



# The Wee Blether

Spring 2022



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

## **Message from Susan White, Executive Director**

With the longer days and signs of spring all around, I hope that everyone is feeling a little brighter and more optimistic as the Covid restrictions are finally being lifted? It's quite understandable that folk are still feeling anxious, but with vaccinations and treatments on offer now, the situation feels quite different to 2 years ago.

Befrienders Highland have been inundated with referrals during the pandemic, so I do apologise to those of you who have been waiting longer than usual for a befriending match. In the past 2 years we have almost doubled the number of annual matches, and we have recruited new staff to help train volunteers and support our friendships. This means we are also having to work hard to secure additional grant funding and to encourage fundraising events. Anyone who would like ideas or support with fundraising activities, please get in touch with Margaret, our fundraising coordinator, who will be happy to help!

In the past few months, we have secured a new Lottery Community Fund grant and funding from NHS Highland and Highland Third Sector Interface, but we still have a big shortfall in funding to support all our new posts and increased level of activity. We continue to look for new grant funding as it becomes available.

An exciting new development for Befrienders Highland is that we are about to start a Peer Befriending project, using group training developed by the Scottish Recovery Network, and funded through the Volunteer Support Fund. We are recruiting a Peer Coordinator to support this project, and hopefully will be able to introduce the new post-holder in the next Wee Blether!



Kind regards, Susan

# Sudoku Time

(Answers on page 16)

	3			4	9		1	
	9			1		5		4
8								2
	7					8		
			9		4			
		2		8	5	6		
		3			2	9		
		4		3				5

Visit [www.sudokuprintout.com](http://www.sudokuprintout.com) for more printable sudoku puzzles

	5			9				1
	7			4				
			2	8			9	
	3				5			6
							8	
					7	5		
		2						
		8					4	

Visit [www.sudoku.us](http://www.sudoku.us) for more printable sudoku puzzles

				2			7	
3								
1		5						4
	2						6	8
4			1		3			
7	9			8				
						1		5

Visit [www.sd9981.com](http://www.sd9981.com) for more printable sudoku puzzles

	2				4		3	
							9	
7		1						
	3							
				5		7		8
				4		1		
					3		6	
8						5		
					9			

Visit [www.daily-sudoku.net](http://www.daily-sudoku.net) for more printable sudoku puzzles

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

## **Message from David Stallard, Convenor**



Best wishes for Easter and for the Spring generally to you all, from me and from everyone on our Board.

I've looked back to what I wrote last year at this time and found that, sadly, I was over-optimistic then about when the easing of Covid restrictions was going to come. I looked forward then to us getting back to normal in a few months. I wish I'd been right! However, there does seem to be a firmer basis now for expecting improvements, with the end of some restrictions already announced for the end of March. I can't wait!

So, we're now looking back on two years of having to work in ways we haven't been used to - and hadn't expected. I can't easily put in words how proud I am of all you in our services have been doing to give support and friendship to each other throughout this time - which has been so difficult for us all. I doubt if our services have ever been more needed or more appreciated and I do want to thank you all so much.

There are many things to look forward to as we enter a new year for our service. And we're in good heart as we do this. You have done so much to show the power of friendship in difficult times. It is a privilege to be a part of this service and to hear the stories about what you are doing.

