

# GowrieNews



PAGE 3  
The start of our new garden

PAGE 6  
River City

PAGE 8  
Bruntsfield Project

rmuir@hillcrestha.org.uk

# WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of your Gowrie Care newsletter.

Thank you to everyone that has shared their stories and thoughts in the range of articles that appear. There are lots of great photos in this edition, so keep them coming!

This is your chance to share what's going on at your project, any creative writing you may have done or anything that you'd like to share with other people being supported by Gowrie Care.

Either speak to your support worker or contact me direct to send in your articles.

I hope you enjoy this edition of your newsletter.

Rebecca

rmuir@hillcrestha.org.uk

## THE TOP OF THE WORLD BEN VORLICH

It was 7am and D-Day finally arrived (or more accurately M-Day - M for Munro). Any lingering half-hopes of miserable weather forcing a last minute call off were crushed by the blazing sun that sat in a cloudless sapphire sky. Today I would answer the question I had asked myself for years. "Could you climb a Munro?" The Voice-In-My-Head would ask this whenever I was travelling north. The voice grew louder the older I got and so I decided to find out. To do this properly I needed a plan, which, after a fair amount of head-scratching, I hatched one night in my flat.

I slumped back on the couch pleased with myself and read my plan aloud. "Operation Munro - 1. Find a volunteer to drive me. 2. Find a Munro. 3. Get there. 4. Climb it. 5. Come back down and go home." A tad simplistic but I consoled myself with the thought that all the best plans were. My driver-to-be agreed that they would be available some time in the not too distant future to transport me to an unknown destination.

I acquired a book entitled The Munro's. It had full page glossy pictures of every Munro there is, a description, a pronunciation guide to assist the uninitiated and a translation of the name. There were also nifty little sketches showing where to start and full instructions for getting to the top. Flicking through I came to page 29: Ben Vorlich it said. It was relatively easy to get to but the pointy summit clinched it (most of them aren't pointy).

Phase Three began that beautiful M-Day morning. My driver for the day arrived at 9am and three and a half hours later I was eating a hearty lunch in a roadside restaurant in Lochearnhead. From there we drove to Loch Earn and took the narrow road skirting the south side of the loch. I craned my neck to see the summit and to my horror discovered it was not pointy, but rounded like all the others. I felt cheated.

Eventually we reached the drop-off point and armed with a bag containing water, a smoked sausage, some rolls, my camera and phone, arrangements were made to meet five hours hence. Off she drove in search of civilisation and off I marched along the track, clutching

my photocopied instructions. The ground was fairly level at this stage and from where I was, the mountain didn't seem so scary at all.

The sun shone relentlessly. I'd covered about 250 yards on a slight incline and ahead I could see the gate I had to go through. The path took a sharp turn to the left. Here said the instructions, the real climb began. It was when I rounded the bend that I was confronted by the monster that was the real Ben Vorlich. I was almost overawed.

I began to feel a bit sickly and remembered you're not supposed to eat a big meal before exercising. The sun did its best to boil my brain but I ignored it. My jeans clung to my sweat drenched legs and I cursed for not wearing lightweight camouflage trousers like I'd said I would. On and up I marched. I stopped for a proper rest and saw the world from half way up Ben Vorlich. It was stunning. I didn't stop too long, fearing I might seize up (but long enough to take my boots off to plunge my feet into a stream). On and on I marched until finally I could see the cairn not so far away. I focussed on that and just kept going up, up, up.

Finally I reached the peak, the top, the summit. Exhausted and dripping with sweat I decided to take a photo and negotiate the way down. The camera and phone were in the bag 3232 feet below me. I couldn't believe it. With heavy legs and feeling stupid I began my descent but not by the route in the instructions. I wanted a quicker way and spotted one. Half tumbling I careered down the mountain then discovered why my route wasn't recommended; there was work going on at the foot and the ground had been turned into a horrible mush of cement, water and mud. I had to wade through it - there was no other way. At last, three and a half hours after setting out I was back where I'd started. I plunged my feet into the soothing waters of Loch Earn and awaited my driver-for-the-day to rescue me. I will do another Munro someday but will remember the lessons of that climb - no big meal before going up; wear loose trousers; get a proper backpack and REMEMBER THE CAMERA.



