



# The Wee Blether

## Summer 2020 Edition

Hello to you all. Not the best start to 2020 but I do hope you have been staying safe and well at home throughout these difficult times. We have a lot for you to read over in this edition and some fun things to keep you entertained 😊. As always put the kettle on, get those feet up and enjoy the read!

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

My best wishes to you all from me and everyone on our Board.

It's great that we are starting to get some relaxations in the Covid19 lockdown rules. I'm certainly looking forward to getting a haircut! But I know how difficult things have been and have felt for so many people over three long months. I do want to thank you all for how flexible you've been in helping us to adapt to these strange times.

The restrictions we've all been living with have sharply increased the demand for services like ours and at the same time put some barriers in our way. But you've found ways around these and I am so impressed by the extra support many of you have been offering and the new volunteers who've come forward to offer their help. Our staff have all had to move to working from their homes and this has brought all kinds of challenges. I do appreciate how difficult this has been and thank you for continuing to work so well in these strange circumstances. This has unavoidably brought some delays in responding to messages and phone calls and I do apologise for this.

They say it's an ill wind which blows nobody any good and I think some good things will come out of what we've all been living through. It's been heart-warming to hear of all the local groups which have sprung up to help with things like shopping, checking on people who live alone and offering social support. I hope and do think

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

that some of these will keep going after this immediate problem has passed. There must be many people who have become volunteers for the first time and I do believe many will want to continue.

I hope you are all managing to keep well and continue to do so. Thank you so much for all you are doing.

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

Hello everyone. It's been a strange year so far and we've really missed having our usual get-togethers for Volunteer's Week, Carer's Week and Mental Health Awareness Week. We hope you enjoyed the celebratory posts on our Facebook page, and for those of you who don't do social media, we know that the Sunshine Packs and Carer's Packs that we sent out were enjoyed by everyone.

Here are a few of the comments and messages that we got back from recipients, but there were too many to include them all in here! We truly appreciated each and every one.



The word search went down so well that we've done another one for this edition of the Wee Blether too, with a summer theme, as hopefully we'll all be able to get out and about a bit more in the very near future as the Scottish Government start to relax the travel restrictions a little more.

There have been a lot of new referrals this year and we now have more than 60 people on our waiting list. In the current situation, we don't want to close our waiting list (as we have done in the past) but we are sorry if it's taking us longer than usual to process your referral or to find a suitable volunteer to match you up with. We've had a few people come forward as temporary volunteers, so some people are receiving calls during the lockdown period, and a number of our existing volunteers have asked to have another match to help with the waiting list issues, so thank you from the bottom of my heart! I'd like to say a big THANK YOU also to the Big Lottery Community Fund who have given us six months extra funding for an additional part-time coordinator post, to try to help support us during this challenging period.

Thank you too, to the four volunteers who offered to help us with the final review of our new Volunteer Training Workbooks. Bill, Lisa, Kirsteen and Claire all gave some

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

brilliant feedback and suggestions, and the final edit is due to be completed any day now! We have had to postpone the next phase of work to design group training materials with the new workbook content, but we'll pick this up again in the future when it's a little less busy for all the staff.

We also managed to get some additional funding to help us through the COVID crisis, and thanks go to both the Corra Foundation and to the Hunter Foundation. With this new money we have been able to purchase some video equipment and are making some changes to our website, so that we can share some crafting and exercise videos on You Tube for you to enjoy whilst we are not able to have the WISH and Stepping Stones group meetings. If you are interested, speak to your coordinator and check out the Befrienders Highland website on [www.befriendershighland.org.uk](http://www.befriendershighland.org.uk) and let us know what you think of the changes.

In line with Scottish Government advice, we are asking all our volunteers and friends to continue their social contact through phone calls, texts, emails or letters rather than meeting face to face, even if you are meeting outdoors.

We hope to be able to re-start our face to face friendship meetings, within social distancing guidelines, in Phase 4 of the Scottish Government plan to ease out of lockdown. We have already started to think about increased cleaning and office precautions for Phase 4, but this is likely to be some way off just now. In the meantime, all of our staff continue to work from home, as they have done since the beginning of the lockdown. We are meeting virtually every week online, and are able to arrange video meetings with you if you prefer this to telephone calls.

