

# **People Care Circles in the Findhorn Foundation Community**

## **Report NFA GatherIn 2018 Award**

by Cornelia Featherstone - 30/04/2019

### **Summary**

The initial assumption of this project, to create 'satellite' People Care Circles in different sub-communities and neighbourhood proved largely wrong. To secure the caring community culture and safety-netting which so many in this community aspire to several initiatives are proposed. The creation of a paid Caring Community Coordinator post was identified as the essential next step.

### **Report**

Martin's suicide has made it very clear how the perceived lack of 'looking after our own' injures the sense of community - both in the collective and in individuals. The distress generated on so many different levels was positively addressed by many in the community. Positive outcomes are the Men's Community Council, the Mental Health Strategy Group of three major organisations in the community, The Healing Presencing group, the Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community, to name but a few.

Creating a strong caring community culture has many benefits. Research shows unequivocally that strong communities and positive relationships have a positive impact on all health outcomes for individuals and a drastic effect on many outcomes in society - use of NHS and social services, mental health, crime rates etc.

The initial assumption of this project, that 'satellite' People Care Circles could be created sadly proved wrong. Apart from the emerging Forres CCC there was no appetite to form such groups. I also realised that I had not taken into account that the members of the existing People Care Circle had largely been healthcare professionals who were volunteering their time and skills. This resource is not replicable. Thus the community has to find other structures to create safety netting for vulnerable community members.

There are many groups and collectives within the Findhorn Foundation Community and in the local area where members find social inclusion and a sense of belonging. These groups are not connected and safety netting cannot be assumed, as commonly people are most vulnerable when they withdraw from social activities and relationships - they fall 'between the cracks' (both within their own capabilities/resources and within the social network). Training of group leaders and a central support hub can mitigate those risks. The training is addressed in the Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community. The central support hub needs development and resourcing.

In brief - engaged community members can do a lot to safeguard themselves. There are a wide range of tools and resources available for that.

### **But all this leaves the big gap...**

the question of how to attend to those situations where crisis and injury are most likely to happen: in isolation and disconnection. This is the time when an individual may not be able to

reach out or maintain their presence in one of the 'infrastructures' mentioned above. How do we as a community then express our love and care for the individual? How do we square this with our inherent respect for privacy/personal choice? How do we honour our sense of duty of care, not only for the individuals but also for our collective wellbeing which gets grievously injured when 'one of our own' comes to harm?

These are questions that need to be explored further by the whole community and in particular by NFA council.

### **Proposed Next Steps to address this gap specifically**

- 1) Caring Community Coordinator - this was proposed by Annie Crawford, NFA councillor, at the dedicated community meeting on 10th July 2017 and is likely the best strategy to create social safety netting and sustainability for this function. There are strong positive models for this, esp. the Boleskine Model (1) where a localised care team is a hub for community, social inclusion and care.
- 2) Stronger links between NFA CCC and NFA council - given the age demographics of our community, the lack of existing support structures and the potential positive impact on community building through Caring Community culture, a stronger link between CCC and NFA council is proposed. Creating synergy in the many different attempts of creating Caring Community will allow us to generate validation, joined up thinking, shared resources etc. - with a potential for 3+3=9.
- 3) Drop-In Chat locations - regular meeting points to come to and share any concerns they may have about themselves or another will create accessibility. Staffing (initially volunteers but some paid post will create sustainability) of such drop in would need to be done in a way that there were joined up procedures to hold and action such information. A Community Care Coordinator would obviously be a crucial resource for this linking. Drop-In chats could be held in different cafes in The Park, Findhorn and Forres, the CC (at certain meals, for example Wed dinner).
- 4) Creating ways to bring together leaders of different community groups for networking with the specific aim to strengthen the safety netting for vulnerable community members and groups.
- 5) Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community (2) - the Findhorn Foundation Internal Training has taken on the coordination of this curriculum and aims to make it available to all community members, organisations, and their staff. An active engagement with that curriculum by the NFA Council and membership organisations will allow this initiative to reach its potential for a positive contribution to creating a caring community culture.

