



# Neighbourhood Networks

## Annual Report 2016



**Our members are connected to their communities,  
sharing their skills and talents and following their dreams-  
"Together anything is possible!"**



## Contents

Page 3	Summary of the Year 2016
Page 5	Scott's Story
Page 6	Coatbridge Allotments
Page 7	TCV Wild Ways to Wellbeing Pilot Project
Page 9	Social Media Intern
Page 10	Finance
Page 11	15th Birthday Party
Page 13	Teenage Kicks in Midlothian
Page 14	East is East
Page 15	Transitions Glamping Trip
Page 17	Zip Slide Challenge
Page 19	Drama
Page 20	Community Connections
Page 21	My Perfect Job

# Summary of the Year 2016

## January to Spring 2016

### By John Dalrymple

Throughout the first half of 2016 we were working hard with colleagues in Midlothian to establish our new networks there on a sustainable footing. In parallel, and as something of a pleasant surprise, we found ourselves exploring, with local authority and third sector partners, the possibility of developing some new networks in neighbouring East Lothian. We are grateful to everyone whose hard work these Lothian projects during this time was seen to bear fruit later in the year.

March was notable for the (extremely premature!) retirement of David Elliott, for many years the manager of West Dunbartonshire's joint learning disability service. David was a key figure in helping to launch and promote our work in West Dunbartonshire in 2011, and we are grateful to him for the support he gave us over those years.

Reflecting the growth of the organisation in recent years, April saw the launch of the Staff Council, bringing staff representatives together with senior managers on a regular basis to discuss strategic and policy issues arising in our work, and adding an additional channel of communication.



We also reached the big milestone of our 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday - celebrated in style in May at the Pearce Institute in Govan. There was a great turnout of friends, members, staff (past and present) and trustees, and a good time was had by all: an excellent tribute to the small group of men and women who demonstrated the imagination and persistence to get the organisation off the ground, back in 2001.

Rounding off the first half of the year, a tropical sun shone us at the beginning of June, when the whole staff team set up camp on the beach at Ayr for a two day retreat, notable, not just for the heatstroke, and the hard work undertaken, but also for the emergence of some hitherto well-kept karaoke secrets.

This warm energy helped to set the seal on the preparations then being made for the succession planning proposal that would see the Director's role later pass to Heather, who now continues the story.....



## Summary of the year contd...

### Summer 2016 to December 2016

#### By Heather Calvo, Acting Director



In August our Board of Trustees met for the Annual Retreat at Seamill Hydro. The focus of the event was on succession planning for the leadership of the organisation. After some skilful facilitation from Janet Roberts from the Cranfield Trust, the Board approved a unique and innovative plan for the organisation that fits hand in glove with the journey to self-management that Neighbourhood Networks has been on.

September saw our amazing zip slide event. The event pushed many of us out of our comfort zone. This was challenging not only because of stepping off a wavering platform and plunging across the Clyde but also because the event itself was a new venture for the organisation. It was a huge success and served as big lesson in the value of trying something new and different. There was a palpable sense of inclusion and we were all in it together to succeed. We also managed to create some significant resources for the organisation including a new website and community pot for Networks.

In October we received a final report from our annual unannounced inspection from the Care Inspectorate.

Once again we obtained excellent grades; 6 for Quality of Care and Support and 5 for quality of management and leadership. The result was well deserved and is a real testament to the commitment and hard work of all the staff in the organisation.

Throughout the year and into the end of 2016 (and beyond) Neighbourhood Networks supported Community Living Workers towards achieving an SVQ 3 in Health and Social Care. This was financed, in part, through grant monies from the Voluntary Sector Development Fund and organisational resources. The qualifications took some significant time and commitment for staff to complete. All credit to everyone for their efforts and achievements in attaining these.

2017 will undoubtedly be another active and challenging year for Neighbourhood Networks. Reflecting back on 2016, however, we have a very robust organisation behind us to face whatever lies ahead.

January 2016

## Scott's Story

Scott is a 25 year old man. He lived in Blackpool with his mum until illness forced them to return to Coatbridge when his mum became very ill.

Sadly Scott's mum passed away and Scott went to live with his Aunt and Uncle. This is when he joined Neighbourhood Networks.

Scott is quite a lively young man who enjoys his own company. As such, Scott found it difficult to engage with the network as he found being in groups difficult. Initially, he kept everyone at a distance.

This early reluctance to become involved changed almost overnight when he received the keys to his own flat. He enjoyed showing off his new home and began engaging with the network, joining in group activities and meeting with the CLW on a regular basis.



Shortly afterwards, Scott started working as a volunteer in a community café in Bellshill and was delighted when the members of his network took it in turns to visit him at work.

He also became involved in the Community Allotments, growing fruit and vegetables. Scott

also hosts Members Meetings where he provides a buffet and takes minutes of the meetings.

Scott also enjoys sharing his skills involving keeping his home neat and tidy with other members. He also has an interest in the cost of toilet paper and can tell everyone where all the best deals are to be found!