The following charts summarise the current position that the Befrienders Highland Board have approved for our organisational response to the changes, although the final date for phase 4 is yet to be finalised.

In the meantime, if you have any concerns or worries about your befriending friendship, please do get in touch with your coordinator as usual, and they will work with you to try to find a solution.

	Phase 1 From 29 May 2020	Phase 2 From 19 June 2020	Phase 3 From 10 <sup>th</sup> July 2020	Phase 4 TBA
<b>Epidemic Status and Protections Advised</b>	High risk the virus is not yet contained. Continued risk of overwhelming NHS capacity without some restrictions in place.  Physical distancing requirements in place. Frequent handwashing and hygiene measures for all. Cough etiquette <del>to be followed</del> . Face coverings in enclosed public spaces, including public transport.	Virus <del>is not yet contained</del> but risk of spreading remains. Focus is on containing outbreaks.  Physical distancing requirements in place. Frequent handwashing and hygiene measures for all. Cough etiquette <del>to be followed</del> . Face coverings in enclosed public spaces, including public transport.	Virus <del>is not yet contained</del> Continued focus on containing sporadic outbreaks.  Physical distancing requirements in place. Frequent handwashing and hygiene measures for all. Cough etiquette <del>to be followed</del> . Face coverings in enclosed public spaces, including public transport.	Virus remains suppressed to very low levels and <del>is not yet contained</del> a significant threat to public health.  Physical distancing requirements to <del>be followed</del> on scientific advice. Frequent handwashing and hygiene measures for all. Cough etiquette <del>to be followed</del> . Face coverings <del>to be followed</del> in enclosed public spaces, including public transport.
<b>BHL Implications</b>	Offices remain closed. Occasional essential office visits by 1 staff member only, max 2x weekly. Staff continue to work from home. All <del>Face-to-Face</del> friendships continue by telephone, email or post only. All <del>Face-to-Face</del> groups are suspended until further notice.	Offices remain closed. Occasional essential office visits by 1 staff member only, max 2x weekly. Staff continue to work from home. All <del>Face-to-Face</del> friendships continue by telephone, email or post only. Staff planning to engage friends and volunteers in on-line group activities where possible.	Offices remain closed. Occasional essential office visits by 1 staff member only, max 2x weekly. Staff continue to work from home. All <del>Face-to-Face</del> friendships continue by telephone, email or post only. Staff engaging with friends and volunteers in on-line group activities where possible. /	Offices re-open with restrictions on numbers to ensure physical distancing, blended with staff working from home where possible. Video conferencing/telephone continues to be preferred method of assessment and review with friends and volunteers, engagement with other organisations and services but staff may resume <del>group-to-group</del> meetings with restrictions to ensure physical distancing. Face to <del>face</del> friendships can resume with restrictions to ensure physical distancing, with outdoor activities recommended if possible. Face to <del>face</del> friendships may continue by telephone, email or post if preferred by either party. Staff continue to engage with friends and volunteers in on-line groups activities, and socially distanced outdoor group activities <del>where possible</del> .  These guidelines <del>will be reviewed</del> <del>and updated</del> <del>as the situation changes</del> .



Finally, it is likely that we will have to have our AGM this year by video link, as it seems unlikely with Coronavirus restrictions that indoor gatherings of large numbers of people will be permitted. We still hope to celebrate the achievements of our long-service volunteers, and to give you the opportunity to ask questions, and hear updates from all our staff and board. We will send out further information nearer the time but meanwhile, please save the date in your diaries:

**Befrienders Highland AGM – Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 6PM**

**If you have any comments or questions for our Board or staff, that you would like to raise during our AGM, please submit them by 10<sup>th</sup> September to [admin@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:admin@befriendershighland.org.uk) or phone the office to leave a message; someone will call you back as soon as they can.**

**We may not be able to meet up as one large group, but we are still keen to hear your views, so please do get in touch.**

**Mental Health Service Update**

So, it is changed days since we did the Easter Wee Blether. At that time, we were about to face restrictions none of us had previously experienced and here we are three months further along and only just tentatively enjoying the beginning of the easing of these restrictions.

