



Community Connections

North Berwick Coastal

MAY 2021

To our members and volunteers having a birthday this month, we wish you a very

HAPPY

BIRTHDAY

Lilly of the valley and hawthorn are the birth flowers for May



Robina's Helleborus still flowering (common name Christmas Rose)

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections becomes a separate organisation.

On April 1, North Berwick Coastal Community Connections was established as a separate organisation, after initially being set up as a pilot project of the Health and Well-being Association.

Launched in 2019, the project aims to help those over the age of 18 with isolation and loneliness. We gained Charitable status last September and we are looking forward to developing a range of services.

Carol Stobie, Project Officer has led the project since its establishment but is now being supported by recently appointed Befriender Coordinator Lisa Brownlie.

Alongside Carol and Lisa, the project is overseen by a board of trustees:

Co-Chairs - Lisa McClure and Robert Burgon

Secretary - Elaine Sutherland

Treasurer - Bill Brown

Safeguarding - Currently vacant

(All have been featured in previous newsletters)

The project has a large team of volunteers, covering a wide range of skills and experience, working with the project members and encouraging them to make connections with other individuals and organisations in the area.

The project is now working to secure funding for a three year period, beginning in October. Thank you to those who completed our evaluation last month, this feedback will help shape the work of the project over the next three years.

Community Connections - Going for a Coffee - wait, what's that?



"Fancy a coffee next week?" someone said. Seriously? I scratch my head to remember what was that like.

Newsletter devotees have endured me havoring about my jigsaws, dodgy ukulele playing, cartooning, weekly (very short) sea swims - and my nostalgia for the days of Christmas parties and Scone Café.

Yikes! So you'd think I'd be hurtling instantaneously into those café's when they start opening up. But honestly, many of us feel surprisingly daunted about going back out there, no matter how sociable we are. It may feel a bit scary to approach that threshold, don our masks, look for the sanitiser, give contact details to the waiter, then confront a bewildering array of cakes, scones, types of tea. Help!

A friendly face waiting for you. Fear not. Community Connections members could soon be met by one of our delightful volunteers at that café table. Do agree in advance on a signature accessory to recognise each other - like spies - if you've only met by phone. A rose? A cheery hat? A fake moustache?

What on earth will we talk about? I'm not kidding - some of us feel pretty rusty. Maybe that's not you, in which case skip the rest of this! **Some starters:** What's your favourite café? How did you get on with the vaccine? Lived round here long? Where were you before that? What do you like about life here? Anything you're looking forward to doing again when we can? What's that weather like, eh?

Ask us for a **Coffee Connections** one-to-one - we'll connect you with a volunteer. And if you fancy a **Buddy Walk** in the park or on the seafront, (maybe with a carry-out coffee), start one to one - but soon you could be meeting others for a rendezvous outdoors - imagine that! Keep those small talk tips up your sleeve there, too. (contacts details on the back page).

Community Connections - Families and Outreach

Do you live in Gullane, Aberlady, Whitekirk or more rural parts of the North Berwick Coastal Ward? Can you see a need for activities similar to our Community Connections work, to tackle social isolation in your area?

Maybe you're aware of local parents who may have been feeling isolated, especially if they had their first baby during lockdown, with little access to the kinds of groups and community support they'd normally find. Community Connections is exploring all of this right now and we'd love to hear your thoughts.

If you and perhaps a few others in your area are interested in developing an idea like that, and would like support from us, let's talk. Some communities are thinking about creating small scale meet ups, Buddy Walks or small gatherings over the months ahead, to bring folk out to socialise when they may have felt hidden away for many months over the pandemic.

We can take referrals of potential members, applications from prospective new volunteers - or set up a zoom or face-to-face meeting, just to talk over your ideas and local needs. (Contact details on back page).

