6.30pm in Laggan Community Hall



Laggan Church Friday 9th December

Carols For Everyone. Come along and enjoy singing your favourite carols

- Friday 9th December
- 7pm in Laggan Church
- Refreshments provided



Aviemore McDonald's Cinema Sunday 18th December

Carol concert put on by local churches with a praise band

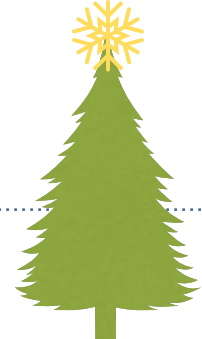
- Sunday 18th December
- 5.30pm McDonald's Cinema



St Brides Newtonmore Church Sunday 18th December

The Badenoch Chorale Carol Concert

- Sunday 18th December
- 7pm
- Newtonmore Church



Laggan Church Christmas Eve

Watch night Service

- Saturday 24th December
- 11pm
- Laggan Church



Helping Hands



Coffee Mornings @ Laggan Community Hall

It was great to see folk enjoying coffee and cakes at our October coffee morning. Our next get together will be on Thursday 19th January 12 to 2pm for a bowl of soup & roll and a traybake... we look forward to seeing you there.



Food Share Shed

This is proving to be very popular and very handy if you find you have run out of something when the shops are closed ...

Helping Hand volunteers continue to check it regularly and will remove any unsuitable food, but it will not be locked and people are free to use it whenever and as often as they like.

Hopefully this will be a happy way of doing something which is good for us and the planet.



Active Cairngorms eBike Project ... loans for local residents



We are delighted to be working with the Cairngorms Trust to set up members of the local community with long term eBike loans.

If you would like to try an eBike for 4-6 weeks, whether it's to try and use the car less or to help you recover from an illness or injury then we want to hear from you. We have a range of styles and sizes available and have availability open up for loans starting in December and January.

What are you waiting for? Get in touch to request an application form by visiting <https://cairngormstrust.org.uk/ace-bikes> to find out a little bit more information about the scheme. Don't be scared to get in touch.

Clipping and Birthday celebrations at Drumgask



There was a huge turn out for the annual clipping at Drumgask again this year and the day ended with a small gathering to celebrate John MacDonald's 80th birthday.



Photo's courtesy of Stephen Thomson

Articles Wanted ...

We've had requests for the following topics and would love to hear about these and any other interesting topics you are interested in. So if you'd like to write an article of about 400 words (with photos/pictures if possible) then please email them to jillvn@aol.com or amandagallagher17@yahoo.com

- ✦ History of the annual 'Clipping' in The Highlands
- ✦ Arts and craft ideas
- ✦ Birds and wildlife
- ✦ Former local 'hanging' sites!
- ✦ Car maintenance and safety tips
- ✦ Walks and cycle routes

Creag Meagaidh - October 2022

Rory Richardson

It has been a busy summer at Creag Meagaidh Nature Reserve, one of our busiest yet with visitors. This included the Spean Bridge Walking Club who received a guided walk from our expert staff, Scott.

We have installed new BBQs to improve facilities and reduce the risk of unsupervised fires. A number of the paths have been upgraded due to the increase in visitor numbers, including the Coire Adaire path where we have repaired large sections all the way up to the Lochan a' Chorie. This involved support from the Royal Marines, and necessitated the use of a helicopter to move 80 tonnes of material into place.

The natural tree regeneration programme continues at pace, with support from our volunteers including Adrain and Jenna. We are using the output from our tree nursery, with silver birch and scots pine grown from seed from the reserve. At the same time, we are preparing a site for a new heritage orchard development, which will include a wild flower meadow. We hope to offer the opportunity for visitors and the local community to sponsor a tree - watch this space!

Our highland cows that we use for conservation grazing are currently in the lower part of the reserve. Using cattle collars, which are welfare safe to keep control of their movements, will enable us to move them to higher ground next season. This will help other species to flourish. As it is, we have record number of black grouse in the reserve. There have been sightings of Golden eagles and two hen harrier nests.

