

Newsletter April 2016

VAO News & Services

Poppies Weeping Window, at the St Magnus Cathedral.

In January of this year, we were approached by Orkney Islands Council to work in partnership with them to support the delivery of an exciting, one off project.

The Council had applied for and secured the exhibition “Poppies: Weeping Window”, which is being displayed at the St Magnus Cathedral from April 22 until June 12. The display is from the installation Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red, which was on show at the Tower of London in 2014, to honour every death in the British and Colonial forces of the First World War. The Orkney poppy exhibition is part of the commemorative activities taking place this year for the Centenary of the Battle of Jutland.

VAO’s role was to work with the council to develop a “Volunteer Poppy Host” role, and recruit volunteers to welcome guests to the installation, answer questions and look after the safety and security of the site. Three volunteer shifts were devised between 9am to 8pm, and a substantial number of volunteers would be required to cover the seven and a half weeks of the display. We promoted this volunteering opportunity widely throughout Orkney and the response we received was amazing. At the time of writing, we have recruited, inducted and trained over 70 volunteers.

This picture (right) shows some of the volunteers at one of our training sessions, delivered in collaboration with OIC staff.



This opportunity enabled not just individuals but groups such as the Army and Sea Cadets and also our Connect Project to be part of this unique community volunteering project.

Friday 22nd April was the opening day, and we popped along to see how the first group of volunteers were getting along. On duty were Bobby Leslie, Gillian Foster and our very own Edwina Lloyd (left).

Connecting with young voters



A panel of Candidates seeking to represent Orkney in the forthcoming Scottish Parliamentary election, came face to face with young voters in a hustings organised by Connect Project worker, Angelina Gould.

Candidates from the Lib Dems, SNP, Labour, Conservatives and an Independent candidate, spent over an hour answering questions from young people on a range of topics from public transport, training and employment to things for young people to do and concessions for disabled travellers. It was a lively debate which challenged the panel to outline what they would do to address issues important to young people in Orkney, if elected.

'I was delighted by the quality of debate', said Connect's Angelina Gould. 'The young people have been fully engaged having already put questions to First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon the previous week.'

After the formal session young people were able to mingle and talk informally with candidates one to one. The atmosphere was friendly and positive. With the minimum voting age in the Scottish Election being 16, it is important for young people's voice to be heard by politicians and those seeking election. Events such as this organised by Connect, are an important stepping stone for young people to engage with the issues that will affect their future.

The Candidates praised the Connect Project for giving them the opportunity to listen to and be challenged by young people in Orkney.



Adult Befriending Stitch n' Blether Group



The Stitch n' Blether Group will be launched in the Marjory Corrigan room at the Stromness Library, Stromness on Saturday 7 May from 2-4pm.

Everyone is welcome to join us and enjoy a yarn and bring your own handicrafts, learn something new or simply come for the company

Some resources will be available if you don't have any projects on the go at present or you are not sure which skills you may wish to re-kindle or learn. However, if you just want to have company and a chat that is just fine. Refreshments will be provided free of charge.

This is a great way to meet new people, re-establish old acquaintances and catch up with friends in a relaxing environment.

For further information please contact [Michelle Manzie](#) at VAO on 872897.

Orkney Podcasts in May

You can test your knowledge of who is doing what in Orkney this May. Do you know who volunteers in the Blue Door, who worked in Shetland, who is training for an off road triathlon or who sings in the St Magnus Festival Chorus? Answers to all these questions are in next month's Orkney Podcasts which you can listen to every Monday by visiting www.orkneypodcasts.uk



You can also listen to previous podcasts. In April our guests were Calvin Reid, Bashir Hasham and Hazel Aim. If you scroll down the page you will be able to find even earlier podcasts and listen to what Ian Garman, Fraser Devine, Linsey Drever, Sheila Garson, Mike Lynch, Meghan McEwan, Lindsey Kolthammer, Rob McGregor, John Clancy, David Delday, Mark Harris, Karen Stevenson, Morgan Harcus, Mark Stillwell or Evonne Rendall were saying about their hobbies and their work.

If you would like more information about the podcasts, please contact [Kasha](#) at VAO.

