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Highland Third Sector Interface Annual Report

The Highland Third Sector Interface Ltd, also known as HTSI, is a Scottish Registered Charity SC043521 and a Scottish Registered Company SC425808.

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PLEASE CONTACT 01349 864289 OR EMAIL ENQUIRY@HIGHLANDTSI.ORG.UK

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Thanks to our funders for this year:



The Highland Third Sector Interface

Thorfin House, Bridgend Business Park, Dingwall, IV15 9SL

01349 864289

www.highlandtsi.org.uk

@HighlandTSI

Message from the Chair:

I am very pleased to be introducing the 2020/1 annual report of the Highland Third Sector Interface. I became Chair of HTSI last year, following Isobel Grigor stepping down. We are very sorry to see Isobel leave HTSI, for which she has achieved so much in bringing the various voluntary bodies in Highland together, and wish her well for the future.

We welcome three new members to the Board this year. Linda Lawton and David Brookfield joined us for the August meeting and Sally Amor will join later in 2021. It has been a challenging year for all concerned. The HTSI office worked from home over the various lockdown periods, which proved beneficial for some, but not all, staff. New ways of working were developed and there is a task in deciding which to keep or modify and which should be seen as temporary fixes whose time is past. In all, staff have worked really hard to maintain and grow the business over the last 18 months and I and the Board are extremely grateful to them for their commitment to HTSI.

A major undertaking this year has been developing a strategic plan for HTSI. The board has broadly adopted the strategic aims of the SG's Third Sector Unit and now has a process for testing new projects and undertakings against a check list to ensure the organisation stays on track with its strategic aims. The full plan will be published through the HTSI website as part of the current overhaul due to happen in 2021/22.

Our financial position is good and we are looking forward to using some of our surplus to implement some of our strategic plan. We have already appointed a development officer to support the third sector representatives to the CPP and other public organisations with information and training. However, we are aware that we may need to keep a reasonable surplus in reserve in case of unexpected need, which may arise as we emerge from covid restrictions and lockdowns.

Finally, my thanks go to all the support we have had from partners and members. It has been appreciated!

le dùrachd,

Margaret Somerville
Chair, Highland Third Sector Interface

October 2021

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Chief Officer Report:

This financial year has been extraordinary in multiple ways and while others will more eloquently outline the impacts of COVID-19, the restrictions and the ongoing uncertainty more generally, there can be no doubt that the Third Sector has demonstrated its incredible versatility, strength and vulnerabilities.

Within hours of the lockdown emerging, individuals, communities and the third sector responded to the needs of those most vulnerable across Highland by diversifying, collaborating and developing new activities. People who have never volunteered before have come forward and got involved. New social distancing measures came into place but in many ways, social connectedness was reformed and redesigned. There can be no doubt locally, or even on a national level, that the sector has demonstrated its worth and how that then impacts and changes the inclusion of the sector in future policy making and service delivery will be a testimony of how well the learning from this difficult time has been adopted.

We can't, however, lose sight of the devastating impact that the restrictions and pandemic have had on many of our communities and the Sector. Arts, culture, youth, sporting and community venues are among many of those that have really struggled during this time. Social enterprise activity will have been just as impacted as local businesses and the general shifts in spending patterns. Although we hope that the Third Sector Census, due to be completed in late 2021, will help us to begin to understand some of these initial impacts—it could take many years before this is fully understood. We shouldn't lose sight within this wider discussion that we are yet to feel the full force of the disinvestment represented by Brexit and the ongoing pressures on public sector spending and commissioning behaviours; all of which underpin the financial stability of our often fragile third sector ecosystem.

In 2020/21 HTSI continued working with our members around the difficulties associated with commissioning across health and wellbeing. The differences in approach between the NHS and Council as lead agencies has become amplified across the financial year and ways to share learning and a more harmonised approach are still an aspiration. One of the challenges that COVID has brought to these services is around increased demand and some services were so successful in their adaptations around the restrictions that they have had unprecedented demand. Concerns too, are growing around the focus that will also be given to funding, local, regional, public and grant based, being directed disproportionately on 'new' recovery activity and could fail to consider sustaining or strengthening existing activity.

