

# North Berwick Coastal Community Connections *Annual Report* *2020-2021*



## **IN A NUTSHELL**

- **Community Connections is still going strong**
- **We've reached more clients and increased our volunteer team**
  - **We've taken on a Befriending Coordinator**
- **Befriending and Buddy Walks volunteers have supported members to reconnect and even get out into the world again**
  - **Coffee Connections events have helped us reconnect members**
- **We're reaching other coastal villages to encourage and support their similar projects to bring people together**
- **We hope to restart Scone Café and other gatherings and partnership activities very soon!**
  - **Our website and social media will be launched shortly**
  - **Future funding is the next big challenge – stay tuned.**

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## **FOREWORD**

In the foreword to our first Annual Report, the founding Co-Chairs of NBCCC, Tillie Baird and Deborah Ritchie highlighted the effects of social isolation and loneliness on health and wellbeing. The Covid 19 pandemic and the large-scale lockdowns have only exacerbated these problems in our community. The pandemic has made the situation more difficult for many who were experiencing problems before Covid 19 and has resulted in many more people experiencing the impact of social isolation and loneliness, possibly for the first time.

While it has been a year of many challenges, it has also been a year in which significant progress has been made including:

- The appointment of a Board of Trustees;
- Approval of our application for NBCCC to be registered as a Scottish Charitable Organisation - in September 2020;
- The successful transition of the project from the North Berwick Health and Wellbeing Association from 1 April 2021;
- The extension of our small staff team by the appointment of our Befriending Coordinator, Lisa Brownlie in February 2021;
- The recruitment and training of a significant number of additional volunteers to work on the project;
- Work with the villages in the ward with a view to extending the benefits of NBCCC to them, often through collaboration with existing village associations;
- The development of a website which will be launched shortly;
- The continuation of our Telephone Befriending service which was introduced when the first lockdown prevented all of our previous face-to-face meeting arrangements including the very popular weekly Scone Café;
- The introduction of Buddy Walks on which members could get much-needed exercise with trained volunteers and Coffee Connections in local cafes which provided members with the opportunity to have social interaction with both volunteers and other members.

NBCCC has been fortunate in having secured funding support for its work this year from a range of organisations including the National Lottery Awards for All, North Berwick Trust and East Lothian Council's One Council Funding. We were also delighted to receive a grant of £1,000 from McCarthy Stone Foundation (following a nomination by one of their residents who is a valued volunteer with the project). A significant application has been made to the National Lottery for funding for the period 2021-2024 and it is hoped that a decision on this will be given in September 2021. Applications are also being made for funding from other sources.

Our thanks are due to so many who contribute to this amazing project, including our funders, our dedicated Project Officer, Carol and Befriending Coordinator, Lisa, our Newsletter Editor, Ruth, our Board of Trustees, our superb volunteers and last but by no means least, our members.

With appropriate funding, NBCCC looks forward to serving the community in the North Berwick Coastal Ward by reducing loneliness and social isolation in the coming years.

***Robert D Burgon (Co-Chair), 4 September 2021***

## PROJECT OFFICER'S REPORT

Our work of tackling social isolation had to adapt very swiftly and radically in March 2020, as detailed in last year's Annual Report, covering April 2019-May 2020.

### **Working with Members – our current activities and methods include:**

- **Responding to** referrals from Community Links, health professionals and community members
- **Following up** with telephone calls, home visits, posted reminders/notes as appropriate
- **Coffee Connections:** these are meet-ups in local cafés, introducing members and volunteers to each other in small groups, aiming to rebuild members' social confidence and reduce the loneliness exacerbated by, in some cases, 14-17 months of isolation at home.
- **Befriending:** one to one meetings and calls with experienced PVG checked volunteers, for members not ready or able to meet others or to leave home, with a view to building confidence and reducing barriers to later participation
- **Buddy Walks:** one to one walks with experienced, Paths for All-trained, PVG checked volunteers, for members wishing to build up their physical and social confidence post-shielding or post-falls, for example
- **Introducing to key professionals** (Carers of East Lothian, Tenancy Support Worker etc) as appropriate
- **Sending our monthly newsletter, Community Connections,** to maintain sense of 'family' and encourage contributions by members
- **Liaising with local agencies,** churches, community and peer support groups to recruit Connectors/Welcomers, helping to increase their reach and inclusion of new members

### ***Additional ways of working with members, from October 2021 - funding allowing:***

- **Invitation to Scone Café,** our weekly drop-in and safe space, which we hope to re-open from this time
- **Introducing to Volunteer Connectors** who can chum to new/re-opening activities, dogwalk to enable access, etc
- **Involvement as volunteers:** where appropriate, and when they feel ready, we can often engage as Connectors
- **Encouraging and introducing new members to local initiatives** by Connectors (community garden, intergenerational meals, movie matinees etc)
- **Lime Grove Community Garden:** this flourishing local shared resource is a neighbourhood-led reclaiming of waste ground initiated by Community Connectors inspired by our launch, with help from North Berwick in Bloom and others. Donations of equipment received, permission gained from Council for plans. Launched Autumn 2019 and growing steadily in planting and participation.

