



Eagle



The magazine of the Church of St John the Evangelist

Forfar

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“Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?”

- Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 15, Verse 4



Communication

As well as our own website address for St John's www.stjohnsforfar.co.uk you can also find information at the following on-line resources:

Inspires Online <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/publications/inspires/>

Inspires Online is the free e-newsletter from the Scottish Episcopal Church – to subscribe please use the address above and then the sign-up box on the footer of that page.

Pisky.scot – <http://pisky.scot/> This provides the latest in thinking and discussion within the SEC. Previously Inspires Magazine offered a forum for information, discussion and debate. Now pisky.scot allows for that same conversation to be held more publicly and with the invitation to comment and get involved.

Diocesan website address <https://standrews.anglican.org/> – from there you can access all the Diocesan resources and subscribe to the Diocesan e-

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Each Springtime as I contemplate the pruning needed in the garden I have to check with the books whether it's the apple trees or the plum trees that get pruned now or in the summer, which of the clematis are pruned hard, a little, or not at all. Sometimes I end up saying sorry to some unsuspecting plant!

Of most benefit to me (and probably the plants) is sitting in quiet solitude just looking at the garden and not doing a whole lot. In those moments it seems much easier to shed my "leaves". All too often I, we, clutch our camouflage—the person we present to the world, to our own selves, and even to God. We are unwilling to shed our false selves, to let go, to live vulnerably and authentically. Sitting in silence helps me see my "leaves" of choice are busyness and productivity, drive and efficiency, achievement and success. It is easy to simply cling on to the identity we meticulously craft over the years.

I read recently of a Japanese pruning method called the "open centre pruning" of trees that creates uncluttered space and serenity in the garden as a whole. When a Japanese gardener "prunes open," he or she cuts away not only dead branches and foliage, but also often a number of perfectly healthy branches that detract from the beauty inherent in the tree's essential structure. Pruning open allows us to see up, out, and beyond the trees to the sky, creating a sense of spaciousness and letting light into the garden. It also enables an individual tree to flourish by removing complicating elements, simplifying structure, and revealing its essence. The process of pruning open turns the tree inside out, so to speak, revealing the beautiful design inherent within it.

It got me to thinking about us with all our leaves cloaking us in a façade of protection, our truest, most authentic selves obscured beneath a tangled bramble of false security. Yet God desires us to live like the Japanese trees that have been open pruned, our true essence revealed and flourishing, our true self front and centre, secure and thriving. God yearns for us to live wholeheartedly and truthfully as the unique, beautiful, beloved individuals God created us to be. Most of all, God's deepest desire is for us to know God, to root our whole selves in God like a tree rooted by a stream, and to know God's deep, abiding love for us.

In that intimate place with God we can live more compassionately and closely with those around us. They in turn help as we glimpse God through them and they might just glimpse God through us.

With love

Elaine



Murton Trust for Education and the Environment managing Murton Farm, Tearoom and Nature Reserve

Murton is a Scottish charity with a dual educational and environmental purpose. We are situated on a former quarry just outside Forfar and manage a thriving nature reserve, visitor farm and tearoom set in 100 acres. 2021 saw us celebrate our 20th anniversary as an organisation. Our aspiration as a charity is to enrich people's lives by using our site to its full potential. We provide our unique environment as an educational centre that offers a positive impact on all ages. We aim to be a thriving and sustainable charity valued in the community and recognised nationally. With education and environment as core principles of our organisation we work hard to have sustainability in mind with everything we do.

Murton's mission is to provide a unique environment in which children, young people and adults can learn and develop skills for life.

The specific aims of Murton are:

- To provide educational opportunities that encourage learning and developing skills for life.

- To maintain and establish a thriving nature reserve that encourages access to the outdoors.

- To maintain and develop strong connections with our community through our leadership, work and on our site.

- To effectively run a visitor farm and tearoom that offers a recreational and leisure facility, which generates income to support our educational provision.

In the late 1960s our two founding trustees, Caroline and Michael Hill lived in an adjoining property and bought the farm that is now Murton's site. At that time it was known as Murton Farm and was a mixed arable and livestock farm. The land continued to be farmed by the resident tenant farmers until Aggregate Industries approached the owners about the possibility of quarrying at Murton. It was agreed at the end of the sand and gravel extraction that the whole area would be restored to the highest environmental standard.

