

Anne Knox, who was Community Manager from July 2007, until September 2008, has taken time out to help out the Integrating Children's Services Project while the Development Officer, Angela Lavery takes some personal time out on a six month sabbatical.



In her place, we have brought in Isobel Traynor, who previously worked with ALVO on the "Gettin Mair Fae Fair Share" Project. Isobel was one of two Development Officers who worked on the project, and was partially responsible for securing the funding for theGuidLife Connexions Project.



Isobel Joined us in October, and is essentially "babysitting" theGuidLife until Angela returns (we think sometime in May), at which point, we'll welcome Anne back.

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Annual Report
2008

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Preparations are under way to submit funding applications to extend the post of Community Manager. We have submitted a first stage proposal to Tudor Trust, who seem to be quite interested in the project, and when the evaluation is complete, we will finalise and submit our stage two proposal. We hope this will secure the position for at least two years, and combined with the re-write (if the application is successful) we hope we can look forward to a successful future for Rural South Lanarkshire's online Community!



The Evaluation of the site is being carried out thanks to funding from the South Lanarkshire Leader—Developing Communities Fund (South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership). An application was submitted in December of last year, and we were awarded £5,000 in January to carry out the evaluation.

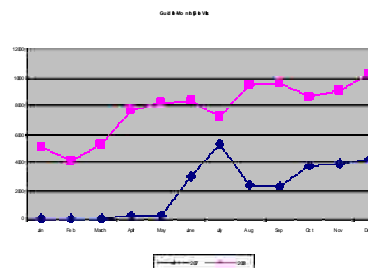
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Chairman's Statement

2008 has been very busy and interesting year with flurry of activity and various changes taking place.

We now have over 360 individual members and 55 community groups registered on the site and traffic is growing at a steady rate, which proves that more people are coming on board—sometimes just for a look, but more importantly, joining in on the various discussions which take place. The simplicity of the site means that even people with very limited IT skills can participate in chats and discussions, and leave comments or give feedback. Users of the site give positive feedback on how easy the site is to navigate.

The graph below shows the growth over the last 12 months in visits to the site, impressive to say the least! The Pink line (top) represents this years' visits (2008/9) and the Blue line (bottom) represents figures from last year (2007/8).



The most recent development on the site is that we have recently been awarded £5,000 from the "Developing Communities Fund" through Leader. This money is being used to carry out a Formative evaluation in partnership with our sister site—Online Borders to look at the future feasibility of the sites. This joint venture is an exciting time for both boards, as it means if the findings of the study are positive, it gives us an excellent starting point to take forward our plans to seek funding to redevelop the site and have it hosted on the Scotland's Health on the Web (SHOW) site. The advantages of this will be free hosting for both sites, meaning lower running costs, more functionality, and hopefully a wider audience.

An application to extend the Fairshare Connexions project has been agreed in principle, we are just awaiting the rubber stamp from the Scottish Community Foundation to finalise it. This means that the Community Manager's Post can be extended from May to September 2009, leaving us with some breathing space to seek further funding to continue the post.

We have submitted an application to Tudor Trust for funding the post, and have been invited to a second stage application, however, this has been delayed until the results of the study are published.

Our very capable and committed Community Manager, Anne Knox, has been temporarily seconded to cover the ICS Development post while Angela Lavery takes a short Sabbatical. In her absence, we have drafted in Isobel Traynor (previously Development Officer for the "Gettin Mair fae Fairshare" project). Isobel is busy ensuring the evaluation runs smoothly, and keeping the site up to date, and of course continuing to support and train group editors.

I have to thank all my colleagues on the board for their continuing enthusiasm and hard work. Anyone who works with Information Technology will understand that once you are involved with a website time passes quickly. I therefore thank the other members of the board and also our panel of advisors not only for their help but more importantly their time in helping this project to steadily progress.

Thank you to everyone for taking this project forward.

Ian Wallace Chairman
24 March 2009



theGuidLife: Changes Afoot?

In order to keep the site up to date, and in line with current activity, we are considering a re-write. Again? I hear you cry. The reason we have taken this decision is because of the comments we have received from our users over the past year. If we had a pound for every time someone said “wouldn’t it be good if the site could do this.....” or “why can’t I do that.....” We all know that in this day and age, technology which is only a week old is almost already out of date! And, we have to hold our hands up and admit, that the more people become familiar with technology, the more they demand of it. Wouldn’t it be great if the site had the facility to put up video’s, have moving still photographs that can be seen any time, and not just what’s been put up recently, what about a local weather module, or a local news feed, so that you can scroll through local news and events and stop them when you want to have a look? We would like to be able to offer groups the opportunity to customise their spaces, to put up different colours and pictures, to change the font size and design. The new changes would also make the site more

