

January | 2026 | ISSUE 135

BLACKMOUNT BUGLE



Picture of Fog Bow by Graham Wardill

Note from our Councillor

I hope everyone has had a good New Year and looking forward to 2026. With the New Year we have had a change in the weather, thankfully, not as severe as the north of Scotland or further south. This is an opportune time to highlight the council policy on gritting. They have identified primary routes that they will work on initially ensuring that all villages have at least one access that is open to traffic. If time allows, they then cover secondary routes. The routes do not necessarily follow bus routes, school or service, pavements in towns main streets will also be gritted. This policy allows as best we can that every village and town is accessible other than in extreme situations. About 51% of roads in SLC are in the primary routes a larger % than any neighbouring authority.

It is also the time of year when we start to look at the council budget. The most important piece of information we require is the level of grant we receive from Scottish government. This accounts for about 80% of our income and therefore central to our decision-making process. It is only then we can start making decisions for ourselves and trying to get a balance of council tax and services. Being able to set a budget without cuts or increase in council tax would certainly be a good start to 2026.

Once again, a Happy New Year to one and all

Cll Allison

Members of Blackmount Community Council (BMCC)

Chairperson: Alistair Muirhead, chair@blackmountcc.scot

Secretary: Andy Hudson, secretary@blackmountcc.scot

Treasurer: Steve Jenkins, treasurer@blackmountcc.scot

Felix Deby, Eric Holford, Anne Hutchison, Tammy McAllister

To contribute to the next Bugle email bugle@blackmountcc.scot. The Bugle is published by the Blackmount Community Council (BMCC) but the committee cannot accept responsibility for any errors printed. Blackmount Area covering Candymill, Dunsyre, Dolphinton, Elsrickle, Greenshields, Libberton, Newbigging, Weston, Walston and surrounding area.

Bulk Oil Buying Groups

The Blackmount Group covers households within the ML11 and ML12 postcode areas and is coordinated by Catriona Malone (blackmountfuelgroup@gmail.com). The Dolphinton Group covering the EH46 postcode is coordinated by Ian Poole (dolphintonbulkoil@gmail.com and Tel: 07510310754). If you are interested in joining either group, please email and the coordinators will explain how the groups operate and put you on the contact list.

Please note that the original deadline for orders has changed and the deadline is now Sunday 18th January at 8pm.

Libberton Church

The new Biggar District Parish Church was pleased to host the Christmas Assembly for Libberton Primary school on 19th December in anticipation of the coming union of the churches at the beginning of January.

The worship in Libberton will take place much more frequently than recent months, starting on Sunday 4th January with worship at 11.15am. The formal service of union of the churches will take place on Wednesday 14th January at 7.00pm in Biggar Kirk led by the Presbytery of Forth Valley and Clydesdale. *Anne Cochrane*

Blackmount Church, Dolphinton

Happy New Year from Blackmount Church. From 1st January we were officially linked with Biggar Kirk and Libberton and Quothquan in a 'new' parish called Biggar District. A joint service will be held in Biggar Kirk on the last Sunday of each month but on other Sundays we will meet, as usual, for worship at 9.45am, followed by tea/coffee.

The first meeting of our Guild will be held in the church on Wednesday 28 January at 2pm and the speaker will be Nicola Campbell talking about 'Wanderings'. Nicola leads these interesting, reflective walks in the local area. Our coffee mornings take place on the first Wednesday of each month when you can enjoy a chat and crackers and cheese! A warm welcome awaits you at Blackmount Church for any of these events. *Gillian Coulter*

Dolphinton Indoor Bowling Club



The Bowling Club returned to Dolphinton in October with around 18 playing members, along with a few others who come along for a social chat and a couple of hours' escape from the house.

Just before Christmas, we held our Steak Pie Competition Night, which was well attended, with around 30 players and several others watching from the sidelines. The evening was rounded off in fine style with steak pies for the winning team and runners-up, followed by excellent tea and sandwiches, and a well-supported raffle.

Thanks to everyone who attended and helped make it such a successful night back in Dolphinton. We look forward to seeing you all again at our End of Session Steak Pie Night on 26 March, or before then on our regular Thursday nights.