Sadly, due to Covid-19, we have had to suspend face to face meetings between volunteers and friends, and within the office, until further notice. We appreciate the impact this has had on people and have been doing our best, as a staff team, to contact people by phone more often to make sure they are ok. This has also been supported by our team of fabulous volunteers who have been checking in with their friends more regularly, which is greatly appreciated by them and by their coordinators. We have also been humbled by the number of enquiries we have had from people willing to volunteer during this pandemic to alleviate the loneliness and isolation people will be feeling whilst waiting for a full-time befriending match.

We are striving to continue our service to the best of our ability from a distance and very much look forward to the day when face to face meetings can recommence, as we really miss seeing our friends and volunteers.

This has been an exceptional and extraordinary time in everyone's lives, one that we could never have predicted, and we appreciate that following this period many people will need additional support to get back to some kind of normality. We want you all to know that we are here to support you and help you in any way we can.

Finally, we would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has pulled together during this hugely stressful and unprecedented period and we look forward to welcoming you to the office in the not too distant future, hopefully! Let us hope we can get some lovely sunny, summer weather to help brighten the days.

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





### **Mental Health Caithness - Catherine**

Catherine the Mental Health coordinator in Caithness has been contracted to work extra hours to respond with the demand for our service during the corona virus period.



She has been using this time to train new volunteers to try and reduce the mental health waiting list for friends waiting for a volunteer befriender. The good news is that three new befriending matches have been established and two new volunteers have come forward to support Befrienders Highland in the last few months, they are both going through the induction process and are looking forward to joining the team of

volunteers soon. Like all of our staff, Catherine is seen here working from home to keep continuity of service for everyone.

### **Memory and Carer Service Update**



Carers Week is an annual campaign to raise awareness of Caring. It aims to highlight the challenges our unpaid Carers face and to recognise the immense contribution Carers make each and every day to our families and communities across the UK.

This year, Carers Week was celebrated from 8th – 14th June and the theme was **‘Making Caring Visible’**. At Befrienders Highland we have found that during COVID19 it has been a particularly challenging time for many of

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

our Carers. Much of the support they rely on, such as day-care, lunch clubs and visits from friends and family, has been forced to cease during this time. This means many of our Carers are managing challenging caring roles on their own and, like the rest of us, they are feeling anxious and worried during this time of uncertainty. Our wonderful Volunteers at Befrienders Highland have really stepped up and are providing additional befriending calls to many Carers, along with the Coordinator who is also making more frequent calls to our Carers and Friends.

During Carers Week Befrienders Highland would normally bring together our Carers but obviously we have been unable to do that this year and we were struggling to think of ideas that could show our Carers just how much they are appreciated and recognised. A Carer mentioned to our Memory and Carer Coordinator, Carol, that he really enjoyed getting his twice weekly meal from a local community organisation and that it just helped not having to think about dinners on those days.

This got Carol thinking and she approached Graham Rooney, chef and owner of



Platform 1864 in Tain, to see if he could supply and deliver a special Afternoon Tea treat for our Carers. Graham was delighted to work together on this as he understood the pressures Carers can experience - Graham's Mum was a Carer for his Dad who had dementia. So, during Carers Week Graham delivered some lovely Afternoon Tea Hampers to all our wonderful Carers across Highland. The hampers included sandwiches, home-made sausage rolls, home

baking and scones with cream and freshly made jam. The feedback from Carers has been great with one Carer saying;

***"The tea was very filling, sandwiches, sausage rolls and cakes all delicious, and delivered by such a cheerful guy, he was lovely! So, thank you to you all, it was a lovely thoughtful gift! There's not much sunshine in my life just now, but that certainly brightened my day."***

We even made the papers and featured in The Ross-shire Journal and Inverness Courier. We certainly hope we raised awareness of Carers in Highland as well as brightening up our wonderful Carers' day.



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

### **Extra Contact could be Available**

Many of us have struggled during recent times, with everything being so uncertain and many of us feeling more cut-off and isolated. As a result of this, Befrienders Highland have relaxed our boundaries around strict once a week befriending contact.

Currently many of our matches are in phone contact a few times a week and this has certainly helped during lockdown. However, additional contact will only happen if the Volunteer and Friend / Carer agree and it is suitable for all parties and Coordinators should be made aware. So if you feel you would benefit from additional contact, or if you are a Volunteer and are able to provide an additional phone-call to your Friend / Carer please let your Coordinator know.

