



October 2020 Review

A New Name, Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh

In September 2019 Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations board committed to continuing the pilot project 'Skye and Lochalsh Neighbours and Friends' as a core service of SLCVO. With this, the SLCVO team decided to update promotional information for the service. One of the first changes was to rename the service to something that 'says what it does on the tin' so Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh was chosen. However, with Covid-19 things were put on hold as the SLCVO team focused on providing an emergency response daily call service.

As we move into the autumn our befriending service continues to be supported by the Highland Hospice

and funding from the National Lottery and Highland Green health Partners has enabled us to employ a dedicated co-ordinator for two days a week until March 2021.

Our new Befriending Co-ordinator, Claire Nairn, has been with SLCVO for 2 years. Many of you will know her through her work on the Community Calls initiative. If you would like to talk to Claire you can call her on 01478 612921 between 9am and 3pm Monday to Thursday or email her at communitycalls@slcvo.org.uk

SLCVO Community Calls – helping reduce loneliness

At the start of Covid-19 SLCVO set-up Community Calls, a daily call service for people across Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross. The aim of the service was to keep people connected and make sure they had support to get essential provision such as food, prescriptions and fuel.

By the end of September 2020 our Community Calls volunteers will have made around 2,000 calls. Many of these calls have been much more than a simple check in they have provided companionship to both clients and volunteers.

"It is good to have someone new to talk to". "It helps to know that there is someone keeping an eye on you" Community Calls client feedback

"As I discovered during the weeks of the call service, being a befriender has two-way benefits, because as a caller I have found it particularly rewarding to be able to develop new relationships during the lockdown." Volunteer feedback August 2020

When we put a call out for volunteers in March we were astounded by the response. 55 people volunteered with the service, supporting 57 clients 7 days a week between April and July then 5 days a week until the end of September.

Volunteers made it possible for us to run a daily service for six months, and funding from the Skye Ward Discretionary Budget, the Highland Third Sector Interface and The National Lottery enabled us to not only provide a Covid-19 emergency response service but ensure its sustainability.

A new service

In October 2020, 16 community Calls Volunteers will join our existing befrienders to support our new telephone befriending service and 18 Community Call clients will move to have a weekly befriending call.

This service ensures that volunteers and clients who want to keep the connections made during lock-down can, in a secure and supported service run by SLCVO.

To see what our volunteers thought of the service visit our Facebook page and watch our video from June.

<https://www.facebook.com/SLCVO/videos/178044506943303>

A New Garden Sharing Project

Funding from the Highland Green Health Partnership Small Grants Fund is helping us to trial a new initiative of connecting people through gardening. The idea behind the project is to connect those who like gardening with people who have garden space but, may not be able to get out into their garden so much. We want to build connections to local growers' hubs and garden groups such as Rassay Walled Garden and Viewfield Garden Collective and to help people to enjoy being outside in their gardens once again. The project was initially to start in the spring of this year however, Covid-19 has pushed the project back

and we are now starting to look for people who would like help in their gardens and people who would like to help by volunteering for the project. If you are interested in the project contact Claire at communitycalls@slcvo.org.uk



North Skye Day Hospital Last year SLCVO's Community Development Officer, Sammy-Jo McArthur worked with the Portree Medical Centre to connect befrienders to the North Skye Day Hospital service. Although this has been put on hold due to Covid-19 we hope this will eventually resume as the volunteers and Day Hospital clients enjoyed having company while waiting for appointments.

SLCVO's Community Development Officer Samantha -Jo McArthur is pictured with Dr MacDougall, Malcom Mathieson, Dr Lankston and Julia Rudram for the North Skye Day Hospital

Green Health Home Packs with Viewfield Garden

Before Covid-19 SLCVO and Viewfield Garden Collective were planning to hold a joint event to celebrate the nature on our doorsteps. We planned to invite befriender clients and volunteers to the event in Portree however, social distancing rules meant we had to think of another way to connect people to nature on their doorstep. Viewfield Garden Collective's Development Officer, Lucy Cooke, came up with an idea to bring the project to people's homes, this project was made possible with funding from the EU Leader Rural Development Fund and Scottish Natural Heritage

Green Health Home packs containing bulbs, information packs and coconut bird feeders have been sent to all our befriending clients. We hope that they will enjoy a little piece of the outdoors within their homes.



