

VOLUNTARY GROUPS - EAST SUTHERLAND

ISSUE 67 ❄️❄️ CHRISTMAS ISSUE ❄️❄️ DECEMBER 2010

Voluntary Groups – East Sutherland 37th AGM

Well we managed to miss the snow this year by organising our 37th AGM a week early. We felt smug. The weather was fine. Everything was going to plan, almost too well. Liz Barron, our Admin Officer said that she could not remember a better organised and smooth run-up to an AGM. It was, of course, tempting fate. We were suddenly beset by a few technical hitches. W C Fields said “never work with animals or children”. To that should be added “nor technical visual aids”. Our perverse laptop and digital projector were misbehaving and did not want to recognise each other’s existence. A second laptop proved to be no better a companion. Our IT-literate Development Officer, Christine Ross, suddenly found herself surrounded by technical experts. After much frowning and gnashing of teeth, the acting chairman, Jonathan Brett Young, decided to commence proceedings without the aid of the agenda projected on screen. Liz Barron took up the challenge to read the long list of apologies, which should have been projected on screen. As she had nearly finished, there was a blinding flash and the screen lit up to reveal the list of apologies. We were in business thanks to the patience and perseverance of Christine plus Felix Spittal, SCVO and Judi Sutherland, Dornoch and District Community Association.



Jonathan Brett Young stepped in as acting chair of the VG-ES board of directors following the resignation of Joan Bishop in August owing to family circumstances. He conducted the business of the AGM which saw the adoption of the annual report and financial statement of accounts, the setting of the subscription fee for next year and the election of directors. As usual, one third of the directors had to stand down at the AGM and being eligible, two stood and were re-elected, namely: Deirdre Mackay and Bill Faassen de Heer. Two new directors were elected: David Hannah – nominated by Ardgay Community Council; and Pete Carson – nominated by Helmsdale and District Community Association. They were welcomed to the board. The following were not required to

stand down and remain as directors for a further year: Richard Gale, Charlotte Gibson, Sheila McKenzie, Colin Ritchie, Flower Thomson, Jonathan Brett Young and Ron Munro. Jonathan thanked retiring directors and those who had resigned during the year for their service to VG-ES, namely: Joan Bishop, Jenifer Cameron, Tony Gibbs and Chris Ferne. He also noted with sadness the deaths during the year of two former directors: Rita Finlayson a former chair of VG-ES, and Marjory Cameron, a former vice-chair. They will both be missed.

Once the business of the AGM concluded, Jonathan invited the guest speaker to give his presentation. This year William Sutherland, manager of the Sutherland Partnership, was invited to speak on the Sutherland Development and Action Plan (D&A Plan) which arose from the Sutherland Summit event of September 2009 and subsequent community workshops. “Why yet another plan” he asked? He quoted an ancient proverb which stated that **he who fails to plan, plans to fail!** Through working in partnership more can be achieved to ensure the social, economic and environmental well being of Sutherland. Rural Analysis Associates worked as consultants to draft the Plan in partnership with the partners that form the Sutherland Partnership (of which VG-ES is one). They sifted through masses of information collected at the Summit and workshops, and finally organised and distilled it into a D&A Plan with 9 themed headings plus actions for development. The plan was adopted by the Sutherland Partnership in May 2010. Work has begun with the formation of a D&A Plan multi-agency working group to address actions identified. William spoke of the Sutherland Partnership’s intention to seek funding for a Development Officer post to replace his post on his retirement. The new post holder would focus on delivering and implementing actions identified in the D&A Plan. A short question and answer session followed. William was thanked for his interesting talk and presented with a small gift from Richard Gale on behalf of VG-ES. *Continued on Page 2*



The Audience

**A Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year from
all at VG-ES**

*Please note our office will close on
Thursday 23rd December at 12.30 p.m.
and re-open on
Monday 10th January 2011 at 9.00 a.m.*

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Ann Keatinge, Chief Officer, gave a brief report of the work achieved by VG-ES over the past twelve months. She advised all to read the annual report for a fuller description of the work of this year. She was experiencing a feeling of déjà vu at the AGM. This was because Jonathan Brett Young had been chairman of VG-ES way back in 1992 when Ann first started working there, and he had chaired the first AGM she had attended as a member of staff. Much has changed since then. Local and Scottish governments have come and gone with their various requirements and expectations of work for the grant funding awarded. Ann explained that direct funding to VG-ES will cease from in March 2011. From April a funding allocation will be given to a Highland Interface made up of the 10 CVS and one Volunteer Centre operating in Highland for distribution. We still do not know how much Highland will receive or what percentage of that sum will be given to VG-ES. The future is unknown and uncertain, but we hope to be able to continue to deliver the services that the voluntary sector has grown to expect from us.

Finally, she said that VGES is always keen to hear from members on how we can improve services. The members' questionnaire will form part of the membership form for next year and there will be opportunities for comments. All directors and staff were thanked and congratulated for working well as a strong cohesive team with a good skills mix. The Chairman gave his closing remarks and thanked all for attending. The raffle was drawn and the evening concluded with drinks and a finger buffet.