Volunteers' Week 2016: The Big Celebration

Once again the time has come to celebrate the contribution volunteers make to Orkney's communities by taking part in Volunteers' Week 2016. This national celebration of volunteering provides an opportunity for all organisations who are managed by or whose work is delivered by volunteers to say 'thank you' publicly. It also presents an opportunity to promote the work of local organisations.



Over 21 million people volunteer in the UK at least once a year and this contributes an estimated £23.9bn to the UK economy. In Orkney, a recent economic survey highlighted that almost £12 million was contributed to the local Orkney economy last year by third sector activity.

Orkney's volunteers are a shining example of how people can all make a huge difference to individuals and communities every day from improving the environment we live in, spending time with those who may otherwise be lonely and contributing to a range of other essential services and enjoyable activities.

Volunteers' Week this year will be extended for an additional 5 days which means that activities will run **from 1st to 12th June**.

The week is also an opportunity to inspire others to get involved in volunteering. There are a number and range of volunteering roles available but sometimes people aren't aware of them so why not use this week to showcase your opportunities.

People are increasingly looking for flexible volunteering that they can fit in around work or other commitments and your Volunteers' Week 'Big Celebration' may just be the thing to attract them. Your event can also be a focal point to get people in your community using their skills, time and talents to help others. VAO will be happy to help your organisation to develop and promote your volunteering opportunities.

We look forward to hearing what ideas and plans you may already have for celebrating Volunteers Week in 2016, but if you'd like some help and support in coming up with ideas, then please do get in touch with Fraser or Rob on 872897 or email enquiries@vaorkney.org.uk. You can also download certificates, logos and fliers from the Volunteers Week webpage, www.volunteersweek.org

VAO awarded EFQM Validation

"We believe that the EFQM Excellence Model is a common framework that helps us all to improve our businesses" (Quality Scotland)

We were delighted to take advantage of the opportunity provided by Quality Scotland to undertake a revalidation of EFQM. The EFQM Excellence Model provides an effective framework within which to assess all aspects of organisational activity and to agree and implement improvement actions.

The work began last year with a day long intensive review of organisation processes, attended by staff, directors and volunteers; priorities were agreed and three areas for improvement selected. Sub Groups were established to take the lead, again with representation from across the organisation, and have been working hard over the past 12 months to define, refine and implement the agreed improvements. A written account of the work undertaken was submitted to Quality Scotland and following a site visit and inspection on 15th April VAO has been awarded C2E Project Validation for EFQM. The work won't stop however and we will continue to apply the model to our internal review and development.

More information about Quality Scotland and EFQM can be found [here](#)



Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy Pupils – Thank you!

Kirkwall Grammar School and Stromness Academy pupils this month received a huge 'Thankyou' for their involvement as volunteers. A special mention to Nicol Harcus (KSG) for achieving his 500 Hours Saltire Award - well done!



Local Third Sector News

Relationships Scotland receive LGBT Charter Mark Award

Relationships Scotland Orkney are proud to announce that Relationships Scotland have become the first national counselling and mediation organisation to receive the prestigious Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual Charter Mark Award this week. Renate Andrews, Practice Manager, said that 'RSO are continually reviewing their practice and training opportunities for staff and are delighted that the national office have successfully achieved this award'.

Click [here](#) to find out more about the LGBT Charter Mark and [here](#) to find out more about Relationships Scotland Orkney's range of counselling, mediation and child contact centre services.



Who's behind the Blue Door?



Friends of Guiding

2 May – 7 May

Racing Pigeon Club

9 May – 14 May

Stromness Community Garden

16 May – 21 May

Kirkwall City Pipe Band

23 May – 28 May

Focus on.....Orkney Men's Shed

The Men's Shed movement started in Australia in 2005 and is now such a part of the culture down under that even Erinsborough (fictional setting for the soap Neighbours) has a local Shed! Given the rate at which the movement is growing here in the UK, it shouldn't be too long before we see a Shed in EastEnders or River City (please do let us know if this has already happened)! According to the [UK Men's Shed Association](#), the first Community Men's Shed was formed in London in 2011. Five years later there are now 300 Sheds open in the UK, with nearly 100 more in planning. One of those 100 in planning is here in Orkney! In this, our sixth interview with members, we met with Morgan Harcus, Chairman of Orkney Men's Shed, to find out just what Men's Sheds are all about.

