

## **Aberdeenshire's Future award**

### Isabelle Curno

Isabelle is in Primary 6, but even at the age of 10 has done more to champion and support charities than most others do in a lifetime. It was the death of her grandfather which prompted her to act, and she raised nearly £3,000 for Cancer Research. It grew from there and now she fundraises for the local Baby Bank among others, and even supported a fund to help get equipment for her school in Maud. Her aims and hopes are that no one should suffer because of financial hardship and she feels strongly about ensuring everyone has access to medicine or support, no matter what their circumstances.

### Ollie and Harry Ferguson

Ollie and Harry are self-proclaimed adventurers, explorers and record breakers. Their aim is to get more people out of doors, exploring nature and encouraging active lifestyles. The pair spearhead a campaign called 50 Marvellous adventures, which is designed to inspire other young people to explore, supported by books and Guinness World Records. But they haven't lost the connection with their roots. They write a regular column in the Turriff Advertiser to help give advice on spending time in the wild. Pickle and Pipsqueak, as they are known, are going over and above to help us all enjoy the beauty of Aberdeenshire.

### Thomas Truby

Thomas started picking litter in Torphins where he lives, and the more he collected the more passionate he became about the environment in his area. He started The Rubbish Club and it now reaches more than 2,600 people on Facebook. When he isn't in school, he spends his time setting up community initiatives and giving talks in schools, mobilising other young people to take action. Not only has he worked with the Aberdeenshire Council team at recycling events but has also been approached by other local authorities to help with their campaigns. A real champion and an example of the power that young people have to help us deliver real change.

## **Inspirational Volunteer award**

### Relay for Life Peterhead committee

Put simply, the Relay for Life committee have, since 2001 raised a staggering sum for cancer research. Their outstanding commitment to running and promoting the 24-hour relay event in Peterhead has generated £2 million for the cause. Each person on the committee volunteers their own time to get together, recognising their collective power to help play a part. Whilst everyone involved has their own life experience of the disease, they work tirelessly to recruit new members, promote the event, and raise as much money as they can, whilst honouring the memories of those taken too soon. The Relay for Life committee are true warriors in the battle against cancer.

### Fiona Winstanley

For many of us, spending time on a sandy beach is peaceful and restorative. But we take it for granted. Then along comes Fiona with her ambition and drive to make Balmedie Beach accessible for everyone. In 2018 she became the coordinator of the Balmedie Beach wheelchair project, providing specially designed chairs to allow families onto the beach when these spaces might otherwise be off limits. She started with one chair and now has five, as well as special support equipment. Fiona manages volunteers and supports families using their resources; it is her compassion, understanding, enthusiasm, and sense of purpose which make her a great volunteer.

### Sarah Robinson

Sarah's range of volunteering is wide and varied. She has chaired the Bennachie Community Council, been the leader of the Inch Beaver Scout pack, raises money for charity through efforts like her One Year No New Clothes campaign, and is involved with her school PTA and help organise pensioners Christmas dinners each year. Everything she does is in her own time, with the ambition of making her community better and giving back. She is determined to have a positive impact on peoples lives, and she is making that aim a reality.

### **Heart of Aberdeenshire Caring award**

### Paula Massie

Paula and her partner are foster carers. A truly noble and selfless calling. Add into that however that Paula does all of this despite having recently had a double lung transplant. Throughout her illness and recovery, she continues to provide a loving and caring environment for her foster son. She is absolutely committed to giving him the best possible chance, juggling multiple hospital visits and appointments with her role helping him settle in school and supporting his emotional wellbeing. Not long ago Paula was urgently admitted to hospital, getting a transplant just in time to save her life. After nearly two months in intensive care, her first concern on waking was the welfare of her son. She has devoted herself to a caring role and is a role model to show that caring is possible in any circumstances.

### Claire Bruce

Imagine being told you might not be able to have children, then having two and both of those children falling seriously ill? This happened to Claire Bruce. Her first daughter was diagnosed with Leukaemia aged just six months old. Then, years later, when the first had recovered, her second daughter was also diagnosed with a form of the disease. Not only does Claire fundraise for children's cancer charities, she spends every day in hospital at her six year old daughter's bedside, supporting her through rounds of chemotherapy. In the nomination form it says she has "been through hell and back, twice" and still does everything with a smile. Claire is more of an inspiration to other than she will ever know.

