**THE NORTH HIGHLAND**

**CANCER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT CENTRE**



**Chairman’s Report 2013/2014**

Calendar from September 2013 – August 2014

11.9.13 & 12.9.13 - Information stand at Caithness General Hospital.

12.9.13 - 3 members attend the annual Scottish Conference of Cancer Support Groups in Glasgow.

9.11.13 – Annual Coffee Morning in the Pentland Hotel.

6.12.13 – Christmas Lunch in the Pentland Hotel.

17.12.13 – Visit to the centre from a group of pupils from Wick High School involved in the Youth Philanthropy Initiative.

20.12.13 -6.1.14 – Centre closed for holidays.

18.1.14 – New Year Party for members and friends.

30.1.14 – Sage & Thyme training for volunteers

22.3.14 – Wyn’s family joined members in the centre to view the painting.

27.3.14 – PPP Canisby School

28.3.14 – PPP Millburn Academy Inverness as part of YPI .

28.5.14 – YPI final in Wick High school.

14.6.14 – Afternoon Teas in aid of Branicht.

20.6.14 – Monica & Donna training Glasgow.

24.6.14 – Colin Smith painted the kitchen.

27.6.14 – Laura training Edinburgh

8.7.14 – Summer Outing to John O’Groats.

26.7.14 – Halkirk Games Stall £212 raised

2.8.14 – Mey Games – 6 volunteers manned the gate.

This past year has seen a varied programme of events for those involved in the centre.

**Therapy** - Our team of Complementary Therapists have completed additional training in “massage for people living with cancer”, this 3 day course was organized by IRIS and was held in Glasgow and Edinburgh. Monica & Donna went to Glasgow and Laura went to Edinburgh, the centre paid all expenses. We got very positive feedback from all 3 ladies on their return. This means that all 4 therapists have now done this training- as Gillian had done this course several years ago - and our members that receive therapy should benefit from this.

Donna’s hours have been decreased by 1 hour on Monday mornings the revised times are 11am – 1pm. Since the start of February 2014 we now open on Monday evenings for people of working age, we also offer therapies at these sessions which is why it was decided to cut Donna’s hours in the morning so she could help us on Monday evenings when necessary.

At the moment we are still able to offer free therapies to our members but funding from Branicht will finish as this was the last year of the annual walk around Inverness. NHCISC will be poorer without the sponsorship of Branicht but we are forever grateful that they gave so generously to the centre for so many years. This will mean we have to do more fund raising for ourselves and in the future we might have to consider charging for therapies.

The therapy sessions on Mondays & Thursdays are very popular and I would like to remind everyone to only book one appointment ahead, so that new service users or people with higher needs can always get an appointment without waiting too long. Although everyone is entitled to therapy we do give priority to those most at need and at times you might be asked to give up your appointment for this reason.

**Cleaning Rota** – we now have a monthly cleaning rota so that our beautiful centre gets cleaned regularly, at the moment it is only volunteers that are involved but if anyone else would like to offer I’ll happily add your name. A big thank you to everyone who helps keep the centre clean at the close of every session as well as helping with the monthly clean.

**Scottish Conference of Cancer Support Groups** – September 2013 Audrey, Liz & Jen attended the annual conference in Glasgow, as usual this was an inspiring and informative event. We were sent a DVD which was produced thanks to Lottery funding, of some of the highlights of the 2013 conference which is available at the centre if anyone is interested in taking it home for a look.

**Volunteers** – we are always looking for new volunteers and thankfully a few people have come forward to offer their help this year. We had training days in January and August and our thanks goes to Louise Shakespeare and Macmillan for arranging/providing this valuable training. Both sessions were well attended by our volunteers. If anyone else is interested in becoming a volunteer please speak to a member of the committee and ask for a copy of the “Volunteer Job Description” a document which was written several years ago by some of our members. To run the centre we need 10 volunteers per week which is a big commitment and at times a lot of pressure on a few people so we would be grateful if all volunteers helped as regularly as possible.

**New Evening Opening** – February 2014 we started opening on Monday evenings for people of working age, it was agreed that our existing service did not accommodate people who worked during the day and we wished to address this. It is still very early days but this service has seen a trickle of people come through the door but we need to promote this part of our service and encourage more people in and to book therapies.

**Opening times of the centre** -Monday - Drop in session - 10am -3pm

 Monday Evening – Drop in session for people of working age 7-9pm

 Thursday - Complementary Therapy – 10am – 4.30pm

 Friday – Drop in session – 10.30am – 1.30pm

Highland Hospice continue to use the centre most Wednesdays for Outreach and Bereavement Counselling.

Headway Highland have occasional meetings on Tuesday nights.

West Caithness Transport occasionally use the premises.

**Health Choir** – our choir has continued to be well supported and thanks to Susie Dingle for leading us and at times single handedly making it sound musical! On Friday 12th September 2014 we hold our first Community Health Choir in the new rugby clubhouse at Millbank in Thurso at 2.15pm. It is hoped that a committee can be formed and this can become a breakaway group from the centre . The hire of the hall is £10 per hour and we need to pay Susie as well so there will be a charge of £1 per person per session to help cover costs. Posters/details have been sent to other health groups and it’s hoped that it’ll prove popular.

**Forthcoming events**

18-20 September - SCCSG Glasgow

22nd November - The “M” Technique - training for volunteers and carers, venue to be arranged.

**Proposals for 2014/2015**

Promote Monday evening opening.

Recruit new volunteers.

Continue with training for volunteers and therapists when available and appropriate.

Get Community Health Choir started.

Think of ideas for raising funds for the centre.

**And finally** there are so many people to thank, this centre can only continue to be successful if we all help and this year has been no exception. My thanks to our wonderful volunteers who at times are stretched to cover all sessions but always show great commitment and never let us down.

To the many kind members that help at coffee mornings, afternoon teas, man stalls and sell things – Funky Monkeys - on show fields, stand for 4 hours in cold weather at the Mey Games taking money at the gate, thank you. Thanks also to those who support by donation and turning up at events, we need people to support the events we organise so we do appreciate you coming along and bringing family and friends.

Thanks to Colin Smith for painting the kitchen and making it look nice and fresh again and also for updating the centres Risk Assessments.

Also – keeping it in the family – thanks to Dean Smith for his continued work with our website. Thanks to John Munro for hosting our Website.

Last but by no means least, thank you to the committee who work behind the scenes to keep our centre working for us all.

Jennifer Ironside

Chairman, NHCISC

Signature …………………………………………………..

Date……………………………………