## **Project work**

### Mapping the Community need

Hampered by the delayed database work within the NFA this aspect has not progressed as it might have. Only an indicative number of members in the different areas was provided (2) - though the total number of NFA members of 281 was too low to be correct. No age profile could be provided.

As an alternative, mapping took place through brainstorming in the existing People Care Circle of vulnerable community members and their carers (4) and in the FCCC (Forres Caring Community Circle).

### Meeting with individuals and groups

- Findhorn village residents - this resulted in the set-up of a neighbourhood buddy group which is still evolving. It does not cover all NFA members in the village. It has the potential to serve as an example for others to do similarly.

- Residents in Park clusters - West Whins set up a neighbourhood buddy group. No other specific groups took up that strategy yet.

- Conversations with older community members - conducted in small groups, this was very productive albeit challenging. To face the idea of growing needs, the fear of a state of dependence, and the many issues relating to ageing is not for the fainthearted. It is so much easier to ignore and deal with the matter when a crisis forces the issue. But all acknowledge that this is not a good way to go about it. The biggest cultural shift needed for graceful Ageing in Place is the concept that asking for help (and accepting it) is a contribution to community building. A lot more of these conversations need to take place to facilitate that cultural shift.

- NFA Caring Community Circle - supported this NFA volunteer circle to create a stronger organisational structure with dedicated office bearers, and becoming a division of our community charity, Park Ecovillage Trust (PET). PET provides CCC with a company structure (incl. legal protection of office bearers) and relevant services (incl. finance and admin), as well as charitable status for grant applications etc. Office bearers: Chair - Cornelia Featherstone, Treasurer - Sylvia Robertson, Secretary - Leslie Jones.

- Carers' Support - One of the NFA CCC volunteers, Sue Dominey, took on the role of Carers' Support Coordinator - and with time this can become an important access point for support for carers (paid and unpaid working in the community) and with that for vulnerable community members. She made a great start with a successful Carers' Celebration Dinner on 12th December 2018.

- Forres Caring Community Circle - after several introductory and then planning meetings, supported 3 dynamic initiators managed to bring together a strong social gathering (18 attending, a further 6 sent apologies) in Cluny on 16th December 2018. Practical next steps were agreed - an email group which will allow direct communication between those engaged; collating resources available in Forres and sharing those.

- Healing Presencing Group (5) - connected with several of the group members

- Men's community council - in the meeting with the facilitator there was no agreement to actively link with the People Care Circle but given that the objectives are very congruent with that of caring community there was an openness for individual men to link with CCC (though this has not happened yet)

- Talking about dementia - supported 3 meetings which were held by Maggie LaTourelle in conjunction with Wendy Menzies from Alzheimers Scotland. At the third meeting there was the resounding conclusion that a dementia friendly community is a caring community - and that a caring community is dementia friendly. A strong recommendation for further more specialised educational events for people working with the public etc fed into the work of the Mental Health Strategy Group leading to the Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community.

- Findhorn Foundation – the S&PD (spiritual and personal development) Department now has the focus of caring community represented through me being a committed volunteer in the department. There are explorations to have a similar link within Cluny as well.
- Mental Health Strategy group (FF, NFD and NFA) - following the suicide and a dramatic mental health crisis that affected all three organisations I convened a group to look at creating stronger collaboration, and joined up policies. This work resulted in the draft Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community for staff training. The decision was made to make this available to all community members and organisations through the FF Internal Training Programme. The group will meet again in May 2019.
- Camper van drop in - visited an initiative by two community members. This highlighted the importance of making space available for regular contact points. It would be great to have more of that available - esp if it were linked up with a central hub.
- Draft report was submitted to NFA council and NFA CCC - any comments were included in the final report.
- Draft report submitted to former NFA Councillor, Annie Crawford, who had proposed the setting up of a paid post in the community meeting held on 10th July 2017. She endorsed the present proposal of setting up a Caring Community Coordinator post. (6)

