



**LEITH AND RESTALRIG
CHURCH MAGAZINE**

APRIL 2025

Leith and Restalrig Church magazine

We welcome articles and thank you letters from members and friends. Articles are published in both the printed magazine and on-line, unless otherwise arranged with the editors (eg, for the online version, where personal information is concerned, either names and other details are omitted or specific permission to use details has been received). All contributors must provide their name, please, which is normally attached to the article. We reserve the right to edit articles. Changes other than spelling or grammar will, where possible, be discussed with the contributor. The views expressed are those of individual contributors and not necessarily those of Leith and Restalrig Church or the Church of Scotland.

Church Office 176 Restalrig Rd South, EH7 6EA
Sanctuary, 29 Restalrig Road South EH7 6LF
McLaren Halls, 48 Restalrig Rd. South, EH7 6LE

If you have any intimations for Church events, please send them to the Church Secretary at mail@larch.org.uk by lunchtime Wednesday.

Please note the church office is the address for all correspondence. Office hours are as following:

Tuesday	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.
Wednesday	10.00 a.m. – 3.00 p.m.

larch.org.uk

Scottish Charity no. SC012680



LEITH AND RESTALRIG CHURCH (LARCH)
MINISTER REV. ROB MACKENZIE

WELCOME to the first edition of the magazine. It is a bumper edition this month to bring everyone up to date with what is happening, who's who and contact details. There is information about Services, groups and events and details of things happening in the next 2 months. Details of the Kirk Session are in the centre. Any items for the next edition should be received by 16th May and emailed to: Richard at thorburnr2000@yahoo.com or Catriona at catriona6849@gmail.com There is also a box for short articles or thank you notes in the entranceway to LARCH: Restalrig.

SUNDAY SERVICES - 11^{am} in **LARCH RESTALRIG BUILDING** * and on Facebook or YouTube, to watch live or later
Oasis of Peace, Meditative Service Every Wednesday, Open Doorway Larch Leith Walk**
Craft Group, Every Wednesday, 2pm-4pm Hanlon Centre***p19
The Guild, see page 24 1.30-3.30 Mc Laren Halls****
Café 2nd and 4th Thursdays Open Doorway Larch Leith Walk**

*LARCH: Restalrig Building, 29 Restalrig Road South,
Edinburgh, EH7 6LF

**Open Doorway LARCH, Leith Walk Building.

LARCH: Leith Walk postal address

1b Pilrig Street, Edinburgh EH6 5AH

Wheel chair users - please ring the bell at Pilrig Street, middle door.

***Hanlon Centre, LARCH Restalrig Building, Halls

****Mc Laren Halls, LARCH Restalrig Building, Halls

McLaren Halls 48 Restalrig Rd. South, EH7 6LE

ALL WELCOME TO EVERY SERVICE and EVENT

If booking is required for an event, details will be included.

Dear Friends

We've entered the first few months of our experiment in being the Church of Scotland, 21st century 'radical plan'-style (although I don't think 'radical' is an apt description of a re-organisation that's been so obviously rooted in financial projections). People have been working very hard on making the transition as smooth as possible, and there is still a huge amount of work to be done. I'm grateful to everyone who has turned up to worship and tried to build connections with people from 'the other congregations', and for all who can't go to worship but who have given prayer and support in other ways during this uncertain time. Things are gradually taking shape. We are no longer St Margaret's, Leith St Andrew's or Pilrig St Paul's but, in genuine and often sacrificial ways, are becoming Leith & Restalrig Church.

I've appreciated your support and your patience as I know it's difficult to get used to new ways of doing things, and this is not how the church normally goes about change. Nothing is normal at the moment. I do think we soon will need to look ahead and consider how we can best grow our congregation in numbers, and reach younger people, without selling out our integrity and without doing what's populist rather than right. It's never going to be an easy task, but we all have a role to play in it. The more people get involved, the more chance we have of success.

Over the next few months, we'll hopefully employ a new Youth & Families Worker and close the search for a second minister to work here. That will make a huge difference and will enable us both to

start using the Leith Walk building more to its potential, and to bring the good news of Jesus in word and action among people in our large parish. John Bell once remarked that faith isn't primarily measured by what we've done in the past – it's always the next step into an unknown future. With faith – even faith as small as a mustard seed – we can bring something positive into the world together.

