

**FREE**

**Issue #9**

# RECOVERZINE

September • 2024



**DUNDEE**

**Inside this issue**

**Poetry Corner**

**Recovery Stories**

**A visit to Dundee Botanic Gardens**

**Nature-inspired art**

**Bird Bingo**

**A new nature recovery garden for Dundee**

**And more**



recoverzinedundee

## Welcome to Issue 9.

For this issue the Editorial Team here at Recoverzine have been inspired by nature.

In the same way that for many of us creativity is an important part of our recovery, so is being in nature.

Getting away from the concrete and glass of the city and being around trees, plants, and animals can all help reduce stress and help us feel more present in the moment.

We began our research on this theme with a visit to Dundee Botanic Garden.

Established in 1971 by the University of Dundee, the garden sits on 9.5 hectares of land overlooking the River Tay and is home to a fascinating range of plant life.

You can see some photos from our visit on page 10.

Over the last few months we've also been busy developing the way in which we run the

magazine.

This has included dividing our meeting times between editorial meetings and activity sessions where we either do some training, go on a trip, or have a guest come in to visit.

Back in June we were delighted to welcome Hope Busak from RSPB who taught us all about local birds and helped us to develop the bird bingo on page 17.

We hope you enjoy this issue and are inspired to connect with nature, even in a very simple way.

It could make all the difference.

Scan for digital issue

Front cover by Wendy Macdougall

Back cover by Starling

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Over a decade  
Cocooned in concrete and steel  
Let back in the world, how would that feel?

People brush past in a world of their own  
Rushing here or there, maybe just home

Vast open space  
Large assortment of choice  
So overwhelming I've lost my voice

Different colours and shapes  
Popping off the shelves  
Merging together amongst themselves

Washing machine in my guts  
Freight train in my chest  
Flowing electricity round the rest

Cold sticky palms  
Short sharp breath  
Feels like I'm close to death

**By Laura**

## Who Is She?

Being a broken woman and mother  
Is a pain unbearable like no other  
Scared to be honest and true  
In case professionals sit judge and criticise you

Addiction trauma mental health all noisy in my head  
Some days it's that severe I'm paralysed can't get out of bed  
Struggling with low income and funding my habit turned me to crime  
Selling my body out my head on drugs I lost precious time

A prisoner in my head a slave to sex and drugs  
Beaten destroyed I dated the wrong thugs  
My child removed as I lost my mind  
Drove me to a mental institution no escape I could find

Having to support myself without my pill of drugs and men  
I started writing and feeling freedom with paper and pen  
I crave my life free from the chains of pain  
Today I promise to not go insane

I've had to revisit my background and work through my past  
See it through a day at a time I know it won't last  
A promise I keep to myself is I know I'll get better if I continue to do the right things  
As I move with love and heart as Love Always Wins

