



Dear fellow residents,

It's all about money, isn't it? These last few days we have been faced with the prospect of rising fuel costs. Meeting these rising costs can be a daunting prospect, particularly for those on low incomes and pensions. As a consequence many will, no doubt, have to make savings elsewhere in their household budgets. And just as we attempt to identify savings, along comes Christmas and suddenly money becomes the top priority.

I was calculating the cost of Christmas the other day. Having just purchased our Christmas cards I then worked out the postage costs. It came to quite a tidy sum. In fact I began to realise that the cost was greater than what I spent on presents, cards and postage when I was twenty one. What a memory! For a variety of reasons I can remember some of the presents I gave that year. They include a dressing gown, four crystal glasses and a couple of records. Along with a handful of other gifts my total outlay was less than the bill for cards and postage this year. Now there's food for thought!

In recent years I have put together a 'wish list' for Christmas in an effort to avoid receiving gifts that I really do not need. You know the sort of thing I mean. The gift that ends up being recycled, donated to the local raffle or handed in to the charity shop. Much better, I think, to be honest and say there are things I would rather receive. Although this may seem calculating I would have to say that my 'wish list' usually is far less costly than what I do receive.

These last few months the hall committee has been putting together its 'wish list'. Among the items we have considered are the installation of a renewable energy system, upgrading the kitchen, replacing the hall floor and a new entrance to the hall. Although the list is small we are only too aware that the costs are considerable. Perhaps it's more of a 'dream list than a 'wish list'.

As we consider these initiatives we shall be looking at ways of raising money; hoping to come up with a programme that would help make at least one of these proposals possible. If we are to succeed we shall have to be innovative and hopefully be able to access grant aid. Whatever our decisions may be, we realise that we can achieve nothing without the support of the local community. The hall was built to provide a facility for the local community and its people. That continues to be its function and is the abiding aim of the committee.

However, that's enough of my ramblings! May I take this opportunity of wishing you all a happy festive season on behalf of the Hall Management Committee.

Alistair McRobb
Hall chairman



The Midmar Players are hard at work on their next production. **'Aladdin'** will be coming to Midmar in March 2014.

Once again we have a cast of almost 30 people with an age range of 7 – 70! Rehearsals began in October and will continue twice per week until show time! Not only do we have a great script, but also some wonderfully written musical numbers to keep your toes tapping. From Dire Straits to Shirley Bassey, who could ask for more!!!

The show dates for next year are as follows:

Thursday 6th March at 7.30pm

Friday 7th March at 7.30pm

Saturday 8th March at 2.00pm and 7.00pm

With characters such as Widow Twanky, Wishy Washy, Princess Yasmin and, of course, Aladdin accompanied by the Sultan and Sultana of Bling together with not only one, but two genie's! This will, once again, be a fantastically entertaining production by our local writers Phyllis Baird, John Kearns, Sarah Kearns and Mairi Roper. Get your tickets from Jenny Begg (01330 833474) in the New Year. Look forward to seeing you there!



Garioch Blend a hit....again!

On 20th October 2013 a packed hall enjoyed entertainment from Garioch Blend, Robert Lovie and Eddie Rose.

As they say "Laughter is the best Medicine" we certainly had bucket loads!!!!

We were very much indebted to various local businesses who kindly donated excellent prizes for the raffle.

Nearly £1000.00 was raised and will be used for hall maintenance and improvements which is always ongoing.

Thanks to Pamela, Mairi, Judy, Colin, Kerry and Marion for their valued help beforehand and on the day.

Date for your 2014 diary 19th October, same time, same place!!!

Bert and Isabel Birse

Treehouse open day invitation 1st December 12pm— 4pm

The new company who has bought 'The Millers' - **Treehouse**, is having an open day for all the people of Midmar and the surrounding area to take a look at what they have done so far and share a glass of fizz and a mince pie. Why not pop along and see the new Christmas collection.

