

West Highland

Newsletter



Spring 2022

Artwork by The Dolphin Arts Group in Ullapool



Tigh Na Drochaid Resource Centre, Bridge Road, Portree, Isle of Skye, IV51 9ER
Tel: **01478 613450** | Email: **lhellonl@alzscot.org** | Website: **www.alzscot.org**

Alzheimer Scotland - Action on Dementia is a company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland 149069. Recognized as a charity by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator, no. SC022315 160 Dundee Street, Edinburgh, EH11 1DQ 0131 243 1453

Online Groups

Most of our groups are continuing online though we have had some small groups meeting in person. 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 online or to find out about any in person 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.



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 – monthly on a Wednesday at 2pm

Different speakers on different topics will join us each time. Our next session is on 2nd March and will be from the Woodland Trust. More details will be sent out nearer the time.



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 – We now have

two sessions a month. Usually, the last and second last Wednesdays of the month - a chance for Gaelic speakers from West Highland and beyond to get together online for a chat. The first session in the month is led by Anne Martin, a lovely Gaelic singer from North Skye and Anne introduces her songs in English as well as chatting in Gaelic so this session is for learners, non-Gaelic speakers as well as native speakers to enjoy. The second monthly session is led by Margaret Nicolson, who lives in Glasgow but has strong connections to Skye and the Western Isles. Margaret also sings and was in the band Na h-Òganaich. Sometimes children from the Gaelic schools in Portree and Lochaber join us too at the sessions for chat and songs and tunes. These groups are supported by Bòrd Na Gàidhlig and Highland Council.



As well as the above groups, we can also help you to join other sessions run by partner organisations.

SEALL @ Home Concerts - Skye based Arts project SEALL @ Home have regular concerts with local musicians available on Zoom. You can find out more about SEALL @ Home here: <https://www.seall.co.uk/what-we-do/community-work/> and we can forward the links to any of their events to you.



Screen Memories are a charity who create a fun and stimulating environment for all involved, using film clips, still images, memorabilia and audio. Their groups are inclusive and have shown to be beneficial to those living with dementia, as well as carers, people who are lonely, socially isolated or just enjoy getting involved with a community who have a shared interest. Screen Memories and Juke Box Days are run on Zoom on Tuesdays. You can find out more about Screen Memories here: <https://www.screenmemories.org.uk/> and we can forward the links for these events to you.



Our Contact Information:

West Highland Office in Portree (diverted to Diane Smith) 01478 613450

Lesley Hellon, Dementia Adviser, email: LHellon@alzscot.org, mobile: 07825 975557

Diane Smith, Community Activities Organiser based in Portree, email: DianeSmith@alzscot.org, mobile: 07825 608057

Mags McGlynn, Dementia Link Worker for Skye and Lochalsh, email: MBain@Alzscot.org, mobile: 07774 558406

Caroline Gordon, Dementia Link Worker for Lochaber, email: CGordon@Alzscot.org, mobile: 07788 294947

Eleanor Brown, Community Activities Organiser based in Lochaber, email: EBrown@Alzscot.org, mobile: 07920 868848

Christine McCallum, Dementia Link Worker for Wester Ross, email: CMcCallum@Alzscot.org, mobile: 07920816599

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>



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Action on Rights Team

Our Action on Rights team, funded by the Scottish Government, was set up in March 2021 to help carers, families, and friends of anyone living in Scotland's care homes. To date, we have had over 240 referrals. Among other matters, the team can support you:

- To have meaningful contact between those living in care homes and their families and friends of care home residents; and where necessary and appropriate to liaise directly with care homes staff responsible for visiting arrangements to facilitate visits
- To be better informed about care home visiting guidance, local public health restrictions and support available
- To make better, more informed decisions and have better dialogue with care homes around visiting

You can reach the Action on Rights team via our 24 hour freephone Dementia Helpline on 0808 808 3000 or email actiononrights@alzscot.org

Read more: <http://www.alzscot.org/action-on-rights>

“ Following the call with the Action on Rights team I then asked to resume essential visits to help the staff out, but more so help my dad and they agreed. How simple it was to ask when you have the confidence to do it. ”



Hello from Lochaber!

It feels like a long time since we were able to get together but hopefully with restrictions lifting, we should soon all be living almost normal lives again! We have started slowly introducing some face to face groups and will be looking to do more in the near future so as they say – watch this space.

I know some of you have been fortunate enough to receive a new Chromebook from the Connecting Scotland project but here is another opportunity for people to get a new Chromebook for a really reasonable price – it also does the planet good!



