



The LDVG Newsletter

supporting our community since 1994



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A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

As we reflect on this last year, we can definitely say it has been one of ups and downs. The impact of the Coronavirus pandemic has touched each and every one of us and totally changed the way we live our lives. As we go into this festive season, yet again we have had to adjust our plans and tone down our celebrations to try to lessen the impact of this horrible virus.

The staff team, board and volunteers have continued to work throughout the year, supporting not only our own members, but the wider community. A huge thank you to each and every one of you. What has been achieved this year is nothing short of amazing - and we are lucky to have such dedicated people in our #charityfamily. We have strengthened our partnerships with other local organisations and it has been humbling to see just what we have managed to accomplish together despite the many restrictions. It can honestly be said that community spirit is alive and well in Larkhall and we are proud to be a part of that.

Plans have been put in place so that our call line service will continue throughout the Christmas break, and packs will be delivered to the community with some goodies to help see people through. We are all looking forward to a much-needed break to relax and refresh before we return on the 5th January, albeit with a return to home working.

So, we would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and safe New Year. Please look after yourselves, your families and your neighbours and we look forward to the day we can welcome you all back to the building, as we miss you all.



- Sandra McCrory, Charity Manager

AGE SCOTLAND'S VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

After much delay, Age Scotland hosted their 2020 awards ceremony on the 9th of November, aimed at recognising the hard work people all across Scotland do for their communities. LDVG was delighted that one of our own volunteers, Betty Carnihan, won their top award; Volunteer of the Year! Betty was overjoyed when she heard the news and had this to say about her award:



"I was overwhelmed the day I came into the office and everyone sang congratulations. I feel very privileged and honoured to receive the AGE Scotland Volunteer of the Year Award.

It was very disappointing that the award ceremony was cancelled because I had not told any of my family or friends that I had won."

A virtual award ceremony is still an excuse to get glammed up and Betty did just that. She can be seen here showing off her award and some of the lovely flowers she received in recognition of her achievement. Further to this, a Parliamentary motion was filed by Monica Lennon MSP to recognise Betty's achievement. This read:



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

That the Parliament congratulates Betty Carnihan, who is from Lanarkshire, on winning the 2020 Age Scotland Volunteer of the Year Award; recognises that Betty is a tireless volunteer who has helped run numerous older people's groups for almost a quarter of a century; acknowledges that she started volunteering with Larkhall and District Volunteer Group in 1996 and is now its longest serving volunteers; notes that, despite initially shielding at home from COVID-19, Betty stayed in touch with the Group's members by phone, offering a friendly ear to people who were on their own, and has helped organise a food collection for people in need, and applauds Betty for her determinator to continue volunteering and reaching out to make a difference to older people.

We are proud that word of Betty's work for the community and LDVG itself has reached such a wide audience. Each and every volunteer at LDVG brings something to the organisation and the community and it's great to see one of our own get this well deserved recognition. Huge congratulations to Betty on this wonderful achievement and a huge thank you to all our volunteers, old and new. Ann Nisbet, our Volunteer Coordinator, had this to say:

"Our volunteers certainly know how to stand out in a crowd. What else could you expect from this amazing group of people, I am so proud of each and every one of them, who are all unique in their own special way. What an unfortunate place this would be without them."