Recently he has offered to support members along to the disco, meeting them at the bus stop and staying with them at the end of the evening until their taxi arrives to take them home.

Scott is the Net Rep for Coatbridge and attends meetings where he shares feedback from his network. He is now very interested in joining the Marketing Group where he can promote Neighbourhood Networks and share with others the effect being involved with this organisation has had on his life.

At Scott's last review it was recognised that his self-esteem and confidence was very high. He has been pushing himself and making decisions for himself. An excellent example of this new self-belief was demonstrated recently when Scott visited a local DIY store where he purchased paint, chose all the colours himself and decorated his flat.

The future – Scott wants to go on holiday without his Aunt and Uncle coming along.



# Coatbridge Allotments

Coatbridge members Scott, Gary, Michael and Grant applied to a local community garden for an allotment space and were delighted to learn that their request had been granted.

Upon receiving the good news the members met with Project Organiser, Toni, who showed them their allotment space and gave them some useful advice about how to care for their allotment.

Toni offered her support to the members on a Wednesday morning. She advised them on how to prepare the ground and discussed the types of fruit and vegetables that would grow best in their allotment space.

The members were also given access to a Polytunnel" and Toni explained to the group about the types of plant material that could be placed in here.



The members also have access to the herb garden and the fruit tree area and were given instruction in the use of the site "Compost Heap".

Working within the allotment has proven to be very rewarding as all four members continue to attend the facility regularly where they grow potatoes, carrots, peas and strawberries.

All members also benefit from the social element of the project too and enjoy planting their vegetables alongside other interested gardeners from the local community and sharing gardening experiences with them.

They have also learned a great deal of new life skills when working within the allotment. The group have learned to work as a team and as a result are able to enjoy together the fruits of their labours.



February 2016

# TCV Wild Ways to Wellbeing Pilot Project

February began our involvement with a wonderful pilot project called the Wild Ways to Wellbeing. Paul Barclay from TCV (The Conservation Volunteers) got in touch to find out if the members of Neighbourhood Networks would be interested in taking part in the pilot project and of course we said yes!

The project involved local walks to Cumbernauld's green spaces with the aim of improving wellbeing by connecting with local, natural places.

The project uses the **Five Ways Well model** which is a simple way of thinking about our health and wellbeing. It gives five easy ways to start taking care of our health:

1. **Connect** -Meet new people, visit local green spaces.
2. **Get active**- Health walks, practical activities.
3. **Take notice**- Listen to birds, use plants in art.
4. **Learn**-Identify plants/ wildlife, try new crafts.
5. **Give**- Your time to be in nature, environmental work.

Seven members from Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Coatbridge eagerly signed up to the project which after lots of planning started in April 2016.

The project was initially planned for five weeks but got extended to thirteen weeks and each session lasted two hours.