Our Community Deer Stalking group continues, with 10 members visiting the reserve to continue training towards their qualifications. This group will contribute to our annual deer cull, which assists us in delivering our ambitions of protecting and restoring the nature



reserve. They will go out on Fridays and Saturdays, and be able to use the larder facilities to process venison to take home. Applications for the community stalking group is now closed for this year. Any interested individuals, keep an eye out for a potential new intake of stalkers for next year, after the initial trial period finishes.

The Rural Skills project with students from Kingussie High School continues most Thursdays. Recently they have been helping prepare for the new Orchard and learning plant identification skills.

Laggan Community Council – Colin Morgan Chair LCC

The Community Council initiated a revision of the Community's Action plan and welcomed the help of VABS (Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey) for this. The outcomes of the on-line survey were presented during drop-in sessions held in the Village Hall in November. Thanks to everyone who submitted their response and came to the feedback sessions.

There is a report elsewhere in this newsletter however, the revised priorities established and actions proposed, will be overseen by the Community Council going forward with some of our existing Community Groups, as well as other volunteers who stepped forward during the drop-in sessions.

Another key outcome will be a discussion with the SSE Community Investment team on these revised priorities and how the Community manages the future of the SSE Community Benefit funds allocated to the Laggan Community in future years. This is crucial as we need their agreement on how these funds are managed in future.

During the past few months, we experienced the disappointment of Gergask Primary school being mothballed for the present school session. We have received reassurances from the Education Team at Highland Council that parents of children wishing to attend Gergask primary will be consulted on their children's needs going forward. We have also asked to understand what the present guidelines are to allow the school to re-open.

Other matters raised included Road improvements along the A86 and A889 with Transport Scotland – the recent re-surfacing of the A86 Laggan to Newtonmore road at Creag Dhu created much commentary and concern – thanks to all who posted their comments on the LCC facebook page – they were “noticed” by BEAR with remedial action on-going.

We were however disappointed to learn that improvements to the A889 had been delayed (not cancelled) indefinitely for budgetary reasons and we will continue to press BEAR and Transport Scotland for a realistic time-line for widening the A889 in our area as well as a potential connection to the national cycling route N7.

For the A9, there is no update to Community Councils as yet on the timing of the dualling programme in our area, but following several fatalities in our area, improvements in road markings and junctions are promised at the Ralia/Newtonmore junction soon.

For Highland Council roads/pavements, our request for a 30mph limit in the village road, for clearance of vegetation on the village pavement and pothole repairs outside the public toilet were undertaken recently following intervention from our local Highland Councillor.

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

With the next Community Council elections not until November 2023, there are vacancies available for residents to be co-opted on to the CC until then. Please contact any member of

the community council if you are interested in supporting your community in this way. Dates for 2022/23 meetings will generally be on the 3rd Monday of each month at 1830 and details are posted to the www.laggan.com website and village notice board.

Where Is It?

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



Photographed by Jackie Ashworth within the Laggan Parish

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



Answer to last issue's photo:-

Crathie - alongTrack 19 Jill Warner

Jahama Highland Estate



Some of you may have noticed work being carried out on the upper Spey in September. This is our "Large wooded structure" project, which we've completed in partnership with the Spey Fisheries Board and the Spey Catchment initiative. Together we have installed 65 large, wooded structures from just above Garva Bridge all the way westwards to Melgarve. These tree structures will help mitigate against rising water temperatures by providing shade in deeper pools of water. They will also provide habitat for invertebrates and improved breeding areas for salmon. We will be increasing

our monitoring of the water system through surveys and temperature loggers; this will help us to gauge the success of the project moving forward. These upper river system works compliment our recent updating of the fish passage lighting within the Spey Dam, the planting of native woodlands further up the river towards Loch Spey and the more recent removal of silt from the Markie Burn area. All of these projects demonstrate our willingness and support of wanting to see improvements in the catchment of the upper river Spey.

