



Christian Outlook On Lochalsh

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Annual Report
2002 *to* 2003





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.



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Contents

BACKGROUND	2
YEAR TWO OF YOUTH WORKER'S WORK	3
THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2002 / 03	6
OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING YEAR	7
FUNDING AND FINANCIAL FORECAST	9
OVERSIGHT OF COOL	10
FINANCIAL STATEMENT	11

Christian Outlook on Lochalsh (COOL) is an interdenominational project in partnership with Scripture Union Scotland through the Associate Worker Scheme, under which has been employed a full time youth and schools' worker to work amongst the young people of this very rural area of North West Scotland.

COOL aims to cover all the villages and ten primary schools which currently send their children to Plockton High School. This incorporates Applecross to the north, Glenelg to the south, together with the parish of Strath and Sleat on the Isle of Skye. Within that region there is a combined population of approximately 7000 people (including over 800 school children) and covers a geographical area of about 300 square miles. Public transport is limited with no local evening bus or train service and much of the population lives in isolated locations. Plockton High currently has 365 on the school role.

Providing opportunities for youth in our rural setting presents its own challenges. Due to the sparse population, lack of public transport and long distances between villages, there are few local opportunities for young people. The facilities that are available tend to be sited in the larger centres of population (such as Kyle) which can be as far as 50 miles from the outlying villages. As the majority of students at the high school travel by school bus, after school activities are restricted. Typical social issues of the twenty first century are as problematic in the Scottish Highlands



as in urban Britain: drugs and alcohol are easily accessible and misused by some.

In August 2000 a committee was formed from members of local Christian congregations to work towards employing a youth worker in the area. During that time the committee met at regular monthly intervals until, in January 2001, COOL was launched and registered as a charity in Scotland. The post of youth worker was advertised the following June with interviews in July. Mr. Dave Mockett was duly appointed and in November 2001 took up the post of youth worker for COOL.

Dave was brought up in Gloucester and gained a BSc(Hons) and MPhil at the Manchester Metropolitan University. He then studied for a PGCE (Secondary) at Strathclyde University, before working for three years as the Youth Worker at Airdrie Baptist Church, heading up the young people's ministry, both within and without the church and in local schools. He is married to Ruth and they have one son named Joshua.

Dave is supported in his work for COOL by the management committee, local ministers and youth leaders. As an SU Associate Worker he is also supported nationally by SU's extensive network of schools workers. The Associate Worker Scheme offers training and development, management support to the committee and a team of workers throughout Scotland, bringing all the benefits of a national body to the local communities.

YEAR TWO OF YOUTH WORKER'S WORK

SCHOOLS' WORK: HIGH SCHOOL

Dave has continued to have good access to Plockton High School as part of the Christian Support Team, together with local church leaders. He continues to be involved in RE and PSE lessons which this year included the S3 PSE sex education programme, S1 RE, thinking about who we are and S2 RE, looking at Christian Morality. In

March he co-ordinated the Ethics and Belief day conference for S6, which he is helping to establish as an annual event. During the spring term he oversaw a voluntary smoking cessation programme in the school, a government led initiative known as 'Stynx.' Weekly visits to the school hostel continue and Dave makes himself available informally within the school during lunchtimes. An extra-curricular club ,

known as 'Dave's Club,' meets once a week at lunchtime for students to drop in for games and teaching.

His contributions have been much valued by the head teacher and other members of staff as well as there being an obvious developing rapport with the young people. One teacher recently commented, "...many thanks for the excellent input that you provided to my S1/2 RME classes over the past month — as an active member of the Christian faith community, you

are filling a major gap in the youngsters' education that is simply left blank in some schools. The pupils always enjoy your visits and are always very enthusiastic when they learn you're coming in."



In March and again in November weekends away have been organised to Alltnacriche, the Scripture Union Highland Outdoor Centre near Aviemore. These events are proving to be very popular and a strong leadership team under Dave is developing, with yet another weekend booked for March 2004. The weekends offer opportunities to further the personal and social development of individuals, to learn more

about the Christian faith and to enjoy a good time away together. In conjunction with these weekends, COOL has

also been able to offer financial assistance to students for whom attendance would otherwise prove difficult.

At the end of October a very successful Christian Focus Week was held in the High School for which Dave had the help of the SU Highland Regional Worker, Colin Carmichael, and a band from England called 'Samson.'

"you are filling a major gap in the youngsters' education"

The week was well received in the school with various team members being involved in RE and music classes as well as assemblies and lunchtime meetings, the school disco and culminating in a full evening of music, storytelling and multimedia based activity.



they move up to secondary. In addition, one morning was set aside during the Christian Focus Week for the primaries to attend and over one hundred children enjoyed an hour and a half with Samson.

The year closes with the news that Dave has accepted invitations to join the School Boards for Kyle Primary and Glenelg Primary as a co-opted member.

