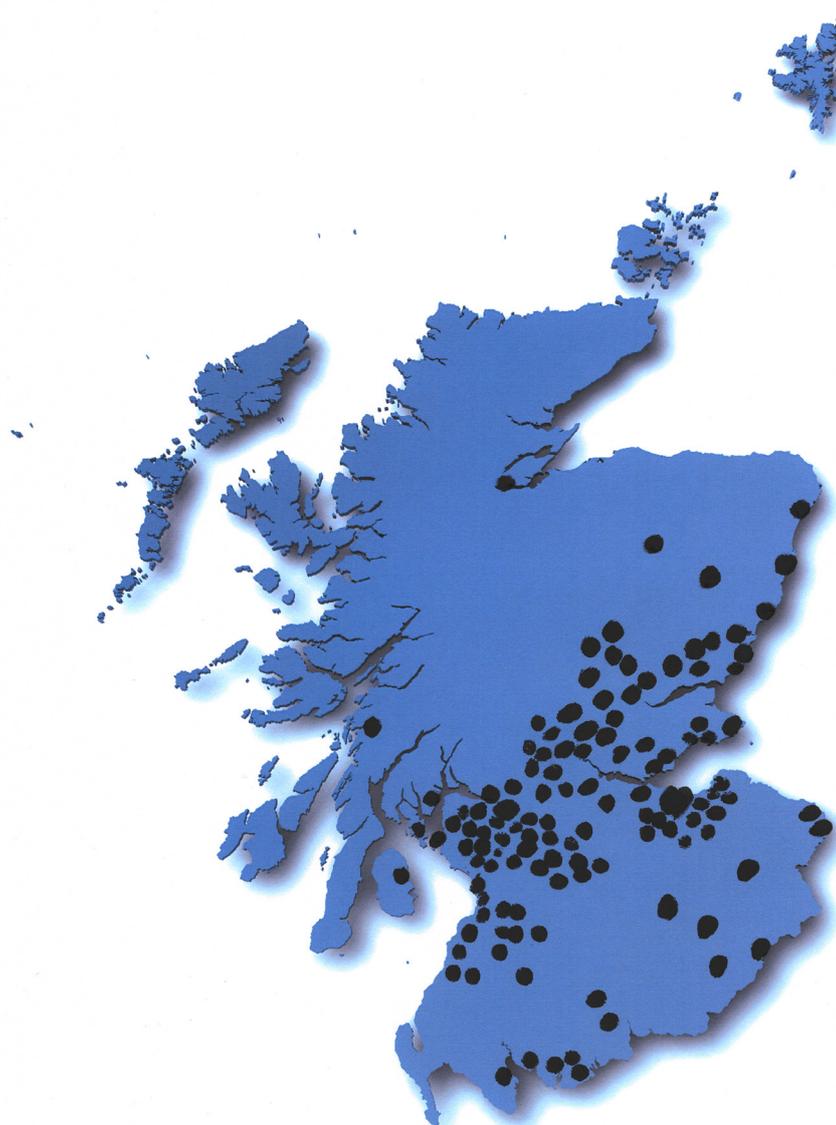


Newsletter No. 2 – January 2019

Guild Partnership Project to Tackle Loneliness and Social Isolation in Scotland

Dear Friends,

"Young or old, loneliness doesn't discriminate...it is something many of us could easily help with". (Jo Cox MP, 1974-2016)



We are incredibly excited to embark on the first full year of our Join up the Dots Project Partnership with the Guild, tackling loneliness and social isolation in Scotland.

Reflecting on 2018 conjures up many happy memories of good times and rich conversations with individual Guilds up and down the country.

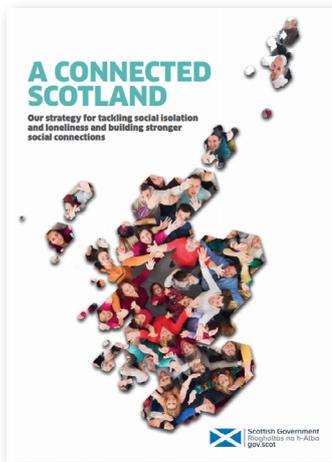
Since the launch of the projects at the impressively-organised event in central Edinburgh in April, our faithful band of speakers – staff and volunteers alike – have delivered 111 talks. You can see exactly everywhere we've been on the plotted map (left).

Our travels have taken us as far north as Beauly, as far west as the Isle of Arran, as far south as Gretna and as far east as Peterhead. We hope and pray that our audiences have got as much out of these visits as our speakers have. One of our recent recruits, Malcolm comments:

“During my working life I have presented at conferences and organised ‘train the trainer’ sessions for people in the construction industry. Accepting the role as a volunteer speaker for CrossReach was a great opportunity for me to use my skills to support the fantastic work that CrossReach does. The most common feedback I get is ‘we didn’t realise that CrossReach had such a wide remit’ and that message is encouraging Guilds to sign up to the Join up the Dots Project”. (Malcolm - volunteer speaker)

Alongside Malcolm, we have speakers ready and waiting to come and speak to one of your meetings wherever you may be. If you have gaps in this or your next session, please do get in touch with us using the details at the end of this newsletter. All we would ask is that if you are a small group, perhaps consider inviting your neighbours and friends. And give us as much notice as you can, please.

