

Dunbar Community Council was delighted to present our Awards Night again this year in the Town House Council Chamber, as part of our Civic Week celebrations.

On 10<sup>th</sup> June, the Royal Court, Queen, **Josie Craig** and attendants, **Aizah Ahmed** and **Emily Alexander**, led the way and presented awards to six people and two groups.

### **Young Citizen Award 2024**

#### **Blake Ainslie**

Blake was nominated by his head teacher, Oliver Langton, asking the Community Council to recognise the contribution that this young man has made in his support for our own Community events as Pipe Major of Belhaven Hill School Pipe Band.

This position carries significant responsibility every year, but probably rarely more so than in the past year, when the band functioned for a great deal of time without a dedicated director of Music.

Blake led the band brilliantly last summer when they performed at the Dunbar community picnic in Lauderdale Park, celebrating the coronation of King Charles III.

The Pipe Band played again when the Dunbar Sea Cadets celebrated their 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in September. With very little rehearsal time underneath their belts, and with many experienced pipers and drummers having left at the end of the previous Summer term, Blake had to lead his new band in a public ceremony of significant importance in front of the Lord Lieutenant of East Lothian and a crowd of family and supporters of the Sea Cadets. He managed this with great aplomb and the band's presence enhanced a great occasion.

Over the Christmas holiday, Blake was to be found supporting a different section of the Dunbar community - the Loony Dookers - when he played on the beach on New Year's Day to encourage the brave swimmers into the icy water and he will be in charge again as the band plays for our guests at the Community Picnic on 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

Blake is an extremely talented student and musician, recognised this summer in his award of full academic and music scholarships to Oundle, one of the most prestigious independent secondary schools in the UK.

We are confident that he will continue to support the Dunbar Community when at home and represent Dunbar with distinction when continuing his education south of the border.

#### **Bowe Cup**

Dunbar Community Council has recognised the exceptional contributions made by young people in our community for more than 40 years, when the Community Council first awarded the Bowe Cup.

This silver cup was made in Birmingham in 1921 – so it is now over 100 years old. Before WW2, the cup was presented by a local gentleman by the name of David Bowe, to the ploughman who presented the best plough team at the annual ploughing competition.

The horse ploughing tradition became obsolete after the war and the cup was passed to the care of Dunbar Burgh Council and then, in 1975, to Dunbar Community Council which superseded the Burgh Council.

At that time, Alastair Bowe, David Bowe's grandson, suggested that the Community Council should present it annually to a young person 'who had made an exceptional achievement'.

The Community Council approved of this idea and presented it for the first time in 1982.

This year, we were delighted to award the Bowe Cup to **Hayley McCausland**.

Dunbar Grammar School's Kirsty McLuckie, explained why she felt Hayley deserved to be recognised.

*I would like to nominate Hayley for an award in recognition of all the volunteering she does.*

*She has been 'hands on' with us at Dinner@DGS every week for 4 years now. Hayley is a great asset and can turn her hand to any of the jobs required for our intergenerational meals - setting up tables; prepping food; baking cakes; serving; washing dishes and front of house welcoming our older friends.*

*Hayley sets a great example to our younger volunteers with her impeccable manners and is happy to guide them through all aspects of their intergenerational dining experience, supporting them to register for the Saltire Awards.*

*Hayley was a key player with the Digital Buddies group, another intergenerational initiative –*

*Dementia Friendly East Lothian, Dunbar Connected Communities and Dunbar Grammar School staff facilitated weekly meetings where the DGS students shared their knowledge of using iPads with their older friends. Hayley joined us every Monday for 2 hours for just under 2 years and has formed and sustained great relationships with our older friends.*

*Hayley volunteered with Sustaining Dunbar's Belhaven Buddies, visiting the residents of Blossom House at Belhaven Hospital on Friday afternoons. Arts, crafts, baking, music, poetry and more were regular activities carried out by the youngsters and residents there.*

*At home, Hayley is a Young Carer and is currently studying for 5 highers - however she still manages to fit in volunteering. She is an amazing young lady and an inspiration to her peers. Hayley is a giver of the greatest gift – time.*

*She would be a most deserving winner of the Bowe Cup.*

We couldn't have said it better!

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The Community Council introduced the **Citizen Award** in 2014 when we were first faced with competition for the Community Council Award. So many wonderful people were proposed for recognition and we were forced to choose a single recipient for the cup. The Citizen Award recognises the contribution that individuals have made to our community and this year we had three award winners.

The first of our 2024 Citizen Awards went to **Christine Bailey** for her outstanding work in setting up the invaluable Debt Advice Service in Dunbar.