A Time to Celebrate? By Deborah Ritchie



I think we can start to relax a little bit as restrictions are slowly lifted. I am however aware that I am feeling a bit overwhelmed at the thought of meeting groups of people again. It feels to me as if I will be a bit like a tortoise and slowly poke my head out into the world. Some people will be like hares and dash out to rejoin life. But I think it is ok to be a tortoise or a hare. The most important thing for me is to go at my own pace. If these strange times have taught me anything it is to listen to what my mind and body needs right now in this moment. I am reminded of my yoga teacher who often starts the class with *“do the yoga with the body you have brought with you and not with the body you think you should have.”* Wise words indeed, we do need to listen and pay attention to ourselves!

It is certainly feels as if post lockdown celebration is in the air and we do need to celebrate ordinary people’s lives and contributions. So more celebrations of life

would be a good place to start. I have been reflecting on my lockdown celebrations over the past year. I really enjoyed having birthday beach picnics. Some of my new ways of doing things during lockdown I would like to keep, such as all the lovely walking and sea swimming and the flask of tea on the bench. I have had many lovely meetings on a bench by the Seabird Centre with my flask of tea and cake. But I realised recently how small my world had become when I opened the door for my Tesco delivery and got so excited to see two Tesco deliverymen. They looked bemused at my over the top exclamation of “Oh how lovely two Tesco men!”

We have been asked to think about what we want to do now that some of the restrictions are lifted. I really need to see my mother who is 90 and lives in Somerset, as well as friends who live at a distance. But a waiter serving a meal on a white tablecloth, a meal not prepared by me, a glass of crisp dry white wine, will serve all my longing for now. Celebrations can feel rather muted when we hear today that 3 million people have died of the COVID virus and many more will still die over the coming months. I hope we are able to take some of the good learning from these times. In North Berwick I think we have experienced an appreciation of community and the importance of all these connections. Kindness and care have seemed so central to our getting through these times as a community. If our world can be more compassionate and kind

then at least we will have a silver lining to the darkness of the past year.

Of course we should also celebrate each and every one of us. I found some lovely quotes about how important it is for us to celebrate the wonder and uniqueness in each of us. So I will offer you my favourite quote: *“celebrate the varied splendour in this world, and remind yourself that it can also be found in you.”* (Farook, S 2018 in *What your soul already knows*)

Don’t forget we have one armchair chats left for our Compassionate Community free talks.

Tuesday May 25th at 7pm the wonderful Dr Kathryn Mannix an inspirational compassionate hospice Doctor who wrote “With the End in Mind.”

Go to the North Berwick Health and Wellbeing Association website for how to book your place: northberwickhealthandwellbeing.co.uk



How does your garden grow?

Pictures by Caroline Foord

I bought a coldframe for my raised bed in Feb and have spinach, lettuce and sweet peas and also peas for pea shoots, which started this week. I love being in the garden each day watering and checking on what is growing. It helps my food budget and is really healthy. I have chives and sage in pots too.



Reflecting on the past while walking in the present by Margaret Purves

On Monday afternoon, I had a wonderful walk down through the Glen. I was overwhelmed by the beauty of it. The tiny buds growing on the trees, the sun filtering through the branches and shining on the beautiful pale green leaves. Am I the only one who thinks the Glen is a magic place? Enter it... and it hugs you, like a comfort blanket. It is not an experience to be hurried but to walk slowly and enjoy.

My ancestor was born here in 1672. I am trying to picture what this area would be like then. I think I am correct in saying that North Berwick started about Quality Street and finished around Church Road. I think the girl's father was a farm servant, so possibly lived on one of the small farms (Runrigs or Heugh or Horse crook or Mains ?). I am so blessed to live just over the road from the Glenmaybeon the spot where baby Marion was born, who knows? It is certainly a little piece of Heaven.

What is your Desert Island favourite piece of music?

Last month Robert encouraged members and volunteers to share what pieces would appear on the request lists of NBCCC members and volunteers. If you had to choose just one piece of music (which could be played time and time if you were ever stranded on a desert island) what would be it be?

Alex Hutchison - "On reading Robert's article I immediately thought of 'Morning' from Greig's Peer Gynt Suite. I first heard it as a teenager and it made me think of gurgling streams and cascading waterfalls, birds singing and leaves opening....the joys of a morning walk through a wood or on a mountain hillside. Just a release of joy . It still has that effect whenever I hear it"

If you would like to contribute a piece of music for the NBCCC request list please submitted to our Newsletter Editor, Emma (contact details on the last page).



