



EDITORIAL

Hello dear readers and a very Happy New Year to you all. Things seem to have started off quietly this year following the big freeze prior to Christmas and this is reflected in some of the articles being briefer than normal in the newsletter. On the other hand we welcome back a contributor, Rosemary Taylor, from the Polmont Community Council. For those who don't know, the role of the Community councils is to find out the views of their communities in terms of local issues, needs and wishes and to pass on those views to Falkirk Council. They are also consulted on planning and licensing applications and may be involved in community events and heritage preservation. Anyone interested in the local community is welcome to attend their meetings.

A reminder you don't have to belong to an organisation to submit an article to this newsletter. If you have anything you think might be of interest to Polmont residents be it favourite recipes or gardening tips, events or discussions, fund raising, quizzes or reminiscences of times gone by please send it to

Please remember if you wish to submit an article send it to:
polmontnews@hotmail.co.uk

Community Police

Submitted by Alyn Blyth, Community Policing Sergeant

Community Police Community Policing in Bo'ness, the Braes and Grangemouth.

Any information you have relating to crime, criminals, drug dealing and the location of stolen property is always of interest to us.

Moving into the new year we will continue sharing information and work closely with the local authority in relation to neighbour disputes.

Our work visiting licensed premises to ensure compliance with the law will continue. This is designed to reduce the illegal availability of alcohol to young people and to reduce drunkenness, disorder and criminal damage in public places.

Tackling drug dealing is always on the agenda for the team. Towards the end of 2010 we ran a number of successful operations and currently have more in the making.

The team attend the nine monthly Community Council Meetings in addition to the Blackness Community Council Meeting which is held every two months.

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Community Police Continued

It's planned to have two further members of the team trained to drive the mobile police office so we can make more use of that during the year and I'm having posters made, introducing the team members, which should be in a shop near you soon.

Rotary Club of Polmont

Submitted by Ian McLean, President Elect



Fundraising

Our Santa Sleigh programme was decimated by the weather with no visits to any of the housing estates. We managed to arrange collections at Polmont Co-op and Tesco's in Redding. Santa Sleigh buckets were also posted at several local shops and service centres. The total raised to date is £3,000 which is fantastic, albeit it over £2,000 less than usual but in a restricted timespan. Many thanks to all the shoppers for their donations which will go to good causes such as Strathcarron Hospice.

Charities and events

The flowerbed on Station Road has survived the severe weather with the winter pansies in full bloom.

Our visits to some local Homes for the Elderly are being well received at Oakbank and Summerdale. Polmont Old Parish Church has invited the team to organise a visit to the Age Concern group and anyone else who wishes to join them sometime in the next few months.

The book libraries at Meadowbank Centre, Grange Centre and Greenpark Centre is being well used and a top-up of books, including children's books, may be necessary.

A Senior Citizens Road Show in conjunction with Age Concern is planned in Polmont Old Parish Church Hall along similar lines to that adopted in 2010.

Finally, a plea for old tools and glasses which can be sent by our Club to poorer countries is still in operation. Contact any member of Rotary for collection or drop them off in the Church Hall, Main Street, Polmont.

St Margaret's Primary School

Submitted by Iain Campbell



Just a brief note from the school this time. School resumed on Thursday January 6th after the Christmas break. Judging by the stories from pupils Santa had been very busy in the Polmont area.

Following a sponsored carol singalong and end of term collection we are delighted to announce that we raised in excess of £1000 for Buskit, a charity which supports children in Belarus who are still suffering the after effects of the Chernobyl disaster. Our thanks to parents, staff and pupils who worked hard to raise this magnificent total.

We are looking forward to a hard working and enjoyable term and hope the snow gives us no further problems.

Meadowbank Library

Submitted by Lorraine Alexander



We hope everyone had a lovely Christmas and a Good New Year.

We have started our spring cleaning already and at the moment we have a January Sale of books in the library. There is something for everyone, picture books, junior fiction and non-fiction, adult fiction and non-fiction and some music cds. Prices start at 10p so you are sure to pick up a bargain.

We have also restarted our activities for young people with a full timetable for 2011.

We have Bounce and Tickle sessions for babies up to 18 months, Toddle Round sessions for wee ones aged 18 – 36 months and Story Time sessions for the 3 – 5 year olds.

More information on these or any of the library services can be obtained by phoning 503870 or emailing: meadowbank.library@falkirk.gov.uk

The Braes Councillors

Submitted by Malcolm Nicol

Braes Councillors

In a ward as large as Lower Braes which covers from the edge of Grangemouth to the edge of Shieldhill and from the ski slope to the Skew Bridge it is the variety of the enquiries and complaints that makes my role so varied. Enquiries range from housing, social work, planning, education matters through to signing documents on peoples behalf and sadly the multitude of neighbour disputes that are so familiar to all elected members.

However, even these have taken a back seat over the last 6 weeks or so to two main issues, the snow and an ongoing problem of bins not being uplifted and left for no apparent reason.

Bin uplifts

Now, I do accept that in some cases this was due to the heavy snowfall but not always and missed bins have been a real bugbear to a lot of constituents and to me. Not only does it necessitate extra costs to the council by sending a vehicle on a special journey to empty the missed bins but the inconvenience is so great. Excuses such as vehicle breakdowns, parked cars and illness have been of little comfort to those who pay good money for this most basic of service. Now a March deadline has been set for things to improve or the council will look at other ways to ensure that people get what they pay for.

