



Living Better



October 2021

Joanne's welcome

Welcome! Jane offered to be our editor for this edition, with our focus being on autumn and the changes in daylight hours, darker nights, cooler weather and the leaves starting to change colour on the trees.

I have been back at work a month now following my eye surgery, which was a time when I had to put into practice all the Self Management advice we give you. My top reminders were pacing, managing fatigue and being kind to myself as the weeks went on. I am grateful to Kirsteen and my wonderful team for all the work they did when I was off, and I welcome Jane to the team.

For the time being our support will continue with online, so please remember to look at all the activities we offer from Mindfulness to Fun Fridays as there is something for everyone. If you've not joined in before and are unsure, contact your Community Networker who can help. I love that fact you don't need to leave your house to join in, especially on dark, cold nights. Grab a cuppa and take a few minutes to have a read of our newsletter.



Calendar of Events

Tuesday 5th October

11am - Coffee and Chat with Kate and Anne

Friday 15th October

2.00pm - Fun Friday with Kirsteen and Jane

'Guess the Movie - Emoji quiz'

Thursday 9th December

2.00pm - 'Digital December' forum meeting

(All on Microsoft Teams - just ask the host for an invite)

We are taking a wee autumn break late October but will restart another 8 week block running up to Christmas.

We'll also stay in touch on our closed Facebook groups - LGOWIT Living Better and LGOWIT Long Covid Highland.



How to Contact Us?

LGOWIT is a charitable project hosted by the Highland Third Sector Interface - SC 0043521.

Tel: (01349) 807061

Email:

lgowitadmin@highlandtsi.org.uk

LGOWIT Welcomes Jane - and other news!



This month the LGOWIT welcomed Jane Tattum as the new Community Networker covering Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey.

Jane recently moved to a wee flat in Culloden in Inverness. Over lockdown she started braving a wetsuit in public and began wild swimming, and she likes to spend time with her niece and nephew who live nearby.

Jane also works as a Volunteering Development Officer with HTSI and is passionate about all things volunteering.

Self Management Forum Focus "Digital December"

Did you know that we now hold our quarterly Highland Self Management forums online?

On the **9th September** we held our fifth online Forum - on the theme of Anxiety and Stress

All the presentations can be found on our website www.lgowit.org under the Activities menu

Our next forum, themed "Digital December" will be held online on Thursday 9th December at 2pm. You are very welcome to join us. Please email lgowitadmin@highlandtsi.org.uk for more details.



Have you joined either of our closed Facebook groups? 'LGOWIT Living Better' and 'LGOWIT Long Covid Highland' are a great place to get to know others and share self management tips, experiences and ideas. **We'll always keep you up to date with activities and events we are hosting too so you'll never miss a thing!**

"Scotland Versus Arthritis and Pete Moore are offering a free Pain Toolkit session on Zoom for people living with chronic or persistent pain in the Highlands on 18 October 11.00am – 1.30pm.

Contact livewell@versusarthritis.org now to reserve your place or you can call 0141 954 7776



Brought to you by Pete Moore and Versus Arthritis

"I found Pete's encouragement and teaching techniques very helpful. We had a good laugh within the group and the session was very enjoyable. All my initial discomfort melted away quickly as the session developed and now I just need to learn to adapt the '3 Ps' myself going forward in life."

