

Newsletter August 2016

VAO News & Services

Young People's Befriending Project Fun Day Out

Young people and their volunteers from the Young People's Befriending Project (YPBP) enjoyed a great day out with the Rumble Skate Orkney Alpacas in Deerness last month. They had a wonderful time being introduced to all the animals that make up the Rumble Skate menagerie; from Arthur and Noodles the curly haired Angora goats, to Doris and Daisy the monochrome Zwartbles and of course Gus, Moomin, Insch and Mungo, the Alpaca boys.

The young people thoroughly enjoyed feeding and grooming the animals and learning about their habits and care. It was both a fun and educational experience rolled into one!

The YPBP is always keen to welcome new volunteers, so if you could give a couple of hours a fortnight to spend with a young person, helping them grow in confidence and sharing your hobbies and interests, then drop us an [email](#) or come into VAO and speak with Morgan or Hannah.



Loud n Live 3

Loud n Live 3, a night of music organised by young volunteers on the ROAR committee with VAO was a great success. Over 200 people turned up to see 10 local acts perform over 5 hours. There was also a charity auction. In total, over £2500 was raised for the volunteers' chosen charity – Women's Aid Orkney.



L-R: Maggie and James Nicolson have both been on the ROAR committee during their respective S6 years; Bad Apple rounded the evening off in style; MC duties for the evening were shared by Jamie MacDonald and David Flanagan

VAO Open Day: Saturday 24 September

Interested in volunteering? Want to find out more? Then pop in to the VAO offices on Bridge Street on Saturday 24 September. Along with activities for the kids, there'll be tea, coffee, home bakes and the opportunity for an informal chat with the VAO team.

For more information, please contact [Rob](#) on 872897 or call in on 24 September between 10 and 3.00. We look forward to seeing you then!

Funding & Finance

The Funders are coming!

The Big Lottery Fund and Scottish Land Fund will be in Orkney on **Tuesday 6 September**. Why not come along to find out more about individual funders' requirements, project planning, shaping your outcomes and where to go with questions. Information on other funders will also be available.

Sessions will be held in King Street Halls from 1.30-4.00 and 4.30-7.00.

For more information or to book an individual appointment, please contact [Meghan](#) on 872897.

Tesco Bags of Help Programme – open for applications from local groups!



Applications are now open for the Tesco Bags of Help Programme on a rolling basis and will be accepted at any time. There are no longer any application deadlines (previously they were quarterly).

A range of not-for-profit organisations can apply. This includes voluntary and community organisations, registered charities, community interest companies, friends of groups with a constitution, schools, health bodies (Primary Care Trust, NHS Hospital Trust, Foundation Hospital etc), parish, town and community councils.

To make an application or find out more, please click [here](#).

Legislation & Guidance

Scottish Government Water Charges and Sewerage Exemption Scheme

OSCR has recently issued a [briefing note](#) which sets out the answers to some of the questions they are asked about the Water Charges and Sewerage Exemption scheme. (Please note this is a Scottish Government scheme. The Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), are not involved in general administration.)

SPIcE Briefing – Named Person

This [briefing](#) summarises the judgement, the parliamentary passage of the legislation and looks briefly at other Scottish Parliament legislation that has been challenged in the courts.

Local Third Sector News

Time to Talk at Orkney Blide Trust



Orkney Blide Trust in partnership with Celia Clark Counselling now offer a Counselling Service, Time to Talk, in addition to their other services.

The free service will support individuals by offering time limited counselling (six sessions per individual) and financial assistance to those living on the isles who wish to access the service is available

Counsellor Celia Clark tells us that she is pleased to be working with the Blide Trust. *'The work of the Orkney Blide Trust is an important and integral part of the support offered to those experiencing difficulties with mental ill health within our community. The Counselling Service will be great addition to what is already of value to so many.'*

'For those who don't know, Counselling is a talking therapy that offers a safe and confidential space to explore issues and difficult feelings that are affecting mental health. It could be Time to Talk if you are experiencing difficulties with any of the following; Anxiety, Stress, Depression, Eating Disorders, Suicidal thoughts, Trauma, Self Harm, Bereavement, Abuse, Transition, Anger, Addiction, Low Self Worth, Relationship Issues, Family Issues, Terminal Illness, Phobias, Insomnia.'

