

**North Highland Cancer Information & Support Centre**

**AGM Monday 4th September 2017**

**Chairman's report 2016/2017**

**Retiring Office Bearers 12th September 2016:**

Chair – Jen Ironside

Vice Chair – Jean Dunnet

Treasurer – Isobel Miller

Secretary – Barbara Cormack

Committee Members – Audrey Smith, Andi Roy, Hilary Gunn, Liz Smith, Louise Shakespeare.

**Elected Office Bearers 12th September 2016:**

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**Opening times of the centre:**

Mondays 10am -3pm, Drop-in session

Tuesday 2.15-3.15pm – Health Choir

Thursdays 10am -4.30pm, Complementary Therapy – booking required

Friday 10.30am -1.30pm, Drop-in session.

Fridays 1.30pm -3pm (school terms only), Young Ladies Group.

NHCISC is now in its 10th year and plays an important part supporting those affected by cancer in our local area. The growth and development of the centre is testimony to all those that have dedicated their time and talents to creating this facility. Throughout this report I will mention several of those people that help but like all success stories it takes many people with a variety of skills to make it work well. Everyone that supports the centre in any way at all is part of what makes it successful and therefore we should all be proud of what we continue to achieve.

**Volunteers :** I would like to thank all the volunteers for the work they do throughout the year and I appreciate that it is a huge commitment and we would not be able to offer this service to our local community if we didn't have such an enthusiastic and committed group of volunteers.

We are continually looking for new volunteers to man the centre but to give the best possible support our volunteers need to have personal experience of cancer and we cannot consider anyone that is still receiving treatment, has a terminal diagnosis or is recently bereaved. Three new volunteers have joined our team this year and we are keen to hear from anyone else that would be interested in becoming a volunteer. All volunteers must have a PVG disclosure, the centre now pays a £3 administration fee for each disclosure to CVG. Thanks to our Vice Chairman Jean Dunnet & Catherine Patterson from Caithness Voluntary Group for organising these disclosures.

As the footfall of the centre continues to increase we have to make the necessary changes to keep pace with the growing demands on the service and therefore we have started using 2 volunteers at each session on Mondays, Thursdays & Fridays. This has put added pressure on our dedicated group of volunteers but is necessary to protect both volunteers and service users.

**Complementary Therapy:** Donna Murray our Beautician works at the centre 2 Mondays a month from 10am – 1pm, Donna offers a variety of beauty treatments from £5 per treatment, or short massages which are free of charge at present.

Monica Whitehead left at the end of 2016 to spend time out in Canada, Monica was a well respected therapist and we were sorry to see her go.

In January 2017 we welcomed Gemma Sutherland to join Laura Durrand & Gillian Macmanus to cover Thursday therapy days. Gemma is well qualified and offers a variety of therapies.

Gillian Macmanus recently undertook further training in "M Technique" massage – which the centre helped to sponsor - and is now able to offer this to our service users.

I would like to thank Donna, Gemma, Gillian & Laura for their hard work throughout the year. So many people benefit from these therapy sessions and it is a significant part of the service we provide.

At present we are still able to offer these sessions free of charge to our service users but as always this is continually under review.

We always try to honour all appointments but there are times when we have to change appointments to fit someone more in need into an earlier appointment. I appreciate this causes upset for the person we cancel but it is done to provide the best service to those most in need.

In special circumstances we offer complementary therapies to people in their own homes but generally we prefer if people are able to come into the centre for these treatments.

**Highland Council:** As you may be aware 5a High Street is a council owned property and we have been using the premises since 2008 rent free. The council are now looking at drawing up a lease and are looking at the title deeds of the building, they have arranged for various inspections of the building to be carried out, as of date we have no further information. We have to be prepared that this could ultimately result in us paying rent to the council for the premises, if this happens we will make every effort to negotiate a fair rent, terms & conditions

We had also never paid for the electricity as the bill was sent to the council but they have now rectified this and we recently received a bill for April 2016 – March 2017, the council have now transferred the bills to our name and we now pay directly to the power company.

