



# Youth Work in the Thurso area

October 2017 – March 2018

## Celebrating Achievement and Valuing Young Voices



*Our Forsinard group has spent nine months out at the RSPB site 'The Flow Country' repairing peat bogs and helping to improve the newly built Field Centre. We have gained qualifications with John Muir & a saltire award for volunteering. We are returning this summer to continue working in this beautiful and unique part of the highlands.*



2018 has been designated the Year of Young People during which the ideas and talents of children and young people aged 8 to 26 will continue to be promoted and celebrated.

There are six themes, all of which will feature in some shape or form. Young Highlanders, with their supporting adults and partners, have agreed to focus on two of these namely

**Equality & Discrimination** and **Participation**

### Key facts and stats

The Thurso youth team worked with on average 122 individual youngsters each month, aged between 12 and 16 amounting to 852 meaningful contacts

In total there were over 3500 hours of engagement with young people, at 700 sessions.

A total of 4 Saltire Awards & 4 John Muir Awards were gained during this period of time.

Thurso Youth Work covers the Thurso High School catchment, which stretches from Castletown to Reay.

# Some of what's been happening and what's planned

## Projects

### FORSINARD FLOWS TO THE FUTURE & JOHN MUIR

Young People from both sides of the County have met each month, and travelled by train to Forsinard to learn all about the work that the RSPB do and to get involved with their Flows to the Future project.

The aim of the project is to repair peat bogs that have been severely damaged due to the planting of non-native trees in the 1980s. Peatlands store carbon – peat is 50-60% carbon (dry weight) – and if it is in good condition they continue to capture more. Peat soils in Scotland alone contain almost 25 times as much carbon as all other plant life in the whole of the U.K however; if the peat bogs are damaged or degraded they begin to emit carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses.

Our Caithness Young People have braved the elements and ventured up to an area called Altnabreac and removed nearly 1000 small trees that have re-rooted themselves after the forest was felled.

Other good work has been done back at the centre such as, drainage channels have been dug out to make sure the newly erected building does not flood during the winter months. Benches have been made for visitors and a fire pit has been built, all by our Young People.

Portfolios have been completed and all our Young People received their John Muir Awards as well as a Saltire Award for volunteering.

### SAFE HIGHLANDER 2017

19 Primary Schools attended last year's event at the Assembly Rooms in Wick. High Life Highland has recently taken over this very important event to make young children (Primary 7 pupils) understand through workshops the danger of, internet safety, road safety, electrical safety and many more issues were covered.

## Getting On-achievements through learning

Young people from Thurso will be working towards their next stage of the John Muir Award & further accreditation with Saltire volunteering achievements.

We also have plans to give work experience to young people that are struggling within their school settings, we aim to make individuals stay positive and realise their own potential.

ASDAN awards have been set up to make sure that the new Youth Independence Group receives accreditation for their commitment to the programme.

John Muir Awards will also be awarded to the Young people that work with Youth Workers in partnership with the Countryside Rangers within our area.

## Getting Heard-confident voices, influencing decisions

Representatives from the local Community Planning Partnership will be invited to a local Youth Parliament Mini-Conference in November, to discuss local issues that our Youth Forum and Youth Parliament members from Thurso and Wick see as very important priorities.

## Getting Out There-youth work; it's educational

We are in close contact with the Highland Councils Tenant Participation Officer who is offering 100% support in developing a training programme to help Young People enter into their own Council Tenancy agreement. As well as a Youth Independence Course to help Young people become independent adults.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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