



EDITORIAL

Hello dear readers. You will notice a few of our "regulars" are missing in this edition. Nonetheless there is much of interest from changes in library opening hours, to cutbacks in our local churches to the amazing story of a local hero Major Morris. There are also details of how to enter our local photography Competition.

Digital Photography Competition

To enter, all you have to do is take a picture of a local scene. The theme is "Autumn" so we are looking for colourful views of local landmarks or events. The competition is open to everyone and we have decided to have an Adult section, a youth section for 12 – 18 and a Children's section for the under 12's. The children's section can include autumn activities done in school. There are a number of prizes on offer, with one prize in each category and an overall winner prize of a digital camera. The closing date for the competition is the 30th of November so we can get the prizes out before Christmas. The winning entries will appear in the December newsletter. Please e-mail your entries to Iain Morrison at iain@melness.org.uk

Email the Editor @ polmontnews@hotmail.co.uk

Meadowbank Library

Submitted by Karen Cumming



New Opening Hours

From 1st September our library opening hours changed as follows:

Mon/Fri: 10am-5pm

Tues/Thurs: 10am-8pm

Wed: 10am-4pm

Sat: 10am-3pm

Anyone still unsure of the new times, please ask at the desk for bookmarks and details of new opening hours for other libraries.

Halloween Craft Session

We will be having a Halloween – themed craft session on Saturday 29th October from 10.30 – 11.30am. Tickets are free and will become available nearer the time. If interested look out for posters and ask at the desk for more information.

Children's Activities

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Meadowbank Library Continued

Children's Activities

Baby Rhymetime for children aged up to 18 months has moved from a Tuesday morning to a Thursday morning, with a new time of 10.15 – 10.45am.

Toddleround for ages 18 months – 3 years has restarted once a month on a Thursday morning at 10.15am. The next session will be Thursday 27th October. Please ask at the desk for details.

Christmas Stock

In response to popular demand we will be putting out our Christmas stock around mid – November. We have a wide selection of Christmas craft books, cookery books, DVD's and CD's.

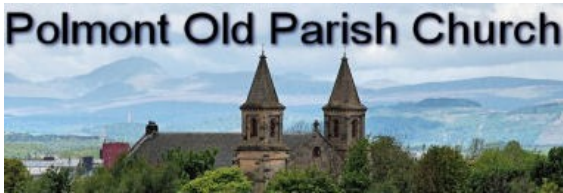
Story Sacks

We have a new selection of story sacks for the Under 5's. These contain a picture book and a toy relevant to the story and are now kept behind the counter. Please ask at the desk for details.

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

Polmont Church News

Submitted by Rev Jerome O'Brien



Fund Raising Fun

The past month has seen folk in the Church arranging a Quiz Night at the Greenpark Centre to raise funds for the stone work restoration to the front of the church building. It was a very happy evening on the 23rd September and we had 23 teams participating in the event. It was good to see how well the grey matter is faring (or to be alarmed at how badly it was faring) and over £200 was raised during the night.

The church helpers have also been hard at work organizing the Macmillan Coffee morning which took place on Saturday the 1st October in the Church Hall. Another good community event, well organized and well attended saw nearly £700 being raised for a very worthwhile charity.

Finally, the Church has also organized a Ceilidh at the Greenpark centre on the 22nd October. The annual Ceilidh, as it is now known, is always a great event and enjoyed by everybody, young and old, experienced dancers and novices alike.

Reduction in Ministry

The Church of Scotland, along with many other organisations that depend upon the support of local communities, is having to face some difficult decisions. The National Church, for reasons of financial constraints and the continuing decline in church membership, has been obliged to agree to reduce the number of full time paid ministries from 1200 to 1000 by the end of 2013.

The Presbytery of Falkirk, to which Polmont Church belongs, has been obliged to start a process that will see ministry provision to the area reduced from 38 ministries down to 32. The Braes Churches, which include Brighthons, Laurieston linked with Redding & Westquarter, Muiravonside linked with Blackbraes & Shieldhill, Slamannan and Polmont Old, have all been asked to work together as a group to determine how ministry costs can be reduced from 5 ministries down to 4 in this area.

This will involve considerable planning and discussion before we are able to arrive at a decision. It is clear, however, that the pattern and way in which ministry is both funded and exercised within Scotland will undergo considerable change. We are fortunate in Polmont to have a hard-working and generally faithful congregation that is doing its very best to keep going, but this is no guarantee of future continuation unless things change.

twinning ceremony

On a more positive note, the Kirk Session of Polmont has agreed that a twinning of churches take place between Highlands Presbyterian Church in Harare, Zimbabwe, and Polmont Old. The discussions for this twinning have been ongoing for some time now and have come to fruition. The relationship is not about the exchange of finances, but about the exchange of ideas, know-how, prayers for one another and friendship. It is anticipated that this twinning will be formalized at a ceremony to be held simultaneously in the two churches on Sunday, 2nd December 2011.