HTSI did, however, benefit from additional support through the Third Sector Unit in the Scottish Government and that support allowed localised resilience meetings, a new community action register, information sharing—at times on a door to door basis, access to free eLearning, new toolkits and guides; including the publication of a toolkit around coping with death in the workforce. The covidhelp4highland.org site was quickly published with a wide range of information for third sector organisations in the region and acted as a portal for volunteer registration and matching. Growing from this activity and learning, we have now put in place a new project to build a third sector Highland Resilience Network to support organisations to demonstrate competency for and interest in responding to a variety of difference emergency needs. The HRN will be piloted in 2021 and launched formally towards the end of next financial year.

Our Third Sector Awards 2020 had to go digital, like many other things this year. For us this was an incredibly sad decision as we always enjoy the ceremony and the chance to work together to put it in place. This year's ceremony itself came at a really great time after Christmas and our award recipients were so inspiring and absolutely made the evening! We hope very much to bring back some of the pomp and ceremony for next year.

Other activities have had to take a step back and plans around the Community Justice *Small Change for Justice* event, which would have seen investment into third sector based activities, is on hold till it is safer to do this in person. Our conference and some of the forum based activities have been delayed or postponed indefinitely. Training, the third sector breakfasts and regular resilience meetings all went digital and at times benefited from these changes as we were able to reach new audiences. Similarly LGOWIT found that the adaptations to their services engaged new people, or people in different ways, and that there were benefits to this.

Having just launched the Custody Link Worker project in the February prior to the COVID restrictions it was a very disappointing start to the year that effectively put the project in to abeyance for the first two and a half months. The staff team were redeployed to support work in developing the community action register and volunteer enquiries before returning to their own activities in June 2020. Returning to the project we had to make modifications to the staff team being based from home and all contact being undertaken by text, phone, mail or some other digital means. Despite this, the team have exceeded expectations in their ability to engage with referrals and we have seen the importance of the support provided by the third sector in stopping people from falling through gaps and the difficulties resulting from the lack of access to support. The project will continue to run until the end of the 2022/23 financial year.

One of the distinct advantages to COVID restrictions, however, was that increased ability to network and participate at a distance with national and sub-national agendas. The new regional groupings within the TSI national network has brought our collaboration with other TSIs across Scotland, and specifically the north of Scotland, to the fore. How we return to a more normal working arrangement without losing these connections and ability to ensure a Highland voice in national work will be a particular interest for us going forward.

There are two specific areas of activity that were also undertaken in the financial year, not motivated but complicated by the COVID pandemic. In the first instance we were able to progress with the long planned modification and renovation of the HTSI building. This has given us a modified working place which better suits our longer term needs, including a new large meeting room and several smaller meeting spaces. Unfortunately we have not been able to make full use of this yet but I hope that we will be able to do so in the coming months.

The most significant change was the alteration of the structure of the way TSI services are delivered within Highland. Since their establishment in 2010 the TSIs nationally within Scotland have had no uplift to their core grant and facing a cut in real terms for the tenth year in a row we were forced to examine options for the future. The resulting change led to the merger of HTSI and ITT and the decommissioning of Ross-Shire Voluntary Action. This means that the amalgamated staff team and restructured HTSI organisation is now responsible for delivery across the inner moray firth area. Recruiting and supporting new members of that team through the restrictions was challenging but we have been fortunate to enjoy working with some very talented individuals, even on a short term basis, to help in the formation of this new approach.

As a result of these changes HTSI has now internally restructured into distinct functional teams including the TSI services, the Café team, LGOWIT, Custody Link (Clinks) and early in 2021/22 a new digital and membership team. The team through 2020/21 grew significantly by another 50% and at the end of the year we numbered just under 30 individuals.

The new structure, developed team and strengthened national and peer collaboration are all a great foundation from which to start building the delivery of the new strategic plan agreed by the Board at the end of the 2020/21 year. We look forward to the successful completion of the 2021 Third Sector Census, new resources around the development of the representation pathway for better support around our sector representatives, strengthened approaches to digital and better communications to and from members. I very much hope that we will be able to deliver more activities in person in the coming year as we so miss seeing and speaking to all of our members and while a digital approach is great for so many things, sometimes we do need time to catch up and build relationships in person.

Finally, and never more so than this year, we couldn't do everything we do without the ongoing support and dedication of our staff team, volunteers, Partners and Board. For my part, I would like to extend a huge and warm *Thank You* for all they continue to do.

Third Sector Interface Services:

Through 2020/21 the TSI services in Highland were restructured within the Inner Moray Firth area, resulting in the region being divided into six delivery areas, largely aligned to the Community Planning structure.