Kind regards

David

## **Mental Health Update**

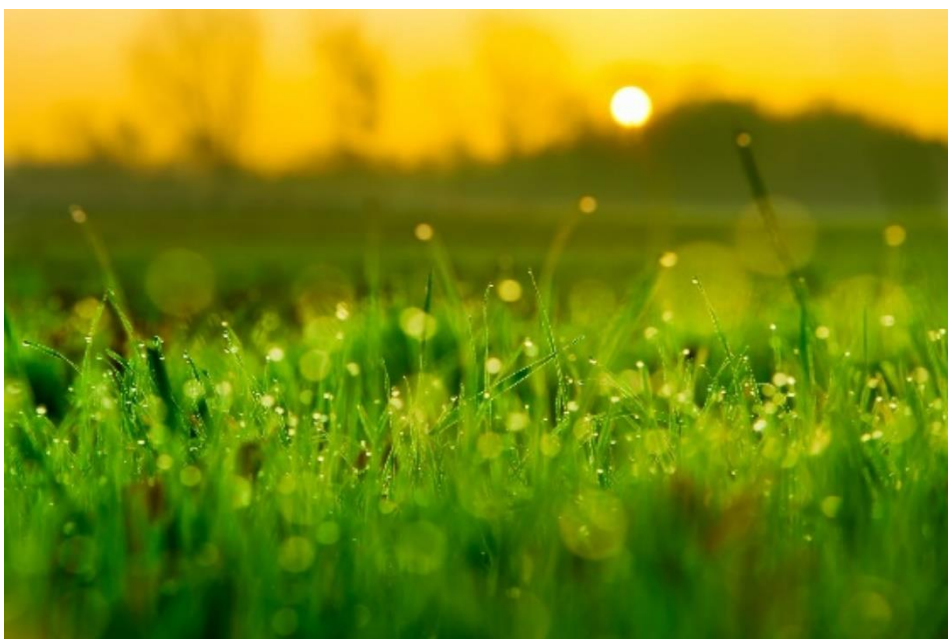
Looking out of the window just now and it is pouring rain when a little while ago it was blue sky and sunshine. It reminds me of just how fast changing our world is. Sometimes we need to take a moment to step back and let things try and fall into place.

Within our mental health service, we continue to strive to be the best people we can be. We encourage our volunteers to take on learning opportunities to further bolster their already excellent skill set. Our Friends continue to be supported incredibly by these wonderful volunteers and whilst we have an extensive waiting list at present, we are doing our very best to get everyone matched so that we can process new referrals and keep everything going.

We are now two years into COVID and it's hard to believe that time has passed. It has been difficult for people, on so many levels, but I am hopeful that the team we have at Befrienders is helping to ease anxiety and help people to move forward.

Spring is coming (despite the rain outside) so hopefully a more positive time for people.

And in the time it has taken me to write this the sun and blue sky are back – nothing stays the same for long and that can sometimes be a blessing!



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



## Year of Stories

### Preparing for our 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in 2023

Next April Befrienders Highland turns 30, and to celebrate, we would like to collect your wonderful stories about what befriending has meant to you. You can be a friend, a volunteer, a family member or carer – everyone will have their own story to tell, from their perspective.



You can tell your story in any way that you like – in words, poetry, photographs, pictures, needlework, sculpture, comic strips, songs – the limit is your imagination!

We have some staff and volunteers ready to help you to tell your story, and then we hope to capture these into a digital archive linked to our website, and also to publish a commemorative booklet next year. 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)

The word limits are just to ensure that we don't run into multiple volumes, and John McLeod has kindly offered to help meet people who want to tell someone else their story, and John Frid will help with photography if you need support.

## **What's been happening in Caithness?**

Hello everyone! Just a wee update from Catherine the Caithness Mental Health coordinator. I am pleased to say that unlike the other areas, we were able to host a face-to-face Christmas get-together last December. Fortunately, the event was scheduled prior to the government restrictions prohibiting gatherings of more than three households and so the event was able to go ahead as planned.

Everyone had a nice time meeting other people, chatting, and eating cake. I created a short Christmas quiz to lighten the atmosphere and get folk in the Christmas spirit. Speaking of quizzes, the online zoom quizzes have been popular with a few people attending regularly. The next one will be in Early April and are held at 6.30pm on either a Thursday or Friday evening. Details to be circulated nearer the time but all welcome to attend.



