

Keeping Well and Enjoying Ourselves

Community Resources
in Scotland



Thank you to everyone for their help putting together this booklet.

Lots of examples here came from people who are part of Angus McFlourish. This is a project that aims to reduce isolation and loneliness for people in Angus who have mental health problems. It is one of the projects supported by the Scottish Government's Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund.

People at Grampian Opportunities, Faith in Community Dundee and Orkney Women's Aid also helped by giving their suggestions too.

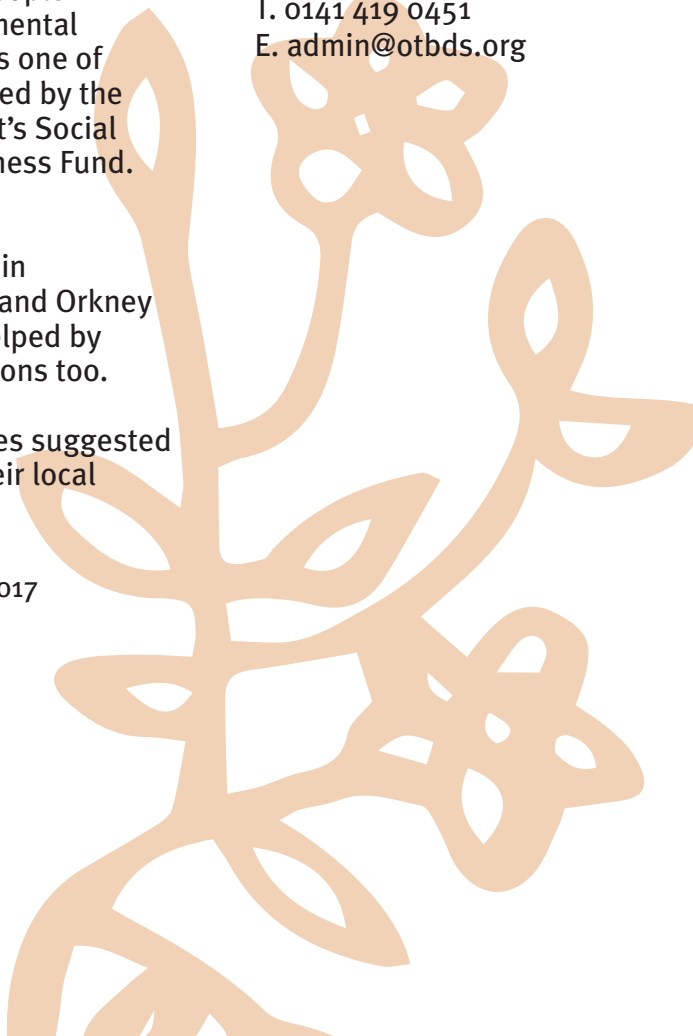
People in other places suggested good activities in their local areas.

First published April 2017

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About this booklet

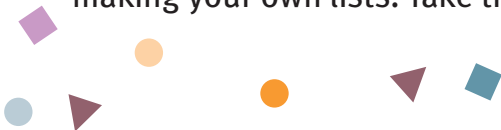
At Outside the Box we know that people who have mental health problems can face a lot of different issues. From speaking with people who have mental health problems, we know that it can be a challenge to find things to do so you don't feel lonely or isolated.

We have brought together ideas on

- Ways to meet more people.
- Getting involved in your community.
- Getting out and about, especially as the weather gets nicer.
- Finding good things to do that do not cost much.
- Activities that help you get through periods when symptoms are a problem or you are not feeling so great.

We know that, for lots of different reasons, not everyone has lots of money to spend on things to do. So we have tried to make these ideas as inexpensive as possible.

Some of the ideas in this booklet involve looking things up on the internet. If you don't have the internet, your local library will let you use their computers for free. We hope that the ideas here will give you ideas on what is available in many places and will get you started on making your own lists. Take the time to find out yourself

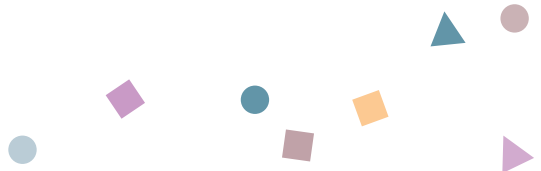


all the different things you could be doing where you live without spending a lot of money.