Midmar Piano Fund Presents

Music in Midmar



A Concert with
Victor Kapoor Hazel Ibbetson
Jonathan Wilson Denys Wheatley
& Jean Fletcher

Saturday 30th November, 7:30pm
Midmar Hall

Tickets £12, £6 U16 & OAP, U12 free
from www.ticketsource.co.uk/midmarhall
or contact 01330 833910

All proceeds to the Midmar Piano Fund

Midmar Under 5's



Goodbye to Sheila

Sheila Macaulay is leaving Midmar Under Fives after 10 years service to the group to move onto pastures new. Sheila has been working at playgroup and more recently at Rising Fives as well.

The children all love her and we will all miss her very much.

We wish her well in her new job, and thank her for her many years of service to our pre school children.



Craft Fair

The Craft fair was a huge success again this year, thanks to the hard work of everyone involved, but mostly thanks to Louise Hunter for organising the whole thing.



Midmar Gardening Group sets a new agenda!

At the AGM in November the members decided a new name and focus seemed appropriate.

Over the last few years we have added to our garden visits and talks- visits to woodland areas with talks about the animals, insects and plants in their natural habitat.

We feel we would like to explore this area further.

Brainstorming for a new name came up with some real howlers-"Midmar Muddy Booters"-"Midmar Woodland Wanderers" BUT we are open to suggestions!

Meetings in 2014 will be seasonal rather than monthly, with some meetings(e.g garden open days) on a Saturday for those who have other commitments during the week.

Our 2014 programme will appear in the next Newsletter. We hope to see some new faces. All ages are most welcome.

secretary for 2014- Ruth McRobb tel 01330 833715



Midmar Players - Costume & Jewellery Request

It's Panto time again and rehearsals have begun for the 2014 production. The "costume ladies" have a request. - we need your help once again. Can you off load some of your costume jewellery namely necklaces and bangles and very brightly jewelled brooches? We are also looking for "floaty" material and brightly coloured scarves. If so, can you give them to Liz Cook, Ruth McRobb, Meryl Mair or any member of the cast. Thanks in anticipation.

Midmar S.W.R.I.

Midmar W I commenced their new session in August with an evening visit to Raemoir Garden Centre. Elliot Mair gave an interesting and informative talk on plants and all the latest gadgets. a beautiful 'FLY' was served and very happy members wended their way homewards. September saw our 'OPEN EVENING' which was very well attended by other institutes. The theme was flower arranging by Mr R.Reid of Torphins and everyone agreed the evening was most enjoyable.

October saw a visit from Laura Downie from Kemnay talking about her career in Welding. From her early teens Laura wanted to weld and by sheer grit and determination is now at the top of the ladder having appeared on TV and travelling to Ireland to help in the re-construction of the Titanic. Our meeting in November is to be a demonstration of cake icing by Miss Jenny Laing and this is followed in December by a Christmas lunch at the Grant Arms in Monymusk. January 8th 2014 sees a talk by Judith Stokoe on her career in Banking and this is followed by a 'Taste and Try' evening on the 12th of February. Everyone is very welcome to attend any of these meetings. The W.I. normally meet on the 2nd Wednesday in each month in the Village hall and further information can be obtained from either Judith Stokoe Tel:01330 833719 or Michelle Paterson 01330 833490.

Cluny, Midmar and Monymusk Community Council.

The Community Council meet 10 times each year and the venues and dates are displayed on the notice board at Midmar Village Hall.

Everyone is welcome to attend meetings and to raise any queries or problems with local issues.

Midmar Community Councillors are Richard Fyffe tel: 01330 833213 and Judith Stokoe 01330 833719.

Midmar Ukulele Consort (MUC)



The Midmar Ukulele Consort (MUC) is now up and running.

We typically meet twice a month on

Wednesday evenings to rehearse a fairly eclectic repertoire.

No previous ukulele (or indeed musical) experience is required.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a MUC Plucker then email either John Kearns

(kearns@btinternet.com or Phyllis Baird) for further information.





MIDMAR SHEET MOVIES

ARE PROUD TO PRESENT...

A CHANGE OF TACK!

NO! THAT'S NOT THE TITLE OF THE FILM...

UP TO NOW WE HAVE BEEN SHOWING FILMS USING A SINGLE TITLE SCREENING LICENCE, THE COST OF SUCH A LICENCE IS AROUND £100 PER FILM. THIS ENABLES US TO ADVERTISE & CHARGE AN ENTRY FEE TO THE FILM WHICH WE HAVE NEEDED TO DO TO COVER OUR COSTS.

