



BLACKRIDGE COMMUNITY COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2023

ISSUE 75

Cover illustration by Cullen Jarvis (P6)



A LOOK AT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE COMMUNITY

Blackridge Community Council wish you a joyous holiday season with peace & cheer in the New Year! A special thanks to Blackridge Primary School pupils for their contributions

www.blackridge.cc



BLACKRIDGE

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Welcome to the winter edition of the Blackridge community news. This newsletter is produced by volunteers of the Community Council and is a fantastic resource to share local news and information.

With the cost of living crisis showing no sign of easing up, the winter generally costs us more to heat our homes, as well as the added pressure of Christmas for many of us. I wanted to use this space in the community newsletter to highlight the wide range of support available to those who might need a little extra help.

We are fortunate in West Lothian that we have fantastic advice agencies that can provide a lot of help and support for those in need. Two important agencies worth noting are the council's Advice Shop based in Bathgate and Citizen's Advice based at Craigshill in Livingston.

The Advice Shop can provide a range of support on issues to do with benefits, money and debt, housing as well as energy advice. It runs out of the partnership centre in Bathgate and has drop in sessions at various points during the week and appointments can be made over the phone by calling **01506 283 000**.

Citizens Advice can provide advice on a vast number of subjects, including money advice, employment issues and consumer rights. Although based in Livingston, they can offer advice over the phone too. Appointments can be arranged through their website or by calling **01506 432 977**.

For people with school aged children there is a range of support available to help minimise costs. School meals are now free in West Lothian to all children between primary 1 and 5. From primary 6 onwards, free school meals are provided based on qualifying criteria. Further advice and support for this can be found on the council's website or by contacting the school.

In addition to this, some families can receive a school clothing allowance to help with the costs of uniforms and other school clothing. Currently, this value is £150 per child for primary aged children and £180 for secondary aged children. Again, details on criteria or how to apply can be found on the council's website, www.westlothian.gov.uk/mealsandclothing

The council also administers the Scottish Welfare fund for those in need of crisis support or access to goods. The Advice Shop can provide support in applying for this.

Finally, for those in need of support, food referrals can be made from Citizen's Advice or the Advice Shop to the West Lothian Foodbank. There is also a local foodbank which operates exclusively for the residents of Armadale and Blackridge, it is open on a Wednesday from 1pm til 3pm in the Partnership Centre in Armadale. No referral is required, simply proof of address.

This is just a snapshot of the wide range of services available. For further details about all that is mentioned here and much more can be found at www.westlothian.gov.uk/costofliving

Cllr Andrew McGuire

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | WEST LOTHIAN Unit 1, Almondbank Centre, Shiel Walk, Livingston EH54 5EH T: 01506 432977 or 01506 436132 (Appointments) E: enquiries@cabwestlothian.casonline.org.uk • www.cabwestlothian.org.uk |
|  | 36a Inchmuir Road, EH48 2EP T: 01501 229307 E: info@westlothian.foodbank.org.uk • westlothian.foodbank.org.uk f West Lothian Foodbank @ westlothianfoodbank X @WLFoodbank |
|  | 21-55 South Bridge St, Bathgate EH48 1TL T: 01506 283 000 • www.westlothian.gov.uk/advice-shop Monday to Thursday: 8:30am to 5:00pm Friday: 8:30am to 4:00pm |




We know that some people are new to the village, so we would like to extend you a warm welcome to Blackridge and hope you enjoy you first Christmas in your new home.

We would like to thank our local community for all their efforts to make our village an enjoyable place to live.

The Community Council meets on the third Tuesday of the month (except July and August) at 7pm in the Craig Inn Centre, open to all who wish to attend.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a safe and Happy New Year

www.blackridge.cc

If you would like to feature an article in our Newsletter, please email mail@blackridge.cc and put the word "Newsletter" in the subject line.



Within Church walls
Where a warm welcome is extended to all

BLACKRIDGE PARISH CHURCH

9.45 a.m. church service conducted by Rev. Julia Wiley

Christmas Eve Service at 11.30 p.m.

