

**OPEN TO
EVERYONE**

Islanders!

Where No One is an Island



**A Range of Completely Free
Social & Group Activities from
Volunteering Hebrides.**

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 some delicious hot food, all at no cost of course.

We vary what's on the menu and always do our best to accomodate dietary requirements. Pre- booking is essential as numbers are required in advance for food.



- **Tuesdays**
- **12pm - 2pm**
- **Venue confirmed when you sign up for event.**



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. where we'll have a mix of local guest speakers giving talks on local history and folklore.



- **Tuesdays**
- **2pm - 3:30pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**



The Queen Bees

It's all about spending quality time together, making new friends and reacquainting with old ones. We start with a spot of lunch followed by a range of different fun activities.



- **Wednesdays**
- **1pm - 3pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**



Going Places Road Trip

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.

It's a great chance to see different parts of the island and enjoy some heart-warming company. So why not join us and make some lasting memories?!



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



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.

We hold these on Thursdays and Saturdays alternately and mix it up in terms of the takeaway we have each time. Whatever the food, you're guaranteed good company and a fun, enjoyable evening.

Contributions towards takeaway are warmly accepted but not essential.



- **Thursdays & Saturdays Alternately**
- **5pm - 7:30pm**
- **We'll meet at Volunteering Hebrides HQ at 30 Francis Street, Stornoway, HS1 2ND.**





Crafty Camerados

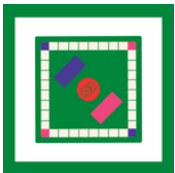
Join our Crafty Camerados Crafts Group and discover your inner Picasso. Meet up with old friends and *easel-y* make new ones in a fun and creative way.

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.

Enough of the crafty puns though, it's all about spending time together, trying new things and enjoying each other's company.



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



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.

So come along and enjoy some quality company and whatever games you fancy trying your hand at. It's relaxed, informal and friendly.



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





Your Islanders! Events Calendar At A Glance

Here are your handy go-to-events calendars, listing what's on and when, from April through to June 2024.

Keep this safe and use it as a reference to make sure you don't miss out on any of our events. And remember to let us know if you're planning on attending our events in advance if you can, as it really helps for us to know numbers.

You can even tick off events as they happen if you're feeling super organised.

And we can't wait to see you at as many of these events as you can make.

April 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	6
7	8	9	10 Queen Bees 1 - 3pm	11 Supper In The Snug 5 - 7:30pm	12 Game Changers 2 - 4pm	13
14	15	16 Past Times 2 - 3:30pm	17	18 Going Places Road Trip 11am - 4pm	19 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	20
21	22	23	24 Queen Bees 1 - 3pm	25	26 Game Changers 2 - 4pm	27 Supper In The Snug 5 - 7:30pm
28	29	30 Butty & A Blether 12 - 2pm				

May 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	4
5	6	7	8 Queen Bees 1 - 3pm	9 Supper In The Snug 5 - 7:30pm	10 Game Changers 2 - 4pm	11
12	13	14 Past Times 2 - 3:30pm	15	16 Going Places Road Trip 11am - 4pm	17 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	18
19	20	21	22 Queen Bees 1 - 3pm	23	24 Game Changers 2 - 4pm	25 Supper In The Snug 5 - 7:30pm
26	27	28 Butty & A Blether 12 - 2pm	29	30	31 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	

June 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3	4	5 Queen Bees 1 - 3pm	6	7 Game Changers 2 - 4pm	8
9	10	11 Past Times 2 - 3:30pm	12	13 Supper In The Snug 5 - 7:30pm	14 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	15
16	17	18	19 Queen Bees 1 - 3pm	20 Going Places Road Trip 11am - 4pm	21 Game Changers 2 - 4pm	22
23	24	25 Butty & A Blether 12 - 2pm	26	27	28 Crafty Camerados 2 - 4pm	29 Supper In The Snug 5 - 7:30pm



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 - 2pm)



- Past Times
- (Tuesdays, 2pm - 3:30pm)



- Queen Bees
- (Wednesdays, 1pm - 3pm)



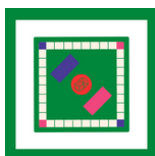
- Going Places Minibus Road Trip
- (Thursdays, 11am - 4pm)



- Supper in the Snug
- Thursdays or Saturdays, 5pm - 7:30pm



- Crafty Camerados
- (Fridays, 2 - 4pm)



- Game Changers
- (Fridays, 2pm - 4pm)



- ReVivers Volunteer Programme
- Monthly get togethers

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