Christine was the driving force behind the establishment of the Dunbar Debt Advice Service and now leads a team of 4 debt advisors, covering the Dunbar, Lammermuir and East Linton areas.

Working closely with The Ridge, Foodshare and The East Linton Wellbeing Club she and her team offer holistic support to those who come for advice and help and she has grown the service since its inception in 2019 to support more than 60 clients to manage over £350k of debt.

A volunteer herself, Christine guides and mentors the Debt Advice Service team, ensuring that they consistently deliver the best advice to meet the needs of every client.

Unfortunately, Christine was not able to attend the event but the award was accepted on her behalf **Diana Hall**, Rector at St Anne's Church, and **Emilio De Abreu Faria** from the Salvation Army, both of whom work with Christine to provide the service.

The second of this year's Citizen Awards went to **Neil MacPherson**.

Although instrumental in establishing vibrant and growing support for competitive rugby for teenage girls in Dunbar, we are here tonight to acknowledge Neil's work with Mini Rugby.

Neil is the Mini rugby coordinator at Dunbar Rugby Football Club. This is a completely voluntary position within the club and as the figurehead of the Minis section, the role takes many hours of personal time, no small thing when you have a young family and work full time.

Neil took over running the Minis section just after the Covid Pandemic mini rugby has grown exponentially in Dunbar since he took over. There are now approximately one hundred children, both boys and girls playing regularly, with parents, recruited by Neil, supporting teams to play in all age groups.

Neil has been solely responsible for developing a full fixture list for the Mini rugby, which was no mean feat after Covid. He proactively reached out to new clubs and re-established contacts with clubs and teams that had long since fallen away or that had struggled to get going again after the pandemic.

His enthusiasm for Dunbar Rugby Club and, in particular, the Minis section, culminates every year in May organising our annual Mini rugby tournament. Arranging fixtures, organising catering, finding referees and countless other volunteer helpers all ensure that the day runs smoothly with all the attending children enjoying a fantastic festival of rugby.

Neil is stepping away from this role now but his wonderful legacy is there for our community now and in the future.

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The third of our Citizen Awards went to **John Montgomery**.

John is a professional with a full time job in academia but still finds time to volunteer in our community.

He has been involved with the First Responders for many years. He is active on emergency calls but is also now a member of the committee that manages this important local team ensuring that defibrillators are maintained and ready to use in Dunbar and surrounding areas. He is a great support to local groups, helping to provide equipment and training that has, and will continue to, save lives.

With another hat on, John is a committee member of the Royal British Legion in Dunbar, helping to organise and deliver the much valued Veterans' Breakfast each month.

And, not the least of John's community contributions has been the many years that he has spent supporting Dunbar Sea Cadets. A skilled educator, kayaker and outdoors enthusiast, John has provided

varied and uniquely wonderful watersports teaching to hundreds of cadets over the years, giving them skills that they will never lose.

### **Community Council Award**

13 years after the Bowe Cup was first awarded by Dunbar Community Council, the group considered that it should recognise the contributions made to the town by a person of any age. In 1995, the Council founded the Community Council Award – a cup to be awarded annually to an individual who had made an outstanding contribution to life in the Burgh.

This year's Community Council Award went to **Bob Fleet**.

Bob has been a volunteer at Belhaven community Garden for over a decade, often leading volunteer sessions keeping the garden maintained, cared for and looking beautiful. Always on hand to pass on his knowledge to others he has a particular skill with more vulnerable volunteers, making them feel welcome and part of things. That's just Bob to a tee.

Bob has helped many times with the Beehive Garden Project at Dunbar nursery school, a wonderful outdoor learning space attached to the nursery block. Leading a team of volunteers, Bob recently completed a fully accessible polytunnel, allowing children in wheelchairs to join in the fun of growing.

He designed and made a beautiful Beehive arch, complete with Bumblebee, for the garden space which he built at Dunbar Community shed, where he also volunteers. The children love it and enjoy it as a momentous gateway for important events in their year.

A lover of nature, Bob is a volunteer with Dunbar Community Woodland Group, helping to maintain and manage the woodland as a safe and lovely place to walk and enjoy the outdoors.

He volunteers at the Community Shed, where he has helped make raised beds for the railway station and benches for townsfolk where people can sit, rest, ponder and enjoy the views. He helped with the local Pledgehog Project building hedgehog homes to encourage our prickly pals and helped fundraise for the Pledgehog project.