### Portlethen Home Care Team

The team is made up of 10 carers, who cover the Portlethen, Newtonhill and Muchalls areas. Each member of the team goes over and above every day to keep the standard of care exceptional in their area, for services users with a range of conditions from Motor Neuron Disease to Parkinson's and others. The last few years has seen a sharp increase in the number of cases where end-of-life care is required, and this team provide a valuable support to users and their families in the most challenging circumstances. The nomination describes their dedication and commitment which is truly inspiring.

## **Cultural award**

### Chris Reid

Over the last 36 years, Chris has been the driving force behind the Fraserburgh Heritage Society, as a dedicated and proactive leader. From small beginnings organising local history exhibitions, the group has grown to over 100, promoting the history of the north east town through the Heritage Centre and beyond. Chris has driven that change. She has responsibility for recruiting volunteers, staffing the Heritage Centre, social media, record keeping and curation. The Centre is valuable to visitors young and old and was described as a blueprint for other community led attractions throughout the country by VisitScotland, none of that possible without Chris and her hard work.

### Rhona Mitchell

Rhona set up the Mitchell School of Drama in Inverurie in 1983, moving to Glasgow before returning to Aberdeenshire in 1998. Many of her pupils have gone on to study drama, working in television and on stage as professional actors. She has worked with many people over the years, training them and encouraging their development, ranging from school pupils to adults to people with additional support needs. Rhona has been the backbone of this school for over 37 years, promoting and encouraging Aberdeenshire talent and local culture. Her aim is to show that drama and theatre are for everyone.

### Iona Fyfe

Iona, from Huntly, is a well known singer, becoming better known across the globe for her part in keeping North east culture and music alive. She has a passion for promoting Doric songs and stories, and performs ballads and folk songs from across Aberdeenshire. She has sold out Edinburgh Fringe Shows, and has performed in Australia, Canada, Switzerland, and Germany among others. Closer to home she continues to teach workshops and perform in Aberdeenshire, as a positive role model for traditional music. In a review of her latest album it was said that "the future of traditional music from the North east of Scotland is in very safe hands."

## **Beautiful Aberdeenshire Environmental award**

### Edenholme Care Home

In partnership with the Aberdeenshire Council waste reduction team, Edenholme in Stonehaven agreed to take part in a green champion award scheme. To take part they had to run and maintain eco initiatives. Since signing up they local team have established their own local recycling point, run “switch off” energy campaigns, set up a clothing bank, turned their garden into a number of veg patches, established greenhouses and involved the residents in gardening and maintenance. They have got the community involved and active and it is that shared role which sets their initiatives apart. And yes, they went on to win the green champion scheme!

### Marion Montgomery

Marion set up the PAWS ON PLASTIC group just over a year ago. The aim is simple, to encourage dog walkers to pick up just one or two pieces of plastic every time they are out on a walk, take them home and recycle them. Her belief is that small steps like this, regularly, can make a big difference. Despite being new, the group has more than 10,000 Facebook followers alone and users post pictures of their efforts from across the globe, as well as picture of their dogs! In her mind it isn't about large litter picks, just small sustainable change that leads to big results.

### David Culshaw

David is a former Banchory Academy teacher and is now the inspiration behind the Banchory Paths Association. He is out in all weathers, come rain or shine, to secure funding or gather volunteerspa to maintain and run the path network, which has improved dramatically since he became involved. He is as happy getting his hands dirty helping with the projects as he is cycling round Scotland to raise thousands for the group. His efforts have opened the network up to people of all ages and abilities, who owe him a debt of gratitude.

## **Local Hero Courage award**

### Paula Massie

Another nomination for this carer battling her own condition selflessly. For ten years Paula, who was also recognised in the Caring category, has suffered from pulmonary hypertension, a condition which has left her often unable to undertake simple tasks without being exhausted and short of breath. Her transplant was life changing but her heroism is in the battle between her own health and her caring role. She does everything for her son and is undoubtedly his hero.