MICHELLE

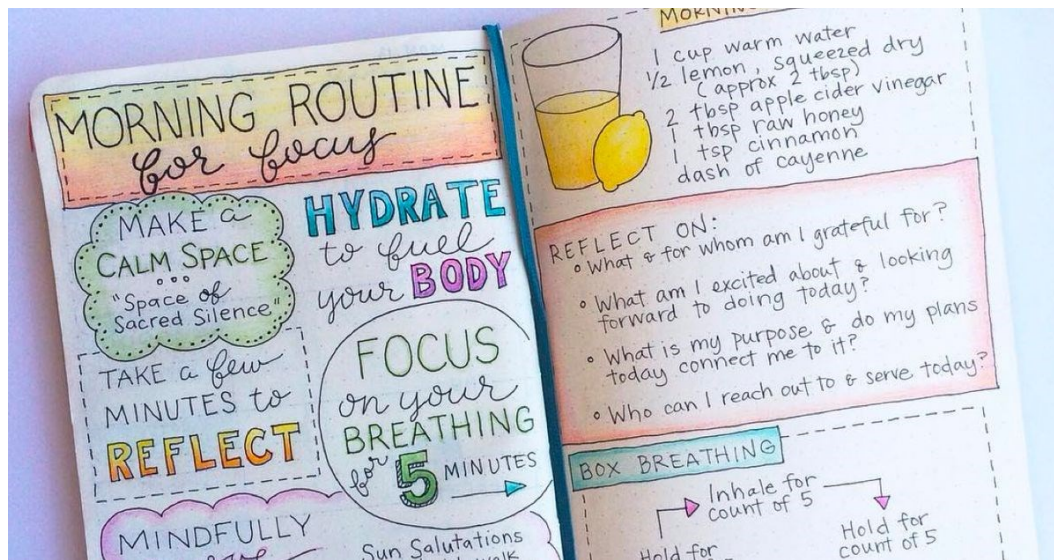


The Pain Toolkit is for anyone who lives with persistent pain and for those who support them. Join our free workshop via zoom and get back in the driving seat!

**SCOTLAND
VERSUS
ARTHRITIS**

Contact us now to reserve your free place at Scotland Versus Arthritis on 0141 954 7776 or livewell@versusarthritis.org.

Bullet Journaling for Health & Wellbeing



Top tips for bullet journaling

1. Make journaling a habit and part of your day
2. Think about your set up and plan a page out
3. Use washi tape to decorate and add colour
4. Only create pages you'll actually use
5. Keep it simple, especially at the start

What is Bullet Journaling?

A bullet journal (or bujo) is a **system designed to help us manage our lives**. It can help us to track our habits and thoughts, organise to-do lists, and plan things in the future. It's completely customisable and can be used in different ways, depending on what we want to get out of it. All you need to get started is a journal and pens. Lots of people find bullet journaling therapeutic in itself.



Inspiration...

- Meal planner.
- Sleep tracker
- Pain tracker
- Medication tracker
- Mood tracker
- Recipe lists.
- Shopping list.
- To do lists
- Daily/weekly cleaning lists.
- Self care ideas
- Routine/planner
- Quotes

My Wellbeing, My Life

Walking Update With Charlotte

Highland Health Walks

Most of our Health Walks have restarted and you can check where your nearest Health Walk is on the Paths for All website: www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/health-walks.

In Highland there are over 40 Health Walk groups and almost 20 Buggy Walk groups. New groups are also starting up soon in Lairg, Lochinver and on Raasay. Walkers have told us that they have really enjoyed our safe and accessible walks over the summer and have felt the benefits of being outdoors, doing some gentle exercise and meeting up safely with others.

If you would like to join one of the Health Walk groups, please check the website for local details, or if you need further information please get in touch: Charlotte Mackenzie, Health Walks Project Officer, email: charlotte@highlandtsi.org.uk or call 07385 380756.



Fly Agaric mushroom at Redcastle



Rosehips at Attadale Gardens

With Autumn well on the way is lovely to see the changes in the season. I have noticed colourful rowan berries and brambles, and lots of mushrooms and toadstools when out walking recently. I always feel a great boost when I go out for a walk, whether a wander around the garden or a walk on a local beach or in the woods. The fresh air and sights and sounds of nature do wonders! I hope you enjoy some lovely autumn walks. It would be great to see any of your walking photos, please send them in!

