

HARLAWHILL NEWSLETTER

SPRING & SUMMER SPECIAL

Hello everyone. Just before we start with all the news and gossip, here is a new rule for this edition of our Newsletter.

WE ARE NOT GOING TO MENTION THAT WORD THAT STARTS WITH **C** AND ENDS WITH **S**

I am sure that, like me, we are all fed up with the ***** word so we are not going to mention it in this edition. Of course, that doesn't mean that it has gone away.

As we know, people over the age of 70 as well as vulnerable people with underlying ailments were asked to stay at home, to remain "shielded" from the ***** and therefore help the NHS from being overwhelmed. We were initially all asked to stay at home and remain protected for 12 weeks and then it was extended to 16 weeks which seemed like a very long time but thankfully, that time is now up. HURRAH!!!!

Word from the government is that we can now start to meet up with family and friends and get out and about in the fresh air at last. However, in the words of my auld granny Roseann, "caw cannie". Let's take little steps to start with and no dashing up the toon to the dancing and the flicks. I know we will all be sensible and apply common sense in our lives.

Although things are looking a lot brighter than they were a few months ago (with less infections, less hospital admissions and, thankfully, less deaths), we still need to be vigilant and careful whenever we go out and meet others. Wash our hands frequently and remember to wear a mask when meeting up with others or in shops or on public transport.

REMEMBER A FEW VITAL GUIDANCE TIPS



At the beginning of this lockdown 00000000000000p0.eriod, Fiona and the trustees were discussing how best to help all our members, and staff, through this time isolation and staying at home.

For the first couple of months, Fiona and her staff were phoning around to all the clients and checking up on everyone to ensure that they were coping OK. It's amazing what a guid blether will do for some folk (thankfully, all our staff can blether) and by merely letting everyone know that they were not forgotten about, can ease worries and stress as well as passing an hour (or so).

Believe me, the staff have felt a fair bit disjointed as well as the members as they miss seeing everyone on a daily basis for a laugh, a blether and the enjoyment of ensuring that all are well and healthy.

As well as the telephone calls, Crazy Fiona and all her daft pals have taken to the streets to celebrate a couple of events that would have been enjoyed enormously had the centre been open.

Firstly, there was the V.E. celebrations. Members of the armed forces and the women's land army took to the streets of Prestonpans to some of the homes of our members where they were joined by our own Vera Lynn (Anna). Much singing and dancing to the tunes of WW2 followed much to the delight of all the Pans residents in the area.

Secondly, as the Prestonpans Gala Day was cancelled this year, the "Dafties" again went on the road (dressed up mind you) with singing and dancing outside the houses of the Gala Queen and various other members of the community. Thankfully, nobody called the police and everyone appreciated the effort by all concerned.



V.E. Day and Gala Day Street Celebrations



The next step that Fiona took was to deliver Afternoon Teas to our members. And did they enjoy them !!! Not only enough for there afternoon tea but enough left over for a light supper (or midnight snack).

Also at this point, we started to kick our bus into action with the marvellous Yvonne and Joe who started taking one client at a time for a short run, maybe down the coast, maybe Musselburgh for an ice cream or a coffee but more importantly, some fresh air and a bit of company.

Also at this time, Fiona and the girls were bringing one or two clients at a time (always socially distancing) down to Fiona's back garden where she had a Gazebo up and the members could partake in a cuppa, sandwich and an iced bun with a small refreshment to the way out to see them home.



On the
Bus
And go
For a run



Or



A cup of
Tea and
A sticky
bun



Now that “shielding” is over and August has come along, lockdown restrictions are easing a bit more and we can come together a bit more and meet others as long as we are social distancing. With this in mind, Fiona has went and acquired a 4m x 3m marquee and the magnificent Mitch (her long suffering husband) has erected it in her back garden so there is now lots of room to meet up for tea and cake in “Fiona’s Bistro” with social distancing no problem whatsoever.

Also, Yvonne and Joe are able to take more than one person at a time for a short journey either down the coast, a market garden or a stop at the harbour. Just to get out and smell the fresh air and see a little of the countryside is heaven after all this time indoors.

A word of thanks here to Joe and his lovely wife Margaret. After “Joe’s Mystery Tours” with running commentary and knowledge of places visited, members were invited into his beautiful garden or conservatory for coffee and cake. Yum Yum – you lucky things !!

The staff have made a rota to ensure that everyone gets the opportunity to go for a run and a visit to Fiona’s Bistro. Don’t feel you have been left out if you haven’t been yet – your time is coming.

Of course, to do all of this, we must continually be thinking of safety. We do ask that everyone, staff and members, wear a mask while on the bus. We have disposable masks if you do not have your own and of course if you are exempt from wearing a mask, just let us know and we will arrange accordingly. We encourage good hand hygiene so please use the hand gel on the bus. Good infection control is the new normal so it’s a good habit to get into. And remember, if you are not feeling well on the day you are due to go to Fiona’s or on the bus, you must not attend. This something we will be very strict on in the future when returning to the centre with temperature checks every day before leaving home.



DONATIONS

Of course, all these days out and treats need to be paid for and we thank the following people for their kind donations and financial help, all of which has been paid into the members account for our little treats.

Collection at Margaret McLeods funeral	£245 (more on this amount later)	
Morag Dickson (in memory of Jean Nisbet)	£100	
David and Nessie Kyman	£150	
Steve Turner (Salvation Army)	£50	
Dorothy Clyde	£100	
Fran Glynn	£100	
Madge Lees	£100	
John Thomson	£20	
May Quinn	£20	
Isa Gilbertson	£20	
Cora Foundation	£2000	Total £2,905

We thank you very much for your generosity. You are the reason we are able to continue to offer the wee extra's which brighten up folk's life. Many, many thanks.