Over a period of 12 years different areas of our nature reserve were quarried and restored. The Home Loch, one of the most established areas on the reserve was first to be landscaped and planted with trees. The area that is now the visitor farm was the last to be completed.

From the beginning Murton has had a clear educational and environmental purpose. This came from Caroline and Michael's own interests with Michael particularly interested in environmental matters and Caroline interested in education.

Murton is very clear on the educational opportunities we can provide to our community from those most in need, to those that have skills to share with others. We run a year round education and volunteering programme for young people aged over 14, have placements for adult volunteers and also support our wider community in accessing both practical skills experiences and access to environmental education through our nature reserve.

The educational offering at Murton is always tailored to the needs of the visiting schools, community

basic education, while promoting life long learning. The educational work of the Trust allows all participants, particularly young people to thrive and succeed in an enjoyable and beautiful natural environment. Regardless of the reason for visiting, we promote the benefits of being active, learning new practical skills, respect for the countryside and benefits to mental and physical wellbeing, while striving for personal development in all that we offer.

When volunteers and school students visit our site, they help our skilled and qualified staff to maintain and enhance our nature reserve to the highest standard for all our visitors. The events and activities carried out on our site encourage an appreciation of the outdoors and ensures children, young people and adults will learn and develop skills for life.

2021 was another challenging year for our community. Many families and individuals continued to reconnect with nature and found solace in the tranquillity of our natural spaces. Our nature reserve was the perfect place for visitors to reaffirm a love for nature or to take first steps in understanding the natural beauty around us.

With regards to sustainability, our own site has a 6kw wind turbine that connects to our tearoom. We also have a bank of solar panels on our office building. The solar panels have been on our building for 20 years and our turbine on site for 11 years now. We have been passionate about renewable and sustainable energy and happy to share our experiences with other businesses. Our wind generates approximately 3500kWh each year and solar generates 4000kWh each year. Our visitor farm is made from sustainable materials where possible and we try hard to limit the plastic toys and equipment that are used by our visitors. Our tearoom recycles as much as possible, buys local and encourages visitors to take home surplus ordered food rather than waste on site. Over the last three years we have planted 250 trees and hedge plants, on average, each year. Our work on our nature reserve also ensures we maintain and expand our wildflower meadows and help nature working to establish new or improved habitats for the many species that make Murton their home.

With high footfall on site we work hard to share information and educate our visitors. We also want to promote activities and learnings that can be replicated at home. One example of this is that we run many public engagement sessions. Building bird boxes and bug hotels has been incredibly popular. During 2021 we have placed 30 bird boxes out on our own site and provided more than 200 to our community. Sustainable goals must now be a priority for all businesses and organisations. We are fortunate to have a large site that helps us meet our goals but this also comes with responsibility. We are happy to learn more, adapt and continue to change our practices to meet new guidance and to ensure we are being environmentally responsible in our activities.



A Winter Walk

From one stretch of my usual country walk near my home, I have a beautiful view of Cat Law, the hill which dominates the landscape around Forfar and Kirriemuir. Strictly speaking, this is the Cat Law 'cluster', a group of hills comprising Long Goat, the Crandard and Cat Law, which is the highest. At 2,201 feet, it comes under the classification of a 'Graham' - for those who do not know—not quite a 'Munro'.

Last week I contemplated it, covered in snow and gleaming in the sunshine. A plan formulated in my mind to mount an expedition and go up to see what it was like up there. I had been up St. Arnold's Seat recently and while sitting (freezing) having my lunch on the summit, I received weather warnings on my phone about storms Dudley and Franklin, which were to follow hot on the heels of one another. Storm Franklin broke on Sunday, 20th February and the wind was still storm force when I resolved to make my ascent on Monday 21st. The BBC weather forecast professed a temperature of 7 to 8 degrees and sunshine, with the wind set to moderate later in the afternoon.

I usually park my car at the gatehouse to Balitore Castle, and when I arrived at about 1.30 pm it was 'blowing a hooley' and the car dashboard display was showing a temperature of 2.5 degrees. I decided to sit in the car and eat part of my lunch before setting off—it was already a long time since breakfast! I had been fearful of encountering lambing sheep on the hill, but there was no sign of any livestock. The farmer must have taken them in owing to all the pastures being covered with snow.