***Carol Stobie, Project Officer***

## **BEFRIENDING COORDINATOR'S REPORT**

*Lisa Brownlie took up post in February 2021, thanks to East Lothian Council One Council Funding.*

These last few months have certainly gone fast as I have learned the ropes and enjoyed meeting the volunteers, members, staff and board members. I have been made to feel so welcome by the NBCCC community and feel privileged to be a part of it!

It has been a pleasure getting to know everyone, hearing their life stories, sharing a giggle and seeing befriending relationships flourish.

Since starting in February, there has been an increased demand for Buddy Walkers. The weather has been lovely and after lockdown people have been keen to get out, get physically active and walking can help us feel better too! Befriending and Buddy Walking share a lot in common: they both offer the joy of sharing a conversation, having a laugh, and enjoying seeing a new relationship develop. And we have seen this develop with lots of our matches.

I have recently taken part in 'Train the Trainer' Dementia training and we hope to be able to offer this to our volunteers in the Autumn.

We hope to continue to grow and develop both the Befriending Service and our Buddy Walking service as the demand for both increases. We have recently had to temporarily close our waiting list. We hope soon to recruit more volunteers, and continue to support and train our volunteer team, who are invaluable to the work we do.

***Lisa Brownlie, Befriending Coordinator***



***Isobel's home-made Easter cards to members***

## THE DIFFERENCE IT MAKES: EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Survey feedback and 1:1 conversations demonstrate the impact of our services:

- Previously isolated members feel part of something bigger, even during lockdown
- Our gatherings enhance quality of life, giving a sense of acceptance and supportive safe space, strengthening members to try out new challenges and overcome barriers to goals
- Participants feel supported by trusting befriender relationships, a regular 'guid blether', a listening ear at difficult times, when reluctant to 'burden' family members
- Members feel encouraged and supported by their Befrienders to venture outside (some for the first time since March 2020) for Buddy Walks and/or Coffee Connections, rebuilding physical and social well-being, and linking with other walkers for conversations and laughter.
- Our newsletter creates a sense of family and a connection to what's going on out there, engaging volunteers and members in writing and illustrating to showcase their talents
- Several members have evolved into volunteers and lead our activities, fulfilling their need to contribute
- Volunteers feel 'very supported', appreciate their gatherings, core training and CPD opportunities; they shape the project through their networks, local knowledge and first-hand experience of members' needs. NBCCC also build community capacity through our specialist training programmes for volunteers
- Building partnerships with other community, third sector, service provider organisations provides a conduit for our members to access other sources of help and support, building not just individual but also community resilience.

We're building in a realistic, flexible, Covid-aware response, targeted outreach, heightened peer support and steps towards the shared vision of a connected, compassionate and confident community.



***Coffee Connections One to One, at the Buttercup Cafe***

***(hungry dogs just visible)***

## Plans for Post-Lockdown and New Funding Phase

1. **Reintroduce our original core activities, responding** to the progressive easing of restrictions:
  - **Scone Café** - when appropriate, relaunch our original drop-in 'safe space', plus demand-led workshops and speakers (mindfulness, strength and balance, yoga etc)
  - **Chumming** by volunteers, introducing members to local groups and events (tea-dances, community lunches, crafts sessions etc)
  - **Partnership Activities** restarting - intergenerational meals, music, movies, crafts, gardening, etc
  
2. **Extend and develop existing newer services (meeting increasing demand):**
  - **Befriending Service** – telephone and in person; still a lifeline for more vulnerable members struggling with 're-entry anxiety'
  - **Coffee Connections** café meet-ups – a crucial stage in reconnecting to the outside world
  - **Buddy Walks:** to meet growing demand for these outings with our trained volunteers, we'll recruit more and introduce group walks
  - **Monthly 'Community Connections' newsletter**
3. **Introduce additional services** - in response to locally-identified current needs:
  - **Group Support:** create and link into Covid-aware facilitated and peer support groups (depression, anxiety, bereavement etc)
  - **Compassionate Neighbours:** with partners Compassionate North Berwick, train volunteers to support isolated individuals facing terminal illness and bereavement, through sensitive companionship, enabling choice, dignity and 'a good death'
  - **Families Work:** collaborating with and complementing specialist agencies, develop targeted support to parents (particularly of teenagers), to reduce isolation and loss of confidence, through 1:1 support, mentoring and groupwork
  - **Villages Outreach:** extend work across Coastal Ward, sparking and working in partnership with similar local initiatives



*The new Aberlady Scone Café's first meeting*

## **OUR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS**

To enable delivery of the new, more ambitious programme, meet increasing demand and build participants' capacity to lead this work, we need the following additional resources.