Deryck Hogge

Elsrickle Carpet Bowling Club

On January 8th we held our steak pie night. The winners were Iain Minto, Thomas Gibson, Rolf Cameron, and Peter Muirhead. Runners up were Ian Wallace, Liz Tweedie and Ailie McCann. Our pairs bowling tournament will be held on Saturday 14th February.

2026 NEWS FROM DOLPHINTON HALL

Dates for your diary. We are delighted to tell you all about what to expect at the Hall during the next few months.

WEEKLY COFFEE MORNINGS - come along to the Hall for a cuppa, a chat in a warm space. 10.30 - 12.00, every Thursday, starting, **JANUARY 8TH**. Children welcome. Free.

MONTHLY FUN NIGHT - on the 1st Friday of the month, fun and games, and usually a quiz - an evening for all the family. BYOB. 6.30pm until late. The next such night is **FRIDAY JANUARY 9TH**. £5 per household.

CEILIDH - dance the night away, 7pm to late. BYOB. £10 per ticket (which Includes supper). **FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13TH**. Phone either Susie on 07801 339392 or Pam on 07966 453317 to buy your tickets, or go to our Facebook page.

TABLE TOP SALE - SATURDAY MARCH 7th - sell your unwanted Christmas gifts, your bric a brac, books, etc. Phone either Susie on 07801 339392, or Pam on 07966 453317 to book a table @ £5 each.

LAZY HORSE - a local five-piece rock covers band (60's, 70's and 80's) will be holding a gig at the Hall on **SATURDAY MARCH 21st**.

REGULAR DATES at THE HALL

Wednesday - Pilates with Lindy, 5 - 6pm

Wednesday - Art Group - 7.30 - 9pm

Wednesday - 3rd Weds of the month until April, WI 7.30 - 9.30 pm

Thursday - Carpet Bowls - 7.30 - 9.30

To book the Hall or to enquire about any of the activities available call either Susie on 07801 339392 or Pam on 07966 453317, or go to our website, Dolphintonhall.org.uk, or visit our Facebook page - Dolphinton Hall Community Association



Dolphinton Art and Craft Club

meets Wednesdays at 7.30pm at Dolphinton Hall

We draw, we paint, we craft, we chat. Generally, our meetings are self-directed based on a theme, we learn from being creative and sharing ideas and techniques together.

Our planned program for Spring 2026 includes a great variety of arts and crafts - printing, portraits, collage ...you may find that you try something new and we are always open to ideas. You can of course just bring any art or craft you wish to do and enjoy creating with a group of friends.

Come and join us - Become a member:- Membership fee for a term - £50 (includes average 11 sessions, hall booking and supply of some additional art materials). Non-member attendance - £6 per session

For more information please call:-

Pam - 07966453317 or Sarah-Jane -07928529239

Spring 2026 Programme

Drawing BIG. 7th January, 14th January

Forget sketchbooks, roll out paper on the floor - start the new year with some expressive large-scale drawing, charcoal, large paint brushes, rollers, hands and feet, enjoy movement of mark making on a large scale.



Printing 28th January, 4th February, 11th February

Experiment with different printing techniques. Monoprint, Linocut print, make stamps to block print with.

Portraits 25th February, 4th March

A challenge to capture likeness and expression, to observe and understand posture movement, anatomy and proportions. Quick sketching, short poses, if possible, a helpful partner will agree to sit and model for us (clothed!)



Collage. 18th March, 25th March, 1st April

Collage art, between us all I'm sure we can have a wide variety of collage materials to have fun with - 2d collage pictures or try some decoupage on 3d objects.



Dolphinton SWI

Dolphinton SWI has met three times since the last edition of the Bugle.

In October, the organisation celebrated 100 years with a celebratory dinner for past and present members prepared by Giovanni's of Penicuik. Two courses were followed by a fabulous cake, which was cut by the oldest and youngest attending, Jean Campbell and Xanthe Abernethy. Jean was presented with a SWI Honorary Member's certificate and badge, in recognition of her incredible contribution to the Rural in Dolphinton – she reckoned she joined in the early 1960s! A toast was made to the next 100 years of the Rural.