Core TSI Services, the support for Third Sector Organisations (TSOs), Volunteering Support and crisis intervention for example, are now delivered by:

- Caithness Voluntary Group, (Caithness)
- Voluntary Group Sutherland (Sutherland)
- Skye and Lochalsh CVO (Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross)
- Voluntary Action Lochaber (Lochaber)
- Voluntary Action Badenoch and Strathspey (Badenoch and Strathspey)
- Highland Third Sector Interface (Inner Moray Firth)



To establish the new Inner Moray Firth team *In This Together* merged with HTSI and Ross-Shire Voluntary Action were decommissioned. The amalgamated team were formed within the HTSI, meaning we now have a direct role in frontline delivery.

The new Inner Moray Firth team at HTSI includes staff within volunteer and organisational development responsibilities. Headed up by Leah Ganley, our development staff Iain MacKenzie and Hannah Clyne (who joined the team in the 2021/22 financial year) have a wealth of experience, including internationally. Jane Tattum and Sue Fraser are our passionate volunteering team.



Despite the pandemic, or perhaps in spite of it, the TSI services across Highland responded with specific support that was relevant and shaped by their area. These included developments or changes to befriending services, provision of emergency food and essentials, volunteer drives and enumerable other ways to support their communities and the organisations and groups who were making sure people were safe.

Several of the organisations across Highland were involved in the distribution of funds, including the Supporting Communities Fund and the resilience/response fundings, trying to ensure that people were getting the support and guidance they needed to manage the investments and ensure they realised their potential.

2020/21 in Numbers:



People

28 members of staff
7 Volunteer Trustees
28 Volunteers
309 Members
5 Local TSI Delivery Organisations



Online

2723 Facebook Followers
1.79k Twitter Followers
120+ Sector Jobs Advertised for free
8K Unique visitors to the HTSI Website



Recognition

1 Online Awards Ceremony with over **3.3k** views
20 Award Recipients at the annual award ceremony



Capacity and Training

23+ Live online training sessions
Free Access to the eLearning Platform with new units commissioned specifically for COVID-19
Ongoing **1-1 support** for governance, crisis and organisational development
3 online clinics for the Inner Moray Firth area



Networking

25 Online Forums
28 Members Breakfasts attended by **220 people**.
Regular **Resilience Meetings**, starting weekly then reducing gradually throughout the year.
3 Mental Health focus groups and **2** external research pieces on the role of the third sector in supporting mental health.

Covid Response:

Throughout the pandemic the HTSI staff team continued to work from home, adapting rapidly to the changes of circumstances. The spectrum of activities and meetings that we took part in are too vast to detail within this report but these are some of the key activities we participated or led on.

Resilience meetings were held weekly at the height of the pandemic and allowed opportunities for exchanging information and asking questions. These were also attended by Highland Council who were able to provide information on a wide range of activities.

www.covidhelp4highland.org was a new website that was launched within days of the pandemic restrictions in March 2020. The website provides information around the community response across Highland through the *Community Action Register* and allowed organisations to add or edit their own entries. Additionally volunteers could register and organisations advertise for volunteers in response to the pandemic impacts.

In addition to a number of guides and toolkits for organisations, we also produced a new toolkit for supporting organisations who experience the death of a colleague - *Death in the workplace*. This was written for us by Hannah Lind who shortly after returned to the Highland Hospice bereavement services.

eLearning was provided free of charge to third sector members to allow access to courses such as safeguarding, food hygiene and a range of health and safety toolbox talks, amongst so many other things. This was intended to ensure that groups could remain compliant with basic training needs throughout the pandemic response. We also commissioned new units about opening work spaces and staff welfare in response to the pandemic.

Flyer Drop: like many other areas of Highland there was a need to ensure that information was circulated to local residents in hard copy as well as digitally. HTSI produced and circulated, using some phenomenal volunteers, a hard copy booklet of services and support available around Inverness. Thousands of copies went through letter boxes across the city.

Finding: in addition to supporting various national funding programmes as assessors or through information sharing, we also supported the roll out of funding circulated through HIE to smaller community groups twice across the period.

Café and community food table: in July 2020 we inherited the Café from *In This Together* and they continued to provide the same support that they had done earlier in the pandemic with access to donated foods for those who needed additional support. Hot meals have been circulated from the café both at the height of the pandemic and continued for collection as restrictions lifted. The Café stayed open throughout the festive period with HTSI staff volunteering their time to ensure access throughout Christmas and New Year.