### **A Warm Welcome to Jo**



I'm Jo, the newest appointed member of the board. So to tell you little bit about me, my love for the Highlands sparked my move here just over 13 years ago.

My passion for the area lead me to my career in hospitality and tourism as well as my hobbies of hill walking and finding hidden gems, that usually involve trees and waterfalls, and taking lots of photos of them!

This keeps me busy in my spare time, but I am now hoping to use some of that time to support the wonderful team and board at Befrienders Highland. Next year I am taking on a fund raising challenge by walking the West Highland Way and Great Glen Way back to back!



## **Art Packs by Post, developed by Creativity in Care**



The Hunter Foundation Covid19 Funding has enabled us to buy some art packs which can be sent out to you by post to help keep you occupied whilst you are having to stay at home more. Numbers are limited, so first come, first served!

Here's what Karrie at Creativity in Care has to say about the Art Packs, and there are a few photos to illustrate contents of some of the available kits:

*"The creative kits have been developed with people living with a wide range of long term conditions."*

*Our creative work is all about letting go of the idea of right and wrong art... and simply giving things a go, because that is where the therapeutic benefit, fun and surprises are.*

*You do not need to be an artist to be creative. More than 75% of people we have worked with said they could not do anything creative. But they could...and they did. All our exhibitions have started*



*with one mark on the page and been full of work by 'first-time-artists'.*



*You do not need any experience of art to give these kits a go. The easy step-by-step guidelines come with all the materials to create something meaningful. We focus on the creative process (regardless of the outcome) because it is important to stimulate the brain, and creative activities have been shown to improve wellbeing and brain health.*

*The Creativity In Care team have thoroughly enjoyed transforming the creative workshops into these postal kits. We are delighted that Befrienders Highland have been able to buy these creative kits and we would love to hear how you get on with them. We are making creative kit videos and are also*

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

*running some online workshops. Please check our Facebook Page (Creativity In Care) for more details of the YouTube links."*

The team at Creativity in Care hope to upload some instructional videos to their YouTube Channel in the coming months, so keep a look out and subscribe to their channel if you like video tutorials and want more inspiration. Please speak to your coordinator if you are interested in receiving one of the art packs.

### **The First Step**

With restrictions starting to ease we will hopefully soon be able to meet up outside in larger numbers. If you would like to get out in the fresh air and go for a walk with others, then attending one of the locally organised walking groups could be the answer. Meeting up for a walk and talk is a great way to meet people and get active in a supported environment. Getting some gentle exercise with company can help improve our health and wellbeing immensely.

There are several group walking opportunities around Inverness and the surrounding area, for further information on these have a look at our 'Getting Active' website page (see link below) or contact your coordinator for options.

<https://www.befriendershighland.org.uk/links/getting-active>

According to the NHS, "Walking is a simple, free way of getting more physically active and is ideal for people of all ages and fitness levels. It is easy to build into your daily routine and does not require any special equipment.

As well as many mental and physical health benefits, walking can help you feel part of your community and reduce loneliness and isolation.

Many people do not think of walking as being exercise. However, you do not need to go to the gym, go swimming or play sports to get the benefits of being active. Walking is a great way of reaching the recommended level of physical activity we need to stay healthy."

So, if you feel you are ready to get more active and would like to start in a friendly, supported environment, take the first step, and get in touch with a local walking group.

## **2021 Calendar**

It's that time again! We are looking for photographs for next year's BHL calendar and have chosen the theme of **Pets and Garden Visitors**.

Please make sure the images are 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. On top of this, the image must be landscape.

We need all entries to be submitted to us by **Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> August 2020**, when they will be judged by a panel of 'experts' to decide which 12 will appear in our 2021 calendar. We can't wait to see all your lovely photos!

Please submit entries by email to Sarah at [admin@befriendershighland.org.uk](mailto:admin@befriendershighland.org.uk)

To help us save money on postage, if you are able to drop into the office in Inverness or Wick to collect your 2021 calendar, that would be very helpful. This depends, of course, on where we all are with any possible ongoing social distancing restrictions. If you would please phone the office from Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December, to check that your calendar is ready and to arrange collection, so much the better.

If you are not able to get into one of our offices, do please let us know and we will, of course, send your calendar through the post.

## **My First Ultra, by Malcolm MacSween**

### **My journey from 'someone who runs' to 'ultra-runner'**

Where to start? I suppose the best place to start is looking at the reason 'Why?'

