



LARKHALL
+DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER
GROUP

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING 2020/2021



Local

Knowledgeable

Caring

Helpful



Who We Are

Larkhall and District Volunteer Group is a voluntary organisation, formed in September 1994 as "Avondale Careline" to provide a friendly chat on the phone to elderly, disabled and housebound people. The services provided have been expanded since 1994 to meet recognised needs within the local community.

The Larkhall area covers some 60 square miles and includes rural and urban communities with a diverse range of needs and social circumstances.

We aim to promote the health and wellbeing of the community in Larkhall and the surrounding areas. To meet these aims, our dedicated team of staff and volunteers work hard to provide services, activities and volunteering opportunities for all members of the community.

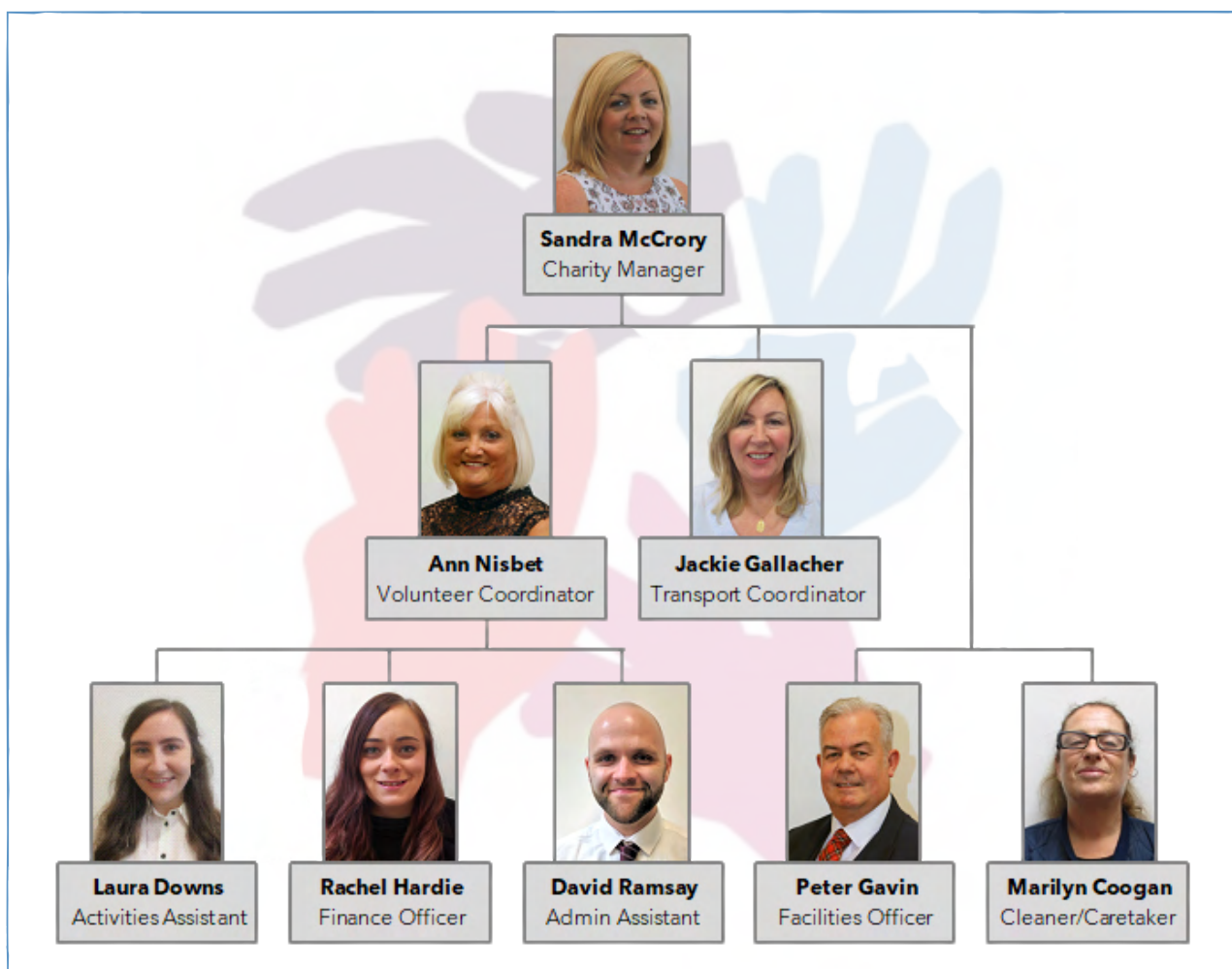
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The Board



Staff Structure



Charity Manager's Update

Welcome to our 2020-2021 annual report!