In November, we were entertained and informed by Ann Yourston's illustrated talk on her recent visit to Athens. The competitions were won by Margaret for the best vase and Libby for her flower drawing and for flower of the month. Pam and Joanne were the hostesses.

In December, Margaret Leiper led the group in making beautiful Christmas baubles, for which she provided the prepared materials. She also brought along a wide selection of decorations and jewellery that she had made, some knitted, some crocheted and some fashioned from discarded coffee pods. We then ate mince pies with our tea and looked forward to the New Year's meetings.

Meetings Diary for Spring 2026 in Dolphinton Village Hall

21st January – Speaker Anna Ludwig – An introduction to Music Therapy. Competitions; an iced biscuit, a winter photograph. Hostess; Carolyn Hawkes and Sarah-Jane Selwood

Saturday 31st January – Bowling Tournament

18th February – Gary Watkins – Help for Children of Ukraine. Competitions; a baby hat (to be donated), most interesting charity shop find. Hostess; Alice Mathewson & Hilary Lyons

11th March – Blind Taste & Try. Competitions; a jar of marmalade, the oldest spice jar. Hostess – all

15th April – AGM

Biggar Area Stitch and Textile Group

The programme for the next few months is as follows:

19 Jan - Annette Bruton Artist in resident at Edinburgh College

16 Feb – Susan Crosby, English paper piecing

16 Mar - Mary Morton, Street stitchers founder

20 Apr – AGM and display of works

Biggar Municipal Hall doors open from 7pm for at 7.30pm start. Visitors welcome (£6). Information about meetings and events such as our **STITCH AND SCONE DAY IN APRIL** will be found on our The Biggar Area Stitch & Textile Group Facebook page. For more details email: secbiggarstitchtextiles@gmail.com

Blackmount Social Group

2025 saw a new home for the Community Fireworks Display – Robertson Mains – and what a fantastic occasion and success it was. Despite having to postpone to the 8th due to poor weather, over 300 people came to support and celebrate together. The change of venue was well received across the community and it was amazing to see the farm full of families, neighbours, and friends all enjoying the fireworks. We are hugely indebted to Anne and Gail Hutchison for hosting the event and making it possible following the closure of our previous venue, and a huge thanks as always to Brian Curle for yet another spectacular display, and the members of the community who helped with set up, parking and provision of food and drinks.



As we enter the cold of January, the annual Christmas Dinner now seems like a distant memory. But for those over 65's that managed to attend it was wonderful pre-Christmas celebration full of good cheer, wonderful company and great food and entertainment in the Elsrickle Hub. Special thanks go to the Johnstone Family from Crawfordjohn for providing such lovely



music and creating a fantastic atmosphere throughout the evening. Many thanks as usual to all who helped with making the wonderful decorations, setting up the hall, preparing desserts, washing up, serving, donating raffle prizes, tidying up etc – you are a special group of people. And to the team from the Gavel restaurant for catering another superb meal, the BMCC and SLC for a Renewable energy microgrant, and to local builder Eddie of EJM Developments for his generous donation towards the costs of the event. It was hugely appreciated. Everyone had a lovely night, and it was a joy to see so many smiles around the room.

Rural Communities Nursery at Black Mount

Firstly, we would like say a Happy New Year to all our families and hope they had a lovely Christmas spending time with their families.

All the children have been extremely busy in the few months before Christmas making lots of Christmas gifts for their families which we sold at our stall at the school Christmas fayre to raise funds for the nursery. They also spent a lot of time practicing for our Christmas show called "baa and twinkle" which they performed with the help of the school Primary Fours as narrators of the story. Thank you to all the family and friends who came along to our show, and thank you for all our support in 2025.

We are looking forward to welcoming some new friends into nursery in the new year.