**Refocus on Core Work with People** – in recognition of increasing support needs, workload demands and rising referrals, and to enable the Project Officer to concentrate on project management, development, partnership and outreach, we propose to expand the staff team (see below).

**We propose to confirm employment and increase hours of our Befriending Coordinator** (recruited to coordinate Covid-generated befriending service – a long-term need)

**Strengthen our staff team** by the addition of a support role dedicated to administration and communications

**Launch our own website and social media** (tendered for and awarded, launching Autumn 2021), enabling more effective promotions, recruitment and awareness campaigns

**Extend circulation of our monthly Community Connections newsletter:** another Covid response, this has created a strong sense of connection and involvement for members, and reaches over 100 people (digitally and by post). Members and volunteers contribute and it has inspired others in local villages

**Recruit new Volunteers** through online recruitment campaign

**Gain Covid-Safe Training** for staff and volunteers in preparation for restarting face to face work in local venues

**Introduce Mental Health Awareness training** to support our volunteers' confidence in responding to increasingly complex referrals, helping to both prevent and assist recovery from mental ill-health, supporting rebuilding of healthy daily routines. Consulting relevant agencies to shape our response, we'll maintain an existing fund to help some members access an Extra Emotional Support Service with trained counsellors, as established during lockdown.

**Create Volunteer Mentors and Specialist Teams** on bereavement work, mental health, dementia, families work and other identified needs

**Bring together staff team** (currently home-based) at a central location

**Obtain regular drop-in space** for members and volunteers to meet and support one another.





*Virtual Tea Party, February 2021*

### **Achievements and Inspiration**

**Effectiveness of original services:** since NBCCC’s launch (June 2019), we’ve worked with over 95 clients referred or self-referred with diagnosis of isolation. Our discussions at drop-in Scone Café and one to one conversations showed our project services help those previously isolated to become **more active, connected, resilient, involved in our community, and feeling more confidence and self-esteem.**

Key causes of isolation among our referrals include **illness, bereavement, history of depression and anxiety, past trauma, hidden poverty, falls and loss of mobility, house move, alcohol and drug issues.**

**Effect of Pandemic:** In 2020, the pandemic meant replacing our drop-in cafe, gatherings and chumming to events with a telephone befriending service, requested by over 40 members. Latterly, as restrictions have eased, we’ve reintroduced a limited face to face service through befriending, Buddy Walks with trained volunteers and Coffee Connections dates.

Covid has been devastating for vulnerable members, frightening many back indoors, depriving them of human touch and eye contact - a huge setback to their build-up of social confidence and greater mobility. We’ve worked hard to respond to this with sensitivity and flexibility.

**Changes in local needs:** Local services which allayed isolation are being cut, from adult education to public transport. Since Covid, our contact agencies report clear evidence of local increases in Universal Credit claims; more pupils qualifying for free school meals; more requests for food and other help from Kindness Cooperative; more relationship splits; more first pregnancies; more families (many newly relocated to the area) who report struggling to cope financially and/or emotionally; most worryingly, a rise in acute mental ill-health episodes, severe shortage of mental health services (waiting lists 6 months +) – two of our referrals have lost their husbands to suicide in the past year.

One notable development (and major issues for many of our referrals) is a growing observation of **bereavement distress and isolation in times of terminal illness**, with fewer support options available than previously.

Recognising this last factor, North Berwick's Compassionate Community, with whom we already worked closely, approached us to propose the incorporation of a much-needed local hub of **Compassionate Neighbours** into our funding application - a major development.

Encouragingly, our 2021 Survey shows we're supporting many older people most isolated by the pandemic. But the above factors, members' changing needs and learning from our first two years have reshaped our future plans: we have to reach wider, focus on strengthening resilience and become as inclusive as possible. We'll all be facing these problems for many years to come.



***Compassionate Neighbours volunteers in training***

#### **Volunteer Involvement: Our Community Connectors**

Approximately 50 Volunteer Community Connectors have continued to participate with us, with many new recruits in early 2021.

Initially involved in Scone Café and chumming, latterly in telephone befriending, many have trained to deliver Buddy Walks or begun welcoming members to Coffee Connections, while some prefer background support work. Several are former members who began to volunteer once their own needs were met and two participate in the Board and Advisory Committee.

