

Newsletter No.4
Winter 2022

Wishing Everyone
Merry Christmas and a Happy,
Healthy New Year

Carols around the Christmas tree

Please come and join us on **Wednesday 21st December 2022 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

Reaching beyond path building and maintenance The Torphins Paths Group is organising the popular Woodland Wonderland event for the third year this Christmas, providing fun and entertainment for all the family through the festive period. Expect enhanced woodland illuminations commencing 10th December until early January. More information will be available at torphinspathsgroup.org.

Donations through the website or at the event are welcome to support the work of Torphins Paths Group and event costs.



Torphins Community Help (TORCH)

Storm Arwen in November 2021 revealed substantial inadequacies in TCC's resilience plan for providing community support during such events. In order to be better prepared to respond to future events, TORCH was formed as a sub-group of the TCC. The substantially revised resilience plan developed by TORCH will provide help to all within the TCC area covering Torphins, Tornaveen and Campfield.

TORCH has a core committee of seven plus approximately 30 additional volunteers who have signed up to be available to assist as and when needed. TORCH's aim is to help build resilience in the community and offer support to vulnerable community members if needed.

The first test for the volunteers was during and after Storms Malik and Corrie. Fortunately electricity was available at the Learney Hall and so TORCH volunteers were able to use the facilities to provide hot food and drinks, emergency supplies, and a warm place to wait for food orders from the mobile catering van organised by SSEN. Volunteers also delivered hot food and drinks, hot water bottles and blankets to those unable to get to the Learney Hall. As word got out, people came from surrounding areas and Torphins featured on national media as an example of how communities were coming together to cope with the effects of the storms.

Following the activities during the winter storms of 2021/22 TORCH applied for and received a grant from SSEN. This will be used to purchase a generator to be installed at the Mid Deeside Church in Torphins. This location will be the designated "place of refuge" in case of similar events affecting the community. It is currently expected that this function will eventually be fulfilled by the Learney Hall following upgrade of the electrics and facilities by Aberdeenshire Council. A generator will also be installed at Tornaveen Community Hall to facilitate use as a place of refuge if, as during the last winter storms, access to Torphins is obstructed.

TORCH has now substantially revised the Community Resilience Plan, incorporating lessons learnt from earlier events, and acquired additional equipment and supplies to support emergency response.

Further information is available on the TCC website <https://www.torphins.net/torch> where you will find the TORCH Guide on how to prepare for an emergency and what to do if it happens, and the revised Community Resilience Plan. The Torphins village notice board (opposite the pharmacy) displays further information about community resilience and will be used to post information about access to help in the case of power cuts and disruption to communications.

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

Hardship Fund

In response to the cost-of-living crisis, Torphins Community Council has obtained further funding from The Robertson Trust and Scotmid to extend the hardship scheme originally offered during the lockdowns. This is aimed at helping residents within the TCC's boundary by providing food vouchers. If you or anyone you know is experiencing severe economic hardship and needs assistance, please email or phone using the details below. Name and details will be kept in strictest confidence and a random number will be assigned for all internal correspondence.

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

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



Welcome Booklet

The next edition of the Village Welcome and Information Booklet is due to be published shortly. It contains a little history, general information, important numbers and contact details. If there are any businesses, services or groups that would like to be included free of charge, please email details to admin@torphins.net. The booklet is funded by Torphins Community Council and distributed for free, copies once printed can normally be found in Scotmid and Platform 22, and if you let us know of anyone new to the village, we can drop one round to their house!

This booklet can also be viewed on the TCC website torphins.net.

Hill of Fare Windfarm

Most households within the TCC area will have received notification of the proposal to construct a wind farm, comprising 17 wind turbines each 250 metre high, on the summit plateau of the Hill of Fare. The current status of this proposal is that RES (Renewable Energy Systems Ltd), have been selected by Dunecht estates to construct this wind farm.



Simulated view from Woodside Road, Torphins, with scaled turbines shown as proposed

RES have subsequently prepared a comprehensive “scoping document” which can be viewed online at <http://www.hilloffare-windfarm.co.uk> . More information from another perspective can be found at <https://hilloffare.org> .

In order to accurately represent the views of the community TCC prepared a short survey form which was available at the exhibition staged by RES in the Learney Hall. This form is also currently accessible on the TCC web site <https://www.torphins.net> and facebook page [Torphins Community Council](https://www.facebook.com/TorphinsCommunityCouncil).