This last year has been unprecedented, with the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns, totally changing how we function as a charity and community. Despite the many challenges we faced, we are still here to tell our tales, and we hope you enjoy reading about them.

At the end of March 2020, LDVG closed our doors and staff set up for home working. At this point we believed it would only be for a few weeks and that things would soon be back to normal. How wrong we were! Even in April 2021, the majority of our staff were still working from home with almost all services and activities still cancelled or reduced.

Adapting & Changing

Over the last year we have had to adapt and change to fit with the most recent advice from both the Scottish Government and the Health and Safety Executive. At all times, the safety of our staff, volunteers and members were at the forefront of any decisions we made. The closure of the building meant that all our face-to-face activities had to stop.

The only remaining service was Call Line, which doubled in membership overnight. Thanks to funding from the National Lottery, we were able to purchase and set up mobile phones so that our call line volunteers could continue this service from home. Due to demand, we extended the call line to also cover weekends. I can't thank the staff and volunteers enough for keeping this vital service running. Everyone was feeling overwhelmed by what was happening and the amount of information being shared, but our staff and volunteers were dedicated to making these calls and doing what they could to support their community. This was no easy task and each and every person involved in this service should be extremely proud of their efforts.

Losses & Gains

Over the year we sadly lost some of our volunteers and members. It is always upsetting when this happens but not being able to say goodbye added to this. To allow us to recognise how important these people were to us, we introduced our "In Memoria" section to our newsletters so we could say our goodbyes that way.



In December 2020 our Activities Assistant Laura left us for an exciting opportunity with South Lanarkshire Council. Shortly after, our Admin Assistant David left us for an exciting opportunity with Glasgow University.

We were sad to see them both leave and thank them for the work they carried out while with us.

In early April 2021, we welcomed 2 new members of staff in the forms of Chloe Charles (Admin Assistant) and John Downs (Activities Assistant).



Both Chloe and John have already made an excellent impression with staff, volunteers and members alike and we look forward to getting to know them as we return to being in the building. You can look forward to hearing more about them in next year's report!

The Power of Partnerships!



Over the last few years, the team at LDVG have worked hard to establish strong, professional partnerships in our locality. This truly came into play at the start of this pandemic journey. Community Links and the Community Engagement Team at South Lanarkshire Council, put out a call for help and the team that formed became the **Larkhall Covid-19 Rainbows**, supporting the community members who had already begun putting things in place to help their neighbours. This

partnership of public, private and third sector organisations very quickly mobilised, meeting weekly on zoom and doing what needed to be done to support those who needed help. This partnership has developed over the year and is now the **Larkhall Community Network**, whose vision is to "Increase the resilience and strength of Larkhall and surrounding areas by supporting the improvement of life chances and health and wellbeing of everyone within these communities". LDVG are proud to be a founding member of this network and a core member of the **Larkhall Community Network Leads** group, who are working strategically to steer the main group.

Our partnership with **Heart of Africa** really came into its own last year. At the start of April, Tuoyo and Sandra had a chat with their funding support officer and were able to secure funding to provide 100 free hot meals a day to be delivered over a 4 month period – with a focus on the shielding community. Working alongside the Larkhall Community Network, the Heart of Africa team cooked their meals in our kitchen, and they were then delivered using our minibuses. The delivery was coordinated by our Admin staff and Larkhall Community Network.



The future...

As we look to the future, our main focus is the safe return of all of our activities and services. Unfortunately, we are still working to restrictions set by the Scottish Government which means some services may not return until much later in the year, but we will do everything we can to keep our members engaged and connected until then.

Our Community Transport continues to be restricted to 6 people per minibus which also impacts on our ability to offer transport support, but we are optimistic that things are heading in the right direction.