Tips on Eating Well this Winter

Cooking well for one

- Enjoy left overs. Cook for 2 and have the rest the next day
- Plan, plan, plan! Make a meal plan, make a list and stick to it.
- Utilise you freezer. Freeze leftovers and ingredients.
- Always have a supply of frozen soup and bread for the nights you don't feel like cooking
- Freeze certain treats such as cookies so they last longer
- Learn new recipes but just cut them in half
- Share with a friend or neighbour—take it in turns

Single.
Taken.
Hungry.

Slow cooker recipe to keep you warm this winter— Vegetarian Chilli. Serves 6 (plenty for the freezer). Prep time 10 min. Cooking time 4 hours.

Ingredients

1 onion.	1 tbsp chilli powder
2 cloves of garlic	1 tsp paprika
1 can of chopped tomatoes	1 tsp ground cumin
Tomato paste	1/2 tsp onion powder
1 can of black beans	1/4 tsp garlic powder
1 can of kidney beans	1/4 tsp pepper
1 cup of uncooked brown lentils	1/2 tsp salt
	4 cups of vegetable stock



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Dice the onion and mince the garlic. Add the onion and garlic to the slow cooker along with all the other ingredients and stir to combine.
2. Place a lid on the slow cooker and cook on high for four hours (or low for 8 hours). After cooking, the lentils should be tender. Taste the chill and add salt to taste, if needed (this will depend on the salt content of your stock).
3. Serve the chilli hot, with your favourite toppings.



Cold Water Therapy

With so many people getting into outdoor swimming, we ask what's all the fuss about?

What is cold water therapy?

Cold water therapy is the practice of using cold water to treat health conditions or stimulate health benefits. Some people find that having just a short blast of a cold shower has great benefits, whilst others only have cold showers, some swim outdoors and some even immerse themselves in an ice bath. Wild swimming has become an increasingly popular way of gaining the benefits of embracing cold water.



7 REASONS TO TAKE COLD SHOWERS...

1. It's better than caffeine.
2. Boosts feel-good hormones.
3. Strengthens immune system.
4. Improves lymphatic system.
5. Stimulates Metabolism
6. Improves recovery.
7. Boosts brainpower!

#GETCHILLY

Morag's Experience

Ever since I was a child I have loved the water. When I was 4, I jumped in to the deep end of the swimming pool and sank straight to the bottom. My Dad jumped in to pull me out and I came up to the surface laughing my head off.

I grew up swimming in the sea and have always felt very passionate about open water. I love and respect nature and rely on my instinct to know when it is OK to get in the water and when to get out. For me, it's not just about knowing whether a place is safe to swim or not. If it feels wrong, I won't go in but when it feels right, I feel so grateful to be allowed to enjoy it - as if nature herself is letting me share in her beauty and wonder for a short time. It is exhilarating, exciting, and joyous.

Before developing M.E. and fibromyalgia 10 years ago, I swam regularly but between ill health and child-care I had not managed to swim often at all. On New Year's Day last year whilst out walking with a friend, I got the urge to get in the water. It felt incredible and I vowed to make it more regular again. This has involved planning and swimming with others* which has been a steep learning curve for me but has ultimately led to new and renewed friendships (bonding over our shared passion), lots of fun and laughter (including one of our party forgetting to bring shoes to change in to and flopping back to the car in a pair of flippers), and experiences that I may not have had the courage to attempt on my own (stunning sunset swims returning in the dark). Swimming outdoors not only relieves my pain, but also makes me feel so free, so alive: it makes my heart soar, it cleanses the mind and uplifts me, and I am truly grateful each day to have this in my life.

* You shouldn't swim alone outdoors. But if you do, at least let someone know where and when you plan to go and when you get back safe and sound.

Wild Swimming...



Safety tips for wild swimming

- **Never swim alone**
- **Know your limits**
- **Beware of 'cold shock' and enter gradually**
- **Have hot drinks and warm clothes ready for after**
- **Be visible! Bright floats and hats are great!**

Donna shares her experience...

