



Highland Senior Citizens Network

Nothing about us without us

Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SCO34260

June/July 2022

Chair's introduction

Covid has spawned many new phenomena. One recently caught my eye in a newspaper. A third of British adults - and half of those over 70 are so worried about catching Covid that they are still socially distancing most or all of the time according to Government figures. This has been dubbed 'Long Social Distancing'.

Fifty five percent of those aged 70 and over, who are most vulnerable to the virus "always or usually" socially distance when leaving home – foregoing visits to cafes, restaurants, cinemas, concerts and other crowded venues, according to the Office for National Statistics. Men are slightly more likely than women overall to socially distance.

But while the eldest in the population are socially distancing the most, the practice goes way beyond the four million Britons who are classed as "extremely vulnerable". Large numbers of people in the younger age groups also exercise a high degree of caution. One researcher said he was quite surprised by the sheer scale of Long Social Distancing, especially among younger people.

With Autumn on the horizon, and with the virus still able to throw few surprises, Long Social Distancing may be no bad thing.

Ian McNamara



Staying in touch with Highland Senior Citizens Network

Phone or e-mail our Co-ordinators

Anne McDonald [07933 653313]

anne-hscn@outlook.com

Jo Cowan [07933 653585]

jo-hscn@outlook.com

call the HSCN phone: 07716 884 989

e-mail on hscn@hotmail.co.uk

write to Box 301, Mailboxes,
8 Church Street, Inverness IV1 1EA

visit our website www.hscn.co.uk

follow us on Twitter and our
Facebook page

We're continuing to look at ways of improving accessibility for people with visual impairment. Talk Lochaber talking newspaper service is now supporting us to provide a recorded version of our news-sheets on a USB memory-stick.

Please contact Jo on **07933 653585** if you require a recording.

Digital Opportunities

We never forget that many people aren't online. That's the main reason Highland Senior Citizens Network still circulates a printed news-sheet every month for those who need it. But we're also keen to let those who do have aspirations to get online, or who need support to use their digital devices, know of projects which can help. **Please let us know of anything happening in your area.** Kirsty from the Libertie Project got in touch to let you know about an opportunity they are offering.

Connect Up with the Libertie Project!

We are the Libertie Project, a small social enterprise in the Highlands. Our main focus is digital inclusion - helping people get online, use the internet safely and get the most from their digital devices.

We are offering free one to one support for over 55s from our digital hub at 58 Denny St, Inverness. We can help with all kinds of things including getting to grips with the basic features of a Laptop, Tablet or Smartphone, making the most of accessibility features such as increasing text size and voice assistant features.

We can also help with common concerns such as internet safety, online shopping, mobile banking and much more! We can help you to stay connected with friends and family more easily using email, messaging services and video calling.

Because support is one to one, we can tailor our services to suit your needs. Our friendly staff are happy to help with whatever you need.

We are open 10am-3pm Tues, Wed and Thurs.

Appointments are usually one hour long and will take place over several weeks for as long as you need. During our first appointment we will have a chat and see what kind of help you need. Bring your own device or use one of ours!

Contact digital@libertie.co.uk or call 01463 417240 for more information or to make an appointment.

Libertie welcomes donations of devices from individuals and organisations. After refurbishment and data-cleansing, they go to local people facing digital exclusion.



CONNECT UP!

Are You Over 55? Want To Learn Basic Digital Skills?

We are offering free 1 to 1 support from our Digital Hub at 58 Denny Street, online and over the phone.

- Face to Face Support
- Online and Phone Support
- Gain Confidence
- Learn Key Digital Skills
- Reduce Social Isolation

We can offer digital support for Smartphones, Laptops and Tablets and can help with online basics, accessibility features, office programs and much more. Our office is open 10am-3pm Tues, Wed and Thurs. Get in touch to book an appointment.



digital@libertie.co.uk



01463 417240



www.libertie.co.uk



Please Keep Putting News Out to People Who Are Not Online

Our Highland Senior Citizens Network Online Tea-Break folk were discussing how difficult it is to know what's happening in communities nowadays if you don't have access to the internet, or to Facebook.

