



Caithness Health Improvement Forum
Meeting Held in the
Town Hall, Bridge Street, Wick
on Monday 6th November 2006 at 3.00pm

Present:

Lorna Simpson, Ormlie Community Association
Margaret Allan, Laurandy Centre
David Brookfield, Pentland Housing Association
Jean McLennan, MS Society, Wick Branch
Christa Macdonald, Homelink, Pulteneytown People's Project
Nancy Spiers, Occupational Health, Rolls Royce Vulcan
Ellen Campbell, Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid
Chris Connolly, Community Learning & Leisure –The Highland Council
Anna Swanson, The North Highland College
Douglas Henderson, Food For Thought
George Bruce OBE, The Caithness Partnership
Niall Smith, Caithness Voluntary Group & Ethnic Minorities Network
Miles Greenford, NHS Highland
David Barclay, THC Access Officer
Bob Silverwood, The Highland Council
Elizabeth Jones, Caithness Community Care Forum & Disabled Access Panel
Libby Cook, Homestart
Eann Sinclair, Caithness & Sutherland Enterprise
Sara Bennett, Dunbeath & District Day Care Centre
Gladys Lyon, Dunbeath & District Day Care Centre
Sheila Elder, Wick Family Centre
Garry Robertson, Highland User's Group
Anna MacConnell, Caithness Partnership
June Pollard, Caithness Partnership

I. Welcome & Apologies – George Bruce OBE, Chairman – Caithness Partnership

Apologies were received from:

Ian Hargrave, Highland Council
Kirsty Windsor, UKAEA
Eric Larnach, Initiative At The Edge
Stephen Fraser, Forestry
Pauline Craw, NHS Highland
John McDonald, Northern Constabulary & Drug & Alcohol Forum
John McLeod, Highland Users Group (HUG) & Food For Thought
Dee Quintas, Health & Happiness

Cameron Stark, NHS Highland
Yvonne Maclean, Dietician - NHS Highland
Julie Calder, Birchwood Highland
Fiona Bremner, Job Centre Plus (Wick)
Deirdre Aitken, Caithness Deaf Care
Margaret Bremner, SHAW Adviser – NHS Highland
Anne Crowe, Health Visitor – NHS Highland
Helen Skea, School Nurse – NHS Highland
Susan Andrew, Pulteneytown Parish Youth Forum
Ian Mitchell, SNH
Chris Bannerman, Neurological Group, Thurso
Sue Mileham, Crossroads Care
Katrina Macnab, Pulteneytown People’s Project
Davie Macleod, MS Society, Thurso
David Flear, Highland Council
Marilyn Durrand, The Haven
Alison Gibbons, People First
Caithness Disabled Access Panel
Innes Mitchell, Highland Council
Helen Allan, Community Learning & Leisure, Highland Council
Fiona Clarke, NHS Highland Health Promotion Department
Tom Sayles, National Farmer’s Union
Margaret Brown, NHS Highland
Patricia Greenford, Smoking Cessation Adviser – NHS Highland
Trevor Walker, Birchwood Highland
Derrick Milnes, Thurso & Wick Trade Union Council
Lindsay Gunn, Highland council
Alison Brownie, Chest, Heart & Stroke
Peter Sutherland, Lybster Day Care Centre

Mr Bruce welcomed everyone to the meeting and especially those who were attending their first meeting of this group.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 9 June 2006

The minutes were approved.

Garry Robertson asked that under **Appendix 1, page 3, Health Promoting and Activities Specifically for Young People** – we add in Scouts, Cubs and Beavers.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising that were not already covered on the Agenda.

4. Aims and Standing Orders

Anna MacConnell explained that this group currently has no constitution and is recognized as a sub group of the Caithness Partnership. Rather than set up a new body Anna proposed that we should take the group under the umbrella of the Partnership's Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The aims and standing orders of the Caithness Transport Forum, another sub group of the Partnership, were distributed to all present. These standing orders have been approved by the full Partnership.

Following discussion it was agreed that Anna would update the Aims and Standing Orders to suit the needs of the Health Forum and would then email out to everyone for comments. The Aims and Standing Orders would then be discussed and agreed at our next meeting. Suggestions included – "The aim of the Forum is to create and maintain the physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing of the residents of Caithness".

The Partnership's role will be to provide support, be a point of contact for the Health Forum and a link to other community planning initiatives and activities in the county.

5. Updates from each subgroup

Substance Misuse

Issues from the Substance Misuse group have linked well with the Drug & Alcohol Forum.

The new chairman of the Drug and Alcohol Forum will continue to be invited to HIF meetings.

Drug and Alcohol Forum Worker has produced a DVD aimed at informing people about drug and alcohol abuse – funding is being sought to have this published and distributed. It is hoped the DVD will be available free of charge or for a nominal fee of £1 a copy.

