

OUTSIDE THE BOX SOUTH EAST NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Summer 2021 edition of the South East team's newsletter.

LINKS EYEMOUTH UPDATE

Hello everyone. LINKS Eyemouth has had a very busy month. First off we had requested for some new volunteers as we are becoming increasingly busy with more and more families joining and taking part in the recipe bags. One of our new volunteers 'Leevi' started last week and got right in there with one of our biggest requested bags so far. She is an amazing young lady from Eyemouth and a credit to the team.

Our 26th recipe bag was 'Carbonara' a recipe that has been asked for and the food that came in through Fareshare made this possible with all ingredients needed minus the Parmesan. I had to cap the bags as numbers are becoming so high we cannot manage. A whopping 62 families snapped the bag up within half an hour! The recipe was simple yet delicious and enjoyed by 156 children, 127 adults. We had 5 new families take part too which is amazing.

I have also had a huge surprise this month. I was awarded "The Community Champions Award" from The Rotary Club of Eyemouth & District". To say I was shocked was an understatement. Very honoured to be put forward and chosen to win such an amazing award. I was also interviewed for ITV Border Life through my volunteering with ReTweed. I gave the reporter a LINKS recipe book...

The summer looks to be very busy and I can't wait to see what we get up to next.

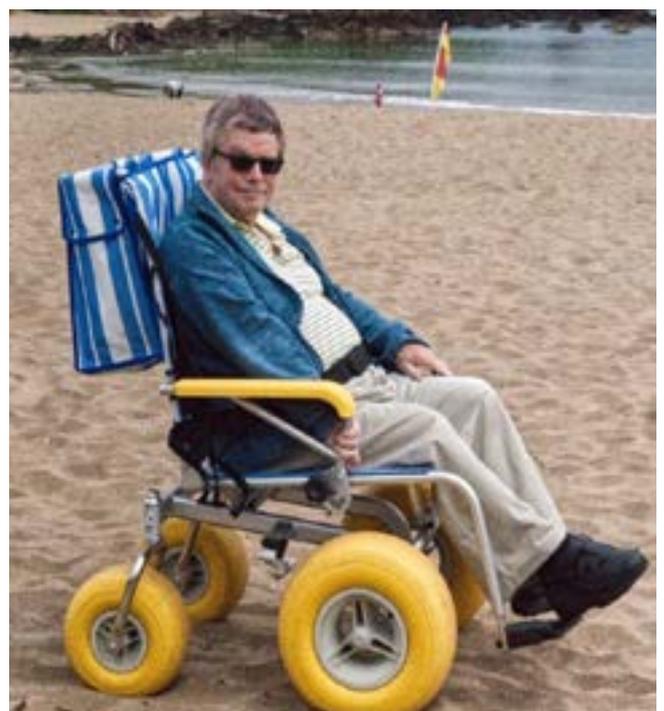
Charlene

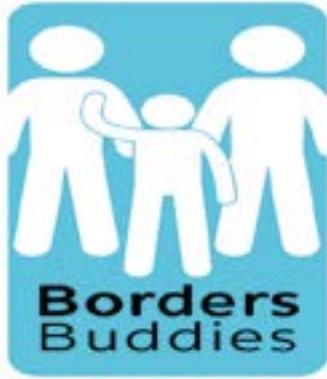


LIFE CHANGES TRUST CREATING BETTER LIVES

Outside the Box were delighted to be chosen to be overall learning coordinator for the Borders for the Life Changes Trust-funded projects, Creating Better Lives. These projects have all been developed to support people living with dementia, and their families, to live as well as possible. The 10 projects are diverse and varied, covering music, eco-therapy, counselling and much more. Our role is to support the projects to share their successes and challenges with one another and more widely (across different regions too). This should ensure each project gets the most from their activities and so in turn, people living with dementia will have the best possible experience too.