HOWEVER, IN LINE WITH OTHER LOCAL HALLS, MIDMAR HALL HAS NOW PURCHASED AN ANNUAL LICENCE WHICH ENABLES PUBLIC BUILDINGS TO SHOW FILMS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR FOR A ONE OFF FEE. TO FULFIL THE TERMS OF THIS LICENCE MIDMAR SHEET MOVIES IS NOT ALLOWED TO ADVERTISE ANY FORTHCOMING FILMS OR CHARGE AN ENTRY FEE. DONATIONS WILL BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED AND PUT TOWARDS OUR RUNNING COSTS AND THE PURCHASE OF EQUIPMENT WHICH CURRENTLY IS BEGGED OR BORROWED FOR EACH SHOW.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT WE HAVE PLANNED PLEASE COULD YOU FORWARD AN EMAIL ADDRESS TO :

MIDMARSHEETMOVIES@GMAIL.COM

TO BE INCLUDED IN A CIRCULATION LIST AND TO PASS ON ANY REQUESTS YOU MAY HAVE.

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!

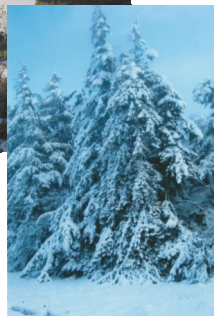
MIDMAR HALL

DOORS OPEN 20 MINUTES PRIOR TO PERFORMANCE

REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

Cover Winner

Congratulations to Pim Young for sending in the winning cover picture taken by her late husband Tony.



There were so many great winter photos sent in that it was a shame not to share some of them. From top left, Rob Ferguson, Fiona Shearer, Fiona Shearer, Anne Taylor, Shona Bain, Isabel Birse, Rob Ferguson and Marion Brown. Thank you to everyone who sent in a photograph.



Little Princess Trust

A charity to provide real hair wigs for children suffering hair loss

A massive thank you to all my family, friends and supporters in our community who have helped me raise awareness for The Little Princess Trust. Over the last two weeks you have raised a phenomenal £780 to see me chop all my hair off to donate the locks towards the making of human hair wigs for little boys and girls who have lost their hair. Each wig cost £350, so we have done ourselves proud folks! Many people have said 'you're very brave' my reply is simple...'I'm not as brave as the children I donate my hair for...'



If you would like to donate -google 'just giving' then click on the 'giving' section then click 'give to a fundraiser', type in Louise Hunter in the 'find a friend' search box and we are under Louise's Little Princess Trust.

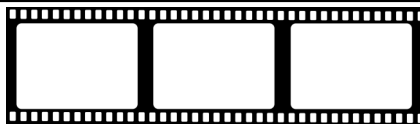
Midmar's puppy pals

Below is wee Libby, she is a Hungarian Vizsla and is pictured with her mum Doris and there's Wallace in the basket too. She lives in Glenwood Cottages.



Above is Milo. He is an 11 week old chocolate brown and white Border collie from Fife. He's lived with the Munro's for 3 weeks.

PSSST!!
Guess what I've
heard....



For those of you who enjoy going to the movies we have heard that Midmar Sheet Movies will be showing the following films:

On Saturday 25 January
at 8 pm

A Clint Eastwood Classic
of Ian Humberstone's



On Sunday 23 February
at 10.30 am

Refreshments supplied
by the Brownies



On Saturday 29 March
at 8 pm

(singalong expected,
costume encouraged)



Yoga Classes

Thursday 31 October

7.30 – 8.45

Echt Hall

£6 per class (for 6 weeks)

Contact Hazel Connolly 01330 833455

hazel.connolly@btinternet.com

Private lessons also given



Clachan Yell



Midmar Hall - 14th March 2014

Midmar Under Fives have organised the fantastic ceilidh band Clachan Yell to play at Midmar Hall as a fundraiser for the group.

There will be a bar and stovies.

Tickets will be on sale at the end of January through the Under Fives Group, details to be confirmed.

Please save the date in your diary for what will be a great fun night, and look out for ticket sales advertised around the village and on Facebook as they are sure to go very fast.

Burns Supper

Saturday 18th January



There will be a host of local talent taking part in this most traditional Scottish evening.