### **Identified Infrastructures and Resources**

- Central People Care Circle within the NFA CCC – where the experiences, skills and connections (within the community and in Moray) of those involved in care in the community, are perpetuated and made accessible. A place for the other ‘infrastructures’ to report to/get support from. For long-term sustainability this requires a paid position of a Caring Community Coordinator. All the resources below would be much more potent in safeguarding vulnerable community members if they were to link with this central resource. The present NFA CCC People Care Circle could evolve into this resource.
- Forres CCC - evolving. Extent of networking and need for resources to be determined as it progresses. Group email list is being used and a few social gatherings have taken place. Cluny is identified as one of the important connecting points for FCCC to serve both the Findhorn Foundation and NFA members.
- Networking meetings for community group leaders to link with the Central People Care Circle - to share information, skills, resources for social inclusion and safety netting - needs to be developed
- Neighbourhood hubs to be developed – people care awareness in co-housing clusters etc where proximity allows connection and mutual support - self-managed, connecting to Central People Care Circle for support, advice, resources etc
- Meditations where awareness for vulnerable community members is held - existing
  - Sunday 9am - Healing Meditation in the Park Sanctuary
  - Elders Meditation Wed 10am Park Sanctuary and Cluny alternating weeks
- Exercise (existing) - NFA Exercise classes held by Sally Phelps - several times a week. Table tennis. Also locally - BALL Group (Be Active Life Long)- Forres Community Centre Thursday 10-11am.
- Buddy system – an individual finds a number of buddies for mutual support (suggested minimum of 4) - self-managed, connecting to People Care Circle for support, advice, resources etc. Several such groups already exist and can serve as a blueprint.
- Telephone chain – esp for people living on their own, a number of people (up to 12) agree to be part of a telephone chain, where each one rings the next on the chain every morning. Monthly meetings for tea and annual outing to ensure the positive connections within the group. A coordinator is required, self-managed, connecting to People Care Circle for support, advice, resources etc

- Elders lunches – such as on a Monday in the Mosset - self-managed
- Wed afternoon cooking followed by dinner in the CC - self-managed
- more local resources:

- FACT - Forres Area Community Trust - [www.http://forresarea.org/](http://forresarea.org/)

*Older Person's Support* – Led by Project Coordinator Kirsty Williams, the Older Person's project offers a Befriending Service for the Forres area called Cameron's Champions and copies of the Forres Area Older Person's Directory are available for collection from the FACT office.

- Forres Men's Shed - Waterford Recycling Centre, Waterford Rd Forres IV36 3TN Mobile: 07903 605879
- Forres Transition Town Town: <https://ttforres.scot/> c/o The Hub, 20 Tolbooth St., Forres IV36 1PH; - wellbeing project - monthly drop in cafe
- University of The Third Age (3UA): via Barbara: a group for elders who wish to educate themselves. Meets Nairn Community and Arts Centre, Wednesdays 2p.m. Membership £14 per annum. Secretary Pauline Ross 01667 453537 Nairn U3A: Home

## Appendix 1 - references

### (1) Boleskine Model

<http://www.boleskine-communitycare.org.uk/>

### (2) Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community for staff training (Draft)

Draft Curriculum for Health and Wellbeing in Community 2018

Proposed by the Mental Health Strategy working group: Caroline Matters (FF, S&PD) Ursula Pfahler (FF, S&PD internal training), Pete Finch (FF, Park Campus) Andy Dodds (Holiday Park Manager), Lorraine Ryzt (NFA Lis/Con), David Harrison (NFA Lis/Con), Cornelia Featherstone (NFA Caring Community Circle)