Why do I want to do this? Why do I want this to be part of my journey? I mean, it doesn't have to be, I'm choosing to do this, no one is forcing me to do it. The thought of it terrifies me, the pain and suffering involved in training for, and participating in, such an event fills me with fear and doubt, so why have I put myself forward for this?

I would not class myself as a 'runner', I think of myself as someone who runs (sometimes). To me, a 'runner' is someone who runs consistently, over a long period of time (years, or decades), I tend to go running sporadically. In the past, I have tried to be consistent with my running, but it usually only lasts a few months then something happens (insert one of any number of excuses) and I end up having a long layoff. This has been true of exercising in general, I would work really hard for a while, make some progress, then let it all slip away when I ceased training. My periods of inactivity were usually accompanied by eating and drinking all the things I would stay away from when I was training so it ended up being a double whammy of unhealthiness.

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

I have spent a fair bit of time learning about health and fitness, I studied Sports Therapy at College, then Sport and Exercise Science at Uni, I have Fitness Instructor and Personal Trainer qualifications, but all this knowledge and experience doesn't make you a fit, healthy individual, you actually have to apply what you've learnt to your daily life to become fit and healthy, and that's the hard part.

Recently, I have been focusing on behaviour change and I have been working (albeit rather slowly) towards creating a life with healthy choices at its core. I am not trying to be a high-level athlete; I am just trying to build a foundation of healthy habits that will allow me to enjoy life with my family and friends as I get older.

I suppose I have been working on this for a long time, experimenting with lots of 'healthy' choices and lots of 'not so healthy' choices through various stages of my life. I am on the wrong side of my forties now and my body's resilience to unhealthy choices is not as it was when I was younger so I cannot treat it in the same way without it having a noticeably negative impact. My hope is that having this challenge will encourage me to be consistent with my training, nutrition, and other lifestyle choices.

Over the years, I have come to the conclusion there are a few fundamentals of fitness that I need to work on consistently, or at least be mindful of, if I want to be the healthier older version of me that I have pictured in my mind. One of these fundamentals is moving, challenging myself is another. Knowing that I need to 'move' and 'challenge myself' I thought I would attempt something that would definitely do both.

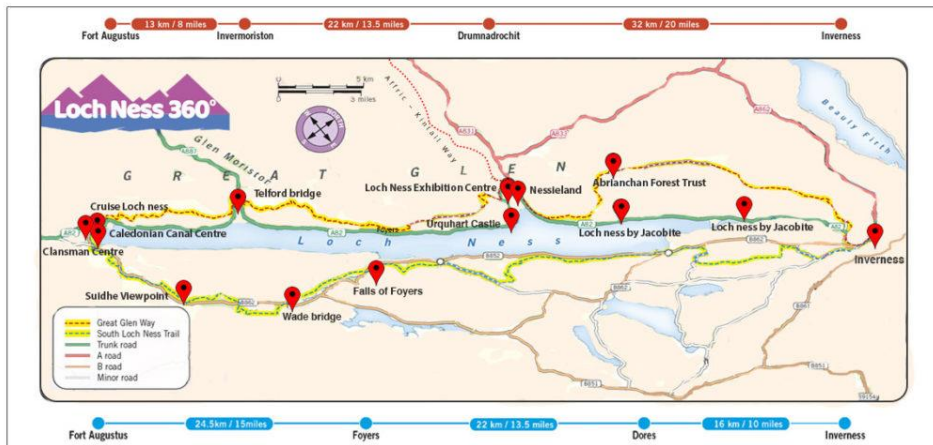
### **The Challenge**



I'm not sure it's the smartest thing I've ever done but I have gone and put my name down for the Loch Ness 360 Ultra Marathon (<https://lochness-360.com/lochnesschallenge/ultra-marathon>). This 80-mile ultra-

marathon around the iconic Loch Ness in the Highlands of Scotland has my stomach turning in knots every time I think about it, especially as it has to be completed in less than 24 hours. I have never done an ultra before, this will be my first. An ultra is considered any run over the 26.2-mile marathon distance, but it is widely accepted that ultras are normally 30 miles and over, with some of the most popular races being 50km, 50 miles, 100km, and 100 miles. The Loch Ness 360 Challenge is 80 miles (129km) so it's a fairly hefty distance to make my first ultra-marathon, but I am giving myself roughly one year to prepare for it so it should be doable (he says trying to convince himself).