Shortly after the second gate, I met a young man coming down with his dog. The young man was very tall, and looked very cool with his long hair tied up in a topknot. Both he and the dog (a springer spaniel) were friendly and we stopped for a (brief) chat on account of the cold. He told me that he had gone up in the hope of getting some photographs of the snow, but that the wind was rapidly blowing it all away. We agreed that in view of the deteriorating weather forecast for the rest of the week, Monday was the day it had to be, in spite of the gale.

The wind was already gale force, but as soon as I got higher up and out of the shelter of the neighbouring hill, I could barely stand. For once, I was glad for the weight of my rucksack to hold me upright. Progress was *very* slow—not only on account of the wind, but the drifting snow had filled in the track—which made it the deepest part. I was glad that my fellow hikers had left a trail of footprints for me to follow and was often reduced to stepping in them, imitating the squire in the "Good King Wenceslas" carol. The human had frequently deviated into the heather, obviously to get a better grip, but walking on heather is very strenuous and I was intrigued to see that the dog had stuck to the track. He either found it easier, or was following some scent or other.

After a couple of hours of struggling, I sighted the fence which signalled a shortcut to the summit. This meant that I was very close to the top. At times I hung on to the wire fence and used it to pull myself along, occasionally plunging into a snowdrift up to my waist!

At last, I sighted the 'trig' point. And the shelters came into view.

There are three shelters on the summit of Cat Law. They are built in the form of a stone igloo, and have no roof, but are open to the elements. In winter conditions they fill up with snow and it began to occur to me that I might not be able to use them to get out of the wind. On arrival they were, as predicted, full of snow, but the young man who had been up there before me had managed to dig out enough room in the largest one for someone to sit down. How he had managed this, I can't imagine, and it obviously wasn't the work of a dog!

Safely ensconced, I attempted to take one or two photos but within minutes my hands were frozen and I had to put gloves back on to eat the remainder of my lunch and drink some welcome cups of tea from my flask. The snow had filled in the spaces between the stones, so it was actually quite cosy.



Nevertheless, I soon felt chilled sitting still and decided to head down. I managed to get a shot of the Grampians in the distance before the battery in my phone ceased to function.



This was the point at which I realised that I had strayed from the path, and no longer knew where it was. I have been lost in a blizzard on Cat Law before, and tried to repress the sensation of mounting panic. However, it was a bright, sunny day, and climbing back up a bit, I caught sight of the track snaking away below me. As I headed down towards it, it occurred

to me that I might have engineered a generous shortcut. Almost immediately after this, the wind moderated to practically nothing and the remainder of the walk was completed in warm sunshine.

(Ed.)

Caring For God's Creation

As the days start to lengthen our thoughts may be turning to the garden. The Royal Horticultural Society recently published five tips to help with addressing the climate crisis. The full article can be found at <https://www.rhs.org.uk/gardening-for-the-environment>

- Plant in layers: trees, shrubs, perennials, ground cover, will become a mini carbon sink
- Plant permanently: the more the soil is disturbed, the more carbon may be released
- Love your shrubs: shrubberies and hedgerows lock in atmospheric carbon
- Work with your garden: grow plants in the right conditions, and they need less additions
- Design close to home: native plants are less "needy" than non-native

Shared Worship for Holy Week 2022

We are delighted this year that St John's and St Margaret's, Forfar will share their worship as below:

Monday 11th April, 5-5.30pm – Evening Prayer – Lady Chapel, St John's

Tuesday 12th April, 5-5.30pm – Evening Prayer – St Margaret's, Forfar

Wednesday 13th April, 10.15-10.45am – Communion – Lady Chapel, St John's – followed by tea/coffee in the Choir Vestry

Maundy Thursday 14th April, 5-8pm – Fellowship meal (simple family dinner) followed by symbolic foot washing and Communion – St Margaret's Hall, Forfar

Friday 15th April, 2-3pm – The Liturgy of Good Friday (no Communion) – Lady Chapel, St John's

Easter Sunday 17th April, 8am – 'Dawn' Service – followed by hot bacon rolls and pancakes at St Margaret's [covid allowing]

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Lay Rep Report from Synod

This was my first ever real view into the workings of our Church of St. John's in the Diocese of St. Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane. What I did like about it was the way the Bishop's Secretary and the Diocesan Digital Missioner, with the Bishop guided us through every stage of the meeting, smooth as anything and all on Zoom.

