



# The Wee Blether

Winter 2021 Edition



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



I would like to wish you all the best as we approach Christmas and the New Year. As always, thank you all very much for all that you have done during another complicated year.

We had our Annual General Meeting a few weeks ago and, looking back on it, I realise how special what we have been doing as a service has been over both of the past two years. We have always been aware of the problems which can arise from social isolation. However, these have been heightened this and last year by the reductions in many health and social care services, such as day centres and home care, and the reduced (at times, no) opportunities for meeting up socially. There was a time when we could hardly leave home!

It has been very special to hear of all the extra things our volunteers and friends have been doing to try to make up for this, like extra phone calls and visits, shopping for people who couldn't get out, face/face visits for some people using our distance services. I have heard of many examples of actions like these and it makes me very proud to know about them. I would like to take an opportunity too to thank all our staff who have been working mostly from home, with the many inconveniences this involves.

We are just beginning to see the chances of restrictions easing and I do hope these work out. It's good to be able to approach the coming new year with hope. Whatever happens I know that, acting together, you have done a huge amount to make things better than they would have been without you. Thank you all so much.

Kind regards, David Stallard

# Word Search

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

Gingerbread

Evergreen

Blanket

Snowman

Gloves

Poinsettia

Frostbite

Festive

Cocoa

Scarf

Woodstove

Snowflake

Icicles

Bonfire

Hibernate

Pinecone

Skiing

Frosty

(Answers on page 12)

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**

Firstly, I do hope that you and everyone you care about is safe and well? I think we are all gradually getting more used to living with Coronavirus and the changes to our daily lives, or maybe you are still feeling more anxious in social situations?

At Befrienders, we are trying to let everyone make their own decisions and adjustments about social interactions in their own time. So, whilst some of our face-to-face friendships have now resumed, other friends and volunteers continue to enjoy each other's company by phone or through letter or email contact. My feeling is that we are not in a race or competition with each other, so this is just fine! During the lockdown periods we all slowed down and enjoyed the natural world around us much more, so let's continue to try to live this way for as long as we can, and travel at the speed we are most comfortable with.

Befrienders Highland are re-introducing some small indoor meetings over the winter. Numbers will be limited for social distancing, but we will be starting with our walking group in Inverness, and then offering some of our Annual Mince Pie events in various locations. Your coordinator will be in touch with details, and you may be allocated a time slot if we have a big response. We will also be holding a Christmas Quiz online, using Zoom, for those who would prefer this, on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December at 6.30pm. Please get in touch with your coordinator if you would like to take part and they will send the link and password nearer the time.

In the meantime, please enjoy the lovely photographs chosen for next year's calendar. There were so many fabulous pictures to choose from that the decision was really hard – at one point I wanted a year with 15 months!!! Congratulations to everyone who had their image chosen.

Kind regards, Susan



## Memory & Carers Update



Try and plan as much as you can in advance, particularly if the person you look after likes or needs routine.



Agree an approach – talk with your family and friends about how you're going to approach Christmas as well as discussing any worries or concerns you have. Everyone being on the same page (or as close as you can be) can help alleviate stress, reduce conflict and make the festive period run smoother.



Don't be afraid to ask for help. As a carer it's important you try and get a rest over Christmas too. If you've got friends and family who could help, even for a couple of hours, don't be afraid to ask them. Many people don't realise the impact caring can have but may be able to offer support if you explain.



Check Christmas opening times - some local and national services are limited over Christmas so you and the person you look after may find it harder to access support if you need it. Try and find out in advance which local services will be available. Think too about pharmacies and GP surgery opening times to make sure you've got all the medication you need to see you through to the New Year.



Stay warm and well - it's important for everyone to stay healthy and warm all through the winter but at Christmas, when services are not always available, it's worth taking extra care and being prepared.

**Support over the  
Christmas period**



**Alzheimer Scotland 24hr Dementia Helpline**

Tel: 0808 808 3000 Email: [helpline@alzscot.org](mailto:helpline@alzscot.org)

The 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline provides information, signposting and emotional support to people with the illness, their families, friends and professionals. The 24 hour Dementia Helpline is confidential, and you don't have to give your name if you would prefer not to.