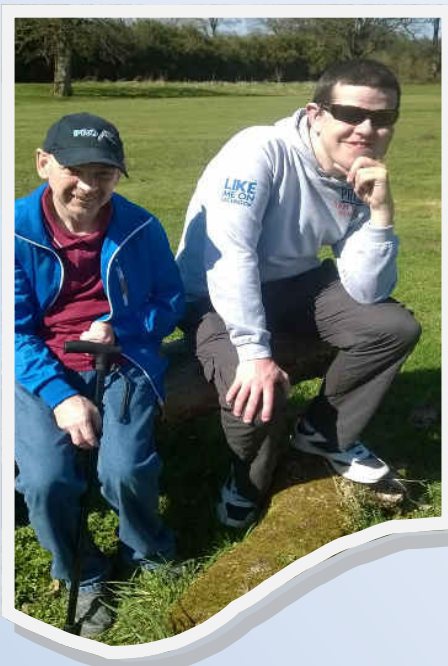
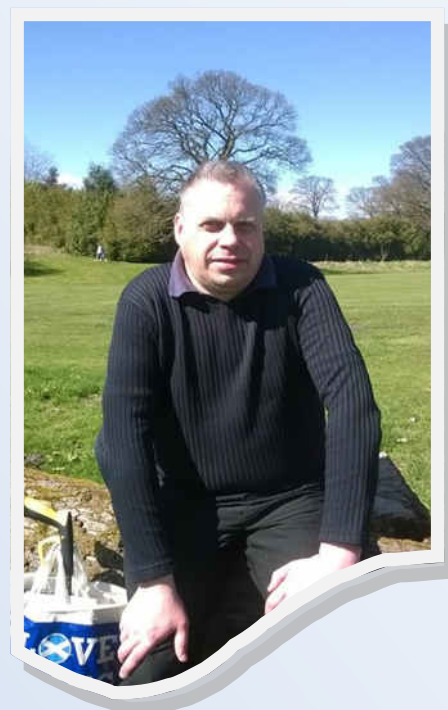
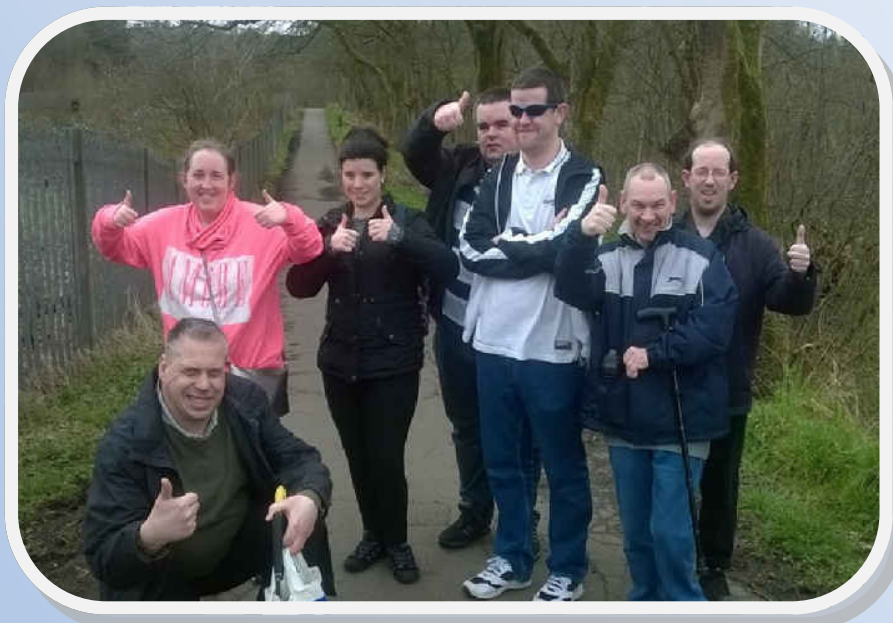
Each week we would walk to a local green space -most had never visited before even though it was on our doorstep. As well as keeping fit walking we spotted lots of wildlife and the walk leaders Anna and Paul would point out trees and plants. The walks were difficult to begin with but as the weeks went on our fitness improved and after each walk we were rewarded with cup or tea/ coffee and a biscuit.

Members were enthusiastic and attended every week regardless of weather- we had sunshine, wind, rain and even snow!



# TCV Pilot Project contd.....

Michael (Coatbridge member) really enjoyed the walks. Michael has built new relationships and has grown in confidence. Michael was supported to travel to Cumbernauld on the first week but was confident making the journey independently thereafter and kept a diary with the walk dates taking responsibility for attending the walks without being reminded.



Members completed a health and well being questionnaire on the first week of the walk. The questionnaire was repeated on the final week which highlighted whether there had been an improvement in members health and wellbeing.

At the end of the project, members were involved with the evaluation and this was done either at a group interview or as a telephone interview.

We have continued to keep in touch with Paul Barclay from TCV and were invited to a conference celebrating the Wild Ways Well Project. Pauline (Network Manager) and Peter (Cumbernauld 2 member) delivered a presentation at the conference explaining who Neighbourhood Networks are and spoke about our time with the Wild Ways well project. Paul Barclay would like to continue to work with us and it is hoped that we will be successful in receiving some funding for future projects.



March 2016

## Social Media Intern

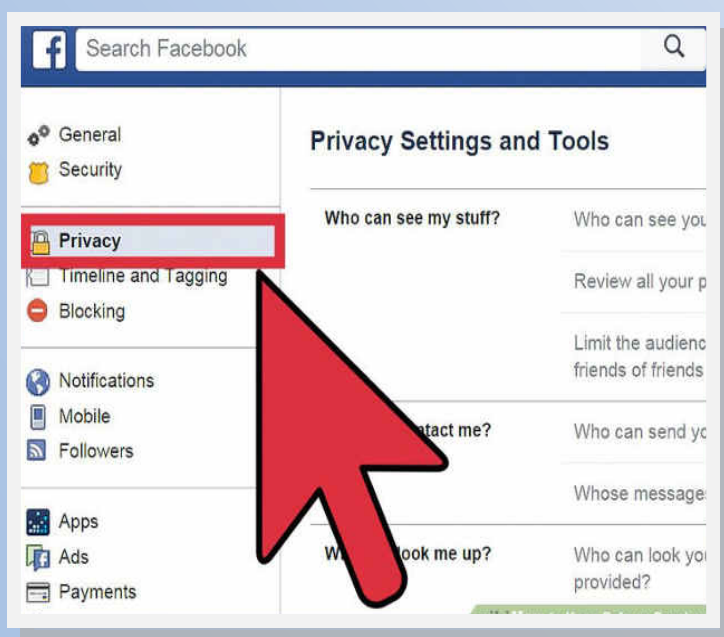
We realised that social media is an increasingly popular way of connecting with members of the organisation and also people out with the organisation who might not have heard of Neighbourhood Networks. We wanted to enhance our presence on social media and Laura McFarlane a student at Glasgow University took on the role of social media intern. Laura spent 6 months with Neighbourhood Networks taking care of our Facebook page and keeping it updated with all the interesting and exciting stories from members across the networks. It was good to have someone to focus on this. Laura also delivered social media training to members to make them aware of the how to use Facebook and the internet safely.