Musical Entertainment by:
Jonathan Wilson and some members of Midmar Melisma Choir along with
some pupils from Midmar Primary School

Your host for the evening will be Alistair McRobb with local speakers
and our own 'resident' piper, Ally Black

Menu
Haggis, Neaps and Tatties
Trifle
Coffee and Shortbread
(vegetarian option - available by pre-order only)



Tickets £12(to include toast drink) Amanda 01330 833543

Midmar School News

Extension Update

The School extension is now nearing completion. We hope to have it operational by Christmas. The extension comprises; a Reception Area, Office, Staffroom, Store, Disabled Toilet and Waiting Area. The 'old staffroom' will become the Head Teacher's Office and meeting room.

Caretaker Vacancy

We are trying to recruit a caretaker for the school. The position would include opening and closing the school during lets and gritting during ice and snow. If you are interested, please contact Midmar School 01330 833244 for more details.

Dates for your Diary

Friday 29.11.13

Family Ceilidh, Midmar Hall,
7.00pm

Monday 9.12.13

Concert, Midmar Hall,
6.30pm

Saturday 1.2.14

Winter Warmer Coffee
Morning – Midmar School,
10.00 – 12.00

Friday 7.2.14

Fair Trade Community
Café, Midmar Hall 10.00 –
12.00

Saturday 22.3.14

Jubilee Open Day – Midmar
School, 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Jubilee Celebrations

Due to the ongoing building work in school the School Open Day has been postponed until **Saturday 22 March 2014**. More details will follow. On this day the School will be open for present and past pupils and members of the community to come together and celebrate Midmar School's history.

Children in Need 2013

Children in Pupil Council organised this year's events. The theme was 'Bright and Spotty'. Children took part in a Treasure Hunt to find the Golden Pudsey, Guess Pudsey's birthday and a raffle. Winners of Guess Pudsey's birthday were Scott and Leona Ross.



Scott and Leona



Ewan Davies

Judo

Last term all children enjoyed four coaching sessions, which were organised by our Active Schools co-ordinator. Children in Primary 3-7 then took part in a Judo Festival at Dunecht School.

Fruit and Veg. Challenge

Health Group organised a 'Fruit and Veg. Challenge' to encourage children to taste and try more fruit and vegetables. Children dressed up as fruit and veg. and took part in a fruit and veg. tasting session.



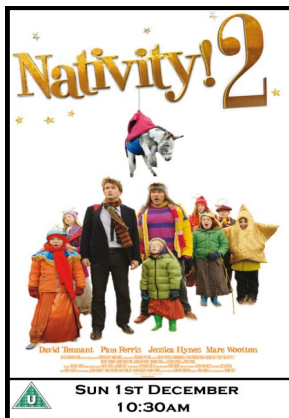
Members of Health
Group



Midmar events at

Classical Concert 30th Nov 7.30pm

Contact Jonathan Wilson
833910 for tickets



School Xmas Concert 9th December 6.30pm

**Boxing Day Village
Walk 10 am
See 'Walk up an
Appetite' for more
details**

Hogmanay Community Party 7.30pm til 2ish Midmar Hall

Day	Activity	Location
Monday	Rising 5's (for our pre-school children)	Midmar School
	Book Club (Last Monday of the month)	Various
Tuesday	Playgroup	Village Hall
	Toddlers	Village Hall
	After School Club	Midmar School
	Upholstery Classes	The Little
	Bowling (October through to March)	Village Hall
Wednesday	After School Club	Midmar School
	Brownies	Village Hall
	SWRI (2nd Wednesday of the month)	Village Hall
	Gardening Club (1st Wed of the month)	Village Hall
	Whist (4th Wednesday of the month)	Millbank Bowling Club Hut
	Playgroup & Toddlers	Village Hall
	Toddlers	Village Hall
Thursday	Mobile Library (fortnightly)	Hall car park
	Upholstery Classes	The Little
	After School Club	Midmar School
Friday	Community Cafe (1st Friday of the month)	Village Hall
	Sewing Classes	The Little