This newsletter has been printed on 150gsm 9lives Satin Art 80% Recycled Fibre, Pulp NAOM & FSC certified.



# The start of our new garden

Here at Lauriston we've been painting, digging, building, sanding, raking, throwing out, putting in and most of all looking forward to the long awaited garden facelift. Well the Beachgrove don't have a patch (excuse the pun) on us here at Lauriston! We were lucky enough to be chosen by the team at Standard Life as their 'Community Investment' project 2010 and what a project it is! Soon we'll be enjoying burger buns from the BBQ in the summer house with a salad prepared from our very own veggie patch... We are at the beginning stages of preparing the lawn for turf, the first rows of bricks are down for the BBQ, the summer house is merely a picture in a catalogue and the veggies are in the early stages of life... seeds in packets! As I type we're on day 2 of the project, the team are doing a fantastic job, a huge thank you to all the lovely volunteers from Standard Life who have been raising money for the garden and helpers around the project... watch this space, we will be back with future developments and hope to see some of you at the grand opening....



## Blue/pink room

With the garden project up and running, it would only be fair for the residents at Lauriston to have somewhere cosy to retreat too when the nights draw in and it gets too chilly to spend time outside. So with this in mind we are working on redecorating the 'blue room'. Thanks to a donation from crown paint the blue room is now a pretty pink colour, and there will be a competition to rename the room when it is complete. With a new carpet on its way the room will be transformed from a not so homely blue to a warm, inviting space for the residents to relax in. We will soon be starting a patchwork quilt made from beautiful material donated from Anta Scotland and there will be a photography trip planned for the residents to capture this picturesque city we live in to display in the newly decorated room. We can't wait for the room to be complete and make the most of the fine-looking space we've created!

**Emily Cross**  
Project Assistant

## Dinnae Lose The plot

After two years of planting, digging, waging war on the slugs and uniting staff and service users against the common enemy of the dreaded pigeons. We at the Multiple Needs Team thought we would share the success of our organic allotment with you.

We meet as a group on a Friday afternoon for 2 hours each week and also we use the garden for one to one work. The garden is a great place to learn new skills and build confidence. It's peaceful and gives people time to chill out if they are struggling through hard times.

## How We Got Started

Three years ago one of our workers supported a service user to attend the Bridgend Community Health Project. This proved to be a very positive experience, so we pushed to get our own plot.

Before we got the plot Gowrie staff linked up with Rob Ford of Bridgend and managed to negotiate a reduced rate for people on benefits to attend an Introduction to Organic Gardening Course. The attendance rate was phenomenal. A combination of fantastic teaching, great place to be, and real interest helped people to sustain attendance. Eleven people both staff and service users have attended the ten week course. Some of us had greener fingers than others!

In the garden we are not just growing organic fruit and vegetables. We are growing a group that is learning about the environment, is becoming familiar with foods that are essential to good health, a group that is able to work together and plan together. A side shoot is that working in the garden also benefits mental and physical health from being outside exercising regularly. The Garden is a team effort and everyone's opinions are valued whether from staff or service users. Everyone is becoming more confident at having their say and putting their spades and hoes where their ideas are.

## The Garden Is Ours

Last April, after a sustained campaign of nagging the management staff at Bridgend (also the applied charm and commitment of the group) we inherited plot 7. It was late in the year to

start planting and as a group we were filled with panic and excitement. We planted Tatties/ Leaks/ Carrots/ Swedes/ Tomatoes/ Peppers/ Brassicas / Chillies/ Bay Trees/ blackcurrant bushes and rhubarb and a Hawthorne hedge, we also had to carry a tonne of manure donated from stables. We also put in some flowers and a herb garden.

## Keeping the plot

Is dependent upon us working it regularly. If you don't use it you lose it and with demand for plots at a premium with a 6 year waiting list the garden is a valuable resource. Working in the garden requires patience, optimism that things will grow, resilience and a sense of humour when the pigeons scoff all your peas, or the seeds don't perform as well as expected. This can be a challenge and this is in part where we got our name from "dinnae lose the plot"

We celebrated our harvest last year with a barbecue that 17 people attended. We also had an art event with folk painting stones to decorate the paths of our garden.