This is what Laura had to say about her experience -

**“Working with Neighbourhood Networks as a social media intern during my third year was a rewarding experience in a variety of ways. For one day a week, I was allocated my own desk and worked as a valued part of a diverse and friendly team of professionals.**

**“the positivity and enthusiasm of the members was inspiring”**

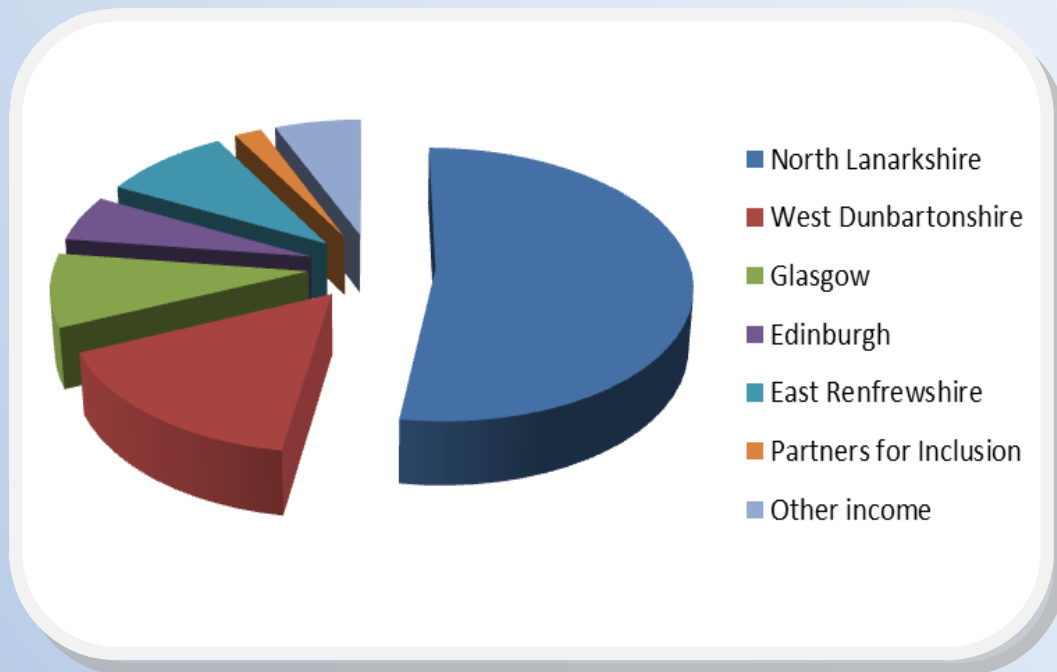
After brainstorming social media strategy with the team, I was given the responsibility to implement this strategy on my own, which helped me build my social media, marketing as well as communication skills. Not only this, Neighbourhood Network offered me the opportunity to run social media safety and training sessions, where I was able to work with vulnerable adults in the networks directly. This is an aspect of the position I found particularly gratifying - the positivity and enthusiasm of the members was inspiring. I worked with Neighbourhood Networks for just over 6 months and only left (begrudgingly!) because I was offered a full time marketing intern position over the summer. I would not have had relevant experience for this paid summer position if I had not have the opportunity to develop my social media, teamwork and communication skills at Neighbourhood Networks. “



April 2016

# Finance

Year end results to 31st March 2016



Income increased to £655,886, up by 2.2% compared to 2015. We continue to have excellent relations with all local authorities, with North Lanarkshire Council showing a particularly high commitment to preventative services. This is evident in the level of income received from them.

There was a modest surplus of £907 in the year. There was a grant received from Children in Need for our Transition Network and the Scottish Government part funded our SVQ training programme. Costs were controlled throughout the year with an increase in salaries due to the need to employ more staff and develop the organisation. There is £262,006 in reserves which represents approximately 5 months cover of resources expended. Only 4% of reserves are restricted and the reserves position is within the OSCR recommendations.

During 2016, there were new networks established in both East Lothian and Midlothian while the Edinburgh pilot network came to an end. The existing networks continued to develop and support the members and there is potential for new networks in 2017. The financial outlook for 2017 is not without challenges but we are in a good position to deal with these and proactive planning will mitigate any difficulties that may arise.

May 2016

Neighbourhood  
Networks

15<sup>th</sup> Birthday

## 15th Birthday Party

Back in August 2015 a group of members got together to take forward the idea of a social event that had been discussed at the Advocates meeting.

The fact that Neighbourhood Networks was celebrating its 15<sup>th</sup> year seemed like the ideal reason for a celebration and it was agreed that a 15<sup>th</sup> Birthday party would make for a great social gathering.