**Housekeeping:** This year we have paid a professional cleaning company to clean the centre, the reason for this is to take pressure off our volunteers and members. This is heavy work and many people involved in the centre are not fit to undertake such a task and it is unfair for us to ask that of them.

Many thanks to our regular volunteers that keep the centre clean each week by tidying up and giving a quick clean at the end of each session.

Our patio area is always a blaze of colour and is admired by many people over the year, thanks to Ish & Danny Macdonald for their green fingered expertise and continual work to keep it looking beautiful.

**Fund Raising:** Once again this past year has seen many fund raising events, in which some of our members played an active part.

Our annual coffee morning in the Pentland Hotel in November 2016 was extremely successful.

We had an information stand and collection in Santander Thurso and Tesco Wick & Thurso.

The last Saturday of July we had a stall at the Halkirk Games with a raffle and guess the money in the bottle.

NHCISC 2017 Calendar sold well and we hope to produce another one for 2018. Once again we are looking for our members to submit photos they have taken around the North Highland area. All entries to be emailed to [cancer.support@btconnect.com](mailto:cancer.support@btconnect.com) by the 1st October 2017.

We have had numerous donations from businesses, charity fund raising events organised by groups and individuals as well as private donations from people. Large cheques are displayed in the centre and I do try to make sure I mention those donations in the newsletters throughout the year but I do not include the private donations unless the person has requested publicity.

At the moment we are in the fortunate position that we do not need to do too much fund raising ourselves as our bank balance is healthy but this is continually reviewed by the committee and if or when our financial circumstances change then we will be doing a lot more to raise funds for ourselves.

I thank everybody that has donated to the centre this past year, all donations large and small are greatly appreciated. Thanks also to all those individuals that have helped at events during the year.

**Social Events:** The Park Hotel Thurso was the venue for the 2016 Christmas Lunch in December.

Our New Year party took place at the centre at the end of January 2017, once again our centre is beginning to get rather small with so many members so we might have to look at another venue for future party's.

2017 summer outing went to the newly refurbished Northern Sands Hotel at Dunnet for lunch then a trip to John O' Groats.

Thanks to Audrey Smith for organising these events.

It is always good to socialise and is an important part of our calendar.

**Vision Statement:** The following document highlights the aims and objectives of the NHCISC, and can be used to explain the purpose of our service and why we exist, giving a general description of our organisation, its function and objectives.

### **Vision**

To make available information on all types of cancer and associated subjects, to offer emotional support to those affected by cancer.

### **Empower**

**Empower** our service users through support.

### **Trust**

Building confidence through **trusting** relationships

### **Listening**

Provide person centred support through **listening** and empathy.

### **Welcome**

A warm **welcome** for all service users without prejudice.

### **Adaptive**

Being **adaptive** to provide a strong service which grows in credibility.

### **Empower**

We provide the information and sign posting relevant to each service users experience, to help them make the best informed decision which provide the maximum benefit.

We provide appropriate emotional support that meets the needs of each individual.

We create an environment of support for one another, through shared experiences.

### **Trust**

We protect the confidentiality of each individual user, to ensure the centre continues to establish a trusted position in the community.

We respect each individual's right to privacy.

We maintain compliance with data protection laws.

## **Listening**

We listen to our user and most importantly we hear what they say.

We provide empathy through shared experience.

We lend a listening ear while withholding personal opinions and judgements.

We provide sign posting towards relevant services where appropriate.

## **Welcome**

We give a warm and friendly welcome to all users of the service.

We remember why we are here and the importance of the support we provide.

Everyone is entitled to feel part of the centre and for it to be a positive experience for all.

## **Adaptive**

We strive to provide the best service we can while being willing to adapt to the needs of our users.

We are flexible in the face of changing circumstances to give the best chance of a future.

We are open to constructive feedback for the betterment of the service.

