



BART LAFERE

Our interview for this issue is with our Director Bart Lafere. In our first issue back in 2014 we did a short interview with Bart and now it is time for an in-depth look at the man behind Nansen!

Q1 You set up Nansen 22 years ago. What was your vision?

A long time ago. There were no opportunities for young adults when they left school for 16-21 year olds there was nothing. A friend Danny and I were in Scotland, we acknowledged there was this gap. So we started Nansen for the age group 16-25, and made an organisation to give young Adults opportunities to get employment.

Q2 You have lived here for many years. Why did you choose Scotland rather than Belgium to open Nansen?

The choice of Scotland came accidentally. My friend Danny was living here on the Black Isle. I came to visit to Scotland for one year and I am still here! I have my own kilt and I say 'aye'. I married in the kilt to a Scottish lassie.



Q3 Some people may not know who Nansen was, can you tell us a bit about him and why you chose to use him as a name for Nansen?

My pal Danny volunteered in Norway and I worked with Nansen International children centre. He worked with Ernest Davis who was a Mountain Rescue leader, they were looking for a name for the mountain rescue team. They found the name Fridtjof Nansen. Ernest investigated the man and found he was an explorer and helped repatriate refugees back to Norway after the Second World War. Sometime later, I went to a memorial service in Norway for Ernest and met Igol Nansen Fridtjof's grandson. We asked him if he would do us the honour of being our patron which he is to this day.

Q4 You will have seen many changes in your time since Nansen has been set up. Can you tell us the biggest ones?

In the very beginning -1993- we were all volunteers for no money, that lasted for 4 years. We worked after hours to make bird boxes to sell to the Forestry Commission for £1 each that gave them money for the next day. 1997/1998 We got wages!

Now our staff are very highly trained. Nansen now has a 3 year plan. 2 Residential houses Fram, & Tigh Na Cloich and is very professionally run.

Q5 How is the way we do our training now changed since the beginning?

Very professional staff now before it was all volunteers, No SQA, Dieter has done a tremendous job with SQA and training now structured with week planners.



Q6 Nansen took over Bridget venture in 2009, Was that a good decision to make?

Actually the young adults should answer this, Beth, Anna and Iain!

The decision to do it was easy. I was invited to be on the Board of Trustees of BV. I was then asked to do a report on BV.

I found that BV would not last for another year. The decision to help BV was taken because I was adamant that we took it over to protect the Young Adults in the project.

A very easy decision, but unfortunately we had to stop the horses. That was a difficult process and difficult decisions had to be made. I know it was the right decision.

Q7 we know you have good hobbies can tell us a bit about them?

I like being cheeky!

Anything to do with water.

I have always be drawn to the sea.

I love swimming diving sailing.-family.

18 months ago, I had the chance to manage a diving school –this was amazing – the Sea was my office.

Now I am back behind a desk.





TIGH NA CLOICH

The collated information for the Quality Assurance Audit at TNC on 15 Dec 2015 for Tigh na Cloich.

Service user- generally good feedback with a few comments and interesting suggestions.

Environment- very good

Care and support generally good

Communication – generally good

Staffing – generally good

Communication generally good

Overall rating between very good and good.

Stakeholders 6 out of 10 returned.

Environment very good

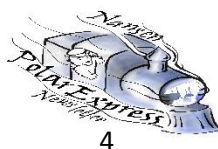
Care and support very good

Staffing- approachable and helpful

Communication –happy with level of communication

Over all very good.

Many thanks to all who took the time to complete the questionnaires and return them.





KIMBERLEY MACKENZIE

My Story

Growing up with a disability can be hard and it creates a lot of challenges. School was a place where I felt misunderstood. I walked around feeling like I was weird and abnormal, in some cases people would verbalise my fears.

I left primary school with very little reading and writing skills and my teachers recommended that I go to Drummond. My mum, however, felt that I should be given a chance. She has always believed in me and told me that it's okay to take a bit longer with things. There should be nothing wrong with people taking time to learn; we don't all conform to a certain standard, which was how I felt most of the time growing up, as though there was some wrong with me.

High school had a better learning support system and I felt like I improved a lot because of it. I was still bullied and I found myself never talking in class, only to my small group of friends outside the classroom. My mum tried to help but, by going to the school, this tended to make it worse. I gave up and accepted that this was my fate until I could leave school which I did at 16.

I had applied for an art course at Inverness College, where I crossed paths with Bart during the photography section of the course. I don't think I would've passed this course if it wasn't for my teacher and before I left they said I should go on to do an illustration course which would've meant moving to the borders, I was too young to do this though.

Between the ages of 17 and 18 I had a few cleaning jobs working for a family friend and later on, a cleaning job with my mum. Like most people though I wanted more but lacked the tools to get me there. In 2003 I went to Nansen and also got a job in a shop.

At the time I ticked a lot of the boxes for having Asperger's Syndrome though if you were to meet me now you would say this was not the case. I feel this had to do with my problems in school as I was so alienated there and I didn't learn many social skills that others my age had. Nansen was a nurturing environment for me, I learned a lot about myself, people and I developed new skills like experimental cooking, improvising everything!

People often mistook my chatty nature for confidence but I found it hard to have any self-esteem. There have been many moments in my life where my reading or writing has left me short changed and I had to explain myself, which would make me feel pretty bad. Many young adults on the borderline of the disability spectrum have their own pains but if you can't laugh at mistakes then you're taking yourself too seriously. I personally try to see my spelling mistakes as an interesting phenomenon, the same way my friends do.

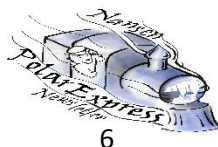
At 21 I needed to move forward and that's what Nansen is about, helping people to reach their potential. I still wasn't sure about leaving home so I made the decision to change my job. Over that year I started to realise that I had to leave, I knew I wouldn't be happy unless I spread my wings and went to college. Everyone at Nansen was encouraging and I really feel that they helped me get there.

