

North East Local Association Annual Report 2020

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Adult Learning
Within Reach



Convenor's Report

The first thing that springs to mind is disbelief at how things in our lives have changed since our last AGM. March and the Covid 19 pandemic lockdown has been a very worrying time for all, like many others, WEA members in the North East had many other priorities to think of.

Committee member Moira Donald offered to host a trial zoom NELA meeting, this was successful. The committee has been able to conduct our first meeting, unfortunately some members have not been able to attend due to technical problems. Technical issues for members is something that we need to address, although great efforts have been made in online teaching etc, some members are being isolated.

Once we were confident in zoom for our meetings, it was good to hear how home working for our staff was going. The committee have been impressed by the work undertaken by our AEM Clare Harper, she has been able to keep the courses running, and continue to apply for funding.

Reach out staff have also been able to keep in touch with students through multi media, letting them continue with valued teaching.

All of the tutors have had to approach and adopt new teaching skills, this under the circumstances could not have been easy.

Thanks to our secretary Pam Simpson, our Tea & Talk group has been able to keep in touch on a Friday afternoon using WhatsApp, this has been very informal chat about issues of the week past.

The committee were keen to have catch up meetings for tutors to keep in touch and meet volunteers, this will have to be postponed at the moment.

Our motivational tales project has also suffered due to the pandemic, the committee were hoping to continue with collecting stories from sheltered housing residents. Karen McCardle has kindly offered to give training on Narrative Inquiry technique virtually.

We have been disappointed with how our request for a national members' forum has gone in 2019, we had meetings cancelled due to low interest from members in other areas.

Two Fife members visited our Aberdeen office. From this meeting we were able to see how the members have struggled to get interest in installing a committee, they were also disappointed with the members forum being cancelled.

Further disappointment at the end of 2019 when WEA Scotland cancelled the AGM, the reason was not enough interest from members.

A meeting with the Scottish director Ray McCowan and the committee was held. Late February, in the Aberdeen office, this was productive, covering areas of concern from members, a further meeting was felt to be worthwhile.

I would like to thank all committee members for their help during a very difficult time.

John C Campbell

Education Manager's Report

This has been a hugely challenging year, but the staff team in the north east has worked hard together to continue to deliver a range of high quality learning opportunities. In the period from 1st August 2019 to 31st July 2020, which this report covers, we have enrolled 532 learners on to 61 courses in Aberdeen City (excluding Reach Out) and Aberdeenshire, both through face-to-face delivery before the impact of COVID, and through various virtual learning approaches after lockdown. With Reach Out included, we have enrolled 881 learners over the period. Reach Out activity is captured elsewhere in this report.

Aberdeen City courses (excluding Reach Out) included: ESOL in Sunnybank, Reminiscence in Torry and Kincorth, Family Connections and Local History in Cornhill, Family Matters in Kittybrewster, a course in Confident Care Plans for SACRO, and a new Political Literacies course. Aberdeenshire courses included: Reminiscence in Banchory, Torphins, Ballater, Rhynie and Inch, a large ESOL programme in Inverurie, Ellon and Peterhead, Conversation Cafes in Ellon and Inverurie, Family Connections in Kingswells, Family Matters in Pitsligo and Fettercairn, New Horizons in Aboyne, a Raising Literacies Awareness course and a Harp group in North Aberdeenshire.

By 23rd March all classes were cancelled due to lockdown. Many were due to come to an end shortly anyway, as it was close to the end of term. All staff were instructed to work from home, and arrangements were quickly put in place (IT support etc) to enable them to do so. The organisation then initiated an extensive programme of training across the UK for staff and tutors in the use of ZOOM and of CANVAS - a platform designed to support delivery of on-line learning. Most NE tutors have now done

the training fully or in part. It is now a formal requirement for tutor contracts going forward. Alongside the training, there was a strong drive to convert as many classes as possible to on line delivery.