Rob Mackenzie (minister)

ASTHMA AND LUNG UK

Amy Johnston is running the London Marathon on 27th April in aid of **ASTHMA AND LUNG UK**. To use her just giving page, please scan the QR code.



'OASIS OF PEACE' at LARCH: Leith Walk each Wednesday from 10.15 a.m. EVERYONE IS WELCOME to attend this short service where we sing some hymns, pray for others and have a reflection or discussion on a Bible passage. It lasts around half an hour and we finish with tea/coffee and a chat.

Please remember members of the congregation, their families and other friends in your prayers.

At the Services (Sunday Worship, Restalrig building 11am, Wednesday Oasis of Peace, Leith Walk Building 10.15am) names are read out. To include someone, please either add the name to the Prayer Book in the entrance way to LARCH: Restalrig or email Rob: AMacKenzie@churchofscotland.org.uk

INTRODUCING THE INTERIM MODERATOR

Until 2024 Leith St Andrew's, Pilrig St Paul's and St Margaret's were served by three parish ministers. Leith & Restalrig Church will eventually have two ministers, plus a Mission & Development Staff worker. The second minister will share the ministerial work with the Rev Rob Mackenzie.

The congregation will soon need to choose names to serve on a Nominating Committee for the second minister – including advertising and interviewing. There are still some administrative tasks to work through before we reach this stage, but hopefully the Nominating Committee will be at work within the next few months and a new, second minister in post later this year.

Another minister is always appointed to serve as “Interim Moderator” in the case of ministerial vacancies, with responsibility to oversee the progress of the vacancy and support the Nominating Committee as appropriate. The Presbytery of Edinburgh & West Lothian has appointed the Rev Matthew Ross to be Interim Moderator for this vacancy. He also served as Interim Moderator at Pilrig St Paul's after the Rev Mark Foster moved to Pitlochry last autumn. At meetings of the Kirk Session, Mr Ross moderates any business relating to the vacancy, whilst the Rev Rob Mackenzie moderates all other items.

Mr Ross is current locum minister at Edinburgh Pentlands Parish Church (a recent union of Colinton and Juniper Green). In 2023, he returned from working in Geneva with the World Council of Churches. He has also worked recently part-time for the University of Glasgow in the School of Critical Studies / Theology & Religious Studies. He studied Divinity at New College, University of Edinburgh, has a Law degree from the University of Edinburgh and a postgraduate Master of Theology degree from the University of Glasgow.

He was ordained as a Church of Scotland minister in 1998. Following 18 months as a probationer at Duddingston Kirk in Edinburgh, his first ministerial charge was Ceres & Springfield Parish Church, near Cupar in Fife, from 1998 until 2003. He then moved to Brussels to work with the Conference of European Churches. In 2009 he returned to Scotland, becoming minister at Cockpen & Carrington linked with Lasswade & Rosewell in Midlothian. In 2014 he was appointed as General Secretary of Action of Churches Together in Scotland, then moved to Geneva in 2018 to work with the World Council of Churches. He has also served as acting Depute Clerk to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2002-03, was Moderator of the Church of Scotland's Presbytery of Europe in 2009 and has been a member of several boards and committees of the Church of Scotland.

His work on *diakonia* (church-related social care) with the World Council of Churches has given him an international insight into issues of peace, justice, reconciliation and the continuing need to tackle issues such as poverty and access to health, food and clean water. He has written and/or edited several books and publications for the World Council of Churches, including the WCC's major study document "*Called to Transformation: Ecumenical Diakonia*".

Rev Matthew Ross can be contacted by email: revmross@gmail.com or tel: 0131 441 2232.

CROSSREACH
Care you can put your faith in

Copies of the current CrossReach news can be found in the entrance, Restalrig Sanctuary and the Open doorway, Leith Walk.



**CELEBRATE EASTER WITH US AT LARCH
RESTALRIG AT 11AM ON SUNDAY 20TH APR**

LARCH Teams

Over the past few weeks, we have been aiming to establish various Teams to take forward the work of the Church. We are encouraging as many members as possible to take on an active role within one (or more) teams. You can do as little or as much as you like – any help would be greatly appreciated.

Pastoral Care Team

In its simplest terms, pastoral care is caring for people in the congregation.

If you visit someone at home or in hospital, or phone them from time to time, that's pastoral care.

If you deliver flowers, magazines or Christmas gifts, that's pastoral care.

