



Press Release

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Dementia friendly funding for Fife Ecology Centre

A project which supports people living with dementia and their families in Fife will benefit from a £15,000 funding boost from the Life Changes Trust.

The funding will be used by The Ecology Centre in Kinghorn to develop their 'Wide Open Doors' project which helps people affected by dementia to become more active and connect with nature. By taking part in a variety of activities, working together and spending time working outdoors, participants will benefit from improved health, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem.

One feature of the project will build on the success of the existing dementia friendly Tool Shed sessions, broadening their activities so that participants - who call themselves Shedders - can do more work outdoors.

Over the last year, the Shedders have been increasingly interested in building items for use around the site, going for walks and visiting the polytunnel to see how the crops are developing.

Incorporating the Tool Shed as part of the Wide Open Doors project enables participants to enjoy the benefits of being outdoors while also having the security of an indoor space as a base.

Walks around the site have also now been incorporated into each session where possible, as people have reported feeling better for being outdoors and also have an improved appetite for lunch served after the

Tool Shed session, as well as increased levels of fitness. "It keeps me moving" is what Shedders often say.

Anna Buchanan, Director of the Life Changes Trust dementia programme said, "The Ecology Centre has taken some of their existing activities and broadened them so that people affected by dementia can get up to more outdoors, for instance walking, refurbishing tools, growing vegetables and other activities that are suggested by the participants themselves. This means that what they are involved in is even more meaningful to them. There is also the enormous benefit of meeting other people and being part of a physical community, as well as a community of common interest".

The funding award is one of six made by the Life Changes Trust under the banner of 'Get Outdoors', with a funding total of £90,000. The funding will help improve the physical and mental well-being of people living with dementia – and their families - by supporting projects that increase their participation in outdoor social activities. The six organisations to receive funding are:

- The Ecology Centre, Fife
- Sporting Memories Network, central Scotland
- The Froglife Trust, east Glasgow
- NHS Dumfries and Galloway
- Evanton Community Wood, Dingwall
- Instinctively Wild Services, Hawick

Some of the projects concentrate on connecting with nature, for instance taking part in walks or art classes in woodlands, and even learning more about farm based activities. Others concentrate on physical activities such as sport.

All of the funded projects aim to empower people with dementia to have a say in how they wish to connect with the outdoors and support them to do so in a way that is meaningful to them.

Jo Hobbett from The Ecology Centre said: The "Building on the success of the Tool Shed Thursdays are now dementia friendly days at Kinghorn Loch and we are hoping that more people will come and join us for a couple of hours every Thursday. There is always plenty of work to be done at The Ecology Centre so we'd love to hear from anyone who has been recently diagnosed and would like to come and join our team of volunteers. We particularly welcome those with green fingers or traditional home cooks who can help us make jams, chutneys and homemade soups, or anyone who simply wants to do something a bit different and enjoy some fresh air, a cup of tea and a blether."

Anna Buchanan added 'By funding a diverse range of dementia friendly communities throughout Scotland, we are developing a deeper understanding of how to meet the needs of people with dementia and their families. Being able to connect with the outdoors has already proved invaluable for people with dementia and their families, and we look forward to watching this project grow.'

The Life Changes Trust was set up with a Big Lottery Fund endowment of £50 million to improve the lives of two key groups in Scotland: people affected by dementia and care experienced young people.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

Our work with people with dementia has shown that the phrase "Dementia sufferers", or using the word suffering to describe dementia has a strongly negative view from people with the condition. We would request that you avoid using the phrase in headlines or in any article you publish to combat the negative way that people with dementia feel the condition is described.

The Life Changes Trust was established by the Big Lottery in April 2013 with a ten year endowment of £50 million to support transformational improvements in the quality of life, well-being, empowerment and inclusion of people affected by dementia and young people with experience of being in care.

The Ecology Centre is an inclusive, community-led charity. We inspire positive change through directly connecting people and the natural environment for the benefit of both. The Centre was established in August 1998 and today the community owned site is a haven for wildlife. We welcome over 5,500 educational visitors annually. Various volunteering opportunities also exist to individuals who help make the Centre the success it is today. Anyone interested in volunteering should contact The Ecology Centre directly.

In Scotland:

- It is estimated that around 90,000 people have dementia.
- The number of people with dementia in Scotland is increasing, because the population is getting older. Based on current dementia prevalence rates, the number of people with dementia in Scotland is projected to double by 2038.
- Dementia costs the country more than cancer, heart disease and stroke put together.