**Chatterbox article January 2023**

**The Black Isle’s Community Markets**

We are fortunate on the Black Isle to have three community markets each month, in Cromarty, Culbokie and North Kessock, with stallholders selling a fantastic range of locally-produced food and crafts. The markets are a great way to shop – for the excellent choice of produce, obviously, but there are lots of other benefits.

First of all, there’s the social side of the markets – there’s almost always one or two neighbours there, and the North Kessock and Culbokie markets also feature a café – so you can get a cuppa and a cake whilst you catch up with the local news. And it isn’t just the other customers – the stallholders are justly proud of their produce, and happy to tell you about its origins. Shopping at the markets also means your money is helping support the local economy, and minimising the environmental impact of transporting goods. And you’ll be helping to support the two charities that run the markets, Transition Black Isle which manages the Cromarty and North Kessock markets on the second and last Saturday of each month, and Culbokie Community Trust which (unsurprisingly!) runs the Culbokie one, on the third Saturday. A full list of 2023 dates, times and venues is on the market leaflet.

These three markets were paused during lockdown because the venues were closed, and in their place informal outdoor markets sprang up in Culbokie and North Kessock – and these have continued to run in parallel with the monthly indoor markets, with a smaller range of food available from 10.00 to 11.00 in Culbokie, and 11.30 to 12.30 in North Kessock. Sadly the Fortrose Community Market has yet to restart – but if anyone is interested in helping to get that back on its feet again, we’d love to hear – email [info@transitionblackisle.org](mailto:info@transitionblackisle.org) for more information.

And for more information about the diverse outlets for local food on the Black Isle, check out Transition Black Isle’s online directory, [www.blackislelarder.org](http://www.blackislelarder.org).

Martin Sherring

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