

# Granttown YMCA Community Centre Annual Report 2020



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## Chairman's Report 2020

The Centre has had a busy, exciting and very productive year with the main focus of our work being the implementation of the Community 1st project. We received funding from LEADER and Awards for All to establish a Soft Play Cafe and a Community Cinema within the Centre. One side of the Old Library was converted into a flexible Soft Play area as a resource for young children and their mothers. The old Games Room, a cold barren space, has been converted into an elegant little Theatre with a stage and tiered seating and professional level cinema equipment. Working to very tight timelines, we opened the Soft Play cafe last summer and were due to open the Cinema in April this year. Sadly, due to the current pandemic, this opening has been delayed. However, we are pleased to have had two concert bookings for the Theatre before the lockdown and have been able to show off our lovely new seating. Our focus for the coming year is to progress our plans for a new toilet suite and the installation of heating in the main hall.

We are pleased to report that we have increased our number of new regular bookings. These include Netball, Yoga, Soft Play, the local branch of a political party and a church group. We have also developed our provision for children's birthday parties with the Bouncy Castle available in the main hall and the Soft Play facility as an option for younger children. The joy of seeing the Centre busy and buzzing is a great reward for all our hard work

Our Fundraising events have included a pop-up charity shop, two very successful quiz evenings, the Tea tent at Motorman, a Prosecco Afternoon Tea and Evening and a Christmas Fair. We continue to hold a monthly Community Cafe and Pancake Brunch. We are very grateful to all our volunteers and to the Community for their on-going support and generosity. Without you, we wouldn't be here!

Youth Work is a core focus of the Grantown YMCA Community Centre. I must express our grateful thanks to the energetic and committed youth workers who run our very successful Youth Clubs. They work together as an excellent team ably led by Louise James, supported by Sinead Whyte and volunteers Rich Moeller and Irene Krawczynska. Without their dedication, we would be unable to offer our highly valued youth provision. In addition, Sinead has also been working in partnership with the Grammar School, carrying on the work of our Youth Development worker, offering further support to some of our young people. We are particularly grateful to Louise for taking over the lead role of our youth work following the resignation of our Youth Development worker last summer.

We were delighted to welcome a new Board member this year. Irene Krawczynska has supported youth work at the Grantown YMCA Community Centre for many years and we were very pleased to have her return firstly as a volunteer with the Youth Clubs and now, in addition, as a Board member. We are fortunate to have retained all our Board members this year, Pearl Bradshaw, Jim Beveridge, Naomi Miles, Isla Game and the Office Bearers Roger McLean (Vice Chair), Seonaid Green (Treasurer) and Ann Hadley (Secretary). I would like to thank them all for giving voluntarily and so generously of their time to ensure the continued running and development of the Centre.

Last, but certainly not least, I must thank our employees, Heather Fraser, Karen O'Connor and Chloe Anderson. Heather is key to the successful development of the Centre. Her loyalty, hard work and unfailing cheerfulness provide an excellent point of contact between the Centre and the community. Karen's loyalty and conscientiousness is highly appreciated as is her willingness to go above and beyond in times of need! Chloe is a new member to the team who is giving her time and expertise to support the development of our new Soft Play provision. We are delighted to welcome her to the Community Centre family.

I hope that you enjoy seeing something of our work and activities in the following pages.

*Claire Thom*



After serving the local community every Friday for almost 6 years it was with much regret that we found ourselves having to reduce our opening hours to once a month half-way through the year because of a lack of volunteers before finally closing it completely just before the Covid-19 lockdown.

The Café has made a considerable contribution to the Centre funds over the years and we are most grateful for all the support that we have received from the local community and from regular visitors to the town.



It was a great favourite with many folks and we were truly fortunate to have had the help of Joan Scott, Jillian Hooker, Margaret Lamb and Ann Green who assisted in the kitchen and served in the Café, ensuring that we could be open every week. We would also like to thank the rota of volunteers who baked cakes for us each week, and special thanks are due to Nan Fraser who baked some of her legendary pancakes for us every fortnight.

## Community Christmas Lunch

Another highly successful Christmas Lunch was held this year which was very much appreciated by all our guests. Not only was great traditional food served but there was also most enjoyable entertainment and fun games.

Tony and Seonaid Green who organised the event would particularly like to thank Betty & David Lambie, Elspeth & Graham Sage and Rosie Fisher for assisting with the food; Eileen & Gordon Sutherland who presented special videos of Grantown in the snow along with images of those who had attended previous Christmas Lunches. Eileen also took special photos of each guest and Alison & Tegan Gallacher did a great job organising games assisted by Eileen.



Special thanks go to Nellie Bruce who donated her very tasty trifle as well as a pavlova, fruit salad and goodies for the guests' take-home gift bags. Many thanks to all for a great day.