Church opens at 11 p.m. for tea, coffee, and mince pies

Friday 1st December, 2-4 p.m. Christmas Afternoon Tea and opening of the community event **12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS WINDOW DISPLAYS**.

Coffee mornings every second Wednesday in the month 10-12 noon remain extremely popular with the community and members alike and have gained in attendance.

Our Warm Space - Twice Monthly on a Friday, 12-3 p.m., where we offer warmth, hot homemade soup, rolls, and freshly made pancakes, teas, and coffee, all free of charge. This is open to everyone, and I'm pleased to say this has become very popular within our community.

The primary school has continued their visits to the church for their end-of-term services; it will take place on Friday 22nd December at 9.30 a.m. This year, the children decorated potatoes for the Harvest Service, which were displayed in the church on Harvest Sunday.

The car park at the back of the church is well used by all and takes cars off the main road. The disabled entrance is at the back of the church. Work also continues to maintain the building. This includes roof repairs and general repairs, and with so much vandalism during this past year, we did not expect.

Christmas Eve Watchnight Service will be returning this year after a few years absence. It will be at 11.30 p.m., and the church will open at 11 p.m. for tea, coffee, and mince pies.

BLACKRIDGE HEALTH CENTRE UPDATE

There are a few recent changes that have been happening at the Heath Centre and the wider Barbauchlaw Medical Practice that we would like to update you on.

Some of the main complaints in recent years were the need to call at 8 a.m. to get an appointment that day, with limited ability to book GP appointments in advance. We are also well aware that the demand for services across the NHS and in general practice across the country currently exceeds the number of GPs and nurses available to deliver this (and we continue to advertise to try to recruit more clinicians, but there just aren't enough GPs and nurse practitioners out there).

To try to address both of these problems, the practice has invested in a product called e-consult. This can be found on the practice website by scanning the QR code on the advert opposite or go to <https://www.barbauchlawmp.com/index.pl>.

This is our preferred way of contacting the practice, as it takes you through several questions based on what you tell them the problem is. These answers are then all looked at by an experienced GP within a maximum of 2 working days (if there is a clinical problem, administration requests may take longer), but normally within the same working day. This way we can prioritise those patients who need to be seen urgently, try to improve continuity if you tell us a preferred clinician, and sometimes deal with your problem without you ever needing an appointment at all.

This system should avoid you being told that you have to call back tomorrow to try again if all appointments are taken. If someone genuinely can't use e-consult, then the receptionists can create one for you over the phone, but this gives us less information than the version you can fill in yourself, so please, if you can complete one, try to do so, as this frees up our reception team's time for the patients who most need their help. Most people who have tried it find that they quickly get used to it, and while it does ask quite a few questions, many people report that it is quicker than waiting on the phone line or having to repeatedly try to call. The other advantage is that you can submit an e-consult 24 hours a day, so you don't have to try and do it when you are at work, or on the school run, etc. We will be turning it off over the two upcoming long weekends at Christmas and New Year, though, as on both occasions, the practice will be closed from 6 p.m. on Friday until 8 a.m. on Wednesday morning.

Please remember that e-consult is not there to try to make it harder to make an appointment; indeed, we are now able to deal with far more problems than before, but like all new systems, it can take a little bit of getting used to.

If we have sent you a letter saying that you need to book an appointment, or a GP or nurse has asked you to book an appointment for a blood test or similar, these can be booked in the traditional way through reception without having to use e-consult, as can same-day home visit requests where a patient is housebound. We are always happy to get feedback, and our new practice manager, Mrs. Anne Paton, can be contacted via the practice.



The GP practice is closed on the following public holidays so please ensure that you have enough medication to last you during these closures.

Monday 25th and Tuesday 26th December 2023

Monday 1st and Tuesday 2nd January 2024

111

Please call 111 if you require medical attention during the above days.

