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## Parrots Social – Claire’s Blog

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Hello! My name is Claire, and I have been the Parrot’s Social Secretary for the last two years. Parrots Socials aim to create a diverse and inclusive space where the LGBTIQ+ community and allies can come together, build connections, and celebrate their identities. We love our sport, but we also host events that don’t necessarily involve anything to do with sport!

You would be forgiven for thinking I only took up this post as I wanted to have a good time with a bunch of queer people from my community! Whilst there is truth to that, I also have a personal reason for wanting to run LGBTIQ+ events in Perth. As an Irish Catholic growing up in Perth, the attitude of the city felt conservative to me. I was Head Girl of a Catholic school, took part in a pilgrimage to Lourdes, was a member of the church band, and even volunteered as a guitar teacher for kids at the church. In these settings I never fully felt comfortable, and I didn’t know why. I felt like a fraud, and in many ways I was.

The first time I thought I might be gay was when I moved away to university. I was drawn to queer spaces, and things started to make sense to me quickly. Of course, there were a couple of wobbles when I was denying my undeniable queerness (*sorry to my short-lived uni boyfriend!*) but eventually I couldn’t ignore it anymore. Once I had finally admitted to myself that I was in fact, clearly a gay woman, I started to notice how, for most of my life, I had been living as half of a person; I had lived my entire life acting. It wasn’t intentional but I now found myself trying to work out what parts of me were real and what parts I had fictionalised. I was having queer puberty, and it was only through immersing myself into the LGBTIQ+ community, and the support that they gave me, which allowed me to go through such a transformative experience with *minimal* damage to my sanity!



*Me, clearly miserable and standing like a sack of tatties, giving my family side eye for making me wear a dress.*

Nowadays, I don’t want anyone to feel like they are living like a half-person, and I truly think by running social events for the LGBT+ community, I can allow people to find their community (*and ultimately themselves*) much quicker than I did.

Hopefully you’re already following us on social media (@PerthParrots - *get following!*) and if you are, then you’ll have seen we have not stopped. Since 2023, we have hosted over 30 events, and this is not including all the other events we have been participants at. In other words, we like to keep ourselves busy! The Social Events team are always working behind

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the scenes to think up new events to host, but we are always open to suggestions. If you want to try a new activity, we will find a way to make it happen, so just let us know!

We plan many Parrots’ social events to coincide with important milestones and celebrations, such as LGBT+ History Month, Purple Friday, IDAHOBIT, and our annual epicentre, Perthshire Pride. These events aim to celebrate the community’s achievements and promote a sense of pride and self-acceptance (and if they get us a floorball player or 2 out of it then it’s a bonus!). Over half of these events are completely free and we aim to run most events not centred around alcohol.



Some great Parrot friends and I at Perthshire Pride, living undeniably queer!

These events can provide a platform for members to network, share experiences, and seek support. This is especially important for individuals who may be struggling. One of the best parts of the socials has been the friendships and relationships (oi, oi!) that have blossomed through these events.

In the past 2 years we have run events like a trip to the Panto (*oh no you didn't*), hikes up Birnam and Kinnoull Hill, a Pétanque Tournament in partnership with the Perth Pétanque Club, The Film Screening of our short film “Every time We Play, We Win”, a highly competitive Darts Tournament, our swanky new Kit Launch, and the infamous BBQ where I drank 4 bottles of Prosecco (*with help*) and forced everyone to listen to me belting out Loreen on karaoke. The latter may have contributed to the reason we

many classic Eurovision songs one can force others to listen to. aim to run some events sober, there is only so many classic Eurovision songs one can force others to listen to. One of my favourite events to attend was the River Tay Kayaking event in partnership with Willowgate Activity Centre. The sun was shining, and the views of Perth were stunning! It even inspired me to buy my own paddleboard and get out on the water more.

We also have very strong links with LEAP Sports Scotland and Out and About Perthshire who host regular events such as Bouldering, Football Golf, Pickleball and much more! The wide range of events will cater to the various interests of the LGBT+ community, and it means that you don't have to be a floorball playing Parrot to enjoy these benefits.