You can find more information on our
website at Midmarhall.com

**29th March 2017
8pm
Sing-along- a**


at a glance

**School Jubilee Open day
22nd March 2014**

Location	Time	Further Information
School	10am -12pm	Barbara Harrison 860421
	8pm -10pm	Alistair McRobb 833715
Mill	9.30am -11.30am	Pamela Black 833682
Mill	9.30am -11.30am	Laura Wade 833810
School	3.15pm - 6pm	MASC - 07503 670 454
Byre	7pm - 9pm	Kay Hourston 833515
Mill	7.15pm - 9.15pm	Alan Blackie 833482
School	3.15pm - 6pm	MASC - 07503 670 454
Mill	6pm -7.30pm	Colleen Moir 833680
Mill	7.30pm -9.30pm	Judith Stokoe 833719
Mill	7.30pm	Phyllis Baird 833586
bowling	7.30pm -10pm	Isabel Birse 833209 First whist 22nd Jan 2014
Mill	9.30am -11.30am	Pamela Black 833682
Mill	9.30am -11.30am	Laura Wade 833810
Park	9.45am - 10am	
Byre	10.30am-12.30pm & 1pm - 3pm	Kay Hourston 833515
School	3.15pm - 6pm	MASC - 07503 670 454
Mill	10am - 12pm	Next date 6th Dec
Byre	10am – 12pm	Kay Hourston 833515



**Burns
Supper
18th Jan
Midmar
Hall 7pm**



**Clint Eastwood Classic
25th January 2014, 8pm**



epic
Blue Sky
in 3D

23rd Feb 10:30am

**Midmar Players present
Alladin**



**6th, 7th & 8th
March 2014**

**Clachan
Yell**



14th March 2014

4

MAMMA MIA!

Celebrate Hogmanay as a community

Midmar 2013 Hogmanay Community Party

Date – Tuesday 31st December 2013

Venue – Midmar Hall

Time – 7.30pm – 2am'ish

Bring your children!

Bring your own bottle!

Bring your own snacks!

Adult Ticket £5

Primary School Children and under £2

All profits go to Midmar Hall

For more information and tickets please call

Mhairi Morriss 01330 833909 / 07802 568855

5111.com

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Year

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01330 833461 

Sponsor the newsletter

If you would like to sponsor the
newsletter prices are:

£10 for a business card size

£30 for a half page

£40 for a whole page in B&W

£60 for a whole page in colour

Please email Amanda at:

Midmar.newsletter@hotmail.co.uk

Echt Bowling Club

The Bowling Club who meet in Echt Hall play on Tuesday evenings (7pm start) operates from September to March. The Club are seeking adult players who do not need to be experienced welcoming beginners who would like to try something new. Membership has been decreasing and the Club may need to consider ending if new members can not be found.

The Club seeks interested male or female bowlers and wishes to convey that bowling is certainly not necessarily for retired persons and please don't worry about 'needing the gear' to get started, this is not a requirement straight away.

George Glennie welcomes any enquiries by telephone 860597 or glennieg@rocketmail.com and by all means even if you want to come along on a Tuesday to see what it is all about, you will be made most welcome.

Walk up an Appetite (10)

I have to admit my last two walks around and across Hill of Fayre have been pretty strenuous so for this winter edition I thought it better to suggest something easier around Midmar and Comers. For those of us who will be home during the festive season it is, I hope, ideal for all the family to get out and work off some of the inevitable excess.

Anyone who would like to do this walk on Boxing Day, starting at about 10:00 am please let me know, we can arrange to meet up either at the hall car park or (to save people getting in cars) along the route as we go around!

In preparation of this article I also want to acknowledge the input from Richard Fyffe and John Esslemont (landowner and tenant). I spoke to them in advance of scouting out the landmarks and they have asked me to remind everyone that at the same time as being a wonderful landscape which we all can enjoy we must also be individually responsible for our behaviour and treat it with the respect it deserves.

In the first part of the walk there will almost certainly be sheep in the field and game birds in the woods so dogs should be kept strictly under control. Half way round, in the rough grazing field before Comers, there may be cattle and if they have calves, can be dangerous, for those who are not aware, the safest thing to do in this case is not to have dogs on a lead, your dog can easily evade an angry cow by itself and you should avoid attracting their attention!

This route is easy to do in about 1.5 hours, it is less than 3 miles over easy ground, metaled road and paths so given the season, just dress for the conditions on the day.