We hope to keep the members who attended last year and encourage new folk out to our garden, and we very much appreciate ongoing support from Gowrie, particularly giving us a budget for seeds and tools.

## What people who use the garden have said about it...

**Although I don't like fruit and vegetables I am going to bring some cream for the strawberries..... I had only ever seen them in a supermarket before.** Norman

**It is so nice to have an opportunity to do something I would not try on my own not just because I don't have a garden but I like the support to get there. I like everything about the garden and I am looking forward to the BBQ.....** Elizabeth



I remember the sounds of the birds and the bottles rattling on the canes, I also remember seeing a rare butterfly that I haven't seen for years. Malcolm



## What the garden means to me:

*by Alex Mclean*

My keyworker introduced me to Bridge End, I went to a gardening class and next thing we had a plot.

Have you ever heard anyone say you are losing the plot? Well, that's what we called it. You can go along to the garden anytime if you have done the course, but we meet up on a Friday to discuss what we shall do, or just sit and enjoy the peace and quiet.

Before I heard about the garden group I was sitting in my flat vegging away! I'm glad I went along because I can forget all my problems there. They leave me when I am in my garden.

Thanks to everyone who help to get it and keep it rolling. It's the best thing ever, especially when its harvest time.

It's a place to be, its different, its definitely for me.

Thanks to all  
Alex Mclean



# River City

Staff and service users from South Fort Street Project went on a trip to the set of the TV soap River City on Saturday 10th July. They got to see all the hot spots of the neighbourhood of River City, including every character's house, the main street and of course the Oyster Café and Tall Ship pub!

Everyone was asked to knock on the brick walls of the street and were all very surprised to learn that it was not made of real bricks, but it was made of wood with plaster on top, made to look like bricks. Our very own Mary even had to knock twice to believe this!

We learned that the summer episodes were actually filmed in February during the snow wearing their shorts and t-shirts! Our guide gave us the secret of using ice cubes which the characters sucked before speaking so their breath wouldn't show up in the freezing cold.

Sammy explained her favourite part was when in the set for the pub "The most fun bit was when Shaun asked me if I wanted a pint and I said yes and he tried to do this but it was not real alcohol and he almost broke the pump!"

Shaun explained "It was different 'cause on the TV you see the pub and that looks real but then you go and see the set and it is not really real'.

Although no characters from the show were spotted as they were on their summer holidays, a good time was had by all. Many said that they did not used to watch River City but now that they have been on the set, they will watch it because then they can say they have been there!

We also got some insights into upcoming plots, but I am afraid to say we have been sworn to secrecy, so we will not be sharing! Sorry folks!





# St John's Hill at Pitlochry

Our Assistant Manger had a brainwave, she decided to get us the Hillcrest mini bus for 2 weeks. We offered 3 other Edinburgh projects dates to use it and we organised 3 days of outings.

On our second outing we went to Pitlochry. It was a beautiful day. We left St John's Hill at 10 am and drove to Perth where we stopped at Morrisons and we bought lunch for everyone. We then drove to Pitlochry where we had a lovely slow walk around the salmon dam. Two of the service users and one staff member saw a salmon. The rest of us missed the salmon after waiting patiently. We then went to the salmon dam exhibition.

We then had another walk and sat down at picnic tables and had some lunch. After lunch we drove to the Queens View which is absolutely spectacular, the best view many staff and service users have seen. It is so peaceful and tranquil, it is definitely worth the drive to admire the scenery.

George said "Pitlochry has stunning views".

Leanne said "Pitlochry was spectacular."

Gary said "The salmon jumping at Pitlochry is a myth". Gary was one of the service users who missed the salmon, along with myself!



## An Ode to the Minibus by St John's Hill

St John's Hill is our name

In June, outings were our game

We hired the Hillcrest mini bus

We drove to Edinburgh in a rush

Our first outing was to Vogrie Park

The weather was wet, dreek and dark

We managed to find shelter and get the BBQ lit

The Project Assistant forgot the burgers, what a twit

Salmon dams and the Queens View at Pitlochry was outing number two

For once we were silent admiring the view

Day three was an outing to Yellowcraigs Beach

Service users up, ready and scrambling for a seat

Risk assessments, staff rotas, all had to be done

We left St Johns Hill and all had good fun

The Hillcrest minibus was a great idea

From all at St John's bring it back next year

## HEY LOOK AT ME NOW

First off when I became homeless I was put at Oxgangs Street for a couple of months, that was ok but I felt strange sharing with people I do not know.

