

From Jazz to Judo, From French to Football

Many residents of Bridge of Allan may only experience their community centre as a polling station at election time. But, as David Tucker discovers, it is definitely worth checking out its full programme of social and recreational activities.

Tuesday is a busy day of the week at the Allan Centre. Arrive there in the morning and you will hear lots of squealing, remonstrating and happy laughter. Some of this will be coming from the Parent & Toddlers but you could also be over-hearing the Ladies Badminton or the Current Affairs class.

Ladies Badminton (also played on Thursday mornings) sums up the spirit of many activities at the Allan Centre: "We are of mixed ages and abilities but this doesn't matter as we only aim to get some exercise and have a laugh or two!"

Parent & Toddler or Child Minder sessions are offered every morning Monday to Friday, while Current Affairs are hotly debated on Tuesday and Friday mornings. There is more earnest debate at the lunchtime meeting of SEPA (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency) in the Social Room. And if it's the third Tuesday of the month, the Bridge of Allan Community Council meet there in the evening. After lunchtime on Tuesday, the sedate Ladies Carpet Bowls - "coffee break halfway through" - gives way to the grunting and groaning of Five-a-Side football (involving veterans). Also on Tuesday evenings you will hear more grunting from the judo (7-10.30pm). The wide variety of activities on other days of the week include:

- Sports/Health: Volleyball, Fitness Training, Callanetics, Indoor Cricket, Table Tennis, Back Pain Clinic, Submission Wrestling



Some of the "Friday Fives" football team

- Culture: French Lunch Club, Jazz Appreciation, Rock Garden Club

- Hobbies: Canasta, Lace Group, Needlework, Whist

The best way to find out about these activities is by picking up one of the informative leaflets (Allan Centre "What's On") from the Centre. If you are arriving for the first time, a staff member will be on hand at the office just off the front hallway - where there is also a useful notice board of local events - to point you in the right direction.

From there, you head downstairs for the main Games Hall and changing rooms and beyond that to a PE room and the Fitness Room. In line with demand for gym exercising, the Fitness Room was created from a former workshop, reflecting changes in leisure since the Centre was built in the 1970s as part of the library and medical centre complex.

Heading up upstairs from the entrance hall you find the largest room available for hire: the Social Area, with a spacious, well-equipped kitchen and views over the Games Hall. As with other rooms, it can be booked at a reasonable hourly cost for parties or meetings. On a day-to-day basis, the

Allan Centre is managed by John Lenaghan (Centre Co-Ordinator), assisted by three Caretakers, Eddie Newlove, Alex Goodwin and George Kremeyer. An elected council oversees the centre in partnership with Stirling Council under a community contract.

There are various types of "lets" for rooms and facilities including Stirling Council lets, one-offs (such as children's parties) and group lets.

Most usage during the annual session (September to August) is by regular, well-established groups whose members pay £30 a year (2009-2010 rate) for Centre membership to cover the cost of their lets. Concessions are available for £15, juniors under 18 pay just £6, and daily visitor fees range from £1 to £3.

Leisure facilities in the region have expanded substantially in recent years, including the Sports Village at Springkerse, extra University facilities and public use of the new Wallace High School.

Meanwhile the Allan Centre continues to offer a venue in keeping with the scale of Bridge of Allan. Not least among its advantages are its proximity to the town centre, adequate parking on either side of the building and, above all, a friendly welcome and intimate atmosphere.

The Allan Centre, Fountain Road, Bridge of Allan Tel 01786 833687

 **BritishRedCross**

Coffee Morning and Craft Fair

What will Red Cross Ted be doing this year?

Come along & find out!

5th September 2009

Bridge of Allan Parish Church Hall

10.00 - 12.00

A Date for your diary!

Donations of Baking - Plants

Raffle & Tombola prizes required.

Contact - Eleanor Clark - 832398 or Lynda Stuart - 833935