

## Welcome to our Summer 2016 Newsletter!

Hello and welcome to the latest newsletter from Forth Valley Sensory Centre. Regular readers will perhaps notice a change in style and layout for this edition as we have moved to a new publishing system. The hope is that this change will make developing, distributing and of course reading our newsletter easier for everyone.



We hope you like it and of course, we welcome your thoughts, ideas and contributions! You can submit these to [sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org](mailto:sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org) or on social media. Please follow us @FVSensoryCentre on Twitter or search Forth Valley Sensory Centre on Facebook. Do note that we are happy to accommodate readers who need the newsletter in a different format, please get in touch and let us know your requirements.

This is a packed edition with some fantastic success stories and lots of news from our groups who have enjoyed a busy start to the year. We will update you on our vital fundraising work and how we are trying to work more closely with Forth Valley's business community.

### Dates for your diary

#### Malvinas Garden Party - Everyone Invited!



This is a rare chance to see inside one of Scotland's best known but least viewed gardens and raise money for Forth Valley Sensory Centre at the same time.

Malvina Dwyer's garden at Quarrybank Cottage, Avonbridge has been featured on TV's Beechgrove Garden and published in Ken Cox's 'Gardens of Scotland', with good reason, the garden has placed first overall six times in the last ten years in the Falkirk and District Gardening Competition.

Once a year, Malvina generously opens her garden to the public to raise money for charity. This year, we are delighted that all funds will go to Forth Valley Sensory Centre, helping us to improve the lives of people with a sensory impairment across the area.

Not to be missed, the event takes place on **Sunday 7th August between 1pm and 5pm** and is open to the general public. Refreshments and home baking will be available on the day as well as a tombola.

Please feel free to join us in this 'hidden gem' and invite friends, family and anyone looking to get some green fingered ideas along on the day.

Transport is available if needed to and from Forth Valley Sensory Centre for a small charge (£4 return). If you would like to book a seat on our minibus, please contact [sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org](mailto:sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org) to avoid disappointment.

All funds raised on the day will come directly to Forth Valley Sensory Centre and directly benefit people in our area. Entry to the garden is just £3 for adults or £2 for OAPs under 16's get in FREE! The garden is open just one day each year so be sure you don't miss it!

### **AGM - September**

Our AGM will take place on Thursday 15th September.

Tea and coffee will be available from 1:30pm. The AGM starts at 2pm and will include guest speakers on a number of topics. Contact [sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org](mailto:sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org) for more information.

### **Dinner and Dance - November**

We will be welcoming in the festive period this year with an exciting dinner and dance at the Park Hotel Falkirk on November 12th.

Guests will receive a three course meal, plus coffee and mints, entertainment and numerous other attractions including dancing.

This event is open to all centre users, their family and friends. At just £20 per person, can you afford not to be there? Contact Lynne Frail for more information.

## Fundraising Latest

### Wine Tasting Evening



We recently held our first ever tasting night, focusing on wine in association with Woodwinters Wines and Spirits, Bridge of Allan.

The evening proved to be great fun and a good opportunity for everyone to socialise and network although the competition to guess which wine was which in the taste test was friendly if fiercely contested!

Thank you to everyone who attended and supported the evening, including our students from Forth Valley College who had to work under the perhaps not so watchful eyes of their tutors that evening. Finally, huge thanks to Morrisons in Falkirk for supplying cheese and nibbles for the night. Do look out for more centre wide social events in the near future.

### Current Appeals and Activity

We are awaiting the outcome of a few Trust Fund bids including an application to Big Lottery for our new Play & Chat Group and Sensory Room.

The Centre is actively **seeking funding** to continue our Health & Wellbeing Class, ICT & BSL Family Tree, Sensory Singers and additional funds to re-activate the audio recording studio and also our Café. The Café is in need of some furniture upgrading to improve accessibility for our visitors.

### FVSC Charity Store – Grangemouth Shopping Precinct



18th - 24th July 2016 - The Centre has a Pop-up Shop for one week at 71 La Porte Precinct, Grangemouth, FK3 8AW.

The shop is open from 10am to 4pm (Monday through Saturday). All proceeds will go directly to helping people with a sensory impairment across Forth Valley so do drop by, support our shop and maybe pick up a bargain! At the time of writing,

we have already seen a huge amount of success and shoppers. Thank you to everyone who has stopped by and all our volunteers helping out each day.

If you would like any further information about the shop please contact the Centre. The store is accepting donations if you want to drop anything into the team.