The day of the Diocesan Synod was a lovely sunny Saturday and there was I sitting looking at a screen and trying to concentrate when I spotted Jenny from St Kessog's, Auchterarder who went to Iona with us - memories from long ago!

Bishop Ian started our Diocesan Synod with a Eucharist. The Dean, the Very Rev Graham Taylor gave the address, and the reader was a new Rector, Rev Jon Connell from Aberfoyle and Callander.

There was a welcome to all the Synod's guests and the Church of Scotland representative, Rev John Murdoch, who is moving to Galloway, gave a short report on how he had enjoyed working with the Cathedral and all the SEC clergy in Perth.

The Dean welcomed us new members.

Then came the time for me to vote yes, no or abstain for the various appointments to which ever committee for another year or so!

Brendon Grimley gave a thorough financial report, though he lost me completely! But the costs were more than the income, so I did know that in all the churches all of us need to give more. The Bishop thanked Brendon for his report.

Next was Bishop Ian's Charge to Synod. He said despite differences between denominations, we are all one church. He talked about the changes to the church following Covid and it will be up to each Rector and congregation to decide on the way forward in their church supported by the Diocese.

There was a session on Climate Change. Reduce our carbon, reuse things, reduce our waste, recycle. I thought we did very well in St. John's at least Carol does! Cardboard is taken to the skips, crisp packets to East & Old. I am good with books, I read then pass to my niece and she recycles onto her friend. All congregations were encouraged to register with Eco Congregations Scotland. We were to have a look on the Diocesan website and the climate change page. There was sharing of experiences across the Diocese with video clips from St. Margaret Tayport with Rev Kathy Barrable and them just starting their commitment to carbon net zero. St. Mary's Aberfoyle talked about installing solar panels and air source pumps in their Rectory. Christopher Roads their property convenor said all this needs lots of planning. St. Andrew's, St Andrews' young people gave a presentation too and the girls presented themselves well. We can all do something about climate change - have a look on the Diocese's YouTube channel <https://youtube.com/channel/UCORGrWfiGDTDWB-t0mwaH7g>. One member of Synod commented that meeting via zoom meant no carbon from cars getting to Perth and perhaps it would be good to continue on zoom. The Bishop indicated that most if not all Diocesan meetings are now on Zoom or some combination of in-person and Zoom. People will be asked before next year's Synod whether we should meet together or gather via Zoom.

Lots of chat and ideas on the Fife Pilgrim Way. The Church of Scotland church at Ceres was being renovated to accommodate pilgrims and walkers. Working with the SEC, they have £16,000 budget for a Pastor for the Pilgrims to help develop this idea.

Ecumenical work was shared by those in the Stirling area. In Forfar we have Forfar Action of Churches Together which should be a support to us all not just clergy. We were reminded that the Diocesan web page had different stories and it's not just for looking for the online worship services.

Two things came for discussion and voting that will be taken to General Synod in June 2022. Motion 1 – 'Alternative use at Offertory' – was the suggestion to include the alternative prayers for the offertory where it comes in the Blue Book and not at the back. This was carried 96% to 5%.

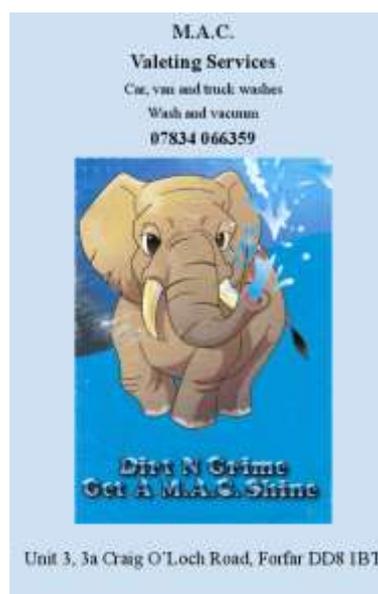
Motion 2 – That Liliias Graham be included in the Scottish Episcopal Church Calendar on account of her faith-filled life and example. This was carried 70% to 2% with 28% abstentions.

Bishop Ian closed the meeting with Prayer for peace in Ukraine. Next Diocesan Synod meeting – Saturday 11th March 2023.