We hold monthly volunteer gatherings, one to one meetings and calls for support and supervision.

*CASE STUDY: CF attended our drop-in Scone Café following our talk for Carers of East Lothian members. Feeling isolated after being a carer for many years, CF showed excellent volunteer potential, with thoughtful meeting contributions and service improvement suggestions. She was encouraged and trained to become leader of our Scone Café team. Shielding over lockdown, CF has skilfully and sensitively supported two vulnerable members with vital telephone befriending. These experiences have benefited her own wellbeing and confidence*



### ***Community Connections volunteers at work!***

**Volunteer Connector/Befrienders (PVG checked)** participate in and actively shape monthly meetings, core training (using Befriending Networks materials and in-house) and specialist CPD (Buddy Walks, mental health etc), WhatsApp groups for coordination and mutual support. Volunteers also receive three-monthly 1:1 supervision and are kept in touch with project developments through email, text and monthly newsletter.

Our Volunteers are encouraged and keen to share and connect us with new opportunities to widen our reach, including their initiative of the Christmas campaign which saw local Bass Rock volunteers create 95 handmade boxes of truffles, primary school children creating and writing personal messages in 66 handmade cards, and Law Quilters making 15 exquisite patchwork quilts, all to be delivered to our members.

Volunteer Dorothy created the drop-in Scone Café idea, the best-known and most-loved of all our services, and remains Baker-In-Chief - her scones are delivered for special birthdays and other occasions, as a reminder of our Scone Café Family.



### ***'Sconentine's Day' deliveries of home-made heart-shaped tablet and shortbread, February 2021***

#### **Our Strategic Volunteers**

**Our Trustees'** professional experience includes business, charity committees, accountancy, HR, counselling, education, health service, social care and community work. One is also a volunteer Befriender/Buddy Walker. Regular NBCCC Board meetings lead on the project strategy and involve volunteer trustees, Project Officer, Befriender Coordinator.

**Our Advisory Committee** includes volunteers, members, representatives of NB Health and Well Being Association, NB Health Centre, surgery-based Community Links Project, Co-

op Member Pioneer and villages links. Two-monthly Advisory Committee meetings to shape our work, connecting us to wider networks, opportunities and needs, involving the trustees and staff plus volunteer representatives, member representative, representatives of North Berwick Health and Well Being Association, NB Health Centre, surgery-based Community Links project, Co-op Member Pioneer.



***Buddy Walkers at the Glen***

### **Member Involvement: welcome to shape our story**

Members are encouraged to feed back and make suggestions to shape the project, right from the start.

Four members have evolved into valued volunteers at Scone Café drop-in, others are befrienders since Covid. We anticipate more of these ‘transitions’ in future as members emerge into the world and regain social confidence with our help.

Our monthly Community Connections newsletter increasingly showcases members and volunteer contributions, reflecting their priorities and interests, and will play a significant part in spreading our message and widening opportunities for involvement. Once our website and social media are in place from this summer, communication will increase greatly from members of the public and influence our service in every way.

Our newest service, Coffee Connections, encourages members to become informal ‘Connectors’, letting others know of the meet-ups, chumming them along and welcoming newcomers, alerting staff to new referrals and/or prospective volunteers. Our future plans will offer even wider opportunity for members to advise, contribute and gain new skills and opportunities.

Results of recent evaluation survey show that members and volunteers feel ‘very supported’ by the project.





### ***Coffee Connections at the Seabird Centre***

#### **Members' strengths**

**Over lockdown, many members (connected with NBCCC help) supported others with calls, letters and later coffee dates, benefiting their own mental well-being and sense of purpose. We've realised the impact of peer support and will build on this.**

***Case Study:*** NBCCC member Barbara (88) is registered blind and deaf, and uses a Rollator walker. A great communicator, she's starred in a stereotype-breaking video; rings forgetful members with reminders of meet-ups; meets a vulnerable member for weekly lunches; heads to the Seabird Centre each Tuesday as a Coffee Connector, welcoming and introducing newer participants.



### ***Barbara with other Coffee Connections participants***

#### **Learning from this year's experience**

**Our ethos is human connection – so Covid challenged us hugely. Through trial and error, listening and learning, we've discerned our participants' strengths, discovering (and rediscovering) ways to reconnect in the future.**

Telephone befriending works; we've enjoyed Virtual Coffees. But nothing has proved as uplifting as traditional home-made cards and treats – hand delivered, with a doorstep chat. We'll build this into a year-round programme, led by volunteers and members skilled in crafts, baking and writing.