If you volunteer at the Open Doorway in LARCH Leith Walk, with the Care Van or at Meet, Eat and Play at Craigtinny Primary, that's pastoral care.

If you are already doing any of these things, or would like to get involved in any way, please let us know.

This is a great way of becoming more actively involved in spreading God's love within our community.

Worship Team

This team helps support the Minister with worship activities – this might include:

- Providing cover during the Minister's absence
- Taking part in services – readings, sketches, prayers, choir/musical items
- Helping with additional worship events (Christmas, Holy Week, bereavement, Remembrance)
- Helping with Sunday School/Creche
- Supporting the minister with Bible Studies

Comms Team

- This team is responsible for communication, both within the congregation itself, and to the wider community. Its remit includes:
- Keeping the website and Facebook pages up-to-date
- Gathering articles for the Church Magazine and ensuring its distribution
- Producing and distributing posters as and when required
- Overseeing the email and digital storage systems
- Helping with the audio-visual provision in church (PowerPoints, sound, streaming services)

Fellowship Team

This team is responsible for coordinating shared activities within the congregation to help us get to know one another better and to have a good time. This might include:

- Helping with tea and coffee after services
- Helping at the Christmas Fayre
- Helping at other social events

As well as volunteering to help with the work of these teams, we are still looking for people who are keen to help coordinate and organise the work of these teams. Please also let us know if you would be interested in doing this.

Volunteering vs Coordinating?

Just to be clear, we are looking for people to do either (or both). For example, you may be happy to **volunteer** to do a reading at a Sunday service, but don't want to be involved in **coordinating** the

work of the team, such as drawing up rotas. That's absolutely fine. When you sign up, please let us know exactly what you would like to do.

Of course, you may already be involved in one or more of these teams. We do not wish to make any assumptions about you wishing to continue, so it would be really useful if you could also sign-up to show that you wish to continue being involved.

If you can help in any way with the work of any of these teams, please speak with Shona Skakle or me after Sunday service, or contact the Church Office:

Email: mail@larch.org.uk

Phone: 0131 554 7400

176 Restalrig Road South

In the near future, we will also be looking for people to get involved in the following teams:

Eco, Outreach, Education

So, if you're keen to get involved in any of those teams, please be ready to sign up later.

Stuart Lithgow

Session Clerk



FOODBANKS

Our foodbanks continue to be open for clients.

LARCH - Restalrig each Wednesday 11-12.30

LARCH - Leith Walk each Wednesday afternoon 4.30-6

LARCH - Easter Road Tuesday 1-2.30pm and Thursday 10-11.30am

LARCH - Restalrig had a large number of books left over from the Christmas Fayre which we are putting out each week for clients to help themselves. This has proved to be very popular.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The World Day of Prayer Service was compiled by The Ladies of the Cook Islands. The Service was well-attended by our friends from St. Ninian's and Willowbrae and members of LARCH. A delicious tea was provided by LARCH and ably served by Sandra Cameron and Katrina Ewart. Thanks to all those who attended and helped to organise a lovely day.



LEITH AND RESTALRIG CHURCH – KIRK SESSION

As you can imagine, the start of a new congregation has meant a busy time for our Kirk Session. Prior to the union, it was decided that the Session would initially be made up of twelve elders, four from each of the former congregations, plus the Minister. The twelve elders are: Jean Aldred, Joanne Baird, Tracy Coyle, Maria Croall, Alex Dickson, Shaurna Dickson, Edmund Farrow, Ginny Gardner, John Innes, Stuart Lithgow, Shona Skakle and Mark Wexelstein.

We held our first meeting on 6 January 2025 and hit the ground running. The following key items were covered:

- The appointment of the Session Clerk (Stuart Lithgow), Depute Session Clerk (Shona Skakle), Treasurer (Mark Wexelstein), Roll Keeper (Jean Aldred), Safeguarding Co-ordinator (Catriona Blackwood), Property Convener (Alex Dickson) and Organist (Stuart Haigh).
- The Property Team was formed, with members from all three former congregations.
- Matthew Ross (Interim Moderator for the second Ministerial post) outlined his role and the steps that would have to be taken to appoint a second minister. He aimed to have the position filled this year.
- The MDS advert was shared and agreed. The MDS post is for a Children, Youth and Family Worker on a 0.5 FTE basis to develop our objectives on reaching out to young people in our community and finding new and innovative forms of worship and ministry relevant to 21st century life.
- We discussed the establishment of a Pastoral Care Team and agreed the model that would be used to ensure the Pastoral Care needs of the congregation.