**NHS
24**

We would like to wish our patients a very happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.



www.barbauchlawmp.com/index.pl



+ Blackridge PHARMACY

PHARMACY FESTIVE OPENING HOURS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Saturday 23rd December | 9.00am - 1.00pm |
| Sunday 24th December | CLOSED |
| Monday 25th December | CLOSED |
| Tuesday 26th December | CLOSED |
| Wednesday 27th, Thursday 28th & Friday 29th December | 9.00am till 6.00pm |
| Saturday 30th December | 9.00am - 1.00pm |
| Sunday 31st January | CLOSED |
| Monday 1st January | CLOSED |
| Tuesday 2nd January | CLOSED |
| Wednesday 3rd January onwards | 9.00am - 6.00pm |

01501 751 175

22 MAIN STREET,
BLACKRIDGE, EH48 3SA

GIFTS AND TOILETRIES AVAILABLE

SHOP LOCAL





**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

THANK YOU



A huge thank you to all who have supported our village's efforts for the Worlds Biggest Coffee Morning, not just on the day but throughout the year. Well over £1000 was raised on the day, bringing this year's total to **£4,062**. A great effort for our wee village and brings our total over the last 26 years to **£45,596**.

This money can help provide a MacMillan nurse for almost nine months or 109 hours of MacMillan support, reaching more than 2000 people or enabling 151 MacMillan grants.

This makes our efforts so worthwhile.

Fundraising has already started for next year!!!

**THIS YEARS
TOTAL
£4,062**

Macmillan Cancer Support, registered charity in England and Wales (261017), Scotland (SC039907) and the Isle of Man (604). Also operating in Northern Ireland.



MONDAY CLUB 1 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.

2023 saw an increase in new members joining the club which meets weekly at the Craiginn Centre.

Thanks to part funding by Foundation Scotland, members enjoyed several outings this year. April saw a visit Klondyke Garden Centre near Falkirk for some afternoon tea, while May was a barge trip along the Clyde Canal. The final outing in October was a trip to Moffat with lunch at the Black Bull Inn.

In July, the club was kindly invited to spend the afternoon at Harthill, hosted by Alec Kennedy.

Members are now looking forward to a Christmas meal in December.



White

Oily

Shell

Smoked

J. W. Thomson

MOBILE FISH SHOP

QUALITY FRESH FISH

EVERY WEDNESDAY

*Last day before Christmas is
Wednesday 20th December.
Returning 2024*

**Tel: 01333 312420
Mobile: 07974 19485**



BLACKRIDGE PRIMARY AND EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



It has been an extremely busy first term at Blackridge Primary & ELC. Our learners have been working really hard and we are so proud of all of their achievements. Our pupil leadership groups have started to work on our improvement priorities and are supporting the school as we work towards our Gold Rights Respecting School Award and our Reading Schools Accreditation. Our senior pupils also recently represented the school on Remembrance Sunday, laying a wreath at both Blackridge Parish Church and the War Memorial in Armadale. Our family learning programme is well under way and our new Family Club has been a great addition to our school calendar.

Within the ELC, our learners have explored all things prehistoric and learned lots about dinosaurs and now the darker nights are here, are learning more about the changes that the colder months bring. They have been enjoying visits to the community library and walks around Blackridge to spot numbers and to hunt for fallen leaves.

We have also welcomed Imagine Theatre Group into the school for all our children to enjoy. Learners were treated to a fantastic performance of Cloud Man and the opportunity to ask the team from Imagine lots about the production and what it is like to work in theatre.

We are looking forward to the build up to Christmas, which is always a special time in the school year. Our Parent Council have pulled out all the stops to ensure we have a fantastic Christmas Fayre and our school children have been busy preparing their songs for our Christmas Celebration.

Everyone at Blackridge Primary & ELC wish everyone in the community a very happy Christmas.

Claire McGoldrick
Head Teacher

#TeamBlackridge



Illustrated
by
Fraser, P1



Christmas Night

It was a snowy night.
And the stars were bright.
Eating Christmas Cakes
While watching snowflakes

All the children falling asleep.
While watching sleet,
you will always remember,
That lovely day 25th December.