Mental health focus groups: led on by the Third sector Representative Gwen Harrison, HTSI hosted a series of focus group discussions around the impacts of the pandemic around mental health. Feedback was collated and provided as evidence to the CPP mental health sub group as well as nationally to colleagues in the Scottish Government.

Additionally we worked with Youth Highland and Ruth Webster, a locally qualified counsellor, to commission two other pieces of work to help build our understanding of the impacts of the pandemic around mental health and wellbeing and the potential role of HTSI within that sphere.

Safely reopening community venues: in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive, HTSI have hosted sessions around how to open safely and things to think about before going live with public use.

Let's Get On With It Together (LGOWIT):



Back in March 2020, because COVID restrictions required a lot of change to approach, we quickly turned our face-to-face delivery into an online service incredibly quickly. We were no longer able to offer our usual in person peer support groups, training or other activities. As a team we recognised that our members were still going to need peer support more than ever before, we wanted them to feel occupied and supported during incredibly challenging times.

Our community networkers began weekly/fortnightly contact with our group members either by phone, text, or email. Engaging with 225 group members. The support was gratefully received and often referred to as a life saver. Our SIPP training did come in useful on a couple of occasions.

As a team we started to have weekly team meetings online, this has provided a great opportunity for the team to feedback weekly and get some support after dealing with challenging situations. It has also been a great opportunity to bond as a team.

We began running online sessions of Tai Chi, Mindfulness, Sound therapy, Coffee & Chat's, and our Fun Friday's which would be Quizzes, Countdown, Themed talks etc. We set up a closed Facebook group, which now has 147 active members. We worked with Creativity & care for a period too, this was a great way of engaging with people who are not online as craft boxes were able to be posted out to them. It has been lovely to watch friendships blossom all around the Highlands. Several people have asked if we can keep an online coffee & chat session in the future so that they can keep in contact with their new friends.

Our LGOWIT living better newsletters have been a huge success going out to our group members and community resilience groups. Packed full of useful information and resources.

Our bespoke E-learning platform went live in the summer to coincide with our new booklet self-management in challenging times. We wanted to produce something Covid related to help people with their self-management journey. Initially ten modules were produced, an eleventh on Long Covid has since been added in.

The E-learning is a great resource and has brought about new opportunities and ways to make some income for LGOWIT. We currently have two pilots taking place with DWP and Dounreay. The pandemic has made people recognise that we all need to look after our wellbeing which fits in perfectly with self-management.

Living Better Coffee and Chat Sessions:

Back in April 2020 we started our online coffee & chat sessions. The community networkers take it in turns to host them. They tend to be a general chat but occasionally we have done some themed chats. Before the pandemic we were running living better groups all around the Highlands area. The online sessions have seen group members join in from all the areas into the one session. We have witnessed lots of friendships form, great conversations and most importantly laughter. Running the sessions weekly has offered a much-needed routine for our group members. As everything starts to reopen a lot of the group members have already expressed how they would like to see the online sessions remain so that they can keep in touch regularly with their new friends.

LGOWIT Pilot with Dounreay:

LGOWIT are currently running a pilot with Dounreay up in Caithness. Dounreay is a Nuclear power development which is currently decommissioning. The site employs 2000 staff. As an employer they want to help support their employee's wellbeing. Many staff have been furloughed or working from home during the pandemic. They have noticed a huge increase in anxiety in the team and have also some staff members who have been diagnosed with Long Covid. The pilot is for 100 staff members to have access to our e-learning platform for an 8-week period. This has received great support from the site medical, training and communications teams. This has taken in a new stream of income for us with the possibility of offering more self-management work in the future. We have built up a great relationship with them and seeing a great attendance at our Highland Forums.

Café 1668:



HTSI absorbed responsibility for the running of the *In This Together* café on Church Street Inverness in July 2020 as part of the changes to the TSI structure in Highland.

The Café has gone through some major changes since that time and these have only been complicated further by the difficulties presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rebranded at the end of the year Café 1668 draws inspiration from the date the building was created becoming the Dunbar Hospital and is, in fact, the second oldest building in Inverness.

