



Easter Ross Community Partnership

equality and opportunities for our communities

Core Partners Meeting

9am Wednesday 9th October 2019

Alness Police Station

Notes from Discussion

Present: Helen Ross, Melissa Macdonald, Lesley Kinloch, James Turner

1. Apologies

Shona Street, Nigel Brett-Young, Bill Couston, Maria Dickson, Karen Mackay, Karen Peasnall, Shaun McGowan.

2. Introductions

Lesley Kinloch, the new NHS District Manager to the Partnership was welcomed to the Partnership. Those present introduced themselves and talked a little about the Easter Ross Community Partnership and its position in the wider Highland planning context.

3. Guest Speaker: Melissa Macdonald, Highland Council Preventing Poverty Manager will be attending to talk about the success of the Holiday Hub in Milton.

Melissa began by describing the Money Plus Project that she heads up at the Highland Council that is supplied by CAB. The project is about to go Highland-wide through referral and is designed to help families through transitions and breakdown stigma around applying for assistance and benefits. The project is designed to be preventative and uses referrals through schools – the first of its kind in Scotland.

She also highlighted an upcoming project, funded by the Scottish Government called Food Plus, will fund community groups to fund food 'plus' an activity that's beneficial to children and families (intergenerational groups would also be welcome) – they must be community led or community supported to qualify. Food will be an additional benefit of the activity to decrease stigmatisation around food poverty.

Poverty and Inequality Commission recommendations for tackling 'holiday hunger' that services should work together to provide activities and childcare over holidays. Funding from the Scottish Government was secured to run a pilot in Milton, over the summer through the primary school and Mercat Centre. This provided childcare, food and activities within the community through the summer holidays, four staff providing childcare for up to 24 children aged between 3-12 (to meet requirements of the Care Inspectorate registration) from 10am to 4pm throughout the holidays. The project also worked in partnership with Action for Children to share meals and activities which brought more children together.

A similar provision will also run through the October half term as well, building on the learning from the summer and parents now have the option to 'book' slots in advance and parents and siblings will be able to join for hot lunches together.

The pilot has been very successful and well received by the community and the staff working on the project and Melissa is looking to work with the community to identify what could be provided over Christmas holidays and early 2020 as funding will run up until Easter.

Another outcome from the project has been the development of a '*How To Open Your School Over the Summer*' guide which can be shared with others who would like to try something similar. This is especially useful in Highland as many schools are already natural 'hubs' within their communities.

Key finding from engagement in Milton is that there is a burning desire for a park as there is no play area for children there now. Findings from all the data gathering can be shared with the Partnership.

4. Updates from Partners

- a. **Alness** – Helen is still working on the draft plan for Alness and it is anticipated that a first draft will be ready for review by the Partnership by the end of the month.
- b. **Balintore/Seaboard** – No update at this time.
- c. **Invergordon** – Karen Mackay and Shaun MacGowan Shaun went into Invergordon Academy at the end of September to run a whole school consultation event using your questionnaire – I think it is very important to share this as every pupil took part with only 3 who opted out of joining in – we had great support from the SMT and also the ASN team and ensured that every pupil could participate. It was noted the huge feeling of “being at a lost” in Invergordon.

The questionnaire is currently being completed by the teachers and support staff within the academy also

The plan going forward is to repeat this hopefully in the primary schools and then to widen the consultation to the wider community – they felt it was a good test of change to start with the young people and then link into community groups etc

5. Highland Aspiring Communities Project Update

James advised those present of the status of the Highland Aspiring Communities Project and specifically the capacity building events which are due to take place shortly:

Seaboard Villages: Book Exchanges are launching in Balintore on the 28th October and Milton on the 29th October.

Tain: A provisional date for the delivery of a ‘money sense’ session with the Youth Café young people has been agreed for the 31st of October. The possibility of continuing support for the Youth Café young people from Youth Highland is also being explored.

Alness: Currently awaiting confirmation of a date from the West End Hall Committee as to when they would like to hold the ‘Pizza and Painting’ afternoon. Also still awaiting a reply from Milnafua Community Association as to what they would like to do.

Invergordon: having met with the Residents Association last night and identified a need for more volunteers from them, the plan is to directly build their capacity by locating some volunteers to work with them.

6. Any Other Business

There was no other business to discuss

7. Action Recap and Close

Helen Ross will be continuing to work on the Alness Locality Plan