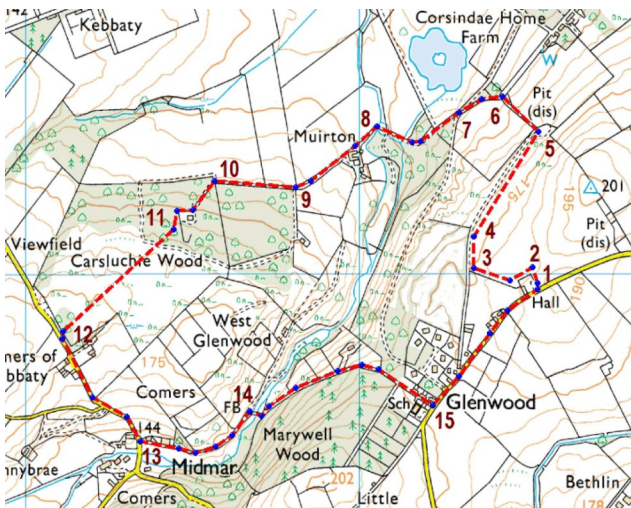
1) To start, head left (NE) out of Midmar Hall car park and then turn immediately through the metal gate to enter the grazing field by the car park.

2) In the field, keep the hall car park and fence on your left to pick up the rough track that first heads NW along the boundary of open ground, this is soon to be new houses.

3) Follow the fence line to turn right (NNE).

You will have lovely views over the valley towards the Grampian Hills and Bennachie in the distance.

4) Pass the stile on your left, continuing NNE.



- 5) After about quarter of a mile you will reach a wooden gate and a disused sand pit. Turn left (NW) through the wooden gate to walk down slope along a grassy avenue known as "Green Lane". The gate to enter "Green Lane" is easy to open but is not strong so please do not climb over it.
- 6) As the slope starts to level out pass through another wooden gate and turn left (SW) on to a well formed track, walking down slope.
- 7) You will reach an intersection, you should continue straight ahead to follow the main track, leaving the yellow grit bin on your right and continue walking down slope.
- 8) After crossing Comers Burn the track swings left (SW again), continue to follow the main track straight through the gate ahead of you where you will leave the house, outbuildings and yard of Monarch Developments at Muirton on your left.
- 9) Take the right fork leaving the main track to continue heading NW with trees on your left and the meadowland to the right.
- 10) Before the trees end turn left following the primary track up slope heading SW with trees on both sides of the route now.
- 11) Leave the hay store on your left side to approach a metal gate into the open ground behind it. This gate is held shut with wire but it is not difficult to open. Once you have entered the field walk up slope (SW) towards the trees at the highest point on the other side of the field.
- 12) As you reach the trees you will find a new gate but this is not mounted on hinges so I would advise that you climb over it as the wire that holds it is tight and will be difficult to re-instate if you undo it. Turn left (SSE) on to the metaled road walking first slightly down hill before the road drops down steeply into Comers village.
- 13) In Comers, at the corner with the Post Box in the end wall of the house to your right and just before the bridge over the burn, turn left to head first E and then the metaled road gradually curves to run NE.
- 14) As you pass along the metaled road, after about a quarter of a mile watch out for a simple seat and path on the right. Leave the road here on a path that leads to a wooden footbridge that re-crosses the Comers Burn. On the E side of the foot bridge the path rises steeply to join a metaled road and re-enter Midmar village. Go straight ahead to passing the school playing field on the right and village housing on the left.
- 15) At the 'T' junction, with water hydrant opposite, turn left (NE) to walk back up past Glenwood Park and return to the Village Hall car park.



Our route map is not scaled so take OS Landranger Map 38, with you for additional reference information. The total area is enclosed by Eastings NJ67 to NJ69 and Northings NJ07 to NJ09.



Farming life



Autumn and winter has well and truly arrived after a lovely, warm sunny and well needed summer. Previous two hard winters and springs had taken its toll on farming life.