While acknowledging the importance and urgency in fulfilling the commitment to green energy, the majority of submissions received to date have objected to the project, principally on grounds of visual impact, noise and effects on the local environment. The consensus appears to be that more wind turbines are necessary but their location should be offshore and not dictated by landowners who are fortunate enough to own a piece of elevated land.

This form was also distributed by Midmar, Crathes and Echt community councils which have boundaries overlapping the proposed windfarm site. In total 278 responses have been received with results shown in the table below:

Opinion	Percent	Subtotal
In favour	14%	39
Object	63%	63
Neutral	8%	23
Undecided	14%	40
TOTAL	100%	278

A further critical opportunity to express views on this project will occur when RES submit a formal planning application to proceed with the project. Notification of this will be on the Scottish Government Energy Consents Unit website, the Aberdeenshire Council Website, and the TCC website once the application is announced. Approval or rejection of the application will be decided by the Scottish Government, due to the magnitude of the project, and NOT Aberdeenshire Council.



Proposal for TCC boundary extension

As a result of Lumphanan Community Council (LCC) being unable to muster the required number of members to operate, Aberdeenshire Council have approached TCC with a request to consider a proposal to combine the LCC area with the TCC area.

TCC agreed to a public consultation on the matter, which was conducted in the Torphins and Lumphanan areas over several weeks to 18th November.

This matter is as yet unresolved, but TCC has a major concern that a combined CC would not have adequate participation from the Lumphanan community to ensure a balanced approach for the whole area and to spread the workload.

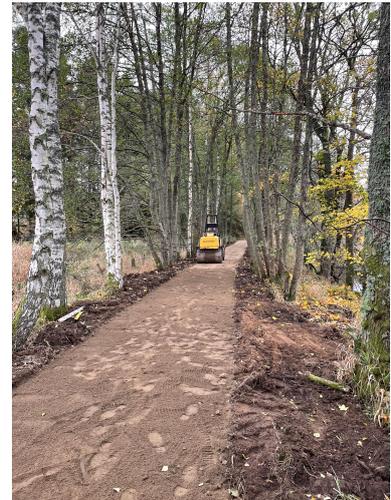
The result of Aberdeenshire Council's "Torphins and Lumphanan Community Councils Boundary Survey", newly published, shows a split of 47.2% of people in favour of the amalgamation and 52.8% opposed, from the 53 responses to this question. Based on this response it is understood that Aberdeenshire Council are to try a further attempt to reinstate Lumphanan CC.

Road Safety in the Village

A concern that is frequently raised at TCC meetings is that careless parking in the centre of the village will eventually be the cause of an accident. The two main points raised are that vehicles frequently cross the road to park so that they are on the wrong side of the road for the direction of travel, making it hazardous pulling out into oncoming traffic, and secondly, parking too close to the corner at the crossroads in the centre of the village, blocking the tactile paving crossings and obstructing the sight line along Craigour Road for vehicles exiting The Square. A white line next to the kerb indicates the area where parking is unsafe.

Torphins Paths Group (TPG)

The ambitious project by Torphins Paths Group to create a multi user path connecting Torphins with Banchory is beginning to take shape with the construction of a 1.4km path at the Easter Beltie river restoration site.



New Path at Easter Beltie | Winding through wooded area 50m - 100m west of Black Linn Burn at Dam Wood

After years of planning, work began on 27 October to develop a 2m wide path from the new car park under construction at Easter Beltie to the Black Linn Burn at Dam Wood. The project, which includes the provision of signage and benches, is funded by an Improving Public Access grant of £56,515, won by Torphins Paths Group and supplemented by 10% additional funding from TPG, plus £3,950 addition toward the signage and benches from Marr Area of Aberdeenshire Council. McIntosh Plant Hire (Abdn) Ltd is performing the earthworks on site, to be complete before end of year, with TPG volunteers installing the signage and benches.

The route will be enhanced by information panels about the river restoration and the history of the area, which are being developed in cooperation with the Dee Catchment Partnership manager who led the river restoration.

The next stage will be to construct a 450m path, including a new multi user bridge at Black Linn Burn, through Dam Wood to the Glassel road. After many months of negotiation the access agreement with Forestry and Land Scotland is ready to sign for Torphins Paths Group to commence construction when funding has been achieved.