'Basically Men's Sheds are about combatting loneliness', explains Morgan. 'It's a lonely place to be a man on your own. Women have lunch dates and meet for coffee, but men just don't do that. The idea of a Men's Shed is to get men together, to get them out of the house and to get them talking to each other.' Morgan tells us that a slogan used by the Men's Shed movement is *"men will not talk face to face, but they will talk shoulder to shoulder"*. Whether that talk is about football, the weather or far more personal things, the contact can provide a lifeline. *'Men are very shy about talking about personal things, they wouldn't sit over a coffee and say "I think I might have prostate cancer", but they might slip it into a conversation with the guy working next to them.'*

Apart from having a good yarn, what will the men be doing in their shed? Morgan explains that the aim is to fill the shed with woodworking equipment, from basic tools to more complex machinery. Folk can then come along and use the space and equipment to make whatever they fancy – all free of charge. *'You might have a guy coming in with a couple of bits of wood who says "I'd like to make a coffee table, but I'm not sure how to go about it". There may be a retired joiner there who'd say "well I can help you with that". And then those two guys, who've maybe never met each other before, would be standing together at a workbench. Before the table is finished they know each other, because they're not only going to be talking about the coffee table.'*



The Sheds will give people an opportunity to pass on their skills and/or learn from the experience of others. Morgan tells us a story of a member of the [Westhill Men's Shed](#) in Aberdeenshire. *'He was well in his 90s, had lost his wife and was a recluse. He didn't speak to anyone during his first visit to the shed, but was encouraged to come back and is now one of the leading lights. He used to be a French polisher and is now passing on his skills to other members.'* You don't need a trade or even any skill to be part of a Men's Shed though. *'Not every man is good with his hands, there's a lot of men around with ten thumbs! But that doesn't matter. You can still pick up a coffee and speak with someone else with ten thumbs, and they'll find other things they can do!'*

Morgan hopes that the Shed will be able to form partnerships with existing groups in Orkney, and has already spoken with Restart Orkney and the Orkney Vintage Club about possible joint projects. He can also see the Shed hosting cooking demonstrations for men, simple stuff that a man on his own can cook that involves more than just a tin of baked beans. The possibilities of what could go on in the Shed seem endless and Morgan can see lots of other groups wanting to come on board.

All men over the age of 16 will be welcome to join the Shed, regardless of skill, ability or number of thumbs! One of the core target groups will be retired men who, explains Morgan, often find they have very little to do except watch daytime TV or go to the pub. The Shed will give them an alternative which is much healthier and much more fun. Morgan hopes to attract younger men too. *'There's a lot of young men who work a shift pattern, perhaps 3 weeks on 3 weeks off. I have a son in Shetland who works this and he's running out of projects about the house. He would be the type of guy who would love a Men's Shed.'* (Shetland too will soon have a Shed.)

What about women, we ask? *'There are women who are very good handed and who can knock spots off men in woodwork and mechanical work, but that's not the idea of a Men's Shed'*, explains Morgan. *'Men don't always want to open up to a woman. If a man has recently lost a partner and there were tears to come, he would try not to do it in front of a woman, whereas he would in front of a man.'* Women will definitely have a part to play in the Men's Shed, says Morgan, *'we'll be holding functions and of course women will be a part of those, but the workplace needs to be a place for men'*. Women will also be instrumental in encouraging their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons to join the Men's Shed: *'so many of the emails I receive start with the line "my wife told me to contact you"',* Morgan tells us.