**By Lisa Marie Diduca**

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Long slow exhale

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Let's regain control

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Quiet the noise

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Find your voice

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Slow down the train

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Stop the machine

STOP  
BBBRRREEEEAAATH  
Look it's fine

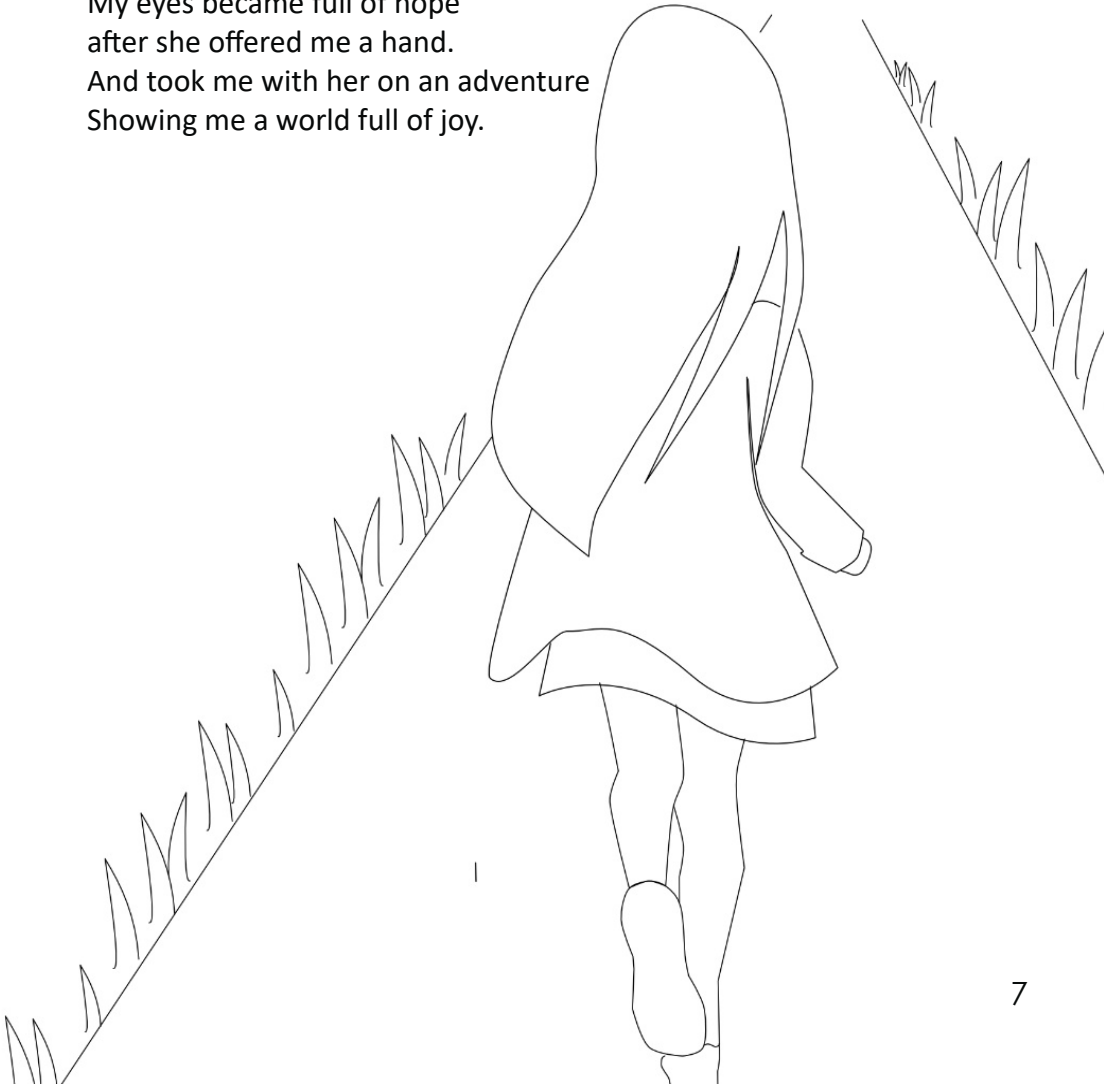
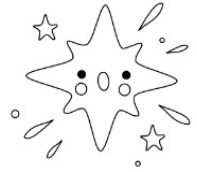


# Light beyond darkness

## Poem & colouring page by Anon

In the darkness I sat.  
Sobbing and pleading for help.  
I felt all alone in the world full of terror.

One night a small star came down  
Brightly shining through the suffocating darkness.  
My eyes became full of hope  
after she offered me a hand.  
And took me with her on an adventure  
Showing me a world full of joy.



# Black Sheep

## By Alexander Lafferty

Blah blah black sheep, have you any wool?  
Now I'll take it from here, if you think me a fool  
Always the black sheep, it's cool to me  
Always been different and always will be

My mind is so open, as open as can be  
Now I've been through a lot  
and experience is key  
As without it, I would not be me.

My love, my honour, my honesty  
Will be with me for eternity as I aim to keep my integrity!

If life is fleeting in the 3D form  
then consciousness is with us all along  
This will always carry on  
as the circle of life has its song

Now the birds and the bees, and even the trees  
they bring my heart to its knees  
as the bad vibes just seem to flee  
Now I love nature, it's plain to see  
And it loves me and helps set my mind free  
And able to see, that actually how good it is in this life to be