I am sure we all remember fondly his huge John Muir puppet, central to Civic Week and greeted with beaming smiles from everybody. The list goes on!

Off dry land, Bob is a member of the Coastal Rowing Club and often volunteers for them promoting them at local events and encouraging people to join, try something new and get fit doing it! He's also been seen inciting people to use a home made coracle!

Bob is a humble, kind, good humoured and generous person who makes people smile.

He is an unsung hero who's commitment and community spirit is truly commendable making him a worthy winner of this year's Community Council Award.

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We then turned to the **group awards** where we acknowledge and thank teams for their service to Dunbar.

The Citizen Team Award for 2024 went to **Rebecca Miller and Alison Wilson**.

Local Dunbar residents Rebecca 'Becs' Miller, who is a RNLI Dunbar crew member, and Alison Wilson, a trustee of Dunbar Harbour Trust, have stepped outside their comfort zone over the last 13 months to support children and their families who face the toughest of times on a daily basis.

In February this year, they conquered a gruelling 65km Arctic Trek in aid of the charity When You Wish Upon a Star, which grants wishes for children living with life threatening illnesses. Pulling their own equipment across the frozen land, lakes and rivers, they slept in tents and endured temperatures as low as -30 deg c.

Their endeavour brought the local community together for an inclusive journey with friends, family, clients, businesses, trusts and local groups all of whom supported them by raising vital funds and bringing crucial awareness of the charity's work to heart of Dunbar.

Rebecca and Alison self-funded their places on the Arctic trek to maximise the funds that were generously donated and aimed to reach a £2400 funding target. For the whole of last year, they organised events, big and small, public and private, and raised awareness of the charity, which, with their Arctic Trek raised an incredible £10,770.41, smashing their original goal!

When you Wish Upon a Star told us:

*Rebecca and Alison, who are at the heart of the Dunbar community, have supported local families living through the hardest of times, making a powerful impact and leaving a lasting legacy.*

They are worthy winners of the Citizen Team Award.

Finally we turned to the **Stephen Bunyan Award**.

Stephen Bunyan MBE has been an active member of Dunbar Community Council since its inception in 1975 and chaired it for thirty four years before he stepped down in 2018. He remains a councillor today, offering a wealth of experience to others.

Dunbar Community Council wished to recognise this remarkable service and, in 2018, 41 years after Stephen took up post, elected to purchase an annual award to be given in Stephen's name to mark an exceptional contribution to Dunbar's community life by a group or team.

The silver cup with Celtic handles was made by Mappin and Webb in 1933, the year of Stephen's birth.

The oak stand was made in 2018 by David Robinson of Drem, East Lothian, to a design by one of our own councillors.

This year the Stephen Bunyan Award went to the **Salty Sisters Dunbar**, represented by Emma Timms and Shelley Sim.

The Salty Sisters was founded by local yoga teacher, Emma and is publicised and supported with the frequent and entertaining social media posts of local woman and admin of the group, Shelley Sim.

With over 1,000 members on its face book page, the Salty Sisters promote cold water swimming in and around Dunbar's beautiful beaches. The social media posts have a nation wide reach and many of "The Salties" took part in the UK wide Polar Bear challenge these last two winters – swimming at Skateraw and elsewhere in Dunbar all winter without wet suits.

They resurrected the Loony Dook on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024 this year, after it was missing during Covid, raising over £800 for Cancer Research. Piped into the water by Blake Ainslie, a winding queue over The Bridge to Nowhere was led to the sea for the first dook of the year. It was a huge success!

The group was instrumental in seeing the restoration of the Gentlemen's Bathing Pool, making it safe for swimming.

They took part as a team in the Relay for Life at Hallhill last summer and are putting a team in again this year, raising money for Cancer Research.

They help wild swimmers socialise on land, too, by organising accessible socials including a Burns Supper, an evening event for International Women's Day and a sell-out craft making social.

These swims and socials provide a lifeline for many people who have found cold water swimming transformative for their health and wellbeing.

Their nominator told us:

*The Salty Sisters are a tough bunch of women with gentle, welcoming hearts who do so much to promote Dunbar in a positive way. I have received so much from them: fun, friendship, fierce resilience and a resurrected ability to perform a handstand underwater – and I am 61.*

That is a pretty special commendation!

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After photographs and congratulations, the award winners and guests were hosted by Community Councillors Pippa Swan, Alasdair Swan, Mark James, Graham Adams, Kevin Searle, Stuart Cameron, Gill Wilson and Stephen Bunyan to refreshments in the Community Room.

*Photographs courtesy of DCC Councillor, Kevin Searle.*