At our second meeting on 3 February 2025, the following key matters were discussed:

- The Safeguarding Panel membership was confirmed.
- The Church Officer remit was agreed.
- All three Presbytery Elders from the former congregations will continue in post until the end of June. Thereafter, Maria Croall would become our Presbytery Elder. In addition, Bill Johnston has agreed to be an equalising elder.
- The new remit for the Secretary/Administrator post was agreed. Anne Turner, who has diligently served as Secretary of St Margaret's for 35 years, indicated that she would prefer to stand down, but agreed to continue until the new Administrator was appointed.
- It was agreed that the Basis of Team Ministry be reviewed as it was felt the present document did not reflect the wishes of Session. It was noted that this would cause some delay in establishing a Nominating Committee to find a second Minister.
- It was noted that Catriona Blackwood, Joan Scott and Val McIntosh had agreed to be on the Pastoral Care Team and to act as points of contact for volunteers.
- Banking and book keeping arrangements for the new congregation were agreed, and Jean Aldred was appointed Gift Aid Convener. Tracy Coyle agreed to help Mark with merging the accounts of the former congregations. Mark, Tracy and Jean would form the Finance Team, though other members may be asked to join.
- It was agreed to seek approval from Presbytery to lease the Leith St Andrew's building to Leith St Andrew's Trust for 18 months to give them time to find enough funding to buy the building, which they hope to turn into a community health, well-being and arts centre.

- It was agreed to establish the following teams, and seek members and volunteers for these: Worship, Communications, Fellowship, Education (Adult and Children), Outreach and Eco. Stewardship would come under the Finance Team.
- It was agreed how data would be stored and accessed digitally, and that a new GDPR policy would have to be drafted.
- John Innes was thanked for all his hard work in setting up the new audio-visual equipment in church.
- It was agreed that the sanctuary at LARCH Restalrig could be hired out. This would be done via the Minister.

As time goes on, and new systems and teams are established, it is hoped that the Session agenda will be a little less crammed.

On a personal note, I am delighted to have been appointed as your Session Clerk and I hope to get to know as many of you as I can. I also have to thank Shona Skakle as my trusty depute and the members of Session for all their hard work and commitment. It means such a lot.

With every blessing

Stuart Lithgow
Session Clerk

Report from Fellowship Team

The Christmas Fayre was held on Saturday 16th November 2024. This was a great success and updated total raised was £3,522.

The Fellowship Team would like to thank everyone who contributed, helped or attended the Fayre.

Mary Coats



THE GUILD
April 3rd Bring and Buy

please contact the church office: mail@larch.org.uk
with any enquiries

New LARCH Property Team

I'm pleased to report that during the first Kirk Session meeting held under Leith & Restalrig Church, a new Property Team was formed with willing volunteers as follows:

Edmund Farrow
Jean Aldred
John Innes
Maria Croall
Stuart Lithgow
Shaurna Dickson
Mark Wexelstein

With an uplift in the collective property portfolio as a result of the union and with somewhere in the region of 12 buildings to maintain, including all hall lets & management, even between all of us on the team, this will present quite a task!

Whilst there are numerous ongoing matters that the team are currently dealing with, a flavour of some of the stand out issues recently dealt with by us are as follows:

- Storm damage to LARCH Easter Road - Steeple requiring rope access to reconnect the lightning conductor.

- Storm damage to LARCH Restalrig Church – Various slates needed replaced.
- Storm damage to LARCH Easter Road Lochend Rd Manse – Roof ridge had completely blown off.
- Burst pipes – McLaren Halls ladies toilet causing flooding.
- Burst boiler – LARCH Restalrig Church office causing flooding.
- Burst pipes – LARCH Leith Walk boiler causing flooding.
- Replacement boiler - LARCH Restalrig Manse after complete breakdown.
- Pigeon infestation – Bell tower LARCH Leith Walk.

Dealing with all these emergency matters has all come at a busy time of the year for property when all the schedules and associated documentation need to be submitted to Presbytery for examination on 18th March 2025.

Alex Dickson
Property Convener

PILMENY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Help us # SavePDP 2025

We are facing cuts to our older people's services - a devastating loss of funding which will mean closure of our services to socially isolated older people in Leith Walk/ NE Edinburgh locality.