Torphins Paths Group has reached agreement in principal with several landowners for a safe path route from Torphins to Easter Beltie while continuing to pursue agreement with the landowner of one section critical to the project.

Since founding of Torphins Paths Group in 2017 an enthusiastic team of volunteers has already developed around 1.6km of paths in Torphins area to open up 5km of accessible paths.



Torphins Growing Living Greenspaces Project

A small team of Torphins residents have taken up Aberdeenshire Council's offer of increasing the biodiversity of our local greenspaces by planting native bulbs, wildflowers, trees, shrubs & fruit trees/bushes in council owned land in Torphins.

- Bulbs have been planted, with the rest of the planting taking place in the Spring.
- Residents near to planting sites will be informed of the plans directly and have a chance to comment.
- Planting plans will also be available to view on the TCC website and information posted on the Torphins Community Forum facebook page.

To find out more about the Greenspace project in general visit <https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/environment/greenspace/> .

To join the Torphins Greenspaces team or help with the planting, please contact Jayne Clarke (email at bridge_house_clarkes@hotmail.com).

A letter from our Chairman

It was a great honour to be elected as the new Chairman of Torphins Community Council at the meeting in November. I look forward to working with the members, all of whom are highly committed to the welfare and interests of our community.

I would like to thank Andrew Macpherson who stood down after several years in November. Andrew has been a dedicated and hardworking Chairman; all of us living in and around Torphins owe him a great deal. On your behalf therefore, heartfelt thanks to Andrew.

It would be remiss of me not to recognise Eric Day who was presented with a long-service award in recognition of 20 years' service to the Community Council. Eric has acted not only as Treasurer for more years than anyone can remember, keeping the accounts accurately but has also been deeply involved in many key projects, particularly the Christmas Lights. He was, in addition, instrumental in reviving TCC when membership dropped away. My sincere thanks to Eric for his long, distinguished - and continuing - service to the community.

Your community council is facing some real challenges at the moment and you can be proud of the way members are responding to them. Of particular concern is the proposal from Dunecht Estates and RES for the windfarm on the Hill of Fare. This is at the consultation stage at the moment but there is no doubt that should the development go ahead, it will have far-reaching consequences for all of us.

We have also had to respond to the proposal to incorporate the village of Lumphanan within the TCC area. Members have real concerns about this and do not accept this is the best outcome for either village.

TCC actively supports the work of TORCH. A huge amount of work is being done by these volunteers to prepare for emergencies and to build community resilience to the benefit of all.

The Community Council exists to give a voice to the people it serves, with meetings attended by our local Councillors. Issues can be – and are – raised with them or by TCC directly with the various authorities working in our area. We are always pleased to hear your concerns and will do whatever we can to resolve them.

Finally my thanks to all of the members of TCC, for all you do to support this amazing community.

With kind regards

Peter Argyle

Peter Argyle

email: admin@torphins.net



Torphins Bus Service Use it or loose it!

The A2B dial-a-bus service between Lumphanan/Torphins and Banchory on Tuesdays and Wednesdays is operated by Council minibus in-between school transport journeys, as per the times in the timetable below. The A2B service is free to use by anyone in Lumphanan or Torphins who needs transport but passengers must book to travel. As the service is currently used by a very small number of people the Council is considering whether to reduce the service to one day per week and redeploy the bus. The Council has another A2B service outside Deeside which is very busy and often has to turn down transport requests so the Council is looking for a solution to this problem.

TCC strongly recommends the Lumphanan/Torphins bus service continues to be available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The bus is only available in-between school times, and time is needed for the driver's lunch break, but we are advised there could be some leeway in amending the times and potentially adding an extra journey.

Please contact admin@torphins.net if you have suggestions or comments regarding the schedule for this service.



A2B dial-a-bus

Lumphanan – Torphins - Banchory

Timetable Guide – Every Tuesday & Wednesday

Lumphanan	10:00	Banchory	12:00
Torphins	10:15	Torphins	12:15
Banchory	10:30	Lumphanan	12:30

This service, operated by Aberdeenshire Council, is open to anyone who needs door-to-door transport.

All trips must be pre-booked.

You can ask to be dropped off and picked up anywhere in Banchory.

For further information call A2B on
01467 535333 and choose option 4 for general enquiries.

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

The timetable for the 201 service operated by Stagecoach is available in active digital format to download. A link to this can be found on the TCC website www.torphins.net and on the TCC facebook page.

