



**We celebrate first 10 years**

NEWS & VIEWS is this month celebrating the 10th anniversary of the launch of the first of its regular issues.

Over the years Merkinch Enterprise has produced a total of 113 issues of News & Views, a massive 282,500 copies using over 1.5 million sheets of A4 paper-all to bring the news, pictures, reports and opinions to 2500 Merkinch homes and businesses.

Back in 1994 the need for a service such a publication was identified by members of the community and the Christmas issue that year was a pilot for what is now your community newsletter. But it was in May the following year that the first regular issue was produced, printed with the kind support of Councillor Peter Corbett and the Clach Club who provided the printer and ink while the Enterprise furnished the paper and the staff joined by a group of volunteers took the project forward over the first necessary steps.

Says ME Chief Executive Colin Downie: *"In the summer of 1996 we were fortunate to be able to set up our own printing facility thanks to our three-year Lottery award. Since then it has been produced on a regular monthly basis and continues to be delivered by an ever-changing group of volunteers who have all willingly assisted over the years.*

*"Our thanks also go to the Newsletter Co-ordinators: Yvonne Stiver-Macleod for her patience during those first issues; Colin 'Woody' Wood; Susan Strachan (now Susan Rose); Roz Marron (now Watson) and Bette McArdle, who over the years have all worked on the News & Views and built it up to what is today a successful community newsletter, unique to Merkinch and the envy of other areas of Inverness."*

The newsletter has always been free to readers, but its costs are quite impressive: over the decade the cost involved has come to around £120,000.

*"Of this, says Mr Downie, "we at the Enterprise have generally been able to source about £85,000 on a regular basis from sponsors, local businesses and other organisations such as mp33, our local community council and both local Highland councillors.*

*"Taking income from expenditure, we are left with a shortfall over the life of the newsletter of about £35,000 giving an annual amount of £3,500 the average contribution that Merkinch Enterprise makes each year.*

*"This is the commitment that Merkinch Enterprise continues to make for the benefit of the community and we are looking forward to our continued success in the next 10 years, hopefully with the support of other organisations within the local area who can assist with this responsibility to the community," said Mr Downie.*

Meanwhile, Mrs McArdle, who has been newsletter co-ordinator for the last five years, makes her own plea to the community.

*"Tell us your news, events your organisation is planning, personal successes, information you'd like to get across to the public or what you would like to see featured-it is your newsletter, after all."*