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

## **Wee Blether Article Memory and Carer Update Spring 2022**

Befrienders Highland are delighted to announce that we are now working with the music and dementia charity Playlist for Life. Playlist for Life promotes the powerful effects of personal music to help anyone who is affected by dementia, their families and carers. Listening to a personalised playlist can improve the lives of those living with dementia. In fact, listening to music that is personally meaningful has many psychological benefits, meaning anyone can benefit from a playlist. Music really can help improve our mood and over all well-being. It is so easy to make a personalised playlist and something that we could do on our own, or even as an activity in our befriending relationship. It's fun and free!

Personalised playlists can:

- reduce anxiety
- improve your mood
- make difficult tasks more manageable
- evoke memories that can help families and carers connect



We are keen to encourage our Friends, Volunteers and Carers to find out more about Playlist for Life, we have resources and information available, so to find out more please get in touch with Carol or Allana.

[carolsummers@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:carolsummers@befriendershighland.org.uk) mobile: 07917 792 883

or

[allanaislei@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:allanaislei@befriendershighland.org.uk) mobile: 07425 916 301



## **Edwina Fraser Tribute**

We would like to pay tribute to one of our dear Friends, Edwina Fraser, who passed away recently in hospital in her home town of Nairn. Coordinator Carol said "it has been a privilege to witness Edwina's friendship develop with her Volunteer Joan over the years. And to hear how much the befriending meant, not only to Edwina, but to Joan too. Edwina certainly was a remarkable woman who will be greatly missed".

Joan said, Edwina and I were introduced through Carol four and a half years ago, a friendship which we both enjoyed. In the early days we used to go out for coffee once a week and time allowing, we would go and sit at the harbour; as Edwina enjoyed looking at the boats in the harbour and seeing if there were any out in the Firth. Edwina also enjoyed seeing our local swan and duck families. It was very important for Edwina to go out for our coffee; on any occasions when a nurse had to visit Edwina, she would tell them that it would have to be in the afternoon as she went out for coffee in the morning. About four years ago, I took Edwina up to see the massed pipe bands parade to the Links on our local Games Day, which Edwina enjoyed immensely. The following year, we went to see the massed pipe bands parade again and this time we went along to the Links to watch the Games for a while - with our coffee, of course. On one occasion we went to Findhorn, as Edwina used to go to visit her grandparents there when she was young and we spent some time in Findhorn - a lovely little village. Unfortunately, due to covid we never got back again. We enjoyed many days at Brodie, Edwina often buying Christmas presents well in advance. Then along came covid and the restrictions. Carol and I spoke about me telephoning Edwina and we didn't think that it would work out. However, much to the surprise of both of us, it did work. When some of the restrictions were relaxed, Carol very kindly approved for me to visit Edwina in her home, which was almost as satisfying as going out. Back to happy, smiling Edwina when she saw me coming. Last Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve we celebrated with a takeaway coffee and hot mince pies.



Edwina celebrated her ninety ninth birthday in January, having a birthday lunch with her friends. Several years ago, at a birthday lunch, Edwina said that she was waiting for her telegram from the Queen. Sadly, due to ill health Edwina had to be admitted to hospital days after her birthday and passed away in February. Although Edwina didn't make it to her hundredth birthday, as she wished, she did make it to her hundredth year ..... what a remarkable achievement for a wonderful lady. It has been my privilege to have befriended Edwina and made a difference to our lives for four and a half years. Edwina will be fondly remembered and sadly missed by myself and her many friends. The photo is Joan with Edwina after her 99<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebrations.

The photo is shared with kind permission from Edwina's niece Elaine

## **Health & Fitness**

As some of you may know, I have a background in health science and it's still a topic that really fascinates me. Over the years the scientific evidence linking physical and mental health has continued to grow and we can now say without any doubt that they are absolutely interconnected (I think we all know this already but seem to have forgotten it as a society).