**NHS Highland**

**Single Point of Contact**

Caithness - 01955 60 69 15

Sutherland - 01408 66 40 18

East Ross - 01349 85 31 31

Mid Ross - 01349 86 04 60

Lochaber - 01397 70 98 73

Inverness W - 01463 88 83 33

Inverness E - 01463 88 83 33

Nairn - 01667 42 27 02

Badenoch & Strathspey - 01479 81 26 18

Skye, Lochalsh & Wester Ross – 01471 82 01 74

**NHS 24**

**Call NHS 24 on 111.**

Call if you think you need A&E but it's not life-threatening

Your GP or dental practices are closed and you can't wait until they reopen

You need urgent mental health support

How to access NHS 24

They will assess and advise you on the next steps

**You should always contact 999 or go to the nearest A&E department in an emergency.**

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



Plan a Dementia Friendly Christmas - if the person you look after has dementia or memory loss, the festive period can cause them extra confusion and stress. Small changes can make Christmas as dementia friendly as possible for example:

Put decorations up gradually. Think about putting decorations up gradually over a few days so it doesn't alter the person's home and usual surroundings instantly.

Keep it simple.

Create a quiet room.

Reminisce about Christmases gone by.

Be flexible.

Be mindful of food (perhaps keep a supply of trusty favourites just in case).

**Carol and Allana would like to send good wishes to all our Friends, Carers and Volunteers over the Festive Season.**



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 Service Update**

So, the nights are drawing in and we are heading very quickly towards the festive season. As we do, please keep in mind people for whom the festive season isn't very festive at all, as it can be a difficult time of year for some.

We continue to support an increasing number of people, as they find their way through this lengthy pandemic, but we have been very lucky with the staff team we have and our Board and all of our volunteers that we have managed to keep our service going for another year.

We are delighted to get face to face befriending running again, which has been fantastic. Volunteers and Friends have been delighted to finally meet up again and have a bit of 'normality' back. We continue to monitor the Government's guidance and urge all our Friends and Volunteers to do the same.

As was mentioned in the summer edition of The Wee Blether, we still have a lengthy waiting list and for those of you on it we apologise for the length of time it's taking to match you with a suitable volunteer. Please be reassured that we haven't forgotten about you, but we do want to match you with someone we know you'll get along with. So, bear with us while we work our way through it.

Finally, we just want to wish you all the very best at this time of year and take care of yourselves.

*'The daylight's getting shorter,  
As autumn moves to winter,  
But the shortest day will soon be past  
For spring to come at last.'*

## **Caithness Service Update – Volunteer Support Group**

In a bid to improve our services and support our wonderful volunteers, some of the Caithness volunteers attended a peer support group and get-together for a coffee and a chat. They are seen here puzzling over some brain teasing activities.



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



## **Wednesday Group**

During the winter months our Wednesday walking group will be meeting at St Stephen's Church (see location details below) for some activity and chat in their church hall. Over the next few weeks the activities will include mobilisation and balance exercises, Decider Skills, goal setting, as well as the usual catch up with other group members. Friends and volunteers welcome.

