

Forth Valley Sensory Centre Spring 2018 Newsletter!

Hello - welcome to our first newsletter of 2018! We are hopeful that this year will be as packed with activities and action as last year and if the first two months are anything to go by, that certainly seems to be the case.

We have been working hard on securing additional funding and working with new partners to offer our Centre Users the best possible advice and support at home, at the Centre or out and about.

We will soon be providing sensory awareness training for staff at The Engine Shed in Stirling and The Thistles Shopping Centre. We are also delivering personal safety classes in association with The Scottish Centre for Personal Safety at Deafblind Scotland, building a relationship with Edinburgh Printmakers and growing our existing friendship with Forth Environment Link.

We continue to offer sensory awareness training to schools, organisations and businesses that are interested in improving staff development and their service to people with sensory loss. If you know someone that might enjoy sensory awareness training, do get in touch.

As always you can contact us about this, or any other matter on sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org. We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and always welcome feedback.

News

“To a Haggis!”

Our Café team has done the Scottish bard proud this year serving up not one but two Burns Suppers to much applause. The traditional fayre of haggis, neeps and tatties went down a storm. Our Café team are happy to cater for most occasions within the Centre so if you are looking for flexible meeting space with good catering, give us a try!



Oven is cooked

Sadly for fans of our homemade food from the Cafe, David's oven took a turn for the worst and bowed out in dramatic style.

We've already bought a replacement but things cost and like any charity or indeed most households, an unexpected £200 cost is not easy to swallow.

If anyone fancies helping us out while our Cafe visitors enjoy our healthy, home cooked grub then any donation would be welcome! You can donate through MyDonate on our page on our website

The Cafe is in many ways the heart of the Centre and David's meals are always popular. Being blind doesn't mean you can't cook, you just need to do some things a little differently!

Speaking of cooking - you can now hear David on RNIB Connect Radio each Tuesday on the Mid-Morning Show with Jill Barkley. David shares his top tips as a cook who happens to be blind and some of his favourite recipes! Listen on Freeview Channel 730 and catch up online via a link on the RNIB Connect Radio website.

Miss Saigon a Hit with Theatre Group

Our regular blind and partially sighted theatre group had a great night out in Edinburgh recently when they went to 'see' Miss Saigon.

The show was at the Festival Theatre and everyone praised the welcoming and accommodating staff. Before the show, Theatre Group members were invited backstage to feel the props and discuss the different scenes that would be on stage later.

On taking their seats, everyone



was given access to an audio description which detailed the actions and set changes as well as the dialogue of the play.

The trip to Miss Saigon was the latest show for the Theatre Group which typically meets several times a year when a new show comes to town. The next theatre trips will be An Officer and a Gentleman in July followed by Calendar Girls in October. We are also noting interest for Motown in November and Les Miserables in January 2019.

Trip organiser Alison Gall said:

“A huge thanks to the staff of the Festival theatre for being so good with our group. It was a fantastic show and everyone had a great time.”

Investing in Technology

We have recently been able to add some new equipment to our IT Suite courtesy of Falkirk Council. As more people move to using the web to arrange Council services, the Sensory Centre is well placed to help those without a computer to access the services they need.

For those worried about stepping into the online world, a number of computer classes are available and we have specialist software to help people with sight loss see and even hear what is on the screen.



Large print and high contrast keyboards are available and all the new monitors have web cams built in making it easy for BSL speakers to use services like Contact Scotland to reach doctors, council offices and other third sector organisations.

The IT Suite is open from 9am to 5pm each day with computer classes on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. Action on Hearing Loss and RNIB Scotland can also offer advice on using tablets, laptops and mobile devices if needed although these services are by appointment.

Upcoming Activities and Events

New Knit and Natter Stirling!

Following the success of our Knit and Natter Group here in the Centre (fortnightly 12:30pm Mondays) we have secured some funding from Foundation Scotland to start a new group in Stirling!

At the time of writing we are still to determine the venue but, the Stirling Knit and Natter Group will start on 13th March (Friday) and run from 10:30am to 12pm.

It is a group for BSL speakers, D/deaf people, blind or partially sighted, if you have some form of sensory loss, you enjoy good company and a gossip, not to mention knitting, then this group is for you. BSL interpreters will be available to help the Deaf community speak with the blind members and there is only a small charge of £1.50 for refreshments.