If you can, please encourage your local organisations to:

Pinpoint, and promote use of, community spaces where information is most visible

Use posters, hard-copy flyers, letters or newsletters as well as e-mail/social media

Tell people it would help if they share the information with those not online

Note where older people gather and make a visit to specially invite them

Engage with local services and projects who can share news face-to-face

Write about coming events in the local newspaper well in advance

Share information in new ways e.g. through schools, bus stops, hairdressers

Object to surveys, consultations, offers which are online only

Use local radio, local libraries, church/club announcements, local magazines

Try to give a phone contact or a place that people can come to for information

TO HELP KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED OF OPPORTUNITIES

As part of our focus on Food, Fuel and Care, Highland Senior Citizens Network would like to look at barriers to older people in Highland accessing food banks and community food-share initiatives. What are your thoughts about this? – and what do you think can be done to make these supports more accessible to older people as the cost-of-living rises hit those on a fixed income? Contact Anne or Jo with any comments/ideas.

University of the Highlands and Islands healthy ageing research: How does exercise affect your appetite?

I was kindly invited to contribute an article to the February news-sheet discussing how exercise might affect appetite in people aged over 65 years old. This is an important research topic for me and one that I hope will be of interest to the local community. Thanks to HSCN for inviting me back!



Since writing the February article, I've been waiting on the approval of some funding to support my work and I am pleased to say that one of the two funders has provisionally agreed to provide support! Hopefully I will hear later this month/early July if all funding has been successfully acquired. In the meantime, I've been trying to raise awareness of the research with Age Scotland and the Scottish Section of the Nutrition Society, plus continue discussions with academic colleagues around the UK. There is also a nutrition company in the USA who would like to be involved, but more about that next time.

I will soon be on the lookout for volunteers to participate in the first step of this programme, so please look out for advertisements! The first study will include exercise classes that will be run by High Life Highland. We plan for the classes to have a range of activities and to be suitable for those who have low-moderate physical activity levels. We will be looking for people aged 65-80 years, with a reduced appetite and a body mass index (BMI) of 20-23 kg/m².

What is BMI though and how do you calculate it? BMI is a measure that uses your height and weight to work out if your weight is healthy. You can calculate your BMI by dividing your body weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared (for example: 75 kilograms / (1.85 metres x 1.85 metres) = 21.9 kg/m²). The NHS provide lots of easily accessible information about BMI.

If you think you might be interested in contributing to this research, either by participating in a study or by sharing your views, then please feel free to get in touch with me by emailing daniel.crabtree@uhi.ac.uk or phone 01463 279405

Finally, thanks to everyone who got in touch following the February news-sheet! All the best, Dr Daniel Crabtree.

IT plays Houdini!

2:00 am – deep sleep. Must be an exciting dream. There's an alarm going off in the distance. No. It's our alarm. It will be a false alarm – usually a nocturnal winged insect flying across the beam. Descend the stairs warily. There is no sign of a forced entry. Check all is well. Then the sound of soft padding feet creeping up from behind. Hair stands on end. IT appears out of the gloom, delighted at seeing someone at such an ungodly hour.

How the [REDACTED] did that happen? On checking IT's cage, someone had left the side door open that gives access to the water bowl. Check for canine vandalism after IT's nocturnal prowling. All clear. The following morning, in day light, a cherished wooden trivet is found on the kitchen floor - reduced to a pile of splinters. Lesson learned – the alarm works but doesn't wake IT's Mistress.

From the frontiers of science comes a discovery that will not be a revelation to dog owners. Over the centuries dogs have evolved to the point where they now have a full range of facial expressions and are able to implore, exhort or, in short, manipulate their owners. IT has a wide repertoire – anticipation, impatience, excitement, curiosity, joy, contentment. What's missing? Remorse - never a flicker.

Our regular contributor continues to prefer anonymity...and we continue to enjoy their lived experience of being trained by a pet in later life!



Perhaps this would be a good time to remind our author of the many benefits of having a pet, as promoted by the Blue Cross charity:

- Health & Fitness
- Wellbeing
- Friendship
- Preventing Loneliness
- Inspiration
- Learning

And a quote from their website
www.bluecross.org.uk

"Pets are, undisputedly,
the very best medicine."