Three stages

Introduction and Awareness - Stage 1

Connecting and Collaborating - Stage 2

Intervention - Stage 3

#### 1) Target Audiences

Findhorn Foundation - Park - Cluny - Erraid

Cluny - including Cluny volunteers and with that reaching into the FF community residing in Forres

NFD

NFA - general and CCC

Phoenix

Potteries - Findhorn Pottery, Claysong

Moray Art Centre

La Boheme

The Bakehouse  
Findhorn Flower Essences  
Newbold  
Duneland  
Titleholders Association  
Findhorn Hinterland

Estimate of numbers:

Stage 1 - 200+ folk - ie everyone

Stage 2 - 50 people - voluntary/optional or requirement of staff contract

Stage 3 - 20 - voluntary/optional or requirement of staff contract, CPD

## 2) Stages of Achievement

### Stage 1

Introduction and Awareness

#### Objectives

- Noticing and sharing information (positive gossip)
- Know where to go (have policies/contact lists/flowcharts)
- How to be a good neighbour
- Caring Community Culture
- Understand Red Flag signs which require calling the police
- 3 Alarm Bells
  - 1=notice 2=check with someone 3=contact the relevant manager/focaliser
  - Understand the importance of the alarm bells with caring in mind
- Basic knowledge in many different areas such as
  - Addictions
  - Mental health
  - Dementia
  - Social isolation
  - Homelessness
  - Neglect
  - Child protection issues
  - Suicide
  - First Aid, incl CPR
  - Fire and Health and Safety

Trainings already available presently/in the past either through FIT, or CCC

- Dementia Friend (Alzheimers Scotland - CCC - Maggie La Tourelle)
- Mental Health - Moray Wellbeing Hub
- Safe Talk - Moray Wellbeing Hub
- Autism Awareness (in the past autism charity via Henrietta Rose)
- Spiritual Crisis (FIT)
- Co-counselling

### Stage 2

Connection and Collaboration

#### Objectives

- Making contact - How are You? Giving the confidence to approach and evaluate. Addressing concerns of rebuff or overload
- Confidence. Care and Comfort in Holding Space
- Reporting structure, support - whom to contact? - Level 3 trained/different collaborating organisations
- Pastoral Care
- Special Care Awareness
- Advanced First Aid
- Fire management
- Health and Safety - moving and handling, etc etc

Trainings already available presently/in the past either through FIT, or CCC

- Special Care Awareness Training
- Communication Skills
- Focalisation/leadership Skills

### Stage 3

#### Involvement/Intervention

#### Objectives

- Job based skills
- High levels of responsibility and authority
- Qualities - good collaborator, clear boundary keeping

#### Folk on the ground already

- First Aiders
- NFA Peacekeepers /Peace Guild
- NFD Wardens
- Gatekeepers (need to be identified in all organisations and departments, public interface locations)
- Fire marshals
- Health and Safety officer and others trained in certain areas
- Background support on retainer for FF and NFD: Lenita van Hoff

#### Collaboration for professional intervention- close links with

- Local services - health and social care, fire department, police
- Professional therapists working with individuals - need to consider impact of their client's situation on the community collective

### **(3) indicative number of members in the different areas provided by NFA admin**

in Forres & surrounding area we have 71 individual members.

other areas are Findhorn 137, Kinloss 20, other areas 53

some of the Forres members have no address registered with us or I didn't know where it was. the rest are:

surrounding area (not Kinloss, Findhorn) 12  
central Forres 10  
Forres west 9  
Forbeshill 12  
St Leonards Rd area 9  
Grantown Rd 4

as for age groups, only 14 of the 71 have their age on record, so that didn't seem significant enough statistically.

#### **(4) vulnerable community members and their carers**

NFA Caring Community Circle collated the numbers of vulnerable community members they are aware of, and their carers.

48 vulnerable members were identified, of that 3 died within the year, 5 were temporary due to limited illness/surgery. 28 were elderly and/or living with cancer, 8 youth with learning difficulties, 12 adults with mental health challenges.