From what I have read, preparing yourself mentally is as important as preparing yourself physically so I am going to try and keep that in mind while designing my training programme. I am not planning on following a typical ultra-marathon training schedule (not yet anyway, that will come later) but I am aiming to create a consistent healthy lifestyle that will slowly help to build me up to the point where I can take on this 80-mile challenge.

I have only run 20 miles or more nine times in my life, four of these were marathons (26.2 miles), two were completing [The Great Wilderness Challenge](#) (25 miles), and three were training runs of 20 miles. You can view my race log at <https://macsweenfitness.com/index.php/race-log/>, and read about my first marathon experience at <https://macsweenfitness.com/index.php/2020/05/03/my-first-marathon/>.

Over the coming year, I plan to share the highs and lows of tackling this sort of challenge, and any lessons I learn from it. I am going to record my training, recovery, and nutrition through articles and updates and post them here. I am going to explore training methods, techniques, and strategies to improve mental and physical fitness.

I am dedicating this challenge to Befrienders Highland; you can visit my fundraising page at the address below.

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/macsweenfitness-myfirstultra>



If you are thinking about taking on a challenge for Befrienders Highland, we would love to hear about it.

Take care and best wishes to you all ☺

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

## **Just Giving**

We would like to say a massive thank you to each and every one of you who have so kindly donated through our just giving page. It really does make a huge difference and doesn't go unnoticed 😊



## **Compose Your Own Limerick**

For those of you who may not know, a limerick is a kind of humorous verse of five lines, in which the first, second, and fifth lines rhyme with each other, and the third and fourth lines, which are shorter, form a rhymed couplet. For example:

‘There lived a wee mouse in the shed  
Who didn't like cheese but loved bread,  
Tom Cat always chased him  
But always was too dim  
To catch him, the mouse chilled instead!’

Try making up your own limerick starting with these two lines:

There once was a man called Old Larry  
Who never found someone to marry...

Feel free to send them into us, so we may share them and put a smile on people's faces – anonymity guaranteed, if that is your preference!



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

A little summertime word search quiz to keep you occupied whilst you have a cuppa....

S	F	S	E	S	O	R	G	N	I	L	D	D	A	P
E	U	W	Z	S	A	M	N	Q	W	S	X	J	C	I
I	N	A	D	Y	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	A	E	C
R	F	L	R	A	F	V	M	D	B	G	T	M	A	E
R	A	L	Y	D	H	N	M	M	G	J	U	M	I	C
E	I	O	L	G	S	C	I	N	C	I	P	A	O	R
B	R	W	P	N	O	I	W	U	Y	I	E	K	S	E
W	A	S	S	O	D	F	S	G	N	H	J	I	U	A
A	E	W	A	L	K	I	N	G	R	T	Y	G	N	M
R	A	S	D	F	B	G	N	I	H	S	I	F	S	G
T	H	U	N	D	E	R	S	T	O	R	M	H	H	J
S	A	S	E	M	A	G	D	N	A	L	H	G	I	H
K	A	L	M	N	C	S	E	I	G	D	I	M	N	B
P	R	O	I	U	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	S	E	Y
A	S	D	S	Y	E	R	P	S	O	F	G	H	J	K
E	R	W	O	H	S	E	L	S	I	K	C	A	L	B

Try to find the summertime words below hidden in the grid. They may be written forwards, backwards, diagonally, downwards, or going up! (Answers are at the back)

Beaches

Ice cream

Roses

Black Isle Show

Jam Making

Strawberries

Camping

Long Days

Sunshine

Fishing

Midgies

Swallows

Funfair

Ospreys

Swimming

Haar

Paddling

Thunderstorm

Highland Games

Picnics

Walking

Holidays

Rainbow

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

**“Find the best of you”**

*(Excerpt from a poem by Karen, who attended a Butterfly Conservation Course last summer)*



**When you visit Yarner Wood  
you create feelings  
that are tranquil, calm and good.  
Corridors of light show the way  
Bringing clarity for a more peaceful day.  
Flora and fauna greet you here  
giving precious moments  
to hold true and dear.  
A woodland stillness cleanses the soul  
Healing the heart  
to make you whole.  
So let nature nurture, and  
guide you through.  
And like the butterfly  
allow transformation and change  
gently find the best in you.**

Poem shared by our kind volunteer Claire, with permission and acknowledgement to:  
Butterfly Conservation, from their member magazine, Butterfly, Issue 134, Summer  
2020, part of an article “Butterflies in the Mind”.