Staff were nice and helped me a lot, they referred me to Dryden St in December 2008, and I was successful.

It was so strange moving into Dryden St, I was a bit scared and my flat was right beside the lift, I think I drove the staff mad telling them someone was trying to get into my flat...but it was only the noise from the lift.

So much has happened to me in my life that I had just accepted I could not do certain things like maths or take care of myself. I managed to get into the Numbers Club and I love it, I now have a volunteers job in a charity shop just round the corner and I manage my tenancy without any problems.

I, along with other tenants organise and facilitate some of the activities that happen at Dryden St I am also part of the Tenants Forum, I chair the meetings and arrange the agenda, I will also be attending staff meetings to train staff!!!!

I organise the breakfast club which means I order the marmalade, bread and butter, I make sure there is enough for everyone and when they come in I make their tea and toast.

I attend the, 'remember when' afternoons and the baking afternoons, on a Friday I go to the communal meal and help the staff.

Staff are always there if I need anything but with their help I now am able to cope better.

Over the last two years my life has changed I am more confident and I have just received an Achievement Award from Community Learning Centre.

The staff at Dryden St made me a certificate for getting the volunteers job it was lovely, it made me feel so special.

I have went from someone who used to say 'I can't do it' to someone who now say 'I can do whatever I want.'

Thanks to all the staff at both projects for their support and encouragement

B .R. Dryden Street.

## Bruntsfield

It's been a busy couple of months for Service Users at Bruntsfield Project; we have dug up some of the garden to grow veggies, made a scarecrow to stop the birds eating the seeds! Played football with Service users and staff from St Johns hill project, Borrowed the Hillcrest minibus went away for 2 day trips Staff and Service Users at Bruntsfield have started to grow Vegetables, its taking a few weeks but were starting to see results.

Latest edition to the staff team at Bruntsfield!!

We were having a bit of trouble with birds eating the seeds from the project allotment! At the end of May we had a Service User Participation Day and we made a Scarecrow to stop the birds! And its working the veggies are starting to grow and should be ready for harvest soon.



## Footy @ Spartans 5 a side pitches

On 2nd staff at Bruntsfield and St Johns hill organised a friendly game of football, a few of the service users plus 2 staff played against St Johns unfortunately we never won!! We have been watching the world cup and took some great tips from Fabio Cappella so watch out!!!



## Interviews

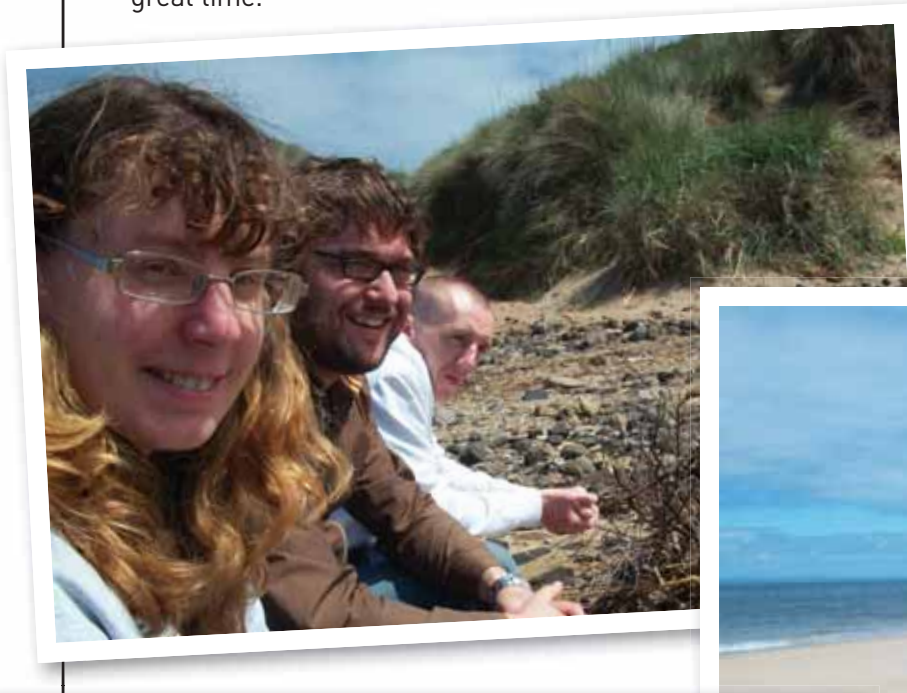
Bruntsfield project are recruiting 2 new Assistant Support Workers, We asked 2 Service Users to help us out in the recruitment process by asking some questions.





