



Centre Manager's Report May 2017

The last couple of months have been exceptionally busy as the Centre continues to thrive and expand. During March/April, 3261 people attended the Centre. In addition there were 1650 visits to the Cafe. We were delighted to host a number of varied events including Action on Hearing Loss Dual Sensory

Employability Awareness event, PLUS Family Fun Day, NHS Neurological Voices Group and a self management training course run by the Pain Association. We hosted a visit from International Health practitioners and we delivered several very successful fundraising social events.

Our Volunteer and Fundraising Celebration Event took place on Tuesday April 25th. This was a major success, paying tribute to our 50 volunteers, financial sponsors and fundraisers. The event was very well attended and included 3 Forth Valley Lord Provosts, Centre Users and representatives from our Board of Trustees all of whom took an active role on the day. Volunteers were presented with a certificate of thanks. Funders and Fundraisers said that they were delighted to be invited along to meet volunteers and Centre Users and they felt it added real meaning to the fundraising they were doing on behalf of the centre. This event will become an annual fixture on our events calendar. We were sorry to say good bye to Vicki Ferguson, our Volunteer Co-ordinator who has worked at Centre for just over a year and has made a very positive contribution to organising volunteering in a relatively short space of time. Vicki is moving on to a new job, and we wish her every success for the future. We have appointed a new Volunteer Co-ordinator, Caroline Storey and we look forward to Caroline taking up her post on 29 May. Caroline is a level 2 BSL user and will be a valuable asset to our team and to the Centre.

We received a visit from a group of International Doctors and Health Professionals on 27 April. The group were on a study tour which was

organised by the newly established International Foundation for Integrated Care (IFIC). Visitors were given a tour of the Centre by John Ormsby, one of our Centre volunteers. There was an opportunity for our Partner organisations to meet with the group and share their experience of working at FVSC. One of our Centre Users, Ian Carmichael, gave a presentation to the group about his experience of being involved in the Centre as a former trustee and a long-standing Centre supporter. The visitors were very appreciative of the insight they were given and have taken away lots of ideas regarding developing a similar model in other parts of the UK and abroad. FVSC was officially thanked for our contribution at the IFIC launch which took place at the University of West Scotland on 19th May.

We now have the Neatebox “Welcome App” software installed in our Centre reception ready to go live. Neatebox will shortly begin a programme of staff training and publicity regarding the app. We eagerly await the imminent launch of this innovative use of technology. FVSC is delighted to be amongst the first organisations in the UK to be a part of this exciting development.

Our Centre User consultation with First Bus took place on 24 May. Jim Brennan, Depot Manager from Larbert Bus Depot provided an update on bus services and heard from Centre Users about their concerns and suggestions regarding providing safer and more efficient transport for Sensory Impaired people. 14 Centre Users attended and a number of others who were unable to attend passed on their comments which were discussed on the day. A summary of the discussion and agreed actions will shortly be posted on our website.

Sensory Garden Refurbishment

We have now received the much anticipated final designs for our new-look sensory garden. The design takes full account of the feedback from Centre Users. In the future visitors can expect to see a more secluded garden with a covered seating area, interactive musical instruments, a viewing platform and a peaceful memorial water feature. There will be an opportunity for all Centre Users to get involved in producing a Welcome mosaic wall which will be located near the entrance to the garden. We are working with local community artist Brendan Gallagher to help us put

together a collaborative design based on individual clay tiles made by Centre Users. The theme for the design is “Garden” and we will be arranging some clay workshops for Centre Users in the near future. We will also be working with SD Consultancy, an experienced project management company who will ensure the smooth running of the project. We plan to call on the assistance of Falkirk Council community payback team to support us with a workforce. Refurbishing work will get underway in June with an expected completion date in September. We will aim to keep disruption to a minimum, however there will be some periods where we will require to restrict access to the garden for health and safety reasons. An event to mark the opening of the newly refurbished garden will be organised later in the year.

Publicity

Our social media figures continue to grow and we have now achieved over 1000 likes on Facebook. This is a milestone figure and shows the level of interest in the Centre over recent months. We are almost at 500 followers on Twitter, another good benchmark which shows that more and more people are finding out about and are interested in what we do.