Is that a snort of derision we hear from the author?

Highland Senior Citizens Network frequently flags up consultations being held by the Scottish Parliament. Here is a summary of a “Call for Views” (closing 30th June) which asks how the public engages (or doesn’t) with Parliament itself. For fuller information call the number at the foot of the article or visit the Scottish Parliament website <https://yourviews.parliament.scot/cppp/participation-2022/>

Public Participation at the Scottish Parliament

What we’re doing

We want to make sure that the Scottish Parliament’s work involves, reflects and meets the needs of the full range of communities it represents.

We know that some people are more closely involved in our work than others. By being involved, we mean people sharing views in writing, online or in person, starting a petition or talking to MSPs about an issue that’s important to them. Some people never become involved in our work.

We want to understand:

why that is the case

what we can do to make sure that the Scottish Parliament engages with everyone in a way that works for them.

How you can share your views

There are two ways you can tell us what you think.

For individuals

If you are an **individual**, please complete the **shorter survey**.

This is a multiple-choice survey, with some space for any extra information you would like to share with us.

This survey is designed to be anonymous so please don’t share any personal information in the free text boxes (e.g. your name or contact details).

We estimate it will take less than 10 minutes to complete the shorter survey.

For organisations

If you are responding to this survey on behalf of a **community group** or **organisation**, then please complete the more detailed consultation.

The questions are very similar to the shorter survey, but this has more space to tell us what you think.

If you need extra help to tell us what you think

We normally ask that you send us your views online.

However, if you require assistance to share your views, then please contact us via 0131 348 5000 or 0800 092 7500. You can also email info@parliament.scot. If you would like to speak to someone in Gaelic: 0131 348 5395 (message service only)

We can then explore alternative ways for you to tell us what you think.

Age Scotland National Energy Survey

How are surging energy prices affecting you?
Our new national survey for over 50s in Scotland is looking into this and seeking to understand

- how people communicate with their energy supplier and how it can be improved
- knowledge of national energy efficiency schemes,
- and how households are getting on with installing interlinked fire and smoke alarms.

By taking part you could win £50 cash in our prize drawn. Take the survey today at

www.age.scot/energysurvey2022

The survey is open until 27th June.

For those not online, please contact Anne or Jo for a paper copy.



Some excerpts from Scottish Older People's Assembly (SOPA) June News

Full news-sheet available on SOPA website or by calling 07434 867890

SOPA's Strategic Aims have been agreed as follows: -

- To facilitate and empower older people to have their voices heard.
- To influence policy and practice on issues relating to older people, age and ageing.

These aims link closely and build on SOPA's mission, objectives and the outcomes we are funded to deliver against, you can find out more on the SOPA website at

<http://www.scotopa.org.uk/aboutus.asp>

Priorities for the next year

It has been agreed that SOPA will focus on the following areas of work over the next 6 months, building towards an Assembly in October 2022.

Age-friendly Communities: This work links closely with the Older People's Champions campaign and we will continue to support a network of Champions once positions are confirmed following the recent local government elections.




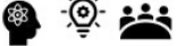

Health and Wellbeing: Key areas where SOPA can influence policy will be a focus for the Health and Wellbeing sub-group. Our current priority is contributing to the consultation on the draft Strategy for Health and Social Care for Older People

Save the Date! Scottish Older People's Assembly – 5th October 2022

We are looking forward to hosting an Assembly later this year and we are making plans for an in-person event in Perth on Wednesday 5th October 2022. Please save the date and further information will follow.

Transforming the Highland Respiratory Service Event

Join us to find out about, and celebrate, what we have achieved during our TEC Transforming Local Systems Pathfinder project

			
Patient information	Patient support	Clinician knowledge	Data sharing & flow
 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respiratory Resource Hub – online and on paper 2. Online open learning and Q&A sessions 3. Digital access to patient's own medical records 4. Improved secondary care letters 	 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Improved access to specialist respiratory nurses 6. Improved access to and uptake of pulmonary rehab 7. Embed 3rd sector (CHSS & LGOWIT) within the pathway 	 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Improved Respiratory Guidelines on TAM 9. Improved opportunities for learning & knowledge exchange through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online teaching sessions • Multidisciplinary team meetings • Joint clinics • Mentoring 	 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Improved secondary care systems and processes 11. Improved clinical applications and data sharing for healthcare professionals 12. Implemented COPD pathway & improved data sharing with SAS

Just click on the Eventbrite link below to register your interest - and remember to put a place saver in your diary.