'Counselling is not for everyone and it can be a challenge but it also plays an important part for many in supporting the development of skills to manage personal difficulties, in reducing or resolving distress and promoting mental wellbeing.'

Receptionist Lesley-Anne Miller, recently recruited for the Counselling Service, will be the first point of contact, managing referrals and appointments. For more information on Time to Talk, to arrange a session or to make a referral please contact Lesley-Anne on 01856 874874, 5-8pm Monday to Friday, or by email at receptionist@blidetrust.org.

Who's behind the Blue Door?



Stromness Eventide Club

5 – 10 September

Sandwick Community Association

12 – 17 September

Orkney Football Club

19 – 24 September

West Mainland & Gilbertson Day Centre 26 September – 1 October

Volunteering opportunities

VAO Adult Befriending Team are looking for Activity Group Helpers

Volunteers are needed to help at an exciting new group which is aimed at stimulating and having fun with people with mild to moderate dementia. Duties will include helping to run the activities, making a cuppa and helping to clear up at the end of the session. Training and support will be provided. For more information please contact Linsey on 872897.



Yip and Yarn Knitting Volunteers needed

Orkney Libraries are looking for volunteers to run their Yap & Yarn sessions in Kirkwall and Stromness libraries.

The sessions run on alternate Mondays from 5-7pm from October to March. Two volunteers each for Kirkwall and Stromness are needed. Knitting/Crocheting experience is essential.

Duties are:

- Start at 4.45pm
- Prepare teas/coffees
- Set up for session
- Assist group members with their projects as necessary
- Share new ideas
- Wash up cups and tidy up at end of session to finish by 7pm
- Liaise with library staff members - Karen Walker and Heather Balfour -who will also provide support



For more information please contact [Rob](#) on 872897.

For details of other volunteering opportunities, please visit the [VAO website](#) or contact [Rob](#) on 872897.

Have your say.....

New Mental Health Strategy

The Scottish Government is seeking views on how mental health services can be improved over the next decade.

Responses are welcome from any organisation or individual with an interest in mental health, or with an experience of services. This will help ministers to set their priorities as part of a new mental health strategy, to be published later this year. Please click [here](#) to have your say.

In addition to the online consultation, Health Scotland and Young Scot are hosting 4 half day interactive engagement events across Scotland to gather views. These events will be of interest to young people and adults with lived experience, their carers as well as those commissioning and providing services. Please click [here](#) for more information on the events or [here](#) to register.

Consultation on Social Security in Scotland

The Scottish Government is publishing a consultation on social security in Scotland, to gather views and inform future decisions including the forthcoming social security bill. The consultation will run until October 28 2016. Please click [here](#) for more information.

Third Sector Forum

The next meeting of the Third Sector Forum will take place on **Thursday 22 September** at 11am in the McGillivray Room, Kirkwall Library and Archive. For more information the Third Sector Forum, please visit our [website](#) or contact [Cecily](#) on 873937.

Education & Training



Alcohol Brief Interventions Training

13 September and 22 November

The training aims to enable practitioners to competently, confidently and appropriately raise and respond to alcohol-related issues with patients/service users, and to deliver brief interventions in line with existing evidence.

For more information or to book a place, please contact ork-hb.learning@nhs.net

Playing Your Part – training for charity trustees

VAO Board Room, Thursday, September 15th at 2pm

Are you a new charity trustee of a local charity? Have you been in post for some time and need a refresher on your legal duties? Have you joined a Board and have still to find out what your role actually is? Then come along to this friendly and informal session!

Participants will:

- reflect on their reasons for joining the Board
- be more aware of their duties as Charity Trustees and/or Company Directors
- be aware of the difference between Management and Governance and depending on the structure of the organisation, comprehend the difficulties of the crossover
- understand the reporting requirements for their regulators (OSCR/CIC Regulator/Companies House) and their governing principles
- have consideration of their role in the community and the duty to their stakeholders
- understand their financial obligations as Trustees/Company Directors
- have an awareness of further sources of help and advice

For more information or to book a place, please contact [VAO](#) on 872897. The training will cost £15 per participant.

New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) Training: Legally High?