All are welcome, so if knitting has been a source of enjoyment in the past but you have given up for whatever reason, now is the perfect chance to pick up the needles once again. Knitting has been proven to be a great source of mental stimulation and is also very good for people with sight loss as much of the work is done purely by feel.

Contact Brenda Whyte on 01324 590 888 or email sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org for more details.

New look Drop in Carers Group

Our Carers Wellbeing Café is being redeveloped to encourage more people from different backgrounds to come along and get support.

We are hoping the new group will be more of a drop in session for Carers and cared for people with help, advice and peer support from speakers and other attendees.

Sessions will run from 12pm to 2pm with a themed talk covering a key wellbeing topic for Carers, such as managing stress or getting the right financial

assistance. There will be a healthy lunch of fresh homemade soup and a sandwich courtesy of our Café at 1pm and a chance to chat over any points raised or bring up any new questions or topics that you would like answered.

The new group is planned to start in 12th April and is open to anyone who cares for someone with a sensory condition or is a Carer themselves with a condition. This might be a husband or wife who cares for their partner or a parent who cares for a child with sensory loss.

There is no need for sensory loss to be the primary condition either. Previous group members have included people with dementia, for who age related hearing or sight loss can be particularly problematic, autism and learning difficulties. Around 40 per cent of people with learning difficulties also have sensory loss and we would welcome anyone caring for a person with sensory loss to the group along with the person they care for.

The only stipulation is that you must be in the Falkirk Council Area as the Drop-in is funded by the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership.

Contact Brenda Whyte on 01324 590 888 or email sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org for more details.

Braveheart Walks

Braveheart Walks are back at the Centre over the coming months. There will be walks around the local area in March and April with the possibility of more later in the year.

In addition to these walks, Braveheart Walks take place across Forth Valley on a weekly and Monthly basis.

Upcoming Walks from the Centre are:

March- Friday 23rd

April- Friday 27th



All have a 1.30pm start from Forth Valley Sensory Centre. Please arrive between 1pm and 1:15pm to be ready for the off at 1:30pm. Why not come in a bit earlier and enjoy a spot of lunch in our social enterprise Cafe?

Each of the Braveheart Walks lasts around 45 minutes and the routes are all checked out by the Braveheart team and properly risk assessed. Paths followed are generally tarmac or in good condition and fairly level. Alternatives are often in place for steps but please feel free to contact walk organiser Eva Finlayson on eva.finlayson@nhs.net or goga@fvds.org.uk

Pop-Up Restaurant is Taste Sensation!

Following on from last year's highly successful trial, Forth Valley Sensory Centre will once again be hosting a pop-up restaurant featuring organic, locally sourced produce. This year's event takes place on Thursday 22nd March, 6pm for 6:30pm start.



Taking place in partnership with Forth Environment Link, the pop-up restaurant aims to showcase the bounty available on our doorstep in Forth Valley with all produce coming from local suppliers and farms.

Diners will only be asked to pay what they think their meal was worth rather than a set price. Three courses will be served up and the current hope is that the starter will be a Broccoli Soup with fresh organic rolls, followed by a main of either fish pie topped with crispy potatoes or a vegetable pie with the same topping. Finally, there will be a trio of rhubarb cheesecake, rhubarb sorbet and rhubarb cake.

Centre Manager Jacquie Winning said:

“Last year's event was a sell-out but it was a much smaller scale. The response to the new event has been very positive so far so register quickly to avoid disappointment.”

Most dietary requirements can be catered for, if you are in any doubt, please contact sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org

To book, see the events section on our Facebook page or our website.

RNIB Living With Sight Loss Course

RNIB Scotland will be hosting a two day 'Living With Sight Loss' course here at Forth Valley Sensory Centre this March, providing practical advice and support.

The free course takes place on 3rd May and 10th May (attendees need to come both days) from 10am to 3pm.

The session is being run by Alan Grieg, Confidence Building Co-ordinator for RNIB Scotland, who is no stranger to the Centre having also previously run the Online Today courses here.

These sessions will cover:

Welfare rights

Getting out and about

Tips and gadgets for everyday living

Assistive technology – including tablets and phones

Eye health

Wellbeing

Leisure, hobbies and interests.

Plus, you'll hear about a range of organisations and services out there to help you.

