

The Glens Support Network COVID -19 July 2020 Newsletter

Working together to keep you safe and well.

This Newsletter has been produced by The Glens Support Network, made up of:
Soirbheas, Glen Urquhart Community Council, Strathglass Community Council and GURCA.

Community Helpline - 07516 317 180

The Community Helpline continues to remain open but is now staffed by the care centre team. It operates 7 days a week, 9am to 5pm. Thank you to all volunteers who have stepped in to assist over the last few months.

Don't Struggle with Your Bills

Home Energy Scotland provide advice and support for householders who might find themselves with lower incomes or facing higher energy bills because of the coronavirus. Support for households with **prepayment meters**, including access to newly available crisis funding for those at risk of self-disconnection or running out of credit on their gas or electric meter to make sure they can keep their power on.

Clear advice on ways to save energy and reduce fuel costs while staying warm at home. Plus, the latest information about extra help from energy suppliers to make sure households don't get cut off. How to access help you can call Home Energy Scotland directly on **0800 808 2282** or we can refer you - contact the community helpline or Soirbheas if you wish us to make a referral for you.

Representing our Area

For queries and concerns you can contact your local councillor Margaret Davidson on 07818015689 margaret.davidson@highland.gov.uk

Staying Safe Together

As we progress to phase three of the Scottish Governments route map out of lockdown. Travel restrictions have eased, hospitality restarts and visitors begin to return to the Glens the community will inevitably face new issues, challenges and uncertainties as these changes take effect.

We are encouraging public facing business to continue to provide hand sanitiser stations. As we are becoming more accustomed to wearing a face covering it is still important to respect social distancing. These visible measures will help as more business reopen and play an important part in increasing public confidence as both locals and visitors start to venture out.

We know that our local economy relies on and thrives as a result of visitors that come to the area. This is particularly true during the busy summer months, with lockdown occurring at the start of the season it has significantly impacted on the livelihoods of many of our local businesses and those employed by them.

Many residents will be pleased to see the return of visitors, but for those in the community that are at risk this prospect may raise concerns. This tension has been reported in the national press and locally there have also been reports of visitors enquiring as to whether or not they will be welcome in the Highlands.

Our local area is renowned for its warm hospitality. Positive conversations are already taking place between local businesses and visitors around sensitivities. These conversations help to re-enforce the role that we all have to act responsibly and thoughtfully around others to ensure that we minimise the spread of the virus. These are important steps in managing expectations as we start down the road to recovery and re-build the local economy - we all have a part to play.

Lunch is Served!

Although the Glen Urquhart Care Centre remains closed to service users, they continue to deliver community care seven days a week. This involves making over 60 care calls a day, delivering prescription and shopping and taking people to GP appointments.

They also provide home-made two course lunches daily, delivered to people's homes. Prices are £4.40 for one course, £7 for two courses. Anyone wishing to access the meal service should call the community helpline 07516 317180. Those requiring support with the cost of meals should please advise staff at the time of the call.

Green Home Health Packs

Soirbheas are in the process of distributing 270 Green Home Health activity packs to children aged 3 - 8 years and vulnerable adults. The packs contain, salad seeds, compost, bird seed, wildlife ID cards and a range of age specific activities. The aim of the packs is to encourage people to enjoy the outdoors and all the associated benefits to our health and wellbeing. The project has received funding from the Highland Leader Programme.



Beaulay and Glens Befriending Service

The Befriending service for the time being has been switched to a phone service. The service is available to anyone feeling isolated or lonely and in need of a bit of support, no matter their age or circumstance. You will be matched with a trained volunteer befriender. If you would like to learn more about the support available, please contact 07748 575330.

Community Larders Near You

The aim of the larders is to provide basic provisions to local households in financial hardship. We currently have five community larders in operation across Glen Urquhart and Strathglass. They will continue to operate for as long as there is a recognised need within our community and funds/donations are available. They are stocked regularly by local volunteers from each of the five communities. As we move into Phase 3 of Covid-19 Route Map we have relocated our stockroom and can no longer take donations at the church hall in Drumnadrochit. However, donations are very much welcome at any of the five larders (location in bus shelters in - **Balnain, Cannich, Drumnadrochit, Milton and Struy**). Items required include tinned meat, fish, vegetables, soup, pasta, rice and cook in sauces toiletries, toilet rolls, tea and coffee. **No perishable or household goods please.** A huge thanks to all those that are supporting the larders: from volunteer giving their time, to Alba Joinery Apprentices who built the shelves and to everyone who has as donated supplies.

The next steps - Soirbheas are in the processes of creating 'a meal in a bag' with a recipe card to encourage cooking on a budget. We also hope to deliver introduction to cooking sessions when restrictions allow. If there are any cooks out there in the community that would like to assist with this project, please get in touch with either Nicky on 07842 781 986 or Carol on 0751 445 2783 at Soirbheas.