We are particularly proud of the hard work and dedication that the Café team (staff and volunteers) have demonstrated throughout the pandemic when, in partnership with 'Acts of Kindness' and 'Inverness Foodstuff', approximately 7000 hot meals were provided for those within the community who were identified as in need of assistance. Further than that they have also ensured regular access to donated food stuff through the community cupboard throughout the pandemic. Today the Café continues to maintain a Community Food Table and donations are collected from various retail stores supporting the Food Waste programme. Additionally people can pop in and access a hot meal for free or a small donation which supports a reduction in food waste and tackling food poverty.

We took the opportunity during the Christmas period 21 Dec – 04 Jan for the rest of the HTSI team to get involved in the work of the café and over 12 days staff and others volunteered to maintained the community food table and produced hot meals including supporting the wonderful Christmas lunch provided by Inverness Mosque. During this period 232 meals were provided and an average of 20 people accessed the food table per day.



We have completed a significant facelift in the Café and with thanks to A and I joinery have reconfigured the space to ensure we have storage for the growing level of food donations necessary to meet demand for support that is only growing at the moment. Additionally we now have a small space off the main café room that can be used by organisations wanting to meet with people on a 1-1 basis - please just let us know if you would find use of this space helpful.

We were delighted to receive support from Criminal Justice Social Work to employ a new Café based Link Worker and Jill has been appointed into that role to provide a person-centred service that is responsive to vulnerable individuals aspirations and needs on a drop in basis.

HTSI has also signed up to the Government Kickstart Programme and the Café has also recruited 4 individuals for placement where they will rotate between 'front of house' and the kitchen.

We couldn't finish without a BIG thanks to all the volunteers who support the café, whether that is collecting the fantastic donations from local supermarkets or working in the kitchen or serving customers. We also need to thank one of our most incredible supporters Inverness Mosque for all they do and especially for providing an enjoyable curry every Monday night.

Finally a further thank you to Morrisons, Tesco and the Co-op, and their wonderful customers, for their regular and necessary donations, not just of surplus food but also for collecting donations of food stuffs for the community cupboard.

Community Justice:

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the work of the Community Justice Partnership over the past year, and whilst there are still some real challenges to face, there have also been some great achievements during this time.

The Emergency Early Release of some prisoners in 2020 afforded an opportunity for partners to work together to ensure services were in place to assist those being released. In Highland this worked very well and reinvigorated the work around the Community Integration Plan which Scottish Prison Service (SPS), HMP Inverness are now piloting. This is a multi-agency plan which will be tailored for each individual entering the prison and will follow them into the community on release.

The Community Justice Excellence Award was presented to Apex Highland during the HTSI Awards Ceremony which was held digitally in January 2021. In his nomination, James Maybee said that Apex Highland's "can do spirit and solution focused approach is nothing short of inspirational".

The Community Justice Plan for Highland expired in March 2021, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic an Addendum to the plan has been submitted to Community Justice Scotland/Scottish Government. The plan will now expire in March 2022, though new work nationally on strengthening the outcome performance framework may delay the publication of a new three year plan within Highland as we move to ensure this is aligned and responsive to those needs.

Further to this, the Community Justice Partnership have undertaken a series of Development Circles to look at areas of work to progress in the interim and in relation to the new plan from 2022. Various partners have attended the sessions with some valuable inputs and good suggestions around future development.

In the last year work has also been undertaken to progress the Strengths and Needs Assessment for community justice in Highland. The Partnership approved a written report outlining several areas where their focus should be. In addition to this, the Partnership also commissioned Azets to prepare an analysis of data around community justice which would also assist in identifying areas which the Partnership may choose to focus on. The report focusses on a trend analysis over a 10-year period and an 'Index Score' which will assist in understanding how Highland performs against the average. The report is due to be published shortly but early indications have identified mental health, reconviction rates and female offending as potential areas of interest. Azets will also provide a toolkit which the Partnership can use in relation to Key Performance Indicators which should make it easier to measure any progress around specific areas of work.

The Partnership has produced an Achievement Report which outlines the successes over the period of the recent CJ Plan 2018-21. You can view it here -

[Highland Community Justice 2018—21 Achievement Report](#)

The Highland Community Justice Partnership have also sought and appointed a new independent chair. Ross MacKillop started his transition just prior to the year end and will continue in this role throughout the next financial year.

HTSI has already indicated to the incoming Chair that we would like to explore a review of the Third Sector Membership of the partnership to better reflect the work that the Sector does within the Justice field and ensure that delivery partners are included within the changing membership around the 2022 planning process.