# Days Out

Last month we had use of the Hillcrest mini bus so staff and services users headed off to Guillane Beach and Dunkeld Country Park for walks and a picnic. The weather was fantastic both days and everyone had a great time.



# St John's Hill Ready Steady Cook Outing

At St Johns' Hill we are fortunate to have 2 qualified chefs who live in our accommodation. One of the service users and his project worker Andy had a discussion around showing other service users how to cook using fresh healthy ingredients which don't cost a lot. Andy agreed it was an excellent idea and organised the St John's Hill Ready Steady Cook outing. Andy booked the rugby club at Leith Academy and the company car. On the morning of our outing we had 6 hungry service users and 3 equally hungry staff. First we went to Morrisons with our resident chef and he showed everyone how to shop on a budget. The menu for the day was tomato and basil soup and then macaroni. Our chef decided on this menu as it suited both meat eaters and vegetarians. It is easy to make and doesn't cost a lot and many of the ingredients we bought could be used for both dishes.

He managed to get enough to feed nine hungry people and all the ingredients for under £20. We managed to bring some soup back to the project but there was no leftover macaroni which was made with a roux and was delicious. Everyone had a very tasty lunch and seconds. When we returned many of the service users returned to their flats for a power nap whilst the workers returned to the weekly team meeting.

## Here is our amazing recipe for Tomato and Basil Soup

Chop onions, garlic, celery, tomato and carrots.

Sweat onions

Add garlic and celery

Add a small amount of carrots (not too many as this can change the soup colour)

Chop 2 punnets of tomatoes

Add between 1 and 2 tins of plum tomatoes

Add water and check the texture, the soup should not be too thick

Add 1 vegetable stock cube

Add salt and pepper (called seasoning to bring out all of the flavours)

Pick all of the leaves off some fresh basil then add the stork (not the leaves as they can discolour the soup at this stage)

Liquidise

Add the basil leaves which should be finely chopped

Add a small tub of double cream (double cream will not separate the mixture)

Leave to simmer for 20 to 30 minutes

Get your bowls out with some crusty bread and enjoy – remember you can always freeze some for another day.





# "No Place Like Home"

Staff and service users from South Fort Street took part in the photography competition "No Place Like Home" which was rolled out through the Housing Support and Enabling Unit. This competition was a first of its kind and was all about celebrating the achievements and the experiences of people who receive housing support in Scotland. As the title suggests, the competition focussed on the home and how important it is as a basis for everything else in a person's life.

There were three different categories that we entered which were **HOME**, **COMMUNITY** and **CHALLENGES**. In each of the categories we also had to complete a photo story to detail what the photo was about.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank again all the service users, staff and external visitors for their

involvement in this. We were successful in winning the top prize for 2 of the entries that we submitted for the **HOME** and **COMMUNITY** photos. Staff and service users were invited to attend an awards ceremony during the Scottish Housing and Support Conference on the 7th of October at the Hilton Grosvenor Hotel, Edinburgh. Service users were presented with a certificate for their involvement along with a cheque for £200 for the winning photographs. Service users have yet to decide what they would like to spend the winnings on but I'm sure that they will come up with some ideas at their next service user meeting. It was a fantastic day for all who attended and a great achievement and result for everyone who was involved.

*Congratulations!!*

## Photo story for HOME category

Service users answered the question of what it feels like to be homeless as this is something they had all experienced. During groupwork they identified words associated to what it feels like to be homeless. One of the service users explained that the title of the competition reminded them of The Wizard of Oz where Dorothy clicks her heels together saying "there's no place like home". We wanted to collaborate all these ideas together to create our photograph.