Morgan's first experience of a Men's Shed was last summer when he was in Aberdeenshire visiting his wife's cousin. *'He's a member of the Westhill Men's Shed and invited me up to see it. I came in the door*



and saw the men, of all age groups, sitting playing cards and dominoes, and in the workshop on the woodworking machinery. There was just such a buzz. I thought we could do with this in Orkney. I came home and spoke to different folk about it, but had no idea about how to go about starting it. I couldn't believe it when I got a call from my wife's cousin, Dave, a few weeks later to say that he was coming to Orkney to talk about Men's Sheds!' Two public meetings were held in Orkney in July and August 2015 at which members of the Westhill Shed spoke about their experience. *'After the meetings we decided to go for it and we now have a Steering group of five: myself; Ian Stallard; Andy Swain; Dr John Corse; and David Harvey. The guys from Westhill have been great, a really big help. We're kind of modelling ourselves on them and their experience.'*

Members of the Westhill Men's Shed – image from the [Scottish Men's Shed Association](#)

So where are they up to now? *'We have our application away to become a SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and have a constitution written. Tomorrow we are finalising and hand delivering an application to the Council for a property.'* Unfortunately we can't tell you what or where this property is, but can say that it's quite central for Orkney. Everything is pretty much on hold now until they hear whether they have secured the property.

Some Sheds have been set up and are fully operational in two years. Morgan would like to see the Orkney Shed up and running sooner than that. *'If we can get our premises, we've got rooms, we've got storage and it's in pretty good condition. We just need to get some chairs and tables and invite people along. Sit the men down and say "right boys, welcome to Men's Shed. This is your shed, give us an idea of what you want in it."* *This is the real fun of Men's Shed, taking an empty shell and making it into what you want.'*

Morgan hopes that they can start off with at least 20 dedicated members and then watch it snowball. He hopes folk will come along, enjoy the experience and spread the word. The best advert, says Morgan, is word of mouth and that's something that we're good at in Orkney. One of the things that might not be so easy to do in Orkney, he says, is to get men fully engaged – *'Orkadian men would rather be at the back*

than the front. We've got to try and get them to come to the front, be noticed and be members.' We have a feeling that if anyone can encourage folk to the front, it'll be Morgan.

As well as looking for members, the Shed will also be looking for donations of equipment. 'We'll be asking people if they want to dispose of any reasonably good machinery or tools to think of us – the amount of good stuff that folk throw out because it needs a fuse changing is ridiculous. We'll also be needing chairs, tables, mugs, a kettle.....we have nothing!'

Along with donations, Orkney Men's Shed will be looking for funding, but can't start the process until their application to be a SCIO is processed. There's no Government funding for Men's Sheds at present, although both the UK and Scottish Governments have spoken about their merit. Morgan hopes that there may be some Government assistance in the future – the Australian Government, having recognised the positive impact the Sheds have had on both physical and mental health, now provide funding.

Although the Shed is not yet open for business, a huge amount of work has been done to get to this stage. Morgan tells us that we must give a special mention in the article to the team at VAO, whose help, he says, has been invaluable. *'Thanks to Meghan McEwan, but especially Edwina Lloyd'*, he says, *'if anybody can be more passionate about Men's Sheds than me, it's Edwina!'*

Having spent an hour chatting with Morgan, it would be impossible to be anything but passionate and excited about the project (even as a woman with no chance of membership)! Morgan hopes to hear in June whether they have secured their property, and we at VAO are keeping all our fingers (and thumbs) crossed. We've promised Morgan a front page spread in the Newsletter when the Shed opens for business.....so watch this space!

Click [here](#) for a PDF version of this article.



www.orkney-mens-shed.co.uk

morharcus@btinternet.com

Facebook.....coming soon

Also in the News

98 per cent of people depend on charity

Nearly every household in the UK has used the services of a charity, a new survey has discovered.

A poll conducted on behalf of the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) found 98% of UK households used a charity's service with more than half (51%) turning to a charity for advice.

Most popular services included buying goods in charity shops (88%), visiting charity-run museums and galleries (73%), visiting religious institutions with charitable status (51%) and getting advice from the charity or from a charity's website (51%).

John Low, chief executive at CAF said: 'All this goes to highlight the valuable role charities play in our lives, both enhancing our free time and stepping in to offer crucial support which may otherwise be difficult to access.'

Click [here](#) to read the full article in Third Force News.

Legislation, Guidance & Support

Scottish charity regulator marks ten years

Scotland's charity regulator, OSCR, has today [Monday 25 April 2016] marked ten years of registering, monitoring and guiding the country's 24,000 charities, by reflecting on its impact and setting out its vision for the future.

