

Blackford Cares

for Blackford residents to support each other during COVID-19

Tuesday 23rd March marks a year since the start of the first national lockdown. None of us expected this to be still shaping our lives now; we just didn't realise.

When this lockdown collage by Claire Tuck appeared last May we possibly felt it had summed up really well that part of our lives. Some of us may have bought a print when it was in the Blackford Cares Facebook Group in August as a way to remember what was behind us. But we're still here.

There is talk of a national memorial day on the 23rd but details are not yet confirmed. We're suggesting, alongside any national event, that we do two things that evening. To light the candle contained within the pack as it gets dark and then to pause at 8pm. Some of us may want to pause out in the street with our neighbours who have helped carry us through this past year; others may want to be alone or to pause as a family. Some may want silence, some may not.

A candle can say so many different things as we use them in so many different ways: to remember, to reflect, to rejoice, to relax, to respond, to give light, to bring warmth. May you find what you need that day.



We've asked Claire Tuck to make prints and cards of her collage available again in case you missed them.

A 30cm x 40cm acrylic print is £28 and an A5 card/envelope is £1. Order by email dr_claire_lowe@hotmail.com or phone 07812 361390 or use Facebook Messenger

Blackford Cares is not a constituted body. Its funds are handled by Blackford Parish Church with expenditure authorised by two signatories. The Independent Examiner confirmed a year end balance of £389.29 based on income of £1,717.93 (grants and donations) and expenditure of £1,328.64 (printing and pack contents, foodbank, crafts and other activities).

SHARE A SMILE

RED NOSE DAY

Search "share a smile poster" online and you'll find this template* to print out and put your favourite joke on your window this weekend.

There's a link to donate on the same page. And as we walk round the village we'll enjoy each others' jokes. We've started early...or have we?

*Other paper and cardboard options are available.

The Zip-lock bags we use are surplus to requirements in a large national employer which is moving records from physical to electronic. That's why some look a bit tatty and others seem pristine. We are upcycling them. Feel free to do the same. Who has discovered how to push your buttons during lockdown? Are you ready to share these with them?



The Scottish Outdoor Access Code aims to help everyone *Enjoy Scotland's Outdoors*. This will be helpful for us all as we move around water, woods, farms, houses and hills.

Christians Against Poverty are promoted by Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis and Blackford's Lance Pearson so we're delighted to pass on their leaflet provided by one of them.

There's another pod of sunflower seeds enclosed too. If you need it, you'll find compost/soil and tubs in the Blackford Cares boxes back at Allanwater Gardens, Waukmill Drive and the Bell of Hope in the church grounds.

The Great Big Art Exhibition

As it's cold, wet and windy—and museums and art galleries are closed—we thought you would appreciate an indoor challenge. So, as part of the national Great Big Art Exhibition, we invite you to take part in our **Blackford Easter Art Exhibition**.

Open to all ages, we would like you to create a card, a picture and/or something in 3D e.g. a model. You can do all three if you want to! More information and downloadable resources for the Great Big Art Exhibition are on firstsite.uk

The theme is "Humour" and to help you get started Blackford Craft Group is making available, for a very limited time, a grab bag of assorted art and craft materials – **for free!** All the bags will be sealed. We don't know what they are putting in them and neither will you, until you get it home. Feel free to use any additional materials or use just your own. There are only 100 bags, available on Saturday 20th March and Sunday 21st March 2021.

Pick up your free, sealed, brown paper bag from the following places:

Primary pick-up, Katharine Huggett, Ogilvie House, Moray Street (behind the middle bus stop)

Secondary pick-ups (not as many bags available at these places) **Bell of Hope or Irene McLaughlan, Arisaig, Moray Street** (bunglow between the Danny Burn and the Bank House). Maximum, 1 bag per artiste, please.

Once you have completed your creation(s), put them in your window and/or post a photo on Blackford Cares. There's a cream egg for each exhibit we can track down!



When do the clocks go forward?

All the time.