We look forward to seeing some of you back in and around our building as some of our outdoor group's restart. When it is possible and the weather is nice enough to have doors and windows open, we will hold small, indoor and outdoor meetings. We are counting down the days to when there are no restrictions, and we can welcome you all back – we have missed you and hope to see you all very soon.

Sandra McCrory

CHARITY MANAGER



Awards

Who would have thought we would be able to report on Awards this year, but here we are with 3 to tell you about!

Lanarkshire Business Awards

2020: Community Impact

LDVG were shortlisted for a Lanarkshire Business Award and due to attend the awards ceremony to hear the final outcome. Ann and Sandra worked hard on preparing a presentation for the Awards panel, but unfortunately both the panel and the awards ceremony were cancelled due to Covid. Eventually it was decided that the event couldn't happen, so the organisers arranged instead to present everyone who had been shortlisted with a trophy.



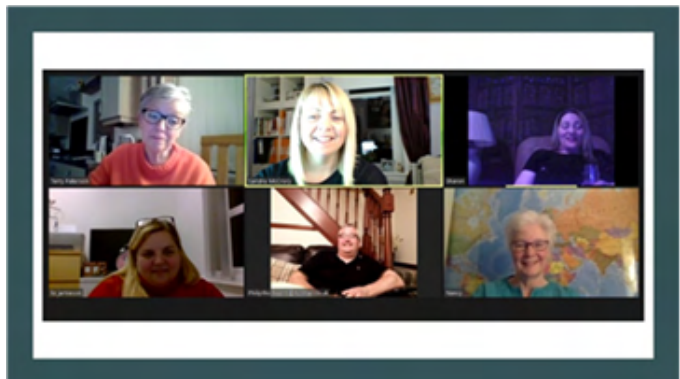
Ministers Point of Light Award



The very charismatic and wonderful Tuoyo from Heart of Africa was presented with a Prime Ministers Point of Light Award for his work producing over 5000 hot meals from May to August 2020. Although this award was presented to Tuoyo, he very much feels that this was a team effort – from his Heart of Africa team to all involved at LDVG and the Larkhall Community Network. Tuoyo also had the pleasure of taking part in a zoom call with the Prime Minister where he invited him to come to Scotland to taste his special fusion of African and Scottish food – so watch this space!

SURF Special Recognition Award: **Ambitious Partnership**

LDVG, Larkhall Community Growers, Larkhall Christians Together and Community Links, were invited to the online awards ceremony where we were presented with this special recognition award in light of our partnership work over the last year. As a national award, this was a very prestigious award to receive, and we were extremely humbled.



We are always delighted when our services and volunteers get recognised for the great work they do, and we hope to be able to report on more awards again next year.

Welcome To Our New Board Members

In the last year we were delighted to welcome 3 new board members to our Charity. Despite having only met via zoom, they are already making a difference. You can read a short introduction to them below:



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Stylianos Souleimetzidis

Tell us a bit about yourself!

I'm Stylianos, and I come from Greece. I came to Scotland in 2018. In 2019 I completed my Postgraduate at Strathclyde University and took the decision to make my stay in the city permanent. I am currently working for an IT company as a Solution Architect with a specialisation in Cyber Security. I am a father of two, and I enjoy the Scottish country-side with my family in my spare time.

What were your reason for joining the Board as a Trustee?

Giving back to the community was my main motivation. Helping the underprivileged and people in need is the most human action someone can do. Choosing to go for a role at Board level was mainly due to my capacity in business management. Nevertheless, as an LDVG volunteer, I plan to get involved in daily volunteering.

Why did you choose LDVG?

It was after my postgraduate when I decided to join a charity and LDVG was a great opportunity at that moment. During my initial interview with Anne and Paul, I realised that my contribution would be appreciated here. Protecting and helping older adults is a collective responsibility of our society as they all represent our fathers, mothers and grandparents.

How have you found your first year?

During my first year with LDVG, I had the opportunity to work with great people at both Board and operational levels and learn new things. It has been a very productive yet challenging year for us, primarily due to COVID19, and I am happy we managed to overcome the difficulties posed. It was very intense for me as well as for all the members of the Board; we faced an unprecedented situation and took critical decisions.

Do you have any particular highlights?