In 2007 I managed to get in to college. I left Nansen and my job and started to prepare to leave, I had just turned 23 and I was feeling scared and excited. I picked Glasgow because a friend and I had gone on lots of day trips there over the years and I loved it. I made great memories living there, meeting new friends, being independent and having freedom I had never had before. I learned a lot and my art improved. It wasn't all fun and games though, I remember the all-nighters I pulled and the worries I felt over deadlines.

Colleges and the tutors are a lot more aware of disability than they used to be and although they had support available, I didn't feel I needed it. I explained my tutors about being dyslexic and that any written work might need to be gone over with them.

In 2010 I left college and went back to Inverness with a diploma in visual communication. I feel I've shown that you should never let anyone tell you what you can or can't do, you should discover that yourself.

That year I was looking for work when a post came up at Nansen. I felt like I could give back to a place that helped me take these big steps in my life so Sarah gave me a job in admin support.



I wasn't sure how people and the young adults would view me so it was tricky. I was the first person who used to attend Nansen who came back as a member of staff, so I wanted to show them what I could do and not let them down. I am lucky that everyone was supportive of me and made me feel like I was part of the team.

At the start I was in the office and I helped with the accounts. I started working with another staff member in the art group but they left in the early stages of the group. I really didn't want to let it fall apart and let everyone down so I took upon myself to ask if I could teach the art group and it has been one of the most rewarding things I've done. I like working with people, trying to show them a side of themselves they never knew they had, showing them skills that will help them gain confidence and pushing people who need more of a challenge. Now I work with the groups all the time and I am starting to work towards my SVQ level 2.

I look to my future with promise. I would like to publish my own children's book that I've been working on and to continue helping people.





THE CHRISTMAS PARTY

All of Nansen came together again for our annual Christmas party. This year we had the party at The Beaufort Hotel which is near the BBC Alba studio in Culduthel Road. This year instead of sitting down to dinner we had for the first time a Buffet.

It was quite good and gave us more time for talking and dancing.

Everyone seemed to like this way of doing the party and it may be copied again for next year.



For the next two months we have a Social Work Student working with us! We decided to interview her as well!

Q1 What is your name and your accent is not local, where do you come from.

My name is Carol Geddes and I was born in Aberdeen, I then moved to Bannockburn . Most of my life I have lived in Fife until I moved up to this area 4 years ago.

Q2 You are here as a Social Work student what does that mean.

It means that I am here to learn about the job. I am studying all aspects of care, training and how to help people of all ages.

Q3 how long are you here?

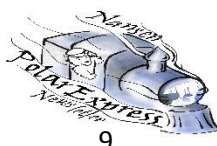
I am here for 2 Months then I go back to University until the summer. I will work during my holidays and then in September I will start my new placement.

Q4 Do you like it since you started. Is Nansen what you expected? Or is it better.

I did not realise you can get SQA qualifications here at Nansen and yes it is better than I imagined.

Thank you for your time.

Reporter Ryan Macaskill





Roller bowl

On the 15th, 16th, 17th and 18th of December

We went to Roller bowl. There was four different groups, going on different days leading up to the Christmas break.

I ask different people around Redcastle station. About the bowling if the staff was any good at bowling. Steph and Gareth were not very good. Polly was very amazing at bowling.



HIGHLAND DISABILITY SPORTS



Come and try day

The young adults had lots of fun at this years, “Come and try day”.

There were was many things to try. Basketball, golf, botcchia, track and many others. Everybody who took part had lots of fun.



The DUKE OF EDINBURGH Presentation

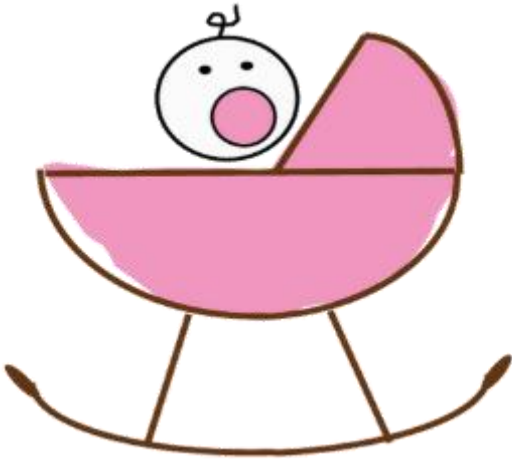
On 26th November, Mary, Eve, Morgan, Liam and I did our presentation quiz at Kingsview about our Trial and qualifying expeditions, and what we did to prepare for both expeditions. We talked about different things like first aid, fire alarms Animal Classification, Tracks and signs. We also asked Quiz questions to the groups about our expeditions and what we ate on both expeditions for dinner. At the end of the quiz, there was tea, coffee and cake.

Overall the quiz and presentation went well and everyone enjoyed it.

THE POLICE DOG TALK

On 21st of Oct, A police man came to talk to us about Police dogs. There was a Labrador which is trained to sniff out drugs and weapons he is called Oz. The other dog is a big German shepherd whose job is to take down criminals and looking for missing people this boy's name is Brody. Every one enjoyed this visit and every one gave dogs some fuss. They said they may come back later a give a demonstration of them at work.





A new child

Jennifer went on maternity leave on 9/10/15

Megan was born on 2/11/15 weighing in at 8.5lbs.

Congratulations to Barry Jennifer and Bruce

New and leaving young adults

We have four new Young Adults Cieran, Ellie, Cal and Caitlan.

Welcome to Nansen it's nice to have you join us.

Departures

On Thursday the 28th November a trainee left us.

All the best May in your new Adventures