Dean Graham Taylor thanked Bishop Ian and Team for chairing and guiding the meeting via Zoom instilled courage for the year to come.

I will keep all paperwork if anyone wants a read through.

Ev Balfour



Chrism Mass and Installation of Rev Canon Elaine Garman as Canon of St Ninian's Cathedral

The Diocesan Chrism Mass will be held on Maundy Thursday, 14th April, 11am at St Ninian's Cathedral, Perth. At this service all the holy oils are blessed for the year and all clergy renew their ordination vows. Two new Canons will be installed in the Cathedral, one being our own Rector! If you wish to attend please add your name to the sign up sheet at the back of the church which will help with the organisation of transport and catering. Alternatively let the Rector know and she can add your name to the list.


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This and That

There is a story Jesus told about some labourers in the vineyard who grumbled when the labourers who had only worked the last shift received the same pay. It wasn't so much this particular scenario, with its particular message—(but isn't it brilliant in its economy of expression, in getting the message over? - and such a credit to the translators) - but the awakening of other reminders of the social mechanism of farming that can be traced back at least as far as Leviticus (23:22) and forward to the middle of the 19th century, and even later:

“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field to its very border, nor shall you gather the *gleanings* after your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger (the immigrant) : I am the Lord your God.”

Also among the Mosaic books you may find a stricture that you shall leave your field fallow every 7th year for the *use* of the poor and the stranger ie: there was no question of a hand-out of the produce; the poor had to do the work. Did they borrow the implements? - and was that part of the deal?

I recall women (in the main) going about the harvest fields in north Yorkshire (ca 1940) with sacks for the 'pickings-up', the 'gleanings'.....yes, they used the same word; but by then the gleanings were for the pig and the chickens. There is a certain tolerance shown here: no threats of 'trespass'!

Continuing in this vein, I remember some of my older colleagues talking of the 'hirings', when farm workers would assemble in the streets of Alnwick and Morpeth early in the morning to be hand-picked by the local farmers. Quite biblical. If not picked you went home to tend your own quarter-acreand others? - well it wasn't good to learn you have been weighed and found wanting.

Of course the 19th century did not just create problems; it also solved many with subsequent acts of Parliament, which included farm workers' working conditions, compensation for injuries etc. (the *non* – safety record of farm workers is still with us 'in this day and age'. I suppose there are many factors: familiarity breeding contempt; impatience/ urgency; and professional safety officers would say that farm workers are not in a controlled environment (unlike factory and workshop).

So we do not have to go far back for farmers in the pews to appreciate Jesus' parables first hand. There is even a story about a farmer who built extra barns....so that he could collar the market in a poor year?but we won't mention that! In any case, food 'put by' is good thinking. But things have moved on again: it is nothing for a farm worker to drive miles to work and then be operating sophisticated equipment 'eye-watering' in value. Perhaps sheep-farming has changed the least: there is still that personal relationship between shepherd and flock, under-lined at lambing: and there is the 'buggy', the quad-bike, to make things a little easier.

It is a little off the subject, but to add to the above, the much maligned 19th century saw the eruption of social conscience. As an instance the Duke of Wellington, when he was on the back benches, was listed to speak, When called, all he did was read out the pension-tariff for the injuries of army and navy serving men eg: so much for a limb, so much for an eye etc. Without comment he then sat down. He was presenting Parliament with the consequences of going to war.....the awful fall-out.

Gordon E. Miller

St John's Mission Activity – Retiring Collections 2022

Retiring Collections for 2022

Month	Charity
23 rd January	Leprosy Mission Scotland Dedicated to eradicating leprosy until leprosy is a thing of the past.
27 th February (Alison Elliot, Manager, Murton Trust speaking)	Murton Trust Their aim is to provide an environment on their site outside Forfar where children, young people and adults can learn and develop essential skills for life. Murton wishes to enrich people's lives and use their environment as an educational tool that has a positive impact on all ages.
27 th March	WaterAid Making water, toilets, and hygiene normal for everyone, everywhere.
April	Bishop's Lent Appeal USPG - United Society Partners in the Gospel. Founded in 1701, they are the Anglican mission agency that partners churches and communities worldwide in God's mission to enliven faith, strengthen relationships, unlock potential and champion justice. USPG has three strategic aims: Rethinking Mission, Energising Church and Community and Championing Justice. Part of their work is to accompany Anglican churches across the world as they form communities of hope and resistance in the struggles associated with climate change, migration, gender, the human rights of indigenous people and inter-religious living.