All the excitement of
Christmas presents,
All the children so pleasant.
They ran up to the Christmas
tree,
With loads of glee.

by Keira McPake, P7

The Winter Snowman

Snowman, Snowman round and white,
I wonder what you do at night.
Do you just sit and watch the snow,
or do you watch the Christmas glow?

His big orange nose,
When it comes to night it glows.
His black button eyes,
Look up to the big blue skies.

When the winter nights end,
the snowman's life begins to bend.
A scarf tight around his neck,
and it is drowning down the back
of its neck.

by Ellie Kerr, P7

Illustrated
by Cole, P1



HEY JUST ME...



Sarah-Jane
Watson
ESTATE AGENCY



YOU'LL FIND US:

37 W Main Street, Armadale

'Guiding your property journey, every step of the way'



THINKING OF SELLING YOUR PROPERTY?

WHO ARE WE?

Being totally transparent, we're effectively the 'newbie' in your area, but be rest assured, we bring a young and vibrant perspective to the property market, ensuring your experience is nothing short of exceptional.

WHY US?

Creating bespoke solutions catered to your unique needs. No two properties are the same, and neither are our strategies or clients.

LOOKING TO SELL?

Let's unlock your property's true potential! Call us now for your complimentary valuation.



 01506 901830 | 07739 937359

 info@watsonestateagency.co.uk

 www.watsonestateagency.co.uk



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- Protection
- Product Transfers
- Buy to Let

Stadium House, Alderstone Rd, Livingston EH54 7DN

T: 07513 973593 | E: pamela@findlaycofs.co.uk

www.findlaycofs.co.uk



Pamela MacDonald has lived in Blackridge for over 13 years and has recently joined Findlay and Co. Financial Solutions as a Mortgage and Protection Adviser.

She provides a wealth of experience, having started her career in property Sales and Letting before changing to Financial Services three years ago.

Given the experience she has, there would be no one better to look after your financial needs.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SHOW



Derek Campbell is busy preparing for this years **Christmas Light Show** and can not wait to deliver yet again another amazing show for you with all money raised going to upporting to West Lothian financial inclusion network who provide gift for less fortunate children on Christmas.

For more information, visit "**Westrigg Electrical Light Shows**" or scan the QR Code.
For personalised messages, please email Westrigg-electrical-lightshows@hotmail.com

Dates are: 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23 at 5.00 p.m., 6.30p.m. and 8.00 p.m.
(Sun 24th 5pm, 6.30 p.m.) • Autism friendly nights 11th and 18th at 6 p.m.

STRICTLY NO PARKING ON STREET



Tutti Music

Our Tutti Tots Pre-School music classes meet in the Craig Inn on Wednesday and Friday mornings at 10.30 a.m. each week. Our numbers have steadily grown over the months and have now reached around 50 children in the two classes. Mum's, dad's, grans, and grandpa's all come along to the classes and enjoy tea and coffee and a chat after our music session. The children get to take part in supervised free play, where it's encouraging to see the way that they are building friendships with other children in the class.

We have a primary school-age music class (Toots & Taps) that meets in the library at Craig Inn fortnightly. The seven children who attend the class are learning to play the tin whistle, drums, and piano. The Tutti Music project has had a successful year of fundraising with our latest venture in the form of a family ceilidh. We had around forty children joining their family members on this occasion, and we were fortunate to have a live ceilidh band to entertain everyone. We also have plans to hold another Turtle Derby in the near future.

For information on any of our classes please contact
Armada Partnership Centre on 01506282278 .



BLACKRIDGE, WESTRIGG & WESTCRAIGS OLD FOLKS COMMITTEE

ARE YOU AGED 60 & OVER AND NEW TO OUR WEE VILLAGE?

DO YOU ENJOY A MEAL AND EVENING ENTERTAINMENT?