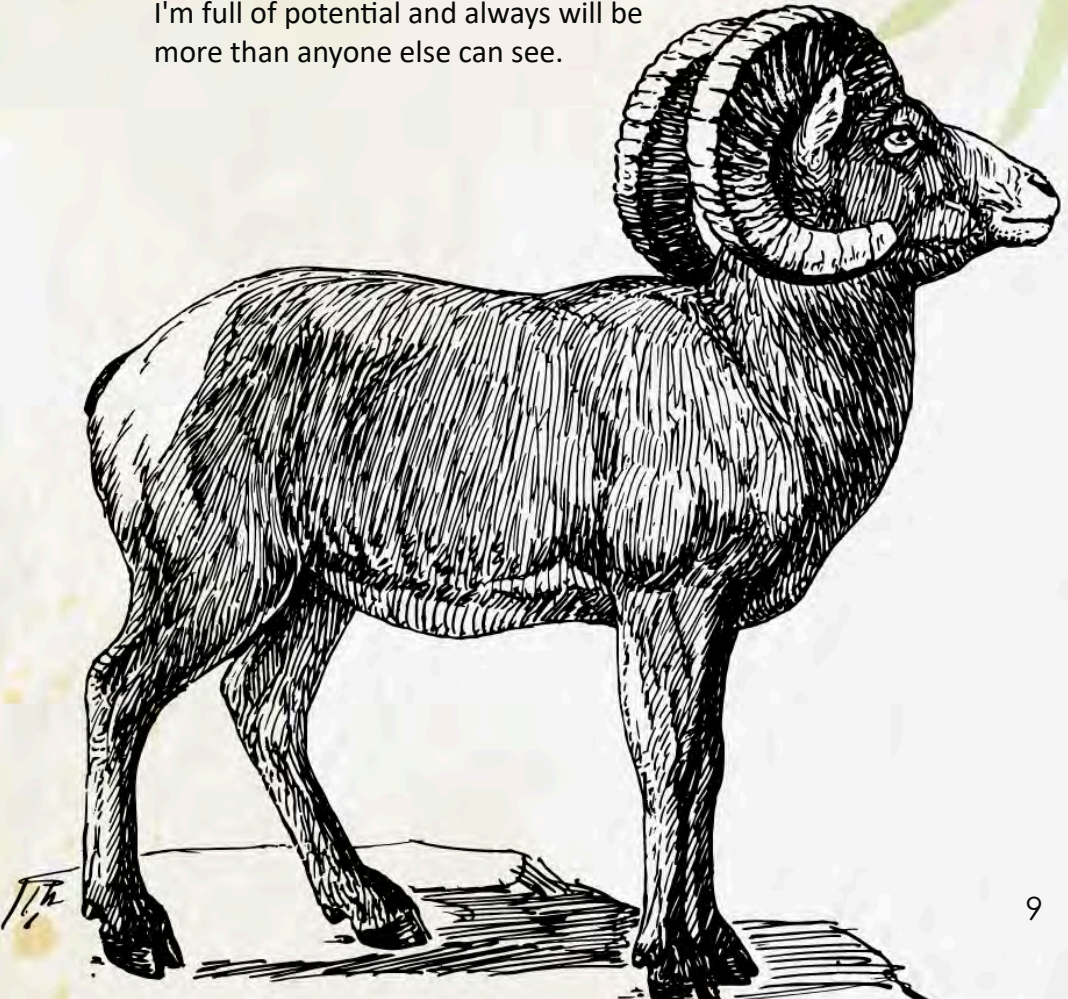
So let's be merry, happy and kind  
and always can be worse in your mind  
So be positive and be kind  
and always remember, the black sheep is only in the mind!



You may be different, which makes you you!  
Now blah blah, black sheep, go join the queue!  
I am a lion, a dragon and a wolf,  
just as long as I am not judgemental like you.

Now back, go ponder at society and wonder.  
I hope you just don't look at the cover!  
Now blah, blah, black sheep, have you any wool?  
All my bags are full, sir, do you take me as a fool?

A scapegoat for thee, as your ego will be.  
You're very short-sighted and cannot see me!  
I'm full of potential and always will be  
more than anyone else can see.



# BOTANICAL INSPIRATION



At the end of June, members of Recoverzine visited the botanic garden in Dundee.

We were fortunate to have a sunny day, which allowed us to fully enjoy the experience as we wandered through the garden which had captivating flowers and various points of interest - from sitting areas to fascinating carvings, statues and art spread out around the grounds.

We have found that the botanic garden is HUGE.

The visit reminded us how photography can be enjoyable and fun again.

We also felt the calming effect of nature as we felt relaxed and wished we could stay longer.



# EXPERIMENT WITH A TOMATO

by Starling

One sunny day, my daughter and I were browsing YouTube out of boredom, looking at videos about plants and vegetables.

