

Merkinch Community Centre Newsletter



We saved our centre!

Its now history but everyone keeps talking about it and breathing a sigh of relief that our wonderful centre has been saved.

The Highland Council decided that they needed a bigger family centre (which serves the Inverness City) and thought it would be a good idea to 'knock down' the community centre and family centre. They would replace it with a large leisure hub including games hall, library, commercial café and lots of offices.....and some community rooms would be there too. Highland Council went through a first stage bid *without consultation with our community*.

Listening is a KEY part of our work. We ask and listen to what people want, then we provide it. The Council didn't ask or listen until after the Community Council meeting, the Inverness Courier and from there a huge public response resulted against these proposals. There were 800 letters written to the Highland Council, numerous emails and phone calls to Officers, MPs, MSPs and Councillors. STV ran the public protest piece on prime time TV which was televised twice. There were *twenty press articles* about the proposals and local businessman Martin Pieraccini gave £1,000 towards a 'fighting fund'.

PEOPLE POWER WON THE DAY. When we called a 'Users Meeting' - the theatre was packed out with 200 people all wanting to give their views. It was amazing to see the strong allegiance and high value which people placed on the Merkinch Community Centre. The Highland Council withdrew their proposal.

Thanks to everyone who supported in such a variety of ways to SAVE OUR WONDERFUL COMMUNITY CENTRE. WE WON THE DAY!

2016

Providing services
for all ages and
stages of people

- > Young Parents with babies and toddlers
- > Children and Teens
- > Adult Learning
- > Older People
- > People with Learning Disabilities
- > Meeting Place for community groups
- > Conference Centre
- > Mini Bus hire
- > Functions

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What’s next after the public response?



Pictured above is the packed out meeting which was held on 23rd November where we invited all our centre users to come along and give their views. We have 500+ people who use the centre on a weekly basis and had no idea what people thought of the Highland Council’s proposals. *This was not a public meeting, only for those who use the centre as they had not been consulted. We fully expected that the Highland Council would have gone out to a wide consultation about the proposal, but this did not happen.* Feelings ran high that night and it became very clear that people from all walks of life who used the centre - wanted the building saved.

After the campaign was won, the Highland Council Director of Care and Learning, Bill Alexander called a meeting of various group representatives who work in the Merkinch area to discuss the way ahead. Everyone around the table was very much in favour of additional facilities in the area, but had to be appropriate and well thought out in order to augment the provision in the Merkinch area. Each group was very supportive of one another and various ideas were presented at the table for consideration.

The group will meet again in the future to discuss how these suggestions can be progressed forward.

What people say to us

- It’s my lifeline!!
- Very warm and welcoming
- Great service and hospitality

STATISTICS

- 40,000+ visits per year
- 30 community groups
- 120 customers who hire our rooms

Volunteering in the Community Centre

The community centre achieves a high output of activity with a very small staff team. However, all of this activity would not be possible without a large team of volunteers helping with various tasks.

- ♦ Driving the minibus
- ♦ Escort on minibus
- ♦ Helping at the lunch club with the elderly
- ♦ Stewarding at large events
- ♦ Sound and light technicians
- ♦ Supporting people with learning disabilities
- ♦ Hospitality in the kitchen doing catering
- ♦ Cleaning and helping with maintenance
- ♦ Delivering mailings



Merkinch Community Centre Mini Bus which is used by 40 community groups in Inverness and is out on the road most days or the week throughout the year.
YOU CAN HIRE IT !!

Volunteering Benefits



Thanks to Voluntary Action for funding our Volunteering Project which has enabled us to provide various training events and also a celebration dinner to thank everyone for all their support.

Pictured left is our most recent dinner event where our volunteers received a certificate for all their time given to the various activities.



Pictured right is the volunteers attending training on our new defibrillator. Thanks to Lucky2bhere for the training.



Above is Vivienne Mackay and Carlie Borthwick who have set up 'SERENITY' which is a weekly drop in session for women with BPD. They are proudly displaying their certificates for attending training.



Mosaic Project

This was a really enjoyable activity for old and young. Artist Jan Kilpatrick delivered the project and we have the pieces proudly displayed in the Skinner Room.

It was an intergeneration project and the children from the Merkinch Primary and teenagers from the Inverness High Schools participated in the activity.



Karate group performing at one of our community concerts. All the other children from Highland Dancing and Step n Style watching their impressive performance.

Our Children's POP Choir with lots of our local children from the Merkinch Community.

Pictured here singing in our Christmas Soiree



McCreadie



You can hire it

Our theatre facility has been a wonderful addition to all we provide in the Centre. The facilities were installed in June 2007 and have been used on a weekly basis since then.