The total of carers identified was 124, there are likely more which were not listed. Of those are 28 paid carers, 37 family carers, 32 looking after a friend (6 of those temporary), 32 community volunteers (looking after more than 1 person),

#### **(5) Healing Presencing Group**

*In April a number of us attended the Sociocracy and Subtle worlds weekend with John Buck and Michael Lindfield. At the end of the event there were various groups set up who committed to some next steps. We committed to attend to the theme of tending to the emotional and traumatised field of our Community... goodness!*

*Our group met once and since then there's been a long gap. Since we met 2 (at least) relevant significant events have happened in our community; 1. Martin committed suicide and 2. the Deep Dive into Conflict and Love with Ana.*

Below is a brief summary of what emerged in our meeting yesterday (mid August)

1) The job of this group in tending the emotional field of the community is both to build and share skills and resources and create opportunities for clearing. We acknowledge that part of the process is learning how to be in conflict while remaining in connection, this means establishing safety within ourselves.

2) We do this first as a small group; facilitating, holding, sharing with each other over several bi monthly meetings, creating a blue print for the way in which we wish to hold and facilitate the whole community in the first part of next year.

3) Among us there are a range of skills and modalities we will share over the bi monthly meetings, building our capacity to facilitate a larger group. We acknowledge the helpfulness of outside facilitators (such as Ana) and also acknowledge the wealth of experience and skills within our community.

4) We acknowledge that this process is part of a paradigm shift where health and creativity is a central part of community and therefore our working life. Thus we agree to schedule our

meetings during the working day, meaning that FF employees will need to ask their department to release them to participate.

5) We acknowledge that when presencing trauma, we need to place equal importance on presencing joy. In our bi monthly meetings we will 'pendulum' between both.

In addition the following point emerged after the meeting, in conversation between myself, Javier and Deborah;

6) Each meeting will require one convenor and two facilitators. Lucy is convening the next meeting and asks for two facilitators willing to lead the next meeting.

You must be willing to plan together prior to the meeting, observing point 5) above. If you feel the call please inform Lucy individually or together.

Lucy Thomas

[www.beingwhole.eu](http://www.beingwhole.eu)

07833993107

### **(6) Endorsement by Annie Crawford**

I am writing in support of the proposed application and concept for our community.

I have lived on the Park for 14 years, and been an active member for the majority of that time, serving for 2 years on the NFA Council. I have a back ground in health care, having worked in the NHS for many years and for the Chest Heart and Stroke Charity for 7 years so am well informed and experienced in many aspects of health and social care, and indeed have a degenerative condition myself. In my early days here, 2006/7, I was part of the care team for Francis Ripley.

Many of us are aware of the unique nature of our community and sadly, it does not always mean that we are aware of or have the resources to always know what is going on with each and every one in terms of health and well being, both old and young.

I have for many years, thought that it is time for us to step up and support our Caring Community Circle and to open and expand the care and attention many might need, especially with our aging population.

I fully support this idea going forward and would be willing to offer some assistance in its development.

Blessings,

Annie Crawford

## **Appendix 2 - previous reports**

2<sup>nd</sup> Report 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018

NFA GatherIn Award – People Care Circles

I have made some progress in some areas: realising that a one-size-fits-all concept will not serve ☺, and that our biggest challenge will be how to connect with those who disconnect - and none in others: database of NFA membership, ie the extent and distribution of the NFA community, and how it could get ‘covered’ by people care provisions.

### **Progress report:**

I have been part of several small group meetings with representatives of different aspects of our community:

- Findhorn village residents
- Residents in Park clusters
- Forres residents
- Men’s community council
- Talking about dementia meetings
- Findhorn Foundation – through my role as committed volunteer in S&PD
- Mental Health Strategy group (FF, NFD and NFA)
- Camper van drop in

In addition to that many personal conversations and correspondence following Martin’s suicide.