In **Aberdeenshire**, Cafes in Fraserburgh and Turriff, (funded through the LEADER 'HOME' Project with the University of Aberdeen) came together virtually through ZOOM, and were well received. ESOL classes formerly held in Inverurie and Ellon for Syrian New Scots re-started in May, through the sterling work of Katrena Wilkie, who supported a team of 9 ESOL tutors through the training and beginner learners through use of ZOOM - no mean feat. These classes are now well established and well attended, as Katrena outlines in her class reports, elsewhere in this document. On line delivery was surprisingly well received by many learners: *'I like online English because I am at home relaxed', 'I think online ESOL is exciting'*.

We delivered slightly higher levels of ESOL provision this year than last year overall, in spite of the enforced change to on -line delivery. We were also very pleased to receive new Home Office funding to support our ESOL work with New Scots welcomed through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme.

In **Aberdeen City** 3 ESOL classes re-started in Sunnybank, through on line delivery. Alongside positive feedback - *'I like online English because I feel not safe walking to community centre in the dark'* - learners have also commented that they miss the class camaraderie of face to face, with one learner saying she has been very lonely during lockdown and has missed the personal aspect of face to face.

A new on line 6 week 'Political Literacies' course was developed by Ed Garrett and Sheena Crossan, and is currently being delivered to a group of 12 learners on Saturdays by ZOOM. It is going very well.

REACH OUT

The project has gone from strength to strength, demanding much hard work and creativity of Ross and his team, especially after lockdown. A detailed report by the team is included in this document, outlining how the delivery changed from face to face to virtual, though Facebook and YouTube. Staff worked incredibly hard to adapt the programme, to find ways of keeping in contact with many vulnerable learners, and to develop a series of 'outdoor', gardening and art videos to capture imaginations and keep learners on board. Learners commented:

'The art has been fun, seeing everyone else's work and sharing my own'

'The videos have been easy to follow'

'I enjoyed watching the outdoor videos, it was nice to see some countryside'

'I wouldn't normally be able to come to every class because of health problems but the Face Book page has let me join when I can, no matter what time or day'

'Have really enjoyed watching Ross's outdoor videos as I haven't been able to get out much since this lockdown.'

The Big Lottery funding comes to an end in Oct 2021. Professor Karen McArdle is very kindly helping to work with us to identify future funding sources and to develop funding bids. This is hugely appreciated.



I wouldn't normally be able to come to every class because of health problems but the Face Book page has let me join when I can, no matter what time or day

Council Service Level Agreements in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire

This year we have developed (largely) new proposals for programmes of delivery in both Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire, with many new Covid-responsive courses planned - mostly on line, but face to face if we can return to this in due course. New areas include ; ESOL training in ICT for residents and staff in care settings; 'finding your voice' in care settings; political literacies; financial first aid etc.

Very recently we heard that both these proposals have been successful, and we will be funded by both local authorities to deliver the programmes. Much of this was down to the creativity and skill of Ed Garrett, Education Co-ordinator, who very recently left the WEA and will be greatly missed. He will continue to work with us on a sessional basis for a while however.

It has been a very challenging time, but many good things have come out of it. I would like to thank my great wee team, (Ross, Morag, Ed, Katrena, Steve and Kev) who are always supportive of me and of each other, and who battled on with a good deal of humour through what was a difficult time. I would also like to thank: our fantastic part time tutors, who rose to the challenge of the new world we find ourselves in; our local voluntary members - always supportive and hugely valued - and good colleagues at every level in the wider WEA in Scotland, (and some in England!) who have helped with new systems, provided all sorts of support, shared ideas, been 'a sounding board', and generally shared the whole experience of this very strange year.

Reach Out

Out Reach

Wow, another year goes by and what a year it's been! There have been so many challenges since Co-Vid, for staff and students alike, and I will talk more about that later. I'll split this into two sections, firstly I'll talk about pre Co-Vid activity and then I'll concentrate on what we did and how we did it once Co-Vid hit.

Firstly, here are the stats for the year. Considering we had one full term in lock down, the numbers are pretty good and not down too much in comparison to last year.

Summer 2019	33 learners and 67 enrolments
Autumn 2019	79 learners and 116 enrolments
Winter 2020	87 learners and 113 enrolments
Spring 2020	25 learners and 53 enrolments

This gave us a total of **349** enrolments submitted by **125** different individuals. The reason the number of enrolments are higher than the number of those who engaged is because some students enrol for more than one class/course at a time.