Wooded structures in the upper river Spey (above photo)

Our plans for peatland restoration at Glenshero move on at a pace. To date we have restored over 120ha and have plans this autumn and winter season to restore a further 50ha. We are hoping that by improving the peatlands in this way we can enhance how much water they store and then slowly release into the wider catchment area. Our wader scrapes put in by Bruce our Head stalker and his team earlier in the year have also proven to be successful and we are starting to see a number of waders use the sites on a regular basis.

Waders in new scrapes at Glenshero



View of the fish passage in the Spey Dam, prior to improvements in lighting to allow for improved salmon passage



Local JHE Ranger Angus Todd hard at it , clearing path drains



The South of Scotland Golden Eagle project has been shortlisted for a top award by the Heritage Lottery fund. We're very pleased to hear of this recognition of the project's success given that a number of the principal Golden Eagles were translocated from Glenshero to the project, based in and around the Moffat area. So successful has this project been that Moffat is now capitalising on the 'green tourism' linked to the re-introduction of the birds and it has hosted its own Golden Eagle Festival for the last two years which has attracted many visitors and tourists alike both creating and supporting local

jobs. The attached image is of 'Edward' from Glenshero, one of the most successful of the translocated Golden Eagles within the SoSGE project.

Edward, a successful Golden Eagle translocation from Glenshero to the Scottish borders

Our summer seasonal rangers for the 2022 season have just completed their time with us. Part funded by Naturescot, we were successful in employing at Glenshero a local man, Angus Todd, as our local ranger and he has done a fantastic job. Angus created a regular patrol route throughout Glenshero and has regularly cleaned out the old bothy buildings, removed fire pits and picked up a huge amount of waste and general rubbish and litter. In addition to keeping the Glen clean he has also engaged with the CNPA rangers, many visitors in camper vans and has been out advising hill walkers in regard to our Stag operations. Angus has also been a regular part of our engagement with the Spey Fisheries Board in relation to the large, wooded structures project mentioned earlier. We wish him and his partner Molly, all the best for the future.

Finally, our thanks go to Angus on the estate. He has been hard at work creating an amazing range and number of bird and bat boxes as well as some fabulous traditional flower holders. The range of and number of mammal and bird boxes across the landholding at Glenshero is now very extensive. We are seeing a number of bird species doing well, given our improved habitat provision.



Our bird and bat box productionline at Glenshero



New plant tubs built by Angus at the Glenshero yard and installed at Sherramore Lodge

Jonathan Hart

Vet Talk

Winter Poisons

Trevor Warner MRCVS

Winter time can present with many potential poisons/toxins for dogs and cats so here is the article again.

If your pet does ingest any of the following, always contact your vet as soon as possible for advice as often action is needed in the first few hours. However, the best advice, is to try and avoid your pet(s) coming into contact with them in the first place ...

- **Antifreeze:** Some pets are attracted to the sweet smell and taste. Antifreeze is very toxic if ingested and can cause fatal kidney failure.
- **Rodent Poisons:** In winter people tend to have more problems with mice and rats and therefore more rodent poisons tend to be used. There are many types, but all will cause severe effects if ingested.
- **Ice melt products:** Most of these products contain salt (sodium chloride) and small exposures typically lead to stomach upset and paw pad irritation., Large ingestions can result in salt poisoning which is potentially dangerous.\
- **Plants:** There are many popular winter plants and flowers that can cause serious symptoms ingested by dogs and cats. These include:
 - Holly and mistletoe including their berries
 - Christmas cactus
 - Poinsettias
 - Amaryllis
 - Japanese Yew (used in flower arrangements).
 - Lilies - certain lilies are very toxic to cats (can cause kidney failure) and even contact with the pollen can cause effects.
- **Grapes/raisins/currants:** Ingestion can result in acute kidney damage. The mechanism of action is unknown and not all dogs are affected BUT ingestion in all dogs should be avoided.
- **Onions:** All types of onions (fried, diced, raw, powdered) are very toxic to dogs and ingestion can result in severe anaemia.
- **Chocolate and Cocoa:** Chocolate contains theobromine and caffeine, which in sufficient levels can cause severe and sometimes fatal effects. Dark chocolate, baking chocolate and cocoa powder have the highest concentration of these toxic substances.
- **Sugar gums and candies:** These contain a sweetener called xylitol that can lead to a life threatening drop in blood sugar levels in dogs.
- **Human medications:** During the winter months people often suffer from colds and flu and it is important not to leave medications in reach of pets as many can be very harmful if ingested e.g. Ibuprofen, aspirin and paracetamol.