As always, if you have any issue whether it is with bins or anything else in connection with the council, please get in touch malcolm.nicol@falkirk.gov.uk

Snow clearing

Even more than bins concern has this month continued to centre on the snow and the response to it. Let me say that the vast majority of you appreciated that the council has never and probably never will have the money or equipment to clear every side street and footpath—it follows a schedule of priority laid down nationally in terms of Prioritising streets for clearance with Main Roads, bus routes and routes to schools being Priority 1.

However lessons have to be learned and improvements made in areas such as – it is nonsense for one department of the council, say roads to clear a public footpath then when the responsibility for the path changed, say to Housing on a path serving houses, to stop and leave it untouched.

We need to decide whether even if the council have not cleared all Priority routes it puts resources into clearing areas such as the Coop car park and the square between the shops and the Millfield for the private owners (on a recharge basis). A small number of large businesses already have long standing snow clearance contracts with the council – should they be providing their own?

If bad winter weather is to be the norm (and remembering that for many years snow ploughs and gritters were barely used at all) do we go ahead and purchase expensive extra equipment-when the money for doing so comes straight off other essential council services. This winter, because salt has no effect at the very cold temperatures often recorded, greater use of hired in JCB's has had to be made to break up ice on roads and footpaths, a slow process.

Should the Scottish Government establish a pool of gritters etc from which councils can call ? - unusually this year most of Scotland was covered in heavy snow at the same time and all councils had difficulty coping but blanket snowfall isn't always the case and rather than all 32 councils all having their own very expensive fleets it has been suggested that area pools be established.

Long before next winter an answer to all these and the many other issues thrown up by the bad weather will need to be addressed and this process has already started. Please contact me if you have suggestions you wish me to put forward as to how the council could do better (and of course effective in terms of cost bearing in mind the limit to resources.)

Even before the winter the sums estimated to bring the structure of the Scottish road network up to scratch were horrific. In the case of Falkirk alone it would take almost £40 million and as at mid January just to fill the pot-holes that have appeared could be a further million pounds. This money is well in excess of that projected and whilst some assistance is coming from the government the majority will have to be found from existing budgets.

Still it's not all doom and gloom the bad weather did once again bring out in a lot of people a spirit of neighbourliness and an offering of help—Stories, from throughout Polmont of people getting groceries in for elderly neighbours or of helping them clear footpaths confirm that the sceptics are very premature in writing off the very human trait of adversity bringing people together. Let's hope that feeling continues long after the snow has gone!

Polmont Church News

Submitted by Rev Jerome O'Brien

Winter Blues



I suspect in many (or not so many) years to come, there will be quite a few people, who are young now, telling their grandchildren, "I well remember the winter of 2010! Worst winter ever!" It's also something that I've noticed here that, in the middle of Summer, no-one ever seems to say, "Isn't this summer just dragging along? I don't think it will ever end."! Well, let's hope that the poor weather is behind us and we can get back to a solid dose of normality.

The Church is now back in the full swing of things – all of the organisations have started up again, postponed events are diarised again, and attendances are back to normal.

Anniversary of the King James Bible

This year is a special year, being the 400th Anniversary of the publication of the King James' Bible. The publication of this book was a milestone for the Christian faith in that, for the first time, ordinary people had access to the Word of God in their own, ordinary language. Imagine for the first time being able to access the treasures of God's word so easily. It changed the world.



Where do we stand today, however, in respect of our Bible reading? In a rather parlous state, I'm afraid. In a recent survey conducted by the Bible Society entitled, 'Taking the Pulse', over 3,000 church members participated across the UK. Whilst the survey found that society generally still has a high regard for the Bible, only 47% of church leaders are confident in their knowledge of the Bible, and this percentage declines to a miserable 14% of church members who declared that they were confident in their knowledge of the Bible. Moreover, only 22% of church members believe the Bible to be divinely inspired, and 61% of church members admit the Bible does not affect their decision making.

I cannot emphasize enough how significant and important a book the Bible is. It is useful for our lives and the way we live. It teaches us the Truth about Jesus, it rebukes us when we are in the wrong, it changes the course of our lives to bring us into line with the will of God, and it instructs us in right living. What other book can make, and deliver on, such claims? So how about a spiritual resolution this year? The New Testament: get it and read it. It will change your world.

Forthcoming Events

In commemoration of the King James Bible's anniversary, the church is planning a number of events, particularly to encourage Bible literacy and understanding, so watch this space for details.

Messy Church is happening again – 30th January at the Church hall, starting at 5:00 pm. A new kind of church that has community, celebration and food at the centre of things. Come along and be amazed!

Polmont Community Council

Submitted by Rosemary Taylor



Dates of Community Council meetings

The dates for the next meetings of the Polmont Community Council are as follows- Jan 24th, Feb 28th, March 28th, April 25th, May 23rd and June 27th.

All meetings take place in the Greenpark Centre at 7.30pm.

These meetings are open to all members of the community and the more attending the better. Ideally the Council would like representatives from all estates in Polmont so a complete overview can be had.

Litter Pick

This year again we're looking forward to co-operating with Polmont Old for the Litter Pick