So, what have we up to from last August, up until the dreaded virus hit? The answer is lots :) We started the summer of 2019 with our usual short summer term, this consisted of gardening, up at the Grove in Aberdeen City where we continue to have a half share in one of the large poly tunnels. I'll let Kev fill you in on the details of what they have been growing and how the harvest went etc in his wee write up. We know the benefits of getting out there, getting your hands dirty and

growing and nurturing your own food supply. The benefits and impact goes way beyond the students who engage and can have a big impact on family and friends. A wee example of this would be a young woman who joined us, she really enjoyed it, met new friends, widened her social circles and slowly but surely became more confident, not only in her own ability, but also in travelling to the Grove, on her own, on the bus. The impact this had on her family was more than we could have hoped for, because she travelled on her own and spent a few hours away from home, this gave her immediate family some respite and a chance to recharge their batteries, all having a knock on effect on their own mental health, making for a healthier family environment.

We also facilitated some short walks for those who find our longer, up to 10 mile walks, too challenging. These walks took us to some places, within the City, that we wouldn't normally visit. This was quite an eye opener for some that live in the city because they didn't know these wee walks existed, and to be honest, neither did we, until we researched and visited.

NTS (National Trust Scotland) visits are always popular. We visited various properties in the North East, from Castles to gardens, culminating in a guided tour of Fyvie castle, one of our biggest NTS properties. Good fun was had by one and all and we were all enlightened and educated about castle legends, myths, curses and family histories.

Throughout the year we did some environmental art. I'll let Steve fill you in on this, along with the art classes and the student led art classes. As always, these were all very popular and the work done was exceptional. The environmental art sessions were fun, as always, and some fantastic 'installations' were created. Like I said above, Steve will fill you all in on the details in his report.

Norman Miller, the WEA's local history tutor, facilitated a couple of sessions during the summer term, and took the students to various locations in Aberdeen City, educating them about the history of our city.

Unfortunately, because of the dreaded V, we only managed one residential in the past year. We did have another one planned for last April, to Skye, but that got cancelled :(We did, however, make it to Findhorn last September. We have been to Findhorn many times and it is always a popular destination for students. The residential was more of a 'chill out' deserved break for the volunteers and students who had put in a huge amount of work doing outdoor activities and helping out staff members when they could, a big thank you to one and all :) We did the usual, visited the Findhorn community and enjoyed some of the local walks. There was no rough camping this time, but the local hostel, ahhhhhhhhhh comfy beds, bliss :)

Before we knew it the autumn term was upon us and we were back to our 8-10 week programme of activities. These included Employability, facilitated by Sheena Crossan. This is always a popular course and Sheena works on the barriers people face to employment, rather than just applying for jobs straight away. This allows for sustainability in employment and folk tend to apply for jobs that they want, and not what they have been pressurised to apply for by DWP. We also facilitated the JMA (John Muir Award), Cooking on a budget, Walking, Basic IT, Environmental Art, Student Led Art Group, Advocacy and signposting sessions, Gardening and football. Once again, see Kev and Steve's write ups for cooking, gardening and the art groups. Melodie Fraser facilitated our Basic IT course and, as always, this was a busy popular class, made all the better by Melodie's attitude and understanding of our student's needs. Once again, please see her write up for what they got up to.

Winter crept up on us, I say winter but what's happened to snow? Outdoor activities, at Reach out, were so much fun in the snow, good character building stuff :) :) Instead we now seem to have just cold and rain, for 9 months! Anyway, during the winter term we did the majority of what we did during the autumn term with a couple of extras.

The student's forum was back. These are always great sessions with students coming in and giving their views on just about anything and everything. This shows them that their voice matters, what they think matters and provides a comfortable space to voice opinions without being put down. We also have a small advocacy service where we can signpost those who engage, if we can't help ourselves, to appropriate outside agencies. This service has been slow but steady and Steve has taken lead. As a team we are helping where and when we can but Steve's knowledge of what's out there has been invaluable.

During the winter term we had the pleasure of having an extra member of staff in the form of a SWIT (social worker in training), all the way from Sweden, as part of the Erasmus exchange programme. Jesper was excellent and fitted into the team easily and quickly. He shared his knowledge and culture, with staff and students, and this was fantastic for students to see and hear about what goes on in other countries, for those who have the same issues/barriers than themselves. Unfortunately the virus hit towards the end of his placement and he had to return to his homeland. Hopefully, once this situation improves, we can welcome him back to the WEA Reach Out project.