This time last year at the end of October, snow had already arrived, harvest had nearly been tided up, and tattie lifting was a long process with the wet conditions. After a long wet spring and a wet summer trying to get farm work done wasn't easy, not many warm, sunny, dry days for grass growth, meant a late 1st cut of silage therefore many farmers didn't get a 2nd cut it was too wet, cold and late in the season for the fertilizer at £340 a ton it didn't justify applying. Food was going to be tight hopefully it would not be another hard winter.

How ever it was another long hard winter, fuel and food fodder prices rising by the month straw bales used for feed and bedding animal courts costing £14-£20 per bale, silage and hay also used for feed making £15-£25 per bale depending on the quality also feed to help fatten cattle and lambs bought from merchants had risen £40-£50 a ton more than the previous year.

Winter went on and on, winter feed was very scarce, buying in extra food to feed animals were a common feature around the farms.

Spring came very late again due to the appalling weather conditions ,coupled with the harsh winter conditions there was no sign of grass beginning to grow for lambing season to help sheep produce adequate milk for the new born lambs.

Snow storms at the peak of lambing and snow still on the ground beginning of April, many losses with sheep and young lambs occurred. By mid-April our lambing started with drier conditions but still cold winds, lambs getting up on their feet quickly with in 5 minutes compared with cold rainy days hypothermia sets in, double work for farmers as the ewe and lambs are taken inside to a pen shed, lambs warmed up, making sure they get a drink of colostrum 1st milk if the extra care is not given death for the new born lambs wouldn't be far away.

The calving went well although kept in farm buildings longer than usual the hard winter took it toll on them; we really needed a dry warm summer for them to rebuild their body condition.

The wet conditions in winter meant early spring wheat and oil seed rape crops had to be ploughed up as they failed to grow.

Weather started to improved day by day towards end of April, muck spreading (farm yard manure) ploughing on going while weather was in our favour working day and night trying to catch up with the work load.

Dry days continued crops of barley; corn (oats) being sown, grass being fertilized, grass rolled that pushes surface stones back into the ground so silage machine doesn't get damaged.

Sheep, cattle are vaccinated, castrated, dehorned feet treated for sores or foot rot; animals are then put away to fields of fresh grass for summer grazing.

Silage (fodder crop cut while green and partially fermented in a pit or plastic wrap) grass grew well, 1st cut silage being cut, chopped and carted into silage pits, silage bales all being made during a dry June excellent quality winter feed for the nutrition value sugar levels being high due to plentiful sunshine.

The dry summer also helped to make a lot of good quality hay (dry grass) no expense on black plastic for wrapping (wrap costing £1.60 per bale, £1.50 to wrap bale, £2.00 to bale the bale. money saved due to our summer sunshine that brought a smile to all our faces.

2nd cut silage grew well; dry conditions again thank goodness more winter fodder made of good quality.

Harvest has had one of its best for years with yield and quality much improved with the ideal conditions for growing crops unlike last year although some parts suffered from drought with the heat and sunshine of July scalding crops. Barley being sold to feed merchants for animal feed or sold to distilleries for beer, whisky making if your crops passed certain tests for nitrogen and moisture.

Cows, calves looking well after summer grazing body conditions built back up, all classes of cattle (yearlings, fat, store) selling well due to short supply.

Lambs being sold for fat prices have dropped already compared with last year due to main supermarkets importing lamb from New Zealand despite Scotch lamb being its seasonal best.

Farmers have been busy this autumn making good of the ideal sowing conditions of wheat and oil seed rape crops which are looking very well. Straw, corn and wheat bales are all gathered together put in large sheds, stacked covered or wrapped to keep dry over winter for feed and bedding

Potato lifting going well due to dry conditions make life so much easier.

Lets all hope winter doesn't continue too long this year, although it may not suit farming life its just what our ski centres need, oh just a little reminder mentioning snow, Christmas !!!! The turkeys are fattening well just in time for the festive season.



The Cottage Bar – The Midmar Inn (6)

The nights are drawing in at a great rate just now and like me, you too are probably putting up a fire again in the evenings, there has been little need for it over the last months. Yesterday was November 5th and while I was enjoying the fireworks flashing up against the starry sky in my neighbours garden I was thinking, wouldn't it be great to go along to the pub afterwards and enjoy a fire there too, if I was the publican I would have a warm welcome with "*Ginger Punch and Parkin*" for all, ready on the bar.

