**LOCAL AREA CO-ORDINATION – UPDATE!**  The Fife Elderly Forum 'Local Area Co-ordination for Older People Project' quietly marked the end of their first year in operation on the 14th November.  Despite low key celebrations, the Local Area Co-ordinators are happy to conclude what has been a very successful first year managing to support between them 388 older people.  This has far exceeded expectations.  Local Area Co-ordinator, Shirley Heeps stated, “We anticipated it would take several months to establish an effective framework for providing the service and aimed to support 100 people during our first year.  To reach near 400 has been amazing, hopefully highlighting the very real role LACs can play at supporting older people to engage in their communities”.

On top of the support offered to individual older people the project also offered advice, information and signposting to organisations and community groups on 212 occasions which it is hoped will build capacity within our communities.  Alison Wilson, Local Area Co-ordinator added, “An element of our work is to help build community capacity and work with interested parties to develop services and resources for older people.  To date we have identified 3 projects in Fife and have helped secure over £5000 of funding to help sustain this”.

As the New Year approaches the Local Area Co-ordinators (Fiona, Wayne, Alison and Shirely) look forward to developing the service building upon their early successes.  Part of their approach will be to continue promoting the service, capitalising on the awareness raising events that have already taken place and which have reached an audience of some 2300 people.  In particular, the Local Area Co-ordinators look forward to developing their over-arching aim of becoming an information portal for older people throughout Fife which is envisaged will take a step closer with the launch of a unique online Directory of Services towards the end of February 2013.
Buying a Caring Christmas Tree is simple but has a huge impact. When you buy your Caring Christmas Tree, you become part of a growing movement of people who refuse to accept the status quo. Every Caring Christmas Tree has the potential to create a happier today and a brighter tomorrow for the most vulnerable in our communities.

Scottish trees from local and sustainable growers BCT are proud of their trees and we are sure that you will be too. But remember, it’s not just about the trees themselves. The real difference with Caring Christmas Trees is that every tree purchased changes a life for the better.

www.caringchristmastrees.com/fife/
info@caringchristmastrees.com

Royal Mail has started publicising a scheme to sell Christmas stamps at last year’s prices to people on benefits.

Customers in receipt of pension credit, employment and support allowance or incapacity benefit will be able to buy 36 first and second class stamps at 2011 prices - 46p and 36p.

Stamp prices increased to 60p and 50p in April.

The scheme was launched on 6 November but leaflets will be sent to every home in Britain explaining who is eligible.

Stephen Agar, Royal Mail’s director of regulated business, said: "Royal Mail is pleased to be introducing this scheme to help our customers, who are on these benefits and facing extremely tight budgets this Christmas, purchase first and second class stamps."

Phone Susan Smith on 0845 111 8733
Mon-Fri. Please order as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Trees are sold in Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline and St Andrews. To date 61 Trees have been sold in Fife at time of writing.
Age UK Energy is a tailor-made gas and electricity package for people aged 60 and over* - developed with and provided by E.ON.

www.ageuk.org.uk/products/energy/gas-and-electricity/

Winter advice to stay warm is snow joke. Stay healthy this winter - nhsinform.co.uk/winter
Tel: 0800 224488

Check your GP Surgery opening times
Over the Festive season
NHS24 & Out of hours service
08454 242424.

Winter Fuel Payment is an annual payment to help with heating costs, made to households with someone over Pension Credit age.

How to claim it in winter 2012-13, you will be eligible if you are born before 5 July 1951. You will normally receive £200 if you are under 80, and £300 if you are 80 or over. You will usually get less if you live with other people who also qualify.

You only need to claim once. After this, you should get it automatically each year, as long as your circumstances do not change. To ask about your payment or make a claim, call the Winter Fuel Payments Helpline on 0845 915 1515.

Cold Weather Payments are made when the weather is very cold. You can get an additional £25 a week when the average temperature has been, or is expected to be, 0°C or below for seven days in a row.

How to claim it - You will automatically receive a Cold Weather Payment if you get Pension Credit or certain other means-tested benefits.