So spring was starting, we were due to go to Skye, and then,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,,WHAM!!! We were all knocked sideways by Co-Vid. What were we to do? How were we going to do it? Because of the nature of many of our students issues/needs/barriers we knew that Zoom etc wouldn't be appropriate for various reasons: financial, IT skills, times etc etc etc so we decided on a plan of action that would involve a social media platform that we knew some of our students used, Face Book. This wasn't the be all and end all. More than half of our students have no access to the WWW so we needed to think of a way to involve everyone, well, as many as we could. So, apart from the Face Book page, I'll go into more detail about this later, we have been contacting students, who don't have access, and involving them in the online activities.

They call us and tell us where they have been for a walk, what areas they have cleaned up as part of our environmental clean-ups and they share what else they have been doing, be that art, the John Muir Award and anything else they wish to share. This is far from perfect and roll on the day we can actually meet up with our students, face to face, as I feel, because of the characters of staff and tutors, that this is where our strengths are, face to face, sharing experiences and being able to chat to folk, gauging reactions by tone and body language, all very difficult in phone calls.

We created a Face Book page and a You Tube channel. The Face Book page is called 'Reach Out-Out Reach' and our You tube channel can be found by searching for Reach Out Aberdeen or by following the link below, this will take you directly to the channel and you can see various videos, Steve's art classes, my John Muir Award vids, our combined environmental art videos, we have all done one, Kev's gardening videos and various other videos introducing the project, page and channel.

[youtube.com/channel/UCcrDIKQikCZVBkMTE1M1SYA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcrDIKQikCZVBkMTE1M1SYA)

The Face Book page is private and can only be accessed by invite.

On the page we facilitated 4 'courses' and the students asked for 3 extras that they took ownership of. The courses we, as staff members facilitated, were art, the students forum, the John Muir Award and gardening. The 'student led' 'threads' were for music, gaming and tv/ movies. All courses went really well, but, as with anything new, it was a steep learning curve for staff members and students alike. Mistakes were made, lessons were learnt and we are now into our summer term where we have hit the ground running.

All course were facilitated by either uploading videos to the You Tube channel, sharing wee videos on the actual FB page or by going live on the page, going live involves video and

can be quite scary but we all got there in the end. Students also shared their art work via pictures, they uploaded to the FB page, into the appropriate thread, or by emailing or simply calling for a chat. Those who were a wee bit shy to post on the actual page shared their work via direct messages. 7 students achieved their JMA, a great achievement for those who engaged, and hopefully they will join us again, for the next level of the award, once we can get back to some kind of normality. The art sessions went really well and Steve provided the inspiration for us all to get in there and try new things, Kevs gardening went well with students sharing what they were growing, be that flowers or food and the students forum provided the space for them to chat about things that mattered to them and also for them just to simply keep in touch with each other and chat amongst themselves.

So, that's about it, so far. Our summer term is up and running but that's for next years report ;)

A big thank you goes out to our tutors, Norman, Sheena, Melodie and Rosemary. Rosemary facilitated a one off well-being session for us. We had hoped to continue with this but it will have to wait until we can all meet, face to face. Thanks to Morag for keeping us all right with all the new processes and procedures that are in place and for keeping on top of the admin side of things, thanks to the staff team, Steve and Kev, for all the efforts and great work and a big thanks to Clare, our AEM, for all the inspiration, the confidence and for just being there for a chat when times are hard :) A big thank you to Prof Karen McArdle who is looking into funding opportunities to replace the funding we have in place that runs out next October 2021. Also, last but not least, the Local Association. Your support and encouragement and all the work you all put in is invaluable, to not only Reach Out, but to the WEA in general, thank you so much. I hope I haven't missed anyone, if I have, sorry :)

Ross Weatherby

EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR
WEA REACH OUT

Cooking and gardening

Over the past year our cooking and gardening courses have been very popular with our students who see the health benefits of both subjects. Unfortunately, due to the lockdown in Aberdeen we are now having to run most of our courses online. This has been a new learning experience for us all at Reach Out and I must say we are embracing this new way of working from home.