DAY CENTRE FRONTAGE AND ENTRANCE

We used the money from Margaret McLeod's funeral collection to renew our giant wooden planters that sit outside our front windows. They are filled with flowers and look great.

If you have passed, you will also have seen the hand of Ewan (our super volunteer) has been busy at work. Ewan has painted these planters in bright colours as well as our benches which sit outside. The front door was next to be given the 'Ewan' treatment. Now that his artistic juices were flowing, Ewan turned his hand to a new signage for our centre and it looks great between the windows and front door.

All the Work of Harlawhill's "Mr Picasso"



LIFE IS A TREASURE (sponsored by Scotmid)

This project has been ongoing for maybe a year and a half now and during this period away from the centre, the very talented Bruce Davies has been beavering away in his song writing studio and some members have had their life story written into a personal song. We will have an opportunity for everyone to hear the songs once we are able to all be together. We are also planning, when we re-open, to have our members involved in the creating and working of a Harlawhill song.

Watch this space

PREPARATION FOR CENTRE OPENING

During this time of closure, the centre has been hit financially as well as missing all our happy faces. With daily income of £10 from members, 16 members a day, 5 days a week, well, that runs out at **£3,200** over a four week period that the centre is not receiving. We are still receiving our quarterly grant from ELC so at present we are OK to continue paying staff salaries as well as any bills that arrive.

As the staff has continued to work, we still have the normal running costs to cover during this time. So, it is with many, many thanks from the Trustees of the centre to the three (3) members who have continued to pay their direct debit throughout the closure. You know who you are and we cannot thank you enough. (I salute you – Editor)

When the centre does reopen, there are going to be many changes and it will be difficult in the early days.

The most often “buzzwords” are going to be ‘Infection Control’. This going to be vital. We are getting extra tables and chairs for meal times to ensure social distancing and you will be finding Antibacterial Gel every where you look (watch where you sit).

One particular change you will see from the reopening is that we will NOT be able to have 16 members a day in the centre. Until we receive guidance from the Scottish Government, we have to prepare for having half that amount of members a day, indeed, it may be as little as 5 or 6.

Also, it goes without saying, that if we cannot have a full 16 members a day, then we cannot have a total of 80 in a week. Initially, we will NOT be able to accommodate everyone on their normal days. Some may have their days reduced, some may have their days changed. When we receive more information, we will be drawing up a schedule for initial visits to the centre and we will inform everyone in plenty of time

To close, I would just like to ask you all to remain safe. Remember, this ***** is not away. It's hiding and trying to catch us out. Be alert, be vigilant and keep safe.

We finish with a message from our very own Wonder Woman (Fiona) on the next page

From Fiona

When we were informed that our Centre had to close it was heart-breaking for ourselves and our members not knowing when we would be able to open again, not thinking for a minute we would still be closed this far on. Our members are mainly made up from sections of the community who suffer from social isolation or whose carers require respite for the time their family spend with us.

Whilst we knew that we could have just closed up and waited it out but instead we chose to plan ahead for the day we could reopen. In liaison with our trustees and my amazing team of staff we initially organised telephone buddies for every member to make sure that they had someone to talk to every week to relieve the boredom and reassure them that they were not forgotten about.

As the weeks went on, we organised treats such as a Sunday dinner and afternoon teas which we delivered to their homes. On VE Day we dressed up and visited several of their streets where we sang, danced, and generally made a fool of ourselves to their enjoyment. We did the same on what would have been Prestonpans Gala Day and made sure they and their families all received a Gala bag. Entertainment was more fancy dress and music provided by local legend and friend of the Centre Fiona Grant MacDonald.

We have continued to work on our Life is a Treasure project, funded by Scotmid and Rose Paxton, Jim & Ellen Baillie and Alex Hogg were among those who received original songs composed and sung by the multi-talented Bruce Davies.

We delivered gifts as well to our member's carers during Carers Week as well as presents for our ever faithful team of volunteers during Volunteers Week. Without their selfless dedication to the Centre over the years we would have been lost.

As we entered the various stages of the Scottish Government's Covid plan we were able to get more creative and our great team of Drivers, Joe and Yvonne started to take members and others from their household out for magical mystery tours to Musselburgh, Haddington, and the surrounding areas. All followed by a snack, a drink and good company.

My dedicated staff, Gillian, Trish and Louise have also been given a good workout, collecting members from their homes in wheelchairs and taking them out for a spin.

My back garden has now also been turned into Fiona's Bistro with members attending most days for afternoon teas and a catch up with staff and other members in a socially distanced manner. This has provided them with the opportunity to get out of the house for the first time since lockdown and their carers a few hours respite, which has been greatly appreciated by all concerned.

During this time, we have also been busy working in the Centre preparing it for our member's return. We have new furniture, an organ, games as well as decorating outside with new planters and a new sign to welcome everyone back.

We are blessed to be part of such a great community who have always come together in times of adversity and these unprecedented times have been no different. Local businesses have provided us with provisions; the community has provided us with funds and donations of cakes, gifts and games to hand out. The local children have done drawings, handed to each member which cheered them up no end, knowing that someone was thinking of them.

From me, my staff and the Trustees I would like to thank each and every one of you for keeping us in your thoughts. I know that we will endure and can't wait for the day we once more open our doors.

Fiona Mitchell
Manager
Harlawhill Day Care Centre.