

Tigh Na Drochaid Garden



In the last newsletter we shared a photo of how the Tigh Na Drochaid garden in Portree was progressing and here is a picture of how it looks now and us all enjoying a picnic and some songs from Morag Henriksen and a tune from Stefan Davies. It is fantastic having this space to meet up in especially on days when the weather is as glorious as it was this day. We are very grateful to Portree and Braes Community Trust for taking this project on board, to Jenny Hey for managing the project and also for the help of the very enthusiastic group of volunteers.

Open Afternoon

On Friday 24th September we are planning, weather permitting, to have an open afternoon from 1pm-3pm for people with dementia, carers, friends and anyone interested in finding out more about our services. We are also keen to hear from people who may like to help with maintaining the garden. Bring your own picnic and enjoy a nice informal afternoon. If you would like to come along, please get in touch with Diane or Lesley to book a place as due to covid we are restricting the number of people in the garden at one time. You can find our contact details on Page 3.

Tigh Na Drochaid Resource Centre, Bridge Road, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9ER
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Online Groups

Most of our groups are continuing online and we have begun having some meeting outdoors and it has been great to be able to see some of you face to face again. We hope that we will be able to increase our face-to-face support, but this is all very dependent on the situation with covid going forward. We also recognise that due to the wide area that we cover, even after covid, it will not be possible for everyone to physically meet up or attend groups. The online/digital groups, emails and telephone support will still be an important part of our service going forward.

We have lots going on online at the moment so hopefully something for everyone to take part in and enjoy. Contact one of the team for more information about any of the groups.

Musical Memories – every Monday at 3.15pm

Join us and Home Farm Care Home on Skye for a sing along and tunes from guest musicians.



Activities Afternoon - every Tuesday at 2pm

People living with Dementia and carers are welcome to join Diane and Eleanor for digital activities, including quizzes, music and other therapeutic activities and maybe even learn a little bit of Gaelic some weeks. Some afternoons, we will join with SEALL at Home for an online concert with local musicians.

Online Bingo and Doggie Bingo – every Wednesday at 11am

Every week we have a different theme and on the first Wednesday of the month we are joined by the Dementia Dogs project and one of the dogs will select the numbers for us or host a fun Scavenger Hunt game.



Carer's Drop In - every Thursday at 11am

For people caring for someone living with Dementia, join us for a virtual cuppa and a chat with peers.

Online Ceilidh – Every Friday at 11am

Join us for a great ceilidh. Sing along at home if you like or just sit back and enjoy the songs and tunes. All welcome to bring an instrument, sing a song, recite a poem or tell a story.



Silver Linings –Wednesday 8th and 22nd at 2pm

Different speakers on different topics will join us each time. Our next session is on 8th September and we'll be joined by John and Audrey from HighlandLIT to read some poems – **please do get in touch and let us know if you have a favourite poem you'd like to hear them read out.** On the 22nd we have a talk from NHS Highland about Telecare.

We'll Meet Again Café - third Thursday of the month at 2pm

A great get together with friends from Glasgow and across the Highlands.

Gaelic Group – Cothrom cabadaich anns a' Ghàidhlig - the last Wednesday of every month - a chance for Gaelic speakers from West Highland and beyond to get together online for a chat. We also hope to add in some extra sessions with Gaelic singers and sometimes we'll be joined by children from the Gaelic schools around West Highland.



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Contact Information:

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Helpline. Our 24 Hour Helpline is always available for advice, support and someone to talk to. Tel: 0808 808 3000 Email: helpline@alzscot.org

You can also find a range of advice and support for managing during the coronavirus pandemic on our website at: <https://www.alzscot.org/information-during-coronavirus>



Annual Conference 2021



Our Annual Conference will take place on World Alzheimer's Day on Tuesday 21 September. This year's conference will be held digitally, and sessions will be recorded for access post-event. We will also be hosting a series of workshops, webinars and drop-in sessions between Wednesday 22 – Friday 24 September. Please note that this year we have taken the decision to waive the fee - you can register for a place here:

<https://www.alzscot.org/alzheimer-scotland-annual-conference-2021>

The theme of this year's conference is **'Moving forward together - what matters to people with dementia, families, carers and practitioners, now and in the future'**. As part of this year's event we will be joined by the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care, Kevin Stewart MSP, and Scotland's National Clinical Director, Professor Jason Leitch. This is an opportunity for the Minister and Professor Leitch to hear from you about what matters now and in the future. Find out more details on how you can contribute here: <https://www.alzscot.org/alzheimer-scotland-annual-conference-2021> or contact us on 01463 711707.