You can read more about the Creating Better Lives programme here: <https://tinyurl.com/pe3ryx48>





Tweeddale news – Borders Buddies

We are delighted that we were successful with our application to the Scottish Borders Council Community Fund (Tweeddale) which is enabling us to take forward our Borders Buddies project. This project is all about supporting people to get back to doing the things they enjoyed pre-pandemic. Following our tried and tested 'buddies' model, we will work with people to find out what they want to do - this could be building someone's confidence to go on a bus to get their shopping, or go along to a club. It could be supporting a whole group or club to overcome obstacles and challenges, dealing with risk assessments and other practicalities to enable them to meet up again. For some, this may mean gathering in the outdoors at first, rather than indoors...we have a whole set of outdoor equipment we can lend to groups to support you with this. For further info please get in touch with ruth.n@otbds.org



DIGITAL BUDDIES

Our Digital Buddies project continues to grow not only in the Borders but in East Lothian too where we are working on a pilot intergenerational project in partnership with Dunbar Grammar School and the Celebrating Communities project based at Dementia Friendly East Lothian. 10 pupils aged between 13 and 16 are the Digital Buddies supporting 10 older people to get digitally connected. We are only a few weeks in but already confidence is growing. Siri has been a big hit!

In Borders thanks to a successful application to Connecting Scotland for further devices and successful grant applications and donations including one from the Peeblesshire Charitable Trust, we are now supporting 29 people to become digitally connected with help from their buddies.

"My buddy got me set up on zoom so I could attend prayers, I was really scared about having my camera on but he showed me how to turn it off - It was the best"

With help from Volunteer Centre Borders we have been able to recruit more volunteers to become buddies but we are always looking for more! You don't need to be an IT whizz, we are looking for people who are over 16, have a little free time and know their way around a iPad/tablet.

Friendships have blossomed between the buddies. Says M: *'She's just like another granddaughter!'* and D said *"I just love it, I really look forward to seeing my buddy, we spend more time chatting than on the iPad - it brightens up my day!"*

If you or someone you know would like to become digitally connected, if you are interested in becoming a buddy or you would like more information contact Christine@otbds.org



What Wheely Matters to you?

Guest spot from a project we have been involved with

Rural transport has been an issue raised in almost every consultation and survey carried out in the Scottish Borders for many years.

Whether it is the difficulties faced by our aging population, reduction in bus routes, expense of car ownership or lack of safe cycling, transport issues can significantly impact on areas of life that many of us take for granted.

What Wheely Matters (WWM) is a project that wants to hear from people in rural communities about what YOU feel are the biggest transport issues and help create solutions that work for you and your community. We are already working with communities across the region, Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Third Sector Interface, and Community Transport to help develop local transport solutions.

But we always want to hear from you.

If you would like to find out what is already happening in your community, take part in some interesting ideas or even get new conversations and ideas happening, then get in touch with What Wheely Matters.

You can email: WWM@bavs.org.uk or fill out our survey at: <https://tinyurl.com/WhatWheelyMattersToYou>



NEWTOWN ST BOSWELLS NEWS

In April we had knitted Easter chicks and baskets, where many of the older residents did the knitting and we sold them to raise money for Newtown In Bloom. We made a good amount of money for them to go towards plants to brighten up the village for the year.

We also held a quiz with prizes for Easter, won by some local children.

The food share has grown arms and legs, with more residents using the phone box and food share table when it's out with fresh produce donated by SBSEC, helping many families in Newtown, Eildon and Bowden on a daily basis. Donations flood in as well which is an amazing help.

I hope to begin our clothing share in the middle of July, lots of different ages in hand already including brand new clothes from SBSEC and Fareshare. This will also include housewares, bric a brac, toys etc for free to use by anyone. I have been busy collecting donations from locals and some further afield who have heard of the phone box initiative.

Having the support of Outside the Box has been an amazing help in doing all the wee things I've been wanting to do in the community, having a team to bounce ideas off is great.

We have more planned for the summer after we take a break to recharge our batteries!

Fiona



SETTING UP BUGGY WALKS

What is a buggy walk?

