

PORTGORDON COMMUNITY TRUST: A LOOK BACK AT 2023

It's the time of year once more for a period of reflection, and Portgordon Community Trust have been looking back at 2023 and everything that has been achieved during what has been an extremely busy but hugely successful year.

The year started on a high, with the Scottish Land Fund supporting our application for funding the purchase of the old Richmond Arms Hotel. A deal with the previous owners, Crown Estate Scotland (CES), was finally concluded and signed off on 22nd February, paving the way for the planned redevelopment work and the creation of our new Community Hub and Cafe.

Phase 1 of the redevelopment work progressed at pace with numbers 19 - 21 West High Street getting completely re-roofed, new toilets were provided with disabled access, and the new cafe and meeting rooms were constructed, thanks to the significant support of Highland and Island Enterprise (HIE) and other funding agencies.

Also, at the start of the year, the Trust commenced their Portgordon Open Doors project (POD's) in the Village Hall, which provided a warm and inclusive space for the local community to meet over refreshments and a hot meal and with a chance to engage with others over a chat, a variety of games and other activities. The POD's were able to run from January through to the summer.

The Trust have continued to work closely throughout 2023 with the



Picture: Lampie Hoose Cafe at the Portgordon Open Day in September 2023

harbour owners (CES) and with HIE pétanque pitch, next to the community garden, and we hope to see many in the village making use of this facility in the years ahead. We held a very successful Open Day in September, showcasing all the projects that have been done throughout this year on the Richmond Building, the Community Garden, and the Village Hall, and highlighting our ambitious plans for the future. The Open Day also saw the first opening of The Lampie Hoose Cafe, run entirely by volunteers. Thanks to everyone who attended and supported this very successful event. following the Open Day the Lampie Hoose Café was officially launched on 2nd October, opening 3 days...

During the spring and summer months the Estate also carried out extensive repair works to the harbour piers and installed new handrails, ladders, grab chains and moorings. Damaged boats have been removed, new life rings provided, and the Gurkha plaque is in the process of being refurbished. Back in the Spring the Trust carried out a complete rebranding exercise and we were able to launch our new website:

www.portgordoncommunity.co.uk

PCT also completed work on the new

... per week (Mon/Thurs/Sat) and, despite the time of year and the poor weather, the Cafe has exceeded the expectations set out in our Business Plan. Why not pop in and support our hard-working volunteers.

The Trust were delighted in October when the Lord-Lieutenant of Banffshire, Andrew Simpson, kindly agreed to become our Charities Patron, and we very much look forward to working with the Lord-Lieutenant in the future.

Looking ahead to 2024, the Trust are pressing on with their plans for further redevelopment of the Richmond Building. Design works on Phases 2 and 3 are already underway and we hope to submit a planning application soon for improvements to Harbour Cottage, our planned holiday let and a new commercial kitchen for the café (phase 2) and for a further extension of the café/meeting space (under phase 3). Funding applications for the Phase 2 construction works have already been submitted and we hope to hear the outcome early in the new year.

As part of our Memorandum of



Picture: Lord-Lieutenant of Banffshire: Andrew Simpson and CDO Michelle Good

Understanding (MOU) with the Crown Estate in connection with the harbour, the Trust are also looking to commission a new and extensive feasibility study and options appraisal on the harbour, looking at how best the harbour can be managed and maintained in future years. Following a tender exercise, a preferred consultant has been selected to carry out the study, and, subject to grant funding being confirmed in the near future, the study should start in January 2024 and be completed by July. Consultation with the community will form part of the study and the outcomes and recommendations will be presented to the community later next year.

Also early in 2024, the Trust will be starting the process of preparing a raft Local Place Plan, which will be presented to Moray Council as part of the Council's update of the Local Development Plan 2027.

. After public consultation events, the LPP will outline the village's aspirations for the future and how the community thinks the village should grow and develop in the years to come while also protecting the existing built and natural environment.

The Trust are extremely grateful to a

all the funding organisations who have supported us over the last year, and to our Community Development Officer, Michelle Good, who has been instrumental in guiding the Trust through all its activities and many projects with her endless energy and enthusiasm.

The Trust must also acknowledge each and every one of the volunteers who have given of their time, commitment, and skills to support the many projects such as the Cafe, the Community Hub, the Community Garden, The Village Hall and the Portgordon Post. Your efforts are very much appreciated!

Finally, we would wish to thank everyone in the community who has supported the Trust over the last year. Without community involvement and support, there would be no Trust, no Cafe, no Hub, no Community Garden, no Village Hall, and no Portgordon Post! We look forward to your ongoing support in 2024 and beyond so that Portgordon can continue to be a great place to live and work.

We hope everyone enjoys the festive season and here's to a healthy and successful 2024. Best Wishes, Portgordon Community Trust.



Picture: Portgordon harbour from above

PG Community Garden

The Community Gardeners have had a successful year building on our experiences of what has what has gone well and what has not. There have been a larger variety of crops as well as larger crops.

The Open Day on September 30th was busy with many interested visitors to the garden.

The polycrubs will be open when gardeners are working there during the winter months, but visitors are welcome to visit and donate towards any crops they take from the growing areas around the crubs.

We have developed a new growing area at the back of the small polycrub and thanks to a donation of topsoil from David Smith Contractors we will be able to grow on vegetables over the winter. The topsoil has also been used to top up other areas around the garden.

