



# PEP Talk



## Pitcaple Environmental Project Ltd News

Issue 1

### PEP learns to talk!

Welcome to the brand new Pitcaple Environmental Project Newsletter written for the members, service users and supporters of PEP Ltd, the Pitscurry Project and the Harlaw Centre. PEP Talk aims to keep readers updated with the news, developments, achievements and events at the Pitscurry Project and as a result make you feel more in-



The Pitscurry Project

involved with the project itself. PEP talk will be issued four times a year and hopes to be able to follow the changes of the

seasons at the Pitscurry Project as the year goes by. We hope that PEP Talk will open up a new channel of communication with our readers and encourage you to join in with the conversation. If you have anything you wish to add to the newsletter or comment on please either email us at [peptalk@pitcaple.org.uk](mailto:peptalk@pitcaple.org.uk) or write to us at the address on page 4. We anticipate that your contributions and views will be an important part of PEP Talk in future issues. We will also be using this as a forum to show case some of the activities PEP Ltd and the service users get up to and to showcase some of their hard work at Pitscurry, fantastic artwork and crafts.

### What's On

On March 14th we have a return visit to the Over 60's group in Kemnay. They came to visit us at the Pitscurry Project last year and we played indoor bowls. They have now challenged us to a game of Bocca which is a mix of boules and bowls. As we are travelling to them this time we have to provide the fine pieces!

In February we will be going out with the Forestry Commission to plant some trees, location to be decided.

On 15th February we are having a visit from Sarah Davidson, Director for Local Government and the Third Sector.

In March we hope to hold a Spring Fair, details to follow.

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### Jobs for Spring:

- Riddle and separate the compost
- Feed the bees
- Plant out seedlings
- Plan the vegetable garden
- Plant tomatoes, onions and garlic sets in tunnels
- Put the skin on the tunnel on the first warm day
- Spread the compost and make tomato compost

### New Website Launch: [www.pitcaple.org.uk](http://www.pitcaple.org.uk)

In addition to the Newsletter we are also relaunching our website with the aim of making it more accessible and relevant to all. The website is moving service providers and will become an Internet "Blog" allowing it to have a more up-to-date format. The

changes will not be just cosmetic but will also mean a more dynamic website with regular news bulletins that web users can comment on. The site will use Wordpress - a popular content management system - that handles the presentation of

the articles leaving the site admin to just provide the words. We hope that our users will use the new site as a forum for comments, views and discussion on all things PEP. PEP Talk will also be available to download from the website. Dates to follow.

Initially this will be posted to you but to save time, money and paper we would prefer to email it. Please email [peptalk@pitcaple.org.uk](mailto:peptalk@pitcaple.org.uk) with 'Newsletter' in the subject box and we will add you to our mailing list.

# Emily

We are preparing to welcome a new and vital member of our team to the Pitscurry Project: Emily. Emily is a 40m<sup>2</sup> log cabin which will become our new Interpretation Centre featuring hands-on demonstrations of renewable energy sources. This is a crucial element of Stage One of our 2010-15 Business Plan which states that PEP Ltd will provide a demonstration of renewable technologies for the general public. Planning permission has been applied for and all

but £10,000 of funding is in place. Our thanks go to our supporters: LEADER (£20,800), Talisman (£10,000), BP (£500), Daviot Community Café (£250), Inverurie Environmental Improvement Group (£750) and the Aberdeenshire Council Garioch Area Top-



**Our new Interpretation Centre: Emily**

up Fund (£5000). We are awaiting a response from Nexen regarding the remaining funds required. Our sub-committee consisting of Neil Watson, John McDonald and Kay Diack have been working hard and hope to have Emily up and running by the end of Spring.

## Future Plans: Wildlife Watch

The focus of the funding recently has been concentrated on Emily but although this project nears completion our funding efforts will continue. We have recently applied for a grant of £2300 for the Heritage Garden from the Stanley Smith (UK) Horticultural Trust. This will be used for purchasing plants such as heathers, sedge, rushes and to sow grass,

We are also seeking funding for a Wildlife Webcam. We have a wealth of wild creatures that visit Pitscurry and our plan is to situate a webcam on site so that from inside the Centre we can watch our animal visitors. We hope to eventually link this in to our new website so you can

watch the wildlife here from any location.

At Pitscurry we have recorded a surprisingly diverse amount of birds, animals reptiles and insects. These include the red squirrel, roe deer and hare. We have toads, frogs and the common lizard. In our pond we have newts, diving beetles, pondskaters and damselflies. We are also lucky to have a wide variety of moths and butterflies. Over fifty varieties of birds have been identified; these include the Long Eared Owl, Tawny Owl, Sparrowhawk, Jay, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Buzzard and the smallest bird in the UK: the Goldcrest.

**For Sale at the Pitscurry Project:**

**Spring bulbs in attractive containers including Crocuses, Daffodils, Tulips, Polyanthus, Pansies and Wallflowers. Prices range from £2—£10. Make ideal Valentines, Mothers Day or Birthday gifts.**

## Christmas Fair

Our Christmas Fair was held at the Pitscurry Project on Saturday 4th December and despite dreadful weather and the threat of cancellation, we went ahead and it was a rewarding and enjoyable success. Our service users had been busy making crafts and gifts to sell in the weeks leading up to the day. We had over 70 people visit and we

completely sold out of our jams and preserves and the angels and Christmas wreaths were also excellent sellers. We took the leftover items over to the Daviot Playgroup Christmas Fair and some to Gordon House and sold even more. The total so far raised is over £750 with more money still to come in. The service users really enjoyed making



**Making wreaths for the Christmas Fair**

the crafts and the event was a good way to show off our project so we intend to make this an annual event. Thank you very much to everyone involved.

