

The Wee Blether

Summer 2022 Edition



Ruth and Alison Celebrate their 50th Birthdays, at a recent lunch in The Kitchen!

Annual General Meeting - 2022

This year, our AGM will be a wee bit different!

We plan to hold an in-person meeting, with a simultaneous video link, to enable those who live further away from Inverness to join us.

Once again, we will be celebrating the achievements of our long-service volunteers, giving you the opportunity to ask questions, and hear updates from all our staff and board members.



Befrienders Highland AGM
Thursday 8th September 2022
6:00PM – 8:30PM
Café Artysans
7 Strothers Lane
Inverness
IV1 1LR

If you are able to attend in person, you will be able to enjoy a light buffet with us!

If you would like to join us at Artysans, please phone the Inverness office on 01463 712 791 or send an email to admin@befriendershighland.org.uk . We need to know how many folk to cater for and if you have any special dietary requirements. We need you to let us know by 30th August.

If you would like to join us on Zoom, please email us – admin@befriendershighland.org.uk – by 30th August, so we may send you the Zoom link for the event.

Our Convenor's report & financial statements will be available for prior perusal on our website, for anyone who would like to see this information.

There will be plenty of opportunity for you to comment or ask questions for our Board or staff during the meeting. If, however, you are a wee bit shy, you are welcome to submit them by 30th August to admin@befriendershighland.org.uk , or phone the Inverness office – 01463 712 791.

Fundraise For Befrienders Highland whilst You Shop Online

Great news! Thanks to our supporters, we raised over £180 last year through Amazon Smile and Easyfundraising – all your donations add up and make a real difference.

If you have not signed up yet, it is easy and completely FREE!

[Befrienders Highland Limited Fundraising | Easyfundraising](#)

More than 6,000 shops online will donate to us when you use Easyfundraising to do your everyday online shopping – at no extra cost to you.



If you register with Amazon Smile, you can nominate **Befrienders Highland Limited** as your preferred charitable organisation. Then each time you shop with them, Amazon Smile will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price (excluding VAT).

Again, it is easy and completely FREE!

smile.amazon.co.uk: You shop. Amazon gives.

Sarah says, “Befrienders Highland supports responsible spending so, please, only spend what you can afford”.



“What do you call a couple of robbers?”

“A pair of knickers!!”
(hehehe!!)



Know any “clean”, funny jokes? Send them into us for sharing the giggle, far & wide!

Message from David Stallard, Convenor



This is a harder piece than usual for me, as this is the last time I'll be writing the Convenor's piece for Befrienders. After almost 30 years, I'm about to stand down from the position and leave our Board. I'm passing the position on into excellent hands, as Keith Walker will take over from me at our AGM in September. Many of you know Keith already from his past roles as a Coordinator for Befrienders and as our manager. He has a wealth of other experience in mental health and in running voluntary organisations.

I'm not standing down because I'm in any sense tired or bored of the role. Befrienders is a wonderful service, full of wonderful people, and it still delights me. However, the management of any service must plan how to pass on leadership in an organised way. I'm not getting any younger! And the time now feels right to do this.

It is almost incredible now to look back at our beginnings and see how we have grown. In 1993, our name was just Befrienders Inverness, because we could offer friendships only within urban Inverness. I think we had nine friendships active, after a year. We had two part-time staff, working just 30 hours a week between them. Just contrast that with now when we offer services right across the Highland area, which span face/face, distance, and group activities, employ ten staff and have literally hundreds of Friends and Volunteers. We have also been able to develop a valuable service of friendships for people affected by memory loss, and offer advice and support for unpaid carers.

It has been one of the great pleasures of my life to be involved with Befrienders, as it has flourished and grown. I thank you all for this. I've met so many amazing people through our service over the years. I'll continue as a member and look forward to seeing and hearing about all that you do, as you carry on putting the care into the community. I thank you all for the wonderful service you have built and wish you all the very best for the future.