Our new website and social media will streamline access, signposting and referrals. We're supporting members to access digital methods where they want to. But we've seen that nothing surpasses the impact of printed copies of our newsletter, posted to over half our members who prefer this, and firmly focused on meeting their needs. One member, Betty, initiated the idea of colouring-in sheets to include in our newsletter, now a regular feature.



***Betty with Fin, an occasional volunteer, holding Betty's latest colouring creation***

Another member, referred to us for Extra Emotional Support Team counselling mid-2020 following a traumatic bereavement, benefited from this support enough to move on to receive befriending; after participating in a Virtual Coffee Connections, she volunteered to become a Member Representative on the Advisory Group; we are delighted that she has now agreed to become a Trustee.



***Sweets by Bass Rockers, comfort quilts by Law Quilters - the personal touch for Community Connections Christmas celebrations***

## **COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **We collaborate with key agencies and organisations to:**

- generate reciprocal referrals and awareness of community assets
- complement each other's work and identify gaps
- create joint activities
- maximise inclusion and welcome
- strengthen connections that benefit our members' well-being

### **Original collaborations (pre-Covid and projected to return):**

- North Berwick Community Centre/ Kindness Cooperative/ Resilience Team – meetings, events, plus Covid-era cross-referrals of vulnerable individuals
  - Stepping Out (Mental Health Charity) – referrals; co-hosting meals and coffees at monthly free NB Movies matinees; planning collaborations on families outreach.
  - Local Churches – talks, promotions, referrals, facilities use; our weekly drop in Scone café; drop-in mornings for members to see staff and access Community lunches.
  - North Berwick Youth Project – intergenerational meals/quiz
  - Inspire Crafts – gift-making workshops
  - Sheila Reid Mindfulness – strength & balance, mindfulness workshops
  - NB Pipe Band Traditional Music Nights – joining in with singing, playing, listening
- We'll resume these activities when feasible.

### **More recent collaborations:**

- Ageing Well – collaboration on promoting walks, swimming and other activities
- Paths for All – gaining walks training/ insurance cover for over 20 volunteers
- Extra Emotional Support Team – referring and subsidising access to counselling for members with Covid-exacerbated mental health issues
- Yoga for Health - subsidising participation in scientifically-validated courses, benefiting members with long-term health conditions
- North Berwick in Bloom - NBCCC chummed members along to socially-distanced public gardening throughout pandemic



***Bass Rockers' Christmas treats for NBCCC members***

- Compassionate Communities – training volunteers to support those facing terminal diagnosis/bereavement
- Bass Rock volunteers – initiators and creators of our Christmas treats campaign
- Outreach village work (various coastal groups) – supporting similar new initiatives tackling isolation - satellite Scone Cafes in prospect
- We Are With You/Community Links (based NB and Gullane Surgery) – meeting CL Worker weekly, generating many new referrals of patients
- NB Day Centre – approached in view of crossover clients and their new, more restricted numbers, offering alternatives for social contact to their previous coffee drop-in clients
- Scottish Seabird Centre - accommodating our weekly Coffee Connections, to renew social connections and confidence among members.

**RECOGNITION FROM THE COMMUNITY**

- The North Berwick **Rotary Club** presented us with a Community Service award for activities during the pandemic
- **The Scottish Older People's Assembly** invited our Project Officer to be a keynote speaker at their 2021 East Lothian Outreach online event
- **Our young volunteer Lottie (11)** was nominated for a Young Scot Award for her Christmas card campaign
- The **Coop's local Funeral Director** presented us with a Christmas Hamper for Heroes, following our Covid response to the community
- We are enormously grateful to the McCarthy Stone Foundation, who have selected us for their first UK-wide Award of £1000 in recognition of our positive engagement



of older people, following nomination by one of our volunteers, a resident of one of their North Berwick properties. (See Appendix for full story.)



***NBCCC members, staff and volunteer with Tantallon Court Manager Lesley Kelly***

***With special thanks to Margaret Purves and Lesley Kelly***

Through outreach and collaboration, NBCCC has become known for our unique connecting work. Our next step in maximising our profile and engaging with other potential networks is to establish an online presence, launching our own website and social media this Autumn..



***Volunteer Lottie's nomination for Young Scot***

## **Appendix 1: SOCIAL PRESCRIBING**

**Health service referrals** initially slowed down during the early stages of Covid, which was understandable given the crisis situation and new priorities and working conditions for both health staff and NBCCC staff. We were no longer able to be present at the Health Centre each week, talk to staff and remind them of our service. However, later on the referrals grew again, as awareness rose of the impact on patients more vulnerable to the impact of shielding and extreme isolation on their mental well-being.