The donation monies from our visitors are invaluable, funding the compost to allow us to continue to keep growing food and flowers for our village as well as supporting new equipment and development. We are in the process of starting up a Hot Compost Bin which can speed up the composting process. Household vegetable and food waste can be added to the composter, and it is hoped that the waste from the Lampie Hoose Café can be recycled this way. Any vegetable waste or garden

vegetation should be cut up small to 4cms or less before adding to the hot composter. This will also help to reduce the amount of compost we need to buy.

Over the next three months we will be planning what to grow next year and early next year we will buy any seeds required as well as begin the soil improvement process.

The Community Garden Group thank all the volunteers who have been working in the garden and have contributed to the success of the area. There is always a need for new volunteers, to share knowledge, sow seeds, pot up small seedlings, general gardening work such as weeding, watering, and opening, and closing the polytunnels on a rota.

We love to see people visiting the Portgordon Community Garden, please feel free to come and have a look around or just pop in past for a blether.

Lampie Hoose Café Update

Greetings from our little neighbourhood café.

We continue to offer a lovely selection of freshly prepared hot and cold food, along with our freshly ground coffee and a selection of teas and soft drinks. All of our bakes and cakes are produced on the premises by our talented bakers who offer tasty treats every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday. Please keep a lookout for new menu items in the new year, and if you have any suggestions, we would love to hear them! you can do this either through our website <https://portgordoncommunity.co.uk/the-lampie-hoose-cafe/> and scroll down the enquiry form at the bottom or to hello@portgordon-ct.org or just come in and have a chat with a member of the team.

We are completely run by a group of wonderful volunteers, who give their time to make every visit to the café a



Picture: Cafe during Portgordons open day

friendly, warm, and delicious experience! Without our team of volunteers, the Lampie Hoose Café would never have been possible. Their dedication and commitment is incredible, and they have worked hard to ensure that we have the right processes in place including REHIS Food Hygiene Level 2, allergy awareness training, and even first aid, we offer our deepest gratitude to every volunteer who has generously given their time and energy to make our community café, the success it is. Also a huge thank you to Vanessa Lawrance for her support in developing our Cooksafe procedures and for all of the invaluable advice that she has imparted over the last few months. Also a huge thanks to Evie ...



Picture: Cafe during Portgordons open day



Picture: Rachel Aldred from the Garden Group with a delighted customer at the Open Day in September

... Harrison and Drew Ewen for sharing their Barista skills with our volunteers and giving them the confidence to use the coffee machines to make fabulous drinks. We would like to thank all of our customers, volunteers, and PCT for their continued support and wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Please note that we will be closed from 15:00 Thursday 21st December until 10:00 Monday 08th January. If anyone has a few hours to spare every week and would like to join our friendly team to help us in the café, please drop by for a chat.

Village Hall Update

Portgordon Village Hall has continued to see further re-development and improvement works during 2023. Following on from major improvements in the last couple of years that saw new windows and doors, new toilets, external repointing and internal insulation work, in 2023 the hall has been able to carry out a complete electrical rewiring, a new fire alarm system was installed, and a new air force heating system provided, improving our move towards carbon reduction.

Portgordon Village Hall are extremely grateful to all the funders for their support. Further works are planned for 2024 including a new sound system. With all these improvements the Hall Committee are keen to see increased use of the hall as we move into 2024. A varied programme of events for next year is currently being prepared and further details will be published in the new year. Should anyone want to book the hall or enquire further they should contact the Hall Chairperson denise.robson@portgordon-ct.org

Thanks to everyone on the Portgordon Village Hall Committee and to everyone in the community

who has supported events throughout the year.

PG Community Church

Plans for Christmas community services are as follows:

- Sat 23th Dec - Carols by Candlelight - the children will lead a torch light procession beginning in the square at 6pm and finishing up in the village hall for a few carols and refreshments.
- Sun 24th Dec - Family Christmas service at 11am
- Sunday 31st Dec - Hogmanay testimony service at 11am.

JOIN OUR TEAM

We warmly invite you to become a part of our vibrant volunteer team at Portgordon Community Trust.

Whether you have a few hours to spare or can commit more regularly. To learn more about volunteering opportunities or to sign up, please visit our website:

<https://portgordoncommunity.co.uk/>. Alternatively, feel free to contact us directly at hello@portgordon-ct.org.

Join us in making Portgordon a thriving hub for all!

SPAR



Spar Christmas opening times:

25th & 26th Dec 23 - Closed
1st Jan 24 - Closed



Wishing all our valued customers a Merry Christmas and joyous holiday season from everyone at Wheelie Kleen, MDK, Brian Reid and Spar!

Portgordon Remembers

Portgordon came together on Sunday 12th November to remember the fallen during 2 World Wars and other conflicts in a service at the war memorial led by Portgordon Community Church.

After the service teas and other refreshments were kindly provided by Portgordon Village Hall.

It is great to see the numbers increasing every year for the remembrance service and thanks to all who attended this important part of the life of the community.



Picture: Teas and coffees at the village hall

Light up Portgordon

As we go to press the Light up Portgordon Group working very hard to get the new Christmas Lights up this year along with the Christmas Tree near the Football Ground. Well done to everyone involved who has supported all the efforts to Light up Portgordon.



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