

## **Western Isles Intergenerational Network Meeting**

Venue: Zoom Link virtual

Date and time: Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2020 10am – 12noon

### **Meeting Report**

#### **In Attendance**

Marion Matheson NHS Health Promotion, Rhoda MacDonald Crossroads Lewis, Bella Kerr GWT, Kathleen Milne Western Isles Libraries, Peigi MacLean Garadh a Bhagh a Tuath, Jo Sinclair, Gemma Steele

#### **Apologies**

Victoria Manchester Volunteer Centre Western Isles (Uist), Marion MacInnes Alzheimer Scotland, Lisa MacDonald Crossroads Harris, Peggy McKay, Karen Peteranna, Sarah MacLeod Action for Children, Suzanne Forman Castlebay Community and Eoligarry Primary School Board.

#### **1. Welcome and introductions**

Informal introductions and some small sharing details about peoples own organisations.

#### **2. Discussion on Covid-19 and how GWT is working to help**

Bella explained to the group that Generations Working Together are working towards an online training platform to assist volunteers and others. Bella will keep the network updated.

#### **3. Connecting practitioners digitally – do you need help to connect?**

We covered this topic with conversations throughout that turned into a more informal chat and moved around the agenda.

**Kathleen Milne** (Libraries) explained that the library branch is closed but it is open with e- resources. Also audio books are really good and you can see them in the background for visuals. They are trying to support schools and they plan to have an author visit.

The council have banned ZOOM.

They do online story time every Saturday for 3-5 year olds.

Kathleen explained that Devices, now has given 10 free tablets to work with the community. There may be another 10 available and people are getting to keep the devices. This is through Devices.now and Goodthings Foundation. It is a UK based initiative.

**Peigi MacLean** quite keen to catch up with Kathleen and do some work together.

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**Gemma Steele** has also been involved with Devices.now and they have been awarded 10 devices. Gemma explained that the devices arrive empty – and from there the org must input the main apps such as whats app, facebook, email address and number. The document responsibility is handed over to the individual and it has 23 gb of data – once the data runs out it is up to owner to top up and make payment for it. This can be done online. Gemma explained that they are looking at Ipads and technology and that there is a Scotland only initiative which can be found on SCVO website.

**Jo Sinclair** spoke about not knowing when the pandemic would end and coming out of self-isolation and the need to teach technology. There will be a real need for this as it will be very lonely now for people and we will have learned lessons about connectivity.

Kathleen explained that the library is a learning my way centre – with devices to support people to get to know how to operate them. They are not sure where to start and putting people in touch with learn my way helps in a small way.

#### **4. Practical examples of how to reconnect the generations.**

We discussed a few different ideas and **Peggy McLean** shared something that her organisation had done before the lock down – the class recorded themselves giving a message ‘Hoped you are all ok and see you soon once this is over’. It will be good to start up new connections.

#### **5. Online training**

We spoke about online training and the adaptations that are required. Bella explained that GWT were hoping to get funding to offer FREE online training during the crisis especially for volunteers and people working intergenerationally but also for people working to help in care homes and community settings in general. The intergenerational relationships that have developed are needing to be kept alive and we spoke about lots of need for digital training for older people.

#### **6.**

- **What do your volunteers needs to do for IG work?**
- **Challenging view points from the media**

We discussed the media and how the quantity of information is overwhelming for people, especially older people. People agreed that there should not be unnecessary panic caused and watching too much on COVID 19 was scaring people. People who are at home on their own too, it may be best if the information was more filtered, especially if they are looking at information online. Lots of fake news.

- **How can we get youths involved to share their digital skills**

**Marion Matheson** share information about a project in a school with children going to care homes with tablets and devices and then the older people went to the school. This was just before lock down. Marion will keep us updated what happens when the times become more safe.

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Gemma Steele suggested that they have a reserve of willing volunteers and it could be possible to match them. But at the moment the advice is to restrict movement.

### **7. Any other news?**

**Kathleen Milne** explained that she is working at a HUB for key workers where they are working with anything from 16 children a day with 45 children registered. Key workers have not had more than 20 children.

**Rhoda MacDonald** knows that Alzheimers Scotland carries out work and it will be good to get examples of how intergenerational work would take place in community based service that delivers home care. Dementia and the different stages of dementia with lots of information.

**Marion Mathieson** talked about 3 gentle exercise classes each class with mostly vulnerable people in lock down. They have a chat and they hope to communicate with active schools and Macmillan Cancer – they are waiting on care homes to see if they will take part. Its not the same as the mainland, the people in care homes are not in good health. They have been doing things through ZOOM.

**Jo Sinclair** works closely with primary schools through arts / crafts, and group with vulnerable adults. She liaises with teachers and messages to families – to build up a good support with children, they are all missing each other at this time.

**Gemma Steele** covers a number of areas with 16+ - care activity and befriending and volunteers. The project had to be changed to telephone volunteering during this period. They now have an excess of telephone befrienders. Two paid staff cover some daily or minimum weekly visits and the response has been fantastic. Gemma explained that in Ballachulish they are using signs for the windows – saying either 'I'm okay' or 'I need help'. The volunteers response has been fab and they are also working with a lot of Highland recovery groups – substance misuse – online recovery forum. Gemma works closely with Jo and Tracy.

### **8. Next meeting**

- Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020, 10 – 12 noon in Benbecula and Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2020 10 – 12 noon in Stornoway. The venues have yet to be confirmed.

Bella encouraged people to think what they would like from the network meetings.

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