We know that what works for one person may not work for someone else. Some of the things we suggest might not be practical for you, and you will follow what you know keeps you well. We have tried to include a range of different things to do so if one doesn't work for you, you can try something else.

Our advice on getting started on anything

- Think of things you've enjoyed doing in the past. Try it again, relax and enjoy it.
- Get a pal to go with you. You'll enjoy it more when you've got company and you'll encourage each other.
- Get into a routine. Do it every Monday morning or whenever – just the same time every week.
- People begin to keep an eye out for each other and get to know each other. You often get to know people when you share an interest.



- Think about what makes you comfortable. Many people enjoy socialising in an active way, whereas some people enjoy an activity they can do alone. We have included a range of activities that would suit people who have different ways of enjoying themselves. Think about what is best for you.
- You can join a group that does something you are interested in. It's easier to get started if you don't have to do much planning and thinking at the beginning.
- If you know someone who already goes along to something that sounds interesting, go with them. Give it a try. One way to start is by asking your friends about the things they do to relax or keep busy.
- Some people find it easier to choose from a list of suggestions. You can check out your local Community Centre and see what they've got on.

“If you can't decide what interests you, think about the TV programmes you like. Are there any programmes like documentaries that interest you? You can go to the library and find out more about that subject, or join a club or class to learn more.”

“You might not always feel like leaving the house but when I get myself out I always feel much better for it and know it was the right decision to get some fresh air.”

“If you try something and don't like it, well at least you tried it. So well done for that. But don't stick with something you really don't enjoy. Try something else.”

Information and ideas

Libraries

Libraries are a great way to read lots of books and go online for free. You can also rent DVDs and CDs for a low cost.

If you have children, libraries can be great for finding activities for them too. For example, a lot of libraries in Scotland have different groups that meet once a week and offer different activities depending on the age of the children, from songs and stories for babies to interactive play for 5 year olds.

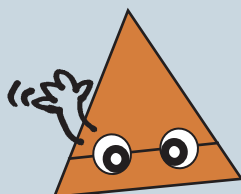
Most libraries are open Monday to Saturday and some bigger ones are open later in the evening. Smaller libraries aren't open as late though so it's best to check the opening times of the library nearest to you. If you are housebound, some places like West Dunbartonshire and Aberdeen offer a home library service. Rural areas such as

“It’s good. It gets me out of the house for a few hours each day. I check out the music and the DVDs.”

“There is loads on offer at the library. And it’s free.”

“You can check up on all the football clubs you support.”

“Once I got into computers I started to look on the internet for places that interest me. You can go on a virtual tour of a museum in Paris. It’s like being able to go anywhere in the world for free.”



Scottish Borders also have mobile libraries that come out for everyone.

While you're in the library you can also take a look at the noticeboards to see what else is on offer in your community. Libraries have computers where you can access the internet for free, which might be helpful for a few of the ideas in this booklet if you don't have the internet at home.

Cultural activities

In most places there are art galleries or historical sites you can visit for free.

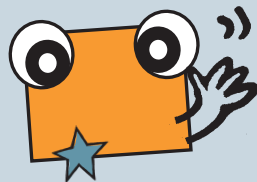
For example in Glasgow you could pack yourself a lunch and spend the day visiting any of these places without spending any money:

- The Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum
- The Riverside Museum
- The Gallery of Modern Art

“Arbroath library is superb for things to do. They always have a lot on.”

“I find it really relaxing to walk around galleries and look at the paintings.”

“Even in tiny towns, there is usually a small museum or some kind of tourist attraction that is either free or quite cheap. A lot of these places have good access for disabled people too.”



- The Botanic Gardens
- Glasgow Cathedral
- The People's Palace

Community activities

Look at your town's website. You'll see a list of activities in your community, many of which are free. You'll often be surprised at how many interesting activities are going on right now in your area.

Places like supermarkets often have noticeboards showing community activities happening in your area too. Whether it's exercise classes or a book club, there might be a group that you are interested in joining.

Why not get involved in some community sports? Take a look at Gumtree to see which sporty activities are happening in your community:

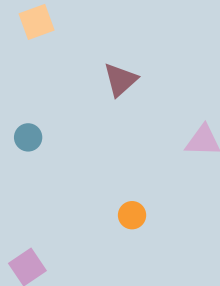
www.gumtree.com

"There are many free attractions which won't cost you a penny."

"Go to a sports centre. There are two in Arbroath so there's no excuse if you live here. You can also get discount cards with your benefits so it's not too expensive."