We worked hand in hand with the Resilience Group in North Berwick and received many referrals from their volunteer with special responsibility for identifying the most vulnerable and isolated members of the community.

In 2021, we gained a new and vital connection to the North Berwick and Gullane Health Centres in the newly-installed Community Links service, with worker Tara Broadfoot. Our Project Officer and Befriending Coordinator took the initiative to approach, and have built a strong working relationship with Tara through weekly zoom meetings. This has become a key source of referrals ever since. We continue to receive community and self-referrals, which latterly have grown to the point where we have to suspend the growth of our waiting list until we can increase staff capacity and meet the needs. We will be introducing stricter timescales and managing expectations for our one-to-one support, encouraging those who can to move onto community networks and social gatherings where possible, so that new members' more urgent needs can be met.

The new website and Social Media platforms are likely to streamline and increase referrals in the future.

## Appendix 2:

### PROJECT STATISTICS FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS CLIENTS 2020-21

#### Member profiles

Total 97 members worked with (2019-21), ranging from 19 to 97 years.

**Table 1 MALES BY AGE GROUP (Referrals in 2020-21)**

Gender	Age groups	Number	Percentage of Total
Male	80+	1	20%
Male	70-79	1	20%
Male	40-69	1	20%
Male	18-39	2	40%
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>MALE REFERRALS AS PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL TOTAL (2020-21)</b>			<b>12.5%</b>

*We retain some male clients from our earlier intake, but it's notable that the number of male referrals has slowed down since Covid.*

**Table 2 FEMALES BY AGE GROUP (Referrals in 2020-21)**

Gender	Age groups	Number	Percentage of Total
Female	80+	7	20%
Female	70-79	11	31%
Female	40-69	17	49%
Female	18-39	–	–
<b>Total</b>		<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>FEMALE REFERRALS AS PERCENTAGE OF OVERALL TOTAL (2020-21)</b>			<b>87.5%</b>

*Female referrals form a higher proportion of intake this year. As before, it is possible that women were more able to express their sense of isolation to others (such as GP) and to seek a solution. This year saw a surprising increase in the number of female referrals aged 40-69.*

**Table 3 PRESENTING PROBLEM - New referrals, 2020-21**

Reason for referral	Number	Percentage of Total
Bereavement	5	12.5%
Mental Health Issues	9	22.5%
New to the community	5	12.5%
Isolation	14	35%
Physical health condition/illness	6	15%
Other	1 (carer for addicted son)	2.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>40 new referrals</b>	<b>100%</b>

*NOTES: Overall, reasons given for referral remain similar to those presenting in our first year.*

**Table 4 TYPES OF SERVICE OFFERED/OUTCOMES during 2020-21**

Type of Support	Numbers currently involved	Percentage of total
Befriending	15	16 %
Buddy Walks	12	12 %
Coffee Connections (Seabird or one to one) as primary activity	7	7 %
Transition to volunteer	3	3 %
Newsletter only	17	18 %
Counselling subsidised from Extra Emotional Support Grant	4	4 %
On waiting list for 1:1 services	9	9 %
Fully discharged	30	31%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>97 worked with 67 currently engaged</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NOTES:** These services have been offered since Covid-19, replacing previous face to face gatherings. All except EEST Counselling will be sustained, but we envisage reducing One to One support and reintroducing more gatherings to reduce individual dependence on volunteers.

**Table 5 WHO MAKES REFERRALS? CHANGES IN 2020-21**

<b>Sources of referrals 2020-2021</b>	<b>Numbers referred</b>	<b>Percentage of total</b>
<b>Health professionals:</b>		
<i>GP</i>	<b>11</b>	
<i>Edinburgh Royal Infirmary Heart Nurse</i>	<b>1</b>	
<i>Community Links worker (NB and Gullane Surgeries)</i>	<b>11</b>	
<i>Mental Health Team, East Lothian Community Hospital</i>	<b>1</b>	
<i>CWIC (Care When It Counts) Team, East Lothian Community Hospital</i>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>TOTAL 25</b>	<b>62.5%</b>
<b>Community Sources:</b>		
<i>Self-referral</i>	<b>3</b>	
<i>Resilience Team link</i>	<b>1</b>	
<i>Family of client</i>	<b>4</b>	
<i>Facebook connection</i>	<b>1</b>	
<i>Neighbour</i>	<b>1</b>	
<i>Penumbra link</i>	<b>1</b>	
<i>Day Centre</i>	<b>1</b>	
	<b>TOTAL 12</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>East Lothian Council:</b>		
<i>Tenancy Support Officer</i>	<b>3</b>	
	<b>TOTAL 3</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
<b>TOTAL NEW REFERRALS Jun 2020 – Sep 2021</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>TOTAL 100%</b>