Our online gardening group was started back in the spring of this year and it's been fantastic to see all our students get involved, even with some not having a garden at home acquiring window boxes and growing plants & vegetables. Gardening is a rewarding way to spend time outdoors especially at this time when everyone is staying at home. It was great to see the students get involved, communicating, assisting and encouraging each other during the sessions we ran online and for them to understand (more than ever) that growing your own food is really beneficial for our mental and physical health.

We are currently in the middle of our summer programme and we had some positive feedback from our learners during and after the sessions and look forward to the next online classes which will start in October 2020.

Kev McPherson

EDUCATION SUPPORT ASSISTANT
WEA REACH OUT



Reach Out Basic IT

04/02/20 – 10/03/20 (Cut short due to COVID 19)

The class was held at WEA in King Street on Tuesday afternoons and catered for between 3 and 8 learners.

Learners varied between complete beginners and a learner with relatively advanced skills. In the six weeks we had, we covered creating and saving a file in Word, internet research (facts, prices); the website Gumtree (local second hand, free items, property rental); cut, copy and paste in Word; online shopping; YouTube; email and sending links, and they also tried using I-pads. The more advanced learner mainly did more complex exercises in Word, which is what he wanted to learn.

It was a happy class! We bonded well as a group and laughed a lot. I mainly picked the topics as the learners weren't sure what they wanted to learn initially, but as they became more confident we negotiated learning outcomes. I tried to show the range of what is available on computers and online, and the learners responded positively and appeared to see the potential. A couple of learners said that they managed to try out things they'd learned in class at home.



Reach Out Employability

Three Employability courses took place at the WEA King Street office between autumn 2019 and the beginning of the lockdown in March 2020.

The aim of the course is to cover a range of skills which help in applying for work such as - awareness of skills, developing CV's., and interview skills. In the background they are also building confidence in using computers, talking in a group and in applying for work.

The course is usually a lively and friendly class where friendships develop during the 8 weekly weeks.

The first session is about communication and body language and, hopefully, is a bit of an ice breaker and helps the group bond.

As the group feel a bit at ease they begin to explore their interests and experiences they have which leads onto hearing about the skills they have.

By session three we are looking at CV's and preparing to work on the laptops. This move often leads to a closer bond as the group support each other in overcoming the inevitable IT problems.

From this point we follow the interest of the attendees which usually include exploring interview questions, applications and letters, personal statements and web searches.

Interview questions are always interesting and we often use role play to take the anxiety out of the situation. The group invent their own business and imagine creating a new job and begin to plan interviewing someone. This helps them see the job situation from another angle which is very interesting. They also appreciate that the interviewers might be anxious as well and why they ask certain questions.

The last session is about appreciating what they have learned and experienced as well as ending the group.



English for Speakers of Other Languages

New Scots Inverurie, Aberdeenshire

The WEA North East work in partnership alongside NESCOL and Aberdeenshire Council CLD to deliver ESOL to the New Scots in Aberdeenshire. The WEA are tasked with teaching the Beginner Literacy learners within this cohort. Following SQA accreditation for literacy ESOL, there are three groups of learners equalling the three levels within the SQA's ESOL Beginner Literacy suite.

Preparation for literacy

This group has changed somewhat from the face to face sessions that became online Zoom sessions in late May. This group comprises of more mature learners, the eldest being 65. Most of the group have had no, or very little, schooling. During lockdown and the subsequent move to online learning, we lost four learners. They had no experience of the digital world and did not want to engage in online learning. On a positive note, another four learners joined the class. The tutor has gently guided them through very basic reading and writing skills, mainly the formation of letters and words, to speaking whole sentences. The group have commented that although they found online learning daunting at first, they really enjoy their Zoom-time lessons with the tutor. The tutor has commented that the camaraderie in the online classes is a joy to experience.

Literacy 1 group

This group has coped well with the challenges of online learning. This is perhaps because they are in their 20s and 30s and find the digital world easier to navigate. Progressing well in their communication skills, they are hoping to sit their SQA assessment as soon as the Covid19 restrictions are lifted. Learners have commented that their confidence levels have increased and feel more confident shopping and speaking to neighbours. Two of the learners had (before lockdown) joined another local group in the community, The Men's Shed.