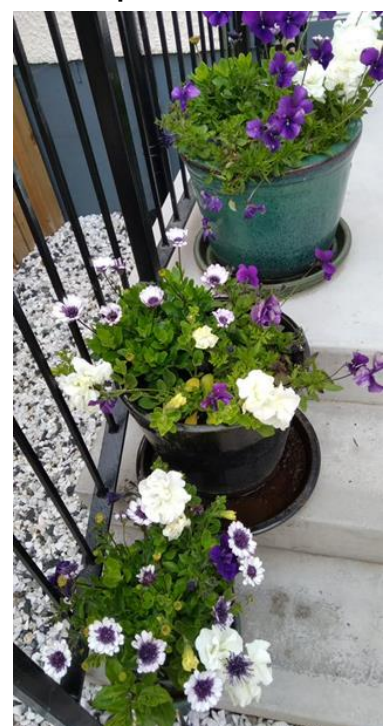
For a tribute to David, please turn to the back page.

Message from Susan White, Executive Director

"We've been on the move since our last Wee Blether and our new office door is about two feet away from our old one. We're still above M&Co in Academy House, but it's much quieter away from the buses turning the corner. We've also saved a lot of money by reducing our office space, and our team are getting used to hot-desking, although we still sometimes try to go into the wrong door! Thanks to everyone who came to our drop-in session/office warming last month, and it was lovely to finally be able to see people in person, after such a long time and to have a party!!!

I told you last time about an exciting new Peer2Peer project, and we are planning for the first course to start towards the end of July. Don't worry if you can't attend this time, there will be plenty of opportunities in the future. Alison and I will be facilitating the first course, but we hope, in time, to have a Peer Coordinator join the team to run the course and the project. Ask your coordinator if you would like more information about the Peer2Peer course at Befrienders.

Finally, my big news is that after a short Covid delay, John and I got married in April. Thanks so much to everyone who sent messages of congratulations and contributed to our wedding gift. Our garden is looking fabulous after investing all the vouchers at the local garden centres, as everything is now in full bloom!"



Memory & Carers Update

We've had a busy few months on the Memory and Carers Service. Dementia Awareness Week ran from 30th May to 5th June and Carol went to the Dementia Resource Centre in Tain to join an Alzheimer Scotland Drop-In session. Carol met some local people, promoted our befriending and enjoyed some lovely home baking!

Dementia Awareness week led straight into Carers Week, which ran from 6th – 12th June. Carol and Allana hosted two drop-in sessions. One was in Inverness at Cafe Ness, which is in the grounds on Inverness Cathedral. If you haven't been, you should visit! It is a lovely café in a beautiful setting and they are dog friendly too! The drop-in was busy with Carers, as well as professionals from Alzheimer Scotland, Social Work and Connecting Carers.

Carol said "It is so lovely getting out and about again meeting people and it is good to link-up with other organisations in person again too"

The second drop in for Carers Week was held in Tain library, and we would like to thank Highlife Highland for allowing us to use their lovely space there. It was perfect to welcome some Carers who popped in to find out about our service. We had a trainee CPN come along as well.

All in all, it's been a busy few months, but lovely to be out and about again.

If you would like to find out more about Befriending for Carers or for anyone living with memory loss contact Carol on carolsummers@befriendershighland.org.uk or Allana on allanaislei@befriendershighland.org.uk or call 01463 712 791.

Mental Health Service Update

Within our mental health service, we have people who are determined to move forward, and they are starting to make steady progress along their recovery journey.

One of our Friends recently told me that they were so tired of living in pain, doubt, and fear, that they were at a point where they just had to change things. Instead of avoiding things, like they did a lot of the time, they said they were working hard on facing, what others would call, everyday things. They went on to say that every little challenge they faced, felt like it was making them stronger and more determined.

This is so beautiful to hear, it also highlights how we all struggle with different things. I find hearing these things so inspirational. Hopefully, by sharing stories we can help give each other strength and determination to face our own challenges, whatever they may be.

If you would like to share your experiences, please let us know and we could make them part of our 'Year of Stories' project.



Promoting Befrienders Highland in Caithness

Catherine, the Mental Health coordinator based in Caithness, recently hosted a Volunteer Fayre in Wick inviting community groups and charities to promote their services and recruit volunteers. She also attended an event in Thurso and was available to talk to the public about the fantastic services provided by Befrienders Highland. This was an opportunity for the public to finally meet the coordinator Face-to-Face now that Covid restrictions are relaxing. In Caithness, Catherine has capacity for more referrals and of course, always welcomes new volunteers.