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Sunny (or otherwise) Lochaber News from Eleanor



It's been a long hard 18 months when we have all been restricted by the Covid-19 Pandemic, however, things are easing up and we are all looking forward to when we can meet up in person and do all our exciting activities again. One thing that we have managed to do however, with the blessing of West Highland College UHI, is hold a few outdoor picnics at the back of the college using their picnic benches. On the first one we made bird feeders with apples and nuts and hung them on the trees. It was a wee bit windy and part of the fun was trying to stop the plastic table cloths blowing away in the wind!! It was just lovely to see people again in person.

We are still offering all our digital groups from Online Bingo every week with a different theme and once a month being run by the Dementia Dog, to online carers groups and activity afternoons. A couple of recent things we have added is "Art in the City", an online collaboration with Edinburgh Museums. Once a month we hook up with the Edinburgh group and discuss various aspects of art. This month, they will talk to us about artworks related to the visit of George IV to Edinburgh in 1822 (very timely as the 200th anniversary is coming up next year!). Another new collaboration is with our colleagues in Fife who run a weekly Football Memories session on a Tuesday afternoon. This is a really fun session so if you are at all interested in football get in touch with me and I will hook you up.

Finally, do you remember the Scarf? Who could forget it?

Lots of people very kindly knitted or crocheted 12" squares for us which we combined into one 450' long scarf. We had hoped to take the scarf on tour around the West Highlands but unfortunately once again Covid 19 intervened and all we managed to do was take it to the Glenfinnan Monument on World Alzheimer Day last September and dress Prince Charlie in it! It had always been our intention to eventually disassemble the scarf and reassemble it as blankets. With the way the world is looking at the moment there is going to be a need for blankets for all the people who have been displaced from their homes so we are now asking if you would be interested in taking 25 of the squares and sewing them up into a blanket which you could either return to me or take them yourself to a centre caring for refugees. If you let me know I will bundle them up and send them to you.



Please continue to take care and look after yourselves and if you would like to join any of our online groups or would be able to make a blanket please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Eleanor Brown

Community Activities Organiser,
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Message from Christine

Hello from Sunny Ullapool,

We have been so lucky with the weather recently.

The sunshine is stretching our Summer and recharging the batteries.

It's lovely to be able to sit in the Garden and enjoy the flowers we've planted in our pots before the chillier days set in.

I just wanted to share my lovely Sunflowers that magically appeared!dropped on target by the many birds that have visited my feeder.

Nature is wonderful and never ceases to amaze and it's lovely to take time to appreciate the little things.

Let's get out there and find more treasures like this.

Does anyone else have a wee nugget that has made your day?

Christine

Link Worker

Wester Ross.



PERSONAL LISTENERS

Personal listeners can be useful when communicating with people who have a hearing loss and use spoken communication but do not have a hearing aid. Only about 1/3 people who could benefit from a hearing aid use one. In hospital situations, people may not have their hearing aid(s) with them. Different types are available. One example is the Crescendo which consists of a microphone, amplifier and stethoscope-type headset.



<https://www.connevans.co.uk/product/17545128/91C608/Crescendo-60-8-assistive-listener-with-Headset-and-Neck-Loop>

There are now smartphone apps available to aid communication. For a list see <https://www.hearinglink.org/living/loops-equipment/useful-apps-for-hearing-loss/>

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Message from Caroline

Hello everyone

The smell of autumn is in the air, morning mists but glorious evenings, ripe jewel bright rowan berries. (one day I will make rowan jelly!). What a busy summer it's been! We have all been emerging tentatively from our imposed restrictions, leaving the safety of our own wee nests, getting back to seeing our friends and families in our own quiet ways. It feels like we are chicks leaving the nest, opening our wings and waiting, waiting for what comes next..... We have had opportunities to reminisce with friends, get out walking a little more and trying to use those "dormant muscles"!!



