

Wishing Everyone Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year

Carols around the Christmas tree

PLEASE COME AND JOIN US ON
Wednesday 20th December 2023 at 6:30 pm

for Carols Around the Christmas Tree followed by mince pies and mulled wine for adults, and soft drinks for the children, served in the Learney Hall.

The Christmas Tree, donated by Learney Estate, will be in its usual place outside the Learney Hall, where the Notes from Torphins and the Mid Deeside Church Praise Band will support and complement the communal carol singing.

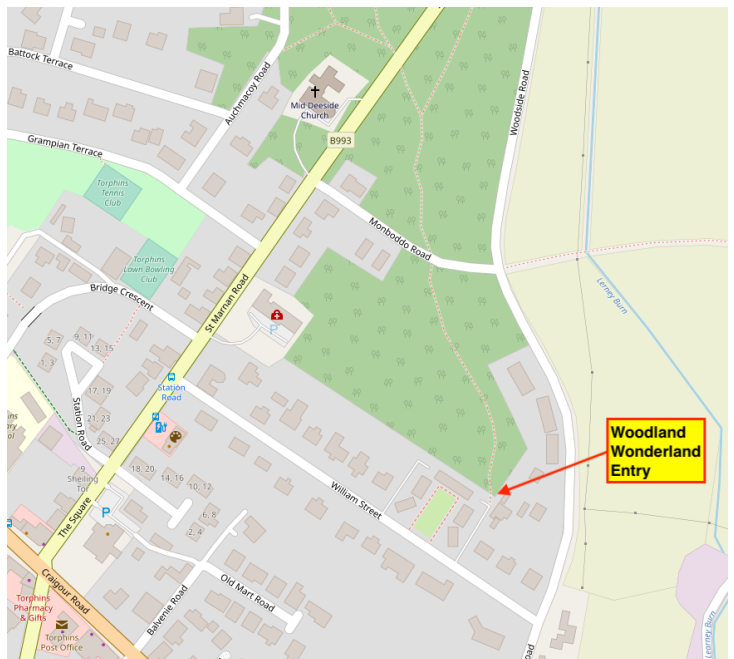
This event is also an opportunity to meet your friends, neighbours and community councillors. Donations to support this event and continued Christmas illuminations in the village will be gratefully received.



Woodland Wonderland and Tractor Run

Torphins Paths Group (TPG) will again be transforming **Torphins Wood** into a Woodland Wonderland. The festive illuminations will be open on Saturday 9th December 2023 through to January 2024, daily from 16:30 to 20:00 hours. Entrance to this spectacular display will be from William Street as shown on the map below.

This year's **Christmas Tractor Run** will take place on 23rd December. The decorated farm machinery will parade around the village finally parking up at the Mid Deeside Church where TPG will provide, for a small charge, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, cold drinks and home bakes from 18:30hrs.



**Enjoy the festivities with
Woodland Wonderland and the
Tractor Run!**

Also at Mid Deeside Church following the tractor run will be a variety of stalls including Great Prize Tombola.

Thanks go to the kind sponsors of this event
Station Garage
The Woodside Veterinary Group.

Further details of these events can be found on the Torphins Community Forum and Torphins Paths Group facebook pages.

Torphins Community Help (TORCH)

Ready to help the community face any winter emergencies

TORCH has been working hard to help make the village more resilient in the face of any potential emergencies. The **Community Refuge**, should the village be affected by a major issue such as a long-term and wide-spread power cut, will be located at the **Mid Deeside Church**. This follows agreement with The Church and installation, and testing, of equipment to ensure the provision of facilities during such events. This refuge will be available to everyone in the community.

A generator, equipment storage container and other essential equipment has been purchased thanks to funding by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks and through the Aberdeenshire Council Marr Area Committee Small Grants Scheme. TORCH would like to thank both organisations for their excellent financial assistance and support.

Many of you will remember Storms Malik and Corrie at the end of January 2022, shortly after TORCH had been formed, and which saw the Learney Hall used as a community refuge for four-days while SSEN teams worked to restore power across the region.

In order for the Learney Hall to meet the requirements for a community refuge major refurbishment is required, including its electric supply which is not capable of being powered by a modern generator. Aberdeenshire Council has plans to upgrade and refurbish the hall although a timescale has still to be confirmed.