SCHOOLS WORK: PRIMARIES

Work with the primaries has increased with many opportunities to take assemblies in all of the feeder primaries and contribute to the development of Religious Education for children. In some cases this has led to further Christian teaching sessions following requests from head teachers. Dave again took part in the familiarisation programme for the shift



to Secondary School, presenting each P7 child with a copy of the Scripture Union publication, 'Its Your Move,' which was funded by local congregations, for which COOL is able to act as a representative body. The pupils all now have the opportunity to know who Dave is before

CHURCH WORK

The 'Worship on the Pavement' events have continued with seven being held during the year. These are now based in Kyle unless invites come from elsewhere. There is a core group of young folk who are regulars, some of whom are becoming more involved in the worship, often with an opportunity to practice the music the evening before. A team of leaders under Dave's direction is now well established and the events are well attended and much appreciated both by the young people themselves (many of whom do not have church backgrounds) and by the local churches. Some even came down from Portree to the October WOTP to hear Samson play.

For the second year, Dave led the teenage programme within the Scripture Union MegaQuest Holiday Club at Lochcarron in July, entitled 'Revelation.' Indeed, Scripture Union invited him and he agreed to take over the leadership of the whole week when the Team Leader took ill at the last moment. His leadership, particularly at such short notice, was much

valued. Revelation itself took the form of afternoon outdoor activities (including orienteering, canoeing, sea fishing and rock climbing) followed by a meal and an evening teaching programme. His technical skills, particularly in multimedia presentation and video production, ensured a high standard throughout and a faithful group of ten youngsters about to move up to Plockton High really appreciated the week. Following this and a week at Lendrick Muir (see below), he led the teaching at Kintail and Glenelg Church of Scotland Holiday Club, 'Seaside Rock,' for over fifty children from the Shiel area.

YOUTH GROUPS

Dave continues to support existing youth programmes within the churches in Lochcarron, Kyle, Plockton, Glenelg and Kyleakin. The Glenelg youth group was a new venture that Dave helped to pioneer by supporting the local youth leaders and that has led to a regular Bible study for the leaders as well as a new Sunday morning class for teenagers, on top of the weekly Saturday evening social events. Although the groups that Dave currently supports are all affiliated to churches or run by church folk, they are the sole youth groups within the communities and naturally open to all of any or no faith.

At community level Dave is now sitting on the Lochalsh New Schools Community Liaison Group with a remit to develop out of school youth activities and investigate the possibility of setting up youth cafés. The group is part of another initiative from the Scottish Executive

and is widely supported by Lochalsh schools.

The purchase of PowerPoint this year has enabled Dave to further develop his presentation skills, and the equipment now available to him ensures a very high standard in all aspects of the work, making it both eye catching and absorbing.

PARTNERSHIP WITH SU SCOTLAND

Dave has attended staff meetings and conferences where the opportunity to share with others the vision and practical ideas for the work occurs and to discuss items of mutual interest. His skills have been appreciated by Scripture Union for whom he has designed the new Associate Worker Scheme logo.



During July Dave was invited by Scripture Union to lead a week's holiday for fifty P5 and P6 children from Highland Region at Lendrick Muir near Kinross. Several local children attended this holiday which was much enjoyed and Dave was asked to lead the same holiday next year.



WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

Over the past year, the committee has met with Dave every four to six weeks for an update on the work and to provide him with support and encouragement. A number of members have helped in various capacities on residential weekends. Dave continues to meet weekly with Malcolm. They have been joined this year by Jill Clayton, replacing Rev. Walter Ritchie who moved away in February. It is hoped in the next year to look at the working of the committee in particular with reference to forward planning and sustainability.

As the midway point of Dave's initial contract approached, we set aside time to revisit our vision statement. We were encouraged that we have remained true to our original vision and therefore, with minor adjustments, re-adopted our vision statement.

“TO ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF LOCHALSH AND SURROUNDING AREA, HELPING THEM TO ESTABLISH AND STRENGTHEN THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. THIS WILL BE DONE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE ASSOCIATE WORKER SCHEME OF SU SCOTLAND, WITH THE ULTIMATE AIM OF BRINGING MORE PEOPLE TO GOD”

There have been a number of changes to the management committee this year.



We were saddened in August by the death of our treasurer and trustee, Mrs. Ann Macrae, who was with the project from the outset and who contributed greatly to the initial developments.

Rev. John Murdo MacDonald and Rev. Roddie Rankin have now become Trustees to COOL.

We have also lost the services of our acting treasurer and fund raiser, Mrs. Fiona Talbot, another long standing committee member who has moved out of the area. Our other fund raiser and also Child Protection Officer, Mrs. Susan MacLaren, has been unable to continue on the committee due to family and work commitments. As Child Protection Officer for the Highlands, Susan remains as an adviser to us and has continued some fund raising applications which she began before stepping down.

We are grateful for all their input and we also give thanks for the provision of a new treasurer and others willing to take on responsibility for fund raising. In September, Mrs. Alison Beaton became treasurer, working a brief overlap with Fiona. Mr. Geoff Venables and Mr. John Clayton have also joined our support team for the purposes of fund raising and research. They have already begun approaching organisations for grant funding, as well

as adding impetus to raising our profile amongst local supporters.