Elsrickle SWI

We have had some interesting few months. We glazed the tiles we made in September and were shown our finished tiles in December that will be mounted on a board and displayed in the hall. Sculpture of a different kind **in October** - a demonstration of cake decoration by Julie Miller. We were mesmerised as she created the most amazing flowers out of sugar paste. **In November** there was a fascinating talk by Dr. Anne Williams on

lymphoedema. She works in the podiatry clinic in Biggar and offers advice and treatments for a wide range of conditions related to the lymphatic system. **In December**, Pauline Rogers guided the group through the making of a Christmas wreath. Mounds of greenery and berries were finally reduced to wreaths fit to decorate the doors of Biggar and Elsrickle for a few weeks over the festive season.



Here are details of meetings from January at Elsrickle Community Hub, 7pm. You don't need to be a member. Come along for £5.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 14 th Jan | Forsyth the butchers – Mike Forsyth |
| 11 th Feb | A Scots Evening – Clare Yuille from Braw Clan |
| 11 th Mar | Gardening – getting your garden ready for Spring
with Colin MacDowell |
| 8 th Apr | Broughtonknowe Community Buy Out -John Hart |



Elsrickle Community Hub

Come for **haggis, steak pie, neeps, and tatties** at our **Burns Afternoon 25th January 1.30pm to 3.30pm**. Includes Scottish themed quiz. Free but donations welcome. Please email Jim Kinloch echbookings24@gmail.com, Alistair Muirhead apgm100@hotmail.com, or Gregor Doyle gregor_doyle@yahoo.co.uk to book your place.



We are pleased to announce that **Tea and a Tale** hosted by **Clare Yuille, a professional actor from Braw Clan**, will be reading a short engaging story in Scots on 25th March at 1.30pm (finish by 2.45pm). There will be tea, coffee, cake on offer. This is a free event but booking will be required (email pritchard.tc@gmail).

We plan to show some of the **Six Nations Rugby matches** (Mens: 7th Feb Italy vs Scotland 2.10pm, 21st Feb Wales vs Scotland 4.40pm, 7th Mar France vs Scotland 2.10pm, 14th March Ireland vs Scotland 2.10pm and Womens: 18th Apr England vs Scotland 1.30pm, 9th May France 4.15pm). Also, 15th March a **Spring Fling Ceilidh with light bites** at 3.30 to 5.30pm. More details to follow.

Monday morning coffee mornings will resume again (dates TBC). Children are very welcome to come and have a play too.

Crafting at the Hub continues on **Wednesdays at 10am**. Bring along your own project and craft away, meet others, have a chat, coffee, and cake (or other refreshment). Also, if you don't have a project with you there is usually materials available to start something, or just come for a chat and refreshments! Other craft workshops will be offered soon. Email Tracey pritchard.tc@gmail for more information or to receive the craft emails.

For booking enquiries please email Jim Kinloch echbookings24@gmail.com and check our website <https://www.elsricklecommunityhub.co.uk>

Biggar and District Men's Shed

Black Mount in Bloom – A Community Effort

At the end of 2025 and into 2026, We have been working with Black Mount Community Development Trust to create new wooden planters for village signs across Black Mount. Each planter has been filled with a mix of tulips, daffodils, crocus, muscari and alliums and, come spring, they'll be bursting with colour to welcome everyone into our communities.



You can already spot planters in Candymill, Elsrickle, Dunsyre, Dolphinton, Newbigging, Walston and Weston, with Libberton coming soon. It's been a brilliant example of local skills, teamwork and pride in place. Thank you to everyone who helped make it happen.

As part of their continued support for the local community, we will also be purchasing new playground equipment for Black Mount Primary School, helping to create more opportunities for local children to learn, play and thrive.

To find out more about **Biggar and District Men's Shed**, based in the Old Walston Primary School, drop by or get in touch:

 info@biggarmensshed.uk |  07471 491099



Libberton Primary School News!

The JRSO Be Bright Day by Lena P7

Be Bright Day is a day where everyone dresses up in bright colours, and it is all organised by the Junior Road Safety Officers for the school. It teaches us to stay safe on the roads and to be seen in the dark. We usually do lots of games to encourage road safety and it was a great day.