Laggan Forest Trust - Winter 2022

At the Wolfrax centre, the past few months has seen installation of new visitor interpretation panels for the Laggan area and an increase in the capacity of the centre to allow meetings to be held. Some audio-visual equipment has been donated and we were also very pleased to receive one of the new Automatic Emergency Defibrillators acquired by the Laggan Helping Hands team on behalf of the community.

Felling Plans from FLS for the coming winter are going ahead as previously advised and likely to start in December meaning that the popular walking Squirrel trail near the Centre is likely to be closed indefinitely. At present FLS have not indicated any alternative walking trails or what plans there will be for this area in future. Clearance work is also needed on the Blackwood to Feagour trail path but a temporary diversion has been made to open this route to the Pattack Falls. Please note also that the viewing platform at the Lower Pattack falls has been removed by FLS as being unsafe and extra care is required at this location by everyone visiting. We await details of any further FLS' felling plans in 2023/24.

The "Connecting Laggan" project undertook a community consultation event in late August. The phase 1 project now awaits some guidance and approval from Transport Scotland for potential route crossings over the A889 and A86 before any additional work can be done.

However, a very significant project, in collaboration with FLS, and with support from CNPA, Sport Scotland and HIE, is the building of an additional mountain bike trail at the Laggan Wolfrax Centre to complement the existing trails, some now nearly 20 years old. During November, the Trust was advised of a financial grant from Sport Scotland to part fund the construction of a new BLUE grade mountain bike trail, as one of the legacy projects to increase participation in cycling in Scotland following the World UCI championships being held in Scotland in August 2023. Details of this were recently published in local and national press.

As part of the project, the Trust will also be running a Cycling Participation Programme with 4 local primary schools: Alvie, Kingussie, Newtonmore, and Gergask (when re-opened), aimed at introducing the children to off-road cycling and developing the necessary cycling skills for them to become competent riders.

The additional trail is expected to be a very welcome addition to the trail network. A planning application is in due process and all being well with both weather and additional fund raising, the new trail will be constructed during the Spring of 2023 on the hillside to the east and south of the present EE emergency telephone mast, with a hub connecting all the upper trails to provide great views of the surrounding hills. It is expected that the new trail will be open for next summer. Plans and maps will be on display in the Laggan Wolfrax Centre, which will remain open in the winter months except during periods of staff holidays. Please follow the Laggan Wolfrax Café's Facebook page to find out winter opening times.

The charity's most recent report and accounts can be found at the LFT website www.lagganforest.com

- [Colin Morgan, Chair LFT](#)

Hot Apple Punch

Amanda Gallagher

Ingredients:

- 750mls cider
- 250mls apple and cinnamon tea
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 apple
- 1tbsp brown sugar

Make 250mls of tea with 2 apple and cinnamon teabags and leave for 10 mins.

Meanwhile gently heat cider (or apple juice for a non alcoholic version) with a cinnamon stick, thinly sliced apple and a tbsp of brown sugar.

Add the tea to the cider and serve.

Great to put in a flask for winter walks or after a cold swim or cycle!



Amazing Season for Badenoch Shinty



The Grand Slam winning Kingussie team has 3 Laggan players pictured ... The captain Savio Genini (centre) who lives at Blaragie, James Falconer from Fuaran Bham (left) and Callum Grant from Gaskbeg.

Not to be outdone, the Baddenoch Ladies also won the Grand Slam with strong Laggan connections ... Ellie Miller and Kirsty Grant (right) who both went to Gergask Primary School.

Well done to all involved.



Lucy Grant

Badenoch Shinty Memories Group



There is a small tree plantation in the village (opposite the Food Shed) which was introduced by the BSM group in conjunction with the Cairngorm Trust, to commemorate the Covid 19 Pandemic and those bereaved families who lost loved ones during 2020/22.