An Update from St Margaret's Health Centre on the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

We are very keen to keep our patients informed of where we are in the vaccination programme but occasionally we fall behind due to the current workload. We are strictly bound by the rules set by the Scottish Government on the order in which priority groups are to be vaccinated

Priority groups 1-5 include:

Older care home residents and their carers; frontline health and social care workers; clinically extremely vulnerable individuals (officially shielded patients); and anyone aged 65 and over.

If you fall under groups 1-5 and have not yet been contacted, please contact us. (01764 662275 / 662614)

We are now working through the patients in Group 6:

16 – 64 years of age with underlying health conditions and at clinically higher risk of serious disease and mortality

For Patients in Groups 7 – 9:

7. 60+ years of age are currently being appointed.
8. 55+ years of age will be appointed w/b 22nd March.
9. 50+ years of age will be appointed w/b 29th March.

You will be contacted directly and appointed by NHS Tayside using the national *ServiceNow* appointing system. This system utilises patient postcodes and appoints them into one of their vaccination centres at Dewars Rink, Pitlochry or Blairgowrie. As with all new systems there may be a few patients who would prefer a different appointment, or appointment venue, and the letter you receive will advise you how change this.

This is all the current information we have. We have no further information on patients 49 years and under so please do not contact the Health Centre.

Additionally, the Scottish COVID-19 vaccination helpline and booking service is available from 8am to 8pm, seven days a week on 0800 030 8013. This is for:

- non-clinical queries as an alternative to accessing information online
- rebooking appointments
- if you think you should have received an appointment by now, or have lost your invitation letter



The Highland Games Committee regrets having to cancel the 2021 Blackford Games. They thank all those sponsors, competitors, volunteers and spectators for their ongoing support. They'll "be lookin' for ya" in May 2022!



Thanks to Stuart Laing, David McLaren and Nathan Brown, there are now four benches located in the Highland Games Park for use by anyone wanting to enjoy the space and the views.

Sunday 21st March is the 10-yearly census night

But not in Scotland. We have taken leave of our census and will do it in 2022. Until then we are counting on the rest of the UK for up to date statistics.



In January, we mentioned the Atlantic Wall as a possible local site to visit. Once again Bob Watkinson is our guide.

To get to the wall from the village, drive up the Sheriffmuir road. As you pass the Greenloaning road junction, look to the moor on your left. You'll see it there. This is the Atlantic Wall built in 1943 as a replica for the defensive wall that would need to be breached on D-Day the year after. Park the car considerately and walk over. The ground can be a bit squelchy but it's only 100m.

Look carefully all over the wall and you'll see the signs of the beating the wall took. There is shell damage all over it. In one place there's a gaping hole where a shell punched through, you'll see how the force of the explosion burst the steel reinforcement bars, pushing them outwards and flinging debris down the hill.

It's a really fascinating place. In a sense it's like a photograph. A freezing of time from a point 80 years ago when the area was so busy with military training.

Blackford Safari Sale on Saturday 15th May

Have you managed to clear out over lockdown? Do you have a load of bits and bobs you no longer need? Or have a crafty skill and things to sell? If so, why not register for a stall at the Blackford Safari Sale on Saturday 15th May (subject to regulations).

A bit like the Festive Weekend, set up your stall outside of your house (handy for tea and loo breaks!) and we will provide you with tips on social distancing and how to keep safe. All you need to bring is your stuff and your energy. No table, no problem. Get in early as we have access to some tables if needed.

Posters advertising the day will be put up around the village and we will promote on Blackford Cares Facebook Group. Stall maps will be available to buy a few days before and on the day. With thanks to Blackford Parish Church for the tables and printing, we couldn't do it without you!

Register by email to Cath.rollo@me.com, giving your name, address and type of stall (for the map). Suggested donation is £2 for a stall & 20p for a map. All proceeds to the church.

Blackford's Emergency Defibrillator

Since 2014 this has been available from a clearly marked door on the Moray St McNaughton's forecourt—beside the carwash machine. The code for the key cabinet (right of the door) is 1234.

