

Volunteers for beach clean-up

Volunteers are needed to help clear debris that has been washed ashore over the winter at Forvie Sands nature reserve.

The clean-up, on April 21, will start at 11am from Waterside car park at the A975 road bridge, but volunteers can drop in throughout the day.

Call 01358 751330 for details.

Charity ball for dementia

A charity ball is being staged in Aberdeen next month to help finance a new dementia resource centre in the city.

Andre Diether, from Insch, has arranged the event which will take place at the Hilton Tree-tops Hotel in Aberdeen, on May 17.

For more details, e-mail andrediether@gmail.com, or call 07732 203195.

Two attacked and robbed

Two teenagers were attacked and robbed in incidents in Aberdeen on Friday.

A 15-year-old boy was assaulted on Manor Avenue at about 5.20pm.

And five hours later, a 19-year-old man was targeted at bus stop outside the Thistle Hotel on Union Terrace. Police are keen to speak to four females who were at the bus stop and might have seen the 10.30pm incident.

Blood donor discussion

A talk on what happens to blood donations will be held in Aberdeen this evening.

Professor Mark Vickers, of Aberdeen University, and NHS Grampian consultant haematologist Henry Watson will also talk about the risk of blood transfusions.

The free event takes place at the Suttie Centre, Foresterhill, at 6pm.

Tillydrone Vision event

Tillydrone Vision will hold its annual meeting on Thursday at 7.30pm in St George's Church, Hayton Road, Aberdeen.



BIG PLANS: The lodge and course at Trump Ireland in County Clare are 'progressing nicely' now that plans for nine turbines nearby have been scrapped

Donald comes up Trumps over Irish windfarm project

Development: Plan to build turbines by tycoon's golf course is scrapped

BY CHRISTOPHER RAE

US billionaire Donald Trump has had better luck in his fight against plans for an Irish windfarm than the controversial Aberdeen Bay development.

The tycoon scrapped plans to further develop his golf resort at Menie in Aberdeenshire after proposals for an offshore windfarm was approved by the Scottish Government.

Days later, he announced he was investing £12.5million in the five-star Doonbeg resort in County Clare

in Ireland. But history looked to be repeating itself after it emerged plans had been lodged with the local authority for nine onshore turbines at a site nearby.

But it has now emerged the project has been scrapped just before it was due to be discussed by council planners, after Mr Trump personally intervened.

Campaigners fighting the development by Clare Coastal Wind Power have revealed Mr Trump contacted them offering assistance.

Tony Lowes, director of Friends of the Irish Environment, said: "Mr Trump was very active - he called me up himself and said they were opposed to the

"It was certainly an unusual phone call to get"

windfarm and noticed the work we had done.

"It was certainly an unusual phone call to get. He just said he knew we

were very active in efforts to oppose it and if there was anything that could be done to let him know."

Mr Lowes and his group had opposed the development, which was a scaled-down version of a larger windfarm turned down last year, over fears it would damage the area's delicate ecology.

He added that a letter from Clare



Donald Trump: delighted

County Council confirmed the application had been withdrawn and was now "invalid".

Last night the Trump Organisation said it was delighted the plans had been withdrawn and said work was well under way on the new resort.

Exe c u-

tive vice-president George Sorial said: "We are very pleased that the application has been withdrawn and alongside the local residents we will continue to monitor the situation and if necessary lodge a further objection.

"Work at Doonbeg, or as it is now known Trump Ireland, is progressing nicely and we are about to start major work on the sixth and ninth holes.

"We look forward to making Trump Ireland even better than it was before."

Policeman killed on motorway 'fun-loving person'

Continued from Page 1 had been a "fun-loving person". He said his father had been travelling with his brother at the time of the accident, which happened westbound on the M8, near junction 2, about 3.40pm on Thursday.

"My father was in the car

with him at the time of the accident and Ian pulled over as he was feeling unwell," he said.

"He got out of the car to get some fresh air."

The road was closed for five hours and the Edinburgh city bypass and Hermiton Gait were affected

by long delays. Mr Smollet and his wife and daughters had been living in Livingston, West Lothian.