If you know anyone who could benefit from the support of a befriender or indeed, become a volunteer, please contact catherinepatterson@befriendershighland.org.uk



Catherine promoting Befrienders Highland at a volunteer fayre in Pultneytown Peoples Project, Wick



Recruiting volunteers & promoting BH services at a stall in Thurso "We Want Festival".

In these difficult financial times, **Pulteneytown Peoples Project** in Huddart Street Wick, KW1 5BA offer free items, clothing and food in their Share Shop located in the outer foyer.

They receive donations from local supermarkets including unsold bakery items. It is stacked in the foyer to save embarrassment.

Check out their video <https://en-gb.facebook.com/pppwick/videos/731734084775625>

Write On

Befrienders Highland Creative Writing Group

Issue 2 Summer 2022



Introduction

Welcome to Issue 2 of our reborn creative writing group! It has been great to receive several poems from members as well as other content. We are delighted to share them with you here. To join the creative writing group, please contact Alan using the details at the end of this edition. Membership is completely free. We look forward to reading what our writers have been creating over the summer so keep your fantastic work coming in. Please get in touch if you are looking for inspiration as we can help with challenges and tips to get you started. Please feel welcome to share longer form writing too, such as short stories & non-fiction, as we can share your work with Befrienders Highland members on an online blog & with a link included in here. Happy writing!

Poetry

Angels by Tina



Angels, angels everywhere
Angels, angels stop and stare
They bring joy and they bring love,
They are sent from heaven, above.

They are pure in what they see
All their love they bring to thee
Watching over us night and day,
Taking all our fears away.

When our world is turned upside
down
They appear to turn it around
Trust in them, they will not fail,
To deliver us and help us prevail.

And when the light returns again
And we see joy on our face
Then we are joined once again,
In Love with our Human Race.

Poetry

Antelope Canyon by Susan

Still, timeless beauty, forged by nature
Rocks shaped by the wind and flowing water
into silken folds, hidden shadows
A moment to stop.

Feel the silence
Breathe in the warm air and embrace the shade
Surrounded by wonder, strength, ripples of stone
Paths leading to new discoveries if you will
follow quietly with intent
Into the light.



Write On

Poetry Reset by Graeme

Walking thru my past
for a life moving way too fast
Anxiety and thoughts are overwhelming
Gently moving on for a life that needs rebuilding

Poetry Normality by Norma

For many “Normality” can be the following: -

It can be persecution
It can be intolerance
It can be cruelty
It can be racism
It can be loneliness
It can be isolation
It can be bigotry
It can be wrongful judgement
It can be hatred
It can gossip
It can be bullying
It can be passive aggression
It can be humiliation
It can be avoidance
It can be deliberately withholding truth and help
It can be oppression
It can be fear
It can be dominance
It can be sheer panic
It can be never being heard

“Normality” could be: -
It could be having the courage to say stop
It could be standing up for the oppressed
It could be identifying the perpetrator
It could be kindness
It could be true friendship
It could be offering protection
It could be uplifting
It could be encouragement
It could be the realisation of self-worth
It could be renewed trust
It could be saying sorry
It could be giving someone a second chance
It could be offering support
It could be unconditional love
It could be no longer lying
It could be speaking the truth
It could be going the extra mile
It could be simply caring
It could be leaving the past behind
It could be a new beginning

Which “Normality” do you live with?

Film Review

Death On The Nile by Graeme

Excellent updated version with great cast. Humour amongst the suspense. Took me three times viewing to work everything out.



To submit your poetry, reviews, short stories, non-fiction, and any other creative writing you would like to share, please send to Alan Duncan, at the address below, or email:

alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk



Fundraising News, from Margaret

Here at Befrienders Highland, we are continuously looking for new ways to raise funds to support all of our amazing friendships across the Highlands.

Coming up in the next few months, we have the Baxters Marathon taking place on the 2nd October.