Liz Martin captured these pictures around The Law. Beautiful blue sky with a carpet of yellow daffodils and newly opened blossom on surrounding trees.



Rory Steel, Director of Fringe By The Sea says “We are super excited to have Storm appearing on the last day of our festival and be part of her ‘resurrection’ as she spreads her story around Scotland. She can expect a very special North Berwick welcome”.

Vision Mechanics’ spectacular STORM comes to Fringe By The Sea this August

Storm returns – a ten-metre-tall mythical goddess of the sea, will celebrate our coasts and waters and the need to protect them at North Berwick’s Fringe By The Sea, August 15th, 2021.

Created by Edinburgh-based visual theatre company, Vision Mechanics, and first unveiled as part of Celtic Connections 2020, Storm will once again rise from the oceans to walk on land.

Part of the Year of Coasts and Waters, Storm is folklore made real, living in the waters around Scotland and coming to land to tell the story of oceans in crisis.

Made from entirely recycled and natural resources Storm is ten metres tall and weighs around 500 kilos. Her eyes are the colour of oyster shells, her hair thick strands of kelp, her voice the chorus of the waves. She is accompanied wherever she travels by a beautiful soundscape created by the pioneering Scottish folk singer Mairi Campbell.

Aided by eight puppeteers, Storm – Scotland’s largest puppet – will gaze down at the beauty of the North Berwick coastline, urging care for the environment every step of the way in this free, outdoor theatrical event.

Vision Mechanics Artistic Director, Symon Macintyre said: “After meeting thousands of friends at her debut in Glasgow at the start of 2020, Storm has been lying in wait to return to Scottish shores and continue to share her message of care for our environment, our oceans and our coastlines. Storm brings communities together, something we have all been missing, and we’re delighted to be able to continue her journey on the beautiful beaches of North Berwick with Fringe By The Sea.”

Storm is the latest production from Edinburgh based visual theatre makers Vision Mechanics. Previously they toured the giant puppet Big Man Walking across Scotland, transformed Drummohr House into the world of Oz, and installed Giants in the Forest across the UK. Their work invites people to celebrate and participate in creating memorable and interactive productions on huge scales. Storm is their most ambitious, challenging, and politically resonant project yet. She will rise again in towns and villages around Scotland in Autumn 2021. Plans for her tour will be announced in summer.

Fringe By The Sea will run from 6-15 August with a line up of over 150 events which will see live audiences being entertained in Covid-secure environments. Tickets are already selling well for acts that have been announced including Basement Jaxx, Huey Morgan, Peat & Diesel, Irvine Welsh, Janey Godley and Gail Porter.

More information about the best way to see STORM will be made available at www.fringebythesea.com and on social media channels nearer the time. Tickets for events can also be booked at this website.

May Wildlife Watch by Ruth Fraser

Spring is now in full swing! May is a month of blue skies, the return of green trees and pink blossom, and long, light evenings. It's a great time to get out into nature and see what you can spot...

Mute swans



Mute swans at the Musselburgh la-

Swans are one of the UK's most familiar birds and always a delight to see. They are such elegant, powerful birds. Now that winter has passed, winter migrant species such as the whooper swan have returned to Iceland, Siberia, and northern Europe. Therefore, if you spot a swan at this time of year it will be a resident mute swan. But mute, they are not! They snort, grunt and hiss!



Did you know? A female swan is known as a 'pen' and a male is a 'cob'.

Beach surprises



Common limpet

Some of the best wildlife spots are species which we often walk straight past...but once we stop and take a closer look, we discover so much about the wonderful nature right on our doorstep. Take the humble limpet, clinging to a rock, waiting for the high tide to return. Under that shell, they have a tongue bristling with tiny teeth to scrape food off rocks. Those teeth are currently considered to be the strongest biological material on the planet! They have a tensile strength value higher than spider silk.

Favourite fact: After moving about over rocks while the tide is high, each limpet returns to their own favourite spot when the tide goes out, following a mucus trail to find its way.