Wild swimming, or just 'swimming' as my dad says, is any swimming that takes place in open water. It might be an open water pool, a loch, the sea or a river. The water, no matter the outside weather, is always cold, sometimes very, very, cold, and that is where many of the benefits come in.

Cold water therapy, which can include wild swimming, ice baths or a freezing cold shower, unsurprisingly, all involve exposure to cold water. Studies have shown many benefits – the 'shock' releases adrenaline and dopamine, which results in a post-swim high that can last for many hours. I've certainly found that an early morning swim sets me up for the entire day. It has been shown to reduce inflammation, improve metabolism, help regulate body temperature and reduce the symptoms of the menopause, CFS and even Alzheimer's. The reduction in inflammation, and maybe the numbing effect of the cold, also reduces pain.

The benefits aren't only physical, however. I can honestly say I have never met a friendlier bunch of people. The wild swimming community is inclusive and welcoming. It has been a lesson in body positivity with everyone happily sporting costumes and wetsuits with little thought to vanity. What a relief. I had been for a couple of very short dips before, but going along to a newbie swim was the turning point for me. I found a wonderful group of fellow mermaids and we've shared morning, daytime and sunset swims. We've celebrated wins and commiserated losses. We've encouraged each other into the water and supported each other to try something further. My mental health, which had really dipped during COVID, has had a real boost.

It is important to be prepared, so that you can enjoy your swim safely. You don't need a lot of equipment to get started – a swimming costume is an important start, but I would also really recommend boots and gloves. Don't stay in too long... a good guide I've found is to come out when your thumb joint aches. Start slowly and gradually build up your time. Go in a group – check out whether there are any wild swimming groups nearby – you will have company for your swim, and they usually have a good idea of the safest places and tide times. It is totally ok just to bob about... you'll still get the benefit of the cold water, but you might find you get chilly a bit more quickly. Take some hot juice or a flask of tea or coffee and easy to change into cosy, loose clothes for the journey home – wait until you're sure you like it before you invest in dry robes and even wetsuits.

Have fun fellow mermaids and welcome to the watery gang.

My Wellbeing, My Life



Graeme Boath

Graeme, a local Wildlife Photographer, has shared with us some of his favourite moments that he captured from the roadside this summer. You never know who you might bump into driving about the Highlands after all...

Highland Cow
Glengarry
Highland



Red Deer Stag
Glengarry
Highlands

[#scotlandfromtheroadside](#)



Old man of Storr

Golden Eagle

Isle of Skye

Isle of Mull

Red Grouse

Cairngorm
National Park



Facebook.com/GraemeBoathPhotography



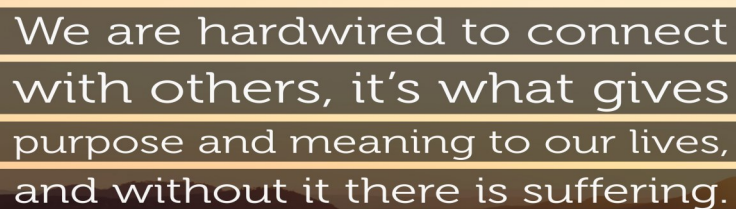
@graeme_boath_photography

My Wellbeing, My Life

The Power of Human Connection

“Having a strong social connection leads to a 50% increased chance of longevity. Social connection strengthens our immune system, helps us recover from disease faster, and may even lengthen our life. People who feel more connected to others have lower rates of anxiety and depression. Moreover, studies show they also have higher self-esteem, are more empathic to others, more trusting and cooperative and, as a consequence, others are more open to trusting and cooperating with them. Social connectedness therefore generates a positive feedback loop of social, emotional and physical well-being.”

www.psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/feeling-it/201208/thrive-connect



We are hardwired to connect
with others, it's what gives
purpose and meaning to our lives,
and without it there is suffering.

Brené Brown

How can we get more human connection during Covid times?

