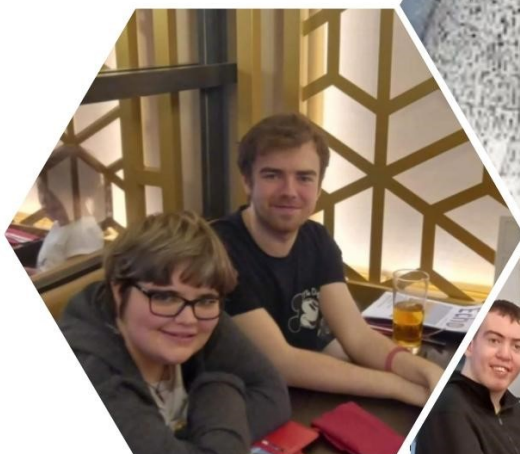


The Neighbourhood

Echo



Spring Edition 2022



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EDITORIAL

Welcome to this issue of the Neighbourhood Echo which has been edited by Margaret, Gordon and Scott, three of the eight Denny network members. The front cover is a range of pictures of other local members. Some of the photos show members making soup, as well as Scott and Ben at a Halloween party. Ben is from the Falkirk network and the event gave the happy opportunity for the two friends to be reunited for the first time since leaving school.

There is also a photograph of the Kelpies which is close to the Helix Park where Neighbourhood Network members are all going to get together and celebrate our 20th anniversary in May. It will be a joy to finally get a chance to get together again!

We hope you enjoy the stories. Gordon said that they were very positive and this made him happy with his decision to join the network recently. All editors wished to pass on their congratulations to the happy couple in our first article. Read on....



Picture of flower from Photosymbols ©

Love is in the Air!



Love was certainly in the air over Christmas as Chris from the Cumbernauld 2 Network proposed to Elizabeth from the Garnock Valley Network and she said YES!

Chris and Elizabeth met on digital activities during lockdown. Romance blossomed and with a lot of planning Chris got down on one knee and popped the question just before Christmas. Both are very happy and making plans for their future together.

A new friend in Motherwell & Wishaw

North Lanarkshire Members had a great day on Monday 28th February 2022 meeting Clare Adamson MSP for Motherwell & Wishaw. We met Clare at the Maranatha Centre in Motherwell. Members chatted about Neighbourhood Networks and shared stories of how being a member has changed their lives. We discussed the activities we do and how we are involved in the local community. Clare told members if they had any issues or questions, they should contact her, and she would take the issues to parliament. A few members sang a song and she said Motherwell & Wishaw have got talent.



Good News from North Lanarkshire Members!

Some North Lanarkshire members have enjoyed being back at their tennis lessons. Currently we have two members Scott Robertson and Ross Watson who are in the progress of achieving their level 1 coaching qualification in tennis. Lisa Davis and Ross Watson recently attended a tennis tournament and achieved certificates.

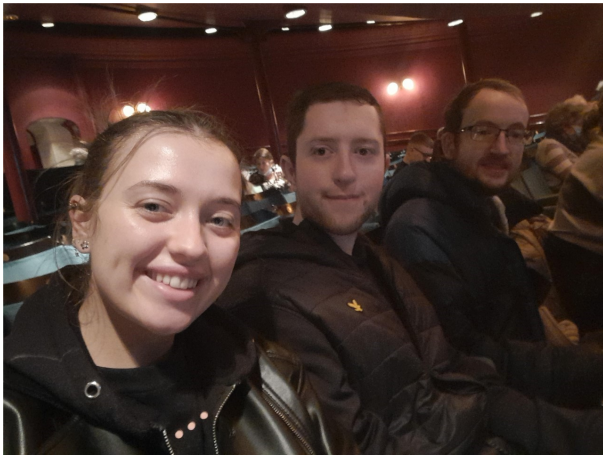
Wishaw 2 member Lisa Davis has excelled in her passion for sport and fitness as at her athletics she recently won gold medals for soft ball and a 60m sprint as well as silver for standing long jump.

Recently, North Lanarkshire members have started a well-being class. The objective of this class is to focus and enhance our well-being to help us achieve the best versions of ourselves. Members have taken a lead in facilitating the class with recent activities being practicing positivity and member led warm ups, HIT workouts and circuits. Additionally, members have taken responsibility and increased independence and life skills by tidying up after themselves when the class is finished.

