

South Highland Newsletter



Summer 2022

Opening up after the pandemic



We are delighted to let you know that our services have reopened following the Covid-19 pandemic. We'd like to take this opportunity to let you know about the changes that have happened and what we are now able to offer in the South Highland area.

South Highland covers Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey.

We have 2 venues in Inverness that are going to be used for our community activities as well as places you can meet with our dementia advisors. These are our Woodlands Centre on Culduthel Road and the Dementia Resource Centre on Strothers Lane. Our Dementia Resource Centre on Strothers Lane will still be a place where people can drop in, along with some group activities taking place there too.

In Badenoch and Strathspey we have our new Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre. There is more information about this further on in the newsletter.

We are currently in the process of setting up groups in Nairn too.

Inverness Dementia Resource Centre, Unit 2, Strothers Lane, Inverness, IV1 1LR
Tel: **01463 711 707** | Email: southhighland@alzscot.org | Website: www.alzscot.org

Meet the new team



Louise MacDonald

My name is Louise MacDonald and I am the new Community Activities Organiser for Inverness. Some of you I have already met, and I look forward to meeting everyone else!

My background is in Health and Social Care, having worked in Social groups and

organised respite breaks in the past. I have previously facilitated activities for a wide variety of people and I am excited to come up with more for Alzheimer Scotland!

If there are any activities you would like to see introduced, please let me know in groups, on 07823 556869 or at LMacdonald@alzscot.org.



Julie Ferguson

Hello! I'm Julie, the new-ish Dementia Advisor covering Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey. When I'm not working I enjoy hillwalking, cold water swimming and spending time with my spaniel pup Seamus.

Contact details:

Phone: 07887 625982

Email: JulieFerguson@alzscot.org



Andy Miller

Community Activities Organiser
Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre
Phone: 07585 976356
Email: AMiller@alzscot.org



Izzy Powell

Dementia Link Worker
Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey

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Rest of the team

Locality Leader

- Sarah Fraser; email: SFraser@alzscot.org

Inverness Dementia Link Workers

- Flora Robertson
- Lilian Williams
- Rhona Grant

Dementia Advisor

- Karen Black; phone: 07585 669654, email: KarenBlack@alzscot.org

Receptionist/Administrator

- Lilian Stott; phone: 01463 711707

Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre Co-ordinator

- Kenny Wright; phone: 07788 286254, email: KWright@alzscot.org

What we do

Post Diagnostic Support Link Workers

Post Diagnostic Support Link Workers help people newly diagnosed with dementia to adjust to its likely impact - both emotionally and practically- and help plan for the future. This support is in place for around 1 year.

Dementia Advisors

Dementia Advisors support people with dementia, their families and carers and work with local communities. Dementia advisors can provide information and advice, help people find the dementia-specific support that's needed, connect people to local groups and services, help the local community be more dementia-friendly and help people to influence the policies and services that affect them.

Community Activities Organisers

Plan, organise and deliver the therapeutic groups and activities we provide, in consultation with the people we support to identify their needs.

Woodlands Re-Opening



The team have been working very hard these past few months to get Woodlands ready to facilitate groups and it is looking great!

So far, we have had a seaside themed café, arts and crafts, music sessions, bacon butty morning and more.

We have parking outside our front door, a lovely garden to the back and a quiet room for those who need some peaceful time out.

We are excited for you all to come and join us for some groups there!



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New Music Group

August saw the start of our new Music Group being held at Woodlands. This is an opportunity for people to come along and take part in musical based activities with the emphasis on playing instruments.

Our first session was based on rhythms and we practiced different rhythms by clapping first and then using percussion instruments.



Seagull Trust Cruises

Throughout the summer we have been able to take groups of people out for trips along the Caledonian Canal on the Seagull Trust Cruises.

The cruises last for approximately 2 hours and they have been thoroughly enjoyed by those attending.

Some of the people who were on the trip had the opportunity to take the helm and steer the boat on the way back along the canal.



CST

At the end of August we started our next course of Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST). CST is a well established psychological therapy for people with dementia with clear evidence of benefits to cognition and quality of life. The course is running weekly for 7 weeks and is structured so that the format is the same each week but with a different theme. Themes include Physical Games, Sounds, Childhood, Food and Current Affairs. The themes are used to create fun activities that stimulate the brain and the senses. We are pleased to have been successful in securing funding for a Smartboard which we are using in the sessions adding an extra element of including some digital skills as part of the course.