His brother said his death would leave a huge gap in the lives of his loved ones.

"He was a fun-loving person and loved his kids,"

said Mr Smollet. "He also loved his job. He will be sorely missed by every one of his friends and his family."

Mr Smollet's police colleagues offered their sympathies to his family, and appealed for information on the accident. Chief Su-

perintendent Gill Imery said: "It is with the deepest regret I can confirm that Detective Constable Ian Smollet, who served in the Lothians and Scottish Borders division, has died following Thursday's collision on the M8. Our sympathies are with his family, friends

and colleagues at this very difficult time. Road policing officers are continuing their investigation and I would urge any members of the public who witnessed the collision, or who believe they can assist with this inquiry, to contact police immediately."

The Press and Journal

The Voice of the North

SNP CONFERENCE

Salmond oozes confidence in dash to the line

Just like an Olympic runner coming off the final bend on the shoulder of a race leader, SNP bosses also feel well placed and that they have winning momentum.

It is hardly surprising, with the polls narrowing and Alex Salmond's conference speech in Aberdeen carrying all the carefully crafted hallmarks of an independence leader-in-waiting.

Mr Salmond even explained how independence negotiations would begin on September 19. Do we view that as prudent planning or counting chickens before eggs have hatched?

The SNP conference was a perfect platform for appealing to those all-important "don't knows", who could swing it. His critics claimed he wasted the opportunity by simply preaching to the converted. True, there were familiar themes running throughout his speech, but this is a golden rule of speech writing: keep saying it and then say it again, so the target audience do not forget.

However, Mr Salmond did try to avoid scaring nervy "don't knows" by speaking of a joint all-party negotiating approach and that a Labour, or alternative coalition, government could easily take over the reins from him in future - if they ousted the SNP.

A last dash for the line is the most dangerous, of course, as competitors can crash out in an "all or nothing" bid for glory.

Unforeseen obstacles can get in the way: take the Scottish Fishermen's Federation, for example, which has revealed a number of reservations about independence.

Significantly, they argued that remaining in the UK could put them in a stronger negotiating position than being a small voice outside. This appears to put them at odds with what SNP fishing ministers have argued in the past - that the Scottish fleet's case at crucial annual EU fishing talks, for example, would be stronger if they stood alone.

The federation's EU position chimes with what other critics have said about the SNP's approach to EU membership.

The fishing industry is a major influence in the north and north-east and cannot simply be brushed aside as taking a negative view, but it requires clarification and reassurance.

CHURCHGOERS

Biblical epic idea for silver screen

Issues around dwindling congregations and remaining relevant in a rapidly changing world have occupied the best religious minds across all denominations in modern times.

Attracting, and keeping, younger churchgoers is of particular concern. While most churches are beautiful to behold and packed with amazing historical stories, they can appear to be forbidding and draughty old places to the young.

Destiny Church Aberdeen has come up with an ingenious idea to switch its Sunday services to a cinema - Cineworld at Union Square shopping mall.

With an estimated 50million people passing through Union Square every year and 30,000 filmgoers at the cinema each week, the future might be on Destiny's doorstep.

Letters to the editor

Write to: Letters to the Editor, The Press and Journal, Lang Stracht, Mastrick, Aberdeen, AB15 6DF. e-mail: pj.editor@ajl.co.uk Letters are subject to editing and must include your full address and a daytime telephone number for verification

Lord Robertson's speech in America

SIR, - I write with reference to the letter (the Press and Journal, April 10) from Sir Peter Graham regarding Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's comments on Lord Robertson's speech in America.

Sir Peter extolled the political acumen of Lord Robertson and described him as "one of this country's great statesmen".

This would be the "great statesman" who announced in 1995 that "devolution will kill Nationalism stone dead", would it?

This would also be "the effective and hugely respected secretary-general of Nato" who doesn't appear to know how Nato works. He appears to be telling us that the withdrawal of Trident from Faslane will somehow make us ineligible for Nato membership. He appears to be unaware that Spain joined Nato after getting rid of the nuclear stockpile placed on Spanish soil by the US and that the next secretary-general of Nato hails from a small, independent non-nuclear country - Norway.