"You meet so many people through volunteering."

"Volunteering is great. There's a really good volunteering centre in Angus who arranged for my volunteering and I've been going for years now."



While you're on Gumtree, look in the community section and see if anything else looks interesting to you. From modelling for art classes to joining a band looking for an extra musician, Gumtree offers many different ways to spend your time doing interesting things for free.

Volunteering in your community is also a good way to support your community and try something new. For example, in North Berwickshire the Gardening for a Good Cause group meets on Tuesday afternoons from March to September. Members help to maintain the garden at Abbey Residential Home and enjoy the beautiful gardens while meeting some new people.

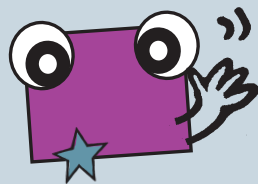
T. 01620 827240

E. amckenzie@eastlothian.gov.uk

“Join a book club, that's free.”

“Tea dances are really good for older people. You only pay a small amount to go, like £2.50.”

“Men's Sheds are really good and they have a lot of speakers.”



Thinking creatively

We mentioned joining a sports team but we know not everyone is able to do this, for different reasons. How about starting a free fantasy football league for you and your friends?

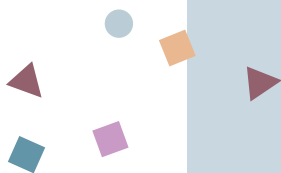
<https://fantasy.premierleague.com/>

Besides being a fun way to fill your time, learning to knit means you can make Christmas and birthday presents for nearly no cost. Websites like loveknitting.com have loads of free knitting patterns. You can get knitting needles and wool cheaply in many charity shops. Don't know how to knit? There are hundreds of YouTube tutorials to get you started.

Become a photographer. All you need is a camera phone and a bit of creativity and you can produce some beautiful images. Use the photos as gifts or share them on Facebook or Instagram to show your talents.

“Taking photos is a good way to get out and see things differently in your area.”

“Making art, drawing and painting are all good things to do and you can buy paper, pens or paints quite cheaply. There are also projects you can get involved in through art like Art Angel in Dundee which is an arts advocacy group that's run by people with mental health difficulties.”



Adult learning

There are lots of online courses you could enrol in to learn more about subjects that interest you for free.

Learn a foreign language. Free apps like Duolingo are a brilliant way to learn a new language at a pace that suits you. Or, if English is your second language and you'd like to improve it, you can often find free English courses such as those run by Oban Library.

For example, Edinburgh Council has loads of courses for you to choose from. For most of the classes, concessions can pay £22 per course so each of the ten lessons will only really cost you £2.20. There's yoga, digital photography, creative writing and much more, you're bound to find something that you'd like to learn more about.

“As my husband is Polish, I wanted to learn more of his native language and Duolingo was a really fun way to do this without spending any money.”

“Arbroath Academy teach things like cookery. My friend and I did evening classes and it was really good. We really enjoyed it.”

“The local college has lots of courses on. I don't think you pay for them all and some courses contribute to your Independent Learning Account.”



Theatre and cinema

Going to watch a film or a play can be a great way to treat yourself when it's rainy or cold. Keep an eye out for deals where tickets are much cheaper than usual. For example, over the summer holidays many cinemas offer tickets for just £2.50. You could also get involved with a theatre group near you as a way to try something different and meet new people.

Spending time with friends and family

Have a film party. Invite some friends over and ask them to bring their favourite DVD with them. Relax and have fun watching films together with some popcorn.

Try a new recipe. There is a huge amount of free recipes online and many chefs ensure that their dishes won't cost you much to make at all. Take a look at Chef Jack Monroe's website for cheap inspiration and invite a friend round for dinner:
www.cookingonabootstrap.com

“Going to the cinema as a group is really good.”

“Ask the folk at any groups you go to if they are interested in going to the cinema, Or, if only a few of you want to go, each bring a friend. Half the fun is talking about the film afterwards and seeing what you all thought about it.”

“I used to like it when we put on shows at school. I lost touch with that. Then I found this wee amateur drama group and I help out. It's great.”

“My friend came round for dinner and I didn't have much in. I looked online and found a simple recipe that I had all the ingredients in for. I was able to try out a new recipe and cook a tasty meal for my friend.”

Food and drink

Going to a new café or restaurant can be a fun way to get a new experience. For example you could go out and eat the food from a country you've never been to before.