We stumbled upon a video where a man took a glass jar, placed soil in, and sliced a tomato bought from a shop. He put the slice in a hole, covered it with the rest of the soil, watered it, and left it to its fate. We watched in amazement as the tomato slice got mouldy but surprisingly started to grow!

Inspired by the video, we had to try it by ourselves too!



We went off to shop to buy everything which we needed for this exciting experiment. In The Range we found a multipack of 5 pots, multipurpose soil and some plant food.

At home, we prepared the pot by stuffing half with soil and then the big moment came: slicing the tomato! We arranged the slice with seeds into a pot and covered it with the rest of the soil.

We watered it and cared for it on our kitchen's window sill.

Honestly... I didn't have much hope, as I knew myself that every plant I wanted to grow died.

So I was very very surprised to find that the tomato was growing after 14 days!

We also had our first crisis when I saw our plants dying. Luckily, my mum stepped in with advice over the phone - water them from the bottom so plants can take it by themselves, instead of washing them through or just spraying them.

Also from time to time I can give them some banana

peel or apple peel as they love it and it's natural nourishment.

Since then, they're prospering and happily growing!





# PAINTING PARADISE

By Alexander Lafferty

This is a picture I done in my mindfulness group which we've branched out into a holistic therapy.

This painting of a palm tree was inspired when us at the Recoverzine magazine took a day trip to the beautiful Dundee University Botanical Gardens.

When I went into the huge greenhouse it had loads of tropical plants which reminded me of being in Belize whilst volunteering back in 1998.

Mindfulness and painting seems to help slow my mind down and helps calm my nervous system and I'd recommend it to anyone else who suffers from PTSD or has used self medication to run from these feelings or thoughts.

The painting and writing as well as mindfulness does this for me while also letting me express my emotions and feelings as well as my thoughts.

It is always good for my mind, body and soul. I'm not perfect but no-one is. If you get an idea or a thought go with it who knows what you may write, paint or learn about yourself. Forget the fear actually take it and transmute into from a negative into a positive and take the good out of the bad always.

## A Mother's Pain Lisa Marie Diduca

To my children when you came into my life I was so deeply broken and torn  
When I had you I promised to give you the best life I had sworn  
    However I couldn't manage my mind and be responsible  
    but being a mum on drugs was not possible  
I couldn't attend to your needs the more I deteriorated in my mental mind  
The absence of light kept me apart from you I was left paralysed  
    Defeated overwhelmed by confusions inside my diseased brain  
I'm sorry for not knowing how to be a mother and causing you emotional pain  
    As I see my unhealed wounds onto you  
I'm trying to heal on a daily so I can be some sort of mother goose  
I have hope and trust that we can rebuild something more genuine and authentic  
    I'm coming back to myself being more self accepted  
    I think of you all each and every long day  
    until I see and hold you all, all I can do is live and pray



## PULL-OUT BIRD SPOTTING GUIDE

Being in nature can be great for our mental health so tear out these pages, take them on a walk and see how many birds you can spot



### SWALLOW

I'm a small bird with a dark, glossy-blue back, red throat, pale underparts and long tail streamers. I'm extremely agile in flight and spend most of my time in the air.

Take an early morning walk in any park between March and October and you'll stand a good chance of spotting me!

## SEPTEMBER



### REDSHANK

As my name suggests, my most distinctive features are my bright orange-red legs. I've got a medium-length bill and an orange base to match. My back and wings are brown and speckled, while my belly is paler in colour.

Look for me in any park which has a pond!

With thanks to RSPB for the bird info  
and Mike Langman for the artwork

## PINK-FOOTED GOOSE



I'm pinkish grey with a dark head and neck, a pink bill and pink feet and legs. I don't breed in the UK, but lots of us spend the winter here every year.

Keep an eye out for us near water (the Riverside Nature Park in Dundee is good) at sunrise or sunset. Don't forget to look up where you'll see us flying in a distinctive V-formation.

## OCTOBER

### BLACKBIRD



Male Blackbirds are black with a bright orange-yellow beak and yellow eye-ring. Females are brown often with spots and streaks on their breasts and brown beak.

I'm one of the UK's most common birds so I should be easy to spot in any garden or park all year round!

