



## ANNUAL REPORT 2010—2011

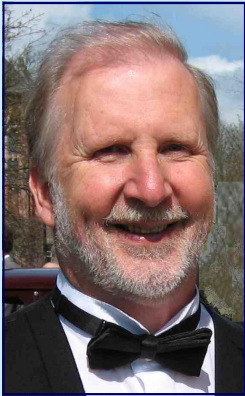


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The last 12 months have seen substantial changes at Befrienders Highland Ltd (BHL), through growth and development, a new member of staff in Inverness, a move to new offices in Nairn and important developments in our Distance Befriending Service. There have also been challenges too, particularly on the financial front. Also, whilst strictly speaking a development from the 2011/12 year, it would be foolish not to report that BHL has had to say goodbye to its Manager, Graeme Mochrie, who left our employment at the end of May 2011.

In terms of our stability and funding BHL's Distance Befriending services are mainly funded by a very generous Big Lottery award. This award was never intended to meet all of BHL's Distance Befriending service costs and it does remain a concern that we have not yet obtained other funding to supplement it.

BHL's face to face befriending in Inverness & Nairn and Ardersier, remain funded primarily by a grant from the Highland Council for which we are very grateful. 2010/11 was the third successive year in which this grant was frozen in cash terms and we have recently learnt that, like every other voluntary organisation funded by the Council, that our grant will be reduced by 5% from October 2011 and will continue at this reduced level throughout the following financial year. We recognise the financial pressures on the Council which have led to these decisions but this has created significant financial pressures for us and meant that we anticipated running a substantial deficit during the year I am reporting on.

Before continuing, I must take this opportunity to thank everyone who makes our continued success in creating and supporting friendships possible; friends, volunteers, staff, committee members and, of course, our funders – The Highland Council and the Big Lottery Foundation on a continuing, long-term basis and a wide range of other valued contributors. Thank you.

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## Inverness Face-to-Face Befriending

This part of our service has been working close to capacity for some time. At the end of March there were 35 friendships active compared to 31 last year. There remains a steady flow both of new referrals and new volunteers coming forward for training, which is very positive. Last year I reported that our Nairn Coordinator, Heather Forbes was supporting a number of these friendships. However, since the welcome arrival of Debbie Ruppenthal to our staff, some of these friendships have now been taken over. Debbie was duly appointed for 16 hours a week and began work in August. She was already a BHL Volunteer and brought a wealth of other relevant experience with her. We have been very pleased to welcome her to our staff.

At the time of last year's AGM, we had only recently moved to our new offices at 19 Church Street. This has been a very successful move, bringing us larger and more comfortable offices which are also closer to the heart of the city centre.

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## Nairn and Ardersier

Heather Forbes continues to run the Nairn service very well. There were 17 friendships running at the end of March, this too is close to capacity but Heather is coping well. At the time of last year's AGM we had just secured new offices in Nairn's Community Centre, shared with Volunteering Highland. This has been an excellent move for us. An element of uncertainty has recently developed with Volunteering Highland's recent merger with the Council of Voluntary Services to form a new body, Volunteering Matters. They no longer need to share our office, leaving us in search of a new partner or having to meet a full-time rent. We are considering our options here.

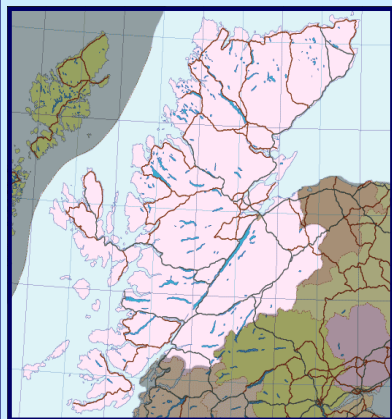
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## Distance Services

We are now entering our sixth year of supporting friendships by phone, letter or e-mail. Yvonne Reid and Sally Mackintosh run this service very ably. There were 58 friendships in operation at the end of March.

Group befriending at a distance has been successfully pioneered by distance befriending for some time with the now well established WISH

## Convenor's Report continued



group and the recent beginnings of a new book group. We are delighted with how well these are working.

I am delighted to report that there has also been continued successful development and training within the

Senior Volunteer programme and we are very grateful to those volunteers participating in this very exciting area of development.

We try to stay aware and to make use of opportunities to expand our model of services into new areas, both geographically and for service user groups. This last year has seen us developing pilot projects to assess the scope for extending our distance services in two new directions. The further developed of these is assessing the effectiveness of distance befriending for people in the early stages of dementia. This pilot will run in Sutherland and, possibly, other areas too.