Picture Shows (L-R): Liz Barron, Admin Officer; Ann Keatinge, Chief Officer; Jonathan Brett Young, Acting Chairman; William Sutherland, Guest Speaker.

NORTHERN CONSTABULARY JOIN NATIONAL ANTI-VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE

Northern Constabulary this week joins Scotland's other forces with the launch of the latest phase of the Violence Reduction Unit's national anti-violence campaign.

This phase of the campaign focuses on domestic violence and Northern Constabulary will be playing an active role and taking a number of steps to target this national problem.

The Force will be tasking officers in some Divisions to carry out targeted visits to previous offenders to advise them of the existence of the campaign and that a robust approach will be taken against any further offending behaviour.

In addition, warning letters will be issued to anyone taken into custody for a domestic abuse related offence relating to possible actions to be taken by Northern Constabulary should that person be bailed, if appearing from custody.

The Force's lead officer in relation to crimes of violence is Superintendent Philip MacRae.

He said: "Like other parts of Scotland, incidents of domestic abuse occur in the Highlands and Islands and affect all people regardless of age, gender or social standing.

"Northern Constabulary recognises this and there are robust processes in place to tackle any issues that arise. That said, we recognise the growing need to reinforce the message that Domestic Abuse will simply not be tolerated in the communities of the Highlands and Islands and we will take swift action against anyone who displays this type of behaviour ensuring that all people taken into custody, stay in custody for a court appearance."

He added: "It is also recognised that some people may be unwilling to report incidents of domestic abuse for a variety of reasons. I would like to encourage anyone to report domestic abuse to the police whilst reassuring people that each incident will be treated as a crime, investigated as such and additionally, the police will ensure access to a range of support mechanisms to those affected."

The Domestic Abuse phase runs from 1 December 2010 to 31 January 2011.



VAT INCREASE!

Increase in the standard rate of VAT to 20 per cent

The standard rate of VAT is currently 17.5 per cent but will be increased to 20 per cent on 4 January 2011.





WINTER CAR CHECK

Before you start to drive you should ensure that your vehicle is roadworthy. The following checks should be carried out:

- *Visual examination of the exterior for damage/defects.
- *Tools and jack are present and in good order.
- *Wheels in good order and nuts secure. (Do not overtighten, especially with alloy wheels).
- *Tyres –check all the tyres, inc. the spare for: Damage, Tread Depth, Pressure, and Compatibility of type.
- *Adequate fuel, oil, water, windscreen wash and other fluids.
- *Fan belt in good condition and correctly tensioned.
- *Lights in good working order including: foglights, indicators, reversing lights, brake lights.
- *Windscreen wipers and washers in good condition.
- *Horn working correctly.
- *Fire extinguisher present and in good working order.
- *All glass clean, windows inside & out, lenses mirrors.



TRANSPORT SCOTLAND ADVISES

Remove all snow from your vehicle especially the roof!

Emergency kits are essential

- ✓ Ice scraper and de-icer
- ✓ Torch and spare batteries
- ✓ Warm clothes and a blanket
 - ✓ A pair of boots
 - ✓ First Aid Kit
- ✓ Battery Jump Leads
 - ✓ A shovel for snow
- ✓ Food and warm drink in a flask
- ✓ Sunglasses for glare off low sun
- ✓ Fully charged mobile phone
- ✓ A map for any unplanned diversions



Act now - warm up your winter!

The new Universal Home Insulation Scheme has targeted the East Sutherland and Edderton Ward area from 1st November. The initiative is being delivered by the local Energy Saving Scotland Advice Centre and EAGA on behalf of The Highland Council.

The scheme is Scottish Government funded and offers free energy efficiency advice and measures to households in designated areas of Scotland.

Free loft &/or cavity wall insulation for your home if you need it.

And even if you don't need insulation, act now for more free benefits:

- Free home energy report to rate your property
- Free impartial advice to help reduce your fuel bills
- Free access to the Scottish Government's Energy Assistance Package

- You could win an energy efficient appliance of your choice (worth up to £500) in our free prize draw
- Free in-depth transport advice to help save you money with a chance to win a year's free car insurance

If residents in your area are particularly vulnerable then the Energy Saving Scotland advice centre can establish a referral process that will fully support applications to the Energy Assistance Package.

This is a time limited offer from the 1st November. If you require more information, please contact Alan Grant, Outreach Engagement Officer on 0800 512 012 or email alan.grant@hi.energysavingscotland.org.uk, or find out more at the next East Sutherland and Edderton Ward Forum which will be held in Edderton Village Hall at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14 December. Tea and coffee will be available from 7pm.

The theme for the meeting is **Community Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency**. The forum will be addressed by **Jon Priddy of Community Energy Scotland and Alan Grant, Energy Savings Scotland Advice Centre**.