Evening walks. Puppy dancing around.
Smell of Autumn in the air
Not an ending but a new season
beginning.....

Lovely butterflies I spotted this morning in the
lovely autumn sunshine.

What type is this one? it a peacock butterfly?

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Sitting on the pavement playing (flat surface) and very few cars back in early 1950's and having to keep clear of drain hole grills!

I was reminded of a lovely website by the BBC Rmarc; <https://remarc.bbcrewind.co.uk/>

This is a super site which is divided into Theme or Decade and hosts lots of lovely wee 2-3 minute films along with lots of pictures going back. One such film reminded me of my first job in local shop manning the single petrol pump and cars having their fuel inlet at the back of car and when petrol was 74 pence per gallon!!

I was speaking with a gentleman recently and it got me thinking to "The Games we Played" -

Marbles, Jacks, Catching bees and sticklebacks. He told me of another game he played : "Touchwood burners". This involved lighting old sticks and running down street with a trail of smoke billowing out behind ! Not something that children would do nowadays I think! Health and Safety and all....

A Timely Reminder About Driving Licence Renewals

HSCN member, Pat, has asked us to remind people to check your driving licence expiry date carefully! People over 70 have to renew their driving licence every 3 years.

"I got a bit of a shock when a friend said that, due to a recent birthday, my driver's licence had probably run out. Indeed it had. My passport is also not valid, which has complicated things. I can't renew it online. This necessitated a visit to the local post office to get the necessary form, they don't stock them, Broadford does but had run out, so over the Bridge to Kyle, where I did get one and a new photo." Pat warns that she didn't get any reminder to renew her licence.

Due to Covid 19, if your licence expired between 1 February and 31 December 2020, it was automatically extended for 11 months, with the extension starting from the date your licence was due to expire. However, if your licence expired on or after 1 January 2021 **you need to renew it as normal**. Please note that postal renewals are experiencing considerable delays.

You will not receive a new licence as part of the automatic extension. You'll only get a new licence when you renew it. This can be done online any time before the extension ends. Even if your licence or entitlement to drive in the UK has been automatically extended, you must renew your licence before you can [drive abroad](#).

For more information on driving licence requirements visit <https://www.gov.uk/renew-driving-licence-at-70> or call DVLA Driving Licence Enquiries Telephone: 0300 790 6801

A further gentle reminder is for those with cars coming up for a first M.O.T. You very well may not receive any prompts to get this done either— so it's good to check when it's due.

Caroline Gordon, Link Worker for
Lochaber



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Message from Lesley

High Tea

We have, with thanks to the Highland Council Resilience fund, the opportunity in Ullapool, Fort William and Skye to have a lovely reason to get dressed up and when restrictions allow, meet up and enjoy the company of others for a lovely High Tea. Looking forward to meeting you for a nice strupac and a blether as soon as we are able.



Tigh Na Drochaid Garden



As well as a lot of lovely picnics happening, we were blessed with lots of sunshine, but this took its toll on all the lovely plants. So, a rescue request for water off the local fire service was called for. They rose to the occasion one evening whilst on their training evening, filling all our water butts!

Advice for Carers – Your Health

Caring can have a significant impact on both your physical and emotional health. When you're caring for someone else, it's easy to overlook your own personal needs, but it's important to stay as healthy as possible

Tell your GP that you are a carer and how this affects your ability to care for your own health. They may be able to offer advice and support such as:

Discussing ways to help you manage your own long-term health needs and episode of ill health, if your caring responsibilities make it difficult to get to the GP surgery.

Arranging appointments for you and the person you are caring for at the same time to avoid having to visit the surgery twice.

Arranging for repeat prescriptions to be delivered to your local pharmacy to save you picking them up from the GP surgery.

Providing supporting letters and information to help you and the person you care for access some benefits

Involving you, where appropriate, in discussions about medical treatments and a care plan for the person you care for, so you can feel more confident as a carer.

Also, carers of people with serious or ongoing health conditions may qualify for a free annual flu jab.

It's important to look after yourself by trying to eat healthily, stay active and get enough sleep. This can be difficult when you have caring responsibilities. So tiny steps will help you.