999 call handlers also know about this defibrillator and will direct you to it. A village meeting to remind us about its use will happen when safe to do so.



Blackford Oil Collective (BOC) was launched last month and organised the first bulk delivery to the village. Others may want to join this week for one more winter delivery making the most of any bulk discount.



Here's how it works. BOC will send out a monthly reminder between October to March for villagers to order their oil. Subject to demand, an order will be placed by BOC.

BOC will gather order details (minimum 500L) and contact details via email, and will send the order request to six independent oil firms. The cheapest quote will receive our business. BOC will not organise payment. Once you have agreed to place an order, it is your responsibility to pay the chosen company by their payment terms and conditions.

Last month 14 households ordered through the collective with savings of up to £100.

If you could benefit from buying oil this month, send your order to blackfordoilcollective@gmail.com by **Saturday March 20th**. You will receive a reply saying whether there has been enough demand for a collective order.

Any further questions? Send them to the above email or find the group on Facebook - Blackford Oil Collective.

Would you rather...?

Questions like this have become the go-to topic starter in Zoom calls for work, families and our church youth group who suggested some of these. So, would you rather...

- ◆ have spaghetti for hair or meatballs for toes?
- ◆ fight a kangaroo or a badger?
- ◆ have the ability to change the past or to see into the future?
- ◆ get caught in the middle of a food fight or a water fight?
- ◆ swim in the sea or ski down a mountain?
- ◆ see your favourite animal every day in captivity or see it once in the wild?
- ◆ always celebrate Christmas or never celebrate Easter?
- ◆ be a fish that flies or a bird that swims?
- ◆ shout at the darkness or light a candle?



Robert Burns would have loved Zoom

The Blackford Inn's haggis, neeps and tatties set off the 2021 Burns Night and, thanks to our performers, we had a great night of talented tributes to Burns in song, poem, speech and pipes. And we got to see ousrels as ithersee us!

The Blackford Inn (682336) will continue their take-away evening meals service even when the pub is allowed to open up. Their next three-weekly roast is on Easter Day.

Long Tired

We're all long tired.

Exhausted by long days indoors,

Clinging tight to worry, when there's no one else to hold.

We're all long tired.

Fed up with long distance relationships

Conducted down a wire or through a pane of glass

We're all long tired.

The weariness etched on our long faces
As we shimmy past each other on the produce aisle

A raised eyebrow the only acknowledgment
of a long-gone way of being.

We're

All

Long

tired.

Longing for a rest.

And when, at last, these days seem long ago,
We'll take a long hard look at what we have become,
And be thankful for the long view.

We're all long tired.

So be gentle in these days, for time is short.

© Fiona Stewart, Foolproof Creative Arts



Blackford Parish Church

Strip back Christmas and there is Easter at the heart of it. So as a church we're gearing up for our biggest day of the year. Regulations for places of worship are ready to change and we're not yet clear what would be safe, helpful and appropriate from the options open to us.

Our Sunday services and Bible Studies have been on YouTube or Zoom and in print. We'll continue to do this for some time even after we re-open the doors.

Look out for an "X marks the spot" Treasure Hunt and an Easter Journey around the village to experience some of the sights and sounds of that first Easter week.



A reminder:

If the recycling bins at the turning circle are full, please don't leave anything in front of them. There are no bins for wood, garden waste or non-recyclable waste at that point.

The Auchterarder Recycling Centre with all these options is open Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday.

Blackford Community Fund

The next closing date for applications from local groups is 29th March 2021, with decisions announced in June.

Application forms are available from foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available/blackford



Information is also available on the Community Council's website: blackfordcommunitycouncil.org.uk



The Garden is Growing

The Blackford Community Vegetable Garden is expanding in several directions. If you see Landscaping by Wallace hard at work in the church grounds, then David's installing the poly-tunnel made possible by a grant from the Community Fund. "We should be able to bring on our seedlings well, and hope to be able to grow some tomatoes and perhaps other salad vegetables for distribution later in the year."