**NOTES on referrals:**

**Health Professional Referrals:** We have collated all Health Professionals and Community Links under one heading in this report, since patients must now be referred to Community Links by Health Professionals. Since Community Links Worker was installed at North Berwick

*and Gullane surgeries, we have developed strong links and weekly meetings have brought about 11 referrals in these first few months (April to September). Many more are in prospect if funding allows us to move forward in October, recruiting and training more volunteers and reopening our waiting list. The number of health professional referrals has grown with this new service and with greater word of mouth awareness of our work, including Extra Emotional Support Team services during the past year.*

**Community sources:** *We collated self-referrals and Resilience Team referrals under this broader heading - the latter stood down in summer 2020, so only one more referral came through during this period, but the link person has since joined our team as a volunteer, contributing her invaluable understanding of the needs of more vulnerable members of the community identified during that time of lockdown.*

**ELC Tenancy Support Officer:** *This newer relationship has proved very productive in both directions - she can refer to us tenants at risk of isolation, and we can signpost members who have tenancy issues with which they need help.*

**OVERALL TRENDS:** *In our first year, two-thirds of our referrals were from community sources. GPs understandably took time to register this project on their radar, but our presence in the surgery helped build this up.*

*This year, it has been reversed, with two-thirds of referrals coming from health professionals. This reflects (a) the new presence of the Community Links service in surgeries, and (b) the difficulty of reaching the public during an exceptional period when we could no longer have a physical presence in community venues or GP surgery, nor circulate flyers. We have had no website or social media of our own, but this will soon be remedied. Already in Autumn 2021 we see a rise in local awareness and community referrals, helped by local press coverage such as for our recent award from McCarthy Stone Foundation. We are working to build strong connections with organisations such as Ageing Well now that their activities have resumed, and fully expect the recent surge in referrals to continue.*



**Scones - our secret weapon**

**With thanks to the Old Aberlady Inn and Kathy Allan**

### **Appendix 3: Treasurer's report by NBCCC Treasurer, Bill Brown**

During the year to March 2021, NBCCC changed from being a "project" to an organisation achieving full charitable status in its own right from 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Funds and expenditure continued to be administered by Carers of East Lothian and North Berwick Health and Wellbeing Association until 31 March 2021 when NBCCC opened its own Bank Account and became responsible for its own administration. We are extremely grateful for the work and assistance shown by CoEL and NBHWA during this period. This period of transition has meant that funds received and spent by NBCCC during this time have been included in the books of account of other organisations as they were not able to be received (or spent) by NBCCC. As such the following figures will not appear in any legal Annual Return or Accounts but are an expression of the activities throughout the whole year.

We are extremely grateful for the funding from the National Lottery, One Council Funding and North Berwick Trust in supporting the charity and for all the help and support in administering the project and charity.

#### **NBCCC Income and Expenditure for the year to Mar 2021**

<b>Income</b>	£	£
National Lottery	9,650	
Additional Covid Support	4,000	
One council	12,015	
North Berwick Trust	15,000	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>40,665</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Salary costs	16,749	
Office & utilities	624	
Promotion and advertising	703	
Phone costs	549	
Groups/ activities/transport costs	456	
Befriending Co-ordinator	448	
Volunteer expenses	407	
Other resources & costs	342	
Emotional support COVID	210	
Volunteers training	174	
<b>TOTAL Expenditure</b>		<b>20,662</b>
<b>Balance Carried Forward 1 April 2021</b>		<b>20,003</b>

**Appendix 4: NORTH BERWICK COASTAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

**REGISTER OF TRUSTEES**

**Robert Burgon, appointed 30.9.2020**

**Jean Campbell, appointed 30.9.2020 (rtd. 03.02.2021)**

**Lisa McClure, appointed 30.9.2020 (rtd. 23.08.2021)**

**Elaine Sutherland, appointed 30.9.2020 (rtd. 31.8.2021)**

**William Brown, appointed 18.02.2021**

**Donna McArdle, appointed 01.09.2021**

**Rebecca Everett, appointed 01.09.2021**

**Elizabeth Weir, appointed 08.09.2021**

**UPDATED 11-Sep-21**



***Community Connectors Bex and Lottie delivering Christmas treats and cards***



***Some of Law Primary P7 creators of Christmas cards (and jokes) for NBCCC members***



*With special thanks to the amazing Bass Rock volunteer group*

## APPENDIX 5

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

Would you like to make new friendships and feel more connected with your community?

North Berwick Coastal Community Connections (NBCCC) are still here to help.....