Audiology Clinic

We recently held our second Audiology Clinic at the Dementia Resource Centre with a visit from Audiologist Rochelle. Each clinic has been very well attended with great feedback being received about the provision of this clinic at our centre. We now have another clinic scheduled for 11 November 2022, please contact us for further details.

First Dementia-friendly Health Walk in Nairn

We had our first Health Walk on Tuesday 23rd August. We met at the Links Car Park and walked along the seafront. We saw a beautiful wild-flower meadow in full bloom, lots of birds and clear views to the Black Isle. We also managed to dodge the ninja showers which were forecast! This will be a monthly walk, led by Julie and wonderful volunteer, Cath. Check the What's On guide for the date of the next one.



Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre

The Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre is based at Badaguish, near Glenmore, approx 5 miles from Aviemore.

Kenny and Andy are the guys organising and helping run the activities there. They have a cozy log cabin and a giant Tipi from which to run activities as well as the beautiful outdoors surrounding the site.



The Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre is funded by the Heritage Horizons: Cairngorms 2030 project - a collaboration between the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Cairngorm National Park Authority <https://cairngorms.co.uk/working-together/cairngorms-2030/>

They have been busy setting-up the project at Badaguish since the start of the summer. There were drop-in afternoons in July followed by some 'taster' activities in August. Please let us know if you'd like a copy of the What's On Guide to see our upcoming activities.



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So far....

The Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre had a visit from Wild Things (Findhorn-based nature gurus) on 17th August who led everyone on a fascinating nature walk, everyone marveled at various animal skulls they had with them and talked about the exciting activities possible in future sessions (including bird-box building and pond-dipping).

On 23rd August they had their first adapted cycling session which involved an introduction to the various types of cycle and wheelchairs and then an opportunity to have a go in the covered pitch area. The side-by-side tricycle was very popular! Also, the motorised, off road wheelchair proved a hit with one attendee who was whizzing around our covered area at great speed!

On 16th August Sarah from the RSPB shared her feather collection and everyone had a go at identifying which bird belonged to which feather. Apparently Kiwis are the only bird with fur 🙄

The activities at our new Outdoor Resource Centre are open for anyone to come along. Please get in touch with Andy for more information.



Ministerial visit

On Friday 22 July Kevin Stewart MSP, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care visited our Inverness Dementia Resource Centre. He took the opportunity to speak to local people living with dementia and carers as well as our staff to talk about their situations and find out what was important to them.

Coffee morning

Susie McNeill and the Ardersier A-Team raised an amazing £2190.40 from a coffee morning held in the village hall on 31 August 2022. This is the second time such an event has been held, the previous coffee morning was held pre pandemic in Susie's sister's garden. Susie has said that she is glad that they used the village hall this year as the turn-out surpassed all expectations and was incredibly well supported by the people of Ardersier and indeed the surrounding areas.

A massive well done to The Ardersier A-Team for all their hard work with organising, baking, and running this coffee morning. Susie hopes that they will hold another event in the future

Below are the amazing "Ardersier A-Team".



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Message from our Chief Executive Henry Simmons

I hope this finds you and your loved ones safe and well. As we are now in September – World Alzheimer’s Month – we welcome the UK Government’s announcement in recent weeks on the launch of an increase in research funding for dementia, in honour of the late Dame Barbara Windsor. This will undoubtedly have a significant impact on dementia research in Scotland. It is the aim of ‘Bab’s Army’ to get as many people to take part in research as possible - research is hope, and by taking part, people can do something tangible to help understand and increase the likelihood of finding a cure. Alzheimer Scotland is a key partner in the delivery and development of Join Dementia Research <https://www.joindementiaresearch.nihr.ac.uk/> – a nationwide online and telephone service that makes it easier for people to register their interest in volunteering for dementia research studies.

Alzheimer Scotland’s key aims are underpinned by research: Prevent, Care, Cure. This was the title theme for our Annual Conference on Monday 5 September, where we explored these themes and heard from expert panellists from across the dementia community, with opportunities for networking, breakout sessions, and therapeutic activities. We were delighted to welcome attendees to our first in person event since 2019, and very much enjoyed connecting with members, colleagues and friends on the day.