If you would like to run in the Half Marathon or Marathon, we have places still available, and from the 19th July to 26th September, runners can only enter the marathon with a charity place so now is your chance!

Equally, if you are not keen on running but would like to get involved in the event, please let me know, as there is the opportunity to volunteer at the event, which would also raise money.



Susan, Bill (one of our fabulous volunteers) and I recently attended the Inverness and Culloden Rotary Day on Inverness High Street. We were able to speak to many other amazing charities and lots of lovely future volunteers and friends.

We are also still on the lookout for a friend to join our Fundraising Sub-Group, so if you are interested, please get in touch. This would not take up much of your time or require a large commitment, but if you have any questions, please let me know – margaretgrant@befriendershighland.org.uk or phone 07425 916 342.



Write to us at 1st Floor Academy House, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT
Or call us on 01463 712 791

2023 Calendar

It's that time of year again!

We've chosen the theme of "**Weather**" for next year's Befrienders Highland calendar.

We want your photographs of clouds, frost, rain, snow, sunshine, wind; you get the idea. Be as creative as you like; rain could be a reflection in a puddle; wind could be trees doing battle with a gale!

The printing company we use for our calendars needs each image to be at least **5MP resolution - somewhere in the region of 3,000 x 2,000 pixels - and the file size needs to be at least 2MB.**

If you're not sure what resolutions and pixels are all about, just send in the photo and we'll check it for you; or ask a teenager within your family circle. They'll keep you right!

The printing company also needs the images to be **landscape**.



Portrait = ☒



Landscape = ☒

The **deadline for entries is Sunday, 4th September**, when they will be judged by a panel of 'experts' to decide which 12 will appear in our 2023 calendar. Send in as many different photos as you like, up to 10 in total.

Please submit entries by email to admin@befriendershighland.org.uk

We are really looking forward to seeing your fabulous pictures.

The Importance of Creating Goals, by Malcolm

Well, I managed to complete the 80-mile Loch Ness 360 Ultra Marathon in 21 hours 25 minutes. It wasn't easy, but I got there in the end.

In the months preceding the event I read a lot about running longer distances and what it took to get across the finish line, and not have a DNF beside your name at the end of the day (DNF = Did Not Finish). The information I consumed kept telling me it was mostly your attitude and thoughts that would determine your success on the day rather than your physical fitness, a concept that is hard to comprehend when facing an 80-mile run.

As the date approached, I knew I wasn't physically prepared for such a challenge. I tore my meniscus (cartilage) in my left knee at the start of March and had managed very little training in preparation. Standing (in pain) at the start line, my confidence in my physical state was low (to say the least) but my game face was on, and my thoughts were that of acceptance; I knew I had a long journey in front of me and it was my mind that was going to get me through. The only way I was going to complete the task at hand was to break it down and focus on the smaller goals I created for myself, thinking about the big picture would have been completely overwhelming. This whole experience has made me think a lot about the importance of creating challenging but achievable small goals, and the real power of our attitude and thoughts.

Working towards goals is an important part of the REFOCUS recovery programme, implemented by Befrienders Highland. If you would like to discuss or renew your goals, please contact your coordinator.



Mile 55 – not smiling 😞

(Photo by John Frid)



Mile 80 – smiling 😊

Bereavement Awareness Session

We are delighted to announce that Highland Hospice will provide Bereavement Awareness Training for Befrienders Highland volunteers and staff, on **Wednesday, 28th September from 6pm – 8.30pm. This will be via Zoom.**



Bereavement awareness training may be useful for us, not only in our roles as Befriending Volunteers, or Coordinators, but also for us in our personal lives. Feelings of bereavement can occur when we experience many things, not just the loss of a loved one or friend but a change in circumstances, such as a loved one going into full time care, losing a job, family or children moving away. These can all lead to feelings of loss. We may also be supporting someone who is going through this.

The training session will hopefully help us feel better equipped at coping with those feelings ourselves, and to feel more confident if we are supporting someone experiencing loss.