A Connected Scotland – the Government’s Perspective



In our presentations we have mentioned how seriously the Scottish Government takes the issue of social isolation and loneliness. At the beginning of 2018 the Government issued its draft strategy on loneliness for consultation. 419 responses were received including from the Church of Scotland, with CrossReach to the fore. The findings of this consultation were published in the autumn of 2018 and have now led to the Government committing up to £1m over the next two years to help build capacity and pilot innovative approaches to tackling social isolation and loneliness¹. This is welcome news, especially as we’ll be ready and waiting to apply for this funding thanks to the innovative research and work we together, the Guild and CrossReach, are already doing right now!

A Connected Scotland – the Church of Scotland’s Perspective

From foodbanks to dementia friendly cafés, knitting groups to book clubs, we’ve been amazed to learn about all the initiatives individual Guilds and churches are already involved in to break down barriers to connectedness. We have encouraged and continue to encourage you to share with us where you have encountered loneliness and social isolation in your community and how you reach out to people.



Several of you have taken up our Grey Cake Challenge, baking cakes which are multi-coloured inside but with a dull exterior to symbolise what it might be like to live under the fog of mental ill-health.

If you’re tempted by this challenge, we’ll be delighted to rush you our specially-designed Grey Cake Toolkit; please just ask.

As well as telling us directly about your initiatives, we invite you to record these online on the Social Care Forum: www.socialcareforum.scot.

¹A Connected Scotland – Our strategy for tackling social isolation and loneliness and building stronger social connections, Scottish Government, December 2018, p.10

Moderated by CrossReach, this website already contains a plethora of resources on all aspects of living connectedly in community, a Q&A forum and projects and stories to inspire others. For maximum benefit, register and become a member. If you're uncertain how to do this, then please contact us and we'll be happy to help.

A Connected Scotland – CrossReach Perspective

Year Two of your themed cycle of work is entitled "Companions on the Way". The Guild and CrossReach have been companions for a very long way. Back in 1970 in only the second year of its supporting specific projects, the Guild gave £4,748 for furnishings at Simpson House in Edinburgh, now one of our most valued services for those looking for support with alcohol and drug related issues. In fact, our history together goes back almost three times longer than that.



CrossReach marks its 150th birthday in 2019; establishing the Women's Guild was one of the early initiatives of the then Committee on Christian Life and Work.

In 2019, that long partnership continues as the money you raise will allow us to kick-start truly innovative work to tackle social isolation and loneliness.

New Initiatives

We are pleased to announce exclusively in this Guild Newsletter the following initiatives which would not be possible without your support:

Mellow Parenting



The role of a parent carer of a young child with complex needs can be a challenging and lonely one. Our Mallard project in Springburn, Glasgow currently provides short residential breaks for young folk with complex needs to enjoy their own en-suite facilities, a spa, a sensory room and a computer room. Mum or Dad can also enjoy the break away from their caring duties but this may merely intensify their feeling of isolation.

By offering Mellow Parenting sessions, Mums and Dads can be part of the Mallard experience, discussing among their peers the issues they have and, together with them, playing with the children in a planned activity time. We will be running a separate Mums' Group and Dads' Group once a week.

Befriending



We have hired a member of staff to recruit and train volunteer befrienders for those moving on to their own tenancies having had a spell in our Cale House temporary accommodation in Inverness. This can prove a particularly difficult and lonely time for an individual when it can be tempting to drift back to unhelpful old ways and old friends.

Join
up the
Dots

Churches in the city are interested in putting forward people for the vital befriending role of helping people to access community resources, learn new skills or pick up neglected ones, or simply to meet regularly for a coffee and chat.

Heart for Art



A dementia-friendly project previously supported by the Guild, this year we are launching Heart for Art at Home. At present our Heart for Art groups meet in church and other community buildings; Heart for Art at Home will bring this highly creative enterprise into CrossReach care homes for residents and their visitors.

The analysis of the Government consultation on loneliness and social isolation concludes that there is not going to be a 'quick-fix' solution to tackling social isolation and loneliness². We knew that all along and that is why we are so delighted that the Guild is committed to support the Join Up the Dots Project for a full 3 years. Thank you!

To book a talk, order a Grey Cakes Toolkit or for any other requests, please contact Fiona Sutherland on 0131 454 4374 or email supporters@crossreach.org.uk.



The Church of Scotland
Social Care Council

Operating as CrossReach, Scottish Charity No: SC011353

²Ibid, p. 24