Top Wildlife Tip: For the month of May don't mow your lawn! Changing your mowing routine and allowing plants to flower can create enough nectar for ten times more bees and other pollinators.

Other Top Spots: Have you heard the familiar buzzing of bees yet? Many species emerge in Spring so it's the perfect time to go on a bee hunt.

Let get snapping: please send any photos of May wildlife that you capture, for us to share in the June edition.

Wildlife Anagrams

T O R E T

D E G E O H H G

T U F E T B R Y L

E M B B E L B E U

H O N I L P D

Answers P8



North Berwick Youth Project

Over the school holidays we ran an Easter Holiday Hub. We had a fun filled two weeks where the young people were involved in lots of different activities. These included lots of lovely walks, den building up at the Whisky Bottle, rounders in the lodge and obstacle courses. We also headed up to Herbspace where the young people took part in some meditation, tried fresh mint tea and explored the nunnery ruins. The young people have had a great couple of weeks with us at the Youth Project before returning back to school full time.

Beth Smith, Youth Worker



North Berwick in Bloom (NBiB) by Libby Morris

The tulip festival is now well underway with over 40 varieties of tulips planted in tubs around the town, and hundreds of bulbs in the lodge and other flower beds. The tulip leaflet has been sent out and hopefully you have already received a copy. If not, there are some available in many of the High Street shops and at the station and the library. If you are not able to get out for walks, our website has lots of photos of the tulips. Just click on this link if you are reading this newsletter on your computer <https://www.northberwickinbloom.org/galleries-tulips>

Summer challenge: to repurpose old used polystyrene fish boxes to create summer displays throughout North Berwick. Start now by going to the North Berwick in Bloom website, watch the video on our website <https://www.northberwickinbloom.org/fish-box-challenge-2021>, take photos of your creations and join in the fun with friends, family and neighbours.

We can supply old fishboxes that would otherwise go into landfill and you can transform it into a colourful miniature garden using paint, sand and some sandpaper. Plant your mini garden with flowers, vegetables or herbs or even create a fairy garden! Display it somewhere so that it can be enjoyed by passers by and maybe even join your neighbours and have a street competition? Please send NBiB your photos and we may be able to display the best ones in front of the Abbey Church or at Fringe by the Sea.



Blooming Blossom

by Emma Papakyriakou



Wee book review by Lisa McClure

I have always been a big reader, but one of the unexpected pleasures of lockdown has been a huge increase in the number of books I have read!

I have been a member of a Book Group (or Reading Bee, as my husband calls us) with a bunch of five wonderful friends from Edinburgh for the past twenty years. They wouldn't mind me mentioning they are all 7-10 years older than me, they are truly like a group of much older sisters, I'm the eldest in my family, and I so value their gentle, wise counsel. We have met far more regularly over the past year, via Zoom, rather than every two months, where we always shared hugs, stories, a glass or two of wine and lots of giggles.

I haven't seen any of them in the flesh for well over a year, like so many of us. Hopefully next month we are going to meet in Ail's garden in Edinburgh to discuss our next book, but I suspect unlike many of the previous zooms, there will be little chat about the book, but lots of chat about everything else!

So a wee review of a book I read last week which really made me think about everything we want to achieve in our project as it is fundamentally about community, connection, isolation and kindness.

The Authenticity Project by Clare Pooley - Six strangers with one thing in common: their lives aren't always what they make them out to be. What would happen if they told the truth instead?

Julian Jessop is tired of hiding the deep loneliness he feels. So he begins The Authenticity Project - a small green notebook containing the truth about his life. Leaving the notebook on a table in his friendly neighbourhood cafe, Julian never expects Monica, the owner, to track him down after finding it. Or that she'll be inspired to write down her own story.

Little do they realize that such small acts of honesty hold the power to impact all those who discover the notebook and change their lives completely.

It is a wonderful, very easy to read book, six people across the generations, all with scars and baggage, like all of us, but through the simple acts of kindness and bravery have a much more authentic future, filled with love.

The opening words in the book are written by Leonard Cohen...