The most important achievement of the group during the last year was the Special Recognition Award we won from SURF. More specifically, we got the Ambitious Partnership for Improvement award for our contribution as a Community Anchor Organisation for the COVID-19 Rainbows Larkhall Community Network. Through this initiative, we managed to bid and secure funding to support and shield the community, but most importantly, we proved that collaboration is the only way to overcome disasters. It's fantastic to see that our efforts have been recognised and our name transcended from the geographical boundaries of South Lanarkshire to the whole of Scotland.

What are you looking forward to next as a Trustee?

I am really looking forward to enhancing our services and making LDVG a point for reference for the broader area of South Lanarkshire. There are many opportunities to unite our powers with other organisations, and the Larkhall Community Networks Leads is such an initiative. Through this partnership, we will draw more attention from the funders, circulate knowledge and work under common goals.



Jennifer Howdle

Tell us a bit about yourself!

I'm Jennifer and I'm Team Leader of General & Community Services at Hamilton Citizens Advice. I've worked there for 6 years. Prior to that I worked for Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service. I'm originally from Dumfries and moved up to this area when I got the job with Hamilton CAB.

What were your reason for joining the Board as a Trustee?

I was looking to do some volunteering and give back to the local community. I hoped that I would have some skills that I could give to the role, but it also was an opportunity for me to develop skills/experience.

Why did you choose LDVG?

I've worked in partnership with LDVG as part of my role with Hamilton CAB and was very impressed with the charity and the amount of work it did for the local community. When the role came up, I jumped at the chance to get involved.

How have you found your first year?

It's been a very challenging and unusual year due to the impact of Covid. It's been very rewarding, and I've enjoyed getting to know the charity more.

Do you have any particular highlights?

It's been great being involved with the charity at such a challenging time. It's been a highlight seeing how the charity has adapted and how hard the staff and volunteers have worked.

What are you looking forward to next as a Trustee?

I'm looking forward to seeing the charity grow and being able to be part of the development.



Stuart McDowell

Tell us a bit about yourself!

I am a local lad (wishful thinking) hailing from the village of Quarter. I have spent the last 35 years working in Finance across Europe and the middle east and ended my career as a global director. Since 2020 I have been working locally in business development. I am very passionate about sport, cooking and walking. Currently I am the president of the Lanarkshire leagues bowling association and a member of Larkhall and District bowling association.

What were your reason for joining the Board as a Trustee?

I wanted to work with a local organisation where I could help it grow and develop, making sure we don't lose focus on the local people who matter. If we can make life better for even one person, then it's a job well done.

Why did you choose LDVG?

It feels like a charity where you can help make a difference.

How have you found your first year?

My first year has been very enjoyable but strange having to carry out all of our duties remotely. I took some time to understand the charity and its workings but now, I feel I can add more going forward.

Do you have any particular highlights?

My favourite thing to do during the year was the Kilt walk.

What are you looking forward to next as a Trustee?

Seeing the charity come out the other side of people and getting some hands on experiences and meeting people face to face for a chat or a cup of tea, not forgetting the cakes.

Welcome To Our New Staff Member



Rachel Hardie

I joined LDVG as the Finance Officer in November 2019 and have previous experience working in a similar role with other charities, over the last 11 years. I worked for Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire and Cancer Support Scotland.

I was interested in joining LDVG as I am originally from Larkhall and wanted to get involved in a smaller, local charity that helps the community. I was settling in well to my role and enjoying being part of the team when lockdown happened.

Over the last 17 months I have been working from home and occasionally working in the office – I never expected this to happen when I joined the organisation, but COVID had other ideas! During this time, I have been able to help with other tasks as circumstances changed. The biggest change for me was helping with our call line service, calling members for a blether, and trying to reassure them in the changing COVID times! I found satisfaction in this as I felt the members really appreciated the calls and many had interesting stories to tell.

I'm looking forward to getting back into the office full time and meeting our volunteers and members when activities resume.

I currently live in Hamilton with my fiancé Jack and two cats (Biscuit & Pumpkin) and am hoping that in April 2022 I will be saying "I do" in New York and becoming Mrs McCourt 😊!