1. Join a LGOWIT digital meeting! We'd love to see you. We can help you join if you need a bit of support...just get in touch!
2. Video call friends and family. It's not quite the same we know, but the likes of Facetime, WhatsApp and Skype make catching up with friends and family (near and far) much easier. What is more, organisations such as AbilityNet can provide free technology support!
3. If all this technology isn't for you, how about writing a good old fashioned letter? Can you remember the last time a hand written letter arrived at your door?
4. Volunteer! You don't need to leave your house to help others. Could you be a listening ear to someone? Many befriending organisations have moved to digital and telephone meetings. If you are interested, email Jane on

lgowitJane@highlandtsi.org.uk or call 07834753766

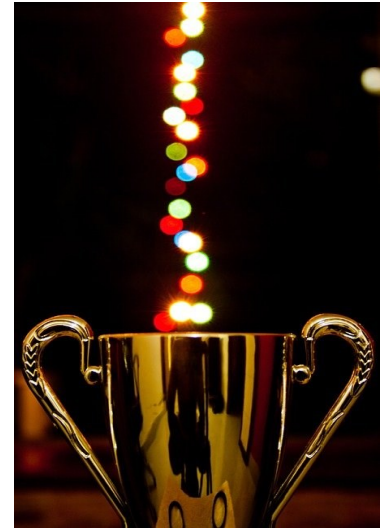
My Wellbeing, My Life

HTSI Awards Nominations Now Open!

HTSI are looking forward to showcasing the very best work of the Third Sector in Highland again. Details of the award ceremony (hopefully an in-person event held in the new year of 2022) will be circulated in early November. Nominations can be made at

www.highlandtsi.org.uk/awards

The deadline for nominations is
18th October 2021 at 5pm



LGOWIT Self Management Excellence Award 2021

An award celebrating a person or organisation in Highland who embraces Self Management in their own lives or services.

Criteria:

- For a group or an individual
- The nomination must explain how the nominee has embraced the concept of self-management.
- If the award is for an individual then you should be able to explain how they have both benefited from the practice of self-management but also how they have championed the approach to others.
- If the award is for an organisation then you should be able to explain how they have embraced and championed the practice of self-management within the culture of their organisation. This should be in relation to how it has benefited those within the organisation who have a long term condition.

**If you cannot go online to nominate, please email
lgowitadmin@highlandtsi.org.uk or call your community networker.**

My Wellbeing, My Life

Get involved and have your say...



Research that asks for real experiences, like ours, helps to provide vital knowledge and understanding of long-term conditions and the effectiveness of treatments. It can highlight what helps and what doesn't, influencing the future of how services are run. Taking part in research allows us to have our say.

LGOWIT are often asked to take part in research, and we feel that it is important that we are all given the opportunity to share our lived experiences, our opinions, and shape our future services. We welcome the opportunity to be involved.

The Real Backstory

We are looking for people to take part in our research

If you would like to take part, or wish to find out more, please contact a member of the research team for an informal discussion about what is involved:

Rebecca Hunter (Principal Investigator) -
rebecca.hunter@uhi.ac.uk



Twitter [@RealBackstory](https://twitter.com/RealBackstory) Please add us on twitter, or private message us for further information.

Aim

Our aim is to see whether digital technology could help people self-manage their chronic low back pain.

What will it involve?

You will be asked to participate in a 45min telephone call with the principal investigator to discuss whether you think a digital self-management programme would or would not work based on your own experience living with chronic low back pain.

Why get involved?

You know what its like to live with chronic low back pain. So you would know what would make a digital self-management programme work or not work. As a result your views are really important this research.

Are you eligible?

- Have you been diagnosed with mechanical, non-specific low back pain* which has lasted longer than 3 months?
- Are you over 18 years old and live in Scotland

* If you have been diagnosed with a specific spinal condition e.g. spinal stenosis, disc herniation, or spinal tumour then you MIGHT not be eligible to take part. Please contact the principal investigator to discuss.

My Wellbeing, My Life