



## ***Braveheart's Christmas Newsletter 2021***



***What a fantastic year we're had here at Braveheart. It's all thanks to our committed staff, volunteers, partners and service users. Thank you to everyone and we look forward to seeing you all in the new year***

***Braveheart's next newsletter is due out Spring 2022***

### ***\*!Walking Winners of the Year!\****

#### **Walking group win volunteer award for stepping up during lockdown**

WALK with Braveheart, an organised walking group, has gained accreditation for its voluntary services throughout of the pandemic.

The team of volunteers, who do group walks around Clackmannanshire, supported locals throughout Covid-19 by dropping off shopping and essentials to people shielding from the virus. As well as providing for the community during lockdown, the group were praised for encouraging family and friends to walk, cycle or use public transport where possible.

Walk with Braveheart won the award for its contribution and support to the community through its work alongside Paths for All, a national charity providing free volunteer-led walks for people. The group has been recognised as the winner of Active Travel Group of the Year at Paths for All's Volunteer Awards 2021.

Walk leader Ann said: "We are a walking group who encourage people to just get out on walks, for both their mental and physical health." "The group's role really changed during lockdown, we were getting people groceries, prescriptions, even walking their dogs if they were shielding!"

Walk with Braveheart is a key project within the Braveheart Association, based in Falkirk, which supports individuals to improve their health and wellbeing through walking, health support and long-term conditions groups. Ann said: "It's amazing that the group's getting recognition for its work. The people helping out, volunteering and taking part, it makes such a big impact on not just themselves but the community."

The group were commended at the awards ceremony which was held virtually for the second year and was hosted by BBC Radio Scotland's Fiona Stalker. Ann, and the rest of Walk with Braveheart are among 11 different winners at the 12<sup>th</sup> annual Volunteer Awards that highlighted the outstanding work carried out by volunteers across the country. The charity supports local authorities and communities to develop inclusive environments for people to be active; whether walking, cycling, or wheeling.

Kevin Lafferty, Chief Executive Office at Paths for All, said: "Groups like Walk with Braveheart highlight the very reason why we host an annual awards ceremony. "It is vital that we celebrate and shed light on the outstanding work that volunteers carry out in local communities across Scotland daily. "Our volunteer's invaluable contribution is directly working to improve the nation's physical, mental and social health which has been evident throughout the pandemic, with many going above and beyond their normal duties. "Hearing the inspirational stories during the award ceremony has highlighted that it is not just enough to say thank you – the work undertaken has provided a lifeline for many and for that we're forever grateful."

To find out more which Health Walks you can join in Clackmannanshire & Falkirk, visit: [www.pathsforall.org.uk/healthwalkfinder](http://www.pathsforall.org.uk/healthwalkfinder)

May Richmond Development Officer with Braveheart Clackmannanshire said "I am delighted for all the dedicated volunteers who have went that extra mile for everyone over the past two years I appreciate all your hard work."

If you would like to join Braveheart as a volunteer, please contact May on 07795283804 or email [may.richmond@nhs.scot](mailto:may.richmond@nhs.scot).



## *Clackmannanshire Walks*

The last Wednesday walk for 2021, leaving Clackmannanshire Community Healthcare Centre, will be on Wed 15th of December at 11am and will recommence on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2022.

The last Thursday walk for 2021, leaving Sauchie Community Hall, will be on Thursday 9th December and will recommence on Thursday 16th January at 11am.

Anyone interested in training as a Walk Leader for Braveheart please contact May Richmond by email or telephone [may.richmond@nhs.scot](mailto:may.richmond@nhs.scot) or 07795283804. Anyone who is already trained as a Walk Leader and would like to enhance their knowledge by doing the Dementia Awareness training again please contact May. Both courses will be delivered via Zoom.

Anyone who is Living with Dementia or caring for someone Living with Dementia and is interested in what Braveheart can offer please get in touch and we can share our resources with you.