In all of them there has been a sense that the concept of ‘caring community’ is one of the core values we all hold. How this concept influences our community culture, infrastructures and day-to-day interactions is an evolving exploration.

### **Possible ‘infrastructures’ to support caring community**

- Central People Care Circle – where the experiences, skills and connections (within the community and in Moray) of those involved in care in the community, are perpetuated and made accessible. A place for the other ‘infrastructures’ to report to/get support from.
- Neighbourhood hubs – people care awareness in co-housing clusters etc where proximity allows connection and mutual support
- Buddy system – an individual finds a number of buddies for mutual support (suggested minimum of 4)
- Telephone chain – esp for people living on their own, a number of people (up to 12) agree to be part of a telephone chain, where each one rings the next on the chain every morning. Monthly meetings for tea and annual outing to ensure the positive connections within the group. A coordinator is required.
- Elders lunches – such as on a Monday in the Mosset
- Wed afternoon cooking followed by dinner in the CC
- Drop in for a chat – such as camper van chats – in various locations. Needs one or two committed organisers for each location

And then there are the many other ways how people connect in groups in and around the community: Work departments/places, meditation and other spiritual groups, service and interest groups, choirs etc. With effective communication of the resources available, community members leading/attending these groups can avail themselves of the knowledge/experience/skill/networks of the Central People Care Circle.

### **Up-skilling**

The Mental Health Strategy Group is working on a proposed curriculum for skills in 'caring community' on several levels:

Entry level - relevant to everyone - pastoral care, caring community culture, confidence/care/comfort, holding space, knowing about resources etc

Advanced level - for those engaged with the public in any formal role, where they may be in a situation confronted with mental health issues/dementia or other vulnerabilities

Higher advanced level - for those who will be involved in interventions in such situations

### **A place for ritual**

Following Martin's suicide people came together in a lot of different ways: to be present in meditation, for information and connection as well as mutual support, grief and trauma processing as well as rituals. Acknowledgement and ongoing support for this level of caring community will allow it to flourish and deepen its service to the whole community.

### **The big gap**

This leaves the big question of how to attend to those situations where crisis and injury are most likely to happen: in isolation and disconnection. This is the time when an individual may not be able to reach out or maintain their presence in one of the 'infrastructures' mentioned above. How do we as a community then express our love and care for the individual? How do we square this with our inherent respect for privacy/personal choice? How do we honour our sense of duty of care, not only for the individuals but also for our collective wellbeing which gets grievously injured when 'one of our own' comes to harm?

I welcome your feedback and input.

With love and blessings

Cornelia

1<sup>st</sup> Report 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018

Dear Ones

I am not completely clear on how this reporting should be done. I just registered a request to do so - hence my slight shotgun approach of sending the report

- 1) Ariane - GatherIn queen :-)) and I think, (please correct me if I am wrong) support for awarded projects
- 2) Listener Convener
- 3) relevant petal representative - here my assumption is that my project is under the 1st Petal (From Cradle to Grave) - if this please confirm who the rep should be for this reporting - I know that Marlene is in it, so I am including her herewith.

I attach my application excerpt (unfortunately I never managed to get the full version once I put this bit into the online application form)

My first step was to approach NFA admin and Lis/Con (email 4th March) for a more systematic assessment of the existing neighbourhoods/subcommunities within the NFA. I had a meeting with David on 13th March where we discussed how this can be achieved and how it may fit in with the database work already considered by the NFA council. I have yet to hear back the outcome of this exploration between David, Katharina and whoever else is involved in that work.

After my Thank You article in the Rainbow Bridge I was approached by three neighbourhoods (Findhorn Village southend, West Whins and East Whins) and will start with them as a pilot to develop effective models on how these People Care Satelittes can function within the NFA community. I am planning a first meeting by the end of April.

Another issue has come to my awareness: data protection implications. I will approach Roy Miles to see what help he may be able to give me with that.