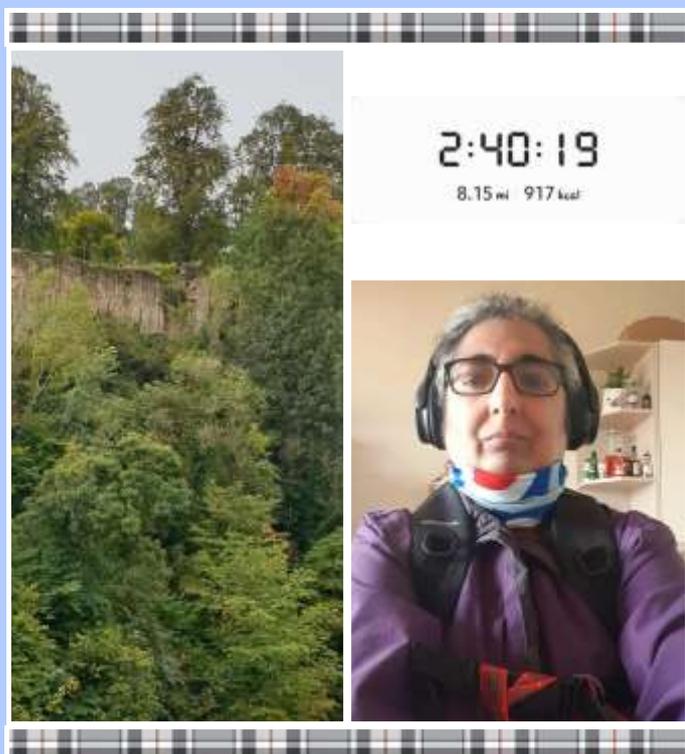
FUNDRAISING

EDINBURGH VIRTUAL KILT WALK

One of the down sides for us this year was the loss of many of our fundraising events, including the Walking Group's annual sponsored walk. Not only is this usually a great fundraising opportunity led by our dedicated Walking Group members but it's a chance for them to get together and enjoy a day out.

Following on from our successful Kilt Walk in April two members of our walking group, Fern Haxton and Janette Ralton, put on their boots and marched out on behalf of LDVG. Their amazing efforts raised £354.05 which was topped up by a further 100%, courtesy of Sir Tom Hunter, giving us an end total of £708.10.

Congratulations to Fern and Janette whose contribution will help LDVG continue it's work in the community. Fingers crossed, it won't be long until the Walking Group can get together properly again and venture into the beautiful scenery that Scotland has to offer.



PLANT SALES AND RAFFLES

LDVG would like to thank our wonderful and talented Gardening Group for allowing us to continue with our Christmas plant sales. Their hard work in producing beautiful festive planters raised over £600 for LDVG!



We would also like to thank everybody who has stopped by the office to donate products for the Christmas raffle. These generous gifts were packed into some gorgeous hampers and raffled off to raise a further £160 for LDVG.



The hard work and generosity of our volunteers, members, staff, and the community, is vital in a time like this. There are a lot of people in and around Larkhall who are definitely on "The Nice List" this year!

LUNCH DELIVERIES

We have been working with Mr T and the team at Heart of Africa to delivery tasty and hearty meals to our Lunch Club members. In keeping with our normal lunch club service, these meals are delivered on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays at a cost of £4 including delivery. There is a menu choice and orders must be placed in advance by the previous Thursday. For more information or to book, please give us a call.



THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC

We would like you all to join us in giving our very own Peter (Pedro) and his wife Jackie of The Five O'clock Somewheres a final thank you for running the virtual Tea Dances near the start of lockdown. Unfortunately these have been unable to continue due to changes with Facebook's licensing restrictions but we know these fun sessions brought a lot of joy to our members over the year.



To show our appreciation, we sent them a little token of gratitude and a tippie because, like their namesake, it's five o'clock somewhere!

CALL LINE

Our Call Line service is at the heart of LDVG, providing a regular, friendly and caring telephone call to people in Lanarkshire who feel isolated or vulnerable. Over the past year the number of people using Call Line has tripled and over 90 calls are now made, every day, Monday to Friday. It is a lifeline for people on their own and for some members, the friendly voice of our dedicated volunteers may be the only regular contact they have. A nice wee chat and a chance to let off steam can make all the difference, especially at a time like this when social isolation is at an all time high.

The service has exploded in popularity, having made over 15,000 calls since March (thousands more than this point last year). It's fair to say that this vital service has grown with dozens of new members joining and volunteers being recruited to meet the demand. The pride LDVG takes in delivering this service and the people who make it possible is difficult to overstate but this quote from one of our members puts it nicely.

"I feel more secure now that I'm on Call Line. The volunteers keep me updated about what's going on in the outside world, like local shop openings and closures. It keeps me in the loop and makes me want to get back out there. It makes me feel less lonely, definitely."