David Mundell MP – Christmas Card Competition by Michael P6

David Mundell is an MP for our area and every year he organises a Christmas card competition. There is one overall winner and three runners-up. I was a runner-up this year and I won a gift bag including a mug with my drawing printed on it. I also got a card that had all the winners on and an Amazon gift card! I drew a Christmas tree with lots of colourful doodles. David Mundell came to our school to hand over the gift.



Jock & The Beanstalk Panto at The Pavilion, Glasgow

We were delighted to be successful in applying for a grant via BlackMount Community Council for £500 to enable us and Wiston Primary to go to see Jock & The Beanstalk at The Pavilion in Glasgow this December. The children had a fantastic time and it was really amazing to go slightly further afield and see a larger production which we would not have been able to do without the grant. Our thanks to the Community Council for their ongoing support of our school – we really appreciated having this opportunity.

The Three Wee Pigs School Show by Thomas P6, Sofia P5 and Harper P6

Our school show this year was The Three Wee Pigs! Everyone had to audition for the roles and we were chosen to be some of the main characters. We had a script to practise and about three weeks to learn all the lines – which was a lot. Close to the show, we received the props and had one practise with everybody in. The piggy masks squished our noses and were a little bit



uncomfortable. Although we were a little bit nervous, once we were on the stage, we really enjoyed the show. We liked being the main characters and are looking forward to next year's show!



Black Mount Primary School

Reflecting on a Busy and Inspiring Start to the School Year

As we welcome the new year, the children have been reflecting on just how busy and exciting life has been since the start of the school year. They've enjoyed a huge range of fabulous learning experiences, working with new partners, leading projects with friends, and developing new skills that will stay with them for years to come. Here's just a small sample of what we've been up to!



Eco Drama: Inspiring Wonder Outdoors

Black Mount completed a wonderful *Out to Play* residency with Eco Drama and their friends at Auchengray Primary,

bringing creativity and sustainability to life in our playgrounds. Led by drama artist Izzie, pupils explored imaginative outdoor learning through storytelling and drama, connecting their experiences to the 10 Eco-Schools Topics and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This project not only enriched classroom learning but also strengthened family engagement through special sessions with parents.



Kindness at Christmas

At Black Mount Primary, the *Community Champions* pupil leadership group showed incredible compassion through their support of WomanKIND Clydesdale's Kindness at Christmas appeal. Thanks to the generosity of pupils, families, and friends, the school collected over 120 donations of essential toiletries.

Two of our pupils even joined volunteers in Biggar to help package more than 1,000 gift bags, which were distributed to local food banks and community organisations. This project was a wonderful example of leadership and kindness in action.

These experiences highlight the creativity, leadership, and community spirit that make our school so special. We're proud of

everything our pupils have achieved so far and can't wait to see what the rest of the year brings!



Young Leaders of Learning Take the Lead

Our Young Leaders of Learning at Black Mount Primary and Auchengray Primary stepped up to design and deliver a festive STEM challenge afternoon for their younger friends at Black Mount Primary and the Rural Communities Nursery at Black Mount. Using KAPLA building blocks, they created imaginative tasks to encourage teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving. The activities were carefully adapted for pupils of all ages, including those transitioning from nursery to Primary 1, making it a fun and inclusive experience for everyone involved. Well done to our wonderful Young Leaders of Learning!





It's been a fantastic start to the school session, filled with creativity, leadership, and community spirit. We can't wait to see what the new calendar year brings! A huge thank you to our local community for your kindness, generosity, and unwavering support – it truly makes all the difference to our school and our children.

Black Mount Parent Council

Our annual November Beetle Drive was originally scheduled to be held in the school; a burst pipe in the school hall meant that Elsrickle Hub stepped in to save the day! We had an excellent night of fierce competition and lots of laughs as kids and adults raced to be the first to ring the bell when they completed their beetle. We all enjoyed a lovely buffet to which everyone had contributed before the final rounds of the Beetle Drive and then scores were tallied and prizes awarded.