To book your free place on the next Living with Sight Loss, call RNIB on 0300 123 3933 or email lwslenquiries@rnib.org.uk

National Deaf Children's Society Scotland Youth Events

The National Deaf Children's Society – NDCS Scotland has announced a series of activities for children and young people aged 8 to 18 in 2018.

They have just begun marketing the Youth Activity Programme Scotland for 2018. At present there are three events planned:

NDCS Big Scottish Sleepover (ages 8-13) May

An exciting overnight event at Compass Centre in Perthshire for deaf children aged 8-13. Closing date for application is 2 March 2018.

NDCS Summer Holiday Scotland (ages 8-18) July

Activities may include:

raft building, canoeing, kayaking, archery, climbing

Make new friends, learn new skills in a fun and safe environment.

Closing date for application is 30 April 2018.

NDCS Adventure Weekend (aged 14-18) October

A brilliant experience for children and young people that love the outdoors. A fun packed weekend for 14 to 18 year olds.

Make new friends and grow in confidence in a safe and supportive environment.

Closing date for application is 28 July 2018.

All events are available to view via the “what's on” section of the NDCS website www.ncds.org.uk

Believe and Achieve!

We will be supporting 'Believe and Achieve' to showcase what is on offer locally to people of all abilities. The event takes place on the 23rd April from 12 noon until 5pm in Grangemouth Town Hall and is free to attend.

Co-ordinated by the Falkirk Health and Social Care Partnership, Believe and Achieve is part of Falkirk Council's ongoing commitment to continue to support people with disabilities in their own communities.

Tea/Coffee and light refreshments will be available and there will be stands from many local organisations, including; Scottish Disability Sport, Dates n Mates, Changing Places and Carrongrange Former Pupils group.

Groups and Classes

Talk and Sign

Our Talk and Sign Group is one of our most popular for people with hearing loss. The group welcomes anyone with any form or level of hearing, from Deaf, deaf, deafened and hard of hearing. BSL support is available to keep conversation flowing and there are always different activities on the go. Recent examples include pancake making and even car maintenance with Arnold Clark.

The group meets on the third Monday of each month between 7pm and 9pm. There can be charges for different activities. Contact us if you want to know more but new members are always welcome.

BSL Voices off Café

An old favourite with a new twist. The BSL Voices Off Café returns with a weekly meeting at 11am each Wednesday. This is a group for people interested in learning BSL and is open to all levels, including complete beginners!

If you have ever wanted to learn BSL in a relaxed environment, from BSL speakers themselves, then this is perfect for you. Tea and Coffee available too for just 50p so come along and expand your vocabulary!

ConneXions

This is the new name for our former Carrongrange Group.

ConneXions is a social club for young adults with learning disabilities and/or sensory impairments. We meet once a month usually on the last Thursday at Forth Valley Sensory Centre from 7pm to 9pm. There are regular chill out nights featuring Cafe, crafts, IT and music, plus occasional bowling and cinema outings, parties and a summer BBQ.

Contact Liz on 07516086564 or leave a message at Forth Valley Sensory Centre or email falkirkconnexions@gmail.com

Personal Safety

David's Personal Safety Class from The Scottish Centre for Personal Safety starts a new block of classes on 6th April. Class takes place each Friday 2pm - 3pm and it is FREE! The class is open to anyone who would like to improve their confidence when out on their own or might have to deal with a difficult confrontation as part of their everyday lives.

Booking essential. Contact sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org or 01324 590 888



Fundraising

Fundraising Group

Our Fundraising Group aims to put on community events and social occasions for all our Centre Users.

This is a vital part of our fundraising and profile raising mission. The Centre needs to secure £40,000 of funding each year and this is your chance to make a difference.

We welcome interested parties and non-Centre Users who simply want to donate their time to raising money for a great cause. If you can help, please get in touch, sign up and help us to support people with sensory loss across Forth Valley. Meets the third Monday of each month 12:30pm,-2pm tea provided! Come along and help us keep providing our vital services to the community.

Can you Kiltwalk £4000 for Forth Valley Sensory Centre?

Raise just £60 and we'll even pay your entry fee!

As a registered charity in Scotland (SCO342697) Forth Valley Sensory Centre is one of the many charities you can support on this year's Kiltwalk. Walking for us means raising vital funds for people with hearing and sight loss of all ages across Forth Valley and Central Scotland and what is more, everything you raise will be topped up by The Hunter Foundation by 40 per cent!