There appears to be no end to the negative campaigning of the Better Together crusade. **Pam McMahon, Thulachan, Weydale, Thurso.**

'What a transformation'

SIR, - After years of being told that we are a poor, insignificant backwater of a country and seen as of no account by the rest of the world, lo and behold, Lord George Robertson, on a visit to America, stated that if Scotland voted for independence it would be catastrophic.

It would destabilise the western world and unleash forces of darkness upon us.

My goodness, what a transformation.

But is this not this same George Robertson who voted, back in the 1980s, to abolish the House of Lords, and here he is now sounding like a true-blue British imperialist?

It is also the same George Robertson who made the statement that "devolution would kill Nationalism stone dead".

"Project fear" is now turning into "project farce".

M. MacLennan, Castle Heather Avenue, Inverness.



Scale of 'windfarm juggernaut'

SIR, - Your story (April 12) headed "North 'under siege' from wind turbines" reveals the alarming scale of the windfarm juggernaut.

Various justifications for this are provided by government and the renewable-energy lobby, foremost among them "we need them to keep the lights on" and "we must reduce global carbon dioxide emissions".

It has been calculated that we would need an additional 12,000 turbines to meet the first requirement.

The second requirement, the reduction of global carbon emissions, is even more problematic.

Last year, Scottish Renewables claimed that all UK windfarms had reduced annual carbon emissions by the equivalent of 7.3million tonnes. Global emissions for that period were estimated at 35.6billion tonnes. In other words, British

windfarms reduced global emissions by one five-thousandth. This was far less than one hundredth of the annual global increase in carbon output and well below that of the UK for the period.

Since then, there have been increases in UK turbine numbers - and increases in global carbon emissions.

The situation across the European Union is equally pathetic. Germany's wholesale commitment to renewable energy has reduced it to opening new coal-fired power stations to maintain energy supplies. Its carbon emissions are increasing as a result.

Now, the EU as a whole is reduced to impotent fury at Mr Putin's encroachments on the Ukraine because we need his gas to keep the lights on. There must be a lesson in all this, **Ken Brown, Dundreggan Bungalows, Glenmoriston.**

"The inadequate offers of extra devolved powers are converting 'soft' No to Yes"

Independence debate

SIR, - Regarding the independence debate, a recent poll claims that the gap between Yes and No, currently 6%, has narrowed by 75% in one year and may disappear by July.

Why? The Yes campaign has been highly focused, including face-to-face persuasion of the disillusioned 30% who never vote.

Second, the inadequate offers of extra devolved powers are converting "soft" No to Yes.

Labour's offer of income-tax-varying powers would

make Holyrood responsible for around £8billion of the £11billion raised annually by this tax. Given that Scotland's overall budget is £32billion, the offer seems minimalist.

Conservatives have stated openly that they would prefer all three devolved parliaments, including Scotland's, to raise most of their own revenue and their ad hoc commission will report in May.

Spreading economic opportunity more evenly should be a commission priority and it will hopefully recommend that all three parliaments be allowed to levy reduced rates of corporation tax.

Given a No in September, a Conservative or Conservative/Lib Dem government from May 2015 would provide opportunity for implementing commission proposals.

Dr Walter J. MacCulloch, Causewayend Crescent, Aberchirder.

Pylons looking like 'matchsticks'

SIR, - The comment by Julia Wait (Letters, April 10) that the Corrimony windfarm pylons look like matchsticks suggests to me that there is scope for a good optician in this part of the world.

Ocular perception is clearly a problem: these turbines tower to a height of 98m and overlook the approaches to Glen Affric - possibly the most attractive glen in Scotland.

As a regular visitor to the area since 1965, I am appalled at the possibility of another windfarm with even taller structures (124m) less than a mile from the conservation village of Tomich.

It is not surprising that locals and visitors alike are supporting a campaign against the plan.

Ian A. Brown, Golf Course Road, Blairgowrie.