Refresher session: 27 September, 10.00-1.00, Kirkwall Town Hall (This is intended for people who have already completed the full day training programme)

Full Day Training Session: 10 November, 10:00 – 16:30, Kirkwall Town Hall

This course is open to everyone but it may be particularly suited to those who work with people who are taking drugs as well as people who work with vulnerable groups, such as those who work in housing, young people's services, education, emergency services, healthcare and social work.

Please note that spaces are limited therefore booking is essential to ensure your place is secured. Please contact [Erin Stout](#) for more information or to book a place.

One Digital Meet Up Orkney

29 September 2016, Kirkwall Town Hall, 11am

Half of all charities are lacking basic digital skills so why not meet up and help each other over a cuppa! SCVO are hosting their first One Digital Meetup in Orkney on 29 September which will include presentations from Tracey Hawkins (Digital Unite) and Jordan Ogg (SCVO Digital and Social Media Officer) along with Q&A, group discussion and networking.

The meeting is open to anyone working in or supporting the Third Sector. For more information please click [here](#).

Dates for your Diary

Orkney Suicide Prevention Events/Campaigns: September 2016

Awareness raising and information sharing: 8 September 2016

King Street Halls

Session 1 (13.30 -15.00)

The aim of the session is to raise awareness of other services, improve communication and ensure that referral routes and criteria are clear. The session is for services that provide support to people in the community.

Session 2 (15.00-16.30)

The aim of the session is to provide information about the support that is available in Orkney. This session is for individuals who provide line management support to individuals.



World Suicide Prevention Day: 10 September.

Agencies and shops in Orkney are being asked to display a poster of the candle symbol for suicide prevention and place a battery operated candle in the window on this day.

“There is no shame in saying I’m not fine” campaign: from 12 September

This campaign will start on the 12 September 2016 following Suicide Prevention day. Posters and booklets are available to display that highlight this issue and provide contact details for local agencies and help lines.

If you would like to support the campaign, would like a poster to display or information on the event on 8 September, please contact [Sarah Kirkness](#) on 888260.

Community Justice Stakeholder Event

Friday 16 September 2016

3.30pm – 5.00pm, Grainbank Room, Pickaquoy Centre, Kirkwall

The Shadow Community Justice Partnership would like to invite you to a Community Justice Stakeholder Event

This Event will:

- Provide an introduction to Community Justice
- Present local and national data
- Help identify local needs
- Look at what opportunities there are for you to benefit from and contribute to Community Justice locally

If you would like to attend, or would like more information, please contact: [Gill Learmonth](#), Community Justice Transition Lead, on 01856 873535 ext 2618

Annual Community Halls Meeting

Saturday 24 September – 10am Firth Community Hall

Shows are over, schools are back and the time quickly approaches for....the Annual Community Halls meeting!

Firth Community Association are hosting the meeting this year on September 24 2016. This year will be the traditional meet to share experiences, learn something new and connect with those doing similar things to yourself all over the county. Thank you to all those who have indicated that they will attend. Now we need to make sure that all of you have this opportunity to meet, and learn

and share (and enjoy the tasty fare that Firth will be providing!), so please let [Ernie](#), [Meghan](#) or [Edwina](#) know that you will be coming as soon as possible.

The [programme](#) this year promises to be exciting and practical, so please do book your place as soon as possible.

Note also that VAO have begun to populate a webpage specifically for you as Community Halls! Click [here](#) to see the information we have already begun to collect. We need your feedback as to what else would be useful for you to see on this page and it is a live page, so can be adapted/added to as you require. We look forward to hearing from you!

North Alliance Conference

5 October, Nairn

The North Alliance, a partnership of Community Learning and Development practitioners from the North of Scotland, is holding it's annual Conference on Wednesday 5 October in Nairn. Alasdair McKinlay (Head of the Community Planning and Empowerment Unit at Scottish Government) and Maureen Mallon (Assistant Director, Education Scotland) will speak on the Conference theme of **Celebrating Inclusion and Good Practice across the North** and workshops will be held on a variety of topics including Syrian New Scots, Place Standards, Participatory Budgeting and Suicide Awareness.

Registration for Conference will open this week and details can be found on the North Alliance [website](#). For more information please contact [Cecily](#) on 873937.

VAO service of the month



Orkney Community Directory

Need information about local services? Then have a look at VAO's [Community Directory](#). Here you'll find information on and contact details for a wealth of third sector and statutory organisations in Orkney – from counselling services to karate classes and from playgroups to emergency housing services.