### Malvina's Open Garden Party – Avonbridge

7th August 2016 from 1pm – 5pm - The Sensory Centre is delighted to announce the Centre is Malvina's chosen Charity for 2016. Every year Malvina hosts a garden party to the general

public and raises money for local charities. Cost is £3 per adult and £2 for OAPs. Under 16's FREE! Travel to and from the event from the Centre is available for just £4 return.

### **Ladies Lunch**

18<sup>th</sup> September 2016 from 12:30 – 5pm – We will be celebrating the Sensory Centres 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary with a Ladies Lunch & Shopping Day. Ticket Prices are £10 to include food, goodie bag and Fashion Show by Next, Falkirk amongst other items.

### **Ladies Pamper Evening – Thursday Oct 2016**

Date & Time TBC. We look forward to our first lady's night in October. Keep an eye on local press for more information.

### **Drop-in Social Independence Group**



On Monday, 4th July our Drop-in Social Group 18+ met at the Centre for a BBQ. Sadly rain put paid to any plans to be outdoors but we were delighted to welcome Linsey, the Community Champion from Morrisons in Falkirk who helped supply the food.

This group is open to anyone with a sensory impairment. The group is an informal and safe environment for individuals who want to socialise and meet new friends. The event usually takes place in the Café with music, games and the use of the IT Suite. Meetings take place on the first Monday of the month.

The Drop-in Group now has its own 18+ Dine Out Group where members choose monthly restaurants to meet up in and around Falkirk. If you would like more information on any of the above please contact Lynne Frail (email [lynnefrail.fvsc@gmail.com](mailto:lynnefrail.fvsc@gmail.com)).

## **Donating to Forth Valley Sensory Centre**

### **Corporate Partnerships and Business Breakfast**

We have recently appointed a Partnership Manager, to help foster relations with local and national businesses who want to make a positive impact within the local community to support the Centre.

The first event is set to be a Business Breakfast on 7th October, held in conjunction with Forth Valley Chamber of Commerce. More details, including a list of speakers will be available soon but if you would like to pre-register for the event or are interested in receiving more information about how partnering with Forth Valley Sensory Centre can benefit your business, please contact Martin Allen on 01324 590867 or email [martin.fvsc@gmail.com](mailto:martin.fvsc@gmail.com)



Huge thanks to RNIB Scotland for donating a fantastic talking microwave to our Café! It really is much appreciated and will make preparing and serving hot food much easier for our volunteers.

### **A massive thank you to the following too:**

- **Rotary Club of Polmont** donation £400 – purchased our new projector.
- **John McNally MP** donation £200 – funds will be allocated towards re-activating Recording Studio.
- **Waitrose** Community Matters donation £500.
- Centre User Helen Balfour's nephew **John Dick**, has very kindly donated his charity winnings of £270 to the Sensory Centre. John is an Engineering Manager at Stagecoach Bus Perth, and recently won their Charity Golf Tournament.

### **Just Giving - New way to donate!**

We have a Just Giving page! Are you looking for a challenge or wanting to do something that benefits your community? Then why not support Forth Valley Sensory Centre?

We have been dedicated to helping people with a sensory impairment live life as independently as possible for 10 years and have helped thousands of people in that time.

We'd be delighted to support any fundraising efforts, from running a marathon to sitting in a bath of beans! We promise to help raise your profile as much as possible through our social media channels and in the local press where we can. We'll supply branded clothing if needed and basically help you reach your funding target.

If you are interested in raising money (or even just dropping us a gratefully received donation) contact Lynne Frail ([lynne.fvsc@gmail.com](mailto:lynne.fvsc@gmail.com)) or see our Just Giving page <https://www.justgiving.com/forthvalleysensorycentre>

## **Volunteering Update**

### **Making a Difference**

Since the end of April we have been trying to meet with all Centre volunteers to find out more about what they are doing, identifying any gaps that we have in our services and looking at what new opportunities there are for involving volunteers.

Training days were held on the 24<sup>th</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> June for new volunteers and we are looking forward to getting our five new volunteers involved in the centre.

The Centre was part of Falkirk CVS's "Volunteering in 3 Campaign" which was run as part of Volunteers week via social media. They highlighted the work of the Centre and asked three Centre volunteers to describe their volunteering in three words. Thanks to John O, Lee and Natasha for helping with this.



We also had six volunteers nominated at the CVS Volunteer Award Ceremony and enjoyed an evening at the Macdonald Inchyra Grange Hotel to celebrate volunteering and all that is happening locally. We have just signed up to undertake the Volunteer Friendly Award which is an accreditation scheme for organisations offering volunteering placements.

Three students from Forth Valley College Foundation Apprenticeship programme have completed six week placements at the Centre, spending time with our Partner organisations and learning about sensory impairment.