### **Wee Blether is Going on the Net!**

For those of you who receive the Wee Blether by email, we have decided to upload it onto our website – [www.befriendershighland.org.uk](http://www.befriendershighland.org.uk)

We are keen to increase “traffic” to our website and it is hoped that by adding Wee Blether to it, our friends and volunteers who have access to the internet will follow the links to keep updated with the latest news.

After this edition of Wee Blether, therefore, those that receive it by email attachment will receive a one-line message telling them where to find it online.

For those of you who still receive hard copies in the post, we are happy to continue posting it to you – the same goes for those who receive a large print version – but we ask that if you are able to access the internet, you let us know to help us reduce our printing and postage costs. “Every little helps!”, as one supermarket keeps telling us!”

### **Increase in Mileage Rate for Volunteers’ Expenses**

The Board has decided to increase the mileage rate paid to volunteers, to reflect the guidance provided by HMRC.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020, therefore, volunteers may claim 45p per mile while doing voluntary work with Befrienders Highland.

Susan White - our Executive Director - adds that, “It’s best to bring BHL into line with HMRC guidance and other charities. Our volunteers do such fantastic work with our friends; it is important that BHL pays them the going rate for using their own cars.”

This 45p per mile rate is payable only up to 10,000 miles – not that anyone is ever likely to claim for such a huge amount of mileage! Sarah – our Administrator – thinks it best, however, to make the new policy absolutely clear!

If you have any questions relating to volunteer expenses, please contact Sarah and she’ll be happy to help.

## **Volunteer Training Opportunities**

During this pandemic we aren't able to get together for any group training, but there are some free resources which our volunteers might like to participate in as on-line training opportunities. We know this won't suit everyone, but for those who have a friendly computer, please read on!

Highland Third Sector Interface (HTSI) have a wide range of on-line courses available, which you can access for free through a secure link. The courses range from Safeguarding to Healthy Eating to Social Media Awareness and each module takes about 30 minutes to complete. There are brief quizzes to review your learning but no exams! Speak to your coordinator if you are interested in getting enrolled for the courses, and they will need to share your email address with HTSI to get you enrolled and started.

There is also a free Psychological First Aid (PFA) course available online, and on this course, you'll explore the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and what you can do to help people cope. The course will teach you the key principles of giving psychological first aid in emergencies, and has been produced by Public Health England and is based on international guidance from the World Health Organisation, United Nations and partners. You can sign up for the course using this web link if you are interested. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/psychological-first-aid-covid-19>

Please speak to your coordinator if you are interested in other training or courses, so that we can start planning for the future, when we are able to get together in small groups again.

### Answers to the Word Search

S	F	S	E	S	O	R	G	N	I	L	D	D	A	P
E	U	W	Z	S	A	M	N	Q	W	S	X	J	C	I
I	N	A	D	Y	R	A	I	N	B	O	W	A	E	C
R	F	L	R	A	F	V	M	D	B	G	T	M	A	E
R	A	L	Y	D	H	N	M	M	G	J	U	M	I	C
E	I	O	L	G	S	C	I	N	C	I	P	A	O	R
B	R	W	P	N	O	I	W	U	Y	I	E	K	S	E
W	A	S	S	O	D	F	S	G	N	H	J	I	U	A
A	E	W	A	L	K	I	N	G	R	T	Y	G	N	M
R	A	S	D	F	B	G	N	I	H	S	I	F	S	G
T	H	U	N	D	E	R	S	T	O	R	M	H	H	J
S	A	S	E	M	A	G	D	N	A	L	H	G	I	H
K	A	L	M	N	C	S	E	I	G	D	I	M	N	B
P	R	O	I	U	H	O	L	I	D	A	Y	S	E	Y
A	S	D	S	Y	E	R	P	S	O	F	G	H	J	K
E	R	W	O	H	S	E	L	S	I	K	C	A	L	B

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the Wee Blether....

Until next time, Stay Safe!

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