Of course, a dance party is essential for boosting one's well-being! The well-being class organised a Halloween party with members coming dressed up in cool costumes to scary costumes. There was lots of games and dancing which helped keep our body and mind healthy.

As part of enhancing our well-being, we have also had guests into the well-being class to teach crotchet. This was a new and fun way for encouraging and practicing a variety of our skills including focusing and patience. An additional bonus was that members were able to crotchet their own bunnies which many thought were a great Christmas gift for families.

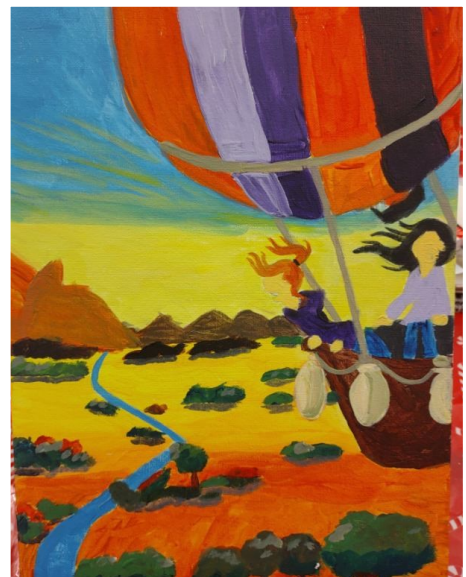
Recently some North Lanarkshire members took a trip to the Theatre Royal Glasgow to see the performances of 'Go Dance'. This involved travelling in to



Glasgow via public transport which members have not done in a while due to covid. With some CLW support, members showed confidence and skill navigating their way into Glasgow and were even able to go to St Enochs for dinner beforehand. Members thoroughly enjoyed the show!

A Talented Artist

Govan Member Gary Turner is an avid illustrator and painter. He has made many pieces of work for organisations such as Projectability and has selected 3 of his favourite paintings to be included in the Neighbourhood Echo.



My Shielding Experience—By Lori Smith, Haddington



I was on the shielding list during the circumstances we have right now (I'm going to call them Corvus). I'm going to admit something: I absolutely loved shielding and, dare I say it, thrived (I even voluntarily went into self-isolation a week before lockdown was officially announced and adored staying at home).

I saw it as a long holiday and got to properly recharge my batteries as well as get a break from the normal system, although I was allowed out for exercise. I got a lot of benefits from shielding, but the best ones were: not getting anxiety and overloads, finding new areas to go for walks within my local area, getting on with abandoned projects, not having to “mask” (appearing “normal” to the general public, especially in busy places), properly discovering gardening, not catching colds or any bugs, finding an appropriate self-care system and learning new skills.

During shielding and lockdown, I learnt lots of things. I learnt how to do video chats and how to work with resin. I also re-learnt cooking with the soup and baking challenges (the soups were the bigger success, even promoting me to “soup maker” in the family).

Some unexpected benefits that I got from shielding included getting a lot more support than I normally get. During lockdown and shielding, as well as Neighbourhood Networks, I also got a lot of support from local community projects, and family as well as friends. I even got to meet more of my

neighbours during lockdown and make friends with them (It was a completely different story pre-Corvus). I got to feel useful, and my loved ones even understood me a lot more after experiencing my version of “normal”.

I didn't get bored at home; I made bears, paperweights and other crafts. I watched a lot of movies and TV shows, did lots of writing, and tended to my little “garden”. I also got introduced to and bonded with Cecil (my Nintendo Switch) and, especially in the first few months, sent a lot of amusing images and videos to give people moral boosts! Humour helped a lot (at the beginning of the pandemic, I even joked that it didn't become a proper emergency, especially in the UK, until the milk, bread and toilet paper shortages started).

Although I enjoyed shielding and lockdown, there were a couple of downsides. I missed going to favourite places – including swimming—and seeing loved ones in person. A downside was also being made to feel guilty all the time for enjoying lockdown as much as I did, especially when I started seeing people again.

I also found the general public's response to lockdown both fascinating and unsurprising (I likened it to the movie *Shaun of the Dead*. Before it became a pandemic, I even expected the government advice to be “go to the Winchester, have a nice cold pint and wait for all this to blow over”). However, I've been finding the easing of restrictions extremely stressful and haven't enjoyed being forced back into the old system again. Although I am slowly getting used to parts of it again. Whilst I thrived with shielding, I've been returned to my default/pre-Corvus setting with normality returning – this feels like being stuck in a survival horror game on the “impossible” difficulty level.