Custody link Project:



The Highland Custody Link Project is a partnership between Police Scotland, The Highland Third Sector Interface, and the Highland Community Justice Partnership. The three-year project is funded by National Lottery, Robertson Trust, Highland Community Justice Partnership and Police Scotland. The project commenced in January 2020 and started taking referrals in March 2020.

Persons in custody who fall into any of the following categories are offered a referral to the project:

- Women 18 years of age and over
- Anyone aged between 18 and 26
- First instance of custody
- Second instance of custody in 6 months

The Link Workers then help the individuals to identify aspects of their life which are placing them at risk of offending and returning to custody. The Link Workers then help them to identify actions, access support and assistance to reduce those risks, enhance their quality of life and improve their life chances.

The original intention was that link workers would meet referrals whilst they were still in custody. It was also envisaged that clients and link workers would meet in the community. As a result of the Covid 19 restrictions however the project staff have been working from home and have been mainly communicating with clients by telephone. The project was paused for around 10 weeks following the first lockdown and project timescales have been adjusted accordingly.

A total of 68 individuals have so far engaged with the project and 11 clients have completed their programme of support. There is a very high incidence of past trauma in clients lives and clients frequently have multiple needs. Clients have responded well to the non-judgemental approach of the project and high levels of trust have been established with the link workers. Clients are highly motivated to effect a positive change have been supported around mental health, emotional support, substance misuse, housing and finances in particular.

Clients have been referred to a wide range of public and third sector organisations and agencies. Less than 5 clients have been re-arrested since engaging with a link worker. The pandemic has impacted on client's mental health. The absence of face to face service delivery and limited access to technology have been the main factors.

The Highland Custody Link project is staffed with a manager and two link workers and the project outcomes are being externally evaluated by the University of Stirling.

Health Walks:



Summary

Think Nature Health Walk's project aim is to provide support and guidance to existing health walk groups and establish new groups within rural Highland, promoting opportunities and recruiting new volunteers. Also to arrange walk leader training for new volunteers. In addition, form links within communities and develop partnerships, including health care professionals and community link workers, promoting active travel and green health opportunities.

Highlights

During the first year of the project I have worked to establish 5 new health walks in: Castletown, Kyle & Lochalsh, Golspie, Fort Augustus and Fort William and 9 new buggy groups in across Highland, in partnership with Care and Learning. Discussion has taken place to establish more new health walk groups in North West Highland. An increased interest in walking is evident as 85 new volunteers have been trained as walk leaders, with more on waiting lists.

No. of Health Walks currently supported each week	26
No. of new walkers that have joined our Health Walks in last 12 months	140
No. of walkers taking part in our Health Walks on a regular basis (on average)	160
No. of new Walk Leaders who have attended Walk Leader Training in last 12 months	85

Training

I arranged 4 online walk leader training courses for volunteers across Highland including Kyle & Lochalsh, Caithness and East Sutherland areas, during November and December 2020 and February 2021. I then attended cascade walk leader training in February 2021 to enable me to deliver the course and then went on to deliver 2 further courses and arrange an extra freelance course resulting in a total of 85 volunteer walk leaders being trained during the last 12 months.

In partnership with Care and Learning Alliance (CALA) we established 9 new buggy walking groups for parents and families across Highland. Two of these groups are bi-lingual, one Gaelic and one Polish. Almost 40 Highland Council Early Years Practitioners have also completed walk leader training and plan to deliver a programme of buggy walks too, which our project will connect with and support.

Communications & Engagement

Due to Covid19 restrictions face to face events have not been able to take place, so I have had to be creative with online activities such as the delivery of online Health Walks in Nature presentations. Walking groups also took part in a creative writing event for Green Health & Mental Health Awareness Week. I also sent out a quarterly Think Nature Health Walks e-newsletter; wrote blog posts for THTN, HTSI & LGOWIT, also articles for LGOWIT and Highland Senior Citizens Network newsletters. I also regularly posted and shared relevant information on social media sites.

I have also promoted health walks and volunteer walk leader roles in key areas in rural Highland by designing digital images and a suite of posters to promote walks and recruit walk leaders. I also attended various online networking events and meetings with community and Highland-wide organisations to make important connections. As well as using social media and other publications, I have also promoted our new health and buggy groups through press releases and radio features.

