

Christian Outlook On Lochalsh



SCRIPTURE UNION
SCOTLAND

Christian Outlook On Lochalsh

(COOL)

ANNUAL REPORT 2001-2002

COOL, in Association with Scripture Union Scotland,
is an interdenominational project
working with the local church,
to reach the young people of our area
with the Christian message
and provide social and recreational opportunities,
through the employment of a full time Youth Worker.

Background

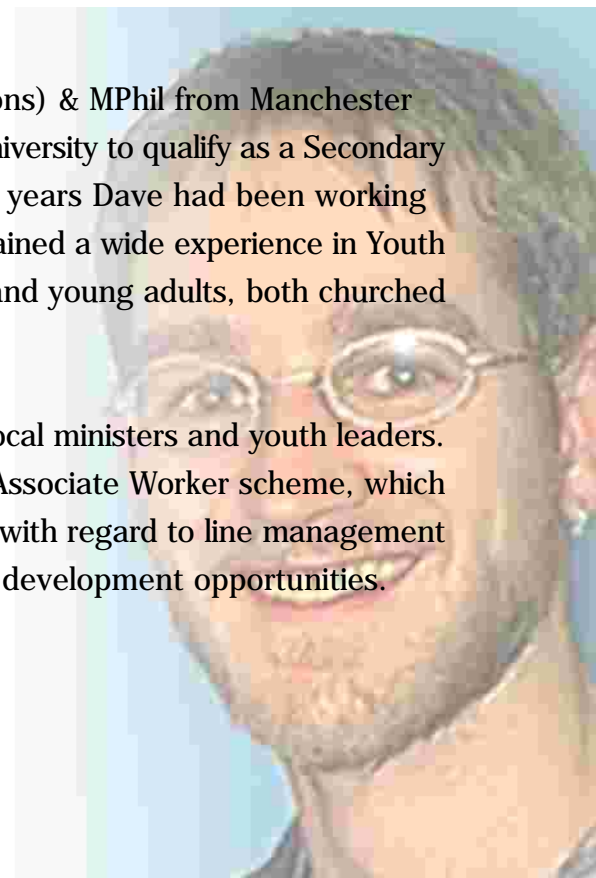
Christian Outlook on Lochalsh (COOL) is an interdenominational project in partnership with the Scripture Union Associate Worker Scheme through which we have employed a Youth Worker to reach out to the young people in this very rural area. COOL aims to cover the areas of Lochalsh, Lochcarron, Applecross, Glenelg and South Skye (i.e. the Plockton High School catchment area) with a combined population of approximately 7,000 and covering approximately 1,700 square miles. Public transport is very limited with no local evening service and much of the population living in isolated rural locations. About 365 secondary school pupils in the area attend Plockton High School.

Providing opportunities for youth in our rural area presents its own challenges. Due to the sparse population, lack of public transport and long distances involved there are few opportunities for youth. The facilities that are on offer are sited in the larger villages, often some 40 miles apart. The young people are taken by bus to school, which means that there is little scope for after school activities. Although this is a rural area the social problems often associated with urban life are also present here. Alcohol and drugs are accessible to the youth in this area and are misused by some.

In August 2000 a committee was formed from members of local congregations to work towards employing a Youth Worker in our area. During that time, at regular monthly intervals, the committee met completing the setting up formalities. January 2001 saw the official launch of COOL, which was followed by our recognition as a charity in Scotland. We were able to advertise the post in June and interview in July. Following this the appointment of Dave Mockett as our Youth Worker was made. He took up post at the end of November 2001.

Dave was brought up in Gloucester; he gained a BSc (Hons) & MPhil from Manchester Metropolitan University before proceeding to Strathclyde University to qualify as a Secondary School Teacher in Computer Science. For the previous 3 years Dave had been working as a Youth Worker with Airdrie Baptist Church where he gained a wide experience in Youth work, heading up the church's work with children, teens and young adults, both churched and unchurched and working in the local schools.

Dave is supported in this work by the COOL Committee, local ministers and youth leaders. Scripture Union is a partner in the project through their Associate Worker scheme, which ensures that the worker has all the necessary safeguards with regard to line management and peer support, whilst also offering many training and development opportunities.



