



Islanders!

Where No One is an Island



**Our Pledge:**

**To create an environment where we  
can tackle loneliness and social  
isolation together.**

## So what is Islanders!?

Islanders! is a completely free initiative that brings islanders together. It's open to all islanders and has been created and delivered by Volunteering Hebrides and staffed by the Befriending Lewis & Harris team.

## Why are we doing this?

Loneliness.... Let's get this straight! Loneliness is an issue in our community, like it's an issue in every other community throughout the UK. Loneliness is a natural human emotion that we can all experience at some time in our lives, but it can seriously affect our physical and mental health, sometimes leading to depression, anxiety and even agoraphobia. It's different for everyone.

Our focus is on creating an environment, right at the heart of our local community, where we can tackle loneliness & isolation *together*.

## What are some of the reasons people experience loneliness in our community?

There are many reasons why people in our community feel lonely; loneliness has no common cause.

It can be linked to a specific life event like bereavement, a relationship breakdown, becoming a new parent, children leaving home, stress at work, retirement, unemployment.

It can be as a result of short-term or long-term poor health; physical/mental illness, disability/mobility issues.

Other factors such as feeling "different", living in a very remote location, financial worries, ethnicity, limited transport, gender or sexuality, faith or religion, the list goes on and on....

There is no, 'one size fits all,' to loneliness - it doesn't discriminate and everyone's own circumstances are unique.

# Loneliness Myths - Busted!

## Loneliness only affects old people

Loneliness isn't just something older people feel. In fact, you might be surprised to learn it can be felt by anyone at any age. A survey of secondary pupils here on the island found that **94%** thought there were young people on the islands who are lonely and isolated.

## In our community, no one is really lonely

While we are incredibly lucky to live in a small, close community, that doesn't mean loneliness isn't an issue here.

We like to think that neighbours, family or, "someone else", will be looking in on people across our community. It can be devastating for someone to be looking out on the busyness of the world, feeling completely alone. A lot of people, especially those living in remote areas, feel incredibly isolated and might only see the postie or delivery driver from one week to the next.

One lady put it perfectly when she shared this with us: "If I had wool on my back, I'd get a visit twice a day."

## If you're feeling lonely, you're the only one

If you're feeling lonely, you **really aren't the only one**. It's true, loneliness is all around us, throughout our community, but it can be very hard to spot.

Loneliness can be a difficult thing to talk about; **sometimes we don't even realise that what we're feeling is loneliness.**

## You can only feel lonely if you live on your own

You might think that you need to live alone to feel lonely. Or that being lonely means not having many friends or family around. But you can feel lonely even if you have lots of people in your life.

# Loneliness - How does it feel?

Loneliness takes all different shapes and forms; here is a powerful account of the devastating impact loneliness can have on someone's life, in their own words.

“Loneliness seeps into your very being: blackening your world and transforming your thoughts to thoughts of despair eroding your self-worth till you feel worthless. Unless you have suffered from loneliness you cannot imagine the sense of complete isolation that comes with this misunderstood condition. Once loneliness enters your world it can bring with it: depression, anxiety, lack of self-esteem and so much more. It is as if loneliness builds a wall around you, you cannot break out and no outside contact can get in.

Loneliness changes positivity to negativity, happiness to sadness, hope to despair. Your heart is broken and your hope is shattered. You look upon life as a burden instead of a pleasure. It's Hell. Then slowly the depression sinks in, then the anxiety, then the agoraphobia. You no longer leave home. Why bother? Where would you go? What would you do? On your own? So you end up sitting at home. Why get dressed? No one comes to visit. Why bother with a shower every day? Who cares what you look like? Why bother cooking a meal for one?

How can we help? Not by saying "pull yourself together, get out and meet people". You have to slowly melt the wall surrounding the person through kindness, caring, listening, making them feel valued, this then leads to them valuing themselves, learning to trust again. Like watering a seedling and very slowly watching it grow into a strong plant that flowers and can lift its face to the sun.

*Quote courtesy of Members of the Promising Links Group, Garscadden Burn Medical Practice, Glasgow*



## Did you know?

Feelings of loneliness can be mild and may never be as extreme as some of the examples above; some people struggle with loneliness over a prolonged period whilst others feel lonely occasionally or in particular situations. It can feel different for each person affected.