Also, three students working towards their National Certificate in working with Communities have completed a 47 hour placement with us. We are hoping they will return next year when they are doing their HNC's and have a 110 hour placement. They have been a great help assisting with groups, events and being an extra pair of hands when needed.

Finally, Jodie – a pupil from Larbert High School has been gaining work experience and doing a superb job supporting our cafe and Isaac - a pupil from Windsor Park School has been gaining work experience and providing excellent support for our caretaker. We would like to thank all our volunteers and helpers who make such a huge difference to our centre.

Volunteering is a great way to gain valuable experience and has been proven to be good for our overall wellbeing. If you are interested in volunteering or know someone who is, please contact Vicki Ferguson who is in the office Tuesday to Thursday (email [vickiferguson@forthvalleysensorycentre.org](mailto:vickiferguson@forthvalleysensorycentre.org)).

## Around the Centre - Events

### Training

A Scottish course to train tutors of Lip-reading, which started last year, has just finished. Training weekends took place in September, October, December 2015, before resuming in March. The final weekend was 4th and 5th June 2016. Look out for additional lip-reading classes which will start up as a result of the training.

David Sutherland and Alison Gail are looking forward to returning to Tesco in the very near future to provide further hints and tips for staff on using conversational BSL. Some of the staff

from Tesco attended this informal session in April and found it to be extremely useful and interesting.

Activity included staff learning to fingerspell as well as signs which they would find useful in their day to day work. We also gave advice on effective communication with people who are hard of hearing. Hopefully staff will have been able to put their training into practice.

### Whisky Galore!



Not to think that all our news in this edition is alcohol based but our visually impaired social group recently enjoyed a fantastic day out at Deanston Distillery near Doune in Stirlingshire.

Members heard all about the history of the distillery (a former cotton mill built by the famous Sir Richard Arkwright) and how it has continued to innovate, being the only distillery to generate all its own electricity, using water from the nearby River Teith.

Of course there was chance to taste some of the distillery products too before heading off for a delicious lunch at the nearby Woodside Hotel. A big thanks to our drivers David Sutherland and John Preston who spent the day at a distillery without being able to drink anything!

### Sensory Singers want you!



Singing makes the heart glad! We are a fun and friendly group of people who enjoy singing. We are looking for new people to join us.

If you have a sensory impairment, you like to sing and you want to make new friends please come along, you really don't need to be a fabulous singer, and don't worry there are no auditions. You can bring a friend if you like...the more the

merrier. See our Group Activities and Times section for more details.

### Family Fun at EFS shape and share event

Over 80 people joined in on family fun at RNIB Scotland's Education Family Services Shape and Share event at Forth Valley Sensory Centre on 25th June 2016.

Children including Haggeye Jnr's, participated in tactile storytelling, giant games and arts and crafts, while Haggeye held its National meeting where they discussed various topics of interest



and up and coming events.

Parents and carers had an opportunity to speak with Sandra Wilson (Chair of RNIB Scotland) and Campbell Chalmers (Director RNIB Scotland) to help shape and share the future provision of the services. They also had an input from Scottish Disability Sport about "First Steps" a pack to encourage children with sight loss into sport. There was also discussion about Talking Books and how to access them as well as fundraise for them.

Following the various activities and inputs the families enjoyed lunch. The day concluded with everyone going on an adventure to the Falkirk wheel including Haggeye Jnr!!

## **Upcoming Activities**

### **Family Fun Day - 27th August**

Forth Valley Sensory Centre will be the venue for a Family Fun Day, hosted by NHS Forth Valley Audiology, Forth Valley Deaf Children's Society ( FVDCS) and Forth Valley Sensory Centre. The event takes place 1pm to 4pm

This is open to all families in the Forth Valley area with a deaf child, by invitation only. The theme for this year's event will be The Carnival, and we look forward to an afternoon of fun with facepainting, fairground games, and goodies.

The NDCS Technology Roadshow will join us for the day.

Donations of home baking for our 'Cake Bake Cafe' where parents can meet and chat will be very welcome. Should anyone wish to hand a donation of treats into the centre on the afternoon of Friday 26<sup>th</sup> August, we would be very grateful.

### **Art Workshops**



Our cook, David was given the opportunity to go and develop his skills as a sculptor at Delta Studios in Larbert, thanks to the generosity of Kiran's Trust. David even took some time out to help one of the Delta Studios students understand what it is like to be blind, teaching her to use a cane to 'see'. You can view the video here.

David has been very positive about his experience and we will be delivering further art workshops in partnership with Delta Studios from September. The workshops will take place monthly and will allow participants to work with various artistic materials.