You can also use food and drink as a way to help out. Syrian supper clubs raise money for refugees in Syria and are a great way to meet new people. Find out more at syriansupperclub.com.

There's no need to spend a lot of money to have a meal out and meet people in your neighbourhood. Projects like Community Canteen aim to break down barriers by providing inexpensive healthy meals so everyone can mix with their neighbours:

www.communityrenewal.org.uk/projects/communitycanteen

“Keep it simple. Ask friends to help and make a list if you get anxious about forgetting something. Remember that it is about being together, not being the greatest chef.”

“I used to be good at cooking. I've started making big pots of soup again. It's good. It takes a while to get it ready but it tastes great. It feels good when I know I've made that. And I'm looking after myself and my friends.”

“Coffee groups are really good. I used to help out at one.”

“Going to the café breaks the day up. When I'm there I pick up leaflets about things that are on, stuff I'd never thought about before. It's all going on and we can be a part of it.”

Outdoor activities

Getting fresh air and going for a walk is a great way to look after yourself and see more of where you live or somewhere new. Take advantage of Scotland's beautiful scenery and see what your area has to offer. For example, if you live in Aberdeen you could take a walk at Torry Battery to watch dolphins.

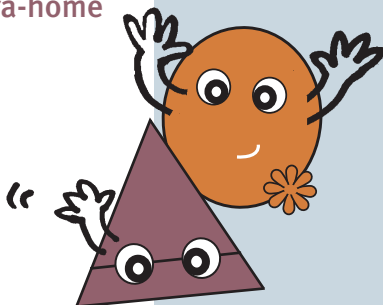
A lot of groups for people who have mental health problems have walking groups, such as Angus Voice who meet in Arbroath. Ask the local groups or your support worker about what is available if this sounds interesting to you.

Paths for All have contacts for walking groups across Scotland that go at a gentler pace:

www.pathsforall.org.uk/pfa-home

“Think about how you feel about places such as pubs. They can be good to get a coffee and use the toilets when you are out for a walk. But some people feel uncomfortable in them. You have to work out what is right for you.”

“Lots of cafés have free wifi. Buy one coffee and make it last. Or if you're waiting for a bus it's nice to go and buy yourself a coffee and use the wifi.”



We know that some people might prefer to have a walk as a way to be by themselves, or they feel more comfortable moving at their own pace. Websites like www.walkhighlands.co.uk provide great ideas for walks you can do in different parts of Scotland. You can also choose the level of difficulty that suits you.

For people who feel self-conscious going for a walk by themselves, you could get involved with something like Geocaching, www.geocaching.com, which is like an adult treasure hunt where you look for little boxes with various little gifts inside. It's free to join and a great way to get out into nature.

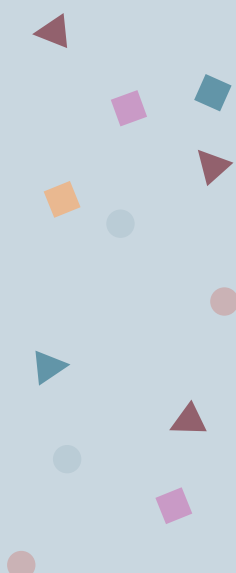
Studies have shown that being around animals is good for your mental health and can have a calming effect. The Cinnamon Trust matches up older or terminally ill people with people who could look after their pet.

“If I can get some fresh air each day I sleep better.”

“Walking is good and you might find that you enjoy it too.”

“Just go for a walk along the beach. Check the tides and wear your wellies if it's going to be wet.”

“You can go on history walks, find out about the history of the area. Clydebank is a great place. There is so much to learn.”



They are looking for volunteers all over Scotland. Why not volunteer as a dog walker to help out and get some exercise?

T. 01736 757 900

E. admin@cinnamontrust.org.uk

You might also be interested in joining the “Borrow my Doggie” scheme which costs about £9 a year to join and you can be matched with someone who is happy to let people have their dogs for a walk, an overnight stay and even a holiday whilst they’re away. For more information go to: www.borrowmydoggy.com

Check if a local animal rescue centre near you would welcome volunteers to help them walk dogs or look after animals.

“I started helping my friend in his garden, growing vegetables and keeping the place tidy. I’ve loved doing that.”

“Some walking groups go for coffee afterwards which is really nice. It’s good to have a chat we change where we’re going so you get to try out lots of different places.”