If you or someone you know could benefit from this valuable service or if you would like to help, please get in touch.

FIGHTING DOOM AND GLOOM VIA ZOOM



Meeting by ZOOM is the new norm and many of our members are taking part in our regular weekly meetings.

The Genealogy group was the first on the uptake, followed shortly by our Gardening and Craft Group and this was so successful it led to us buying a Zoom package to allow members, staff and Board to enjoy the full benefits of the system - larger numbers and longer sessions.

Supported by staff who are keen to provide a safe, friendly and fun event, our activity groups are volunteer led. Members enjoy relaxed and informative sessions along with like minded people, happy to share knowledge and ideas, but I think a big attraction is the friendly banter with friends who share the same interests and hobbies.

If you are interested in participating in any of our sessions but do not have the equipment or the know how to access Zoom, please let us know and we will help to get you started.

We hope to have our groups and services up and running as soon as safely possible, but meanwhile you can check out our Facebook page for updates and all the latest news from LDVG.



CO-OP COMMUNITY FUNDING

LDVG are delighted to share that we have been successful in being selected as one of three causes being supported locally through the Co-op Community Fund over the next year. Every cause has their own dedicated page on the Co-op membership website, and we would be delighted if you could sign up and choose us as your cause. The page includes information about LDVG and about the project we're raising funds for. Scan below for our causes profile page!



SHOP, EAT, LOVE, SUPPORT!

We love that everyone is focusing on #thinklocal, doing what we can to shop, eat and love our local towns. For us this includes supporting local charities – those people who have been there when we really needed them. During lockdown, the Third Sector has stood up and made itself known, supporting those in our communities who needed them most, being the foot on the ground delivering services for the public sector and finding support and funding to do whatever is required. As a staff team, we have decided to donate to local charities who mean a lot to us. Why not have a look online at your local charities' websites and if you are able to, do your bit now to support them with a one-off or regular donation. Your community will be better off for it!

TO OUR WONDERFUL VOLUNTEERS



Thank
you!

2020 has been a year filled with change. We have had to adapt to new regulations and there has been a greater need than ever to comfort and care for family, friends and community. We can't begin to express how grateful we are for the continued support we receive from all of you. Your generosity and hard work is second to none

and on behalf of us all, staff, members and Board we would like to say THANK YOU for being part of LDVG and for the huge contribution you make.

Over the year community partnerships have formed and strengthened, bound together with one united purpose – to serve and support the local community and LDVG volunteers have played a major part in proceedings.



**How fortunate we are to have you!
You make LDVG a better place.**

AN UPDATE FOR THE BUILDING

If you follow us on social media (or walked past the building), you will know that we have taken the opportunity of the building being closed to have some much needed renovation work carried out. The roof and heating were due to be carried out but we were struggling with when would be the best time to do this as it would have meant weeks of the building being closed and all groups and services being cancelled.

The lockdown meant this work could happen and our building is now sporting a gorgeous, weather and water tight roof (with thanks to GDS Roofing).

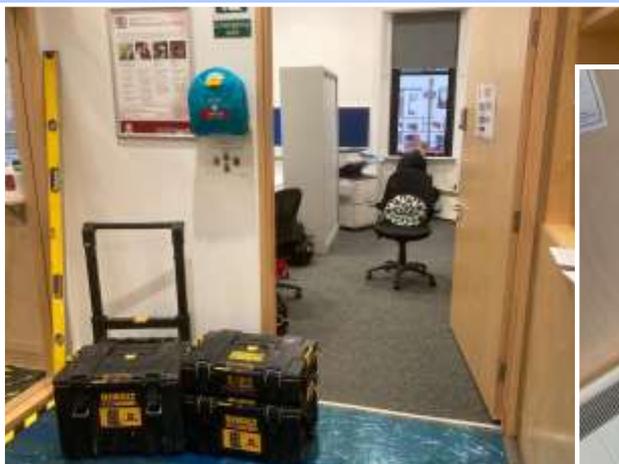


BEFORE!



