



LINK EAST FIFE ADULT MENTAL HEALTH BEFRIENDING PROJECT



LINK-UP

Summer 2023

A big sunny hello to you all! Warmer days are here and it's lovely to get out and about in nature without having to be wrapped up. We have had some fantastic news, after all our hard work applying to various different funding bodies, we have been successful in gaining small grants from the Cervus Trust managed by Foundation Scotland, Agnes Hunter Foundation and Fife Community Regeneration Fund. We have also been awarded funding that will see the project through the next 3 years, from The National Lottery Community Fund which is a huge relief as we really were looking at having to wind down the project if the bid was not successful. Thankfully the panel recognised the worth of befriending and the vital work that LINK do and awarded us the full amount asked for.

A huge well done to our volunteers, Erin has just graduated with a Psychology MA (Hons) and a large amount of volunteer hours have been racked up. Caroline 700, Erin 30, Molly 50, Frances 300 and Matthew 100. Thank you all!

The walking group has not met as frequently as the numbers were diminishing, so we asked you what you wanted and most of you said a Wednesday morning suited so our walk this month was on a Wednesday morning. What you enjoyed most about the walks was the company and chat, followed by location and the fact that they were open to all. A good few new locations for walks were suggested so it will be lovely to walk some different places in the next little while.

Senga Smith, Project Manager



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Kinkell Braes Walk

As mentioned above our monthly wellbeing walks halted for a little while due to there not being much interest, however we took into consideration your suggestions and decided to change the walk days to Wednesday mornings. The walk took place in July and we decided to walk the Braes at Kinkell from the East Sands in St Andrews, with the sun shining we wandered along the cliff top and gazed at the beautiful views of St Andrews and across the sea and eventually found a small beach to have a rest, before our steep walk back. We finished with a cuppa and a snack at the St Andrews Community Hub which is a great resource in St Andrews, they serve affordable meals, snacks and drinks and have a very well stocked community fridge (with food donated from local supermarkets) and clothing bank as well as friendly staff and patrons, so it's well worth a visit.

Becky Manley, Levenmouth Project Coordinator



Some of the staff and supporters are doing the Dundee Kiltwalk on 20th August; at least 2 are doing the 5 miles and 2 are doing the full 20 miles. Please pop over to our fundraising page and sponsor us, every little helps. Although I did the full 26 miles a few years back, I haven't managed to get in the training that I would have liked this year, so don't think it's going to be an easy walk! <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/teamlinkmh>



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Training

Health Promotion Fife's Training is open to volunteers. Their training programme is now available: Health Promotion Training Programme 2023-2024 (health-promotion-training.co.uk) Click the link to access [Health Promotion Training Programme](https://health-promotion-training.co.uk)

Interview with a LINK befriender 'K'

S: What was life like for you when you were referred to LINK?

K: I was very underconfident. I didn't go out, if I could get someone else to go, I would. I would avoid going out, my anxiety was through the roof. I wouldn't travel on the bus. Although I have always had mental health issues, my mental health really got worse after my second child.

S: How have things changed for you since you have been matched with your befriender?

K: Since seeing my befriender my confidence has been boosted. I am able to go out. I can be in a foul mood, go out with my befriender and come back feeling high. My partner notices the difference in me. If I see her [befriender] on a Friday, it makes my weekend. She says she always looks forward to seeing me. It's like paradise for that hour. I go out now, I've done stuff like walks, creative workshops and going out for Christmas lunch.

S: How did you feel about befriending before?

K: I didn't think it was going to be as good as it turned out to be. It's a hundred times better than what I thought. I never knew what friends were before.

S: What is the best thing about having a befriender?

K: Just enjoying time with someone who is not judgemental, having a laugh.

S: How has your life changed?

K: I go out more, not on my own yet. It makes me feel like I want to go out more. I am still anxious, but I do go out.



Maria's NC500 tales of Smoo Cave

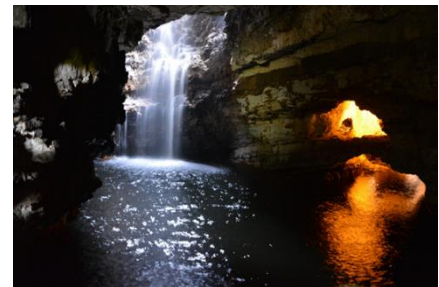
In July, I completed in the North Coast 500 in a campervan with my husband and two kids in tow. As promised in the online forums and guidebooks we saw some spectacular scenery and beautiful beaches along the west coast and northern



tip of Scotland. One of the highlights of the trip was visiting Smoo Cave, near Durness Beach where we were treated to a guided tour inside the cave. Smoo Cave is a large cave that has been formed by both seawater and freshwater. The Allt Smoo stream feeds

into the cave from above. It has a huge entrance measuring 40m wide by 15m high. A walkway connects the entrance to the first chamber which contains the waterfall and then a second chamber is at the back of the cave. The tour took us on a dinghy to see the waterfall and we also got to witness Scottish Piranhas in action when our tour guide threw some bread into the water. I definitely wouldn't be going for a swim after seeing them ravishing the breadcrumbs! To travel further into the cave we all had to duck down until we were almost on the floor of the dinghy to avoid overhanging rocks. We then alighted the dinghy and travelled on foot into the depths of the second chamber, where we tried our hand at 'making fire' from Durness Chert (a sedimentary rock with quartz and silica).

This particular type of rock is quite rare across Scotland and would have had significant value as natural resource during Viking times which is why there is so much evidence of Viking settlement in the cave. It is believed there could have been thousands of people living in various chambers



(many still inaccessible) of the cave 4000 – 6000BC. There is a waste pile 12 metres deep with remnants of fish bones, marine shells, mammal and bird bones, indicating a diet predominantly of marine consumption. Other tales from Smoo Cave are that it was used to smuggle whisky; and of highway man McMurdo who patrolled the area in the 1500's murdering his victims by throwing them down the blowhole into the cave. Smoo Cave has some fascinating tales as well as being surrounded by breathtaking scenery. We had a brilliant time!



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FUNDRAISING

If anyone is interested in doing a fundraising event for LINK please get in touch; if you are sporty it could be a walk, run, swim or cycle or you might be able to organise a get together with friends and ask them to donate a small amount for coffee and cake, or you might have your own great idea. If so, let us know. Every little helps!

Remember to keep earning a little bit for LINK when you shop online, it's totally free, gratis and for nothing! Why not shop via the Giving Machine? Go on, give it a go, it's easy and costs you nothing but raises much needed pennies for LINK.



It is very simple to use, and you only need to give a few details to join. Whenever you shop online you would firstly go to The Giving Machine website and log in. Next, search for the retailer

(at this point you will be directed to your chosen retailer's website) and then make your purchase as normal. It is that simple. The commission from your purchase will go directly to LINK's fundraising page.

Thanks to those already using and generating free donations for LINK.

We would be grateful for your support.



Keep in touch



Remember to 'like' our Facebook page where we will post interesting articles to read and information about events in the local area. We will try to update regularly with links, games and chat.

You can stay in touch and keep updated with our news, photos, invitations and links on our Facebook page. Just look for LINK East Fife Adult Mental Health Befriending Project and 'Like' to get notifications. You can also see documents, photos and upcoming events on our website www.linkbefriendingef.org.uk

If you are feeling overwhelmed by thoughts and feelings, there are organisations you can talk to. Keep these numbers handy and remember that they are there to listen.

Samaritans: 116 123: Open 24hrs per day, 365 days per year

Breathing Space: 0800 838 587: Open Mon-Thurs 6pm-2am, Fri 6pm -Mon 6am