VG-ES Events Calendar

Do you want to know what's on; plan your events so that they don't clash with others? Help is here!!



We have developed an Events Calendar for our website – accessed from the VGES homepage. See our website at www.vges.org.uk Please let us have your event details as early as possible.

It could include meetings, training events etc. Please send all necessary information to Christine Ross. **N.B. the Events Calendar is not limited to fundraising events!**

We will include any fundraising events that you advertise in our Northern Times box too. Please send your details to christine@vges.org.uk or to Events Calendar, VGES, Alba, Main Street, Golspie, KW10 6TG.

VG-ES TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

BASIC WEB/BLOG DESIGNING COURSE

Are you interested in a basic web/blog designing session? In the pipeline for the New Year is a 2-day web training course. The sessions will cover the new idea of 'cloud computing' which is a trendy way of saying that all your information exists out there on the internet rather than on your own machine (e.g. YouTube, Picasa etc).

Also covered will be 'blogging' as a way of making a constantly updating website. Time will be spent producing a website/blog.

TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT TRAINING

Also coming in the New Year is a Trustees Annual Report Training for registered charities completing Receipts and Payments Accounts for OSCR. This training will cover reference and administration details; structure governance and management; purposes (aims, objects) and activities; achievements and performance; financial review; other optional information; declaration.

Please contact Christine on 01408 633001 or christine@vges.org.uk if you are interested in either of these courses.



Office Services for VG-ES Members

Advice and information on:-

- ☺ **Sources of Funding**
- ☺ **Grant-Aid**
- ☺ **Constitutions**
- ☺ **Charitable Status**
- ☺ **Training Courses**



Office Services at Reduced Rates for Members:

- Use of our MEETING ROOM with OHP, SLIDE PROJECTOR, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR, LAPTOP COMPUTER & SCREEN, TV/VIDEO FACILITIES. To book the room or to borrow equipment, please phone Liz for details at VG-ES ☎ 01408 633001.
- Use of our SMALL SOCIETIES LOTTERY LICENCE for 'printed ticket' raffles.
- STATIONERY FOR SALE at reduced rates: e.g. envelopes, copier paper and card (white and coloured), Plus an ordering service – stationery, sundries & office equipment.
- Use of PAPER SHREDDER – discreet disposal of unwanted documents.
- DIGITAL PHOTOCOPIER Copies in **Black & Colour** Improved quality reproduction, enlargement, reduction and overlay facilities. Double sided document feeder, and collating facility which sorts multi-page documents.
- TYPING and computer printing in a variety of styles plus graphics for posters, leaflets, letter heads, etc.
- RING-BINDING of booklets using either wire or plastic combs or slide binders.
- Use of FLIP CHART AND STAND.
- Use of FAX MACHINE – 05601 146813
- Loan of notice boards for temporary displays.
- Use of ADVERTISING space in the Northern Times for fund-raising activities and notify MFR What's On.
- Funderfinder - Software for Grant Seekers, helps voluntary groups to identify which Charitable Trusts might fund their work - used in conjunction with the Directory of Grant Making Trusts on CD-ROM. Results can be e-mailed to you with funders' web links.
- A4 Colour Flat Bed Scanner. We can now scan documents into our computer of both text and graphics.
- Laminator - We can laminate documents for you such as, posters, identity cards or important papers you wish to protect.
- Cold Laminator for photographs, banners and delicate originals.
- Digital Camera.

- Laptop, digital projector and screen for hire. Please contact VGES for details of terms and conditions for use.
- DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND – VG-ES is registered with the Central Body in Scotland (CRBS) to sign Disclosure applications for potential staff and volunteers who will be working with children or vulnerable adults.
- INDEPENDENT EXAMINATIONS for Receipts and Payments Accounts for organisations with charitable status. The charity must be a trust or unincorporated association established or registered in Scotland and meets the eligibility criteria. There will be a fee for this service and an engagement contract to sign. For further information contact Christine at VG-ES.
- **Events Calendar – advertise your forthcoming event on the VG-ES website www.vges.org.uk E-Mail info to christine@vges.org.uk**
- **E-bulletins. Contact us if you would like to be added to our e-mail list for more news between our newsletters.**

For further details phone 01408 633001 or visit the VG-ES Office, Alba, Main Street, Golspie.



VGES MEMBERSHIP 2011

The annual subscription of £10 for 2011 is now due. Annual membership fee for groups remains the same as last year. Membership is open to all Voluntary and Community Organisations who operate in the East Sutherland area. Please take this opportunity to join or renew your membership. Our group membership form which incorporates an annual survey is enclosed. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey. It helps us to strive to deliver better services to you.

The next issue of this Newsletter will be
March 2011.

Please send information to be included by the end
of February 2011 to:

VG-ES, Golspie, KW10 6TG.

Tel: 01408 633001 Fax: 05601 146813

Or email your information to: contact@vges.org.uk