Feelings of loneliness and social isolation can be reduced. Practical and emotional support can build connections, empowering us to feel part of our community again. We've seen this time and time again through our work at Befriending Lewis & Harris and our new Islanders! project takes this and builds on it.



## So how does Islanders! fit in to all of this?

Whether we've lived here all our lives or whether we've just moved here, living in this place we all call home means we are all Islanders.

Being an Islander is about a lot more than just geography. It's about being part of a community; a shared identity. It's about belonging. It's about being part of something bigger.

Our mission (and we've chosen to accept it) is to tackle loneliness and social isolation in our community through hosting a wide range of social and group activities, with something for everyone. We're also launching ReVivers, our island-wide volunteer revival program as well as expanding our Kindness Calls telephone befriending service.

We're all about bringing people together, (re)creating community, having fun and creating lasting memories together. Anyone living on the island can be involved and it's really quick, really easy and completely free to sign up. So read on to find out all about our full programme of social events.

We'd love you to sign up as an Islander! and, when we say sign up, we mean that you can come along and enjoy any of our events, whenever you like. You don't have to attend everything, every time, just come along whenever you feel like it. Our groups are relaxed and there's no pressure on anyone to do or say anything. Come along and see for yourself!

If you'd like to join the Islanders! Team as a volunteer, we'd love to have you on board. Just select the **ReVivers Volunteer Programme** event tick box on page 11.

We hope this has whetted your appetite and given you a taste of what we're all about. Now, let's dig into those social group events. Read on!



## Butty and a Blether

Does exactly what it says on the tin. A relaxed, informal get-together to catchup and chat over a cuppa and a butty, all at no cost of course. What's not to like?



- **Tuesdays**
- **12pm - 2:30pm**
- **We'll be at St Columba's Church Hall**

- **Tuesday 25th July**
- **Tuesday 8th August**
- **Tuesday 22nd August**
- **Tuesday 12th September**
- **Tuesday 26th September**
- **Tuesday 10th October**
- **Tuesday 24th October**
- **Tuesday 7th November**
- **Tuesday 21st November**
- **Tuesday 5th December**



## Positive Vibes

Forgetting about fitness and focusing on fun, join us in trying your hand at a range of social games, fun activities and a little gentle exercise. Whether seated or standing, we're sure there's something for everyone. Remember, health is wealth!



- **Tuesdays**
- **2pm - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Tuesday 19th September**
- **Tuesday 17th October**
- **Tuesday 14th November**
- **Tuesday 12th December**



## Past Times

Have you got a story to tell about island life? Do you enjoy listening to stories about how island life used to be? Then we'd love to hear from you at our monthly get together for history lovers. We'll have a mix of local guest speakers giving talks on local history and folklore plus visits to local museums and exhibitions, depending on what's on locally.



- **Tuesdays**
- **2pm - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Tuesday 5th September**
- **Tuesday 3rd October**
- **Tuesday 31st October**
- **Tuesday 28th November**



## The Queen Bees

It's all about spending quality time together, making new friends and reacquainting with old ones. Whether we're getting our nails manicured or settling down to an afternoon movie matinee, relax and unwind at our fortnightly Queen Bees club.



- **Wednesdays**
- **2pm - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Wednesday 26th July**
- **Wednesday 9th August**
- **Wednesday 23rd August**
- **Wednesday 13th September**
- **Wednesday 27th September**
- **Wednesday 11th October**
- **Wednesday 25th October**
- **Wednesday 8th November**
- **Wednesday 22nd November**
- **Wednesday 6th December**



## A Few Good Men

What exactly will be on the *men-u* will depend on the venue. Whether you're too cool at pool or simply tremendous at table tennis, we'll have something for you. It's a great chance to kick back, relax and enjoy some quality time with others.



- **Wednesdays**
- **2pm - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Wednesday 19th July**
- **Wednesday 2nd August**
- **Wednesday 16th August**
- **Wednesday 6th September**
- **Wednesday 20th September**
- **Wednesday 4th October**
- **Wednesday 18th October**
- **Wednesday 1st November**
- **Wednesday 15th November**
- **Wednesday 29th November**
- **Wednesday 13th December**



## Going Places

Remember, miles = smiles and there are no wrong turns – just new adventures when we head out in our minibus, exploring some of the spectacularly scenic spots our beautiful island has to offer. We'll head to a different area each trip, with a stop for refreshments along the way.