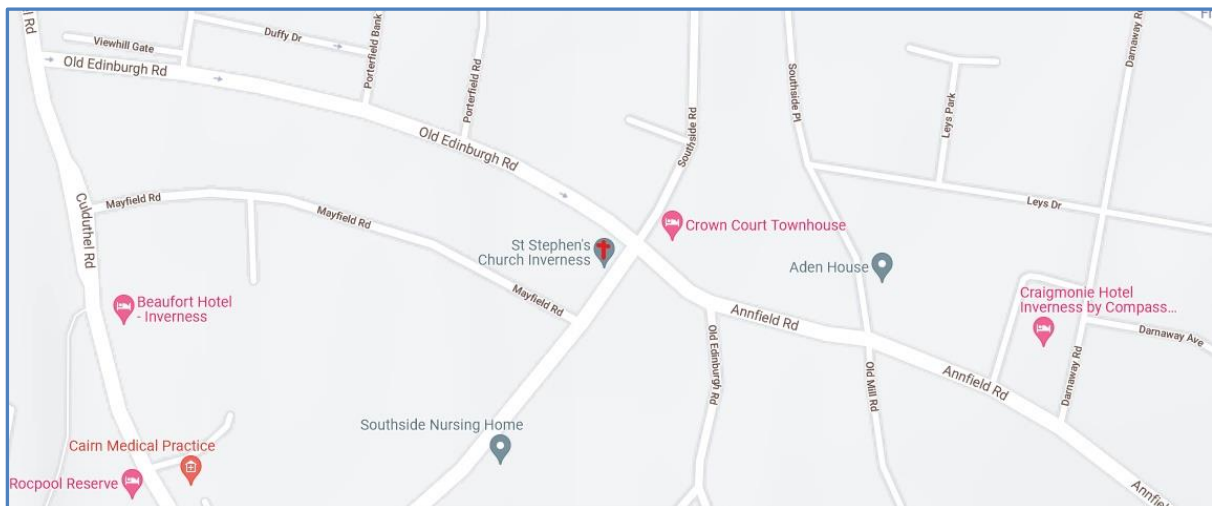
When - 12:30-13:30 every Wednesday

Where - St Stephen's Church

St Stephen's is at the junction of Old Edinburgh Road and Southside Road, opposite the Crown Court Hotel.

The address is:  
St Stephen's Church  
Southside Road at Old Edinburgh Road  
Inverness  
Inverness-shire  
IV2 4XA

Free parking is available in the church grounds and the surrounding streets (please don't block driveways).



If you have any questions about this group, or would like to book a place, please contact Malcolm -

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

**Mobile:** 07917 79 31 31 **Office:** 01463 71 27 91

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

## **Fundraising News**

As winter approaches, I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has raised money for Befrienders Highland this year, whether that's been through sporting challenges, fundraising events, corporate fundraising or through donations. We are very grateful for all money raised to support our work across the Highlands and, with a growing waiting list, additional money raised allows us to support more friendships.

You might be thinking of taking part in a fundraising event next year, please let us know as we will support you throughout any fundraising challenges. If you are already signed up or thinking about signing up to a sporting event we would love it if you would consider raising money for Befrienders Highland, we currently have four free places available for the Inverness Loch Ness Marathon or 10k which is taking place on the 2nd October next year. For more information on free places please get in touch.

There are some exciting sporting events taking place next year such as the Inverness 5k or Half Marathon on 13<sup>th</sup> March and Tough Mudder Scotland on 2<sup>nd</sup>/ 3<sup>rd</sup> July to name two, but if running isn't for you there are lots of other ways to get involved.

I am currently busy writing funding applications but I would love to recruit fundraising volunteers so we can continue to grow Befrienders Highland. It doesn't matter how much time you have available, whether it's 1 hour a month or more, I would love to hear from you.

Kind regards

Margaret



Shane & Ian  
Loch Ness Etape



Malcolm  
Loch Ness 360  
Challenge

### Fundraisers Hall of Fame

A huge thank you everyone who has fundraised for Befrienders Highland.

This is really appreciated at a time when fundraising is so difficult for us, and demand for our services continues to grow.

We know how important the support of befriending volunteers is for people who feel lonely and isolated, and this has been even more critical during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Your kindness is so appreciated, and will enable us to continue to provide befriending to those who really need a friend.



Jo  
West Highland Way &  
Great Glen way Hike



Alison Cocker  
Loch Ness Marathon

John Ross Loch - Ness Marathon ★ Murray Munro Middleton – Charity Head Shave ★ Emily Styles – Twitch Stream  
Bairds Malt – Walk to Pencaitland Site ★ UHI – Charity Leg Wax

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



## HAPPY CHRISTMAS MEMORIES

Dea ye mind o' Christmas lang ago,  
When we were only wee?  
There wurnea phones nur Laptoaps,  
In the presents 'neath the tree,  
We were happy wi' a jigsaw,  
An annual or a game.  
A dolly fur the lassies,  
An fur the lads a train.  
Sometimes if we were lucky,  
A big selection box.  
Then sometimes, no se lucky  
Yer granny's knitted socks!

~Anon~

## Answers!

### Word Search

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

Gingerbread

Poinsettia

Woodstove

Hibernate

Evergreen

Frostbite

Snowflake

Pinecone

Blanket

Festive

Icicles

Skiing

Snowman

Cocoa

Bonfire

Frosty

Gloves

Scarf