Black Mount Sprouts is a new Gardening/Science/Arts based after school club for pupils at the school and will be held weekly from the beginning of January. This will allow the kids to make good use of the polytunnel, outdoor classroom and the wonderful outdoor space we have at the school. We are looking for donations of seeds, plants or art materials as well as a helping pair of hands from experts in the community would be very welcome. If you have any donations or would like to volunteer sometimes, please contact blackmountparentcouncil@gmail.com

Our next event is the Film night at the Corn Exchange on 27th February.



Black Mount Community Development Trust

Autumn Highlights

Autumn was filled with cosy community events and thoughtful conversations. We co-hosted a **Halloween event at Errington's Barn** that welcomed over 80 people. Children and adults alike enjoyed exploring the woods after dark, listening to stories by torchlight, toasting marshmallows over fire pits, and sharing warming food and drinks.

We also hosted two community events to gather ideas for our Climate Readiness Grant: **Trees, Tea and Taking Action** and **Black Mount in Bloom**. Insights from these events have shaped a Black Mount tree-planting project, and we're delighted to have received **420 native tree saplings from the Woodland Trust**, which will be planted across Black Mount with the help of our members.

In December, we carried out **speed-watch surveys** in several key areas of concern around Black Mount. Thanks to all the community members who got involved, we collected a huge amount of data that clearly shows that speeding is an issue. We

also welcomed a productive visit from the **Community Police** to discuss speeding, road safety concerns, and rural crime. Several useful ideas were shared, and we'll be working on making Black Mount's road safer for all during 2026.

Coming Up

Spring wreath making – 22nd & 28th Mar. Booking via our website

Spring tree planting – many hands make light work. If you'd be up for helping with tree planting, please get in touch

Black Mount Community Fun Day – 25th Apr.

Make and Mend Skills-sharing for all ages to increase reuse - join our membership to stay in the loop.

If you'd like to stay involved, hear about events, or help shape what happens next, you can become a friend for free by visiting:

👉 <https://sites.google.com/view/black-mount-development-trust/become-a-member>



Dates for the Diary

Dolphinton Hall = DH, Elsrickle Community Hub = ECH

January

Wed 14th **Union of the Churches**, Biggar Kirk, 7pm
Wed 14th **Elsrickle SWI**, ECH, 7pm
Wed 21th **Dolphinton SWI**, DH, 7.30pm
Sun 25th **Burns Afternoon**, ECH, 1.30pm

February

Mon 2nd **Community Council Meeting**, DH, 7.30pm
Wed 11th **Elsrickle SWI**, ECH, 7pm
Fri 13th **Ceilidh**, DH, 7pm
Sat 14th **Carpet Bowling Tournament**, ECH
Wed 18th **Dolphinton SWI**, DH, 7.30pm

March

Mon 2th **Community Council meeting**, ECH, 7.30pm
Sat 7th **Table Top Sale**, DH
Wed 11th **Elsrickle SWI**, ECH, 7pm
Wed 11th **Dolphinton SWI**, DH, 7.30pm
Sat 21st **Lazy Horse** (Rock Band), DH
Sun 22nd **Spring Wreath Making**, BMCDT
Wed 25th **Tea and a Tale with Braw Clan**, ECH, 1.30pm to 2.45pm
Sat 28th **Spring Wreath Making**, BMCDT
Mon 30th **Community Council Meeting**, DH, 7.30pm

April

Sat 25th **Community Fun Day**, BMCDT, Black Mount School

Regular groups:

Dolphinton Carpet Bowling, DH, Thursdays, 7.30pm

Elsrickle Carpet Bowling, ECH, Tuesdays 7.30-9.30pm and Thurs 8-9pm

Crafting at the Hub, ECH, every Wednesday from 14 Jan 10am,

Dolphinton Arts and Craft Group, DH, Wednesdays 7.30 pm except when WI is on.

Coffee Morning, DH, Thursdays, 10.30am

Biggar and District Men's Shed, Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays 10am to 4pm. Mobile: 07471491099.

Monthly Fun Nights, DH, first Friday of Month 6.30pm

Blackmount Church Choir Practice, Thursdays 6.30pm.

Church Services:

Libberton Church first and second Sunday of each month at 11am.

Blackmount Church every Sunday at 9.45am except last Sunday and The Guild 2pm on 4th Wednesday of each month.