### Some party planning members enjoying the photo booth



The planning committee were given a budget from the central office to put on the event.

There were some important decisions to be made early in the process including when and where to have the party; what type of music and food to have and ticket prices. Team members had to think about the size and cost of the venue and also the location of the venue and how easily it could be reached by public transport. Possible venues were contacted and visited and the Pearce Institute in Govan seemed to tick all the boxes.

As well as the main hall we could also take advantage of their catering team, who worked really hard to provide everything we needed at a really good price.

The planning committee continued to meet regularly and, once they had the big things sorted out like the venue, the food, the DJ etc, members of the team started to focus on the smaller details.

Decorations for the hall were bought, letters asking for donations were written and sent out, raffle prizes were collected and a photo booth was also planned.

### Birthday card from a network





# 15th Birthday Party contd.....

The team invited all the networks to “bring a present”. The network members came up with some really inventive gifts to bring along, everything from a giant card filled with members’ stories and comments to a whole trolley filled with birthday cakes, comedy sketches and films, songs and stories. The networks were also invited to suggest some songs they would like the DJ to play on the night.

## CAKES!!!



Then the timeline for the evening was planned out. This proved to be the trickiest part of the whole planning process. Co-ordinating the diverse range of “gifts” being presented by all the network members was hard work! Making sure that everyone had the right resources at the right time, trying to organise their time to allow everyone their moment and still leaving enough time to party was not easy, but we got there in the end!

A guest list was drawn up and invitations were designed and printed. Invitations were sent out to lots of people who had been involved with Neighbourhood Networks in a variety of ways over the last 15 years.

The party was well attended. The network members came along and presented their gifts, and then danced the night away.

Thank you to all of the members and staff for their hard work behind the scenes and to everyone who worked their sock off on the night. Thank you also to the staff at the Pearce Institute, Janette Bain and the McMillan Café catering staff for all of their help and to Greggs and Farmfoods for their kind donations.

## MORE CAKE!



June 2016

## Teenage Kicks in Midlothian



Great news in summer 2016 – Midlothian Council confirmed funding (1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018) for two networks specifically for young people in transition from children's to adults services. We were especially delighted because we had been working since September 2015 to develop networks in Dalkeith and Penicuik. All the young members and their families had leant their support and their voices to make this happen so there was much to celebrate.

***“The Network group has been an amazing group for Jamie. His confidence has dramatically improved and he looks forward to it every week. Jamie doesn’t have many friends so without it would not have the opportunity to meet new people and get out and about doing the things other kids his age are all doing.”*** (Jamie’s mum)

***“I am very optimistic about this group as Ben is very happy and content. I can see great progress being made in the group in terms of***

***promoting social and independence skills for each and every member.”*** (Ben’s mum)

‘Transition’ members are young people who are about to leave, or have recently left, school and are moving forward into college or training for employment. Both the networks are very popular with steady referrals from the Transitions Social Workers Leigh and Lynda who have also put a lot of effort and energy into this exciting new opportunity for the young people they support.

***“What a breath of fresh air this group is. They are doing things that ‘young adults’ should be doing at this stage in their lives. It can be a very lonely place, feeling different and being treated differently. To be part of a network where they can be themselves and go without ‘Mum & Dad’ is great as it is giving them independence but in a very safe and reassuring manner. Without this it’s back to spending time only with family and sitting every night listening to music in your bedroom.”*** (Ciera’s mum)