A huge thanks you to all of our volunteers for going above and beyond their volunteering role over the past two years you have all been exceptional. A heartfelt thanks to you all. We wouldn't be able to offer so much without you.

Thank you to all partners that have supported not only the project but one another during these unprecedented times we have been living with over the past 2 years.



## *Falkirk Walks*

We've had a busy few months with our Falkirk walks! We held our 2021 Sponsored Walk which raised over £700, thank you to everyone who joined and supported us. We successfully relaunched our Monthly Walks in October, providing 3 different walks leaving from the Falkirk Wheel, and look forward to providing a full calendar of 2022 Monthly Walks.

We're delighted to announce our brand new Grangemouth Weekly Walks is in full swing! We meet every Tuesday, 11am, leaving from Community Education Unit. Both a 30 minute and 1 hour walk option. No need to sign up, just turn up!



We not only said goodbye to our Denny Walk Leader Pat (who will be helping support our Clacks walks from early 2022 ☺), but also long standing walker Eileen Shields as she starts a new chapter in England – we look forward to seeing Eileen when she visits.

Many Leaders and walkers supported the family of walker John Reid at his funeral. Braveheart was kindly given half of John's funeral donations (£480) – a heartfelt thank you to John's wife Ann.

Please speak to your Walk Leaders regarding walks over the festive period – most walks run as normal during this time. Our Friday Denny walk is now finished, with our Camelon walk finishing on 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 2021- BOTH return on 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022.

## *Maternity Cover*

From January 2022 our Walking D.O Eva Finlayson will be on maternity leave until January 2023. For all Falkirk Walking enquiries, please contact Walking D.O May Richmond on [may.richmond@nhs.scot](mailto:may.richmond@nhs.scot) or 07795283804. We're delighted May will be covering during this time.

## Peer Support Group for people with Chronic Illness




For many people, a health-related support group may fill a gap between medical treatment and the need for emotional support. A person's relationship with doctor or other medical personnel may not provide adequate emotional support, and a person's family and friends may not understand the impact of a disease or treatment. A support group among people with shared experiences may function as a bridge between medical and emotional needs.

We are fortunate to be able to continue to grow our capacity and expertise and offer support for people living with long term conditions in our community through our "Braveheart Plus" Peer Support groups.

The Group open for all people with chronic disease, their carers, families and friends and meets every third Monday 1.30 - 3 pm at the Braveheart Connections Hub at the Howgate Shopping Centre and is open for new members.



Upcoming Meetings are:

-  Monday 17 January 1.30 pm
-  Monday 21 February 1.30 pm
-  Monday 21 March 1.30 pm



If you are interested in joining the group or for more information, please Munira on [munira.farara@nhs.scot](mailto:munira.farara@nhs.scot) / 07747457418

## **Volunteer Health Mentors**

We are looking for volunteers to empower and motivate people to get involved in healthy social activities, create groups to meet local needs and signpost people to relevant support and services. Health Mentors will enable people to make positive choices regarding their own health and wellbeing and will volunteer as part of a team to support people from a wide range of backgrounds. No experience in is necessary as full training is provided.



**RECRUITING NOW!**

**IF YOU CAN SPARE 2-3 HOURS A WEEK, PLEASE GET IN TOUCH!**

We would love to hear from you! Please Contact Munira on [munira.farara@nhs.scot](mailto:munira.farara@nhs.scot) / 07747457418

## NEW SCOTTISH DOMESTIC FIRE LEGISLATION

From February 2022 the law on domestic fire alarms is changing which will require all Scottish homes to be fitted with interlinked alarms which means if one alarm goes off they will all operate so you will always hear an alarm regardless where you are in your home.

### **The new legislation requires;**

- One smoke alarm in the living room or the room you use most
- One smoke alarm in every hallway or landing.
- One heat alarm in the kitchen.

Additionally if you have a carbon fuelled appliance like a boiler or fire in any room you must have a carbon monoxide detector in that room but it does not require to be linked to the fire alarms.

All alarms should be mounted on the ceiling.