## Pancake Brunches

The popular Pancake Brunches continued this year with sales boosted by a delivery service to the High Street traders. The Brunch morning is generally a frenetic few hours for our volunteers but we have had some laughs (don't ask what happened to the Nutella jar in the microwave) and the income that it generates makes it all worthwhile. We started the year with two established teams, each team has a pancake maker, a fillings 'chef' and a team of servers, tea makers and dish washers. Both teams were well established and generally the mornings run like clockwork but due to retirements, these teams have suffered from a bit of disruption. Fortunately, new volunteers have come forward and we will get back into an efficient regime but we are eternally grateful to our loyal customers for



coping with the odd forgotten order, brick hard bacon and semi-frozen berry as the new volunteers get bedded in.

We see the Brunches as not just a significant fund-raiser for the Centre but as a community activity that brings people together and provides a volunteering opportunity. We are particularly proud of, and grateful to, our young servers who help regularly and are all still in Primary school. All of our volunteers need a very special vote of thanks for doing all they do under pressure. It can be hard work and is not for the faint-hearted! A very special thanks too to our many loyal supporters. It wouldn't be worthwhile without you. We hope to see you again once we reopen, hopefully in the not too distant future.

*Roger Mclean/Claire Thom*

## Youth Club Report

Over the last year the Youth Club have continued to provide weekly sessions for Primary 6-7 and Secondary 1-3 pupils. The Youth Team consists of 2 staff and 2 Volunteers as well as occasional parent helpers. Our activities include indoor and outdoor games which encourage team playing, fitness and most importantly fun, arts & crafts, music, dance and cooking to enhance creativity, independent thinking and socialising / working in smaller groups.

Throughout the year we have had skilled people coming in and providing sessions involving health & beauty pamper nights, cake making and decorating. This is something we intend to do on a more regular basis as they proved very popular with both boys and girls.



We ran a summer club over 3 weeks for our younger members providing fun sports games, art, jewellery making and on the last week we had a sports day.



The Club took part in the Centre's Christmas Fayre. We were able to offer a raffle with superb donations from many local businesses. We raised valuable funds which allowed us to purchase an Xbox console and tv. Some of our club members volunteered on the day and helped with running the games we had on offer. We entered a Christmas tree into the local Episcopal Church Christmas tree event, the tree was designed around our activities, decorated with baubles containing pictures of all the club members – we were placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the people's choice category.



This year the Youth Club were also able to offer services to Grantown Grammar School where Sinead worked in conjunction with the Guidance Department – this is Sinead’s report on her time.

During term one at Grantown Grammar School, I spent some time working with the guidance department to identify a need for more intensive support within the school. Potentially a group of young people who needed help or an individual who might benefit from having some time or a programme of work directly for them. As such one young person was identified - this particular young person had been attending the senior youth club regularly and was known to the youth workers. On identifying the young person we conducted a series of one to ones over a number of weeks - these one to ones included discussing feelings, any issues that were arising - either at home to within school, and identifying strategies for coping with difficult situations. The young person, after having quite a rocky start to the term, managed to make it through the term successfully and asked towards the end of the programme if it would be possible in the future to set up a group that they could attend regularly with the youth worker in school to continue with support.

We also established a lunchtime drop in youth club - it was hoped that this group would provide a safe space for any young people who felt that lunchtimes at school were a bit overwhelming, deciding what to do and who to spend time with. The group could have done with more time to get running but it did end up with a couple of regulars who seemed to really benefit from the opportunity to have an adult on hand to talk to who wasn't a teacher or parent. This drop in would potentially be a good foundation on which to create some lasting and meaningful relationships within the school in the hope that they could transfer over to the community centre and the youth work happening there.

We have had a very successful year with Youth Club as member numbers continue to grow, we have a good working Youth Team who are able to provide consistent provision of the weekly sessions providing a fun, inclusive and safe environment for the young people of the area. Our intention is to try and expand the provision we have in place currently by possibly offering clubs to other age groups, running sessions during Easter, Summer and October holidays, working more with the Grammar School, establishing a link/working relationship with the Primary School and running more activity workshops with external skilled professionals.

*Louise James*



## Y-Play

The Soft Play Cafe for under 5's and their carers opened last summer. The plan was to create a resource that would be run by the carers in the direction of their choice. The initiative has been led by our Centre Co-ordinator, Heather Fraser, supported by Chloe Anderson, a qualified Child Care specialist. This report was submitted by Y-Play user and Board member, Isla Game.



'The soft play has managed to create a core set of volunteers to run sessions and Heather has worked hard to ensure that they have the opportunity to get together to bring forward new ideas. We have also found that more engagement with parents of the soft play has given us great feedback and ideas to work from. We will continue to keep up this high level of engagement either face to face or with simple questionnaires in the future. Chloe has also worked extremely hard to keep a rota of volunteers working efficiently and is very much keen to keep engaging with parents and children. She has a great rapport with everyone involved.