Literacy 2 group

This group was highly motivated in face to face classes and have been the same in online classes. They work hard and support each other. This group is now ready to sit their SQA Literacy 2 assessment and move to the higher level CLD ESOL classes. Learner comments have been that they have fun when they are learning and enjoy learning English in their home. The learners have also commented that they are all confident to go out and about in their community to shop, travel and ask for help independently. They all make the effort to chat with neighbours and locals as their everyday English is constantly improving. The tutor commented that it was a joy to teach this class as they are very supportive to each other, motivated to learn and full of fun.

Peterhead Beginner ESOL

This well attended accredited evening course was delivered face to face in the local community centre. Upon transferring to online delivery, the numbers dropped significantly, but those who did attend, attended consistently. This is another class delivered through the NESCOL/CLD partnership. The learners are mostly factory workers but some were directed to our classes via Jobcentre Plus. Learners commented that they felt more confident talking to people at work and speaking to neighbours and other mums in the playground. Most commented that they now have Scottish speaking friends and socialise with them out with work. The tutor commented that both she and the learners enjoyed the online class. She also found teaching online gave her more time in the evening with her child as there was no hour long travel time to the class and no need to organise childcare when her husband was working.

Sunnybank Community Centre ESOL

The beginners ESOL class at Sunnybank Community Centre had eight regular learners until the centre was forced to close in March. The learners were mainly from Eastern Europe. When the centre closed only one lady from the face to face class joined the online class. The learners gave reasons for not joining the class varying

from shyness to lack of technology or no internet. When the Zoom classes started, four new learners joined. Learners comments included that it was easier for them to come to online classes as there was no need for childcare and no walking home after class. Tutor comments included; "I found it quite challenging teaching online. More time was also spent in preparation as materials had to be adapted for online use."

The Elementary ESOL class at Sunnybank Community Centre made the switch to online classes with ease, with all the learners from the face to face class joining in online. Included in their elementary level teaching, the tutor discussed and kept them up to date with information of government advice during lockdown. Learner comments were mirrored by agreeing that online classes gave greater freedom to not have to travel to class or arrange childcare. Many commented that it was more comfortable to study at home. Tutor comments included; I found teaching online extremely challenging, particularly if the learners were using smart phones. With those using this sort of equipment I found it difficult to read body language and other non-verbal communication because of poor video quality + they often had poor audio quality which made pronunciation correction difficult.

Although I found online teaching really tough going I was very interested to hear from all students at the end of the term that they actually preferred the online classes to f2f. The learners felt that the practical advantages of the online class meant that they were all hoping to attend online classes next term.

Sunnybank Pre-Intermediate ESOL

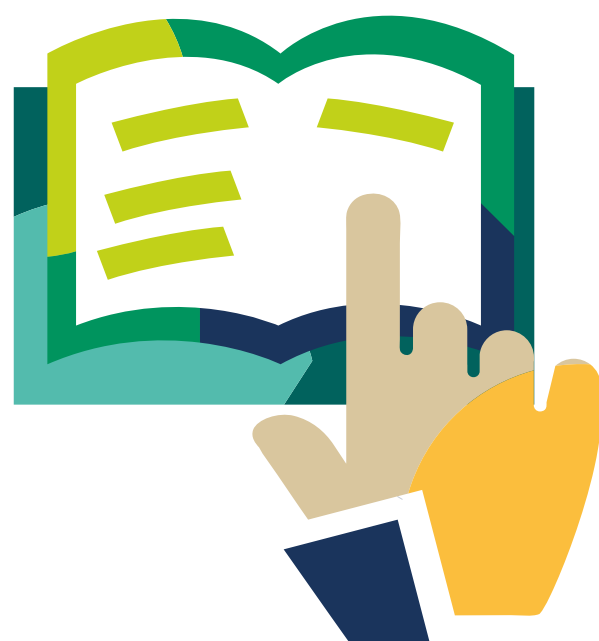
The class at Pre-Intermediate class at Sunnybank (from 15/01/20) had 11 enrolled and 8-10 learners attended every week until the Coronavirus arrived in Scotland: attendance then dropped sharply away to 5 and then 2 at the last face to face class. The switch to online lost the regular learners but gained a new set of learners.

