**Monquhitter Primary School pupils roll up their sleeves to plant tatties in preparation for Turriff Show 2023!**

On Friday 26th May, former Turriff Show President and farmer, Graeme Mackie, from Little Hilton Farm, visited Monquhitter Primary School and met pupils from the school’s Friday Eco-group to plant tatties in time to harvest at 2023’s two-day northeast Turriff agricultural Show. These tatties will be harvested on both days of the show and used to create delicious dishes by Chef, Catriona Frankitti. Catriona will be the host to the Chefs and Scottish produce in Turriff Show’s cookery theatre this year, as part of the EQ Food and Drink marquee exhibition.

Graeme Mackie said of the children's project, “rolling up their sleeves to plant, care for and watch their food grow gives the children a sense of pride in their work and an enhanced appreciation for the food on their plates. Being actively involved in growing food, demonstrates the work and time farmers put into yielding a crop, making food all that more valuable.”

Monquhitter Primary School already has its own polytunnel growing an abundance of produce - strawberries, mixed salad leaves, onions, carrots, peas, broad beans, and radishes. Each year-group oversees a raised bed and together, parents, teachers and students get stuck in to ‘plant care’.

Primary Teacher Miss Garven says, “Sustainability is a huge part of our curriculum. Many students learn by doing rather than watching. Growing food of their own motivates children to be more aware of the benefits of eating nutritious foods and encourages them to eat a fruit or vegetable that they may not have tried before.”

Gathered outside the school polytunnel, the young boys and girls were eager to get started, with trowels at the ready, as Mr Mackie gave an enlightening talk on the planting and harvesting of the tatties.

“What we are planting here today is a variety of tatties named ‘Charlotte’ – a salad type with a buttery flavour and versatility for many meals. These potatoes will be ready to harvest in two and a half to three months, in time for this year’s Turriff Show,” explained Mr Mackie.

The group of students got straight to work, carting soil from the trailer and into their individual tubs. Recycling empty livestock feed and mineral tubs, Mr Mackie, and the team of young learners, planted the potatoes and levelled off the soil.

Mr Mackie exclaimed, “Some children head to the supermarket with mum and dad and that’s where they believe food comes from. It is hugely important for all those involved in agriculture to pass on their knowledge to the younger generation. We are responsible for filling that missing link between farm and supermarket.”

The children helped to carry the tubs back into the trailer. They gave Mr Mackie a tour of the Polytunnel and raised beds. The school pupils explained to Mr Mackie that once the produce was ready to be harvested, they would dig it up and hand it to the school kitchen to prepare and be used for school dinners.

The children all hope to attend this year’s Turriff Show to take delight in witnessing their tatties being harvested and prepped into a wholesome meal.