Report On Youth Worker's First Year of Work

Schools Work

The Rector of Plockton High School has been particularly supportive of Dave and has welcomed his support & involvement in the school. Dave is part of the 'Christian Support



Team' for the school, which includes the local ministers and priest, as well as Dave. Dave has also been involved in RE & PSE lessons as well as supporting the school more informally during breaks and visiting those pupils who stay in the hostel once a week. He also runs a weekly SU Club on Friday lunchtimes.

At the beginning of March a weekend away was organised to the SU Centre in Alltnacriche. Twenty-eight people attended a very worthwhile and enjoyable weekend. It

helped Dave get to know the group and form relationships with them and also helped him acclimatise to Highland Culture!

Work with the Feeder Primary Schools has been limited mainly to doing Assemblies, but in June, Dave was able to meet with the P7's and present them with the SU booklet 'It's Your Move', which explores different feelings & emotions about moving up to Secondary School.

Church Work

Three Youth events have now been held called 'Worship on the Pavement'. These have been mixed media events with interaction in worship and teaching. They have been well attended and well received, both by the young people and the supporting churches.

During the summer holidays Dave was invited to lead the teenage program for the Lochcarron Scripture Union Holiday Club hosted by the Lochcarron Church of Scotland. Afternoon activities included hill-walking, canoeing, prawn fishing, outdoor sports and a barbecue. There were followed each evening by 'Encounter', a multimedia extravaganza of games, activities and music looking at people who met Jesus as witnessed by John in his gospel.

In September Dave led a day for Primary children in Dornie, hosted by the Kintail & Glenelg mission weekend. The theme of this day was 'Superheroes' and included a range of activities from singing to stories, games to crafts.





Youth Clubs

Support and direction has been given to a number of different Youth Clubs in the area. In Kyle the club has restarted after a 9 month break. Dave has been meeting with the leaders giving them ideas and pointers as to how to run the club as well as a lot of fresh ideas and impetus.

Support has also been offered to the Kyleakin Youth Club and a new club has started in Glenelg where Dave has been meeting with the leaders, encouraging, guiding and supporting them in this venture, as well as attending the first few club nights.

Technology

Thanks to grants received from the Co-op Community Dividend Scheme & the LEC we were able to purchase a laptop computer and video projector. This has greatly helped Dave in his work



THIS PROJECT
HAS BEEN
ASSISTED BY A
CO-OP COMMUNITY
DIVIDEND AWARD

and presentations. He produces very high standards of presentations, which enables him to communicate effectively and attractively with the young people that he works with. His multimedia presentations are very much extravaganzas and very professional.

Objectives & Way Forward for Next Year

Strong links have already been developed with Plockton High School and it is hoped that they can be developed with the local primary schools in the coming year. We are particularly keen to develop contact with the P7 & 6's for Religious Assemblies, RE & PSE lessons and multimedia based teaching resources have now been made available to P6 and above. It is again hoped to be able to provide literature for the P7's 'Moving Up' to Secondary Schools.

Training with local Volunteer Youth Leaders has so far been done in an informal basis and with each individual Youth Club. It is hoped that a few formal training sessions could be arranged with the SU Highland Regional Worker to bring the Youth Clubs leaders together for teaching, brainstorming, sharing of 'good practices' etc.

It is planned to have a Youth weekend away at the end of March to the SU Centre in Alltnacriche. This was a very worthwhile event last year and it is anticipated that more interest will be generated this year for this event. It fosters a sense of unity and social responsibility within the young people as well as providing a time of relaxation and enjoyment and we have already booked the whole centre which sleeps a maximum of forty-seven.



Continued support will be offered to the local churches in the area for their Youth Fellowships & Bible Classes. At present the Youth Worker has assisted the local ministers in starting these groups and offers support, information and manpower as well as encouragement for them. We are also looking at the possibility of providing resources for the local churches in the area in the form of leaflets, booklets etc., one example of which has already been produced and used by churches in Skye & Ross-shire. Dave is also working with SU in developing resources for use in Schools' SU Clubs across Scotland and he plans to pilot this in the local High School.

Associated with the above plans for the coming year are also the following 5 'SMART' objectives: (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Tested)

1. Further Develop links with Primary Schools
2. Continue Volunteer Youth Leader Training with SU Highland Regional Worker
3. Increase the number of Youth Rallies to 2 per term
4. Organise a weekend trip away to an Outdoor Centre for recreational/social purposes
5. Develop a pack in conjunction with SU for use in SU clubs across Scotland and pilot in local High School.

The financial report is also available on request.
Please email finance@coolsu.fsnet.co.uk for more details.