Transport will be available to and from the Centre. Come along and find the artist within! No experience necessary just an interest in learning new skills and having fun. Contact Brenda for more information: [brenda.fvsc@gmail.com](mailto:brenda.fvsc@gmail.com)

## **Event Calendar**

Many of our official groups are taking a break for the summer holiday season, however, if you are interested in joining any of our sessions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Contact Brenda if you have any questions or queries.

**VI Social Group – Monday. 10.30 – 12.00**

For people with a visual impairment, who enjoy socialising, the group love quizzes, entertainers, guest speakers, singers and going out for lunch.

**The group will restart 22nd August.**

**Sensory Singers – Alternate Monday from VI Social Group. 10.30 – 12.00**

Enjoy singing? Why not join the Sensory Singers? We are looking for new members to sing songs ranging from Adele to South Pacific. You do not have to be a fabulous singer, just enjoy singing and socialising!

**From 29th August**

**Stirling VI Group – 2nd Tuesday of the month. 11.00 – 13.00**

Members from across the Stirling and District area meet on a monthly basis at the Mayfield Community Centre, enabling access to information and providing advice and support to those coping with sight loss. Variety of interesting speakers every month.

The group also enjoyed a summer outing to South Queensferry and then a boat trip on the Maid of the Forth.

**This group will continue through the summer.**

**Bo'ness Group – last Wednesday of every month. 13.00 – 15.00**

Looking for new members. Come and join a small friendly bunch for tea/coffee and cake. Interesting visits and outings for lunch. Members from Bo'ness meet on a monthly basis at St Catherine's Church. The group programme contains guest speakers and interesting trips!

On the 16th June the group visited The Scottish Parliament for a tour, First Ministers Question time and then lunch with their local MSP, Angus McDonald.

**This group will restart 31st August.**

**Dining Group – Last Friday of the month. 12.00**

Trying out the tasty delights of the Forth Valley area.  
Suggestions for venues welcome!

**Wednesday Group – 1st Wednesday of every month. 10.00 – 11.30**

Our Wednesday Group is open to all people of all ages with a visual or hearing impairment. Ian Scott, local historian has committed to doing more sessions in the coming months, if you would like more insight into the history of the local area please come along.

**This group will restart on the 1st September.**

**VI Reading Group – 3rd Tuesday of the month. 10.00 – 11.00**

Read books ranging from classics to murder mysteries. Books are provided in audio format or large print by Falkirk Trust Library staff, join with other book lovers to discuss the book of the month.

### **Play & Chat – Every 2nd Thursday 9.30 – 11.00**

Parent/carer led support group for babies, toddlers and pre-school children with a sensory impairment or additional support needs (siblings are also welcome). Provides a social and supportive network for parents to overcome barriers and offers a safe play environment for children to interact, develop communication and boost confidence.

**During the school holidays the group will run weekly.**

### **Health & Wellbeing**

This Group will restart in September – date to be confirmed.

### **Helena - Foot Practitioner**

Every Thursday - with Helena.

Wide range of treatments and services available, including:

- Nail cutting
- Massage
- Nail infections treated

This service is by appointment only on a first come first served basis. Contact [falkirkfootcare@gmail.com](mailto:falkirkfootcare@gmail.com) or call/text 07955 424 421 to book.

**Delta Studios** We have places available at Delta Studios in Larbert from September this year. If you are interested please contact Brenda. Cost is £30.00 per three hour session per person, materials and refreshments included. Pottery, painting, working with clay are all options.

### **Falkirk's Best Cup of Coffee?**

Café Tiki plays an integral role in the Centre, a place to catch up, enjoy a bite to eat and get the perfect fair trade coffee.

The Café welcomes families and is open each day until 4pm (3pm Friday) serving hot and cold food all prepared in house by our own team and using local suppliers, including meat from the award winning Patrick's of Camelon.



We welcome members of the public as well as centre users and a takeaway service is available. Next time someone asks you to recommend a place for lunch, think Café Tiki, for perhaps the finest coffee in town.

**External bookings**

Northlight Heritage visited us again on 22nd June for their Glorious Gardens Workshop, while we were also delighted to host CarrGomm for their Falkirk Local Forum meeting here in the centre on 27th June.

Other visitors to the Centre for meetings and corporate events include; Independent Living Association, Pain Association and Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance.

If you would be interested in hiring one of our rooms for your corporate (or even personal) event, we can offer a wide range of facilities and catering options to ensure your day is a success. Contact Alison for bookings and further information.

[sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org](mailto:sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org)

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