We are currently raising money for a number of projects. Refurbishing our Sensory Room which is used by lots of different local charities, replacing our kitchen where our cook David, who is also blind, makes his soups and specials each day and our Sensory Garden which is currently being revitalised with new play equipment and attractions.

You can help by taking part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk on 16th September and if you agree to raise a minimum of £60 we'll even pay your entry fee!* Walkers will also get a Forth Valley Sensory Centre t-shirt so everyone knows just who you are raising money for.

Centre Manager Jacquie Winning said:

“RNIB Scotland estimate that in the next few years one in five elderly people will have some form of sight loss and Action on Hearing Loss also believes one

in six people will have hearing loss and in the UK there are around 50,000 children with hearing loss; half born with a hearing condition and the other half losing their hearing through childhood.

“With such high figures it is likely that everyone knows a person with some form of sensory loss, even if that person refuses to get treatment or have their hearing checked. Sadly many people leave it until very late to get the help they need and this causes huge problems with a loss of confidence and eventually independence. Many elderly people with sensory loss avoid going out which can lead to serious



issues like depression or simply loneliness. The Centre provides social activities and support for all ages as well as families and carers to help combat these problems. Please support us if you can.”

You can register for The Kiltwalk on their website www.thekiltwalk.co.uk and there are lots of options from the ‘Wee Wander’ which is a child friendly six miles to the Big Stroll at around 13 miles and finally the Mighty Stride at approximately 23 miles. Contact us for your discount entry code on 01324 590 888 or email sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org As well as raising money for a great cause and having your sponsorship topped up by an amazing 40 per cent all walkers are also registered in a prize draw to win a brand new car courtesy of Arnold Clark who are supporting the event. Why not get together with friends and family to help us reach our £4000 target?

There are Kiltwalks taking place in Glasgow (29th April), Aberdeen (3rd June) and Dundee (19th August) if any of those dates suit better but let’s make the Edinburgh Kiltwalk a sensory Kiltwalk!

A Letter from Broughty Ferry

By Jim McLean

Just along the coast from Dundee is where the above town is, so it was off for a weekend with me wife Mary for a relaxing spa/hotel pool weekend. Eh naw...power cut when we arrived and the pool was shut! Ah the best laid plans. But the Best Western Woodlands hotel I would recommend.

A brisk walk along the beach, Mary thought better of it (too cauld), ensued in the morning post brekky (full Scottish) with the wind coming in off the Firth of Tay that would cut you in 2 and I found the old castle down at the harbour which is open all year and the magic 2 words outside...Free Admission. Didn't go in but logged that fact anyway for another day.

Back to the hotel and we drove back into town. Now Broughty Ferry is not a one horse town at all, lotsa different shops open on the Sunday morning. We like nosing about in charity shops; I spotted a nice crystal chrysanthemum candle holder so the cancer research shop got a nice wee sale.

Then a run along the coast going through Monifeith to Carnoustie which holds the Open golf championship regularly, Local lad, well Aberdeen, Paul Lawrie won it there in 1999. Really nice hotel on the links but I suspect a bit dear for my pocket. Golf Course next door is the Buddon Links that I have played with my mates a few years ago on a rain soaked day in May AND they put the sprinklers on when we were going down the first fairway! We got drenched and had to wring our socks out mid rounds and had to put them back on sodden wet...always...repeat...always take spare socks!

Leaving on Monday morning we crossed the Tay Bridge and swung down the A92 which is really nice rural drive passing through Auchtermuchty and Falkland, We've visited the palace there long time ago and walking about in the village that day we came across a bench with a plaque. This said that the singer Johnny Cash and his wife June Carter gave a concert there many years ago to raise funds for, well actually I've forgot, either his or her ancestors came from around the area. Honest.

Video to DVD conversion

Volunteer extraordinaire, John Ormsby has offered to turn your old home movies into DVDs. He can convert VHS tapes, old Camcorder film and even slides into a more modern format for today's machines.

Prices start at just £5 with the money being donated to the Centre so if this is something you have always been putting off or you are keen to preserve those old memories, contact our reception and we will put you in touch with John.

Subscribe Online!

Email sensory@forthvalleysensorycentre.org to get a copy of our newsletter straight to your inbox.

We only publish four issues per year and occasional big news about our Centre and we won't pass on your details to anyone else. Think green and keep it on the screen!