Take care Lesley
Lesley Hellon, Dementia Adviser

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Message from Diane

Now that the Tigh na Drochaid garden is ready to use, we've been having weekly meet ups in the garden for a picnic and a chat. The weather is not always the best but we do have some shelter in the wooden gazebo. On 11th of August SEALL arranged for us to be joined by Skye musicians Peter Morrison and Seamus MacLennan for some tunes and entertainment. The weather was very wet that day but luckily we were able to borrow a canvas gazebo from Portree and Braes Community Trust to put up for us to shelter in.

We plan to keep going with the picnics as long as the weather permits. On 1st of September, as shown on the front cover of the newsletter, we were joined by Morag Henriksen with some songs to listen to or join in if you like. Morag joins us every week at our Friday ceilidh and it was great that she was able to meet some of you again in person!



We also had a special little visitor to the garden brought along by one of our carers, Reggie the hedgehog!



Gaelic – the language of the Highlands - Gàidhlig - cànan na Gàidhealtachd

You may have noticed that we now have a monthly online Gaelic Conversation group in our schedule. The group was set up for folk living with dementia, their carers and friends to be able to come together and chat in their own language. We have Margaret Nicolson, native Gaelic speaker with Skye and Lewis connections joining us to lead the chat. Margaret is also a fantastic singer with the Gaelic folk group Na h-Òganaich and she often treats us to a song too. Children from Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh (Portree Gaelic Primary School) also have been joining us for chat and music. Going forward we hope children from the Gaelic schools in Lochaber and Ullapool will also come along sometimes. If you are a Gaelic speaker living anywhere in the Highlands, Islands and beyond we'd love for you to join us.

We are also working on future plans to have some bilingual Gaelic and English sessions and the opportunity for non-Gaelic speakers to learn more about the Gaelic culture and learn some Gaelic words and phrases.

Do please get in touch if you want to know more and are interested in joining in.

Diane Smith, Community Activities Organiser, Skye and Lochalsh

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Message from Mags

Outside in the Sunshine

This beautiful spell of weather we have been experiencing has got me thinking how beneficial getting outside in nature can be for everyone.

I have found this really interesting article online which I would like to share with you:

<https://dementia.stir.ac.uk/design/virtual-environments/importance-design/importance-getting-outside>

There is good evidence that being outside is essential for our physical and mental health.

Vitamin D is vital for building strong bones and muscles, and its deficiency is most commonly associated with rickets. It is also associated with an increased risk of malignancies as well as several chronic inflammatory and autoimmune diseases. Its deficiency is due mainly to lack of exposure to sunshine.

Daylight too is important and is equally effective as sunlight in regulating our body clock and helping us sleep at night.

Getting outside also allows us to exercise in fresh air at the same time as benefitting from sunshine and daylight – and here again, research has shown that the health of people with dementia who spent as little as 10 to 15 minutes of activity a day outside improved significantly. Walks outside, 'green' walks, reduce stress levels and increase people's self-esteem, allowing for activity and sociability as well as contact with nature – whereas a walk in a shopping mall may show no improvement in mood at all!



Of even greater significance for people with dementia, evidence has indicated that keeping the brain exercised and active contributes towards preventing or lessening cognitive decline. Higher levels of aerobic fitness are associated with greater hippocampal volumes in elderly humans and larger hippocampal volumes translate to better spatial memory function. Studies have shown that planned walking three times a week for people with Alzheimer's disease resulted in significant benefits in their ability to communicate. In addition, being in bright light has a modest benefit in improving one's cognitive and non-cognitive symptoms of dementia.

There are so many things too that we can do outside – active and messy activities such as potting, planting, digging, pruning, harvesting produce and looking after animals (chickens, rabbits). There is such satisfaction in seeing things grow, through our own efforts.

And for those who are less active – just watching and enjoying the activity of others and the daily changes of light, shade, sun and clouds, growth of plants, wildlife and so on is just as beneficial. Eating outside, reading a newspaper (the light is so much brighter outside for old eyes to see well), enjoying a cup of tea and chatting or being on one's own are all so very life-affirming – yet cost little or nothing. All that needs to be done is to create a safe, secure garden with seats to sit on and things to do – and an easy and visible way out to the garden and back in again.

In short, there is no better place to be on a nice day, than outside – and it is good for us all – and especially for people with dementia for whom so many choices in life can no longer be made.