We are currently in the process of updating our online and printed Directories and will be in touch very soon to make sure that the details we hold on your organisation or group are correct. If you can't find your organisation please let us know.

If you have any questions in the meantime, please contact [Cecily](#) on 873937.

Focus on.....Orkney Foodbank



Since opening its doors in 2013, the Orkney Foodbank has provided emergency food supplies to over 1,500 people. Of these 1,500 Orkney residents, about 500 are children. *'We knew there was a need, but the level of need has really surprised us'*, founding member and foodbank secretary, Rhoda Walker, tells us. *'The fact that there are hungry babies saddened us all. I'm just so glad that we're here to help.'* In the tenth of our interviews we members we met with Rhoda and Foodbank volunteer, Karen Williams, to find out more about the vital service the Foodbank provides.

'Foodbank's main aim is to be able to provide food parcels and emergency food parcels to people who find themselves in a set of circumstances which means that they cannot purchase food', Rhoda explains. *'And it's not just food. We're also able to provide items like toiletries and dog and cat*

food. We provide baby food through our hungry baby scheme and can offer Hydro tokens thanks to a specific grant. Things that most of us are lucky enough to take for granted.'

Rhoda explains that the Foodbank is not a 'feeding programme', but rather an emergency short term measure. In the region of thirty statutory and third sector agencies in Orkney are able to issue Foodbank tokens - including GPs, Social Work, Citizens Advice Bureau and Women's Aid Orkney – which can be exchanged at the Foodbank for three days' of emergency food. Rhoda explains that people are allowed up to three separate parcels, although a significant number of clients only require one. The Trussell Trust (who run a network of over 400 Foodbanks across the UK, including Orkney) advise that after three vouchers/parcels an individual's circumstances should be resolved and support from the foodbank no longer necessary. *'Very few folk need more than three parcels'*, explains Rhoda. In addition to the three day food parcels, the Foodbank also provide emergency food parcels, which are located across the mainland and isles, to get people through until they can arrange the full package on the next opening day.

Rhoda explains that changes to benefits, low income and zero hours contracts are some of the main reasons people find themselves in need of help from the Foodbank. Situations that any of us could find ourselves in. There is also real need among the over 65s, she tells us, but very few have used the service. *'We really want to target helping this group as we know there are over 65s who are in need but we think that they are too proud and private to come here for help.'*

There is unfortunately still a huge amount of stigma associated with the use of Foodbanks and a real mix in people's perception of and attitudes toward the Foodbank here in Orkney. *'In Orkney we've been protected from the realities of life to a certain extent and people here pride themselves on looking after their own.'* This, Rhoda explains, leads some to believe that there isn't a need for a Foodbank here. It is easy for Rhoda to dispel this myth and she outlines in no uncertain terms why there is a need here in Orkney. Without compromising confidentiality it's difficult to provide specific examples of the circumstances leading to people using the Foodbank, but Rhoda and Karen tell us that they and colleagues at the Foodbank have heard some horrific stories from clients, *'things that you wouldn't think would happen in Orkney in the 21st Century and a level of need that saddens us. We are absolutely clear that the folk who pitch up are in need, the referring agency has assessed this, and when somebody comes to us with a voucher in their hand we will issue a food parcel – we absolutely do not pass judgement on the reason for needing a foodparcel and would ask that the wider public don't either. There but for the grace of god go any one of us and the level of poverty in our islands is a sad reality!'*

On a more positive note, given the amount of donations and support, Rhoda would say that on the whole the Foodbank has been very well received in Orkney. Especially, she says, as *'there are so many competing priorities looking for funding and support in Orkney. We don't take it for granted at all'*. The majority of the Foodbank's funding comes from local individuals and organisations. *'Our fixed collection point in Tesco is used by loads of people and we're extremely grateful for that. We also have individuals and organisations who collect food and donate to us, for example a number of Churches and OIC's Children and Families team have a food donation box. The generosity of the Orkney public is amazing.'* A grant from the Ronald Slater Trust currently provides Hydro tokens for those in need. *'We recognised the fact that we were giving people a food parcel but that they'd got no electricity to actually be able to heat the food. We're now able to give them a £10 voucher so that they can actually cook the food provided.'*

In its three year existence, the Orkney Foodbank increased its role significantly. In addition to the provision of food parcels, the Foodbank set up a drop-in service for folk to