## SONG THRUSH

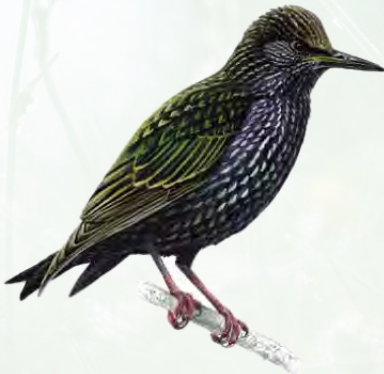


I'm a small brown garden bird with spotted underparts and a great singer as well! I've got a habit of repeating song phrases and copying other birds. You'll maybe see me enjoying a diet of tasty snails by smashing their shells off of rocks.

Look out for me in gardens sitting at the tops of trees and singing my heart out.

## NOVEMBER

## STARLING



I've got a short tail, pointed head and triangular wings. My plumage is very glossy with a sheen of purples and greens. I can fly fast and will walk and run confidently on the ground.

Look out for me socialising with my flock. I love to make noise and will chirp, tweet, and even imitate the sounds I hear around me.



## OYSTERCATCHER

I'm a large, stocky, black and white wading bird with an orange-red bill and reddish-pink legs. I love to eat cockles and will breed on almost all UK coasts.

I'm also a big fan of worms so you'll often spot me in parks looking for something tasty to eat.

## DECEMBER



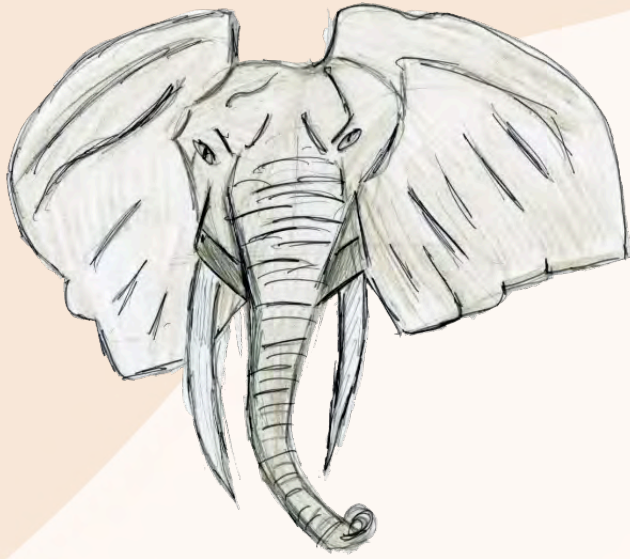
## ROBIN

Thanks to my bright red breast, I'm very easy to spot.

Males and females are identical but our young have no red breast and are spotted with golden-brown.


You can see me all year round, often aggressively defending my territory or singing at night next to the street lights in town and cities.

# Nature-inspired art by Wendy Macdougall



# GAINING MOMENTUM

By Jayne  
PART 1



I was at my lowest after the first phone call. They wanted me to stop dieting, and I was terrified. What did they expect me to do instead? I only had two states: over eating and under eating. When I signed up I thought it would be no big deal to stop dieting and restricting, but when finally faced with it, I panicked, I cried. In reality I wanted to lose weight more than anything. I saw a future where I was thin and therefore happy, if I could just keep dieting a little more and a little more. Now that future- my very happiness itself- felt under threat.

When I first discovered the Momentum programme for binge eating disorder on the Beat website, I thought

it a miracle: A free self-help course, no diagnosis required, helped along by weekly phone calls from a consultant. Here, finally, I had found the help that my GPs had failed to provide.

Until that point I had gone through cycles of compulsive eating and unhealthy restriction. I wanted to eat all the time. I wanted to eat everything. I wanted crisps, chocolate, chips, meats, cheeses, and most of all takeaways. Huge takeaways, with multiple starters and sides, two main meals, and of course a little dessert or two in the fridge for later. I would spend far too much money on my little feasts, and I would sit and gorge myself in front of the TV- preferably alone and after hiding some of the packaging, so no one would know just how much I was eating- until I couldn't possibly fit any more in. And then I would wait,

reluctantly, until there was the slightest room left in my belly, and I would start again on my usually now cold food. I couldn't even stop myself long enough to warm it up most of the time. And I would repeat until I felt so horrified with myself that I couldn't continue.

I felt helpless. When the cravings came over me they were all I could think about until I gave in. I would go for hours resisting, angrily fighting myself, but the cravings never stopped and always won. And then I would eat and eat way past the point of enjoying it, way past uncomfortable fullness.