“Fishing is really cheap. If you live somewhere like Arbroath you can just go along by yourself or with a friend and you might even catch your tea.”

Feeling and looking good

Many people find that taking the time to present yourself nicely can really improve your mood. Although you could do this yourself at home, you can also find ways to treat yourself without spending a lot of money.

Most hairdressers are regularly looking for models to test out their abilities on. This way you can get your hair dyed or cut for free. You can also take a look at what discounted beauty treatments you can get at your local college at a much cheaper rate. For example, at Dundee College you can get a manicure for £2.50.

Take a look at what is available near you. For example, in Govan the organisation SEAL offers cheap beauty treatments and massages:

www.facebook.com/SEALGlasgow/

“When your hair is looking nice you feel better about yourself, have more confidence.”

Swimming pools and other sports facilities

There are loads of swimming and sports facilities all over Scotland. If you have a Young Scot/Kidz card or are 60 years old or over then many swimming pools let you swim for free. This means that if you have children or older family members you can spend some time with them having fun swimming without spending a lot of money.

Activities you can do by yourself

We know that not everyone has a group of friends who they can do activities with. Or maybe you prefer to sometimes spend time alone. Here are some activities that you could do by yourself. Some of them don't even need you to leave your home if you don't always feel up to it.

There are loads of free podcasts you can download and listen to while you're at home. You could also download these to your

“Most swimming pools offer lessons if you can't swim – or if it has been a long time and you need a refresher. So don't let that put you off.”

“Just come and splash about.”

“I started going swimming every morning. It gets me up and out, starts the day off with a purpose. Afterwards, I always feel good about myself.”

phone and take a walk while you listen to them. Try the BBC or iTunes for a big selection.

Creating a playlist on YouTube is a great way to make sure you have the right music for the right time. If you're feeling a bit down you can make a playlist of your favourite songs to help you feel better at any time.

Start a blog to write about the things you love. Having accounts on WordPress or Tumblr is free and is a great way to perfect your writing skills.

You can go to places on your own and still feel part of a group. For example, many of the people who go along to talks at local art galleries or come to walking groups will be on their own. People often get chatting and some people will go for a coffee at the end and welcome company.

“If you have a bus pass you can travel all over Scotland. Just pack yourself a lunch and off you go.”

“I’ve got a disabled rail pass so I can go all over Scotland with a third off. I’m going to Edinburgh next week for my nephew’s birthday.”

“The cinema is quite quiet during the day and sometimes you can get cheaper prices than too. At my local cinema a lot of the people who go during the day are on their own.”

Things to do across Scotland

We have put together some information on things you can do in different parts of Scotland to give you some ideas of the specific activities that you can do.

These are ideas to get you started – you will find lots more.



Lothian

Visit the birthplace of John Muir which has been turned into a visitor attraction for the whole family and admission is free:

T. 01368 865899

E. info@jmbt.org.uk

www.jmbt.org.uk

Edinburgh's Fringe Festival has many free shows you can enjoy over the summer. From plays and performance art to stand-up comedy, if you live in Edinburgh you can have fun watching lots of talented artists for free: www.edfringe.com

Moray

The Buckie and District Community Choir meet every Thursday evening from 7pm – 9pm. You only need to pay £2 and they welcome all ages and abilities:

www.facebook.com/bckcommchoir

Pluscarden Abbey is free to view for the public. Go along to get some peace and enjoy the beautiful surroundings:

T. 01343 890 258

www.pluscardenabbey.org

Always wanted to learn to cook but thought you couldn't afford classes? Let's Eat, along with the Moray Food Network, have loads of free cookery classes:

E. lets.eatforres@gmail.com

www.morayfoodnetwork.org.uk

Logie Estate has lots of different things to do throughout the year but you can always go along to enjoy a riverside walk at the Logie Gardens. Plus, with a fun children's playground this is a great place to visit for a free day out:

www.logie.co.uk

Highlands

The Highland Folk Museum is Britain's first open air museum and entry is free:

T. 01540 673 551

E. [highland.folk@](mailto:highland.folk@highlifehighland.com)

highlifehighland.com

Inverness Botanic Gardens are free to visit. Go take a walk in the Tropical House, which has its own waterfall, and the Cactus House where you can see hundreds of different types of cacti:

[Bught Lane, Inverness, Inverness-shire, IV3 5SS](#)