Volunteers Daphne Tait and Janet Prior-Sanderson check the stock at the Foodbank.

have a cuppa and some company, a tattie van (with profits going to the Foodbank) and an out of date table where people could receive (or make a donation) recently out of date items. While these services have proved popular with clients and volunteers alike, Rhoda explains that resources are stretched and they have made the difficult decision to cut back. *'We need to ensure that we have the resources to meet demand'*, she says. *'We've looked long and hard at our core function – which is food parcels and emergency food parcels – and decided to re-prioritise and re-focus our goals to ensure that this is sustainable'*. As such the drop-in, tattie van and out of date table will no longer be offered from 6 September. The drop-in will undoubtedly be missed by those who regularly attend, but Rhoda and colleagues will ensure that folk know what else is available, for example the regular drop-in sessions at the Salvation Army and Blide Trust.

Although the drop-in is highly valued by those attending, Rhoda suggests that it may be a barrier to some clients accessing the core Foodbank service. *'It can be quite intimidating for folk coming into the Foodbank, especially when there are a lot of people about. We know that some people physically can't make it through the door and we're hoping that the changes will make it easier and less intimidating for them. There's a need for a drop-in and a need for a Foodbank, but they need to be separate. There are drop-ins and other services that we can signpost people to, but we can't signpost them to a food parcel service anywhere else.'*

People collecting food parcels will still be able to have a cup of tea and a chat with volunteers while waiting for their parcel to be made up. Some of the larger Trussell Trust Foodbanks are widening their support for clients at this stage, providing advice on money management, housing, job skills, etc. Rhoda doesn't feel that this is applicable for the Foodbank here in Orkney and thinks it makes more sense to use the skills and knowledge of the agencies already offering these services in Orkney. *'It's really about signposting and making sure that the clients know that there is help available'*, and they work closely with both third sector and statutory agencies in Orkney to do this.

The Foodbank is entirely staffed by volunteers, and Rhoda tells us that they are always looking for more to join the team. Volunteers carry out a wide range of tasks, from stock taking and administration to making tea and chatting with clients. *'Folk can choose what they want to do. Some folk enjoy meeting the clients while others prefer to stay in the stock room behind the scenes. At the moment we're also looking to recruit a volunteer [Foodbank Co-ordinator](#)'*. Rhoda and Karen clearly enjoy and value their roles at the Foodbank. When we ask Rhoda when she's happiest at work there, she tells us that it's *'hearing the stories that come back from the staff (Rhoda tends to work behind the scenes rather than with the clients directly), especially if somebody's come back and said thank you and explained the difference that it's made to them. Knowing that we can make a difference to people who are not in as fortunate a position as ourselves is important to us all. It's very humbling.'*

We ask where Rhoda would like to see the Foodbank in five years' time. *'Obviously what we'd really like is there to be no more demand. In an ideal world we wouldn't be here because people didn't need the service. The reality is that we still will be here so what we want is to be able to meet the need.'* We ask what the Foodbank would do with a donation of £1,000,000. It doesn't take long for Rhoda to come up with a plan for the money..... *'a purpose built facility including showers, laundry facilities and a kitchen where folk could make themselves a meal and learn cooking skills'*. She would also like to be able to take such facilities out to all areas of Orkney. Unfortunately such a large donation is unlikely, and as such Rhoda and colleagues are having to focus on their core function, the provision of food parcels.

We ask what she would like folk in Orkney to do to help the work of the foodbank. *'To keep donating and spread the word'*, she replies. *'People have been so generous, especially in the face of such resistance. The amount of food and money we receive is just amazing. But we know that there is unmet need out there, especially among the over 65s, where pride and stigma will stop people from accessing us.'* Rhoda and colleagues work tirelessly to ensure that the needs of our community can be met, with numbers using the Foodbank slowly creeping up. *'We haven't really been open long enough to know whether the need is actually increasing, or whether organisations are getting better at referring to us. To a certain extent it doesn't matter, the issue is that the need is there, it's probably here to stay, and we need to meet it.'*

From 6 September the Foodbank will be open to voucher issuers and clients from 12.00 – 2.00 on Tuesdays and Fridays. If you would like more information on the work of the Foodbank or would like to volunteer, Rhoda would love to hear from you.



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