And when my weight got too high and the shame became too much, I would swing the other way. I would diligently calorie count, I would fast, I would scream and cry and resist as hard as I could. When

the numbers on the scales went down, it felt like all the mood swings and headaches were worth it. But one can't keep up a diet like that forever, and when my willpower dried up the cravings would win again.

I knew Momentum wanted me to stop dieting. I had already lost a stone and I needed to lose two stone more before I could be happy. But surely I could stop. Surely dieting isn't my problem: the binges are. If I learn to stop the binges the weight will just fall off me naturally, right? But then there I was: Looking at the Recovery app. Looking at the food logs it wanted me to make, without counting calories. Looking at breakfast, lunch, dinner, and three snacks a day. Looking at weighing myself every week. And I was paralysed with fear.

"They can't ask me to eat that much!" I thought.

"They can't ask me to stop holding back! If I don't hold back I'll binge again! I'll gain weight!" And that was it, that was the real fear: weight.

I never thought I was the type of person to put so much of my worth on my weight or how I looked. I had bigger friends, I went to body positive burlesque shows, I would assure people that they were pretty and amazing and their size didn't matter. But I couldn't tell myself those things. Deep down, I needed to be smaller. If only I was smaller, I wouldn't have any other problems. Everything else would be magically fixed by just being smaller. I was shocked at my subconscious thinking.

I took a breath. I gave myself a mental hug. I told me I loved me and I can do this: I have to stop worrying about the future and take



things one step, one snack, one meal at a time. I have to live in the moment, and just make the right choice for right now. It wasn't much of a comfort, but I managed to at least stop crying and take a shower. I had to give the programme a fair shot. I had to learn to overcome, not just binge eating, but this warped idea that I can't be or don't deserve to be happy until I can achieve "thin".

The first week was a tightrope walk, trying to hold myself back from over eating but also resist under eating. It felt precarious to eat without counting calories, to guess at what was enough. There were a couple panic moments where the diet pills came out. After confessing this to my consultant, we agreed I should give the rest of the pills to my partner to hide them from me.

The second week was about trying to eat at

regular times, with no more than four hours without food. I found it tricky to create and stick to a new routine, and eating when I wasn't hungry felt wrong, but I also felt my body and cravings respond well: I would start thinking about food only around meal and snack times instead of all the time, and I only wanted something small rather than a big binge. The only days I felt out of control were the days when I either missed meals for some reason, or I was especially tired or emotional. This was honing in on what was causing me to over eat: stress, fatigue, skipping meals. My harsh diet really had been making it worse. Knowing all this didn't make the cravings feel any less when they hit, but at least I knew why it was happening, at least I could point to a reason and tell myself tomorrow will be better.

READ PART 2 IN THE NEXT ISSUE, OUT DECEMBER



Prisoners at the Bella Centre Community Custody Unit in Dundee receive a range of support to help them prepare for their release.

For some, after careful assessment, this may include a period of unsupervised volunteering in the community. This is an important way for the women to get used to life on the outside, looking after themselves, and navigating the complexities of a world from which they have been absent, often for many years.

The experience can be fraught with anxiety and trepidation. Simple things that many of us on the outside take for granted can seem like huge hurdles.

Over the last couple of months one of the prisoners at the Bella Centre has been keeping a diary of her experiences which she has agreed to share with Recoverzine.

**15/06/2024**

I went to Pride March for my first Unsupervised Day Release (UDR). I was nervous, excited.

It was real good seeing different kinds of people, some dressed up.

I had a great time. My thought was if I can do this I can do anything.

**16/06/2024**

I went to see Maxwell's garden as it was where I was going to be volunteering. I was out my comfort zone as I'm that used to jail jobs.

**18/06/2024**

Started my outside job. So worried as I don't have a clue about gardening. People were very welcoming. I just had to remember to breathe and not forget my wisdom.

**22/06/2024**

My first UDR to my nan's. Being there with all my family, never

thought I'd actually see the day. Having the responsibility to get from A-B meant a lot.

### **24/06/2024**

I went to see my mum and sister at Markinch cemetery. It was one of those things I had to do cause my mum passed away only 6 days after I received a life sentence. I felt so relieved and got closure for myself.