OSCR, Scotland's independent charity registrar and regulator, took up its full powers on 24 April 2006 and, says chief executive David Robb, has both witnessed and brought about significant change in the sector during that time.

'Before OSCR was set up, charity regulation in Scotland was limited,' he said. 'In our ten years we've worked closely with charities to drive up standards, we've supported those running charities to be more transparent about their activities and to make the right decisions, and we've taken firm action where required. We've also reviewed and refined our own structures and procedures to make sure that we are light-touch, proportionate and efficient and continue to reinforce public confidence in the years ahead'.

Click [here](#) for the full article on the OSCR website.



Volunteering opportunities

The Adult Befriending Service is looking to recruit volunteers from your Parish NOW!

You won't believe what you can do – Give, Gain and have FUN!

Volunteering gives you a chance to do all three and Voluntary Action Orkney (VAO) is here to help you do it. You can volunteer with family and friends? – Or by volunteering, you can find new friends. You can use the skills you have to make a real difference to others, or make a difference while you are learning new skills. Your favourite hobby may be a way you can help others such as knitting, sewing, pottery, walking, etc. Or if you have always fancied trying something new but never had the chance perhaps you would like to befriend someone who is lonely and isolated or you may wish to volunteer at a group activity such as a crafts, singing, having a yarn about the 'good old days'.

Volunteering could provide the opportunity you have been waiting for. Volunteering can also give you the confidence and skills needed to move on to further education or finding a new career or job.

The Adult Befriending Service, which received 5 year funding from The Big Lottery in January 2016, aims to enhance the quality of life of older people, reduce their loneliness and offers the opportunity for you to develop a trusting relationship with older adults in the community who may be socially and geographically isolated.

As a volunteer, with VAO, you will be fully trained before being matched to an individual or a group. You can volunteer for as many or as few hours as you wish and at the times that suit you. Everyone can find something that they enjoy doing!

Would you like to find out more? Why not give us a call on 872897 and ask to speak to either, Linsey Drever, Adult Befriending Service Co-Ordinator, Michelle Manzie, Development Worker or Arlene Montgomery, Development Worker.

Kitchen Volunteer

The Salvation Army are looking for a friendly team player who can join their kitchen team at the weekly drop in lunch. The volunteer will be responsible for washing up, loading the steriliser and general kitchen tidying. This is a great opportunity to talk to members of the public and provide a hot meal to those who may be vulnerable or just in need of some company. Please contact [Rob](#) on 872897 for more information.



Third Sector Forum

The Third Sector Forum will meet on 19 May in the VAO Board Room. If you would like to join the Third Sector Forum or would like more information, please contact [Cecily](#) on 873937 or visit the VAO [website](#).

Education & Training Opportunities

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Training: Legally High?

Find out the real information on 'legal highs' and new drug trends with this credible and informative course.

The course will discuss the most commonly used new psychoactive substances (NPS or 'legal highs'), information on effects and ways to support those who may take them, including harm reduction.

By the end of the training participants will be able to:

- Identify the impact of new drugs and recall trends in use.
- Name the typical effects and side effects of the key substances in use.
- Recall the issues surrounding availability and legality.
- Identify techniques to work with users, including harm reduction and motivational interviewing.
- Identify sources of help and support locally and nationally.



Refresher sessions: (intended for people who have already completed the full day training programme)

24 May 10.00 – 1.00pm

27 September 10.00 – 1.00pm

Full Day Training Sessions:

23 June 10.00 – 4.30pm

24 November 10.00 – 4.30pm

Sessions will be held in the **Kirkwall Town Hall**. Please note that spaces are limited therefore booking is essential to ensure your place is secured.

For more details or to book a place, please contact [Sharlene McAlister](#)

Session Facilitators: Angela Colborn-Veitch - Dual Diagnosis CPN, NHS Orkney; Katie Spence – Coordinator, Orkney ADP; Carrie Rendall - Substance Misuse Development Officer, Orkney ADP

VAO Service of the month

Did you know VAO can do mail shots for your group? And by using our franking service you can save on mail costs. Newsletter or AGM time? We can format and print your document, label your envelopes and organise and post your mailing – all at competitive third sector rates. Call us now to find out more and join the growing number of organisations benefitting from VAO office services.