accessible by having the facility to have larger fonts for those who are visually impaired or have difficulty reading small print, and users will have the option to “listen” to web pages if it should be required. We’re hopeful that all these features will be available if our applications for funding the re-write are successful. At the time of writing this report, a consultant has been engaged to undertake an evaluation of the site, looking at the number of people who visit it, what pages they’re using, what they like, and what they don’t like, and most importantly of all, what new things they would like to see on the site. The evaluation is being carried out in partnership with Online Borders. The evaluation will be completed by the end of April and from there thGuidLife and Online Borders will be submitting applications to various funders to ask for money for the re-write. The two new sites will be hosted by SHOW (Scottish Health on the Web). This will be free of charge, which will reduce our running costs and allow both sites to become more sustainable—allowing us to be around and serving our communities for many years to come.

theGuidLife: Analysing the Traffic

We’ve recently installed a tool onto the website called Google Analytics, which helps us to keep a track on the visitors to the site. The reports tell us things like how many people visit the site in a day, what they look at, how long they’re on for and how they got there! Big brother is watching you?? Not at all - we can’t actually see individual people, just numbers of people. It helps us to see what sort of items people are interested in and lets us adapt articles to satisfy the audience. One of the things that’s really interesting is how people get to the web site. The analytics shows us whether people just typed www.theguidlife.net into their browser, or whether they searched for key words that got them onto the site. It also shows us where in the world people are visiting us from! Recently, we’ve had visitors from America, Canada, Spain, Australia, New Zealand, Norway and many other countries! This table shows where people have visited us from in the last couple of weeks - what we don’t know is whether they visited us by accident, or

whether they knew we were here! If anyone would like further information on the analytics, contact the community manager.

Country	Visits
United Kingdom	1156
United States	14
New Zealand	3
Canada	3
Australia	2
Russia	2
Nigeria	1
Italy	1
United Arab Emirates	1
Pakistan	1

theGuidLife Celebrity Blogger Speaks Out.

Life is a Cabaret old bloggers come join The Guid Life Cabaret, come hear the banter come read the blog, the news, the gossip and take part in Rural Lanarkshire’s ON LINE COMMUNITY. **If it’s going on in Rural South Lanarkshire it’s in The Guid Life.**

The Guid Life blog has been **AWESOME FUN** and exciting to see it grow and develop as members who said they could not go on and blog are now frequent bloggers, some of them are getting too damn guid, the original concept of Guid News stories is still alive and kicking and the blog still tries hard to bring a smile to your torn face on a dreary Scottish morning. No, I do not mean you Community Manager!!

The range of topics is now wide and varied and it can be quite surprising what generates a response, some come via the blog and some via private message.

It has been and still is a challenge to get members to go on and blog I still get lots of emails with the phrase “for your blog” some items I can and others well just lets say that the Moderators would be called into action, hopefully the emailers after some ALVO training will soon be proud to stand up at their next Community event and say “**I am a Guid Life blogger**” however there is now a dedicated team of **NEETS.... bloggers Now in Entertainment, Excitement and Training for Stardom**, this team of sad lonely dysfunctional contributors may meet one day if they are ever released back into mainstream society or even Rural South Lanarkshire to start with!!

It has been a pleasure to blog with them on The Guid Life, and they have become On Line Friends. I am even being told that some of the Guid Life Board now read the blog, it is satisfying to know that the blog is engaging with the older generation (Bet that gets edited! Note to Community Manager: - Just reduce the font size and they will not be able to read it!)

There are no **Community boundaries On Line**, you do not need to show your passport as you engage with members from all over Rural Lanarkshire, **The Guid Life helps build bridges between Communities and Connects Communities On**

Line which is very important.

It is Guid to know that there are thriving communities all over Rural South Lanarkshire connecting together via The Guid Life. DJ Uthie is now “boogieing” in far of foreign pastures such as Carstairs and Newbigging, and is now fluent in the local community lingo thanks to The GuidLife, the local Carnwath community is thankful for the peace and quiet.

The next challenge will be to get the new overseas members to join the blog and The GuidLife will then have its own On Line Homecoming Scotland.

Once you get started blogging it becomes easy and the Site gives you loads of Topics to reply to, it does not take long unless you are trying to blog an exciting, original witty, hilarious article (oh come on some have been wicked).

Remember do not ask what The GuidLife On Line Community can do for you, ask yourself what you can do for The GuidLife On Line Community, and if you have not already joined, get off your..... sorry cannot say that.....lets start again... please log on to www.theguidlife.net and become a member of what is probably the best on line community engagement web site in the world!! This report has been checked for WMD... words of mass deception and has passed the “Coterminous, stakeholder engagement guidelines’ attaining a mark of 103% for bull human waste material and 118% for posterior kissing.

