

NORTH HIGHLAND CANCER INFORMATION
AND SUPPORT CENTRE, SCIO (SC048935)



**5A High Street
Thurso
KW14 7AG**

Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Monday 4 October 2021 at 1.00 pm.

PRESENT:-

Mairi Forbes
Barbara Cormack
Linda Sutherland
Margaret Mackay
Isobel Marshall
Malcolm Clark
Sandra Smith
Stan George
Margaret Sutherland
John Black

Belle Wolfe
Elisha Ross
Margaret Bruce
Joan Mackay
Jean Dunnet
Frankie Murdoch
Andy Angus
Alison Moar
Liz Smith

1. WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting intimating that it was good to see so many members attend.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Joyce Patrick
Jen Ironside
Sylvia Cameron
Eann MacIntosh
Rowland Shallcross

Sheila Coghill
Laura Macdonald
Sarah Dickinson
Colin and Karen Lloyd

Unfortunately, two people could not attend the meeting as it was being held during the day and they would be at work.

Colin and Karen Lloyd could not attend for health reasons but wished to pass on their best wishes to everyone.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the 2020 AGM were distributed to all the members and were adopted as a true record.

Proposed: Frankie Murdoch

Seconded: Jean Dunnet

4. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Isobel intimated that her report was pretty much self explanatory but wished to highlight a few points.

Macmillan Inspection - our Macmillan inspection went very well and the inspector commented on the fact that we had acted on recommendations from the previous assessment. Her comments quoted in my report were very much appreciated by everyone. Decoration, new carpet etc which took place during the lockdown all helped to gain such a favourable report.

PVGs - we are now doing the PVG reports on-line directly with Volunteer Scotland Disclosure Services. Previously they were done through Caithness Voluntary Group (CVG) in paper form. Jean Dunnet is the enrolled lead signatory for the Centre. These reports are required for anyone volunteering in the Centre.

Therapists - Laura Durrand continues to work nearly every Thursday morning and is very much appreciated by all our members. We have a new regular therapist, Kate Burt who started last month.

Gillian MacManus and Monica Whitehead provide backup cover. If there is an odd occasion when we cannot get cover we will get in touch with the members in advance and re-book the appointment.

As of now we haven't been able to secure the services of a beautician for the Monday morning sessions, so if anyone knows someone they can recommend please let us know.

Wig fitting - Sandra Cormack provides a wig fitting service from the Centre for anyone requiring a wig. She is not directly connected to the centre.

Parking permits - we only have 5 parking permits and nearly seventy members so we have made the following provision for issuing the permits. When a member parks in Wilson Street they should ring the office and a volunteer will go down with a permit for their car (logging it in the permit book) and when they leave the Centre a volunteer will accompany them and bring the permit back and sign the permit book to confirm that it has been returned.

Web page and facebook - Malcolm Clark has continued to keep these up to date. Lots of useful information and well worth visiting.

Office equipment - Malcolm Clark applied to the Dounreay Communities Fund and received a grant of £900 for the update of our IT equipment. We have now purchased a new computer, tablet and printer for use in the Centre. The system has proved to be a great improvement on the old one.

Christmas lunch - we have booked the Pentland Hotel on Friday 10 December 2021 for our Christmas lunch.

We had provisionally booked the Pentland Hotel on 6 November for our coffee morning. The committee decided to cancel this booking as we felt with the rising numbers of covid cases and the number of helpers we require to man such a busy event we should not go ahead.

Let's hope the Covid restrictions continue to allow us more freedom and we have a successful year ahead.

5. TREASURER'S REPORT

At the end of the financial year (30 June 2021) we had £71,131.76 in our bank account. This was slightly down on the previous year but we had installed new windows and heating. Our electricity bill was about £900 less than last year. This was to be expected as the Centre was closed for a large part of the year due to Covid.

We have recently received a cheque for £8,060.00 in memory of Karen Cragg. This was part of a funding exercise to purchase benches in Thurso and Wick in her memory. The benches have now been installed in Thurso and Wick stations. The remainder of the money was donated to the Centre. As can be seen from the amount of money raised Karen was an amazing person and loved by so many.

A very big thank you to Linda for her raffle last year which raised over £3,000 and also her monthly "squares" which are raising £100 per month. Well done Linda!

Linda intimated that she is going to run another raffle starting at the beginning of November and drawing it at the end of the month. All donations welcome.

6. REPORT FROM CANCER SUPPORT GROUP FOR MEN (Malcolm Clark)

It was the intention of the 'Men's group' to keep going throughout the Coronavirus pandemic. The only way we could do this safely was to hold our monthly meetings via Zoom. We had as few as 2 at one meeting but it was normally 3 or 4. On one occasion we peaked at 5. Some members tried to join but were unsuccessful at logging in to Zoom, so unfortunately, they gave up. We re-started our meetings at the centre, in July. Sadly, yet understandably, numbers have remained low as we slowly emerge from the pandemic.