What we can offer right now..

- Weekly calls
- 1:1 Buddy Walks
- Monthly newsletters

NBCCC has been funded by the North Berwick Area Partnership, The National Lottery Community Fund and North Berwick Trust

COMMUNITY FUND

Please get in touch with us for more information:  
Carol Stobie, Project Officer on 07940 203380 or via email [nbc-communityconnections@outlook.com](mailto:nbc-communityconnections@outlook.com)  
Monday to Thursdays 8.30 am to 4pm or  
Lisa Brownlie our Befriending co-ordinator on 07862 694842 or via email  
[Befrienders@nbc-communityconnections@outlook.com](mailto:Befrienders@nbc-communityconnections@outlook.com)  
Tuesday and Wednesdays 9.15 am to 1.15 pm

Sp Adobe Spark

*With thanks to Elaine Sutherland*

## **APPENDIX 6: NORTH BERWICK COASTAL COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS RECEIVES £1000 GRANT FROM MCCARTHY STONE FOUNDATION**

The McCarthy Stone Foundation has given the North Berwick Coastal Community Connections charity a welcome boost with a £1000 grant after the charity was nominated by a local volunteer.

In the charity's first two years they have helped more than 80 socially isolated adults connect into local networks, new friendships, and purposeful activity. Alongside social prescribing and community referrals, new Covid-response services have been added, and the charity is seeking to further expand to introduce peer support, specialist volunteer training, and new partnerships. Core activities, such as the Scone Café, workshops, speakers, and intergenerational meet ups are all now returning with the easing of restrictions.

The £1000 unrestricted grant from the McCarthy Stone Foundation will support the charity's plans to develop their services in the coming months, supporting key members of staff and volunteers to cope with the increasing demand on the charity's services.

Carol Stobie of North Berwick Coastal Community Connections said: "We are thrilled and honoured to receive this award from the McCarthy Stone Foundation. It means so much to hear that we were nominated by one of our much-loved Community Connections volunteers, and that it's an award for the whole of the UK, we had no idea, and are quite overwhelmed! The award is enormously heartening and makes us feel we have real hope of developing our work into the future."

The McCarthy Stone Foundation is the independent, registered charity of the UK's leading developer and manager of retirement communities, McCarthy Stone, which has a development in North Berwick, *Tantallon Court*. It aims to build long-term partnerships with charities and organisations who support the wellbeing of older people, the educational needs of young people and the urban regeneration of communities by providing much-needed financial grants, volunteers, and other resources.

Graeme Marsh, Foundation Manager at the McCarthy Stone Foundation, said: "We had many compelling nominations from across our communities, but our trustees felt that North Berwick Coastal Connections was the perfect example of a community-led charity making a real impact in their local area and were delighted to award them the £1000 grant."

## APPENDIX 7: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

**Community Connections**  
North Berwick Coastal | September 2021

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

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

The September birth flower is the aster which represents love and daintiness.

Brand new day by Ruth Fraser

A month of New Beginnings. Is September the new January?

January might be the start of a new calendar year but September can be a great time for a fresh start, new routines, and a chance to make a change for the better. The sticky heat of the summer has given way to a breezy brightness with evenings still light enough to enjoy a lovely walk. September can feel fresh and exciting; a month to make your own - to do the things you want to do, maybe you could: form a new habit, gain a new skill, or finishing something important to you. It's all about settling into a new beginning.

There are a wealth of benefits to trying something new. From physical benefits such as improving executive functions and the number of brain cells to more psychological benefits that have surprisingly wide-reaching effects on how you see yourself and interact with others. Heriot-Watt University Ageing Lab tells us, it's activities that involve a combination of physical, mental, and social elements that seem to be particularly beneficial - and the key is finding one that is a good fit for you. "What might make a change in my thinking skills might not make a change in yours," says Prof. Gow. "If you're more engaged in the task, it's been shown that you get more cognitive benefits. So if you are trying something new, try incorporating elements that make it social, active, and mentally challenging."

For me, September is a time to take a breath after a busy summer, the children are back at school and I have a bit of time to reset and to think about what is coming up next. There's lots to do around the house, healthier meals to cook, the garden is in need of some TLC but I think I might start with reading a book that I've been meaning to start all summer 'Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm'. It's National Read a Book Day on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September, perhaps that will help me to do it!

- Ruth Fraser

To send any contributions to our newsletter, email [newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org](mailto:newsletter@nbc-communityconnections.org) or contact Carol to arrange postal contributions.

**With thanks to Ruth Miller, our Newsletter Editor**



North Berwick Coastal  
Area Partnership

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.

**Contact: Carol Stobie, Tel. 07940 203380**

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