With such an interest in this subject I am always looking out for podcasts or videos to hear other people's take on it. One that caught my attention a few years ago was Dr Rangan Chatterjee, some people may recognise him from 'Doctor in the House', a BBC television programme. I liked the fact he examined every aspect of the person's life and explored the connection between mind and body, taking a holistic approach to the people's health. This trend seems to be growing with the introduction of social prescribing within primary care.

Rangan's message is 'take control & simplify'. He believes that lifestyle and nutrition are the keys to good health if we eat well, move well, sleep well, and relax well, we will be on the road to improvement. Obviously, achieving these things is easier said than done (for a whole host of reasons) but they are good goals to work towards and will definitely provide a great foundation for health and resilience. Rangan keeps things simple and easy to follow (which I like), he has interesting guests on the podcast who look at all aspects of health, and he seems pretty down to earth. The thing I like best about his approach is the fact he admits his understanding of health is limited (even as a doctor) and he is constantly learning. He tells how he graduated medical school thinking he knew a great deal about health then realised over the years that he knew very little at that point. Follow this link for his YouTube channel <https://tinyurl.com/2p9xuxt3>

Best Wishes Malcolm

## **Fundraising News**

Coming into Spring we have exciting projects happening that will allow us to continue to support all of our friendships across the Highlands.

We still have 4 charity places available for the Inverness Loch Ness Marathon or 10k which is taking place on the 10<sup>th</sup> October this year, now is the perfect time to get your running shoes on with the better weather!



One of our new fundraising projects is the creation of a Fundraising Sub-Group made up of Jo, one of our fantastic board directors and three of our staff to allow us to spread awareness of Befrienders Highland whilst raising vital funds as we're hoping to raise £30,000 to celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> year. We are currently looking to recruit two people to this group (ideally one friend and one befriending volunteer) to join our meetings. Don't worry if you don't have much time as our meetings will take place once every few months. For more information on the group or if you're interested in joining, please let me know.

We are also looking to recruit a pool of fundraising volunteers to a separate Events Fundraising Group that will look at helping us with organising fundraising events and fun activities with lots of social opportunities available. If you would be interested in joining either the Fundraising Subgroup or Events Fundraising Group, please give me an email or call I would love to hear from you.

Best wishes  
Margaret

[margaretgrant@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:margaretgrant@befriendershighland.org.uk)

## Other News

We have received a huge bundle of beautiful handmade cards from a lady called Jill, who lives in Edinburgh. They were a gift, to bring happiness and joy to our friends and volunteers, from someone who has no previous connection with our organisation! Susan "met" her online through a Facebook group for crafters.

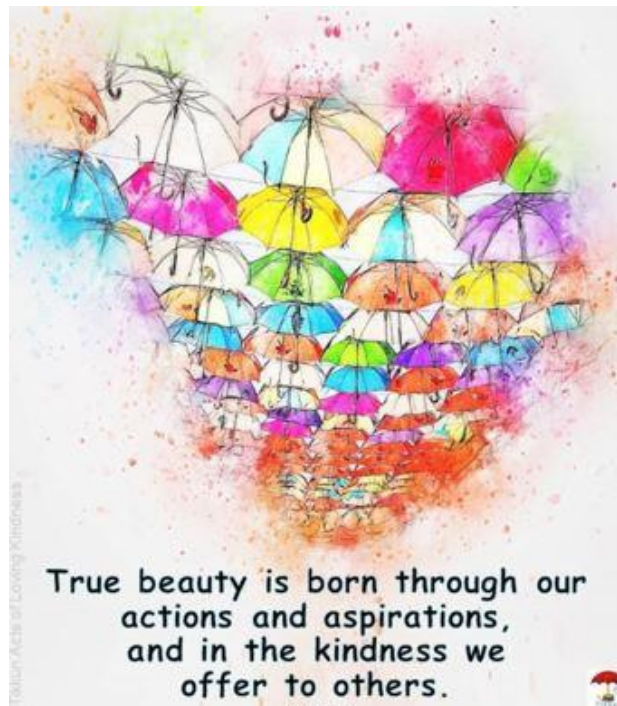


Always have faith in the kindness of strangers, and if you are lucky enough to receive one of these cards, please send some well wishes and good thoughts to Jill for sharing her talent with us ❤️



We would also like to thank Floris for her donation of craft items and raffle prizes to BHL.