Partnerships

Building new relationships with partner organisations has been important to the success of the development of the health walk groups, some of which are listed below:

Highland Green Health Partnership - East Sutherland, Kyle, Lochaber and Caithness groups; NHS Highland teams: Health Improvement; Physiotherapy; Orthopaedics; Mental Health; Community Early Years; Community Development; Highlife Highland teams: Active Schools; Community Sports and Countryside Rangers; Macmillan Move More; North Cancer Alliance; Kyle of Sutherland Trust; Skye & Lochalsh Council for Voluntary Organisations; Care and Learning Alliance (Cala); Highland Senior Citizens Network; Chest, Heart & Stroke Scotland; Connecting Carers;; Homestart Highland; Lochaber Hope; Cycling UK; British Legion—Veterans Community Support

Walkers quotes:

"The Walking Group has been, for me, a single elderly woman, a bright light in an otherwise lonely week. A help to confidence to keep moving, and the friendship of other people. A great idea"

"By joining the Walking Group, our family instantly became part of the community. Our non-verbal adult son soon interacted with everyone and developed confidence and independence. We all really enjoy this".

Outlook & Actions

Actions for the second year of the project, August 2021 - July 2022:

Provide ongoing support to the existing (80+) volunteer walk leaders within the 14 health walks and 9 buggy walks across rural Highland

Recruit a further 20 – 30 walk leaders

Increase the number of walking groups, both health and buggy, across the area, particularly focusing on the North West. A further 6-8 groups to be established this year.

Deliver at least 4 online walk leader training courses and attend cascade training for face to face delivery method.

Coordinate a minimum of 3 enhanced training opportunities for walk leaders i.e. cancer & dementia friendly, strength and balance; mental health awareness, outdoor first aid

Continue promotion and recruitment campaigns to increase volunteer numbers and promote new groups.

Attend, promote and support up to 8 Green health & other events in my project area

Develop intergenerational groups and continue work with active schools and early years projects

Introduce themed walks using newly produced specialised creative nature backpack kits

Build on existing referral pathways through links with GP based link workers and others.

Continue project work with NHS Highland teams: Raigmore Orthopaedics, mental health, early years, physiotherapy and community nurses to refer suitable participants

Work with community organisations to identify those who could benefit from joining a walking group as part of Covid recovery.

Provide further networking opportunities for walk leaders, along with the Scottish Health Walk Network.

Link Health Walks with active travel initiatives, such as walk to school week and cycle to work.

Develop active travel surveys for walking groups to take part in.

Statement of Financial Position:

Below is a summary of the Highland Third Sector Interface Ltd. Financial position for the 2020/21 year. Full accounts are available for information and inspection.

	2021	2020
	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	66,206	7,644
Current assets		
Debtors	7,687	46,884
Cash at bank and in hand	551,536	326,725
	559,223	373,610
Creditors: amounts failing due within one year	100,854	96,867
Net current assets	458,369	276,743
Total assets less current liabilities	524,575	284,387
Net assets	524,575	284,387
Funds of the charity		
Restricted funds	311,344	164,691
Unrestricted funds	213,231	119,696
Total Charity funds	524,575	284,387

Third Sector Organisations we have paid* in 20/21:

AbilityNet
Acts of Kindness
Black Isle Cares
Caithness Voluntary Group
Charity Learning Consortium
Creativity In Care cic
Dingwall Men's Shed
Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council
Evaluation Support Scotland
Fife Voluntary Action
Girl Post
Health in Mind
Highland Senior Citizens Network
Inverness Foodstuff
Libertie Project Ltd
Living Wage Foundation
Maggies Highland
McNamaste Yoga
MikeysLine
MIM Tai Chi
Nairn Arts Centre
Nairn Task Force
New Start Highland
REA Counselling
Relaxation Lounge
Ross-shire Voluntary Action
SCVO
SLCVO
Spilt Milk
Spirit Advocacy
The Alliance
The Emmaus Road Trust

Third Sector Hebrides
Triangle Consulting Social Enterprise Limited
tsiMORAY
Velocity
Vitality Retreat
Voluntary Action in Badenoch & Strathspey
Voluntary Action Lochaber
Voluntary Action Orkney
Voluntary Action Shetland
Voluntary Groups Sutherland
Youth Highland

* This includes groups that we have distributed funding to directly, or on behalf of another organisation.