From this feedback there are plans to:

- Increase our food offerings to parents and children
- Offer more themed sessions: Storytelling, bookbug style sessions etc
- Offer special events during key points in the year (Easter, Halloween, Christmas etc)
- Courses for parents such as the 'Mini First Aid'
- Look at our pricing structure and potentially offer an annual membership.
- Occasionally use the bouncy castle in conjunction with y-play sessions
- Work with the cinema team to put together potential 'baby sensory screening sessions'

## What we are doing now:

We are keeping engaged with parents and carers on the facebook page by sharing tips on how to keep children entertained during lockdown, offering links to live bookbug sessions and other items of interest to parents and children during this difficult time.

Obviously, with the current state of affairs in mind, there will need to be a full self-assessment regarding regulation going forward. If/when we are allowed to resume soft play this will include: cleaning schedules, maximum occupancy per session, hand sanitising stations etc. This will be dependent on any official guidance and guidelines.

Many children and parents will be missing this important resource in Grantown. Feedback from past questionnaires have shown us that parents feel safe and comfortable at the YM soft play sessions, where they feel that they can bond with other parents and forge new networks of friendship and support. The advantages for their children includes the opportunity for them to socialise, make new friends, increase their confidence, learn new problem solving skills and much more. The Y-Play offers a setting where everyone can benefit on an emotional level.'

*Isla Game*

# Cinema

## Quiz nights/local money raising events

The film quiz night was a great success, with many thanks to everyone involved and we raised a grand total of £779 which was fantastic. It was good publicity too. Our plans would be to organize more events like this maybe twice a year.

## Regional Screen Scotland

Having met with Robert Livingston who works with Regional Screen Scotland and who also runs the Screen Machine. We managed to get some interesting leads on additional training and support going forward, this included:

- Working together with the Screen Machine to do cross promotion of our screenings and theirs. Allowing us to spread the message of our community cinema and ensuring that we don't have any crossovers of screenings.
- North East Arts can offer guidance on training, schemes and licensing
- Interfilm Club is a school organisation potentially offering films for no fee
- Regional Screen Scotland can offer advice on where we can potentially claim additional funding in the future



## Volunteers and training

We have so far managed to obtain interest from 11 people who would be happy to volunteer for future screenings. With this in mind, we are planning to pull together a user friendly training manual for all to use. Once things get back to normal, we will start meeting with volunteers on a regular basis to discuss screenings and projects.

## Packages

We hope to encourage more diverse use of the space by offering packages for

birthdays, group meetings e.t.c Pricing and exactly what the packages involves will need to be decided.

## Community engagement/Opening

With this currently on hold until further notice, we still hope to plan a private and public opening of the cinema. Engaging with key social groups from the community including care homes, Grantown Society, Schools e.t.c

With the current situation as it stands, cinemas and any location with larger gatherings may not be able to take place until at least 20th August, if all of the government phases continue on a three week pattern. This is extremely optimistic.

## Best Practices

We will continue to use our contacts at Regional Screen Scotland and Cinema For All to help advise us on best practices, as the situation develops. But we have to ensure that our community are engaged with the re-opening process.



- Advertise how we are making our screenings as safe as possible
- Selling fewer tickets to begin with and enforcing social distancing
- Ask the community how they are feeling about opening the cinema (Would they feel more positive about a late 2020 opening (Christmas) or starting fresh in 2021?)

One of our main objectives is to find positive collaborations and other opportunities to find funding going forward.

*Isla Game*

## Special Thanks to.....

We could not have achieved so much this year without the support of our grant funders and local tradesmen.

### Grant Funders

**LEADER and Awards for All** - thank you for believing in our vision and supporting us to make it happen.

**Ward Discretionary Budget** - for supporting structural alterations

**Bruce Wakefield Trust** – for supporting our disabled access.

**Berry Burn Windfarm** – for allowing us to maintain our staffing and for the contribution towards our new Fire Alarm system.

**National Lottery Young Start**- for continuing to support our youth work provision and the work of the Centre.

### Our 'Go To' local tradesmen

**Craig Shaw** – for building, painting and joinery work. Thank you for going above and beyond to help us meet deadlines and for your infinite patience and generosity.

**Graham MacPherson** – for being so obliging, helpful and patient.

**Andrew McLeod** - for volunteering your professional skills and expertise. We are eternally grateful.

**Mike Grant**- for never being tired of giving us estimates for carpets.

and

**Andy Belby of Media Pro Scotland**- for sharing our enthusiasm and helping us create a perfect little Cinema

### **Laings Builders**

We wonder if they ever regret moving next door! Ron and Geoff never stint with their advice and support. Always so kind and helpful and generous with their time and expertise. We are endlessly grateful.

### **Kerry Reilly, National YMCA Secretary**

For professional advice and support

### **Our User Groups, Volunteers and Supporters within the Community**

**User Groups** -We are very grateful for all the continued support of our user groups, their tolerance with the occasional 'blip' and for coping so well with the limitations of the building.

**Volunteers** – we are endlessly grateful to our army of volunteers without whom we couldn't run the Community Cafe, Pancake Brunches or any of our fund-raising activities. For giving up their time to help set up and to help at various events and an especially huge thanks to our bakers of bread and cakes and makers of soup, sandwiches and curries!

**Community**- for supporting our events and for your on-going encouragement.