- **Thursdays**
- **11am - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Thursday 20th July**
- **Thursday 17th August**
- **Thursday 21st September**
- **Thursday 19th October**
- **Thursday 16th November**





## Supper in the Snug

Settle down for a sociable evening of board games or a movie with a delicious takeaway and some fantastic company at our monthly Supper in the Snug. Contributions towards takeaway warmly accepted but not essential.



- **Thursdays**
- **4pm - 6:30pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Thursday 10th August**
- **Thursday 14th September**
- **Thursday 12th October**
- **Thursday 9th November**
- **Thursday 14th December**



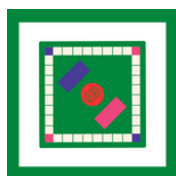
## Crafty Camerados

Join our Crafty Camerados Art Group and discover your inner Picasso. Meet up with old friends and easel-y make new ones in a fun and creative way. You don't need any creative skills to take part but it's a great chance to learn some new ones and we're sure you'll be drawn to it.



- **Fridays**
- **1:30pm - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Friday 28th July**
- **Friday 11th August**
- **Friday 15th September**
- **Friday 29th September**
- **Friday 13th October**
- **Friday 27th October**
- **Friday 10th November**
- **Friday 24th November**
- **Friday 8th December**



## Game Changers

From Giant Jenga to Cluedo, Monopoly to Snakes & Ladders, we have something for everyone. So don't get your Uno's in a Twister, fight the Friday board-om and join us for a sociable GameFest! Just remember to bring your game face.



- **Fridays**
- **2pm - 4pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**

- **Friday 21st July**
- **Friday 4th August**
- **Friday 18th August**
- **Friday 8th September**
- **Friday 22nd September**
- **Friday 6th October**
- **Friday 20th October**
- **Friday 3rd November**
- **Friday 17th November**
- **Friday 1st December**
- **Friday 15th December**



## Camerados Public Living Room

Our public sitting room with couches, chairs, board games, newspapers and - most importantly - a kettle and biscuits. It's a warm, comfortable space so why not pop in for a cuppa and a chat with others and to get some light relief from day-to-day life (at no cost of course).

You don't need to sign up for this, just pop in any of the days we're open.



- **Open every Wednesday & Thursday**
- **11am - 4pm**
- **Camerados Public Living Room, 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND**



## The events I'm interested in are:

(And if you'd like to volunteer with us, please remember to select the **ReVivers Volunteer Programme** Event box below).



- Butty and a Blether
- (Tuesdays, 12pm - 2.30pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- Positive Vibes
- (Tuesdays, 2pm - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- Past Times
- (Tuesdays, 2pm - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- Queen Bees
- (Wednesdays, 2pm - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- A Few Good Men
- (Wednesdays, 2pm - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



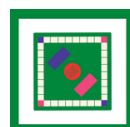
- Going Places Monthly Road Trip
- (Thursdays, 11am - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- Supper in the Snug
- (Thursdays, 4pm - 6:30pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- Crafty Camerados
- (Fridays, 1:30pm - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- Game Changers
- (Fridays, 2pm - 4pm)
- For full dates, see event info



- ReVivers Volunteer Programme
- Monthly get togethers outside of events
- Dates confirmed following sign up



## Islanders! registration form

Signing up to our group events is as easy as 1,2,3. Select the events you're interested in on the previous page, complete the registration form below, remembering to tick the appropriate boxes and to include your signature. And send both pages to us at the address below.

**So let's get to know you a little better... (and don't worry, your details are safe with us).**

 My Name Is:

 My Address Is:

 My Age Category is:      18 - 40                      41 - 65                      65 Plus

 My Phone Numbers Are

Home:

Mobile:

 My Email Address Is:

(If you don't have one don't worry, just leave this blank)



### The important stuff we need you to tick and sign

We want to look after you and your information and we take this seriously. You need to be over 18 and we need the permission boxes below ticked in order for you to sign up to Islanders! events, and remember we also need your signature.

In order to run Islanders! events, we are legally required to process and store your personal information in a safe and secure manner:

**I give permission for my personal details to be stored and processed by Volunteering Hebrides for the duration of my involvement with Volunteering Hebrides.**

I confirm I am over 18

**Signature:**

**Please send your completed form  
back to us at this address:**

Team Islanders, Volunteering Hebrides,  
30 Francis Street, Stornoway,  
Isle of Lewis, HS1 2ND

**or email it to us at:**

hi-aye@islanders.org.uk

