



Atholl Centre Pitlochry

Time Out
Time Away
Time Together



Spring/Summer News & Prayer Letter



"Dear Lord, please could you make it a bit less wintery, and a bit more springy? We'd really appreciate it. Amen." That was back in March when we felt as if spring would never come, it had been cold and miserable for so long. Now it's May and the Black Spout Woods are carpeted in the soft white of wood anemones punctured by the occasional wild violet. The trees are at last coming into leaf and there have even been some hot days when we broke into our summer outfits ☺

Unlike the weather our year at the Centre started well. We're delighted to tell you that a combination of successful fundraising and sustained usage enabled us to end 2012 with a £7,000 surplus. This has meant that we have been able to pay more of the architect's fees and that the building warrant for the new staff bedsit could be applied for. It's now through, and thanks to more donations and a grant of £2,000 from Perth & Kinross Business Growth Fund we are now at the stage of waiting for a date from contractors to start the alterations ☺. In January we moved the office out of its old space into the former bookshop/reception lounge. Thanks to donated furniture from Reality Scotland we have a brilliant new office space, roomier (now we have 3 desks) and making us much more visible and therefore accessible for guests. People have commented "You look like a real office now" – I don't know whether to take that as a compliment or an insult.

We're really happy to say we have also received a pledge for £12,000 from the Hugh Fraser Foundation towards the chalet being converted into a disabled friendly self catering apartment and towards converting our other downstairs bedrooms to disabled en-suites. Although we still have a lot more money to raise before we can start these projects, it's so exciting to have such a big name show confidence in us and what we are doing. At the moment there are other funders considering these funding requests, so please pray for a good outcome.



The new office

Our busy season at the Centre started early this year with our first residential group of the year being Probationary Baptist Ministers for their in-service training in January. What a great bunch of guys – and so wonderful to hear the Centre filled with lively chat & laughter at the start of the year. Since then every weekend has been booked and we have also had a couple of runs of weeks and fortnights where we had back to back bookings midweek and weekend combined. Glenrothes Baptist Youth Group came to stay with us mid-week so they could walk the Rob Roy Way to raise money for Romanian Summer camps. They wrote, "We enjoyed a splendid week at the Centre which was just perfect for our group. We had a wonderful week, the undoubted highlight of which was 5 of the young people who came with us accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour." So God has been good as the Centre grows, although when it is busy like that we struggle to make sure staff are getting adequate time off. Part of our plan for growth is to employ another member of staff, a Development Officer, to focus on reaching the people who would benefit from using the Centre, but don't yet know we exist. This new staff member would also enhance our staff cover, making these back to back bookings more sustainable and making us able to take them on throughout the year. At the moment we are investigating funding for this post. If you know who might be able to help us, please get in touch.



Camille 1

Meanwhile we have continued to have interns. An intern is a student who is looking to gain practical experience in their subject area to help them with their college courses. In the last couple of years we've had a few interns from France through our town twinning organisation and the most recent of those was Camille (accountancy)

who came for 3 weeks over November and December. We were glad she brought thick jumpers and winter boots as we had quite a bit of snow – but it made for fantastic winter wonderland photos and was a great chance for her to experience some of our Christmas customs. Camille No2 arrived from Nimes at the beginning of this month for 2 months. She is studying management. She's already got out and about in Pitlochry, thoroughly enjoying the live music scene here. All of our foreign interns have benefitted from the English as a Foreign Language classes taking place weekly here & have a good laugh with Pam the teacher. In July Michal is coming from Katowice in Poland for a month studying Tourism and in August we have the lovely Amaia back, a student volunteer from Spain. So we're having an international summer before the guests even arrive!



Camille 2

We've found ourselves at the heart of what is happening in the community regarding community care over the past few months. The 2 Fionas arrived on the scene in November new in post with Perth & Kinross Council. They've been using the Centre as one of their bases as they fulfil their role as community co-ordinators for the elderly and have become familiar faces at the elderly lunch club held fortnightly here by Pitlochry Baptist Church. In December they set up a Winter Warmer event here designed to help people be winter aware. In March Anne was invited to a conference about Self Directed Support. This is a new policy where instead of being told by social workers what services they are eligible for, disabled and elderly people are allocated a budget and allowed to choose what services they feel they need and who they will get them from. For many disabled people this is a scary and



The Big Plan

confusing thing and so the conference was talking about how to offer guidance and support and how to get the wider community involved in helping those in need around them. At the same time Anne was involved in the transition of Highway, our local group of adults with learning difficulties, becoming part of Enable, a Scotland wide charity, and Enable's first foray into Pitlochry was to put on "The Big Plan" at the Centre. The Big Plan is a tool to help people take their lives forward, encouraging them to make personal goals and to seek support in their local community. The folk at the SDS conference were over the moon to hear that this kind of event was to happen soon

because it was exactly what they had been talking about. Through this contact social workers decided to join in and this increased the network of support, enabling 2 more young adults with learning difficulties to join us and giving social workers a taste of this new model. The Big Plan met over 3 weeks, welcoming folks with a buffet and chat and then through questions and activities helping each participant to make their own big plan. We had 8 participants and various supporters from Pitlochry and Aberfeldy. It was a real blessing that there was such a lovely atmosphere of security, welcome & trust, helping people to open themselves up to dare to do new things. As follow up the Atholl Centre will be hosting a monthly community circle to help people stay in touch, encourage each other and offer help to others. It's really exciting to be part of this venture and to be at the heart of new frontiers in community care here.

Our community fundraising has got off to a good start this year as well with a Co-op bag pack, a Madcaps concert, a WA coffee morning and Richard Underwood riding in Etape Caledonia, an 81 mile national cycle challenge starting and finishing in Pitlochry. We haven't yet got totals from all these events so find us on facebook to keep up with the news or take a look at our blog, now in a new location at <http://athollcentre.blogspot.co.uk/> - and of course any donations you might like to send in too would be very welcome .

Thanks to a grant from Perth & Kinross Social Enterprise Fund we are in the process of having a new website made. We hope you like the new look when it comes out sometime in the next few weeks.

Thanks for all your support.

Jain



Richard