Please sign the petition & share - <https://chng.it/MJQhfyPT5h>

Nicola Hutchison (she/her)

Youth Development Worker

Pilmény Development Project

19-21 Buchanan St Edinburgh, EH6 8SQ

07907 020 254

From the Treasurer:

For those that don't know me my name is Mark Wexelstein and I have been appointed as treasurer for LARCH. I was treasurer at the former Pilrig St. Paul's from 2006 until 2024.

There is a lot of work to do over the next year in order to bring the finances of the three previous congregations together so some things may take longer than others but I along with the Finance Committee will keep the Session and the congregation up to date with the progress.

The first change is having a bank account for Leith and Restalrig Church. As the charity number we retained was the Leith St. Andrew's one it makes sense to keep that bank account as well. The name has been changed and is now Leith and Restalrig Church of Scotland. The sort code is 80-02-71 and the account number is 00224978.

If you were a member of Pilrig St. Paul's or St. Margaret's Restalrig and pay your offering by standing order can you amend the bank account details the payment is made to so your payments go into the new account. If required I have standing order mandates printed off with the new bank details that you can complete and send to your bank. (Remember to tell them to cancel the current one you have). If you want one, I will have them with me each Sunday. If you were a member of Leith St. Andrew's you don't need to change your standing order as the name change to the account won't affect the payment.

If you are interested in paying your offering by standing order you can use the details above to set this up or come and speak to me.

At present we don't need to get a new gift aid declaration signed if you have signed one for any of the three previous congregations. Over time we will ask people to sign one for the new congregation so we can make sure we have all the required forms. If you pay income tax and haven't signed a gift aid form please consider this as we can claim back an additional 25% of any donation you make and all we need is a signed form. Again if you would like more information speak to myself or Jean Aldred. We also have a PayPal account setup and we have already received donations through this from people watching online. We will look into what we can do to make this easier for people to get the required information.

I will try and put something in each magazine. Let me know if there is anything you would be interested in seeing included regarding the finances.

Finally it would be good to have another member on the Finance team so if you're interested in joining this or just want more information on it please come and speak to me or email treasurer@larch.org.uk

THANK YOU



We have received thank you notes from many members for prayers, flowers, cards, visits, phone calls, texts and support

received following illness, celebrations, bereavements and accidents.

To donate flowers: Sign up on the sheet in the Hall, or put a donation in the box at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you.

LITTLE LARCH NURSERY

Leith St Andrew's Playgroup has been part of our church family for many years. We have changed our name, and are moving to the old bowling green site at Loaning Crescent over the next few months. This is a wonderful opportunity for the children to learn and play outdoors. One third of the bowling green will be replaced with Astroturf which will be for general church group and community use; the remainder of the ground will be developed into an outdoor nursery.

We are looking for help. **If you are an enthusiastic DIY person or gardener then please get in touch.** When you start your spring gardening and are splitting overgrown shrubs etc, then we would love to have these. Also, any spare large plant pots, and remember us when you go to the garden centre. - buy an extra tray of plants to help make our Nursery attractive.

Contact: mail@larch.org.uk

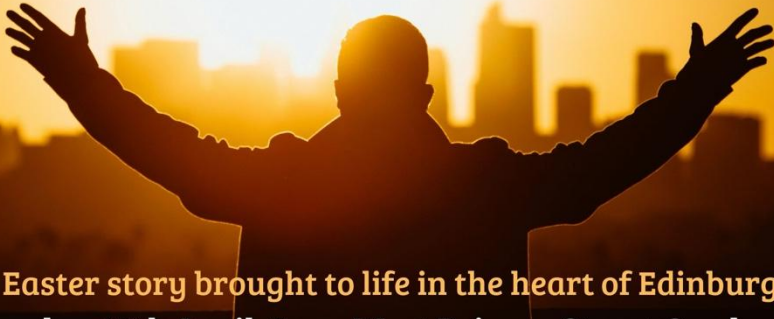


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BEHOLD THE MAN



**The Easter story brought to life in the heart of Edinburgh
Saturday 19th April, 2pm, West Princes Street Gardens
Free & unticketed, more information at www.easterplay.org**

**The Minister and Kirk Session of
Leith and Restalrig Church
invite you**

to

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion
on**

**Sunday 27th April 2025 at 11 am,
in the LARCH Restalrig Building**

**This is the Lord's Table. Anyone who loves God and responds
to Christ's invitation to join together in this feast is welcome
to join us in the celebration.**

**As well as wine, there are cups of plain water on the serving
trays. Please take whichever you prefer.**

THURSDAY CLUB BURNS SUPPER REPORT

Over 50 members and friends of the united congregation participated in the annual Burns Supper held in the McLaren Halls, this year coinciding with the Bard's birthday.