WWW.EVENTBRITE.CO.UK/E/TRANSFORMING-THE-HIGHLAND-RESPIRATORY-SERVICE-TICKETS-344100011397



About this event

This celebratory event is being held online to help ensure that as many of our "stakeholders" as possible are able to attend, including:

- Patients and carers from across the Highlands
- GPs and primary care staff from across the Highlands
- Respiratory specialists (including consultants, doctors, nurses, and physios) from across the Highlands and Scotland
- Specialists who work with patients with other long term conditions
- Third sector colleagues who work with respiratory patients
- Members of the national TEC TLS Pathfinder program and colleagues working on other TEC TLS Pathfinders across Scotland

The event will be hosted by Pennie Taylor and will include short talks, and a showcase of:

- Where we were
- What we did and who with
- Where we are now
- Where to from here
- A panel session with questions, answers and discussion.



Online Tea Break taking a break but invitations to tea welcomed!

We're taking a break from our online meetings in July. However, Anne and Jo are keen to meet up with groups holding face-to-face meetings, activities or events. So, if you would like them to come along for a chat about what matters to older people in your area, please give us a call!



Focus On Summer Activity

In the Highlands, summer can actually be a lonely and inactive time if your usual activities stop, you're not going away and you're not seeing family or having visitors. Why not think about trying something new or different? We can't give a comprehensive list of what's happening across the Highlands – but here's a flavour of the wide variety of activities that are around. A bit like planting seeds and hoping some flower!

<- The photo to the left is a great idea for a community diary spotted by Jo in the village of Seaview on the Isle of Wight

Museums and Art Galleries

Look out for what's on in your local Museum or Art Gallery. We're guilty of seeing these community assets as "for the tourists" when, in fact, they are often working really hard to draw in locals! Why not give your local museum or art gallery a visit – or make a day of it at one elsewhere. Here are some examples:

An initiative from **Glencoe Folk Museum** is trying to encourage informal, monthly social drop-ins for local residents with a bit of activity added in.

Highland Folk Museum near Newtonmore holds "Heritage in Action Days" on **Thurs 7, 14, 21 & 28 July and 4 and 11 August**. Heritage in Action Days offer the chance to see and take part in a wide range of activities. There will be demonstrations across the site of traditional skills including rope making, spinning and weaving, waulking the cloth and lots more!! Have a shot at some traditional school games and hear live traditional music. (Activities may differ on different dates.) You can also book "behind-the-scenes" tours on Wednesdays. Call 01349 781650 for information.

GLENCOE FOLK MUSEUM

MEANINGFUL MONDAYS

11AM - 1PM | FREE |
DRINKS & BISCUITS

Drop-by to socialise in a friendly,
informal environment

Each session will have a different
activity to take part in

Open to all
Lochaber residents

For more info email
learning@glencoe-museum.com or drop-in
at the Museum

MON 27 JUNE
MON 25 JULY
MON 22 AUG
MON 19 SEP
MON 24 OCT



High Life Highland Countryside Ranger Service

High Life Highland Ranger Service puts on a wide variety of activities ranging from events for pre-school children to adults. They don't charge – but welcome donations and give an

indication of what it costs to operate the service/activity e.g. *It costs £9.73 per visitor to operate our Countryside Ranger Service. We make no charge for this event, but we rely on your donations to help us protect our Highland wildlife and heritage.*

The programme of events is available online

<https://www.highlifehighland.com/rangers/upcoming-events/> or you can contact the Countryside Rangers by phone to find out what's happening in your area:

North Highland

Andy Summers – Senior Countryside Ranger for North Highlands

T: 01571 844654 M: 07825 116516

Marcia Rae – Easter Ross Ranger M: 07788387634 T: 01349 781011

Jenny Grant – Wester Ross Countryside Ranger T: 07917307499

Donald Mitchell – Countryside Ranger, Northwest Sutherland

T: 01971511332 M: 07766475338

Paul Castle – North Sutherland/North Caithness Countryside Ranger

T: 01847 821531 M: 07827 281481

Roz Summers – East Caithness Countryside Ranger

T: 01847 821531 M: 07551 525719 please text if no answer – often out of range. Thanks!