Staying in touch – Don’t feel isolated when severe weather hits. There are plenty of ways for you to get the latest information about service disruptions, for example due to bad weather through:

- www.fifedirect.org.uk/closures
- m.fifedirect.org.uk
- www.facebook.com/fifecouncil
- www.twitter.com/fifecouncil
- Kingdom FM - 95.2 & 96.1; Radio Forth - 97.3 Tay FM - 96.4 & 102.8
- Sky - channel 539, press red
- Virgin - press home, select interactive 08451 55 11 99 automated updates
- 08451 55 00 11 faults & repairs
- 08451 55 00 99 out of hours (Urgent social work or council house repairs)

Email/Text Alerts Receive information about school closures, road updates and service disruptions straight to your phone or inbox. Sign up for your personal email or text alerts at: www.fifedirect.org.uk/join

Cozy Kirkcaldy – Let Greener Kirkcaldy help you stay warm this winter. Call 01592 858458, email info@greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk
Don’t let flu turn on you

What is flu?

Flu is much more than a bad cold. It’s a virus that can cause chills, fever, muscle aches and a sore throat. It can also cause headaches, coughing, sneezing and extreme fatigue. In the most serious cases it can even bring on pneumonia, which can result in death. Flu is often spread through the air by coughs and sneezes. It can also be caught by coming into contact with contaminated surfaces.

To find out more about flu, visit our website at www.infoscotland.com/flu

Flu is much more serious than you may think. And if you have heart or lung problems, or are 65 or over, flu hits you hardest.

How the flu vaccine works

The vaccine takes around ten days to work and will protect you from flu for around a year. And you have to get vaccinated annually because the virus develops different strains, and last year’s vaccine won’t protect you from this year’s flu virus. Also, it’s important to realise that the flu vaccine won’t give you flu, but it can stop you catching it.

Where do I go to get my vaccination?

If you think you’re eligible for the flu vaccination, just contact your GP surgery or pharmacist to find out more. The vaccine is quick, free and could save you weeks of misery.

Don’t let flu turn on you
“Fife Employment Access Trust (FEAT) is one of several Fife organisations in receipt of funding from the Change Fund with a view to reshaping care for older people. FEAT, a mental health charity, are using the funding to run a series of Mindfulness courses from their Glenrothes headquarters, as well as ½ day “positive mental health & wellbeing” sessions to improve or sustain mental health in later life.

The Mindfulness courses run each month. Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment, using techniques like meditation, breathing and yoga. It helps us become more aware of our thoughts and feelings so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, we’re better able to manage them. Practising mindfulness can give people more insight into their emotions, boost their attention and concentration and improve relationships. It’s proven to help with stress, anxiety, depression and addictive behaviours, and can even have a positive effect on physical problems as a way of managing pain.

The next 2 ½ day courses “Positive Mental Health & Wellbeing” courses are running in the Levenmouth area: 9.30am-12.30pm Tues 4th Dec 2012 in Methilhill Senior Citizens Centre and 1.30pm-4.30pm and Fri 22nd Feb 2013 in Leven Community Centre. The course outline is as follows: *The importance of a "Healthy Mind"; *Transitions and Triggers - Coping with change - Moving On *Common Mental Health conditions; *Attitudes & Challenging Stigma; * Stress and its impact * Healthy Mind - Healthy Body

To reserve a space on either Mindfulness or the ½ day course, contact FEAT on 01592 759371 or visit www.f-e-a-t.co.uk “feat@journeytowork.co.uk

Christmas trees, decorations, lights, roaring fires and candles are just some of the winter and Christmas essentials that can spark tragedy if they aren’t monitored carefully.

Follow these basic fire safety rules to make sure you have a safe and happy festive season:

- check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard
- never place candles near your Christmas tree or furnishings and don’t leave them burning unattended
- make sure your family and guests know what to do in an emergency and make a fire escape plan
- decorations can burn easily - don’t attach them to lights or heaters.
- never overload electrical sockets and always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed

- the risk of accidents, especially in the kitchen, is greater after alcohol is consumed - never leave a cooker unattended
- make sure cigarettes are completely extinguished before going to bed
- check the battery in your smoke alarm every week
- take time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas - make sure they are fire safe.

For free fire safety advice or a home risk assessment, Freephone 0808 100 3141 or email fire.safety@fife.gov.uk

Following basic fire safety rules will make sure you have a safe Christmas
About the Fife Council budget challenge

Fife Council are having to make our budget stretch further every year and have got to save £66 million in the next three years.