We use the equipment a few times per week for our Centre groups and also host our own home grown shows.

Many other Community groups and Organisations hire it for a wide range of Training, Conference, Ceilidhs, Award Ceremonies, Fashion Shows and Celebrations throughout the year.

The space is fully equipped and very flexible - can be set up to your requirements.

*
We had
ELEVEN
community
shows in
the month
of
December!

The
theatre
was
packed out
several
times




Top - Guitar Group
Left - Step n style
Below - Highland Dancers





Above - Tap Dancers



Right - Drama Group

Adult Learning

UR CIRCLE meets on Thursday morning and people either bring their own gadgets or use our centre technology.

It is a warm informal setting where people learn how to work tablets and laptops etc.

As people learn all the tips, they share their new knowledge with each other ☺



GOLDEN GADGETS has been running for over four years in partnership with the Inverness High School.

The young people provide a support session each Wednesday afternoon to adults who bring along their gadgets to get support and advice.

It's a great intergenerational project!!

Training Courses delivered to Volunteers

- ◆ Introduction to Learning Disability
- ◆ Protection of Vulnerable Adults
- ◆ Food Hygiene
- ◆ Emergency First Aid
- ◆ Defibrillator Training
- ◆ Mental Health First Aid

Volunteer Comment
"I really enjoyed the training and feel valued by the Community Centre"



Hobbies (above) and Knitters (right) enjoy meeting together and sharing their own knowledge with each other.

It's a good way to learn!



Monday

- 10-12 Art Society - membership group
- 10-12 Knitting for Charity
- 10.30-1.30 Serenity for women with BPD
- 11-12 Tap Dancing
- 12-1pm Tai Chi
- 12.30-2pm Drama Group
- 4-5pm Guitar for children
- 3-5.30 pm After School Club
- 6-8pm Youth Clubs



Merkinch Community Centre Pipe Band

Tuesday

- 10-2pm Citizens Advice Bureau
- 10.30-12 Rainbow Singers for adults with LD
- 12.45-1.45 Superart for adults with LD
- 3.30-5pm Step n Style dance class - children
- 3-5.30 After School Club
- 7-9pm Slimming World
- 7-9pm Singing for Pleasure



Mums and Tots

Wednesday

- 10-12 Art Society - membership group
- 12-2pm Lunch Club
- 3-5.30 After School Club
- 3-4pm Golden Gadgets - High School pupils helping people with technology
- 5-7pm Karate
- 7.30-9.30 Pipe Band

Thursday

- 10.30-1230 Hobbies Group
- 10-3pm UR CIRCLE - laptops & tablets
- 3-5.30 After School Club
- 4-7pm Highland Dancing
- 5.30-6.30 Pop Choir
- 7-9pm FALCON Club for adults with LD



Our Scottish Variety Show

Friday

- 10-12 Archery
- 3-5.30 After School Club

Saturday Only opened by special arrangement

Sunday 10.30-1.30 Inverness Christian Fellowship

Rooms of varying sizes area available for hire

Community Centre Staff

The Staff of the Centre are all employed or contracted in different ways. Highlife Highland provide the basic foundation of staff in the Centre which is overseen by Wendy Jack, who co-ordinates three Community Centres in the City.

Iain MacLennan - Caretaker
Anna Kula - Part time Steward
Karen Halkett - Clerical Receptionist
Janet - Cleaner, Highland Contract Services

The Directors of the Charity also contract with Staff to provide various services:

Elsie Normington
 Development Officer

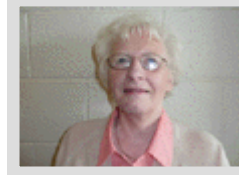
Karen Halkett
 Lunch Club Co-ordinator
 Superart Tutor

Donna Hall
 FALCON Leader
 Freelance Tutors
 for various classes



Directors of the Charity

The Charity has three Directors who are responsible for the governance of charity and day to day running of the business



Anne McCreddie
 Director



Dell McClurg
 Director



Irene Pearson
 Director

Merkinch Community Centre

The Merkinch Community Centre opened its doors 39 years ago and has been providing a very valuable service to the community over these decades. Society changes and evolves down through the years but the principle has remained the same; we give a warm welcome to all people from all backgrounds and seek to provide the services and resources which are asked for by the people.

The centre has seen many changes in the physical environment and also in the groups and classes, however we are proud to say that over 500 people attend the centre on a weekly basis to connect with others.

Merkinch Community Centre is the 'place to be'



Merkinch Community Centre

Coronation Park

Inverness

IV3 8AD

Tel: 01463 239563

Where
 people
 matter!



Scottish Charity SC 000706
 Company Limited by Guarantee 103787
www.merkinchcommunitycentre.org.uk