July 2016

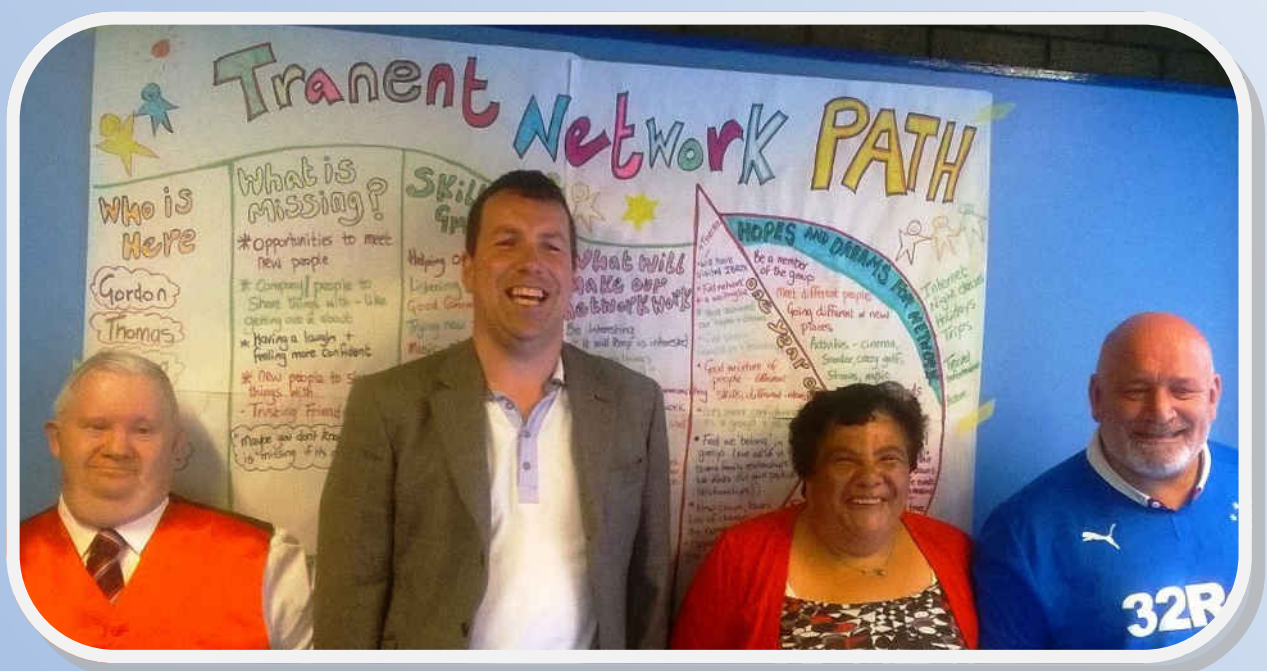
## East is East

Neighbourhood Networks are now well established in Musselburgh, Tranent and another network is being planned in Haddington. Members are enjoying meeting others from across the networks at Quality Street meetings they are also keen to establish their own regional identity.

As the first step in that process, East Lothian and Midlothian held their first ever Regional Members' Meeting at Southside Community Centre in Edinburgh. 16 Lothian members attended to consider how to choose their own Net Reps and to meet some of the candidates for election to the NN Board. Making sure members and staff in the East know they are part of something bigger is important. We need to think about how we strengthen that sense of belonging, using new technologies and social media.

A great deal of effort is going into raising the profile of Neighbourhood Networks in East Lothian. The Musselburgh Network will be officially launched by Colin Beattie MSP in February 2017. The launch will take place in Fisherrow Community Centre in Musselburgh, where the network regularly meets. It is expected to be attended by local councillors, social work, other service providers and potential members.

The Tranent network will be launched by Iain Gray MSP in March 2017. These events are a great opportunity to reach out to communities and key people in these communities.

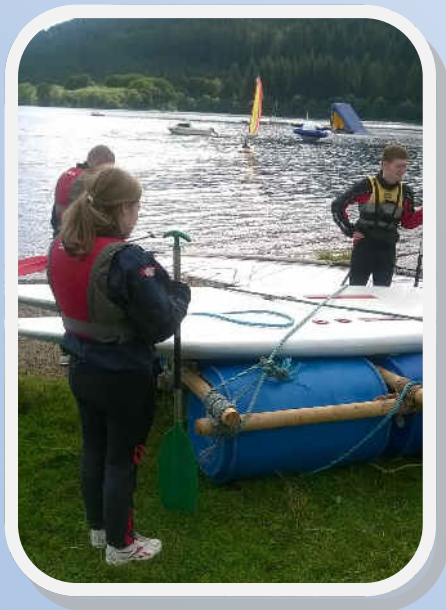




August 2016

## Transitions Glamping Trip

On 25<sup>th</sup> August the West Dunbartonshire transition group went to on a glamping activity for two days to Galloway Activity Centre near Castle Douglas. While there they participated in various activities such as archery, mountain biking, laser tag in the forest and water based activities – this involved them working as a team and sharing skills to build a raft using wooden poles, plastic barrels, surfing boards and rope.



For many reasons this was a particularly successful trip for members of the group. It helped individuals to build their confidence and self-esteem. No-one in the transition group had ever stayed away overnight with friends and independent of family members/parents. This was a huge achievement for them. One of the members from the Dumbarton network joined them to act as

mentor and advisor. The group were encouraged to be fully involved in planning their trip and to identify areas where they could take responsibility and use their skills to offer each other support.

**“One young man in particular took on a leadership role,”**

During their stay the community living worker ensured that the group were given plenty of opportunities to be as autonomous and as self-sufficient as possible e. g they shared cabins independently in two small groups and one person from each group was elected by their peers to act as team leader. One young man in particular took on a leadership role, listening to others opinions, offering support and stepping in to help resolve issues.