Quite simply, it's a semi-organised walk for mums (or others with babies) to bring their wee one along, meet other parents, have a bit of chat and share any hints and tips. Being a new parent can be challenging at the best of times, and many people feel alone and exhausted! The good news is, you're not alone - and while many groups can't meet indoors at the moment, buggy walking is safe and free and can start from your doorstep. Buggy walking also gives you a chance to get outdoors, get some exercise and fresh air, and discover your local area. Assuming you stick to the latest guidelines, there is virtually no Covid risk attached.

How do I find a buggy walk?

The best thing is to keep an eye on local social media pages, perhaps the local mums and babies page, you could post a question here, or ask around. If there isn't one already in the area, why not start one yourself? You could just put out a really simple invitation to others, asking if they'd like to meet for a walk with buggies. Once you think you have a few takers, you could always formalise it, set up a Facebook group and arrange regular days and times to meet up.

Outside the Box have come up with a quick tips guide to help. Read our buggy walks guide here: <https://tinyurl.com/5nv7w2jn> and watch our animation here: <https://tinyurl.com/4d5nbscm>

What do I need to think about?

If you are joining an organised group, just pack yourself, your baby and buggy, waterproofs, usual changing and feeding stuff, and maybe a snack for yourself. If you are organising a walk, you will need to think about where and when, think of a suitable meeting place, sharing phone numbers group and maybe having an emergency phone number.

If the weather is looking dodgy, make sure you have a way to let people know of last-minute change of plans or cancellation. Plan for around an hour's walk, somewhere like a park with wide paths and no traffic. Be welcoming and friendly, some people might be new to the area or lacking confidence. Be alert for anyone who may be struggling to cope or with low mood, if possible try to ask them quietly if they have someone to speak to. Be prepared to go at the pace of the slowest - or allow stragglers to lag behind if they have some company!

Above all, enjoy it!

You can start off small, if the meetups work out you may want to create a more formal organised group with a designated walk leader. Paths for All have a great Buggy Walks resource page, and guides for finding accessible, stair-free routes.

Check out the Scottish Buggy Club on Facebook if you're looking for a local group.

Getting Outdoors: Buggy Walks

As we emerge from Lockdown being able to get outdoors and meet other people is great for our wellbeing - particularly for mums and babies who haven't been able to access groups in the same ways as before. Here are some tips on joining or starting a Buggy walk in your local area.

Why a Buggy Walk?

- Great way to meet other mums, chat and socialise.
- Share tips with other mums.
- Leaving the house, fresh air and exercise is good for lifting your mood.
- They are free.
- Meeting outdoors has limited COVID 19 risk.
- Get to know your local area better.
- Get fitter.

Setting up a Buggy Walk

- Start a conversation, perhaps the local mummy and baby Facebook page. Ask the question: 'does anyone from this community fancy meeting for a buggy walk?'
- Plan a route, it does not have to be anything fancy. Somewhere with limited roads and a terrain suitable for most buggies/proms. Round the local park is usually a good place to start. Start small and build up over time.
- Agree a meeting point.
- Remember everyone will need to walk at their own pace, so do not rush on ahead, be mindful of the slowest walker.

Checklist

- Plan the route: where are you going, when and for how long.
- Be prepared for inclement weather, rain cover, jacket, sun cream, layers of clothes.
- Pack your usual changing bag, and bottle if using. Think about having a big jacket you can breastfeed under.
- Take a snack and water for yourself, or if you have a younger child going along too.
- Have a mobile phone available in the event of an emergency.
- Be welcoming, introduce new members to each other.
- Share mobile numbers or create a Facebook page to plan next week's walk.

For a video animation and Blog about Buggy walks, see here: www.outside.org/buggy-walks

Get in touch

We work with many partners in the Scottish Borders, Midlothian, East Lothian and beyond...and are always looking at ways of supporting others. Please get in touch with Ruth or Christine if you have an idea for filling a gap to help make communities more connected and resilient.

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