Recent media success has contributed to this with our cook, David Black, featuring on the BBC, STV, and The Scottish Sun due to his involvement in setting up and delivering Personal Safety classes at the Centre. A further BBC piece on the Personal Safety Class is also being planned. The class itself has allowed us to develop some strong links with The Scottish Centre for Personal Safety and also the Community Police who have attended on several occasions and praised the course content and reiterated the need for people with a sensory impairment to report any incidents of hate crime. Posters are on display in the Centre to promote this and we are actively looking to work closely with local law enforcement to help Centre Users feel safer and more confident.

We secured a large feature on our Carers Wellbeing Café in the Falkirk Council News and Falkirk Herald. Promotion of this group remains a priority as there will be new sessions starting up each quarter.

The donation of a shirt signed by Paul Pogba, the world’s most expensive player from Manchester United has helped raise our social media profile. Local celebrity Grant Stott re-tweeted our auction link and

the page on Facebook has over 18,000 views. The top bid at the time of writing stands at £600. We will be looking to hold similar auction activities in the future.

A team of Centre staff and volunteers recently provided some conversational BSL training for staff at the Next Home store in Falkirk. This is a service we hope to repeat with other companies and organisations.

We are planning to support a Volunteer Recruitment event in Clackmannanshire. We would like to become more established as a service provider for Sensory Impaired people living in this area and we are involved in initial discussions with Clackmannanshire Council regarding ways in which we can make this happen.

Partnerships

We now have a provisional date for Centre refurbishment work which will be led by **TSB** and involve support from **Lloyds, MITIE, Go Green** and **Arthur McKay**. The refit is scheduled to take place between 24 – 26 July. We plan to work with these organisations to refit our café, waiting area and halls and at a vastly reduced cost. We have requested sample materials and furnishings wherever possible so that these can be shared with Centre Users to ensure they are user friendly.

Tesco are committed to upskilling their staff to support shoppers with a sensory impairment and have asked us to continue to support them with Sensory Impairment awareness training. Tesco have donated £1000 towards the work of the Centre and they have extended an invitation for us to attend family BBQ events at local stores throughout the summer so that we can promote our services.

In addition to those already mentioned we are currently working with many other partner organisations including:

- PLUS Forth Valley – Peer support services for parents and carers of children with disabilities
- ASDA Falkirk – Volunteers and Donations
- Morrisons Supermarket – Donations of Goods
- Fire Scotland – Safety Advice

- Police Scotland – Safety Advice
- Ideas for Ears – Information and resources for people with Hearing Loss
- Park Hotel Falkirk – Provision of resources to support our events
- Scottish Centre for Personal Safety – Training and resources

Fundraising:

We are in the process of submitting bids for various trust funds and grants to support our Centre.

Recent fundraising successes include:

£500 Punjana & Falkirk High School

£615 TSB Local Charity of the Year donation

£620 Springtime Afternoon Tea & Fashion Show.

£60 FVSC Sponsored Silence

£792 Ladies Pamper Evening

£3000 Braes High School Charities project

We received a very generous donation of new toys and games from Morrisons supermarket and we will be using this to generate more income for the Centre via raffle prizes, auctions, tombola and via our shop in Grangemouth. We would also like to share some of this with children's groups who use the Centre such as NDCS FV and PLUS FV.

Up & Coming Events:

- Friday 26 May Dine in the Dark– Park Hotel Falkirk £20 Ticket includes 2 course meal & eye mask (guests decorate eye mask with prize for the most creative one). We would like to share first hand people experience on the 'dining' and therefore await confirmation re a Falkirk Herald member of staff attending this event.
- Friday 14 July – 22 July Grangemouth Charity Shop – we will be seeking donations of goods for sale and volunteer centre staff and

centre users to support this community event. School pupils have also volunteered to support this event

- Sunday 3 September – Ladies fashion show and afternoon tea
- Sunday 1 October – Great Scottish Run
- Saturday 18 November – Dine and Disco, Park Hotel Falkirk

Centre Groups:

Food Buddies gave a talk to our BPS Social Group on the 8th May. Group members enjoyed this interactive and informative discussion.

Bo'ness Outreach Group – Next meeting on the 31st May - Bridge 49 café/bistro followed by a walk along the canal pathway.