I understand that this may be a difficult subject for many, so please do not feel obliged to attend. Or, if it would help to have a chat about the content of the session, or if you would like to ask any questions before committing to attend, please just get in touch, with Carol on 07917 792 883 or email carolsummers@befriendershighland.org.uk

Or, if you would like to register for the event please contact Carol, who will then send information to you nearer the time.

Are you sick of Cold-Callers on your Doorstep?

It is a fact that older and vulnerable people are targeted by fraudulent traders, workmen and fake 'professional' people such as conmen pretending they are from the Water Board, Local Council, BT, Gas Board, NHS Covid Dept., etc. Befrienders Highland has received information about some free door stickers, which may deter unwanted callers.

If you or someone you know would like us to order one, please email us at admin@befriendershighland.org.uk



Reminder - Year of Stories submissions

In the last Wee Blether, we mentioned that to celebrate our 30th Anniversary in 2023, we would like to collect your wonderful stories about what befriending has meant to you over the years. You can be a friend, a volunteer, a family member, or carer – everyone will have their own story to tell, from their perspective.

We would like you to tell your story in your own way – in words, poetry, photographs, pictures, videos, needlework, sculpture, comic strips, songs – the limit is your imagination!

We have already collected some written stories from friends, carers, and volunteers, but with over 150 matches, there must be more tales to tell!

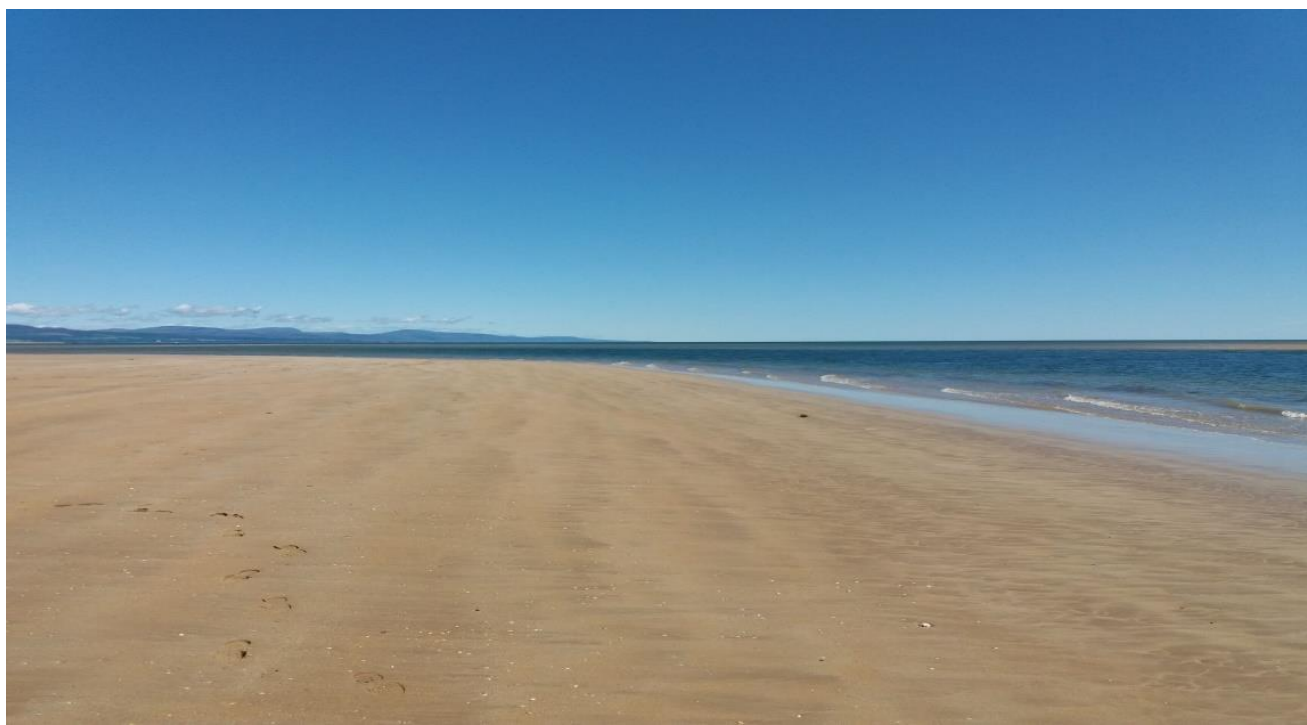
We are limiting each story to:

- Stories written and submitted by individuals (around 500 words)
- Poems (around 500 words)
- Visual representation of a story (using photographs, collages, drawings, paintings, sculpture, quilting etc.) (Limit of 5 images taken by the individual)
- Video or audio recordings of a story (up to 5-minute short stories)
- Stories told to a third party (volunteer, family member or staff member) and verified by the storyteller (around 500 words)
- Original music or songs written by the individual, which represent their befriending story (up to 5-minute pieces)

Please let us know if you need some support to tell your story, and one of our staff or volunteers will be able to help!

Contact: susanwhite@befriendershighland.org.uk

Or phone the office on: 01463 712 791.



Dornoch Beach, June 2022 – Sarah's holiday photo!

Write to us at 1st Floor Academy House, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT
Or call us on 01463 712 791



Community projects provided by Inverness Cathedral

**A SUSPENDED COFFEE SERVICE FOR PEOPLE IN
NEED AND CARERS: GRAB YOUR FREE COFFEE AT
CAFE NESS IN THE GROUND OF INVERNESS
CATHEDRAL)**



**DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO NEEDS A
SCHOOL UNIFORM? OUR INSPIRES PROJECT
OFFERS FREE SCHOOL UNIFORM AND SHOES TO
THE CHILDREN OF INVERNESS**



**WE OFFER A NO QUESTIONS ASKED FOOD BANK
AND TOILETRIES DROP IN DAYS WEDNESDAYS
10AM-2PM OR THURSDAYS BETWEEN 10AM-
12PM**



**HOT WATER BOTTLES AND BLANKETS ARE
ALSO AVAILABLE**



**OUR WINTER JACKET BANK IS AVAILABLE
FROM SEPTEMBER ONWARDS THROUGH
INSPIRES**

**DROP IN: 9-11 KENNETH ST, INVERNESS, IV3 5NR
OFFICE: 01463 225553**

follow us on Facebook and twitter for latest updates





The Mysterious People

They are thoughtful and kind
And of empathic mind.
Listening and talking,
Reassuring, supporting.

Sharing laughs and tears,
Achievements and fears,
Through tough times and good,
As we all knew they could.

They give up their time,
Not charging a dime,
And quietly impart
Some hope in a heart.

Too good to be true,
So give us a clue!
They have such appeal
They sound so unreal!!

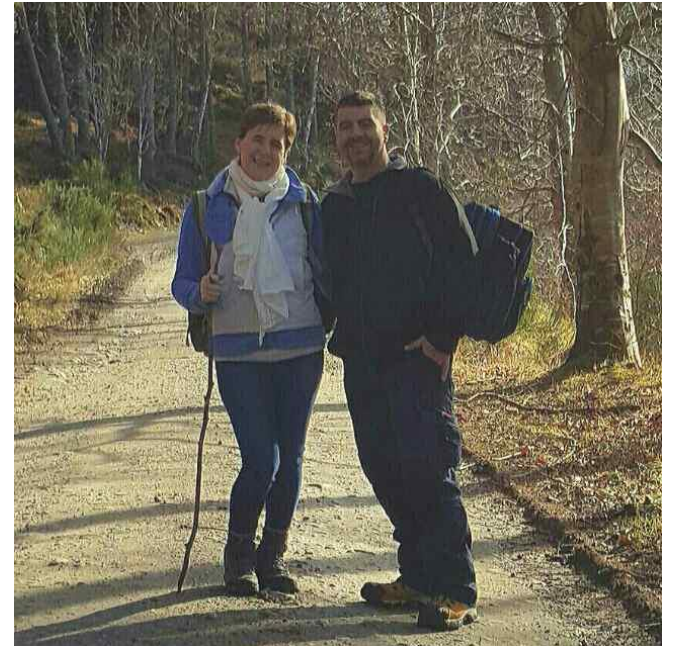
The mysterious people
We speak of on here
Are the wonderful, fabulous
BHL VOLUNTEERS!!!!