AFTER!

We have now started the work to upgrade our heating system, so that when you are all able to return to the building it will be toasty and warm. All this work means we have also had to have some freshening up of the décor and we can't wait for you all to be able to see and enjoy these upgrades!



We're still unsure when we will be able to re-open the building to the public but when we do, it's going to be a brighter and warmer place for everyone!

SCAM AWARENESS

Online Shopping

It is important that you remain cautious while shopping online, especially this year as new restrictions force boxing day sales online. Be cautious of online stores that you may not have heard of as there are reports of stores that will take your money without sending your goods. Also be cautious of buying products from social media.

Common warning signs of a scam store include a lack of contact information, a small range of products and negative reviews on other websites. If you are unsure, save your money and buy from a reputable store.

Cold Callers

There have been reports of cold callers in the Lanarkshire area, attempting to gain entry to people's homes with claims including that they're there regarding the flu jab or to clean the gutters as the council are no longer doing this. You should absolutely not allow an unexpected or untrusted visitor into your home.

If you expect there to be a scam caller in your area, you can report them to local police by calling 101 and do not hesitate to call 999 if you are feeling threatened. You can also report them to the council using the following details:

- Phone: 0303 123 1015
- Email: consumer.enquiries@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

Security Systems

Safe as Houses is a scheme to help older or vulnerable people improve their home security. Care and Repair will assess your home security and fill supply and fit any equipment they deem necessary free of charge! You can contact them using the details below.

- Phone: 01555 666200
- Email: enquiries@careandrepair-sl.co.uk

Fire Safety

New legislation from the Scottish Government will make it mandatory for all homes to have interlinked smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms installed in certain areas of their home. Although this legislation is delayed until February 2022 due to the impact of COVID-19, it is recommended that make sure your home is compliant early.

The Scottish Government has made some funding available to cover the costs of these alarms for at risk homes. You can also contact Scottish Fire and Rescue for a free personal home safety check by calling 0800 0731 999.

Helplines

We'd like to remind you of some of the helpline numbers you can call during this time:

- South Lanarkshire Community Wellbeing Helpline - 0303 123 1009
- Age Scotland Helpline - 0800 12 44 222
- The Health and Wellness Hub - 01698 262437 / 01698 303199

IN MEMORIA

LDVG is sad to announce the loss of some of our members. We know they meant a lot to our other members and volunteers and would like to take a moment to inform you and invite those who have memories of them to reflect.

Mary Buchanan, a member of our Call Line service, passed away at the age of 73 on 18/12/2020.

Rose Gallagher, who attended the Hareleeshill Lunch Club and Thursday Night Group, passed away at the age of 69 in December.

Beth Reid, who was a Call Line member and Shopping Bus user, passed away at the age of 81 on 30/10/2020.

John Sinclair, a recent member of our Call Line service, passed away on 17/12/2020.

STAY UP TO DATE WITH LDVG

To stay up to date with everything going on with LDVG and its partners, please consider following us on social media. This is where we post updates and news and it's a great way to stay in touch.

Facebook

facebook.com/LarkhallDistrictVolunteerGroup/

Twitter

[@LarkhallVolGrp](https://twitter.com/LarkhallVolGrp)

You can also find more information about LDVG and what we do at the following places:

LDVG Site

www.ldvg.org.uk

LinkedIn

www.linkedin.com/company/11639116

HOW YOU CAN GIVE TO LDVG

There are now lots of ways that you can help LDVG to continue making a big difference to the community! Check our website or scan the QR codes for more details.



We are now on Sustainably! This is a free app that raises money for LDVG by rounding up the cost of your online purchases. You can control how much you give, set monthly donations and add gift aid to boost donations by 25%!



You can also support us while shopping online using Easy Fundraising, which contributes a donation to LDVG at no additional cost to you! Easy Fundraising is supported by over 3,600 retailers including Amazon, ASOS and eBay.



We have also recently set up a Just Giving page which you can use to donate to or fundraise for LDVG, contributing to the continuation of all our services.