ILM Highland laptop refurbishment scheme

ILM Highland has launched a new service to refurbish unused and unwanted laptops – converting them into affordable, high-quality Chromebooks. They will sell the refurbished Chromebooks starting at £70 from the Alness store, with **plans to introduce online sales in the new year.**

Martin Macleod, CEO of ILM Highland, said “electronic items can have a much longer life beyond their initial use, with simple refurbishment and repairs. That’s why we’re delighted to be providing these refurbished Chromebooks, to ensure that laptops from across the Highlands do not end up in landfill. We welcome any donations of old laptops that may be suitable for conversion. Ideally, laptops should come with any cables and batteries to ensure they are suitable for upcycling.”

ILM Highland is a social enterprise, supporting vulnerable people in the Scottish Highlands to live at home – giving them greater independence and freedom.

To find out more about ILM Highland, and its new refurbished Chromebook project, please visit www.ilmhighland.co.uk or follow ILM Highland on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

In the last newsletter I mentioned our amazing scarf and how due to Covid we had been unable to take it “on tour” and asked for volunteers to take the scarf apart and re sew it into blankets which we would donate to the Lochaber Supports Volunteers project. Wow what an amazing response again – all the squares have now been sewn into blankets, here’s a couple of pictures (apologies for the quality of the photos, I’m not very good at it)



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One lady in Fort William has very kindly crocheted an array of baby blankets for us, here's just a couple.

So, a huge thank you to all of you who undertook to complete blankets for the refugees. I will be taking them into the Refugee Centre in February to look out for a mention in the local press.



We're all looking forward to the Springtime and being able to get out and about but in the meantime, we are still running a huge selection of online groups which you would be most welcome to join, just get in touch!

Until next time, please take care and stay safe.

Eleanor

Email: EBrown@Alzscot.org

Tel: 07920 868848

Update on Nick Gardner

'Climbing the Munros in 1200 days starting from age 80 while raising money and awareness for Alzheimer's and Osteoporosis.'



In our last newsletter we introduced Nick Gardner to you. Nick, who lives in Wester Ross, has been climbing Munros to raise funds for Alzheimer Scotland and the Royal Osteoporosis Society. His wife has Alzheimer's and Osteoporosis and it is Nick's goal to climb all 282 Munros in 1200 days. He has been busy over the winter so far and completed his 200th Munro on 5th December.

Nick's latest update on his Facebook page shows him having completed Meall a' Bhùiridh 1108m and Creise 1100m on 17th January from Glencoe Ski Centre. He has now completed 209 Munros in 548 days!

You can follow and support Nick's challenge on his JustGiving page here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/team/nicks-munro-challenge>

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Message from Lesley

Hello everyone. It's a new year but covid is unfortunately still with us and causing restrictions and difficulties. However, I do hope that the situation will improve this year and that we'll be able to have some regular meet ups in the community again. Last year, in November we were able to have a get together in The Cuillin Hills Hotel for High Tea and we were given a beautiful spread of food. This event was funded by the Highland Council and there has also been one at The Moorings in Fort William.

We also had a lovely get together at the Duisadale Hotel on Skye on Thursday the 10th of February and still have a couple more of these events lined up for Skye and Fort William.



It's good to talk, but sometimes hard to start

Remember that the signs and symptoms that are worrying you may not be caused by dementia at all but some other illness which could be treated. This makes it doubly important that these are checked out and treated appropriately.

If you have tried to start a conversation with someone about the symptoms or signs that are worrying you, you might have found that the person refused to talk, denied that there was anything wrong or got angry or upset. Other family members may also have disagreed with you about what to do, or even that there is anything to worry about. These are normal reactions but there are some techniques that other people have found worked for them to break down those barriers.

My Mum refuses to discuss my concerns with me

Sometimes people find it difficult to talk to people they know well. Don't be offended by this; sometimes we all find it easier to talk to a stranger than a close relative about personal worries or health problems.

What might help

Try asking gently why she doesn't want to talk to you and if there is anyone else that she might prefer to talk to. She might be more comfortable talking to a GP, minister or other religious leader, another relative or friend, or someone who has been through a similar experience. Sometimes skipping a generation helps, grandparents finding it easier to talk to their grandchildren.

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My husband won't accept that there is anything to worry about

He might be finding it difficult to accept that he may have an illness and deny there is a problem or that he needs help.

What might help

Try to understand how he might be feeling – it is likely that he is scared or worried about the future.

Try to reassure him that there is help available but identifying and accepting that there might be a problem is the first step to getting that help.

He might need times and space to think about what you have talked about. You might need to try again when he is ready.

Reassure him that you are there to talk if needed.



Tips to help with an **ANXIETY** attack

Look around you.

Find FIVE things you can **SEE**

FOUR things you can **TOUCH**

THREE things you can **HEAR**

TWO things you can **SMELL**

One thing you can **TASTE**

This is called grounding; it can help when you feel like you have lost all control of your surroundings.