### **25/06/2024**

Was back at the Maxwell Centre. I had a purpose to get up for. Knowing the people are nice I felt confident and ready for the day.

### **02/07/2024**

Today I got a lot of weeding done. I was zoned out a few times since I was that used to hearing keys, people banging doors and shouting (prison vibes).

Today I was just hearing birds, different conversations and

personalities and also everyone is just so happy to be there.

**18/07/2024**

I went on the bus for the first time in years to go to my social worker's. Honestly you couldn't write it but the bus broke down.

I was thinking someone is trying to tell me something.

**25/07/2024**

I had to go on the bus again to my social work appointment. I was praying it will go smoothly. I managed to get to my appointment on time.

When I was walking through the city centre it was so overwhelming.

Happy as I was with the UDR I was on my own for 8-9 hours and I felt the pressure, but I used my positive thinking skills and knew I'd manage. Overall it was a good day.

When I was walking through town on my own I tell you something I started to feel great. I can now say "I'm back."

**09/08/2024**

I've been a volunteer at the Maxwell Centre for nearly 2 months and every day is a good day, and very welcoming.

When I'm there I feel worry free as I leave everything at the door and focus on what makes me happy, which is good people.

I've gained a lot more confidence in what I'm doing. Everyone at Maxwell comes from a different walk of life and each one of us has different life experiences.

Every day I walk home feeling great within myself and I can't wait for the next day.

If you're reading this please come along and see for yourself.

# BACK TO THE GARDEN

The Friary on Tullideph Road in Dundee is one of the largest church sites in Britain and was formerly inhabited by Franciscan Monks.

Alongside the RSPB they are now in the process of developing a special Nature Recovery Garden.

Envisioned as a nature-rich inner-city sanctuary, the garden is being co-created with the local community and addiction recovery services.

It will offer three levels of nature engagement: appreciation, education, and conservation. Over the next six months, significant progress is planned, including making a start on a sensory and



reflective garden, a wildflower meadow, and a woodland walk.

So far a number of trees have been felled in the garden but there are a lot of branches, trunks and chippings needing cleared.

Hope Busák from RSPB spoke to Recoverzine to tell us about what needs done.

“We're looking to assemble a team of volunteers to help tidy up the garden over the coming weeks. This could involve tasks ranging from litter picking to moving larger items with the help of a forklift or tractor to designated areas agreed upon by the church.

We're working towards our first public open day on September 25th as part of Recovery Month so we're keen to speak to anyone who has access to and license to use some of the bigger equipment we need.”

Dave Dyson from the Reconnection Project, based at the Friary, explained why this garden will be so important to people in recovery.

“The Friary Gardens are a place where people can relax and

put any troubles to one side.

It is an idyllic setting 10 minutes outside the city centre offering up 3 acres of woodland and grass.

People can be involved in the allotment garden which gives an opportunity to give back by growing fruit, herbs and vegetables which are donated to people in need or used in lunches for people in Recovery.

Alternatively, you can have a walk and see our bug hotel, flower beds or just sit and enjoy the peaceful surroundings.”

Anyone wanting more info can contact either Hope or Dave.

Hope.Busak@rspb.org.uk

dave@thereconnectionproject.org.uk

**General Disclosure:**

The views expressed in Recoverzine Dundee are those of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of DVVA, its staff, or partners.

The articles in this magazine do not constitute advice and are offered as suggestions and personal experiences only.

If you require specific advice on any topic, you should contact an expert or an appropriate professional in the relevant field.

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We are keen to hear from anyone with lived experience of recovery. This could relate to your own journey or the journey of someone you know.

Please send any submissions for the next issue of Recoverzine Dundee to [rossbull@dvva.scot](mailto:rossbull@dvva.scot) before 22nd November 2024.

Please also get in touch if you would like support with your submission or just want to discuss your ideas over a cuppa.

If you would like to see your work featured in the next issue of Recoverzine please send it in no later than **22nd November 2024**.



**DON'T  
MISS OUT!**

If you would like some support before submitting please let us know. Some of the articles featured in Recoverzine are entirely written by the author. For those less confident with writing one of our Engagement Workers can have a chat with you and turn the recording of the conversation into an article that you're happy with.



**Poetry**  
**Recovery Stories**  
**Features**  
**Reports**  
**Visual Art**

To submit your work or to discuss support please contact  
[rossbull@dvva.scot](mailto:rossbull@dvva.scot)