South Highland

Eilidh-Ann Phillips – Senior Countryside Ranger for South Highlands

T: 01397 70 9227 M: 07884 102 584

Fiona MacLean – North Lochaber Countryside Ranger (part-time) M: 07393 784341

John Orr – Inverness Area Countryside Ranger M: 07771370959

Saranne Bish – Countryside Ranger for Nairn, Badenoch & Strathspey M: 07818 588 222

Heritage

Michelle Melville – Highland Heritage Ranger M: 07766 161875

High Life Highland Community Library Service: Check out your local library for any special events or activities they are holding over the summer. They're not just for books!

Growing and Gardening Projects, Green Health Projects, Environmental Projects

There's a wealth of growing hubs, green health projects, therapeutic gardens and allotment projects across Highland. Drop in to your local project for a chat and to see what's happening. Many are looking for willing volunteers both for ongoing projects and for help at events etc. Visit Open Days and events to find out more about "green" benefits to our health and well-being and ways we can help be kinder to the planet.

Community Cafés, Community Lunches, Coffee and Chats, Soup and Sandwich Events

Village halls, churches, community hubs, social enterprises, projects, charities – there's such an array of settings offering food and company. Whether they are being run to encourage community togetherness, social interaction and well-being, or to fundraise, raise awareness or support service-users, they are all grateful for your support!

Some open once a week (like Kirkhill Community Café, Fridays 10.30 – 2), mentioned in our last news-sheet

Some on weekdays (like Lochaber & District Lunch Club, Mon – Fri at 12.30) monthly

Some every day (like Café Ness at Inverness Cathedral)

Some on specific days (like Invergarry Village Hall Tea-Room, 9 – 3 Tue/Wed/Thu or the Café at Hilton Community Centre, Tue/Wed/Thu/Fri 9.30 – 3.30.)

Some are one-off events. **ALL** appreciate people coming along and supporting their efforts! Even gatherings and events which are run with a particular target-audience in mind often say – All Welcome – and mean just that! E.g. Ewen's Room Open Doors Drop-Ins prove popular across the communities they cover in Ardnamurchan and surrounds. Promoting good mental health and well-being is for everyone!

Please send us some stories about the great “things to do” happening in your area!

Here's some news from the Happy Healthy Hilton Project

Residents of the Inverness area of Hilton can enjoy a series of activities aimed at keeping them happy and healthy over coming months.

Green Health Days with N4H- Nature for Health Sunday 3 rd July Friday 12 th August Castle Heather Park (access via Castle Heather Drive entrance)	10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Nature connection family fun. Free sessions – foraging, wildlife watching, arts and crafts, campfire cookery, story-telling etc.	Booking not necessary – but more information available on www.n4h.co.uk or N4H Facebook Page, or phone 01667 459400
Nature Walks Hilton Tuesday 5 th July Tuesday 2 nd August	1.30 – 3 p.m. Meet at Hilton Community Centre	stephen@n4h.co.uk or 01667 459400 for more information
Over 50s Creative Workshop with Ness Natural Flowers Tuesday 26 th July	10 – 11.15 a.m. Fun session making a posy of seasonal foliage and flowers in a jam-jar	Book by e-mail info@nessnaturalflowers.com or phone 07714 693689
Cycle to Health with Velocity Love (Contact to discuss times)	Cycling skills and confidence building sessions. Want to be a part of a friendly and inclusive cycling group?	Phone 07957 346317 or 07864 905627 or e-mail C2H@velocitylove.co.uk

Jubilee Jubilations and Other Celebrations

The Platinum Jubilee

Even the seagulls are doing a Royal Flypast
The Country is covered in bunting
Amazing that the Queen should last
And no doubt misses the hunting

Keith Murdoch

Thanks to Keith for his poetic contribution!