We are at an earlier stage with examining the scope for offering a distance befriending service in the Argyll and Bute Council area. Although a separate local authority area, this is now part of NHS Highland for health care purposes and it would be logical to offer our services there. A pilot project is expected shortly.

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Last year Sarah Fraser joined our Management Group and continues to be an active member. We are also delighted that we now have three Volunteers as active members and a further volunteer recently expressing interest. These are very welcome developments and we greatly appreciate their contributions.

We have been giving considerable thought in the last year as to what is the best management structure within BHL. We are currently trialling a different approach, that of running the organisation with a group of workers of similar status, with management roles shared amongst them rather than employ an overall manager. The effectiveness of these changes will be reviewed later this year.

I continue to be a little concerned about the low number of Directors BHL runs with. We currently still have only 3 Directors, all of whom have been managing the service for a very long time and we would very much like to expand and refresh our group if at all possible.

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I have already said that we entered the last financial year anticipating a significant deficit, potentially in the region of £11,000. Careful management reduced the size of the deficit to a figure a little below £7,500 at the present assessment. This meant that BHL entered the 2011/12 financial year with reserves of almost exactly £24,000; mainly in unrestricted funds. This reserve is close to our minimum planned reserve which would cover 3 months running costs. If it does prove feasible to manage our services without a designated overall Manager in post, we should be able to avoid further significant calls on these reserves this year. However, we are determined not to jeopardise the quality of our services and will keep quality under active review.

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Despite some financial anxieties, this has been another busy and successful year for BHL. It has continued to grow and is supporting more friendships in a greater variety of ways than ever. I am very grateful to everyone who made this possible; friends, volunteers, staff, management group members, our funders and our partners in other agencies. I must record our particular thanks to Graeme Mochrie who played a lead role in almost doubling the size of our operations during the 4 years he worked with us.

*David Stallard* - Convenor



## Treasurer's Annual Report 2010–2011

It is never comfortable to be reporting an annual deficit, as we are again this year. However a combination of careful management - and the generosity of all involved, in limiting claims on funds - means that the deficit is significantly less than anticipated. A reorganisation which has taken place in the current year should though leave us with a small annual surplus. It relies on a yet greater ongoing contribution from the staff and management group as well as the continuing support of Highland Council and the Big Lottery Fund. We are committed to doing all that we can to deserve these. *Tim Phillips* 21 June 2011

### DRAFT STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Year ended 31 March 2011

<i>Incoming resources</i>	General	Restricted	Total	2010
	£	£	£	£
Voluntary income	54,896	78,152	133,048	107,550
Investment income	20	-	20	21
	<u>54,916</u>	<u>78,152</u>	<u>133,068</u>	<u>107,571</u>
<i>Resources expended</i>				
<i>Charitable activities</i>				
Staff remuneration	45,821	60,885	106,706	85,697
Volunteer, staff and friend expenses	3,494	3,433	6,927	7,116
Premises	3,585	5,515	9,100	7,760
Office running costs	4,208	6,423	10,631	9,061
	<u>57,108</u>	<u>76,256</u>	<u>133,364</u>	<u>109,634</u>
<i>Governance costs</i>				
Company costs	2,305	4,189	6,494	2,832
	<u>2,305</u>	<u>4,189</u>	<u>6,494</u>	<u>2,832</u>
<i>Total resources expended</i>	59,413	80,445	139,858	112,466
Re-allocation of general expenditure	(3,806)	3,806	-	-
<i>Net movement in funds</i>	(691)	(6,099)	(6,790)	(4,895)
<i>Reconciliation of funds</i>				
Total funds brought forward	23,492	7,296	30,788	35,899
Total funds carried forward	<u>22,801</u>	<u>1,197</u>	<u>23,998</u>	<u>31,004</u>

### DRAFT BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2011

	General	Restricted	Total	2010
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	490	1,113	1,603	2,228
Current assets				
Cash at bank and in hand	48,643	3,453	52,096	31,363
Other debtors	750	750	750	750
	<u>48,643</u>	<u>4,203</u>	<u>52,846</u>	<u>31,363</u>
Creditors: amounts falling				
due within one year				
Other creditors	1,044	1,445	2,489	2,204
Accruals and deferred income	25,288	2,674	27,962	600
	<u>26,332</u>	<u>4,119</u>	<u>30,451</u>	<u>2,804</u>
Net assets	<u>22,801</u>	<u>1,197</u>	<u>23,998</u>	<u>30,787</u>
Representing:-				
Accumulated funds brought forward	23,492	7,296	30,788	35,899
Arising during year	(691)	(6,099)	(6,790)	(5,112)
	<u>22,801</u>	<u>1,197</u>	<u>23,998</u>	<u>30,787</u>