Active Journeys Skye and Lochalsh

With grant funding from Paths for All Smarter Choices, Smarter Places and the Highland Green Health Partnership, Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations (SLCVO) has teamed up with local group Skye for All to complete an active travel project. The focus of the project is to create maps of both Portree and Kyle of Lochalsh highlighting the accessibility of both village centres. These locations have significant accessibility issues, therefore the new maps will show people where critical access points, such as dropped kerbs and seating are, making everyday journeys easier.

The aim of the project is to raise awareness and understanding of the benefits of getting outdoors and help people incorporate walking into their daily routine. By teaming up with Skye for All, SLCVO hope to encourage people to feel more comfortable going out for short walks. Jo Ford SLCVO's Chief officer said "There are many websites and leaflets promoting walking in Skye and Lochalsh, our project however, is much more focused on short daily journeys for those who may struggle to participate in longer walks and whose mobility is restricted. Working with Skye For All will help us create very unique maps of Kyle and Portree that can be used by individuals, cyclists and walking groups."

The brainchild of good friends Sarah Lister and Melanie Moss, Skye for All specialise in identifying

short walks that are suitable for people of all abilities and sharing these on their website www.Skyeforall.co.uk. "We want people of all ages and abilities to be able to enjoy Skye and Lochalsh and experience some of the quieter hidden gems. Enjoying the scenery and its beauty on foot, in a wheelchair or on a mobility scooter. We want to share the many beautiful places that our home has to offer", Melanie & Sarah, Skye For All.

For her work with SLCVO's Active Travel project and Skye For All, Sarah was recently awarded Path for All's Active Travel Volunteer of the Year. Sarah, the inspiration behind Skye for All, was left with mobility issues after multiple surgeries for a brain tumor. She is only able to walk short distances with an aid and needs a mobility scooter for longer journeys however, this has not stopped her. Jo Ford, who nominated Sarah for the award said " I am so pleased Sarah won, she often just tells people she just does Skye For All walks because she likes it and is very humble about the impact her and Melanie have. Sarah is an inspiration and a very valued volunteer; she deserves this award many times over"

For more information about the project visit Skye and Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations website www.slcvo.org.uk or follow Skye For All on twitter <https://twitter.com/skyeforall>



Melanie and Sarah from Skye For All



Hello from Claire



As the new Co-ordinator of Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh, I am looking forward to working with our clients, volunteers, and referrers. I have worked with Skye and Lochalsh CVO for 2 years as the Office

Administrator and since the start of July have managed the Covid-19 emergency response service Community Calls. Having 14 years' experience of

working in Social Care leaves me well placed to run the service.

I will start work on our new Garden Sharing project soon and hope to over the next couple of years work with the new Broadford hospital to provide a no one dies alone service. If you would like to chat to me about the Befrienders service or if you have any ideas about how we can develop it please do not hesitate to contact me on 01478 612921 or email community calls @slcvo.org.uk.

About the Service

Befrienders Skye and Lochalsh is funded by the Highland Hospice, The National Lottery and The Green Health Partnership. We work with GP's, Social Work, other Third Sector Organisations and Families to match clients with a volunteer befriender. Although Covid-19 has stopped our volunteers from meeting with clients face to face we are continuing to provide befriending support via the telephone to our face to face clients. From the 1st of October we will begin with a Telephone Befriending service which has evolved from, our emergency Covid response service, Community Calls. We will also be looking at befriending by video call over the coming months.

How to make a referral

If you know of anyone who would benefit from the Befrienders service, you can get a copy of our referral form by downloading it from our website www.slcvo.org.uk or by emailing Claire at communitycalls@slcvo.org.uk. Under typical circumstances, once we receive the referral form, we contact the referred person to discuss the service and ensure that it suits their requirements. We would then visit with the referred person in their homes to chat about their interests and what their expectations are with regards to the service. After a risk assessment has been completed we match the referred person with a volunteer befriender and ease the transition into their first visit by going with them to introduce them to the client. If the match is deemed suitable by the client and the volunteer all

subsequent contact is arranged between themselves. For the telephone service, after matching we would let both the client and the volunteer know who their matched person is, with permission, give both a brief overview of their interests and organise a time for their first call.

How to apply to be a volunteer

If this service is of interest to you and would like to volunteer, application forms can be downloaded from our website www.slcvo.org.uk or by contacting Claire at communitycalls@slcvo.org.uk. Upon receipt of your application form we will contact you to arrange an informal chat and to discuss the requirements for the PVG check and training that you will need to complete.