These gestures of kindness are hugely appreciated.



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

## **Stress Reduction Mindfulness** **Course**

Following on from the popular Introduction to Mindfulness sessions that we held last year, we would like to offer the opportunity for friends and volunteers to join an upcoming Stress Reduction Mindfulness Course. This will be on Monday afternoons over an 8-week period, facilitated by Rona MacKenzie (Highland Mindfulness) and Ruth Webster (Befriending Coordinator).



If you are interested in participating, and can commit to attending all 8 sessions, please get in touch at [admin@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:admin@befriendershighland.org.uk) to register your interest. The course costs are subsidised, but we are asking participants for donations to Befrienders Highland on a "Pay What you Can" basis, so that we can use these funds for other charitable activities.



### **Goodbye and Thank You!**

It is with sadness that I wanted to let you know that my time with Befrienders Highland has come to an end. I have very much enjoyed my time working as an administration assistant and feel privileged to have worked with such a lovely team who do such an amazing job.

I will really miss Befrienders but am looking forward to new challenges in my new role with the NHS, best wishes, Tricia



# Write On

**Befrienders Highland creative writing group** Spring 2022

## Introduction

Welcome to the relaunch of Befrienders Highland creative writing group. Please enjoy some work below from our fantastic group of writers. If you would like to join the group, please get in touch. You can send in your writing and share it with our community. You will be welcome to share your poems, limericks, short stories, nonfiction articles, reviews or whatever else you enjoy writing. Links to longer pieces such as short stories will be included here so you can then read them online.



## Poetry

### Television by Irene

I switch on the telly, sit back in my seat  
What can I watch for my nightly treat?  
University Challenge on Monday Night  
If I answer ONE question, I feel quite bright  
I always learn something from Panorama  
And there's nothing to beat a good period drama.  
The Soaps are depressing, the news is a bore,  
But Strictly is brilliant as they waltz around the floor.  
But sometimes I switch on and take a look,  
There's nothing worth watching, so I pick up my book!



## Poetry

### Moving On by Norma

I have just moved house and oh what a strain  
Wrapping and packing and undoing it all again  
Remembering where the cups are for that vital cup of tea  
Amidst a heap of boxes as far as the eye can see  
If it could go wrong or missing, well of course it usually did  
And during the upheaval, I tried to get rid,  
Rid of stuff to charity I haven't used for years.  
Looking at belongings reduced me to tears  
But now I am settling down at my new address  
I'm glad I went through it all, I have to confess  
A new start and I hope a new me  
Because this time I want to break the mould and feel free  
Free of all the previous ways I hope to leave behind  
Unfortunately, this does not apply to my over-worked worried mind  
Thanks to some constants it isn't all bad  
Like my patient core of true friends, who make me feel glad.  
It would be too easy to sit down and be sad  
So, a big Thank You to my friends I send  
As Bugs Bunny would say, "That's All Folks"