The Scottish Executive has produced a DVD on how to handle individuals with Drug/Alcohol abuse and show things like putting an unconscious person into the recovery position in what could be a life or death situation. Copies of the DVD are available by telephoning 0305 262244.

Embedding

Embedding health improvement principles is everyone's business with no one agency responsible for this. Unfortunately Margaret Bremner, SHAW Advisor, is ill and unable to attend today's meeting. Her role is to assist businesses who want to adopt health improving initiatives within the workplace.

Health impact – Pip Farman would be available to speak to the group. The group was happy for Pip to be invited.

Access to Health Food

One meeting of this group has taken place and they are presently arranging a follow-up meeting to take their priority forward.

Health Inequalities Group

This group has met twice and i£400s taking forward a project to provide a directory of health improvement support. It is hoped to take this work forward to the next stage in a few weeks.

£2,000 of Community Regeneration funding made available as part funding of a Directory of healthy activity opportunities that would be made available to the community in Pulteneytown. A further grant from NHS may be available as match funding. It would make sense to tie the two pieces of work together somehow.

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation figures for 2006 have been released showing that there are now 3 data zones in Caithness that qualify for CRF Funding. 2004 figures shoed only 1 data zone in Wick (in upper Pulteneytown, area including Murchison Street) as being within the 15% most deprived in Scotland – the two new ones include the Kennedy Street and Cairdhuna Terrace area and in north Wick the Willowbank area.

Community Regeneration Fund monies for 2006 -7 must be spent by end of March 2007.

Smoking Cessation Programme –

Wellbeing Alliance – process being designed to consult with Voluntary Organisations.

6. DVD

Miles Greenford delivered a slide presentation on the Rumster Outdoor Centre, showing it –

As it was

As it currently is

As we hope it will be

The aim is to use the natural environment to improve the health of our communities by creating a place of respite away from the stresses and strains of every day life. It is important that the centre is accessible physically, socially and financially.

Current committed partners are:

- Individuals of the Caithness Community
- Thurso Sea Cadets
- Wick Air Training Corps
- NHS Highland
- The Highland Council
- Forestry Commission
- South East Caithness Development Group
- Caithness Voluntary Group

From the past some of our local needs remain, some have gone and some have changed over time or are new. Fragments of a wider picture of needs remain. Individuals, groups, committees and agencies continue to identify these needs. Opportunities to build on our past are found and by joining the fragments together, this enables us to create a picture of services that could sustainably address these needs today and tomorrow.

We do not underestimate the work that lies ahead and with committed partnership working we have come this far. To progress, we need to further strengthen the work of these partners with your support.

About three years ago a series of separate themed working groups met to identify their specific local health needs. These themed groups were referred to as Local Implementation Groups for:-

- **Learning disabilities**
- **Mental health**
- **Older Adults**

At the time further groups made representation including youth groups; for a modern, fully legislation compliant, residential outdoor centre.

The Caithness Neurological Group – for a residential respite centre for young adults who had a range of neurological conditions.

Seeking overlaps has enabled us to recognize and combine service needs; creating the vision for a sustainable centre. Sustainability was a major challenge for some of the proposed services as the numbers of potential service users were too small to make the proposals viable.

Continuing support has enabled the Rumster Outdoor Centre Management Group to reach these stages:-

- The purchase of the old Outdoor Centre
- Explore the options to lease or purchase some surrounding Forestry Commission owned land
- Establish itself as a registered charity and public limited company
- Start the process of engaging with local interest groups and organizations in its own right

Highland Council has agreed to:-

- Sell their current Rumster Outdoor Centre site at minimal cost to the group; the sale to proceed imminently
- Dedicate staff time to advise and generally support the group

The Forestry Commission has agreed in principle to:-

- A long term lease of a significant amount of land within Rumster Forest, adjacent to the Centre, for a 'peppercorn' rent
- Give the group a copy of the plans to Borgie Forest log cabin
- Skills and experience sharing in relation to their Borgie Forest log cabin project
- An involvement in the strategic management of Rumster Forest
- The southern half of Rumster Forest being designated a recreational area
- Staff time in advising and supporting the group

NHS Highland has committed staff time to the processes of:-

- Identifying and pulling together service needs
- Leadership to the group
- Strategic and operational direction to the group
- Incorporating research findings into the Centre's ongoing development

The Rumster Outdoor Centre Management Group requires:-

- The funds to purchase the old Centre
- The formal agreement of a lease with the Forestry Commission
- Strengthening of the skills and membership of its Board
- Funds to commission a detailed study to create the business plan
- Continue engagement of stakeholders in the design process
- Costing of the design
- Sustainability for the Centre
- Potential funding sources to construct and fit out the Centre

Some initial anticipated findings are:-

- For a Residential Centre with 32 beds
- For a design incorporating the use of local renewable materials and energy resources
- For a recreational, environment focused Centre, including sports and education
- For the incorporation and promotion of a healthy lifestyle approach

An Outdoor Centre with a difference –

- The combination of the familiar, unified in ways not normally expected or experienced.