Fife Council is well prepared for this year but the big financial challenge kicks in from April 2014. Our funding will be drastically reduced in future years. With huge challenges facing Fife’s society and public services, we need to invest more in some areas of work, which means reducing costs in other places.

The draft budget document lets you see what Councillors are thinking of spending money on next year (2013-14). Councillors will make final decisions on Thursday 14 February; tell Fife Council what you think by January 6.

Councillors need to know the things that matter to you and that will make a difference in your community. Your opinion could influence their decisions about local services.

The facts of the matter

- Fife Council spends over £800 million every year providing services
- More than £340 million is spent on Education services
- Almost £200 million is spent on Social work services
- At the moment 66% of our budget comes from Scottish Government grants
- Council tax provides around 18% of the council’s income and the other 16% comes from non domestic rates.
- We’ve already saved £65m by making efficiency savings, reviewing the way services are provided, getting rid of surplus buildings, reducing staff numbers by 5%
- Over the next three years there’s a budget gap of £66m

Food for thought

- We have an ageing population and vast inequalities in the standard of living throughout Fife
- We need to dramatically increase available housing and focus on social care, youth unemployment, education and supporting children in their early years
- The way resources are allocated across council services needs to change
- More cuts in funding are expected in the next few years

The budget for 2013-14 has to prepare the way for more drastic changes in the following years to meet these challenges. It’s the start of a difficult journey.
Earlier this year FFD published a New Food Manifesto. The manifesto is the culmination of five years action research in Fife and beyond, trying to get an understanding of how food can be part of restorative practice across health and well-being ecology and community.

The purpose of the manifesto is to try and help build a food culture in which communities can begin to take charge of creating a better food system. To promote Community food and health, affordability and sustainability.

The works divided in to four themes: low carbon communities, culture & education, health & wellbeing and innovation & enterprise. FD will be publishing the whole document at the end of the year but are gathering comments and feedback from people. The ideas were discussed in the Scottish Parliament in September 2012 http://www.fifediet.co.uk/manifesto/

FIFE CONSTABULARY is reminding householders and businesses in North East Fife to ensure the security of their sheds, outbuildings and their contents by taking a few simple steps.

PC Paul Buttercase, Community Safety Officer for North-East Fife, said “Thefts from sheds and outbuildings have been a regular feature on our recent crime bulletins, with items stolen including power tools, gardening equipment and bikes.

“The value and replacement cost of items stored within them can be substantial. If we sat down and counted up the value of property stored in our shed, garage or other outbuildings, I think most of us would be surprised at the value of property which is often protected by a poor quality padlock.

“There are a few simple steps that we can take to reduce the chances of you becoming the next victim. Consideration might be given to storing particularly high value items in a more secure setting.”

For further advice, contact: Fife Constabulary on 0845 600 5702 and ask to speak to their local Community Safety Officer.

***Stop press***
Sestrans Thistle Assistance Cards are available from Fife Council on Direct telephone number - 01592 583370
Concessionary.Travel@fife.gov.uk
NEWS FROM THE USER PANELS

Across the panels we have had Guest speakers from: British Red Cross, Fife Credit Union, Greener Kirkcaldy, Fife Constabulary, Fife Fire & Rescue, and Fife Council’s Social Work: Home Care and Trading Standards.

We are recruiting for User Panel members across the Kingdom. Anstruther, Cowdenbeath, Kirkcaldy, Ladybank, Newport, Rosyth and West Fife Villages

Ideally members should be 70 (although younger in some circumstances and receiving NHS/Council Services. We meet once a month, with free transport, to and from the venue, and free tea/coffee and biscuits. Interested? Call Julia

NEWS FROM THE FORUMS Kirkcaldy & District Elderly Forum are actively seeking to recruit a Secretary and Treasurer. Please contact John.

ADVOCACY SERVICE Providing FREE Information, advice and support for older people in Fife. If you or someone you know could benefit from advice or support, please contact Caroline.

Call: 01592 643743 info@fife-elderly.org.uk

SUPPORTED BY NHS FIFE AND FIFE COUNCIL

MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM

Co-ordinator: John McKendrick Advocacy Worker: Caroline Stevenson
Facilitator – User Panels: Julia Walker
Local Area Co-ordinators: Fiona Clark, Shirley Heeps, Wayne Mathieson, Alison Wilson
Admin/Clerical: Elma Yeaman
Scottish Charity No: SC022596