We are very lucky and grateful that the Rev Holly Smith and Colin Guy at Mid Deeside Church stepped in to offer an alternative location for a community refuge until the Learney Hall situation is resolved.

Our local Aberdeenshire councillors and various council officers have also provided great advice and support while we went through the planning process for setting up at the church.

A special thanks must also go to members of our community who stepped up to help TORCH when it was needed. They include:

- Kenny Cruickshank and the team at the Station Garage, who helped with temporary storage
- Andrew Fowler at Waulkmill Farm who unloaded the generator when it was delivered to the village
- Nick, Kyle and Cameron Edgar and their team for installing the storage container at the church

These people all selflessly gave up their time to help their community and as a result Torphins is now in a far better position to deal with any potential emergencies.

We have not forgotten about Tornaveen, which is also part of the Torphins Community Council area. During Storms Malik and Corrie, Tornaveen was cut off from Torphins with roads blocked by fallen trees. A smaller generator has been installed at the Tornaveen Hall along with other equipment to help make that part of our community more resilient in the future.

All of this means that if Torphins suffers another wide-spread and long-term power loss in the future, the Mid Deeside Church will be able to open as a community refuge, where residents can get warm shelter, hot drinks, and food and wi-fi access. Tornaveen residents will be able to use their hall if it is required.

TORCH has a list of local volunteers willing to help if the community refuge is opened. We are always looking for more volunteers and the duties at the refuge are very simple in helping people who arrive looking for assistance.

You can follow TORCH's activities on our Facebook page, where we also give advice as part of our #ReadyTorphins campaign to encourage residents to be prepared for winter. There is also information on the Torphins Community Council website, and you can pick up a free copy of the TORCH help guide at Torphins Pharmacy.

Robbie Dow
Chair
TORCH

The TORCH Facebook page also provides some useful information about resilience in the community. <https://www.facebook.com/torch.torphins>

Hardship Fund

The Hardship fund established by the TCC continues to operate. Food vouchers are available and funds are being used to help stock the food pantry at Mid Deeside Church. Logs have also been distributed in the community and continue to be available courtesy of Mar Log Bank. Please get in touch if hardship assistance is required, all communications will be dealt with in the strictest confidence.

Email: admin@torphins.net or Phone: Rev Holly Smith 013398 82915

Please also use these contacts if you are having difficulty in **keeping warm** this winter as some help may be available.

Additional AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for the Village

For some time TCC has felt there was a need for an additional public access AED to supplement the existing two – which are located outside Scotmid, on Beltie Road, and outside the Church, on St Marnan Road. These existing ones are available for public use on a 24 hours basis. There is a third AED (located in the Health Centre) but its availability is limited to Health Centre opening hours. We felt that the best location for this additional AED would be at the east end of the village.

TCC's grateful thanks go to **Woodside Veterinary Practice** for kindly agreeing to "host" the AED, and carry out the installation, and to The Bread of Life for kindly providing us with the finance to purchase the unit. The AED is now installed and operational with its location being to the left of the main entrance door to Woodside Veterinary Practice.



Road Safety in the Village

The potential for poor, **inconsiderate parking practices** in the village continues to be a serious concern repeatedly raised with TCC. The main areas where concern has been expressed are:

Number One : The Primary School. Sadly, parents transferring their children to and from school do not appear to realise the dangers to which they subject their children and others on a daily basis by the chaotic way in which cars are parked on both sides of Beltie Road. At times it can only be described as mayhem . At 3.00pm the scene is exacerbated when the driver of the service bus, (normally a double decker), attempts to reverse down Brebner Place during the turning manoeuvre. The potential danger from this manoeuvre is magnified by the congregation of parents collecting their children. TCC appreciates that there is a distinct lack of white lining adjacent to the junction at the Learney Hall, however common sense should prevail at all times.

At time of writing TCC understands that consultation is taking place between School Management, Aberdeenshire Council Roads department and Police Scotland, in an attempt to better manage the situation. There is an adequate parking facility at the South end of the football park which could be used by parents taking/ collecting their children to and from school. It is only a short walk to Bridge Crescent and the school entrance.

'Park and Stride' should be the motto to adopt .