# Winter at Pitscurry

Despite the snow and ice winter is a busy time at the Pitscurry Project. Happily, this year the two polytunnels have survived the snow thanks to careful and regular maintenance and clearing of the snow. We hope to get a third tunnel erected as soon as possible. Thanks to the Harlaw Association we have a heater for inside the tunnels which will enable us to start planting tomato seeds and vegetables including beetroot and cabbage. We are going to bring on some plug plants for the Harlaw Association too. Thanks to Gaulds Gas who kindly donated two large tanks of gas for it.

Depending on the weather we will also start planting bulbs and vegetables outside too. Winter is the time to deal with the compost that we have been collecting over the year.

It will soon be riddled in the composter which filters it into a fine consistency which will be used to start off the seedlings. The coarse leftovers will be put into the sensory garden as mulch.

We have also been busy inside. The labels for our first jars of honey are in the planning stages and the bees are due a feed of sugar in February. We are very excited about tasting our first batch. We have been putting together the benches from Benchmark, another support centre in Ellon. We are always kept busy making sticks and kindling from recycled pallets kindly donated by a



**A path at the Pitscurry Project buried in snow, December 2010**

company in Inverurie. We also make brickets from shredded paper collected from the Harlaw Centre. We sell bags of kindling and brickets from the Pitscurry Project and now through Connors who are going to transport them to places like Shetland, its amazing to think of

someone in the Shetland Isles lighting a fire with Pitscurry kindling!

Winter is a time for housekeeping and preparation for the year ahead and here at the Pitscurry Project we are looking forward to an active, exciting and successful 2011.

## Robert's Story

I began working at Pitscurry at the beginning of December 2010. In my last employment I worked in a garden and there was also a woodwork shop. We grew a variety of vegetables and flowers. In woodwork I made, among other things, a mobile phone holder and a cup stand.



**Robert bagging up the kindling**

Living, as I do in Oldmeldrum, I wanted to work nearer home. Pitscurry offered a wonderful opportunity to do this. After visiting Pitscurry, and having a look round, I was happy to see the variety of things to do there. These included work in the poly tunnels, two greenhouses, a vegetable plot, sensory garden and a wildlife garden. There is also a large area of grass which

needs cutting, and I hope to be able to cut the grass at Pitscurry. There is also a woodwork shop and an arts and crafts area.

Not long after starting work at Pitscurry in December the snow arrived, this meant we could not get out as much as I would have

liked. But we did get to clear the

snow and ice. We also made kindling that we sell to the public. These are made from recycled wooden pallets which we collect from local businesses. We use a special tool to do this, it makes the work easy. The wood



**Robert making the rabbit fence**

is then sawn into lengths and finally split with an axe. We then bag up the kindlers into five kilo bags. We also made briquettes using shredded paper and water. When they dry you can burn them on your fire. I have also helped put up fencing round the vegetable plot. This is to keep out the rabbits. I have not seen any yet, but I was told there are plenty of them around. I have enjoyed working at Pitscurry in the short time I have been there.

By Robert Travis

**On 3rd December at 4am Pitscurry recorded the lowest temperature in Scotland, an incredible  $-20.8^{\circ}\text{C}$  on our weather station. It was verified by the Met Office and later announced on Radio Scotland**

## PEP Ltd

Pitscurry Project  
Pitcaple  
Inverurie  
AB51 5DY  
Phone: 01467 621885

Chairman:  
Colin Stirling  
c.stirling2@tiscali.co.uk

Company Secretary:  
Bob Yuill  
bobyuill@saos.co.uk

Funding:  
Kay Diack  
diackkay@yahoo.co.uk

Newsletter:  
Diane Scott  
pep@wicketslap.wanadoo.co.uk



The Aberdeenshire Council Pitscurry Project, with the help of the Pitcaple Environmental Project, provides employment and training for people with disabilities, helping them develop skills that can be used to fulfill work opportunities.

Training and support enables people to improve their practical skills and contribute to local community projects.

The Pitscurry Project is supported and guided by staff and parents/guardians at the Harlaw Centre, Inverurie. The project is set up as a Co-operative Society for the Benefit of the Community with charitable status and any person or business who supports the aims of the Society can become a Shareholding Member.

The Pitscurry Project is based within an old Aberdeenshire Council Nursery site. The site includes a sensory area, gardens and polytunnels that produce fruit and vegetables, a heritage garden and an innovative environmentally sustainable centre.

## How You Can Help

The Pitscurry Project is always looking for volunteers to help with tasks on site. If you are willing and able we would welcome:

- assistance with gardening, digging, basic construction, pruning and general help.
- anybody willing to work alongside our service users, giving simple assistance and guidance
- Anybody with any experience with or expertise in fruit trees or woodwork

To offer your help please contact Anne Bissett on 01467 621885

In addition, PEP Ltd are always looking to add to our membership. For just £1 you can become a

shareholder for life enabling you attend our meetings, receive PEP Talk, have your say in the running of the organization and, most importantly, support our work. To become a member please contact Kay Diack on the above address.

Another very simple way to support PEP Ltd is by pledging, via Direct



**The Pitscurry Project Work-**

Debit £12 a year: just £1 a month. If you are a UK tax payer we can reclaim Gift Aid of a further 28%

meaning your contribution would become £15.36. We have 150 members and if even half of them sign up to support this initiative we will raise £900 per year.

If you are willing and able, please complete and return the attached bank mandate in the envelope provided so we can collect the funds easily by Direct Debit. Remember – if your circumstances change you can cancel at any time.

If you know others who would be willing to help by pledging £12 per year please contact Kay Diack.

Finally we also have small collection boxes for your loose change that could be located at home, your workplace or local shop, again, contact Kay Diack.

**Thank you to all our supporters, we could not run without you.**