Dining Group – The monthly Dining Group met on the 5th May at local restaurant The Coppertop. The staff were extremely helpful and everyone in the group thoroughly enjoyed their meal. The group have agreed to use this dining venue for future outings.

Stirling Outreach Group – Greg Douglas, Solicitor from Caesar & Howie gave a talk about the “Six Legal Must Dos for Older People”. It was an informal talk about preparing well for the future. He covered about getting Power of Attorney in place, making wills, etc. Feedback from the group was that it was one of the best speakers they had had. Speaker for the next meeting is Steve Callaghan from Access to Adventure.

Wednesday Group – The group had on loan two reminiscence boxes from Callendar House. These resources led to a very lively discussion and stirred many memories. Ian Scott local historian will be attending the next Wednesday group meeting on 7 June. Topic still tbc.

Health & Wellbeing sessions provided by forth Valley College students have finished up for this term. We are hoping to re-start these sessions when College resumes in the Autumn.

Knit and Natter Group – This group, which is led by Centre volunteer Margaret Howie, is going from strength to strength. New members continue to join and there is a great mix of BPS and deaf/hard of hearing

participants. A BSL interpreter is on hand to help with communication support.

Tennis – This popular group restarted on the 12th May. Weather permitting, our volunteer tennis coach Hannah will be taking the group to the Dollar Park to practise on outdoor courts.

Art Group- The Art group at Camelon Community Centre has gone back to its original time from 1.00 – 3.00. It is being run by Brendan Gallagher, a local community artist. This group meets fortnightly and are encourage to use a variety of art materials.

BPS Reading Group – Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, currently looking for new members.

Slimming World holds classes every Wednesday from 5.30pm.

Carers Project – This lunch group meets weekly on Thursdays from 12 – 2:30pm Carers and the people they care for are welcome to attend. Information, support and advice is on offer together with a free healthy lunch. Places available.

Personal Safety Awareness Class – We are currently at week 3 of the 8 week block of classes. The classes are proving very popular and we already have a waiting list for the next block which will start in August. David is planning to deliver some taster sessions at the monthly evening Drop-in groups and we will consider delivering the next 8 week block as an evening class if there is sufficient interest.

Braveheart Walks – Braveheart are offering a regular programme of supported walks. Volunteers will be on hand to provide guided support for blind and partially sighted people and deaf people. Please notify the Centre in advance if you are planning to take part and require support. The most recent walk took place on Wednesday 24 May with 8 sensory impaired walkers and 7 volunteers. The next walk leaves from Callander House on 30 June. Walks start at 13:30 unless otherwise stated. For an update on dates and walking routes please check our website www.forthvalleysensorycentre.org or Braveheart www.braveheart.uk.net

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Social Group –Group meets on the 3rd Monday of each month from 7pm – 9pm. Activities include line dancing,

arts and crafts, use of IT suite, pamper and well-being sessions. The next group will take place on Monday 20th March. Contact Lynne Frail at the Centre for more information

Monday Social Drop in Group – for people aged 16+ with a sensory impairment. Group meets on the first Monday of each month 7 – 9pm Offers a variety of social activities in a relaxed setting. Café available. Cost £1.50

Carrongrange Social Drop in Group The monthly evening group for young people aged 16+ with a sensory impairment or additional support needs. Group provides an informal, relaxed environment socialise and meet new friends.

Volunteering

We have submitted our portfolio for the Volunteer Friendly Award and we are currently waiting to hear if we have achieved this high standard. The new Volunteer Handbook is being distributed to all volunteers.

Save the Date

Our AGM will take place this year on 14th September (time tbc). We have a vacancy for a Centre User Board member from the Visually Impaired community. Centre User Jill Hendry has kindly agreed to cover this post on an interim basis and is interested in taking on this role more permanently. Jill will be attending the next Board meeting on 16th June to represent visually impaired Centre Users, alongside Centre User Board member Laura Cluxton. If there are any other expressions of interest in becoming a Centre User Board member, or if you would like to discuss this opportunity please notify Jacquie Winning prior to the AGM. The Board will vote to ratify the new Board member at the AGM.

Report prepared by Jacquie Winning, Centre Manager, 24th May 2017