Creating a community asset flexible enough to meet the needs:-

- Of those more traditionally excluded
- Of the many
- In a sustainable way

**A Healthy Environmental Living Centre, with a wide range of recreational activities
A place for all to stay**

- For the day
- Or for days
- Or for weeks

A Business Study will be part-funded by the Big Lottery Fund.

Mrs McLennan welcomed the proposals and said it was important to look at what members want and what is available. The only facility available for MS patients at present is the Queen Elizabeth Ward at Caithness General Hospital. It is therefore important that this facility is designed with future User's in mind.

Lorna Simpson asked how wide the consultation process had been. Miles confirmed that a huge consultation has still to happen.

It is important to look at the long term costs and flexible use of the building.
Miles is going to see what funding for a business case is available.

Bob Silverwood said that if you are going to be thinking of providing respite care you should be aware of what you are getting into and what you are offering in the way of respite care because of the cost implications.

David Barclay said that there is a new link footpath to take you round Rumster and this will be promoted from the Trunk Road. Stephen Fraser is keen to speak to groups who wish to use the area to see the Forest developed.

7. Community Update Section

Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid

Ellen Campbell gave a short talk to everyone on the service Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid provides to women, children and young people in the area. The Refuge has been running since July 2005 and offers temporary accommodation and support in a non-directive manner to enable women and children to move on from abusive and violent situations. Up until now, 17 women and 38 children have been accommodated - of these 71% have been local families from Caithness & Sutherland. The accommodation available includes a 2 bedroom disabled flat, a 3 bedroomed flat and a 4 bedroomed flat. A drop-in service for women is also available at the refuge, offering support and information. There are two Children and Young People's Workers in the refuge and 1 Children and Young People's Outreach worker covering Caithness & Sutherland. There is also a Women's Outreach Worker covering Caithness & Sutherland providing support and information to women who are still experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse and have not come into refuge. The Service endeavours to raise awareness of the problems women experience in leaving abusive relationships and supports women through the process of leaving, which can present huge problems and dangers for them. Support is provided until the women feel confident to move on. Because of the lack of housing, women may have to wait 7 months up to a year, to be rehoused and this results in the refuge having to turn vulnerable women and children away. Women from outwith the area are accepted and the Refuge works closely with Police and other agencies. Nationally statistics show that 2 women a week are murdered by their partner or ex-partner and 1 in 3 women are presently experiencing domestic abuse in their lives. Evidence shows that 94% of domestic abuse is perpetrated by men against women and 6% of women against men. Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid welcomes both self and agency referrals.

Ellen would be happy to provide members with a more in-depth presentation if anyone would wish this.

Wick Family Centre

Sheila Elder, newly appointed Manager of the Wick Family Centre, introduced herself to all present. Sheila wish to inform everyone that Wick Family Centre has a large meeting room with kitchen facilities available for groups to hire out at very competitive rates. If anyone wishes further information they can contact Sheila at the Centre on 01955-606065.

8. Health Improving Service Gaps

Those present were asked what services they felt were needed.

Sheila Elder was keen to see a daytime class or classes set up with activities for the over 45's. She had tried to contact Age Concern but discovered there isn't a local branch. Sheila welcomed ideas from anyone and offered the Family Centre as a venue for such a class.

David Brookfield said that Thurso also had a problem with lack of venues for holding such classes. The Viewfirth has been offered as a facility and there would be no demolition costs and the land would be free. It was important to get some partners together to take this forward – partners like for example the Highland Council, NHS, Ormlie Community Association, etc

Garry Robertson was keen to see a Befriending Service group set up.

Garry also said she would like to see the Boating Pond on Wick River brought back to life. It is hoped that Wick 21 will look at this.

David Barclay said that the upgrade to Wick River Path was well under way and this upgrade will benefit mothers with pushchairs etc.

Access Strategy – what Council would like to achieve.

Questionnaire – Core paths marked – if paths suggested provide suitable links, local press, website, THC website – core path draft plan has to be ready for February 2008 for Scottish Executive. Phase 2 will be completed over Spring and through to next Winter.

9. Rural Action Research Programme

The Partnership has been awarded a contract by the Carnegie UK Trust to carry out research into involving rural people in community planning. Part of that work will involve consultation about the themes in the community plan, of which one is Health Improvement. She distributed a sample questionnaire which had been done for put together to consult people about the transport section of the Community Plan. A similar questionnaire will go out to consultees across Caithness early in the New Year. A draft of this will be circulated to members of the HIF by email and Anna would be extremely grateful if members would give their input to the draft questionnaire.

10. Agenda Items For Next Meeting

Please let Anna know if you have any items which you wish to raise at the next meeting.

11. Dates For Future Meetings

The next meeting will take place in 3 months time at the end of February 2007. The Partnership will email out the date nearer to the time.