### Paul Cheyne

Paul and his family were at Balmedie beach in August last year when they were alerted to a young boy in trouble in the water. The boy and his older brother had gone out on bodyboards but the tide took the nine year old out further than was safe and he began getting into difficulty. Without a second thought, and wearing just the shorts and t-shirt he was standing in, Paul swam out and rescued the boy, taking him to safety in deeper calm water before bringing him to shore to his relieved family. Speaking in the nomination form, the young boy's family say that Paul will forever hold a special place in their hearts and they know they can never fully repay his bravery.

### Eilidh and Isla Noble

These sisters shot to fame when they rescued a man and his son from the water off Fraserburgh last year. The teens heard cries for help when they were on the beach and swam out to find the pair in trouble in deep water, rescuing them with a lilo and a lot of courage. They called the Coastguard for help, and got the man and his son to safety, but not before the father lost consciousness. He came around briefly on the beach, just enough to thank the girls for their bravery before being taken to ARI. Both the man and his son made a full recovery, but owe their life to these Aberdeenshire heroes.

### **Community Spirit award**

#### Pieter voor de Poorte

Peter moved to the village of Catterline 15 years ago and has become established in the community, but it is his work with the Catterline Braes Action Group which has earned him this nomination. Pieter stepped in to help when the Braes were badly damaged in a storm. He made links with a group of academics in Glasgow researching ways of tackling coastal erosion environmentally, has researched the problem and doggedly sourced necessary materials. He has replaced paths, mobilised the community, stabilised the land in front of threatened homes in the village and done it all in the most environmentally friendly way possible. The residents of the community feel sure none of this would have been possible without him.

#### Connor McCarthy

Connor is an S6 pupil and Vice Captain at Kemnay Academy. His cerebral palsy means he uses a wheelchair and an electronic talker to communicate. Connor has dedicated himself to working with Riding for the Disabled and wanted to give something back for all the support they have given him. As a result he has appeared in the school newsletter and given presentations to raise awareness of equality. He has also been fundraising for the RDA group. Connor is a well known and loved pupil and member of the Kemany Academy family, using his experience and words to help young people better understand those of all abilities.

### Rosehearty Harbour Inshore Fishermen's Association

This group was set up in 2018, after it was agreed that the best way to make the desired improvements to the Rosehearty Harbour was for the community to take the lead. Working in partnership with the Council and others they have raised more than £30,000 and secured £70,000 in funding for projects and developments of the harbour area. They aim to protect and promote the livelihoods of inshore fishermen and develop the harbour for everyone. Because of their success, this group has been cited regularly as an example of good practice, and community groups from other parts of Scotland and beyond have visited to see how they are delivering real change as a mobilised community.

### **Inspiring Aberdeenshire Lifetime Achievement award**

#### Brian McCann

Brian comes from a care experienced background and the feelings he had when he was growing up have never left him. As a result he put that experience to the best possible use and has been volunteering with the Children's Panel for more than 20 years. Over the years he has done everything to ensure young people get the best possible chance and has put children first in everything he does. In his various roles he has steered the panel group through a number of challenges, from legislative change to training to recruitment and gives up his own time freely to support young people. He is exceptional volunteer with an exceptional heart, but would always shy away from the praise he deserves. He is described as the heart of the Aberdeenshire Panel (something the nomination said would make him cringe). A huge thank you Brian, you have helped change lives.

#### Gordon Laird

Gordon is described as the rock of stability that Fraserburgh United Football Club has anchored itself to for nearly 30 years. Over the past three decades he has been Chairman, navigating change, success and adversity and always doing it to make the club something for the whole Fraserburgh community. He isn't just chairman. He is also treasurer, fundraiser, secretary and even groundskeeper. Despite being in his 70s he will pick up any job that needs done and see it through, a true inspiration to past and present club members as well as a role model in the town. And long may that continue.

#### Sandy Mack

If you are ever faced with a challenge, think to yourself "What would Sandy do?" That is the question which motivates the person who nominated this true Aberdeenshire inspiration. Sandy has been a youth worker for more than 25 years, as a valued and trusted community worker. It is his role at the "coal face" of youth work which inspires and enthuses him and that enthusiasm is infectious. He has led local, regional and national groups, fighting the cause for young people and the services that they can access. He was instrumental in a

project to promote valuing young people and organised the annual Aberdeenshire's Youth event. Despite being one of a number of dedicated youth workers, Sandy is nominated here because he has never lost sight of what matters to young people. The youth of Aberdeenshire have a real champion in Sandy Mack.