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

# Write On

## Poetry

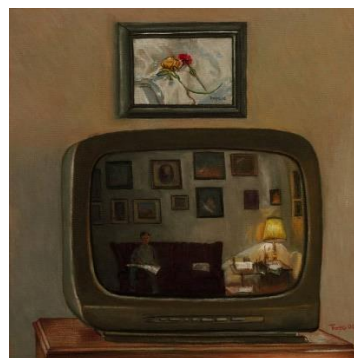
### Every Day Is a Gift by Norma

The rainbow in the spider's web of pink, turquoise and gold,  
Every delicate strand an incredible site to behold  
Perfectly hanging by every woven thread  
This wonderful creation, for a fly is a place of dread.  
Looking round the garden, the leaves are all but gone  
Still, I hear the robin singing his chirpy, wintry song.  
Time to put the tools to bed for another year  
I feel a sense of contentment as I watch a mother deer.  
She's gingerly approaching the fence line round the field  
The barley gone now that it's given up its annual yield.  
A flock of geese fly overhead in the greying cloudless sky,  
I wonder what it's like to be able to soar and fly?  
Seeing everything from above, just by looking down  
Is simply amazing and it takes away my frown.  
Life is really cool, if you look around  
Wonderful in creation, striking in colour and sound  
Even when we are stuck indoors, look out and see  
What wee joy is awaiting for our discovery?  
Like the little jenny wren who hops in and out of the wood stack  
You really never know what time she might come back.  
So, grab each special moment and please don't delay  
Every days a gift in every possible way.

## Film/ T.V review

### Three Colours Blue reviewed by Graeme

This 1993 film starring Juliette Binoche, and part of the Three Colours Trilogy, focuses on a woman who seeks solitude after the death of her husband and daughter in a car accident. Despite her attempts to be on her own, other people try to lure her back to reality. For me this film proves that no-one is ever truly alone.



Joke/ thought for the day.

What is wrong with Mickey Mouse's helicopter?  
- It Disneyland.

## Links

### Writer's Digest

<https://www.writersdigest.com/>

### The Story Starter

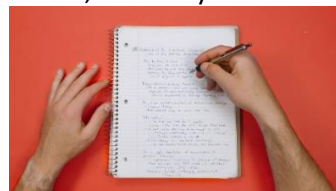
(Randomly generates a story starter sentence!)

<http://thestorystarter.com/>

### Imagination Prompt Generator

<https://www.creativity-portal.com/prompts/imagination.prompt.html>

To submit your poetry, reviews, short stories, and any other creative writing you would like to share, please send to: [alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:alanduncan@befriendershighland.org.uk) or Befrienders Highland, Write On, Academy House, Academy Street. IV1 1JT



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

## Sudoku Answers

Sudoku #1

6	3	5	2	4	9	7	1	8
2	9	7	8	1	3	5	6	4
8	4	1	6	5	7	3	9	2
5	7	9	1	2	6	8	4	3
3	8	6	9	7	4	2	5	1
4	1	2	3	8	5	6	7	9
1	5	3	4	6	2	9	8	7
7	2	8	5	9	1	4	3	6
9	6	4	7	3	8	1	2	5

Sudoku #2

8	5	3	7	9	6	4	2	1
2	7	9	5	4	1	8	6	3
4	6	1	2	8	3	7	9	5
6	8	7	9	3	2	1	5	4
9	3	4	8	1	5	2	7	6
1	2	5	6	7	4	3	8	9
3	9	6	4	2	7	5	1	8
5	4	2	1	6	8	9	3	7
7	1	8	3	5	9	6	4	2

Sudoku #3

8	4	9	3	2	6	5	7	1
3	7	2	4	1	5	8	9	6
1	6	5	8	7	9	2	3	4
9	2	1	7	5	4	3	6	8
6	5	3	2	9	8	4	1	7
4	8	7	1	6	3	9	5	2
7	9	4	5	8	1	6	2	3
5	1	8	6	3	2	7	4	9
2	3	6	9	4	7	1	8	5

Sudoku #4

5	2	8	7	9	4	6	3	1
3	6	4	8	1	5	2	9	7
7	9	1	6	3	2	4	8	5
4	3	7	1	2	8	9	5	6
9	1	2	3	5	6	7	4	8
6	8	5	9	4	7	1	2	3
1	5	9	4	7	3	8	6	2
8	4	3	2	6	1	5	7	9
2	7	6	5	8	9	3	1	4

Visit [www.sudoku-puzzle.org](http://www.sudoku-puzzle.org) for more printable sudoku puzzles