When the pub closed FoMICC formed because we believed, as we still do, that Midmar would benefit from it remaining open, this is why we applied for, and were awarded, the Community Right to Buy (CrTB) should the owner put the business on the market. As we described in our last article, the CrTB process does not stop the owners of the Midmar Inn from improving their land and buildings for its approved use but after closing the business, the owners, almost immediately raised a planning application to change the usage of the whole building to be a residential dwelling, including a "private" bar!

This article describes what we believe are the primary reasons that both the council and government turned down the application for change of use of the pub. For everyone who wants to independently read the detailed story of that application and local appeal the



number is "G/APP/2008/0932". Use this number at the Aberdeenshire Council web site <http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning/apps/>.

The Council refusal was contested by the owners so the decision was then referred to the Scottish Government who upheld the decision; the reference number for this further appeal is P/PPA/110/810 and can be found at the Government web site <http://www.dpea.scotland.gov.uk/casesearch.aspx?T=1>.

Just as with the CrTB, the Planning process is also comprehensive and the reasoning behind the outcome both logical and fair. The early part of the documentation concentrates on the technical aspects of planning, i.e. the Aberdeenshire development plan, effects on employment, compatibility of the proposed development to the landscaping and amenity of the area, loss of the public facility and so on.

All the documentation makes it clear that from a planning point of view, "Midmar Inn House" was different from most residential properties therefore whilst the building has a dual use, the dwelling does not have primacy, i.e. the usage as commercial premises, a Public House, is the building's main function.

One of the owner's key points was (and still is) that they could not be expected to trade at a loss and this is acknowledged but the point is also made that this is irrelevant to the planning process. It was also noted that the business had obviously been under-invested for a number of years and the current owners must have known that when they bought it in 2004.

The owners also made the argument that the Midmar Inn was their home so the report points up that there was nothing preventing them making repairs to make it more comfortable for their occupation and thereby also improve the overall value of the property. It should not however have been expected that planning permission for conversion to residential use would automatically be forthcoming.

At the time the absence of any attempt to openly market the property by the owners at an independent valuation as a public house and dwelling weighed very heavily against them. It meant that it had not been conclusively demonstrated before the planning application was lodged, that the Midmar Inn could not continue as commercially viable public amenity providing a facility of benefit to the local rural community.

The planning report also acknowledged that to make any new venture at the Midmar Inn viable it would involve a very considerable investment, it also noted that the registration of a community interest in this property by the Friends of the Midmar Inn Community Company (FoMICC), *“represents a serious attempt to secure its future for a use which will then make a positive contribution to the community”*.

We would argue that the case for the community approach is even stronger now because there so are many operational examples, the length and breadth of the UK, where community groups have taken over their local businesses and, through the spirit of ownership that this engenders, made a success of these ventures. The thing about a community enterprise is that whilst it needs to be viable it does not need to turn a huge cash profit, the profit comes from improved “well being”, being shared by all. The Butchers Arms (pictured) in Crosby Ravensworth, Cumbria being a case in point.



The final paragraphs of the reasoning for the planning appeal decision make the point that to be fair to the owners all that is required is that the Midmar Inn should be openly marketed as a business for a minimum of six months and if *“realistic proposals for its re-use as a public house are not forthcoming”* the planning application for change of use could then be re-considered.

This is a proposal that FoMICC wholeheartedly supports, we have *“realistic proposals”* and provided a fair value can be paid are willing to put these into action. If we fail then FoMICC would stand aside and let whatever then happens take its course.



This article has been submitted by Rob Ferguson other information and contact details can be found on our website
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Closing date for submissions to the March 2014 newsletter (which covers events March, April & May) is the 12th February 2014.

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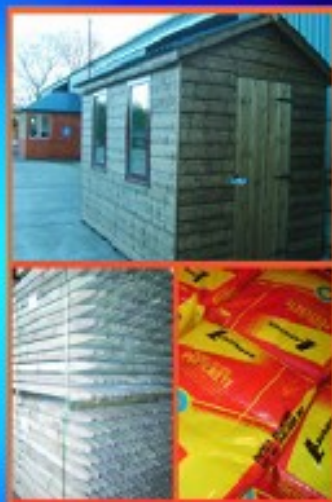
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