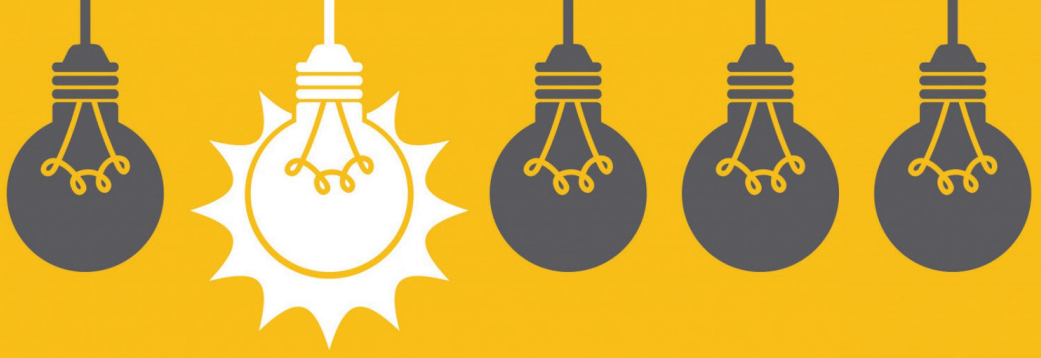
**Why not join us on on Monday 18th December
for a free Village Christmas Treat at Whitburn Bowling Club.**

Dinner and Entertainment will be provided. Pick up in village at 5.30 p.m.

To register your interest call 07936 466551

Facebook: Blackridge, Westrigg, and Westcraigs Old Folk Committee

Strictly for residents only, replacements are not allowed



NEW FUNDING BOOST FOR BLACKRIDGE



Blackridge Community Council (in collaboration with Blackridge Primary School) are delighted to have recently been successful in being **awarded a grant from the Electrical Safety Fund of £5,000.**

This grant will be used in the village through a combination of educational events and a series of open days to raise awareness of the importance of Electrical Safety in the home and activities that will focus on helping to keep people electrically safe in their home.

In addition, several areas within the school curriculum have been identified where education on this subject would be very welcomed and in line with existing Electrical Safety First campaigns would help to promote Electrical Safety within the school children, their families and the wider community.

We will be supporting Electrical Safety First campaigns such as:

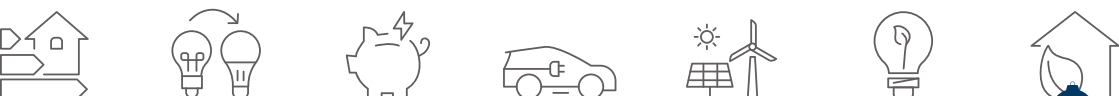
Saving money while staying safe: Our guide to safety in the home during the cost of living crisis. <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/costofliving>

Battery Breakdown: Our report into dangerous lithium-ion batteries <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/battery-breakdown/>

Don't be Electricked: (Into buying unsafe electrical products from online marketplaces) <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/guidance/dontbeelectricked/>

Look out for more news about this and future events around the village coming in 2024!

Please follow the link (scan QR Code) to find out more about the fund. <https://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/what-we-do/working-in-partnership/electrical-safety-fund/>





CRAIG INN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Craig Inn centre is all about bringing the community together, so why not come along and participate in some of our classes. Here are just some of our classes:

MONDAY

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Library | 9.00am – 3.30pm |
| Craft Class | 9.30am – 12.30pm |
| Gentle Exercise | 11.00am – 11.45am |
| Monday Club | 1.00pm – 3.30pm |
| Tutti Music - Toots and Taps (fortnightly) | 6.00pm – 7.00pm |
| Management Committee Meeting (3rd of the month) | 7.00pm – 9.00pm |
| Women's Rural Institute (2nd of the month) | 7.00pm – 9.45pm |
| L.L.O.L (1st of the Month) | 7.15pm – 8.15pm |

TUESDAY

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Library (Centre Staff) | 5.00pm – 9.00pm |
| Art Class | 5.45pm – 9.00pm |
| Community Council (3rd of the month) | 7.00pm – 9.45pm |

WEDNESDAY

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Tutti Music - Tutti Tots | 10.15am – 11.30am |
| Railway Club | 6.30pm – 9.30pm |
| Camera Club | 7.00pm – 9.45pm |

THURSDAY

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| OAP Bowls for the more mature adults | 1.30pm – 4.00pm |
| Knit Wits (Knitting Group) | 6.30pm – 9.00pm |

FRIDAY

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Tutti Music - Tutti Tots | 10.15am – 11.15am |
|--------------------------|-------------------|

SUNDAY

| | |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Flutes 4 Fun (Fortnightly) | 6.00pm – 8.00pm |
|----------------------------|-----------------|

These are just some of the classes available to the community, if you want to start up a new group please contact the centre as we are always looking for new ventures.