By Alison Campbell



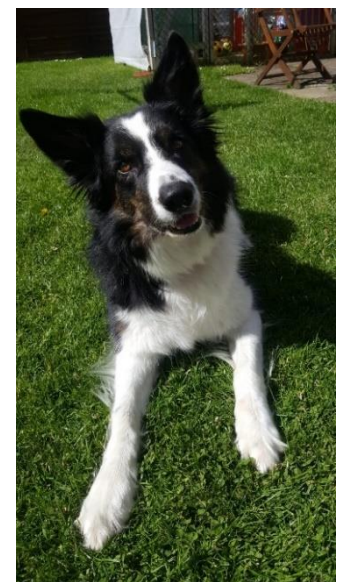
Introducing our new Administration Assistant!

Hi everyone, my name is Rebecca. I joined Befrienders Highland on 9th May 2022 as an Administration Assistant. This has been a big step for me, as for many years, I have spent my time at home raising our two children, while my lovely partner Alex has clocked up the miles, travelling from St. Kilda to Cornwall and everywhere in-between for work. To say I was 'rusty' returning to the office is an understatement! I feel very fortunate to have found a role with such a lovely team, who reassured me from the very start, that they would help me 'find my feet!' With their patience and guidance, training has been ongoing, and I am beginning to feel more confident in myself. Updating my office skills and the use of today's advanced IT is exciting! It has given me the belief that 'nobody's too old to learn something new!' My children have been such a great help with their IT knowledge at home too! They have encouraged, helped, and advised me on any stumbling blocks that I have faced so far!



I love spending time outdoors with my family. We enjoy camping in the summer and visiting new places. I love walking and taking in our beautiful scenery. We have an energetic collie called 'Jake', who is definitely the baby of our home!

I have met so many lovely people so far, since joining Befrienders, and hope to meet many more through time.



... And, **Farewell to Ruth**

I've been with Befrienders just short of two years (1st September 2020 was my start date) and I have enjoyed both of those years very much, despite spending most of it with my colleagues online, due to lock down. I am sure you will all agree that the staff at Befrienders are hardworking, compassionate people, and I feel lucky to now count them as my friends.

I have met some wonderful people both friends and volunteers, and I hope that I have supported both, in a way they have been happy with. I wish you all the very best for the future.

I'm not leaving Befrienders because I am unhappy, but I am leaving to spend more time with my now retired husband, and to concentrate on my private counselling practice. I also have my daughter's wedding coming up next year with lots of organising to do.

I fully intend to do some volunteer work for Befrienders, so hopefully I will see some of you sometime soon.

With Love

Ruth

Support to access benefits if you are disabled, from VoiceAbility

If you are disabled and want support to access benefits from Social Security Scotland, VoiceAbility are there to make sure you're heard.

Get support to apply for benefits from Social Security Scotland if you are disabled

If you identify as disabled, you can get free support to access benefits from Social Security Scotland. This support is available from the moment you want to start an application and is entirely independent from Social Security Scotland.

An advocate is an independent professional who supports people to have their say, be heard, and understand their rights. They do not work for Social Security Scotland, or the Scottish government and they have no role in assessing or deciding people's benefits.

An advocate can help you to:

- understand information about your rights, and options
- ask questions so you can say what you want, have your voice heard and represent yourself
- be fully involved in decisions about your benefits
- complete the process from the point of application, including reviews and any appeals you want to make

An advocate will support you to:

Apply for benefits. Your advocate can meet with you over the phone, over video call, or might meet you in person. An advocate will support you in the way that works best for you so you can understand what is happening and say what you want.

What does an advocate do?

Your advocate will:

- listen to you and be on your side
- talk with you about your options
- plan with you what you want to do
- represent you if you are not able to represent yourself

Your advocate will **not**:

- offer counselling or be your friend
- offer legal advice
- make decisions for you
- provide advice or tell you what to do
- make any decisions about what benefit you get

Contact Them: **0300 303 1660**

Website: **voiceability.org**

To find out more about advocacy support or to ask for an advocate, their website has lots of information. You can also call them for free or email them. The easiest way to get an advocate is by visiting their website.