Pre-intermediate level course work was followed for most of the term but then comprehension exercises based on the official Coronavirus information was added to the lessons. Learners found the information useful, particularly the advice to not go to the doctor if you have symptoms, the fact that overseas visitors would receive free treatment and the downloadable materials such as posters, videos etc. They were left with a physical copy of the most up-to-date info that gave web addresses and phone numbers for support and advice. Learners commented on the ease of attending the classes online and found them very enjoyable.

Tutor comments included; 'I enjoyed the challenge of learning how to teach ESOL in a different way and some of the methods were arguably more effective than some of the ones I previously had access to in class, so I can see the advantages of teaching in this way in the future'.

Katrena Wilkie

EDUCATION CO-ORDINATOR



LITERACIES AWARENESS RAISING

The WEA offered a whole day course looking at raising awareness of issues around adult literacies. The course was presented by two experienced WEA tutors who have worked together on similar courses over the last few years. It was held at Kintore Community Learning Centre and was advertised to people throughout Aberdeenshire. The course was open to a wide range of participants who might meet people in their everyday lives who have some difficulty with reading, writing and numeracy, be it at work, in their families, amongst friends or in their communities. It offered an opportunity to find out more about how to spot when someone has literacy and numeracy difficulties and be able to offer them help.

The course included:

- Understanding how it may feel to have literacy and numeracy needs
- Exploring why some adults have literacy and numeracy needs
- Some of the techniques adults use to get by in their day to day life
- What makes adults look for help with their reading, writing or numeracy
- How to notice when an adult is having difficulties in these areas
- What steps you can take to assist someone who has literacies needs
- What support is available locally for people with literacies needs



I did a lot more speaking than I would normally at a training event.

The course was very participative using a range of techniques to present information, build participants' confidence and encourage discussion, along with a bit of fun to lighten the day. This approach was appreciated by participants who commented:

"The delivery of the course was very refreshing... The use of engaging each learner on the course with different activities worked well."

"I did a lot more speaking than I would normally at a training event."

"I enjoyed the comprehensive information about literacies. The handouts were very useful"

Participants were offered the opportunity to gain the Professional Development Award Raising Awareness in Adult Literacies. Two participants went on to undertake the assessments and gain the award.

Pam Simpson
TUTOR

Tea and Talk Branch

Since last year's NELA AGM our Tea and Talk Group have had six months of having our cup of tea and fine piece by our own firesides and the talk has seen our fingers gather speed as we type on WhatsApp (with no regard for spelling, predictive text always catching us out) no prizes for guessing what a lot of the talk has been about! Apart from the pandemic we have had discussions about childhood toys, favourite sweets, fashion from our younger years, lifestyle choices, favourite holiday spots and any newsworthy events that we thought needed our input.

John, our Treasurer, thought it was great that Pam had suggested the idea of us keeping in contact via WhatsApp and setting up the group for us all it's just a pity that some of our group haven't got the means to join in.

Before Lockdown happened in March we enjoyed a well organised Christmas Lunch at the end of November and a Burns Lunch in January, thanks to Anne our Social Organiser, both outings were much enjoyed by all.

One of the highlights of our year was a group visit in February to our fabulous Art Gallery where we were taken round by Lynsey Merrick, Formal Learning Officer, and we behaved so well she said we could come back again and I am sure we all would have been back if possible and now it has reopened again I think we'll be dropping in (just not yet as a group).

Prior to lockdown Norman, our Programme Organiser, had our weekly meetings all sorted out for us. We had some interesting discussions and outings such as going to see the Oor Wullies, going to the Maritime Museum to see an exhibition of Victorian Photographs we also had a talk from Neil Curtis, Curator at Aberdeen University, about Standing Stones and Circles in the area and we paid a visit to the Duncan Rice Library at Aberdeen University to see an exhibition of George Washington Wilson photographs shortly after this event..... LOCKDOWN.....WATCH THIS SPACE.....

Marlene Bewsher

SECRETARY
TEA AND TALK BRANCH



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