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack in everything

**Wildlife Anagram Answers: 1) Otter 2) Hedgehog
3) Butterfly 4) Bumblebee 5) Dolphin**



Celebrating Communities works to bring joy back into communities through events and local projects inspired by the support, care and friendships that we have seen throughout covid.

We meet on the third Thursday of the month at 10.30am on Zoom. Everyone is welcome to join us for an online chat. Register for our next conversation on May 20th [here](#).

Some of the ideas so far are singing, golf, digital help, and a walking festival! The project runs on community energy and enthusiasm with a bit of help from Dementia Friendly East Lothian and funding from Life Changes Trust, North Berwick Trust, National Lottery Community Fund. If you want to find out more or get involved email maya@dfel.org, call Sue on 07727 883 881, or go to www.celebrating-communities.org.

Read about our Seaside Singers project below. We look forward to seeing you soon!

Seaside Singers



Seaside Singers Presents: Elvis!

Get your dancing shoes on and your microphone at the ready - Elvis is in town! With a selection of songs including *Love me Tender* and *Jailhouse Rock*. Watch and sing-along [here](#).

Seaside Singers is an inclusive monthly sing-a-long for all, with performances from local artists, and members of the community to bring us together in song. Performances are available online: <https://www.celebrating-communities.org/seaside-singers>. Email khlayre@dfel.org.uk to receive the performances directly in your in-

PROGRAMME:

March: Seaside Singers variety sing-along

April: Elvis - King in the Cabin:

<https://www.facebook.com/KingintheCabin/>

May: VE day special with Sarah Laing:

<https://www.sarahlaingsings.co.uk/>

June: Summer variety sing-along

July: Live events + online sing-alongs

August: Live events + online sing-alongs



Spread the word! If anyone would like to sing with us, or if you have an auntie, granny, friend, cousin, daughter, dog... that you think would like to give us song, then please get in touch: Khlayre@dfel.org.uk



Dementia Friendly East Lothian upcoming dates:

VE Day special Sarah Laing - mid-May Email khlare@dfel.org.uk if you would like the performances sent to your inbox.

Celebrating Communities Conversation – 20th May The third Thursday of the month at 10.30am on Zoom. Register [here](#).

Dementia Awareness Week: 31st May – 6th June

Carers Week: 7th – 13th June

We will be sharing more information on our Facebook and through your networks for ways to get involved.



This picture was taken at the Phone Booth on North Berwick High Street. This booth was painted by local artist Julie Burnes for the Law Primary PTA Easter Egg Hunt.



Carers of East Lothian are continuing to support carers over the phone or online via zoom. If you are unpaid carer and would like to find out more about our services and support please contact our office on 0131 6650135 to register with us and find out more. We also have some online events for carers in May.

Budgeting & Saving - Thu 6th May, 2 to 3 pm

This session will focus on ways of budgeting and ways of saving money. It will also give a brief introduction to savings accounts and how to assess which account is best for your needs. The session will be delivered by Money Advice Scotland.

Bank Accounts & Online Banking - Tue 11th May, 10:30 to 11:30 am

This session will give an overview of the type of bank accounts available and what the pros and cons of each may be. We will chat briefly about open banking and how this could help with budgeting. We will also discuss online banking and introduce you to a tool that simulates the online banking experience so you can practise. This session will be delivered by Money Advice Scotland.

Caring for a loved one with COPD - Wed 19th May, 1:30 to 2:30 pm

Join us for an interactive session with physiotherapist Lynne Turnbull and Carers Support Worker Jenny Swan about caring for a loved one with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) - what is it, what you can do to help the person you care for and support for carers. This session will be delivered in partnership with NHS Lothian Pulmonary Rehabilitation service.

Booking Instructions

All events are FREE for unpaid carers but require advanced booking. To book a place on an event, **please call us on 0131 665 0135 or email centre@coel.org.uk**. All events will be held on Zoom.



Ageing Well are delighted to let you all know that following Scottish Government announcements as of Friday 12th March, adults can take part in outdoor non-contact sports and organised

group exercise of up to 15 people.