Carers fund

Alzheimer Scotland have been given some funding to use to support unpaid carers. We have consulted with carers and from their feedback we are planning to hold some afternoon teas where carers can also have a small spa treatment. We are planning to hold these events over the next couple of months. If you are a carer and you would like to come along to one of our events, please get in touch with either Karen on KarenBlack@alzscot.org or Julie on JulieFerguson@alzscot.org or call the Dementia Resource Centre on 01463 711707. We can then let you know when these are arranged.

Queen Elizabeth II

On behalf of Alzheimer Scotland, we are deeply saddened to hear of the death of Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Earlier this year the country celebrated her Platinum Jubilee – a remarkable 70 years of service. We extend our deepest sympathies to the Royal Family for their loss.

Our services will be open as normal. Our 24-Hour Freephone Helpline will be operating as usual. If you have any questions about dementia, about the support available in your area, or simply need someone to talk to call 0808 808 3000 or email helpline@alzscot.org

Nick Gardner



Nick's Story

My, Janet has Alzheimer's Disease and Osteoporosis, and I wanted to do something to benefit sufferers and carers everywhere.

I was 80 in April 2020 and my challenge was to raise £50,000 for Alzheimer Scotland and the Royal Osteoporosis Society by climbing the 282 Munros (Scottish mountains over 3000 feet) in 1200 days.

I am delighted to say that I have smashed both targets! I completed the challenge on 13 August 2022 (in less than 800 days) and have raised over £80,000.

My Story – As a small boy in Leicestershire, I was fascinated by mountains. So I think it was destined that one day I would live in the Scottish Highlands. When I was 50, I achieved my ambition and brought a traditional highland croft in North West Scotland with my wife Janet. It had always been my intention to climb the Munros but I found the unique atmosphere of my local mountains in Wester Ross so magnetic that I rarely went further afield. I therefore never did climb them all.

Buying the croft also enabled me to pursue my other passions: gardening and being self-sufficient.

Janet's story – Janet was a primary school teacher until we moved north. Whereas she wasn't a mountaineer she loved walking in wild places and encouraging wildlife. She too was a passionate gardener.

Her health began to deteriorate in 2002 with osteoporosis but despite having spontaneous spinal fractures she persisted in doing the garden. Then, in 2018 came the devastating news that she had Alzheimer's Disease as well as Vascular Dementia.

Many people have described Janet as being the most gentle and compassionate person they have ever met. She has been the most wonderful and caring wife, mother and grandmother possible and I am eternally grateful that I fell in love with her.

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Our story – When Janet and I met we instantly realised that we had the same outlook and many common interests. It wasn't long before we fell in love and became a couple.

We often talked about how lucky we were to have met. There was never any doubt in our minds that our relationship was eternal.

We had both been married before and had 4 children between us. We both wanted to live a similar lifestyle, so when the children left home, we moved up from suburbia to the 10-acre croft. The land was mainly moorland, devoid of trees, but with an acre of good soil.

We wanted to create a woodland on the croft and cultivate the good soil for fruit, vegetables and flowers. We were quickly able to be almost self-sufficient in fruit and vegetables, but establishing the woodland took much longer. It was not easy, but by working together we saw the moorland gradually blossom into a mature woodland, at times even with a temperate rainforest atmosphere.

We were able to “live the dream” for 30 loving years.

The Challenge – Janet's diseases meant that our wonderful lifestyle ended abruptly, and I had, and still do, great difficulty coming to terms with it. I didn't know what to do. Then a story appeared in a newsletter from the Alzheimer's Society where a young woman, who had no climbing experience, climbed 20 Munros in memory of her grandfather, who had the disease.

This inspired me; I thought: “Could I, as an 80-year old climb all the Munros?”

I am an experienced walker and climber and believe I have the skills, stamina and fitness to achieve it. So, my answer was: “Yes, I will give it a go, and raise money for Alzheimer's Scotland and Royal Osteoporosis Society”

Thus, the challenge was born.

The final climb

Following Nick's final climb (Cairngorm) on 13 August, our new Outdoor Dementia Resource Centre were honoured to host a celebration as he and many of his supporters descended from the Munro. We were joined by representatives from the Royal Osteoporosis Society for the opportunity to thank Nick for his amazing fundraising achievements. It was a great afternoon and very inspiring to hear from Nick himself, as well as those who had supported him, all about the challenge.

Our support and activities are only possible thanks to the donations we gratefully receive.



To support Alzheimer Scotland South Highland please consider donating via our Justgiving page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/alzheimer-scotland-south-highland>

or by putting money in our donation tins when you attend any of our groups.



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