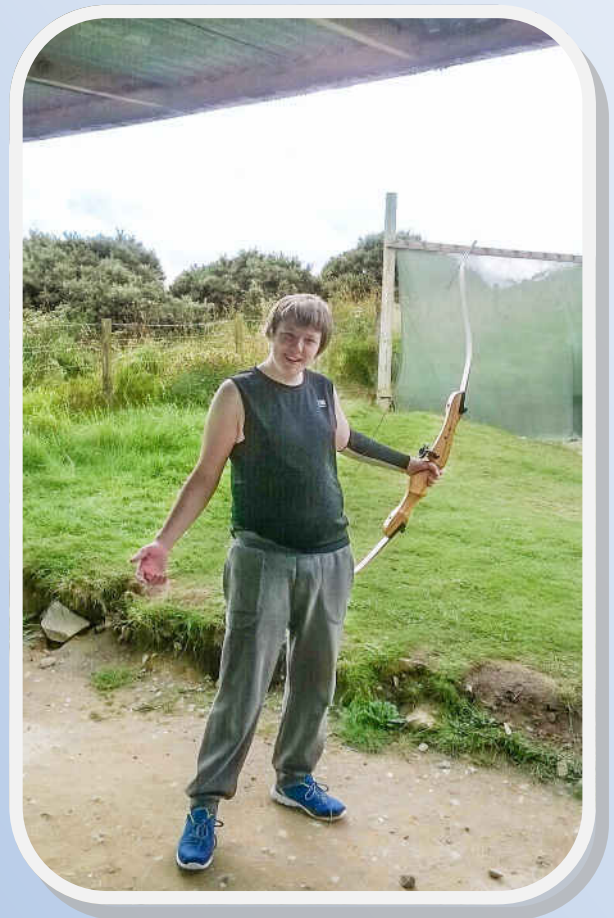


# Transitions Glamping Trip contd...



**Models by  
Daniel Fotheringham**

When the trip was over we met as a group to highlight and praise the skills and efforts that we had observed. We gave individuals a small token in recognition of their achievements and noted a significant difference in how they rated their own sense of pride in themselves. We actively encouraged individuals to consider their individual gifts and talents and to think about how they could use them to support each other. Seven of the young people have demonstrated a rise in confidence and self-esteem since then and they have shared their learning with other networks by helping to produce a holiday guide.





September 2016

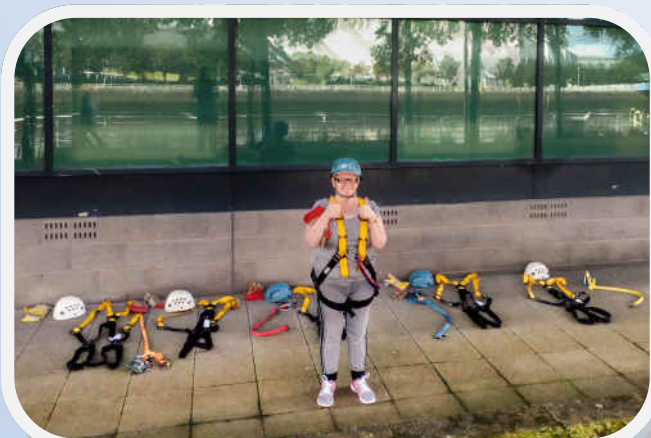
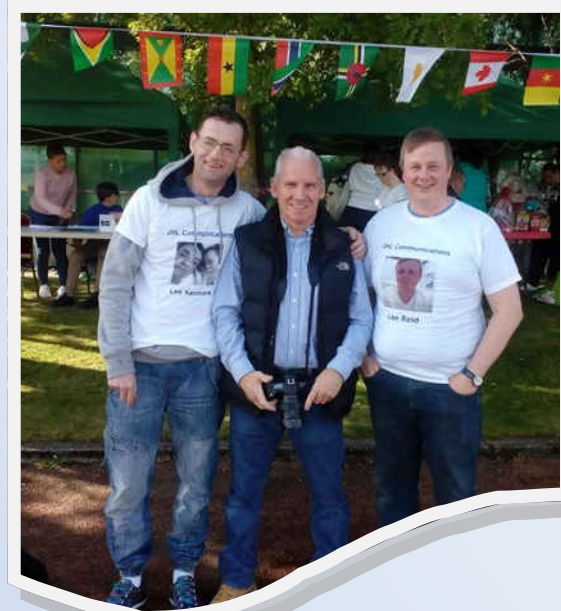
# Zip Slide Fundraising Challenge



“On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2016 a Zip Slide was organised by Neighbourhood Networks to help us to raise funds for the organisation.

This challenging event was not for the faint hearted. The participants were lifted 130ft high where they had a bird’s eye view of the spectacular and iconic landmarks across the beautiful City of Glasgow. They were asked to take a deep breath and step off the crane to zip 700ft across the River Clyde to land safely on the Govan side of the river.

We had set up a couple of stalls on the site too. This included a cake stand with home baking on offer and everyone who had completed the Zip Slide was offered samples of delicious cakes and refreshments after their leap of faith. Another stand sold jewellery made by some crafty members.



More than 300 people attended the event with lots of member’s, staff, families, friends and neighbours coming along to slide or support those brave enough to step off the crane. We even managed to rope in (literally) some Dava Street connections including the JHL mobile phone guys and our GHA neighbours.



# Zip Slide Fundraising Challenge contd..

Neighbourhood Networks are grateful for all the people who helped to make this a really successful day, too many to thank individually. We appreciate the incredible bravery of people for completing our zip slide challenge and supporting our organisation.