22 nd May	<p>Christian Aid</p> <p>They work with local partners and communities to fight injustice, respond to humanitarian emergencies, campaign for change, and help people claim the services and rights they are entitled to such as education and healthcare.</p>
26 th June	<p>Christians Against Poverty</p> <p>A debt centre network that tackles the causes of debt and poverty. As well as debt support and advice, they assist people into employment and help equip people to live well on low incomes. Their vision is to see transformed lives through the local church in every community with a nationwide network of CAP projects.</p>
3 rd July (Rev Tim Tunley celebrating and preaching – Sea Sunday)	<p>Mission to Seafarers Scotland</p> <p>As well as the chaplain and volunteers visiting ships there are several centres where men and women are offered light refreshments, reading and games rooms, good cheap accommodation, and a chapel.</p>
28 th August	<p>UNICEF</p> <p>Children’s charity that works to help provide nutrition and life-saving food, education, emergency relief for children, protection from climate change, water, sanitation, and hygiene and vaccines.</p>
25 th September	<p>Scottish Association for Mental Health works with adults and young people providing mental health social care support, services in primary care, schools, and further education, among others. They also work on suicide prevention, antibullying, and active living that promotes good mental wellbeing all of which influence positive social change.</p>
23 rd October	<p>Shelter Scotland</p> <p>Shelter Scotland services, policy advocacy and campaign teams come together to create the best possible outcomes for people in housing need. They do this by providing practical support and advice to people experiencing bad housing or homelessness, by informing professionals, and by campaigning for legislative change.</p>

13 th November	<p>PoppyScotland</p> <p>From advice to employment support, they help provide a helping hand to those who have served, those still serving, and the families.</p>
December	<p>Advent Appeal – Aberlour</p> <p>Their vision is that every child in Scotland has the chance to flourish. They offer a safe and loving place to live for children who have suffered abuse and trauma, help families recover from drug and alcohol addiction, provide confidence building sessions for parents, support for families where a child has a disability, work with young people and families to prevent their problems from spiralling out of control, cash grants to assist children, young people and their families who are suffering extreme hardship, and help pupils fulfil their potential in school.</p>

Meeting Centre for Those with Dementia in Forfar

Strathmore Cricket Club is working to establish a Meeting Centre for people in Forfar living with dementia. It is pressing ahead at speed and the plan is for the Centre to be up and running in the spring. Here is an update from them.

“The Meeting Centre – which will offer people in the early stages of living with dementia and their families a place to meet, socialise and access information – will be based in Strathmore Cricket Club’s Lochside Park premises and be open several days each week. And there are plenty ways that you can get involved and help to ensure the success of this exciting new initiative in the town.

Since an open meeting of interested parties in October last year, work has been moving ahead on several fronts to get the Centre up and running.

Improvements have been made to the building at Lochside to make it more attractive and suitable. Preparatory work has been done on processes for recruiting Meeting Centre members and staff recruitment is well underway.

In all of this work, there has been great support for the project from individuals, community organisations, health and social care agencies. All have recognised the potential for this important new service.

The Meeting Centre project is being headed up by Strathmore Cricket Club, but its success will depend on the extent to which others in the community get behind it and contribute.

It’s particularly important that people living with dementia and their family carers have an input to the project.

The activities that take place in Meeting Centres are led by the members (the people who attend) and organisers of the proposed Forfar Centre are very keen to hear from potential members now.

If you, or someone you know are living with or caring for someone living with dementia then project leaders would be delighted to hear from you and talk to you about the Centre, what it might offer and how it might help to meet your needs. You can get in contact by emailing meetingcentre@strathmoreecc.co.uk. Someone from the organising group will then get back to you to explore your interest.

There’s plenty of scope for others to get involved too.

The Meeting Centre will have staff, but it will also offer opportunities for other members of the community to get involved and support the project.

The volunteering opportunities will include committee work, fund raising, befriending and going along to help organise activities that are of interest to members.

If you think that you might have some time and talents to contribute, again the organising group would be delighted to hear from you at meetingcentre@strathmore.co.uk.”