Lesley Hellon, Dementia Adviser

Email: LHellon@alzscot.org

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Message from Diane

Hello everyone. Last time I was telling you about our new Gaelic Conversation group and since then it has been going from strength to strength! We now have two online sessions per month. We are joined at one of the groups by Margaret Nicolson, who is based in Glasgow but has Skye and Lewis connections. Anne Martin, Gaelic singer from North Skye joins us for the other session and sings us some lovely Gaelic songs. This session is for everyone whether they have Gaelic or not. We'd love to have you come along and you can enjoy the songs even if you don't have Gaelic. We often also have children from either the Gaelic Primary School in Lochaber or Portree joining us too with songs and chat.



Here is a picture of the children from Portree playing a whistle tune for us just before Christmas.



In November last year, our Gaelic Project was nominated for two awards at the Scottish Gaelic Awards, Duaisean Gàidhlig na h-Alba, in Glasgow and we are delighted to say that we were given the Award for Community - Duais Coimhearsnachd.

You can watch a short clip about our award Youtube by clicking the link below or typing https://youtu.be/SfLetiS_OzE into your browser if you are reading the printed version of the newsletter.



In March there will be the first ever World Gaelic Week, Seachdain na Gàidhlig which aims to raise awareness of the language and encourage people to learn about it here in Scotland and across the world.

The week runs from 21st – 27th March 2022. There will be official events as well as community and local events. Alzheimer Scotland West Highland will be joining in with our own Seachdain na Gàidhlig and focussing on Gàidhlig at some of our groups as well as having a few extra Gàidhlig online events during the week. On Friday 25th we also plan to have an afternoon of Gàidhlig in the garden at Tigh Na Drochaid in Portree. Everyone welcome even if you don't speak any Gaelic – come along, have a cuppa and shortbread, learn a few words and listen to some songs!



On the following page is the schedule of Gaelic groups for the week. Please get in touch if you would like more information about the groups and how to join in.

Best wishes,

Diane Smith, Community Activities Organiser, Skye & Lochalsh.

Email: DianeSmith@alzscot.org, Phone: 07825608057

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What's On in West Highland for Gaelic Week 2022, 21st – 27th March 2022

Dè tha dol anns A' Ghàidhealtachd an Iar airson Seachdain na Gàidhlig

English		Ghàidhlig	
Monday 21st	Making Music 3.15pm Online Join us for Gaelic songs and tunes.	Diluain 21	A' Dèanamh Cèol 3.15 f Air-loidhne Thig còmhla rinn airson òrain is cèol Ghàidhlig.
Wednesday 23rd	Gaelic Conversation with Margaret Nicolson - 2pm Online Join Margaret for chat and songs and hopefully some children from the Gaelic schools too.	Diciadain 23	Còmhradh Gàidhlig le Mairead NicNeacail 2 f Air-loidhne Thig còmhla ri Mairead airson cabadaich is òrain agus an dòchas clann bho na sgoiltean Gàidhlig cuideachd.
Thursday 24th	Gaelic Taster Session 2pm Online Come along and learn a few words and phrases in Gaelic.	Diardaoin 24	Ionnsaich Beagan Gàidhlig 2 f Air-loidhne Thigibh ann agus ionnsaich beagan fhaclan a ràdh sa Ghàidhlig.
Friday 25th	Online Ceilidh 11am A great get together with friends for a ceilidh - songs, music and stories.	Dihaoine 25	Cèilidh air Loidhne 11 m Cruinneachadh sgoinneil le caraidean airson cèilidh – òrain, ceòl agus sgeulachdan.
	Tea & Shortbread in the Garden 2pm Tigh Na Drochaid Garden, Portree Meet in the garden for tea and shortbread, chat and songs in Gaelic. If you don't speak any Gaelic at all, come along and learn a few words.		Tì agus Aran-Milis sa Ghàrradh 2 f Gàrradh Tigh Na Drochaid, Port Rìgh Thigibh don ghàrradh airson tì agus aran-milis. còmhradh is òrain Ghàidhlig Chan eil Gàidhlig agaibh? Thigibh agus ionnsaich beagan fhacail!!



Find out more about Gaelic Week here: <https://seachdainnagaidhlig.scot/?lang=en>

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Message From Caroline

Hello to everyone. I'm feeling hopeful. The grey skies are giving way to a little more daylight every day. It is said from the shortest daylight hours on 21st December that there is an extra minute of daylight every day. First snow drops have been spotted: hurrah Spring is coming!



I cannot say I like the winter long hours darkness. I attended an online webinar hosted by the NHS on SAD (seasonal affective disorder) in December... the top tips included:

- Having a tidy bedroom
- Having good quality bedding
- Keeping even temperature
- Having morning walks
- Putting the day to rest - having a list for next day
- Getting a good night's sleep helps our brain flush out toxins.