We also appreciate the fundraising efforts of all the participants. We will use the money raised for a new organisational website and community funding to benefit our networks.

A fundraising committee within Neighbourhood Networks is being formed to make decisions on how the funding is best spent in our network areas that will benefit everyone in the community.



October 2016

## Drama

I have been taking part in the drama workshop along with my friend Diane and Govan members Sally, Dot and Frank. Our drama teacher is called Rachel. We were meeting in the Pearce Institute every Wednesday for 8



weeks. We practiced every Wednesday to put together a play to perform for audiences.

We have had so much fun doing this together and by taking part in this it has helped me to have better friendships with people from different communities and I feel much more confident around people. I can be a shy person but taking part in the drama workshop also helped me with public speaking as I struggled with this before.

Although I have known all the Govan members for a long time I never had close friendships with them before I went along to the drama. I now have strong friendships with Sally and Dot and keep in touch with them regularly.

After lots of practice our play was put to the stage. We visited Pollock Community Centre and the Pearce Institute to perform and everyone really enjoyed it. I was really proud of myself and all my friends.

Our play was about benefit changes and how it affects us. I played the part of Jean a benefits worker and along with Diane we interviewed Sally who played the part of Helen Ramsey who was there to be interviewed for her benefits.

### **“the drama workshop gave me new skills I never knew I had”**

We all enjoyed the drama so much that we would all love to do something like this again. Taking part in the drama workshop gave me new skills I never knew I had, including acting, confidence, more friendships, being able to stand up and speak to an audience and how to remember a script.

It was a great experience and I take away from this, lots of new friends and skills.

**By Elizabeth Henderson**

**Springburn Network**



November 2016



# Community Connections

Jo Mason from Community Connections in New Zealand visited our networks and office in November to chat with members and staff about our organisation. This was to share experiences as they have similar networks in New Zealand.



Whilst Jo was here we arranged to Skype members in New Zealand to chat about their daily lives and interests and talk about our networks. We carried out the

Skype session with the North Lanarkshire Networks at the Mission Place, a Trust Sheltered Housing complex. At the event Jo got up to sing a traditional Maori song.



Tenants from the Housing Association and members have requested we have another Skype night as they enjoyed chatting to New Zealand members and were very interested in their lives and outcomes.

Members have been visiting tenants at Mission Place for some time to volunteer. They've have been helping organise and host social events such as a Christmas party, Burns night, trip to the pantomime and arrange social events. This has been a huge success and relieves isolation to both people in both organisations as everyone is enjoying each other's company.

Members visit any residents who are looking for a chat or need an errand from the shop. The have also suggested they will go day trips in the better weather with residents. This will benefit health and wellbeing for all parties.

Recently Maggie from the Motherwell network went on holiday to Blackpool with a resident from Mission Place and shared wonderful stories of their time away together. This boosted Maggie's confidence and she felt so happy and content being able to get away on holiday as she has not had a holiday for several years.



December 2016

## My perfect job



I have been a member of Neighbourhood Networks for over 2 years. I live in Giffnock in supported accommodation and am a member of the Thornliebank/Giffnock network. The network has given me an opportunity to meet new friends.

I have always wanted to move to my own flat, but because I have had some difficulties in the past and because I have a learning disability it was decided that I should live in supported accommodation until I was independent enough. I have lacked confidence to live on my own in the past but recently I have worked towards the goal of finding a voluntary job and living on my own.

When I joined the network I was asked to be part of the interviewing process for staff and I have also been training to become a member of the Neighbourhood Networks Board. As part of the Governance training to become an elected member of the Board I have travelled around Glasgow and Edinburgh to speak to other networks. I have found this useful as I've met lots of new people while learning new places to travel to. This has been good for my confidence and has led to me

becoming independent enough to be considered by my care team to live in my own flat. The team are in the process of looking in to this being finalised by the end of this year or early next.

When I started the network I had a pet dog named Max who sadly died and due to this I decided that I'd like to work with dogs. As a result of looking in to this over the past 2 years and trying lots of different volunteering positions I have now found my perfect job in a kennels. I volunteer in the mornings and I love it and look forward to seeing and working with the dogs every day.

I love being part of the network and always look forward to seeing everyone. We spend time together every week and go on trips together to the cinema and to café's and pubs. They are always excited to hear my news about my voluntary job at the kennels or my new flat. They also comfort me when I'm feeling down.

**By Donna Bolger**

**Thornliebank Network**

# Highlights of the Year











# How do I find out more?

There are many ways to find out more about Neighbourhood Networks.

You can visit our website at [www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org).

You could also email us at [info@neighbourhoodnetworks.org](mailto:info@neighbourhoodnetworks.org)

You could also contact our office on 0141 440 1005

We can arrange to send you some information leaflets or arrange for you to meet a member of staff, who can talk to you about Neighbourhood Networks and what we can offer.



*@nayburhood*



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[www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org](http://www.neighbourhoodnetworks.org)