



ALCOHOL SUPPORT LTD

INAUGURAL

ANNUAL REPORT

HEALTH AND LEISURE GROUP

2006



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1. Introduction and History

The Albyn House Health and Leisure Group was first mooted in November 2005 by male clients of the Albyn House Support Hostel, the residential arm of Alcohol Support Ltd. In recognition of the success of "Amethyst", a women's group, the question was asked "how about a men's group?" When the possible purpose of the group was discussed, the core aims stated below were identified, along with the observation that in fact, these aims applied equally to women and that the group should include all regardless of gender.

The aims of the Group are:

- i) To provide an opportunity for members to meet and socialise in an alcohol free environment, understanding that company is important to members and that alcohol and licensed premises often seem to be the only outlets for those seeking company.*
- ii) To do so in a range of social settings that are within the community, not set aside from the community and in doing so to develop members' confidence and social skills so that they feel able to socialise freely with others without the use of alcohol.*
- iii) To base this group around activities which are in themselves healthy and constructive bearing in mind the needs and limitations of group members, with these needs and limitations being ascertained by suitably skilled professionals.*
- iv) To make it fun. Members attend this Group voluntarily, it must be something they aspire to, look forward to, and potentially maintain after ceasing any formal support to address their alcohol problem*
- v) To keep it distinct from the therapeutic environment and programme. While seeking to be complementary to the support of Albyn House, it is not intended to replace key-working and care-planning.*

In December 2005, members of the group authorised Sandy Wallace, a social care worker at Albyn House, to organise activities on behalf of the group, to raise money to fund these activities, and to draw up a draft constitution. This constitution was approved at the February meeting of the group.

2. Activity Report

a) Gym membership

The principle activity of the group is gym membership. The Group agreed to the purchase of daily passes to the Beach Leisure Centre at a cost of £2086. Gym use commenced in March 2006, since when 20 members have used the gym, (16 male, 4 female) some regularly over many months, others occasionally, some for strenuous activity, others to relax in the sauna, some enjoying the company and support of other group members, others taking the opportunity to reinstate their independence. Actual gym visits total well over 100.

Staff support has been available to those members who wished this when using the gym for the first time, often from Andy Keilloh, a qualified gym instructor and Albyn House staff member, who sadly has since left Albyn to resume his studies. An unexpected spin off of this healthy activity was that Sandy, in accompanying members to the gym on a regular basis, improved his own fitness to the extent that he was able to run the New York marathon and raise £5000 for charities supporting children with special needs.

b) Outings

The first outing took place in January 2006, a curling outing to Lang Stracht attended by 8 members. February saw a golf driving range outing at Aspire in Ardoe attended by nine members. Both these clubs gave discounted prices.

Chinese New Year in March was marked by the gift of a take away meal for 16 from Lotus Restaurant in Crown Terrace, while April saw the group attend Deveronvale FC in Banff as guests of the club, continuing the trend of kindness by hosts that was to continue throughout the year. Three members visited the Scottish Parliament in May as guests of Dr Nanette Milne MSP.



June saw 9 members return to the golf course while July saw 9 members engage in the most expensive outing of the year, ten pin bowling at £70, evidencing the value of discounts, gifts and invites from generous friends. The summer also saw the group purchase its first assets, two tents purchased for a camping trip that did not, in the end, take place (they have since been sold for the same price) and three second hand golf bags which have been borrowed on many occasions since.

August was blessed with fine weather, making the fishing trip off Stonehaven especially memorable. Two members ran a fun run for charity. September saw the final golf outing this year, a green bowls outing and the first visit to the cinema subsidised by the group. Tutti Frutti at His Majesty's in October was generously donated by the theatre. Throughout October members attended cooking classes at Summerhill supplied by NHS Grampian.



As the year draws to a close, our Christmas lunch has taken place at Jimmy Chungs and been paid for by donated vouchers.

There is at least one more outing in us. Will it be Borat or Bond at the cinema? Murrayfield or Pittodrie?

3. Finance Report

The business plan of this group was simple. Raise enough money to purchase gym membership in bulk. Sell that membership back to members at a discount. Use the income to fund outings, which are again sold to members at a discount. From the very beginning the group has accepted that regardless of the fact that most of them are in receipt of benefits, it is right that they should pay what they can afford for this service. It is part of the recovery from alcohol dependence to recognise that you deserve a better life, but also that if it has a value, it has a cost. Members fees have totally £250.

Had we been unable to raise enough money to purchase gym passes, the group would not have happened. We are hugely grateful to the bodies that funded the group when it was no more than an idea on paper, and also to those, public, private and voluntary bodies that have responded so positively to our more recent requests for support.

Grampian Police Community Fund	£500 in financial year 05/06
Shell UK	£350
ACC Drug and Alcohol Initiatives fund	£500
Albyn House	£500
Qserv	£250
NHS Grampian	£500
North Kincardine Community Council	£20
Aberdeen Safer Communities Trust	£250
Co-op Dividend Fund	£250
Broomhill Community Council	£250
Ferryhill Community Council	£100
Grampian Police Community Fund	£500 in financial year 06/07
Private donations	£70

The impact of Aberdeen City Council's Access to Leisure scheme and the discount given by ACC for buying gym passes in bulk enabled our funds to travel much further.

4. Challenges for the Future

It has not all been plain sailing. Although monthly meetings have taken place to decide on future activity, members have not taken full ownership of the group, and this represents a challenge for 2007. Gym attendance tailed off late in the year as a fairly young client group left Albyn House to be replaced by a more mature group. Such cycles are inevitable, but it is to be hoped that the group develops by retaining members beyond the period of their stay in Albyn House.

In 2007 we would hope to see members attend the gym as enthusiastically as they did earlier in 2006, and would hope to arrange modest outings on a weekly or at least fortnightly basis, with more ambitious outings monthly. To do this, we hope to secure the continued support of those who have helped us get this far as well as the support of new patrons who see the progress made to date as worthy of their endorsement.

We look forward to 2007 in the hope of sobriety, good health, friendship and happiness.



With thanks to

Aberdeen City Council

Aberdeen Curling Club

Aberdeen Safer Communities Trust

Albyn House

Aspire to Golf

Broomhill Community Council

Co-operative Society

Deveronvale FC

Dr Nanette Milne MSP

Ferryhill Community Council

Grampian Police

His Majesty's Theatre

Jimmy Chungs

Mr Brian Bartlett

Lotus Restaraunt

NHS Grampian

North Kincardine Community Council

Qserv

Shell UK