LOOK OUT FOR MORE EVENTS IN 2024

Keep up to date with forthcoming events by checking out
<https://blackridge.cc/craig-inn-centre>

BLACKRIDGE WELCOMES TO THE VILLAGE



RYAN'S ROLLS

SNACK VAN

BUFFETS AVAILABLE - drcatering77@gmail.com



**ALL DAY BREAKFAST • DAILY SPECIALS • HOT & COLD ROLLS • WRAPS
PANINIS • TOASTIES • SOUP • BURGERS • SALADS • CHIPS • SALADS
HOME BAKING • HOT & COLD DRINKS**

Monday - Friday 7.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.

MAIN STREET, BLACKRIDGE - NEXT TO COOPERS BAR

PHONE ORDERS WELCOME - CALL 07775 209 348

As a couple, Diane and Ryan love cooking together at home and have been contemplating starting a cafe or a snack van for some time now. "We were looking at Glasgow, but when we saw this location, we thought it would be great to try and be part of a smaller community that doesn't have as many choices on their doorstep." Diane has previous experience in the catering industry having ran previous businesses along with her daughter Jessica.

"We are a small family-run business aiming to produce quality street food at reasonable prices in this current financial climate we find ourselves in. As well as being a business, it brings us great pleasure to hear the positive comments about what we are doing and to see them enjoying our food."

Ryan continued "The people of Blackridge have been very welcoming and supportive in such a short space of time, and it is a pleasure to come to work in the community."

No one should have no one!

Need help?

Call us ANYTIME on: 0800 4 70 80 90



The Silver Line is the only free confidential helpline providing information, friendship and support to older people, open 24 hours a day, every day of the year.



www.ageuk.org.uk

IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS

POLICE/FIRE

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Police HQ Livingston | 01506 431200 |
| Police (Non-Emergency) | 101 |
| Fire (Emergency) | 999 |

HOSPITALS

| | |
|----------------------------------------|---------------|
| St. John's Hospital, Livingston | 01506 523000 |
| University Hospital Monklands, Airdrie | 01236 748748 |
| Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh | 0131 536 1000 |
| Western General Hospital, Edinburgh | 0131 537 1000 |
| University Hospital Wishaw | 01698 361 100 |

HEALTH

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Blackridge Health Centre | 01501 751238 |
| Harthill Health Centre | 01501 751795 |
| Armadale Health Centre | 01501 730432 |
| District Nurses / Midwife /Physio | 01501 730339 |
| Blackridge Pharmacy | 01501 751175 |
| NHS24 (Out of Hours Service) | 111 |

SCHOOLS

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Blackridge Primary | 01501 751223 |
| Armadale Academy | 01506 282145 |
| St. Anthony's Primary, Armadale | 01501 731668 |
| St. Kentigern's, Blackburn | 01506 656404 |

UTILITIES EMERGENCIES

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Scottish Gas | 0800 111 999 |
| SP Energy Networks (Electricity) | 105 |
| Scottish Water | 0800 077 8778 |

TRAVEL

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Rail Service Enquiries | 0845 7484950 |
| West Lothian Traveline | 01506 775288 |

WEST LOTHIAN COUNCIL

01506 280000

LOCAL COUNCILLORS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Stuart Borrowman stuart.borrowman@westlothian.gov.uk | 01506 281702 |
| Andrew McGuire andrew.mcguire@westlothian.gov.uk | 01506 281717 |
| Lynda Kenna lynda.kenna@westlothian.gov.uk | 01506 281724 |