There are 2 types of alarm;

You can either use sealed battery or mains wired alarms, both types which are interlinked by radio frequency.

The battery type alarms can be purchased and fitted by householders but the mains type must be fitted by a fully qualified electrician.

Complying with the new legislation will be the responsibility of the property owners.

It is important that when fitting alarms that they comply with following standards;

Smoke alarms BS EN 14604:2005

Heat alarms BS 5446-2;2003

Carbon monoxide alarm British Kite Mark EN50291-1

If you live in private rented accommodation it will be the responsibility of the landlord or in the case of Council or housing association properties it will be their responsibility to ensure that your home meets the necessary new standards.

Further guidance on the new legislation can be found on the following websites: [mygov.scot/firealarms](https://mygov.scot/firealarms) or [firescotland.gov.uk](https://firescotland.gov.uk)



## *Message from Braveheart Board*

As 2021 draws to a close, it is important to reflect on the on the year just past. It has unquestionably been one of the most difficult years for many of us. One that was dominated by the anxiety of living with a pandemic never seen in any of our life times. It restricted our freedom and even resulted people we know and love being taken from this world too soon. And we can see from what is happening around the world today that this situation is far from over. We need to remain vigilant and look after ourselves better than ever. As individuals and responsible citizens of the world.

However, amongst all those challenges, the best of human kind has also had the chance to thrive. We have seen this in the news reports that we watch or read and we have seen this within our own communities. Let us focus on what has happened with Braveheart.

When the world was shutting down, the staff at Braveheart were working hard to open up new channels of communication with the volunteers and the people across Forth Valley who engage with the services that we provide. Walk leaders and other volunteers started visiting people one to one and providing weekly shopping for those who found it difficult to perform this basic task. When we could, we started "Buddy walks" where some of our walk leaders took individuals out on walks, giving them gentle exercise and simply another person to chat with, when this was so difficult. Regular phone calls and emails were made to support others, trying to maintain the community that Braveheart creates. We have delivered many of our services using IT that nobody had heard of before the pandemic. (ZOOM was an ice lolly until fairly recently!)

For those who attended the AGM recently, you will have heard that 2020/21 was a very successful year in accessing funding for existing projects, and to deliver new initiatives that meet the growing needs of the people of Forth Valley. There will be a greater focus on helping tackle mental health and dementia. We are privileged in having the opportunity to help the growing number of refugees residing across Forth Valley.

This year we have taken on extra staff to support new projects and also to support the core needs of Braveheart itself. We now have an organisation development manager, for example. Lee will make sure Braveheart continues to be "fit for purpose", as we grow into an organisation that has twice the number of employees we had 18 months ago. Exciting times for all.

On behalf of the board, we would like to thank all staff, volunteers and everyone who is reading this newsletter. Thank you for supporting Braveheart throughout 2021. We hope you stay safe and enjoy Christmas.

### **Would you like to be on the board of Braveheart?**

You have read elsewhere in this newsletter how Braveheart has grown in recent times. We are delivering more activities to more people with more staff than ever before. This has created some opportunities to join the Board of Trustees. In the UK, Charity Law dictates that every charity has a board of trustees who are the people have general control and management of the organisation. Our duties are to make sure that the charity follows its governing document (our constitution) and that everything we do is true to our charitable purpose. We must look after our assets, the most important being the people we employ and others who use our services. We have collective responsibility for decisions taken by the board and we need to record the decisions in the minutes of the meetings we hold. Currently we hold meetings lasting about one hour, once per month. There is some work required in addition to this depending on the needs. We are looking for people who share the vision of Braveheart and who can spare a few hours per month. We would particularly welcome people with experience of working in the third sector and for those with expertise in HR, accounting or fundraising. However, we welcome all notes of interest.

If you think you would like to find out more, please contact the chair of Braveheart to discuss further.

**Gordon Thomson**

**Chairman**

**Mob; 07557 861815**

**Email; gordon\_thomson59@btinternet.com**

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