A traditional Supper was ably served by Kenny Mackenzie's team of Servers. Rev. Rob MacKenzie recited the Selkirk Grace, Irene Taylor performed the Address to the Haggis, Kenny McKenzie Toasted the Lassies and Sandra Mack did the Reply to the Laddies. Two quizzes, one a Wordsearch on Burns and his works, the other comprising Anagrams of the names of notable Scots, tested the attendees' knowledge during the evening.

A number of attendees took to the floor and danced the Gay Gordons, Dashing White Sergeant and Strip the Willow.

Finally, Auld Lang Syne was performed with everyone at the tables. Sincere thanks to the Chef, Kenny, his team of Caterers and Servers for skillfully carrying out their duties, Rev Rob MacKenzie, Irene Taylor and Sandra Mack for their contributions, and Lynda Johnston for her compering skills.

A most enjoyable evening was had by all those present.

Richard Thorburn

THURSDAY CLUB PROGRAMME 2025/26

Thurs 24 Apr 2025 (7.30pm)

Quiz Night -

Thurs 22 May 2025 (time TBA)

* TBA - to be announced

WOOLLY HATS FOR SEAFARERS.

Calling All knitters:

I am a Volunteer with the Mission to Seafarers and I will be going aboard the Cruise Ships which come into LEITH and NEWHAVEN this year from April to September. One of the things the Volunteers do is to hand out free of charge woolly hats, gloves and scarves to the crews. Most of them are from the Philippines or Indonesia and they feel the cold.

We also chat to them in the crew mess about their Families and we help them in any way we can.; eg. a crew member might want to buy something but if they have never been here before then don't know where the shops are located, we can take them in our cars into the Kirkgate Shopping Centre eg Poundland.

If anyone would like to help with this project I would be very grateful and the Crews much appreciate it. I can supply a knitting pattern if required. If you would like any further details I will be at Church most Sundays.

Walter McGillivray

e-mail:-wmcgillivray@googlemail.com or Tel 0131-553-1060



TUESDAY BOOK GROUP



THE BOOK CLUB meets on the last Tuesday of the month at 10.00 a.m. in the Hanlon Centre, McLaren Halls. **EVERYONE WELCOME.**

February's chosen book was "The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency" by Alexander McCall Smith. Published in 1998, this book was the first of a series of novels about Precious Ramotswe, who set up the first female detective agency in Botswana.

The author writes with charm and creates stories that are intelligent, amusing and heart warming. Precious becomes very successful, solving cases of wayward daughters, missing husbands, philandering partners, conmen and finding a missing child. The stories were like a comfort blanket in the cold, windy, wet days in February.

Time for coffee / tea after discussing this delightful book and time to choose a book for March. This will be "The Suspect" by Rob. Rinder and will be discussed on Tuesday 25h March. Then time to choose a book for April. Will it be a classic by a Scottish author, about issues e.g. racism, war, love, bereavement, disability? The group will decide!

New members would be very welcome. Even if you haven't read the chosen book, you might like to join in the chat and see if you would like to be a member.

CRAFT GROUP

The Craft Group meets every Wednesday afternoon in the Hanlon Centre, from 2.00 to 4.00pm. Everyone is welcome irrespective of their Crafting abilities. Come and meet fellow Craft enthusiasts and enjoy the fellowship, including the reviving cup of tea and biscuits at the end of the day.

Easter Fair **Table Sale**

Sunday 6th April
11am to 2pm

Restalrig Lochend Community Hub
198 Restalrig Road South

Pre-loved and vintage clothing
Fabric crafts, vinyl records, bric-a-brac
Hand knits - socks, hats, baby clothes
Tombola and raffle
Cafe open for tea/coffee & filled rolls

Fundraising event for The Ripple
and supporting local sellers

£1 entry
under 16 yrs free

The Ripple

HELPING PEOPLE TO HELP THEMSELVES