The Braes Councillors

Submitted by Cllr Malcolm Nicol

Braes Councillors

A few figures

The current population of Polmont is 5323 of which 18% are aged 15 or under and 17% are over 60. There are 2235 households of which 90% are owner occupied. 49.3% of households have 1 car, 39.1% have 2 or more cars and 11.6% have no car. 27.5% of households are of people who live alone of whom one third are pensioners. As the days shorten, I shall be especially pleased in assisting any of these senior citizens with any assistance or advice on any council service. (tel. 719399)

Local Plan

A number of constituents contacted me regarding a report on the local plan in the Falkirk Herald which suggested a large amount of house building was being proposed for Polmont. This is because in local plan terms Polmont also covers Maddiston, Wallacestone, Reddingmuirhead etc and it is in these areas that there are proposals for further building.

Remembrance



As the nation prepares to remember all those who have laid down their lives in defence of our freedom let us also acknowledge those who are still putting themselves in danger on our behalf. I strongly believe that as a community and as a country we need to do more for those who have served in our Armed Forces.

The two World Wars produced many local heroes. One of these was Major James F. Morris MC and Bar of Rosehall, a house that still stands in the Main Street. Like millions of others in the Great War he answered his country's call, first by joining the Highland Light Infantry then transferring to the Royal Flying Corps. He was credited with the downing of 32 enemy aircraft and as well as his MC and Bar he was honoured by the King of the Belgians. In May 1918 in recognition of his valour, he was gifted a sword and Gold watch by fellow villagers at a function in Polmont Church Hall.

Sadly in August of that year Major Morris was killed, aged just 21, in a flying accident whilst on a morale boosting trip to the USA. It was over a year before his body could be brought home to Polmont. This in itself was very unusual with the vast majority of those killed being buried close to the site of their death, giving rise to the many hundreds of the moving Commonwealth War Cemeteries throughout the world and on the Western Front in particular. It was probably this sense of Captain Morris being a surrogate for all the bodies that were not brought home to their loved ones that caused such scenes of grief at his funeral:-

The Falkirk Herald of November 1st 1919 tells the story:

"The village was in mourning, shops were closed, blinds were drawn, while the route was thickly lined by thousands of people who wished to pay a last tribute to the gallant young flyer. The coffin covered with the Union Jack was borne by a detachment of airmen. A firing party from the Gordon Highlanders and the H.L.I was present as were children from Laurieston School to do homage to the late major, who was a former pupil.

At the churchyard, thousands more had gathered to watch the closing scenes. The rites were performed by Captain (Rev.) A. McKenzie, son of the parish minister, thereafter volleys were fired over the grave and the Last Post sounded by a bugler" The impressive stone and grave of Major Morris can be viewed in the churchyard and a display to his memory including the presentation sword exists at Callendar House.



Polmont Rotary Club of Polmont

Submitted by Susan Ord



Club speakers

Recent speakers to the club were Julia Leyden, Mentor from RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Award), Ken Hutton, Scotland's Energy, the Future of Oil, Gas & Electricity and John Reid, Memories of a Football Referee.

Rotary Flower Bed

The Rotary Flower Bed on Station Road has been cleared ready for winter bulbs to be planted for flowering in the spring. The 2012 theme will represent Polmont Age Concern with acknowledgement to the Polmont Horticultural Society for their expertise in providing such a wonderful display.

Rotary Projects



Other forthcoming projects within rotary will include the Rotary Shoebox Appeal. The gift of a shoebox that contains toys, toiletries, educational items or household goods is a drop of happiness to the people of Eastern Europe who live in a world of poverty.

For many, it will be the first present that they have ever received and it lets them know that somebody, somewhere cares.

Our International Convener, Nancy Rule is co-ordinating the project and if you would like to support this project please contact Nancy on 01324 712363.



Christmas Appeal

Details of the Rotary Christmas Appeal and the Santa Sleigh will be published in November.

Volunteering / Joining Rotary

If you would like to volunteer for the Santa Sleigh or would like to find out more about joining Rotary please visit and contact the club via our website www.polmontrotary.org

Community Police

Submitted by PC Colin Richardson



Bogus workmen and associated thefts

Between 1.30pm and 2.30pm on the 11th October 2011 a theft occurred from a house in Polmont where two males purporting to be workmen preyed on an elderly female and whilst one distracted the lady regarding repairs to her home the other sneaked into her house and stole cash.