They're open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

They're closed on Bank Holidays.

Freephone/ Email helpline@voiceability.org

You can also contact Social Security Scotland about advocacy for free on 0800 182 2222.

They can provide this information in other languages or formats, including Easy Read and large text. They can also provide interpreters including for British Sign Language.

About VoiceAbility

They make sure you're heard when it matters most. They have been supporting people to have their say in decisions about their health, care and wellbeing for almost 40 years. They are an independent charity and one of the UK's largest providers of advocacy and involvement services.



SIPP Training

Susan writes: When I first started with Befrienders, one of the things that concerned me was what I should do if someone was expressing thoughts of suicide. This has happened on occasions over the years, and I found that listening and talking through those feelings with the individual, acknowledging their distress, and offering compassion and support seemed to help us both. The suicide intervention and prevention programme (SIPP) is training offered by the NHS Highland Public Health Improvement Team. They have offered to deliver this course specifically for us at Befrienders Highland. The course will enable people to feel more confident talking about suicide, to dispel some of the myths and stigma around suicide, to support others to express their thoughts and develop their safety plan, or where to signpost for more specialist support and advice.

The course is split over two sessions, and you will need to be able to commit to attending both sessions. It will be facilitated by Siobhan Leen and Maggie Hume, from NHS Highland. Please contact: susanwhite@befriendershighland.org.uk or your coordinator if you would like to attend, and we will provide you with the joining link closer to the time. The course will be held on-line, in a small group, on Tuesday 30th August and Tuesday 6th September, between 10.00am and 12.00pm. We are also hoping to offer another date in the evening. So, if you would prefer an evening session, please get in touch and we will let you know as soon as the dates are confirmed.



Christmas 2022

Bill Whyte - Volunteer and Befrienders Highland Ambassador – writes:

Although it seems early to be thinking about Christmas, I would like your help with a project to provide Christmas dinner deliveries to people who will be alone over the festive period.

Christmas can feel especially difficult when you live by yourself, and it may be possible to bring a little cheer if we start planning now.

Last year, I managed to contact several local church groups, who kindly organised Christmas day meal deliveries for a number of people living alone, and they were all delighted with them. Meals are delivered on Christmas Eve, so they may be reheated to eat on Christmas Day.



BHL Staff Xmas Lunch 2021

If you, or someone you know, would appreciate a meal delivery over Christmas, please contact me on **01349 880 009**.

I cannot guarantee that I will be able to arrange a meal for everyone, as it depends on the local groups and availability; with a bit more time to plan this year, however, I am hoping I can do it again this year, and maybe reach even more people.

Visit from Emma Roddick MSP

On Monday 25th July, we were pleased to welcome Emma Roddick, MSP, to the Befrienders Highland office in Inverness.

Emma was keen to find out about our work and the issues faced by the Third Sector in terms of funding and connecting with other agencies. We had a lovely, relaxed chat with her and she was interested to hear about what we do and how we help people.

Having personal experience of mental health issues herself, Emma champions reform of mental health services. In 2020, following a successful and years-long petition, she succeeded in having an option for mental health emergencies added to Scotland's NHS24 service.

We hope to maintain good working links with Emma going forward.



Celebrating David Stallard's Convenorship



Many of you will know David, who has been our Convenor for most of his time serving as a volunteer director of the board of Befrienders Highland. Some of you may also know that after almost 30 years, David has decided to enjoy his retirement, and is stepping down as Convenor at this year's AGM.

There are not enough words to thank David sufficiently for all the support, time, kindness and sage advice he has given over those years; steering the organisation from a good idea, developed by a small group of folk back in the early 1990s, into the well-respected charity that we are today, with 10 employees, over 160 volunteers, offering friendship and alleviating loneliness for people right across Highland.

So, instead of using words, here are some photographs, through the years, celebrating David's contribution as the head of our charity. If you would like to send a card, or a short note to say your personal thanks to David, please post them directly to our office in Academy Street, to arrive by the end of August 2022, and we will pass them over to him at the AGM.



Write to us at 1st Floor Academy House, 42 Academy Street, Inverness, IV1 1JT
Or call us on 01463 712 791