Number Two : Parking at SCOTMID leaves a lot to be desired. Motorists continually break the rules by parking too close to the junction with St Marnan Road. Also some motorists continue to park against the flow of traffic. Whilst this is not illegal during the day , IT IS at night . As with the school issue , TCC understands that SCOTMID has expressed concerns over inconsiderate parking, and that discussions have been held between Aberdeenshire Council Roads department and Police Scotland over the matter.

As a general reminder: the **Highway Code** states "DO NOT stop or park - opposite or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space"



Hill of Fare Windfarm

The proposal to locate a windfarm on the Hill of Fare has caused significant concern locally and has been the focus of Torphins Community Council's work over many months. The formal application to the Scottish Government's Energy Consents Unit (ECU) is expected imminently, later than originally advised by the developer.

The proposal is located on land owned by Dunecht Estates and is being taken forward by RES, a multi-national renewable energy company established in 1981. The company claims to "...consult with care, collaborating with everyone from landowners to investors to drive the best outcomes for all", a statement of priorities which may explain why there has been very little positive engagement with TCC or the other community councils around the Hill of Fare.

TCC has not, at the time of writing, adopted a formal position on the application; it would be improper to do so before the application is lodged. However, we have reflected the views of the community in our communications with the developer and have participated in two community consultations jointly with the other community councils. These have shown that around 75% of respondents oppose the development, while 11% are in favour.

The proposal, to date, is for 16 turbines, 180m-200m in height on the Hill of Fare, which rises 250m above the surrounding landscape. The application is likely to include access roads, a battery storage facility and pylons to connect to the National Grid. As the windfarm will be visible across a very wide area, its impact will be significant for the 13,500 people living around the hill.

The survey demonstrated that as well as concern over the visual impacts on the River Dee Special Landscape Area, there are real concerns over future access to and enjoyment of the hill, over water supplies, noise, habitat and biodiversity, archaeology and safety.

Windfarm developers are required to offer 'community benefits' to communities affected by their developments and to devise these after engagement with those communities. To date TCC has not been involved in any discussion over RES' proposals on this. The package currently on offer is worth £5000 per megawatt (or equivalent) of installed capacity per annum, amounting to around £600,000 to be shared by all the communities impacted. This may include a scheme to offer an annual discount to electricity bills of those properties closest to the Hill of Fare, but this suggestion has not yet been defined or confirmed.

It will be vitally important for everyone to respond to the application when it is submitted. We will do all we can to give details of how to do so when the application is lodged. One of the reasons given for the recent approval of the Fetteresso windfarm was the limited number of letters of representation received. Whatever your views, please do take the time to let the decision-makers know what you think.

Representations will need to be made to the ECU and to Aberdeenshire Council. The council will not determine the application but an objection from them will trigger a public inquiry.

This is a hugely important issue for this community and TCC will do everything possible to keep everyone updated on developments.

Further information about this issue can be found at:

The RES website <https://hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk>

The Hill of Fare Windfarm Information Group (HOFWIG) website <https://hilloffare.org>

Torphins Bus Service

Please use this service if you want it to continue to be available.

Since the last (Winter 2022) issue of the Newsletter some changes have been made to the bus timetable and routes serving Torphins and local destinations. The initial impression is that these changes appear to have improved alignment of the services timetable with community requirements.

The Torphins to and from Banchory route is served by some 201, and the 202 services. Onward and return travel between Torphins, Lumphanan and Tarland is then provided by a linking service provided by Aberdeenshire Council (Service 212). No charge is made for use of this linking service.



TPG WINS ABERDEENSHIRE UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND GRANT

Torphins Paths Group (TPG) has been awarded a grant of £84,000 for the construction of the next section of the proposed path to connect Torphins with Banchory. The Aberdeenshire UK SPF grant will enable the group to award the contract, following a competitive tender process, to McIntosh Plant Hire (Aberdeen) Ltd to construct the new bridge and path at Dam Wood. This 460m extension of the path completed last year at Easter Beltie will cross the Black Linn Burn with a bridleway standard bridge, and traverse the north west of Dam Wood to provide a safe and accessible route all the way to the Glassel road. Construction is planned to start in the near future.

Discussions are ongoing with landowners for the route from Torphins to Easter Beltie, which we plan as a vital next phase. Beyond Glassel Road a landowner has rejected access for our latest proposed route. This was developed in conjunction with a local resident and member of Inchmarlo, Brathens and Glassel Community Council. We continue the search for a viable route past Glassel and West Brathens with Kynoch Plantation being one potential option.