Health Walks have restart with a Walk Leader, physical distancing will be maintained. Please get in touch for more information on the Health Walks. Health Walks will take place:

Monday - North Berwick – 1.30; Tuesday - Aberlady - 10.30; Wednesday - Dirleton - 10.00

We continue to have lots on offer online too—Pilates, Yoga, Zumba, Singing and Tai Chi, for anyone over 50.

For the full list of online classes and to find out what might suit your interests or the Health Walks please visit Ageing Well [website](#) or [Facebook](#) page or you can talk to Parvine Jazayeri, Ageing Well Co-ordinator on pjazayeri@eastlothian.gov.uk or call 07718 117585

Community Links Worker for North Berwick and Gullane

Tara Broadfoot, Community Link Worker from We Are With You, is based in both the North Berwick and Gullane Medical Practices. Gullane every Wednesday and North Berwick every Thursday and Friday.

I can offer you a safe space to talk about issues that are stopping you living well and time to explore what changes and support you might need to help improve your health and well-being. All at your local surgery. I can also accompany you to attend the places you want to be, helping you connect with community resources (e.g. Welfare Advice / Mental Health Resources), services (e.g. Benefit applications / Housing problems / Befriending / Trauma) and groups (e.g. Walking / Men's Shed / Art Therapy) helping you resume a regular daily routine, make better life decisions and feel less isolated.

If you would like to be referred ask your GP, practice nurse or receptionist. They will explain how you make an appointment.



Coastal Communities Museum hopes to reopen with a new exhibition on Saturday 8 May. We also have lots of interesting features and activities:

- **Object of The Month**
<https://www.coastalmuseum.org/object-of-the-month/william-auld-beach-hut>
- **Audio Tour of North Berwick:**
<https://www.coastalmuseum.org/audio-tour-of-north-berwick>
- **Walk with Robert Louis Stevenson:**
<https://www.coastalmuseum.org/walk-with-robert-louis-stevenson>
- **Go on a Treasure Hunt:**
<https://www.coastalmuseum.org/go-on-a-treasure-hunt>
- There is also a link if anyone is interested in volunteering with the museum:
<https://www.volunteereastlothian.org.uk/latest-news/coastal-communities-museum-volunteers?rq=coastal%20communities%20museum>

Beach Hut donated by Stewart Auld. © Judith Booth

JUNE Newsletter Content – Please send in to Emma by **WEDNESDAY 19 MAY**

We welcome a range of content so please share your stories, your own photos, hobbies, news, as well as any events cross North Berwick and the Coastal Villages. We would also welcome content that celebrates special occasions.

Please send directly to Emma Papakyriakou at newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections - our current service

Community Connections is ready to support you getting out and about in May. We stick closely to the government guidelines, but more possibilities are opening up now.

Do you feel you have been indoors too much and you'd like to get some physical confidence back? Ask us for a one-to-one Buddy Walk with a trained volunteer. When you feel ready for it, it will be possible to meet some other buddy walking pairs for a rendezvous in an outdoor space.

Have you been missing the days of coffee dates, but need to get back into the way of it? If you'd like to try our Coffee Connections at a local café, why not arrange to meet your volunteer befriender, or another of our police-checked volunteers, in your favourite café? We can arrange that for you. If you're not quite ready for that, but would like someone to talk to regularly, we can connect you with one of our volunteer telephone benders once a week.

Bit by bit, towards summer and as guidelines begin to allow, we will be able to arrange introductions to other folk among our membership. Whether you've been with us for some time or are quite new, by Autumn (all being well), you could know quite a number of new faces - and friendships often emerge from that.

Just contact Carol or Lisa if you'd like some more company, conversations and connections in your life.

Current services:

- Weekly phone calls
- Buddy walks (weekly or one off)
- Monthly newsletter
- Coffee Connections

Need some more information first?

Contact Carol, Project Officer on 07940 203380 Email:

NBC-communityconnections@outlook.com

Contact Lisa, Befrienders Coordinator on 07862694842 Email:

Befrienders@nbc-communityconnections.org

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections has been funded by the North Berwick Coastal Area Partnership, National Lottery Community Fund, North Berwick Trust, East Lothian Council.

