

## Introducing WDCS's Adopt a Dolphin Field Officer, Charlie Phillips.....

I know that most of you will already be familiar with his name, but I thought it would be good for staff and customers of The Mortgage Shop to learn a bit more about the man behind the amazing photographs and quarterly updates that you receive about your adopted dolphin, Freedom.....



*"I first encountered the Moray Firth dolphins about 14 years ago, at the village of Cullen, where I had a newsagent's shop. A friend had given me unlimited access to his boat, so I used to explore the coast and all its diversity in my time off. One day a group of 10 dolphins escorted me along towards Findlater Castle.*

*I knew that there were bottlenose dolphins in the Firth, but this was my first close encounter. I was totally blown away. Their speed, power and agility and sheer size of the adults staggered me.*

*Two of the young animals simply would not leave me alone, passing slowly within inches to look at me while the adults hunted. This first eye contact did something to me. I cannot explain it in words, but I get the same feeling every time I see them. Sheer wonder I suppose. I now know a bit more about them, through study, photographing them and experience. This helps me gain an insight into the lives of these enigmatic animals and makes them even more exciting and amazing.*

*From that first moment on, I would spend a lot of time watching from headlands or onboard the boat, studying their habits and behaviour. They never fail to amaze me, doing things that seem to defy physics and take one's breath away. Behind it all is the phenomenal intelligence, the powerful body and the spirit of being wild and free.*

*I have been working with WDCS for the past 10 years or so, most recently as their Adopt a Dolphin Field Officer. I spend much of my time at Chanonry Point, one of the best places to see the dolphins from land. Here I get to meet many hundreds of nice, enthusiastic and caring people who travel many miles for the opportunity to see these incredible, intelligent mammals –and many of whom have adopted a dolphin with WDCS. I also provide WDCS with updates, photographs and footage of the dolphins, including your dolphin, Freedom.*

*I do hope that one day you will come and visit us in the Moray Firth - in the meantime, thank you once again for your continued support!"*

### Charlie's October 2007 Freedom Update

I am delighted to be able to pass on some VERY exciting news, which I'm sure you are going to be thrilled about – Freedom has become a mum!

She went a bit "off the radar" for a while - I didn't see her at Chanonry for weeks and then managed to catch sight of her a couple of weeks ago with a little baby by her side. Now Freedom has given me scares like this before - babysitting for other females - but this time there is no doubt. I've photographed them together many times now, sometimes at Chanonry also at North Kessock.



Going by the size of the calf, I think it was most probably born early to mid-September. I will need to watch out carefully for them over winter and hope that Freedom keeps the little one safe, as this is the most dangerous time for a young, wild dolphin.