In September, I suggested that the meetings were changed from an evening time to the afternoon. This was agreed and we will hold our first day-time meeting on Wednesday 20th October 2021 between 1430 and 1600 hours. We are keen to establish a more informal atmosphere as is achieved at the Monday meetings. Men can come and go at a time that suits them.

Malcolm thanked the men who have supported him in keeping the group going and likewise the group are indebted to the chair and committee of the NHCISC for allowing them to use the centre. Without this, the group would not exist.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The chair invited Malcolm Clark to give a presentation on CLAN (Cancer Link Aberdeen and North) as this could be a way forward for the Centre at a future date.

Possible merger with Clan Cancer Support –

There has been some concern over recent years about the future of the centre due to the difficulty associated with recruiting new members to the committee. This problem is made more difficult due to a lack of younger members coming forward. However, the reasons for this are also understood; careers and families are high on the list of priorities for many.

The worst fear for the members is for the centre to close due to a lack of committee members and volunteers. The options to combat this problem are quite limited. However, one possible solution is to merge the NHCISC with Clan Cancer Support who are based in Aberdeen.

What is Clan Cancer Support:-

- Clan was founded in 1983.
- It has more than 60 staff and a further 50 therapists and counsellors.
- It is supported by over 400 volunteers.
- It operates in community-based facilities in Aberdeen, Alford, Ballater, Banchory, Buckie, Drummond, Forres, Inverurie, Kirkwall, Lerwick, Lossiemouth and Turriff.
- It is committed to raising more than £2.6 million every year from the generous support of many individuals, families, organisations and whole communities.
- Over the last 38 years Clan has developed specialist knowledge and understanding of how a diagnosis of cancer impacts on not just the person diagnosed, but also their wider circle of family and close friends. They offer a range of person centred services, delivered using qualified and experienced counsellors and therapists and support volunteers focused on the general wellbeing of their clients.
- Services available include information and support, counselling, complementary therapies, social and wellbeing activities and dedicated support for children and families.
- For those travelling to Aberdeen hospitals for appointments or treatment, they also offer affordable B&B accommodation at Clan Haven including assistance with transport to and from the hospital.

I (Malcolm) have had some discussions with the NHCISC committee members as to how they may feel about a merger with Clan. The initial feelings have been positive, but there are many questions yet to be asked and answered. I had a video-conference on Thursday, 30 September 2021 with two of their senior management team, Fiona Fernie who is the Head of Income Generation and Business Development and Kay Johnston, Head of Cancer Support Services to discuss levels of interest, areas of concern, and how this proposal could move forward to the next stage. It proved to be a very positive meeting with concerns and optimism on both sides. Fiona will create a list of questions to be shared and answered by us and I will post questions from us, to them.

Once we have established an even better understanding of each other's position we can then arrange for Fiona and Kay to visit the North Highland Cancer Information and Support Centre. This will put us both in a position of greater understanding of how, and under what terms, a merger arrangement may be possible.

The treasurer asked what the financial arrangements would be regarding money raised by the centre. All monies would be paid to Clan but a large proportion would come back to the centre directly.

The chair asked for a show of hands to indicate how many of the members were in favour of Malcolm pursuing the prospect of the Centre becoming part of Clan. The vote was unanimous in favour.

Malcolm will keep us all posted on how things are progressing as this is in the very early stages and no decisions will be made without consulting the membership.

Choir – Liz Smith intimated she had been approached by a few people regarding when the choir might be able to start up again. As the numbers attending are too many to be accommodated in the Centre they would have to look for alternative premises. The Rugby Club was suggested but obviously that would have to be paid for. Isobel said she was considering asking Caithness Horizons for a room when they open on a charitable basis.

Isobel pointed out that the choir is run separately from the centre in that they have their own bank account etc. People pay to attend the choir and this covers Susie Dingle's fee etc.

Isobel is to get in touch with some of the main organisers of the choir to discuss the situation and also Susie Dingle to see what she thinks.

8. RETIRING COMMITTEE

The current committee were stood down.

9. ELECTION OF NEW COMMITTEE

The undernoted members stood for re-election:-

Isobel Marshall

Barbara Cormack

Jean Dunnet

Linda Sutherland

Frankie Murdoch

Joan Mackay

Margaret Mackay

Carolyn Swanson

and Malcolm Clark who was co-opted onto the previous committee under the special skills provision in the Constitution – IT.

This was the required number to form a committee and as no other member intimated a desire to be nominated as a committee member the above named persons were duly elected to form the 2021/22 committee.

Proposed: John Black

Seconded: Annette Ward

10. CLOSING REMARKS

Isobel once again thanked everyone for attending and there being no other competent business the meeting closed at 1.35 pm.

MARGARET MACKAY
Secretary, NHCISC