The Community Garden have also been invited to take on the ground on The Morays overlooking the school field. 9:30am on a Sunday last month was the time to help spread manure on this new development. The plot thickens.

Keep an eye on each of the venues for Mark Nixon, Nicki Sinclair or other volunteers and help the team grow as you learn alongside them.



Blackford Study Group encompasses Blackford Bells, Blackford Crafters, Blackford Sings and a Book Group
If you are interested in taking part in any of these groups, email blackfordcrafters@hotmail.co.uk and your details will be passed to the relevant group leader.

Blackford Sings is a local choir which has been meeting for over 5 years now. Normally gathering in the church each Saturday morning at 10am, we have continued to meet since November on Zoom. The choir is led by a range of professional singers and is part funded by the Blackford Community Fund. We are open to all who love to sing and welcome new members when our next new session starts up, hopefully face to face, in August. Look out for further details ahead or contact us through Blackford Cares or call Kenny Hutton on 01764 682732 for more information.



The good folks of Auchterarder have challenged us to a large game of hide and seek when the restrictions allow. If you'd like to join the team, please get in touch.
Good players are so hard to find.

These questions were all asked and answered in the Blackford Cares Facebook Group recently. Perhaps others will find the answers helpful.



Who is the car valet service that people use in the village?

Grant Blair's Mobile Valeting, 07742 230406

Who can sort my TV aerial; it's bent over with the wind?

Bill Taylor, 07815 639512

Ray at AV It All, 07956 269966, avitall.co.uk

I'm looking for an NHS dentist nearby who is taking on patients. Any ideas/ recommendations?

Infinity Blu, Auchterarder, 01764 664488

Beech Tree Dental Care, Dunblane, 01786 439270

I'm looking for recommendations for a plumber to change a heating radiator.

Graham Keir, Blackford, 01764 682426

Alex Moore, Braco, 07967 646131

Can anyone tell me the window cleaner for the village?

Tony Papa, 07816 279017, tony.papa@hotmail.co.uk

Does anyone know of local MOT centres please?

McNaughton's Garage, Blackford, 01764 682261

Do you know of a good quality supplier and fitter of household carpets who doesn't charge the earth?

Carpet Master, Stirling, 01786 451376

Glenearn Carpets, Perth, 01738 622219

The Carpet Shop, Crieff, 01764 654626

Gleneagles Furniture, Auchterarder, 01764 664030

Can anyone please recommend a chimney sweep?

Central Chimney Sweeping, 0800 999 5225 / 07530 210949

And a builder?

Kevin Moran, Blackford, 07979 455587

David Brown, Firmus Building Services Ltd, 01764 682540

Simon Head Joinery Services, Blackford, 07764 255163

Does anyone know a good personal trainer?

Conor Moran, 07818 453432, conormoranpt@yahoo.com

Blackford Gala 2021

We're no longer planning a Duck Race for April but we are planning that a Gala Week runs in some form culminating in Gala Day on Sunday 13th June. The success of last year's programme encourages us to repeat things like the Senior Citizen's Afternoon Tea, Scarecrows, Windows, Art and Treasure Hunt competitions plus the Bingo, Quiz and Gala Concert. We'll be working on the programme until late-May to reflect what is practical and possible at the time.

We're also looking to appoint a new Gala Queen and Attendants to do duties that week and thereafter such as the 2022 Blackford Highland Games. Girls must either live in the village or go to school in the village. Only names we receive from parents/carers by the 20th April will go in the draws for Queen (P6/S1) or Attendants (P4/P5). Private message the Gala organisers through the Blackford Gala Facebook page or email on gala@blackford.org.uk

We're not out of the woods yet

"We are in a slightly anxious, precarious balance."

Jason Leitch, BBC Radio Scotland's Off the Ball 13/3/21

Hence the caution from most local groups and individuals at this stage. It's frustrating but it's still true to say that
"If it looks normal, we're not doing it safely enough."

Our next newsletter will be in late May. Take care till then!