This is a despicable type of crime and any information regarding the type of people who do this must be reported to the police. If you have any information please contact the police Tel 01786 456000 or through crime stoppers Tel 0800 555111

Youth disorder

Youth disorder in Polmont and Brightons continues to be monitored and policed as effectively as possible. We do rely on the public phoning to tell us where, when and what is happening in the area. Please keep contacting us if you see anything which causes concern, especially congregating groups participating in anti-social behaviour. Please be vigilant around shops that sell alcohol. If you see any adults doing this tell the police and give as much detail as you can about the children and the adults. If a child asks you to do this please contact the police with as much detail as possible.

I can't stress enough to everyone, including the children who just go along to watch whatever others are getting up to. This is everyone's community and everyone has a responsibility to make it a nice place live. With your help we can achieve this.

Both myself and all the officers at Grangemouth are working hard to ensure everyone is safe and secure in the area. Braes High School, Grangemouth High School and Graeme High School are all helping in this matter and I am pleased to say there has been a big reduction in the reports received by the police in the last two weeks. We will continue to monitor things for a few weeks yet to ensure issues do not arise again.

Winter months - be extra vigilant

During this time of year it is easier for a thief to establish whether or not people are at home. Any house in darkness during the late afternoon or early evening, gives any potential thief the impression that your house is empty.

Regular patrols are carried out in our area to help combat this threat, however please find below a few simple and inexpensive steps which may prevent you becoming a victim.

These include:

1. Fitting good quality time switches to lights in the living areas of your house, such as the living room, kitchen and bedrooms - not just the hallway.
2. Angle blinds accordingly to ensure the light can be seen from the outside of your house but no-one can see into your house.
3. Ensure switches come on as it's getting dark. This may require regular adjustment as the hours of darkness change.
4. Fit lighting to the outside of your house. Make sure these cover all aspects of your house, particularly doors and windows.

Motorists urged to drive with caution

Motorists are being urged to drive with caution as roads throughout the force area, in particular the motorways, have excess surface water on them.

Chief Inspector Donald McMillan, head of the Road Policing Unit, said: "Motorists should be aware of the road conditions and drive according to them. When there is surface water lying motorists should slow down, leave a good distance between them and the car in front and don't take any unnecessary risks. If driving too fast and you hit a large area of surface water this could cause your vehicle to aqua-plane which in turn could cause the vehicle to leave the road with the potential for serious or fatal injuries."

Please drive carefully.

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Community Police Continued

One person's laugh is another person's misery!

It's that time of year again! Traditionally this is when we get an upsurge in eggs getting thrown at windows and fireworks getting set off indiscriminately. For some strange reason some seem to think this is amusing and have no regard for the distress they cause not to say the potential for serious injury.

All staff in the Grangemouth, Bo'ness and the Braes areas have been instructed to tackle this problem robustly and at an early stage so that we can at least try and minimise the distress this causes. That means getting a hold of those who are responsible for this and dealing with them regardless of age.

However, we cannot do this alone. If you know anyone who is doing this please let us know and we will deal with them in whatever manner is appropriate. Community officers have been tasked with collating the names of all those involved so we will quickly identify repeat offenders. If you think your children may be involved, please have a word with them.

If you wish to report an ongoing matter please contact the force on 01786 456000 as per normal. If you wish to discuss the issue or assist in the matter please contact your local community officer via this website or contact the above number. I can't promise that we will eradicate this practice but we will certainly give it a good go!

Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd October 2011 ASBIT

Over the course of Friday 21st and Saturday 22nd October 2011 both PC Stirling and I conducted ASBIT patrols both in the Upper and Lower Braes area's. Both nights were mostly quiet, however three litres of alcohol was confiscated from local youths and a small quantity of cannabis was also recovered.

Don't let bins fuel bonfires

The emergency services and local authorities in Central Scotland are urging householders to take steps to avoid having their bins used to fuel illegal bonfires in the run-up to November 5. The advice is issued as part of Operation Alamo, an initiative involving the police, fire and three local authorities, gets underway on Wednesday (October 29). The multi-agency initiative, which runs until Bonfire Night on November 5, aims to tackle those behaving in an anti-social or irresponsible manner.

Householders should take the precaution of not putting their refuse bins out for collection overnight when they could be stolen and used for bonfires. For those thinking of using plastic bins on bonfires you need to be aware that the toxins that this produces can cause serious injury or worse. You have been warned.



Autumn Sunset over Polmont—Photo Iain Morrison