The idea behind the photo is to show somebody experiencing homelessness and sleeping rough but who also has a glimmer of hope in the form of the ruby slippers. The individual is contemplating clicking her heels together but does have fear over the consequences. She is asking the question - will this work? What if it doesn't? Holding onto the only concept she has remaining which is hope.

I'm sure that you will agree that Yvonne played an excellent role as the part of Dorothy!! Also many thanks to the owner of the dog who just happened to be walking by when we were taking the photos, she makes an excellent alternative Toto.



(Pictured Yvonne Donaldson aka Dorothy - Support Worker and Giro the dog aka Toto)

word city showing clearly and how our community can play a big part in creating our beautiful city!

## Photo story for CHALLENGES category

Service users discussed their own experiences and the challenges they faced and realised that as a group they all encounter the same struggles when attempting to manage situations in their lives as a result of being no fixed abode. They thought that the photograph of one person would reflect each and everyone of them and their uphill struggle.

This image is of one of the service users climbing up an uneven wall. The service users wanted to show that the wall is the challenge. The wall deliberately has no start or end as service users identified that sometimes they just have to keep battling on and even clinging onto it in the hope that they will eventually reach their goal. The wall is also uneven and may have little footholds and this symbolises further difficulties and obstacles they may face as well as some progress on their journey.



The service users wanted to create a photo with everyone in the community that made a difference to them out with the Project which they view as their main base in the community.

Service users worked with staff to invite everyone to the project where they live and create and capture their essence of community in the photograph.

The concept of our photo is to show everyone working together to spell out the word community with the



(Pictured SS service user)

## Photo story for COMMUNITY category

Service users identified people who are important to them in the community - some are professionals and some are local people who support them in a variety of ways. The range of people that service users identified are: - the community nurse, local shop worker, bus driver, police, paramedics, their neighbours, postman, lollipop person and local builders.



# A-Team

In November last year a group of guys got together and planned and organised a pool tournament. They were from the resettlement projects and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. They plan to organise another tournament in the bleak mid-winter. This is a great chance for everyone to feel part of a community, and the guys look forward to meeting new tenants and bringing them along to take part...

Since the success of the pool tournament there has been another pool night, bingo & quiz nights, a lunch club and two barbeques which were all successful. At the last barbeque over fifteen people, from all three resettlement projects, came along and enjoyed the afternoon. More events are planned for the coming months.

## The A-Team

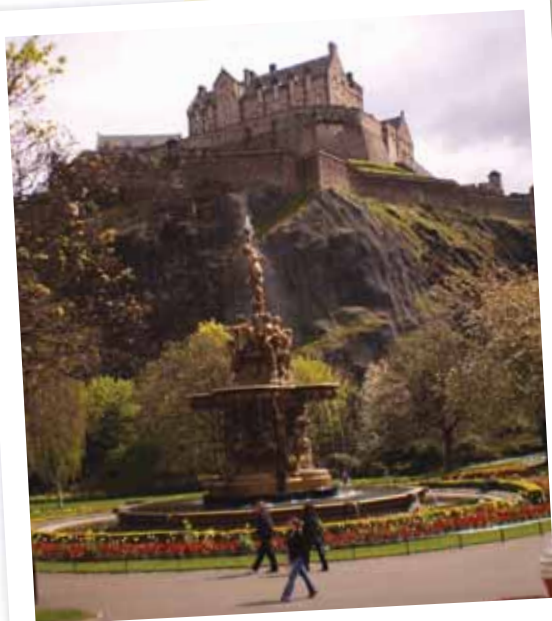
### (Resettlement Service Users Group, Edinburgh)

In addition to organising a variety of activities for service users, the A-Team has played an important part in improving the quality of the resettlement services over the past year. This has included a quality questionnaire, re-writing file paperwork to make it easier to understand and designing a survey so tenants can participate in staff appraisals. Representatives have attended team meetings and their work has contributed to local procedures as well as our Care Commission Inspection. So, a big thank you to everyone involved in the A-Team over the past year for all their hard work and especially the two founder members who continue to improve the quality of the resettlement services for everyone we work with.



# Photos around Edinburgh

## 4th of May in Edinburgh



Myself Jamie Alan and Carmen took photos and had a really nice day and it took my mind off alcohol which helps me not to think of it. I do appreciate it and I hope it will help other people.