A Midlothian's Theatre Trip

The Penicuik and Dalkeith network enjoyed a trip to the theatre to see Beauty and the Beast the musical. Everyone had a great time singing along!

Travel Buddies

Two members from Kilsyth, Jamie Bauld from Condorrat and Shaun Gould from Millerston Glasgow, have become good friends as well as offering each other peer support. Shaun and Jamie have been going to the cinema, playing pool, going to the ten-pin bowling, and meeting up to chat. Shaun has a car and drives Jamie to and from the events they plan with each other. Shaun has recently moved into his own flat. Both have gone to the local Glasgow “dates and mates” meeting in the Garage night club. Shaun and Jamie come up with their own plans and trust and support each other at events.

Michael Rodgers is a new member to the Kilsyth network. He lives in Cumbernauld and has been supported to learn new bus routes with Martin Holmes, an associate member in Kilsyth network. Both Martin and Michael support the same football team and through traveling have become good friends. Michael can now travel from Cumbernauld to Kilsyth and back on his own to attend meetings and events. Martin and Michael are starting to travel to Condorrat, Kirkintilloch and Falkirk for the ten-pin bowling and cinema.

Great Scott!

It has been a difficult year for most people, and Scott Laidlaw is no exception. However, he started his STEPS course with North Lanarkshire Council attending Coatbridge Community College. When due to covid restrictions this changed to online, Scott was able to immerse himself into online learning and completed his STEPS Programme, helping to build his confidence and self-esteem.

Scott did not stop there. He continued his learning and his thirst for knowledge, and is halfway through completing his Microsoft IT SQA course, having completed the Microsoft Word part of the qualification, and is moving onto PowerPoint and Excel in the new year.

He also became aware of the North Lanarkshire Men's Project, funded by the local authority to support males after lockdown. Scott chose photography due to a previous interest, and mental health first aid.

Scott attended the photography course at Summerlee Heritage Museum and excelled, with his and the other participants photograph's being on display there. This has inspired him to continue his passion and, along with a peer from the course, is looking at a college course next year.

You can see Scott's artwork on display. His artwork has specific meaning to him with pictures of St Andrew's Church formerly Gartsherrie Church, where his grandpa was warden. Also included is the old telephone box beside Sunnyside station where the signal box used to be, and where his Papa was the signal man.

Scott can tell you many stories, including about a picture that he did not use in the exhibition of Lambertons, where his uncle used to work.

A huge congratulations to Scott. So many outcomes achieved and onto the future!



Great spuds!

The Dumbarton and Clydebank networks have had a busy few months despite the challenges faced by covid.

Members have been learning all about the right time to plant and harvest vegetables at the allotment and were delighted to take some tips from the resident gardener. They were also visited at the allotment by Michael Matheson MSP who was impressed with our crop of potato's!

On a visit to Greenock during the COP26 conference, members from each network went head to head in a quiz on environmental issues.

More recently, members visited the impressive new health centre, and plan to get in touch with their local MSP about improving the bus service to the centre.



A Busy Giffnock Member

Neil has been an active member of the network, regularly attending group activities and working full time in a supermarket. Neil always likes to be busy. In his time off he has upcycled a coffee table and is an avid baker.

Lisa says Neil reminds her of a Yoda quote from star wars:

“Do... or do not. There is no try.”



Neighbourhood Network's 20th Birthday Party!

As part of Neighbourhood Network's year of 20th Birthday celebrations, there is going to be a Neighbourhood Networks Birthday Party on Sunday 15th May. The party is going to be at Helix Park in Falkirk.

Ronnie from the Clydebank network is part of the birthday working group, who have been organising the birthday events such as the party. He says he has enjoyed being part of the birthday working group because of being able to use his brain and plan ahead.

Ronnie is looking forward to meeting members at the party, and just enjoying the celebrations.

See you there!

Hello's!

We would like to welcome some new staff to Neighbourhood Networks



Chelsea Watterson

Community Living Worker
(Stevenston 1)



Pauline Graham

Finance & Admin Assistant
(Central Office)



Catherine Thom

Community Living Worker
(Garnock Valley 2)



Emma Turrell

Community Living Worker
(East Renfrewshire Transitions)

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