Stirling

It's not just the Edinburgh Fringe that has free shows! Every September The Shindig festival entertains with dancers, DJs, story tellers and poets:

www.stirlingfringe.com

If you like a festival but want something a little more unusual, Stirling's Festival of Architecture runs throughout summer and autumn. The festival has both free events and ticketed ones:

www.foa2016.com

Western Isles

An Lanntair is a brilliant gallery that showcases a mixture of workshops and classes as well as musical events that take place in the gallery. There are loads of free events including free film screenings:

www.lanntair.com

The North Harris Eagle Observatory is open to the public all year round. If you've got some binoculars then bring them along to admire all the wild birds you can spot and learn about using

the information posts: www.north-harris.org/north-harris/the-north-harris-eagle-observatory

Dundee

Dundee's art gallery and museum The McManus gives interesting information about Dundee and has eight different galleries. It's free to visit and has a nice coffee shop: www.mcmanus.co.uk

Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) has two small film theatres, a café/bar and a modern art gallery. Their art gallery is free and the film theatre has a great atmosphere: www.dca.org.uk/visit

Dundee Central Library has free access to computers and Wi-Fi and a fantastic selection of books, DVDs and audio books. The library also has authors visit a lot and

has readings and sessions where you can get digital support:

www.leisureandculturedundee.com/find-library

Orkney

At the Pickaquoy Centre there are lots of leisure activities on offer, including activities costing just 50p if you receive benefits:

www.pickaquoy.co.uk

If you contact Orkney Council's transport team you can ask for their great free leaflet on walks using buses. The leaflet is full of lovely walks and the times and numbers of the buses you need:

T. 01856 873535

E. transport@orkney.gov.uk

Orkney has some great free play parks. They are good fun for people of all ages. There is a mini golf course with a children's play area:

www.orkney.com/whats-new/crazy-golf

A natural play area has a BBQ area and seating at the top of the site where you can have a BBQ and sit and watch the sun set:

www.orkney.gov.uk/OIC-News/Orkneys-first-natural-play-park-opens-to-the-public.htm

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/KirkwallPlayAreas/>

For Arts Sake offers lots of different free art and craft activities, like their 'Knit n Natter' group which costs £2 to go to:

www.orkneycommunities.co.uk/FORARTSSAKE

Orkney has good libraries; you can sit upstairs in Stromness library looking at great views and read all day:

www.orkneylibrary.org.uk/html/stromlibrary.htm

Pier Arts Centre in Stromness is a free, beautiful art gallery with year round exhibitions: www.pierartscentre.com

Scottish Borders

Borders College offers a range of evening classes at a fee. However, if you receive certain benefits or have a smaller income then you can take a computing course for free – although you will have to pay a deposit which will be given back to you once you've completed a quarter of the course:

T. 01896 662603

E. commclasses@borderscollege.ac.uk

The Scottish Borders have great forest walks. They are all free and some are on bus routes from the main towns. Check <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/map> to find them here and in other parts of Scotland.

Argyll & Bute

Enjoy free computing classes and 1:1 support for things like reading, writing and numeracy. Keep checking the website as new courses are added throughout the year:

T. 01631 567 974

www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/oban-lorn-and-isles/adult-learning-oban-area

Puck's Glen is free to visit and a magical way to get out into the outdoors. Take a walk through the gorge and enjoy the beautiful waterfalls:

**Opposite Benmore Gardens,
Benmore PA23 8QT**



About Angus McFlourish

Outside the Box has been working with Angus Voice, a mental health advocacy group in Angus, on the Angus McFlourish project which organises things for people with mental health problems to do to reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Part one of this project is making a diary of events for people to go to. We want to find activities that people can go along to alone or with a friend, that don't cost a lot of money and give the opportunity to make new friends. So far the group have come up with a lot of varied ideas, including having a photography taster session, starting a walking club and a creative writing

club and meeting monthly to go to the cinema together. Part two of the project is putting together a list of businesses run by other people that are 'mental health friendly' in Arbroath or the surrounding area so we can ensure that people with mental health problems in Arbroath can go to businesses that are warm and welcoming. We will also be sharing tips on how to prevent loneliness. From discussions with Angus Voice, and other groups we work with, we know that feeling down and isolated can be quite a common experience if you have mental health problems. To see more about what the group is up to, take a look on Angus Voice's website:

www.angusvoice.co.uk

