



BLACK ISLE BULLETIN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE
BLACK ISLE PARTNERSHIP

A Different Future Awaits

BY JON PALMER, CHAIR OF BLACK ISLE PARTNERSHIP

For the past three months the Black Isle has proved its resilience. Throughout the area there are wonderful examples of residents looking out for one another and communities keeping us safe and feeling cared for. We have all had to adapt to change in our normal routines and we've proved it can be done. Some initiatives that have sprung up may remain for the long term. They definitely help to make our communities more sustainable. Shopping locally, running errands for neighbours, sharing resources, growing more food! If this crisis has taught us anything it is that we can be more resilient and self-sufficient.

However. In the short term there are people whose livelihoods have taken a big hit. Many families and individuals rely on visitors coming to the Black Isle. Some are wholly dependent, such as accommodation providers. Other businesses such as shops and eateries rely on the extra footfall to top-up their annual turnover. And without tourism-related enterprises tradesfolk such as builders, plumbers and electricians also lose custom. As the country eases out of 'lockdown' we must now adapt to further change.

Whether we like it or not we're going to be seeing more people in the Black Isle over the coming weeks and months. This can be managed if we provide clear and consistent messaging. We recommend that advice to visitors (and locals) should be:

***Support local businesses. Respect local needs.
Keep your distance. Stay connected.***

The final statement is important if people are going to heed this advice. The more they feel part of the community and engage with what's going on the more they are likely to act responsibly.

So, the Partnership will be doing all it can to make information as accessible and available as possible. We will also be promoting all the good things that are going on. We hope you can support us by getting these messages out there. When folk come to the Black Isle a big part of their experience should be a sense that we are a community who cares.

Footnote: Amongst all these changes spare a thought for those who are 'shielding' (until the end of July at least!) Better still, give them a call for a friendly chat or post a kindly message through their door.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

This period in our lives has not been without its trials and we are especially concerned for the health and wellbeing of residents - and our young people in particular.

Some practical steps are being taken to provide opportunities for more social interaction, engaging activities and meaningful employment. We hope to provide more detail in future editions of this newsletter.

In the meantime if you are in need of support, or have ideas you'd like to contribute, contact us at:

community@black-isle.info

*A quick round-up of just **some** of the things that have been going on in the various communities:*

North Kessock – Kessock Kindness have been holding regular knitting meetings via Zoom.

Knockbain CC are planning to create a Community Larder in **Munlochy**.

Avoch and Killen are painting and refurbishing two 'phone boxes as community exchanges for books, games, seeds and plants.

Fortrose. With additional funding Black Isle Cares have been able to extend the free provision of meals on wheels to more residents.

Rosemarkie are knitting a blanket depicting people's experiences of lockdown.

Cromarty Care Project has been providing food vouchers for those facing hardship and delivering groceries from the local shop to those self-isolating.

Resolis have been knocking on doors, especially the more outlying dwellings, to make sure everyone has what they need.

Ferintosh hold regular online community quiz nights, amongst other things.

Killearnan work closely with the Church of Scotland to ensure no one is forgotten. CoS are also live streaming Sunday services.

And we must of course mention Groam House Museum who've inspired a population of scarecrows across the whole Black Isle!

Black Isle Partnership exists as an umbrella organisation for all residents. In May it was awarded the status of 'anchor organisation' with grant-aid from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund - distributed by Highlands & Islands Enterprise,

Since March we have been holding weekly Zoom meetings with Community Council representatives and care providers from across the Black Isle.

If you wish to comment on anything in this newsletter, make contact on matters related to Covid-19, or subscribe to receive future editions direct to your inbox e-mail Asia Cielcka at: community@black-isle.info