Love it or not, there was a lot going on around the Platinum Jubilee, providing opportunities for communities to come together and re-connect.

We would love to hear your stories of celebrations that your groups or communities have planned for reaching a significant birthday or celebrating a special anniversary of some kind.

Carers Corner

We were small in number at our Carers' Week Playlist for Life Carers' Tea Party in Kinlochleven Community Library – but everyone had a lovely evening. Some people would like to carry on meeting monthly to speak about Musical Memories and compile their personal playlists – so we will be happy to support that. Both Highland Senior Citizens Network and Kinlochleven Community Library are Help Points for Playlist for Life. We were delighted that our colleagues from Alzheimer Scotland and Connecting Carers could attend too. The very best connections are made over a good tea and natter!

If anyone who is not online would like information about Playlist for Life, please phone Anne or Jo and they will send a booklet. Those online can visit www.playlistforlife.org.uk



Gardening corner

The distinctive aroma of Kendal Plug announced the arrival in the potting shed of his Lordship. “Ùisdean, her Ladyship has come under the influence of some pensioners’ group, and they need some gardening advice – Could you write a small piece?”.

The Gardens on the island Estate have a staff of twelve so this gave head gardener Ùisdean the idea of having a different staff member take a turn compiling a piece. Ùisdean does not think much of the elfin horticulturalist Titchmarsh, but deigns to quote his thoughts on the July garden:

“..enjoy your garden ... look for ways to make it better ... are there gaps, or plants ... not pulling their weight?”



Amongst jobs to do, Ùisdean recommends regular deadheading (not a reference to the great American rock band (best years 1965-1970), but removal of spent flower heads). This will prolong and encourage new flowering. Do not prune peony roses, just dead head them. Also trim back alpine plants, and look forward to some autumn colour by planting some autumn flowering bulbs.

Seeds can still be sown, so why not try some dill and parsley and spring onions, lettuce and radishes.

Cuttings can also be taken, so why not increase you stock of plants by propagating the likes of box, hydrangea, buddleia (attracts bees and butterflies) and jasmine (amazing scents).

Plants which look at their best in July include: honeysuckle, red hot poker, roses, clematis.

Next month, Ùisdean will “persuade” one of the other gardeners to give some advice.

To be continued



Save the Date! Wednesday 14th September, Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness Highland Senior Citizens Network AGM and Conference 2022



As reported in our last news-sheet, plans are underway for our Annual General Meeting and Conference in September. Full details for booking will be circulated in early August.

Highland Senior Citizens Network AGM and Annual Conference

'Keeping it real in 2022 - Food, Fuel & Care'

Wednesday 14th September at the Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness

Guest speaker confirmed: Donald Macaskill, the CEO of Scottish Care talking about 'Adult Social Care - Finding Solutions'.

Further details and other speakers to follow...

Great Wilderness Challenge: Your Support for HSCN is Welcomed!

Highland Senior Citizens Network is delighted to be one of Great Wilderness Challenge nominated charities again this year. Our main annual fundraiser sees the HSCN team of Trustees, Co-ordinators and Supporters gearing up once again to take part. David, one of our Trustees, will be doing the 13-mile circular walk from Poolewe on Saturday 13th August. After a serious conversation with her hips and knees, Jo has elected to join David in the 13-mile challenge rather than doing 25 miles!



Ian (and his merry band of supporters) will be opting for a virtual challenge option for GWC this year – which means they can put in the miles anywhere and anytime between 1st July and 31st August. Anne is planning a watery virtual challenge in St Kilda all being well weather-wise!

If you are considering taking part in the Great Wilderness Challenge and want to fly the flag and raise funds as part of Team HSCN, please let us know. Contact Anne or Jo
Anne anne-hscn@outlook.com 07933 653313
Jo jo-hscn@outlook.com 07933 653585

All fundraised monies go to Great Wilderness Challenge and are then distributed to the nominated charities after the event. **Please get in touch if you would like to sponsor us!**