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## **Other Services:**

- At the beginning of 2017 we organised an exercise class in the centre on Monday mornings, this was delivered by High Life staff and although those that took part enjoyed it we agreed to stop the classes after a few months as we do not have the required space in the centre for this activity and service users not wishing to take part were being moved into the quiet room which was not big enough. It was suggested that the group moved to the gym at the swimming pool but we didn't have sufficient interest. We did sign post people to other exercise classes in the community.
- Karen Lloyd gave a very interesting talk in the centre on a Tuesday morning in March on Nutrition, this was well attended and thanks to Karen for delivering this. We are open to all suggestions on talks that are relevant to people living with cancer but due to the lack of space in the centre these are best delivered on a day that the centre is not running a drop-in session.
- Highland Hospice Outreach Service finished using the centre in May as they were finding our premises on the small side as their service began to grow, they also found access by the ramp difficult with wheelchairs. We did purchase a power pack

for our wheelchair to make it easier to drive the chair up the ramp but they still felt it took two people to get the chair safely up the ramp and in the front door.

- Highland hospice Bereavement Counsellor continues to use the centre approximately one Wednesday each month.
- The Health Choir have changed days and now meet on Tuesday afternoons instead of Fridays. The time stays the same 2.15-3.15pm and new members are welcome, being able to sing is not a requirement, it is singing for pleasure and a healthy way to exercise. Thanks to Sandy Moore & Betty Cunningham organising the choir and to Susie Dingle for her musical talent.
- In spring 2017 we started a Younger Ladies Support Group which meets on Friday afternoons from 1.30-3pm during school terms. We have a small number of ladies who come along but it would be good if we could encourage more ladies to use this group.
- The Cancer Support Group for Men meet once a month on a Thursday evening, further details can be found on our website or the poster displayed in the centre.
- Local hairdresser Cara Duff uses the therapy room to fit and style wigs for those requiring this service.
- Connecting Carers use the centre every second Wednesday of each month to hold their meetings. This has changed as they used to meet on Tuesdays but I asked them to change days when the choir started meeting on Tuesday afternoons.
- Headway Highland occasionally hold evening meetings in the centre.

**Thank You:** My sincere thanks to this year's committee for all the work they have done. This has been another busy year at the centre and there have been many obstacles to overcome. As the centre expands and develops we have to grow with it and at times that has been challenging.

When we opened the centre in 2008 it was a weekly service on Mondays for 5 hours which was a small manageable service but through the good work of many people involved the centre is now open Mondays, Tuesday afternoons – choir, Thursdays & Fridays giving a total of 17 hours a week, this is something to be proud of and gives an excellent service to the local community. Clearly the demands on our volunteers is far greater, as I spoke about earlier but also this means a much bigger service to manage which puts pressure on us, the committee.

A number of the present committee have expressed a wish to stand down in the not too distant future as some of us have been on the committee since we set it up in 2008, therefore we are looking for new office bearers & committee members with the skills, energy and enthusiasm required to continue the good work of the centre.

Thanks to our treasurer Isobel Miller for the work she does every month in the centre keeping all our finances in order. Thanks to our secretary Barbara Cormack for carrying out her duties which include sending birthday cards to all our members. Thanks to Margaret Mackay for organising and filing important information stored on the computer. Thanks to Andi Roy for updating the cancer information stands and membership files. Thanks to Eann McIntosh who is our contact person with OSCR the Scottish charity regulators, this annual chairman's report is one of the documents that has to be sent to them along with the financial balance sheet and the independent auditors report on our bank account. Thanks to Dean Smith for keeping our Website updated and John Munro for hosting our website.

**Events planned for the remainder of 2017:**

Information stand & collection Tesco Wick on Friday 8th September.

Coffee Morning - date and venue to be confirmed.

Christmas Lunch – date & venue to be confirmed.

**Proposals for 2017/2018:**

2018 Calendar –members to submit photos by 1st October 2017

Macmillan QEM re-assessment May 2018

NHCISC 10th Birthday Celebrations – May 2018

Highland council negotiations for fair Rent and Terms & Conditions.

Jennifer Ironside

Chairman

Signature.....*Jenife S. Ironside*.....

Date.....*4 - 9 - 17*.....