We continue in partnership with Scripture Union Scotland through the Associate Worker Scheme. SU have undergone restructuring during 2003 creating new regional teams, of which Dave is part of the North Team. During a period of transition Mr. Colin Carmichael took over

from Mr. Kenny McKie on the committee in his new appointment as SU Highlands and Western Isles and Orkney Regional Worker. Colin has been a regular at committee meetings and as we close this year, it has been agreed that Colin will formally take over Line Management in January 2004 and becomes our first point of call with SU nationally.



OBJECTIVES FOR THE COMING YEAR

With Dave's new involvement on the Lochalsh New Schools Community Liaison Group, we have access to a broader range of services and funding for community based projects. We would like to encourage this relationship and play a key role in the development of the group's remit.

This year will see an increase in our commitment to Primary Work which we see as key to the work in years to come with future youth. As assembly work becomes more regular in a number of schools and Dave sits on two school boards, COOL is able to provide both

specific and general support to education throughout the district.

The work in the High School is now well established and we look to continue and increase our support for the staff and pupils. Specifically we would like to investigate the role and requirements of the chaplaincy team and address any issues arising.

Youth group support also continues, not only in programming (such as through our weekends away) but also in support for the volunteer youth leaders. We would like to develop the network of these leaders throughout the area for mutual support and sharing of ideas,

whilst looking to support any new youth initiatives arising within the communities.

It is with two views that we look at the balance sheet and the list of committee members. We remain grateful for all the provision of funds and volunteer work over the past year, but are conscious that this cannot be taken for granted. Next year sees our last major cheque from Lloyds TSB and the committee is not entirely representative of the district, most notably with regard to Skye. We would like to see a broader support base from local people develop throughout the year, both practically and financially.

Finally, the committee is not unaware that we have already begun year three out of a four year contract, and during the year we would seek to give thought to the continuation of the project after year four.

SMART POINTS

To keep our focus for our objectives, we have once again specified the following SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Tested) points:

- To draw up a year plan to improve the effectiveness of the COOL management committee, seeking professional guidance as appropriate.
- Arrange two link days for volunteer youth leaders for support, encouragement and training.
- Increase the number of local summer activity clubs from two to three, and increase the target age range of the current clubs to include secondary participation.
- Assess the chaplaincy requirements within Plockton High School and implement as required.
- Attend the Lochalsh New Schools Community Liaison Group committee meetings, in particular to investigate the feasibility of providing a youth café.

FUNDING AND FINANCIAL FORECAST

During the year 2002/2003 we were thankful to receive the second of a three year grant of £7000 from Lloyds TSB.

Throughout the year there were special events which included The Christian Focus Week and the 6th Form

Ethics Day and the committee were most grateful for the support from local

churches and individuals, both financial and in giving of their time and prayer.

Local regular committed giving reached a total of £8065. Other donations and giving made up the rest of the income.

we are dependant on donations from individuals and churches

The committee is most thankful for the continued increase in local giving but are aware that this

will be the final year of the Lloyds TSB grant and that there is a need to encourage further regular committed giving.

PROJECTED FUNDING FOR 2004

	Income [£]	Expenditure [£]
Grant from Lloyds TSB	7000	
Pledged Donations	8500	
Gift Aid from Inland Revenue	2500	
Other Gifts	2500	
Worker's Salary & Employment Costs		21000
Travel Expenses		3250
Youth work Expenses		1000
Administration		1000
Capital Expenditure		500
Insurance		250
	20500	27000

We wish to thank all those who have contributed to this project, whether as a regular giver or as an one-off donation. These are estimated figures and do not include such things as subsidising weekend activities for young people or special events etc.. For these items we are dependant on donations from individuals and churches and grants from Trusts and Organisations. The project was initially for four years but as we hope to continue the project beyond this continued funding will be required.

OVERSIGHT OF COOL

THE COMMITTEE

Chair:

Mr. Malcolm Gardiner (*Trustee*)

Lochalsh Christian Fellowship, Kyle

Treasurer:

Mrs. Alison Beaton

Free Church of Scotland, Plockton & Kyle

Secretary:

Mrs. Jill Clayton (*Trustee*)

Church of Scotland, Lochalsh

Mrs. Alison Angus

Church of Scotland, Lochcarron

Mr. Colin Carmichael

Scripture Union Scotland

Mr. Noel Gordon

Church of Scotland, Lochalsh

Mrs. Ruth Harris

Lochalsh Christian Fellowship, Kyle

Mrs. Linda Inglis

Free Church of Scotland, Plockton & Kyle

ADVISERS TO THE COMMITTEE

Rev. Roddie Rankin (*Trustee*)

Plockton & Kyle Free Church of Scotland

Rev. John MacDonald (*Trustee*)

Lochalsh Church of Scotland

Mrs. Susan MacLaren

Development Officer, Highland Child Protection Committee

Mr. John Clayton (*Funding*)

Mr. Geoff Venables (*Funding*)

The Committee have adopted the Evangelical Alliance Statement of Faith.