The importance of hearing:

Here are some top tips on this website - peer support, advice and information.

<https://www.hearinglink.org/>

Dementia and Hearing Loss:

Mild hearing loss: 2 times more likely to develop dementia

Severe hearing loss: 5 times more likely to develop dementia.

The importance of attending to your hearing is underlined by these statistics.



The 4 Amigos

The 4 Amigos are a virtual group creating films of conversations to share, teach and support everybody to have a greater understanding of their worlds living with dementia.

Throw away your text books and watch, listen and learn from George Rook, Wendy Mitchell, Gail Gregory and Teresa Davies (known as Dory). The 4 amigos:



Find them here: [https://www.dementiavoices.org.uk/group/the-4-amigos/#:~:text=The%204%20Amigos%20are%20a,Davies%20\(known%20as%20Dory](https://www.dementiavoices.org.uk/group/the-4-amigos/#:~:text=The%204%20Amigos%20are%20a,Davies%20(known%20as%20Dory)

<https://livingwithdementiatoolkit.org.uk/>

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I spent a Sunday in a Local care home and here are my reflections of that day in December:

SUNDAY SHIFT REFLECTIONS:

Bones of daylight

Voices stealing through the air

A low mumble

Condensation on windows

The peace of Stillness

Time Shifts for me, for you

You are afraid

“Why am I here”

“Where am I”

The calm voice:

“I know you”

Yes, I recall your story:

Your wedding outfit, the precious borrowed blue brooch

“I don’t want to be a bother” you say

I kneel by your bed I touch your hand, I reassure

The connecting thread.....

“You were a nurse” I say

“Me too”

We reconnect, slim fragile threads of memory

The carers have kindly made you a story board

It reminds you who you are, where you are

Snippets of history

This brings you comfort, some momentary peace

Carers move from room to room

Tea trolley rumbles along corridors

Carers smile

Shuffling feet

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I am asked to sit with you
I don't know you
I introduce myself
I sit with you
I see your family photos
You ask about your mum
We talk, you tell me of days gone by on the farm
You smile
We laugh
Your time has shifted back
I follow you....
The day inches along
People passing on the road outside
Unaware
Lunch time
Small trickles of conversation
Helping hands
The day moves on
Voices soft, Voices sometimes louder
Music
Bones of daylight fading...

Caroline Gordon 2022

best wishes

Caroline Gordon, Dementia Link Worker, Lochaber

A little message from Christine in Ullapool

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2022 and hoping for some warmer weather and clear blue skies soon. I just wanted to share some good news with you.

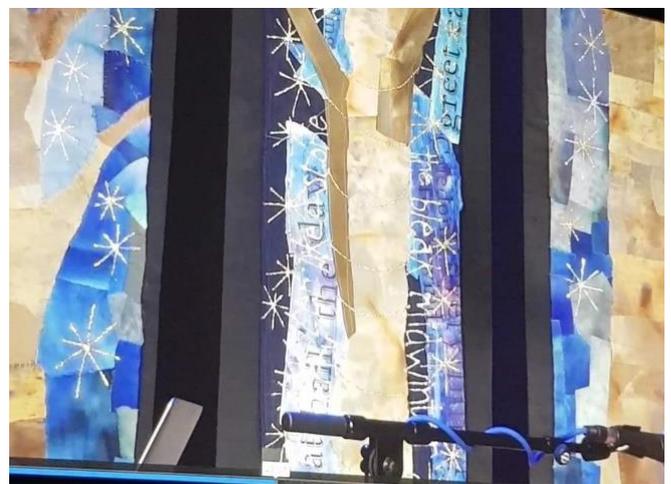
The Ullapool Harbour trustees have very kindly given us part of their newly acquired building on Mill Street here in Ullapool specifically for The Dolphin Art group who support People living with dementia and anyone with memory difficulties in the Community.



We are absolutely amazed at the transformation of this empty shell three weeks ago and are still spinning with happiness. They have fitted a kitchen including dishwasher, disability friendly toilets and access, lovely signage, tables, and chairs and lots of storage. The whole building has been painted with new flooring laid and cork walls for hanging up the crafts we make. They have added WIFI, heating, and a fantastic loop system to help acoustics for those wearing hearing aids.

Now we are at capacity and meet every Thursday afternoon. People living with dementia attend along with their "buddy". We are hoping to invite the local Care Home soon so they can enjoy this safe space and create.

Recently we created 12 banners painted and stitched with birch as a backdrop for the dementia choir in Edinburgh for their Christmas concert.



Perhaps one day you'll get the chance to come along too or perhaps you have very supportive Harbour trustees in your area who would do something similar for you too.

All the Best

Christine McCallum
Dementia link worker
Wester Ross

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