2022 Laggan Community Action Plan – looking forward to 2030

Karen Derrick VABS

In autumn 2022, Laggan Community Council, together with The Laggan Forest Trust, Laggan Community Housing Ltd, Laggan Community Hall and Laggan Heritage, decided to carry out a review of the community action plan for the village, previously undertaken in 2019. The purpose of revisiting and updating the plan was primarily aimed at giving these key community organisations, along with a range of other groups in the village, plus public and private sector stakeholders, a strong mandate to move forward with tackling current and emerging issues, as well as leading on new community projects as identified by Laggan residents and businesses.

Why did we do this survey so soon after our 2019 community priorities were established and with some of the projects from 2019 yet to complete? 3 main reasons: seismic shocks on our way of life from COVID, recent impacts from severe weather incidents and a war in Ukraine with global and local economic impact.

The backdrop to the survey was also influenced by the recent mothballed closure of your local primary school due to falling school roll numbers for the present academic session 22-23 and a strong community desire to have the school re-opened. What the criteria is for re-opening is presently unclear.

So with all that, it was very likely that the priorities from residents and businesses would have changed since 2019 – both personal and also as a community. We are also in the fortunate position to receive some Community Benefit funds from SSE as a result of the Stronelairg Wind Farm development “up the valley”. Access to that fund and how it is used for future community sustainability is an essential component for any discussions with SSE in the future, as well as how the fund is managed in future. The survey outcomes will underpin a way forward by providing the appropriate mandate.

With support from Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey, the community-led steering group, comprising representatives from our local organisations, sought the views of local residents and businesses on a number of key questions. This was achieved via a survey which was personally delivered to every household by volunteers – as a paper copy and was also accessible online.

The survey questions asked were:

- 1) What do you like about living in Laggan? Lots of very positive responses to this question ranging from being
 - “a beautiful place – with ever changing landscape, ever changing seasons, astonishing views”
 - “friendly people, sense of belonging, small community feel”
 - great local facilities – Medical GP Practice, various Coffee Stops, Wolftrax as well as rich local Heritage and History to explore.

- 2) What changes would you like to see by 2030 - the themes to emerge were around
- Being Socially Connected;
 - Being Climate Conscious; and
 - Being Economically Thriving but
 - with some very significant "infrastructure" issues needing much collaboration and support from various public sector agencies outwith the community but impacting on the community - e.g. school, housing, waste disposal, roads, local transport connections.

So thank you to the 87 residents and householders in the Laggan area who contributed so meaningfully to this Community survey - approx. 25% of the Laggan parish wide community population - and to the 35 or so people who attended the drop-in sessions to see the initial summary outcomes, have discussions and make more detailed comments on "stickies". As ever, Laggan's tray bakes were delicious!!

It will take a bit more time to summarise all the additional comments and draw final conclusions. The "posters", as displayed at the Drop-in sessions, can now be seen on the "home" page in the Laggan community website on <https://www.laggan.com/index.asp> under 2022 Community Action Plan survey outcomes.

Some highlights and themes are published below.

To be A Socially Connected Community e.g.

- Sustainable and resilient community spaces delivering for community needs
- Sustainable (any) Public Transport provision
- Affordable places to live

To be A Climate Conscious Community e.g.

- More Active travel (walking and cycling paths) throughout area
- Public Toilets - retain and enhance for visitors
- Energy efficient housing help
- Village visual appearance

To be An Economically Thriving Community e.g.

- Attract Tourism and business to local area.
- Develop strategy for local jobs and businesses e.g. "promote" Laggan; provide small business units; a local wood fuel business.

Next Steps:

- VABS will facilitate a meeting of the local sub-committee to finalise and agree the priorities as well as assign which group can take the lead role in moving forward any particular Project.
- We also intend to meet with SSE early in the new year to both share the Community's declared priorities - your mandate - and discuss future management of the SSE Community Benefit Funds.
- The [Laggan Community Action Plan: Looking to 2030](#) will be available to view and download on the Laggan community website by the end of December.

Contacts Information

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