Mags Bain, Link Worker, Skye and Lochalsh

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Nick inspires us to get out and walk for Scotland's Memory Walk

Nick Gardner aged 81 from Wester Ross has been inspiring people across the country and beyond since 2020, when he began his extraordinary challenge to climb all 282 Munros in Scotland over 1200 days. Nick set himself the challenge in honour of his wife Janet and to fundraise for Alzheimer Scotland and the Royal Osteoporosis Society. To date, Nick has completed a staggering 120 Munros with plans to climb Ben Lomond over Scotland's Memory Walk weekend on the 18th-19th September.



Nick told us about his and Janet's life before her diagnosis:

"Janet and I met in 1971, and she was a friend long before we fell in love. Both our sets of children went to the same school and, when we met, we realised just how much we had in common. We had similar sets of values for conservation and both wanted to live a simple life in the country growing our own fruit and vegetables. It was these similarities that led us to fall in love in 1974.

We had 30 years of living the dream. Janet and I have had an unbelievable relationship; we genuinely never argued. For all those years, in our remote surroundings, we built the life we had spoken so much about. Our croft has 10 acres of land and, over many years, we planted 10,000 trees and developed our own vegetable garden.

Of course, I also got to embrace my hobby of climbing. That was one thing we didn't do together – Janet loves walking across the coast and spotting wildlife whereas I feel most at home in the mountains."

In 2016, Nick began noticing changes in Janet's behaviour. He shared some of their experiences:

"About 5 years ago, I started to notice something was wrong with Janet. It started off slowly; little odd patterns of behaviour and your automatic reaction is to try and stop that behaviour because, to begin with, you don't realise it's something bigger. From Janet's point of view, her behaviour was fine and from my point of view it wasn't – so at points it was a vicious circle and we were at a bit of a stalemate. Eventually her behaviour was growing harder to cope with; she would want to go for a walk in the middle of the night and displayed some aggression but up until then she was the most gentle person I had ever met. You do at the time what you think is right but in truth we needed help – we just didn't know it.

Janet was eventually diagnosed with vascular dementia and, whilst we did have some support, we were so remote that it was difficult to access what we really needed. It's only now that I know how much Alzheimer Scotland would have been a benefit to us both."

Unfortunately, Janet deteriorated and by Christmas 2019 she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital in Inverness and when the pandemic hit, this put visiting to a halt.

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“Janet is my best friend – the loss of her from our home has been unimaginable and not being able to see her, and then eventually only getting to see her through a window, was so upsetting. Not just for me, but for her too.”

Now residing in a care home close to home, Nick visits Janet every day when he is not climbing.

“Janet can’t talk anymore but she knows who I am and, whilst it’s difficult to see her this way, it’s not as difficult as it was not seeing her.”



Nick’s challenge has been a “lifesaver” for him and allows some much-needed respite from his daily worries.

“Because Janet didn’t like hillwalking, I don’t have any memories attached on the hills with her. Whereas, at home, her memories are everywhere and that’s so painful. Being up a hill, in the fresh air, with the stunning countryside is just an antidote to the loneliness and upset I feel plus it’s given me the opportunity to raise thousands of pounds for two wonderful charities who mean so much to me, and Janet.”

Scotland’s Memory Walk is a chance to visit the outdoors, enjoy the scenery and sights in your local area and raise vital funds and awareness of dementia, all whilst remembering and honouring our loved ones. Whether it’s climbing a Munro like Nick, a coastal walk like Janet used to love or a place that’s special to you, the distance doesn’t matter. You can make a real difference to people like Nick and Janet by taking part in Scotland’s Memory Walk.



**Alzheimer
Scotland**
Action on Dementia



We're asking you to join us across Scotland and beyond to walk and fundraise with friends and family. This year it's **your walk, your route, your way**.

Join us over the event weekend in your own special Memory Walk location and you'll be uniting with thousands of other amazing supporters.

Take part as an individual or create a team, whichever you do, every penny raised stays in Scotland. If you are unable to take part on these dates we would still love you to sign up and complete your walk on a date that works for you. Can't take part but still want to support us? You can still be part of Scotland's Memory Walk by donating to our campaign.

For more information, please go to www.alzscot.org/memorywalk

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