We are delighted with the success of the Easter Beltie path, which is proving extremely popular with locals and visitors of all abilities. The recent flood damage at the midway crossing to the wetlands is being repaired with a more robust finish.

Path to Lumphanan

A revised route each side of the Beltie Burn crossing has now been mapped to eliminate excessive gradients on the proposed path. When documentation is complete by our consultant CRC, we will be able to formalise landowner agreement and finally submit the planning application.

TPG Seeking Volunteers

We are always keen to recruit additional volunteers for our regular Tuesday work sessions, or for new weekend working, and to assist with any of the other important activities of fund raising, grant application, planning work, web and social media maintenance, etc, etc. Volunteers have conducted path maintenance days over summer and are now back completing the refurbishment of the Monboddo to Carigmyle West Lodge path, with much appreciated financial support from **Bread of Life** and **Magic Little Grants**. The very successful TPG plant sales by volunteers at Torphins Gala raised a fantastic £462.

To volunteer contact us through:

<https://www.torphinspathsgroup.org>
<https://www.facebook.com/torphinspathsgroup>

Donations

We would be grateful for your support in our several projects to benefit the local community and visitors to the area.

Go to our donation page at:

<https://www.torphinspathsgroup.org/donation>

Or scan this code to go directly.

A Gift Aid certificate is also available there.



Kincardine O'Neil Twinning Association - Visit from France

The Kincardine O'Neil Twinning Association, which has several committee and other members living in Torphins, is delighted that our Twinning friends from Thun Saint Martin in north east France plan to visit the area in May 2024. This will be the first visit since 2019, covid having got in the way. The association is on the look out for new members who wish to participate in the activities of the group, who may be interested to host visitors from Thun Saint Martin, and in alternate years visit Thun Saint Martin. No requirement to speak French, just a desire to widen horizons in the company of like-minded people here and from France.

For more information contact the Secretary at kontwinning@gmail.com

Christmas Tree Festival

Mid Deeside Church are planning to host the Christmas Tree Festival again this year (subject to sufficient support in the form of entries). We are seeking individuals and groups who are prepared to put up a tree in the Church. This is a great way to connect with our community, and the local schools and nursery children love these events.

Set up will be on 16th December and viewings will be on Sunday 17th December from 2:30 to 4:30pm and Saturday 23rd December from 10:00 to 12:00pm and 5:30 to 8:00pm.

Please contact Karen Whyatt for further information and to register.

kazawh@icloud.com
tel: 07730 341664



A letter from our Chairman

I was honoured to be re-elected as the Chairman of Torphins Community Council at the AGM in June and thus able to continue working with the members, all of whom are deeply committed to the well-being of this community.

It will come as no surprise to learn that the greatest challenge we face is the proposed wind farm on the Hill of Fare. At the time of writing, TCC has taken no formal position on the proposal but we have worked with other community councils around the hill to get a clear picture of residents' opinions.

We participated in two surveys, both conducted after the developer presented details of the application and which show that around 75% of respondents are opposed to the proposal, with around 11% in favour. The second survey showed that many of those who had been undecided are now opposed. TCC will of course take these data into account when coming to a decision on whether to object to the proposal or not. We remain concerned that the developers have not held any direct discussions with TCC on an application which will have a major impact on all of us.

The application will be submitted to the Scottish Government very soon and it will be important for everyone to take the time to make representations on the wind farm. Details of how to do so will be published along with details of the application itself.

We have of course considered a wide range of other issues, including road defects, speeding traffic, parking, domestic waste collections and local planning applications. TCC worked with Aberdeenshire Council to arrange the planting of an oak tree by the Lord Lieutenant of Aberdeenshire, to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee and the life of Her Late Majesty.

Through the dedicated work of Eric Day, plans for this year's Christmas Lights are well advanced.

Community Councils play an important part in the life of any community. Torphins is fortunate to have people who are willing to commit their time and energy to furthering the work of TCC. I would particularly wish to thank our Secretary, Will McLean, for his unstinting work over the past year.

On your behalf I thank all the members for the huge contribution they have made to the community, and also thank Cllr Sarah Brown and Cllr Anouk Kloppert for their support.

With kind regards

Peter Argyle

Peter Argyle

email: admin@torphins.net