Volunteer Coordinator's Report

What a strange year this has been! Lots of restrictions, lots of changes, lots of people feeling lonely and isolated. But let's not despair as there is always light at the end of the tunnel and LDVG has worked tirelessly to ensure our volunteers and members are looked after and kept up to date, as much as possible, about what is happening within our organisation. We managed to squeeze in our Volunteer Christmas Party before lockdown but that was the last social event on the calendar before lockdown.

Our planned **Veterans Group** launch for March 2021 was nipped in the bud but our plans will be resumed as soon as possible. This new group will meet every second Thursday at 2pm and details of our launch will be publicised, and members contacted well in advance of the re-launch.

During the past year, many of our activities and services came to a halt when the pandemic hit. None of us expected the situation to go on for

so long but we soon learned to adapt and were able to continue with

some essential services and to put a couple of activity groups online. This has been a learning curve for all of us and has had some positive outcomes. Staff, volunteers, and members have learned new skills, and many have enjoyed the new experiences which in some cases have brought people closer together.

Many volunteers have been disappointed as their roles were made redundant and there were no other suitable opportunities available to them. Others have managed to find a part to play and have helped us to continue with some services and activities. The biggest impact for us has been the increase in referrals for our **Call Line Service**, rising from approximately 30 calls per day to almost 100 by the end of the year.



Many have said that this service was a lifeline for them, and it was, in many cases, the only connection members had with other people. Hearing a friendly voice and being able to let off steam and share their worries made all the difference in their isolated world. The service was offered to all members and volunteers and monthly Wellbeing calls were introduced to ensure everyone had some form of contact during the lockdown period. Many had friends or family keeping in touch and declined the offer of these calls, but others were grateful for the regular contact. LDVG take pride in this service, the impact it has in the community and the dedicated volunteers who help. One member sums it up nicely in this quote.

“ 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 definitely makes me feel less lonely ”

The loss of the **Lunch Clubs** has been devastating for so many and initially Heart of Africa along with the Covid-19 Rainbows Larkhall Group (in which we played an important part) stepped up to the mark, using our kitchens to prepare delicious lunches and our minibuses to deliver meals throughout the community. LDVG has continued with meal deliveries and members are very appreciative of this temporary fix, although they can’t wait to get back to their clubs.

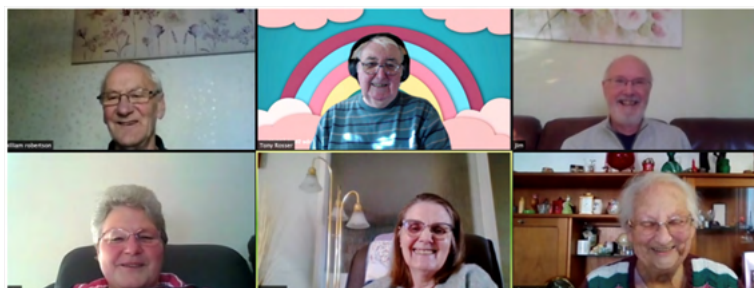
Craft & Genealogy Groups

It was important for us to engage as many of our members as possible in some form and we decided to try meeting online. The Genealogy Group was first on the uptake closely followed by the Craft Group and this was so successful it led to us purchasing a ZOOM package to allow members, staff, and Board to enjoy the full benefits of the system – larger numbers and longer sessions.



These meetings, led by volunteers who were supported by staff in the initial set up, resulted in members enjoying relaxed and informative sessions, happy to share knowledge and ideas with the added attraction of the friendly banter with friends who share the same interests and hobbies.

The offer to borrow equipment from us allowed more people to join in and this soon became the new norm. Both groups bonded well using this format and spent time supporting and encouraging each other.



One member from our Genealogy Group, had this to say:

“ What a great meeting we had today. It was great fun. I think what Jim said before is right and we are all getting to know each other better. We’re all working together and helping each other. Everyone gets their turn, and we are finding out about each other’s families and can laugh about the same things. I don’t say much but am always included. Had a great time! ”

Gardening Group

The Gardening Group were first back to the premises after lockdown, meeting in the garden and preparing and replanting the raised beds.



Up at the allotment plot our volunteers were growing vegetables to be shared in the community and everyone was feeling the benefits of getting out and about again.



Tea Dances



Our very popular tea dances couldn't go ahead but Peter and Jackie Gavin, popular local entertainers known as 'The 5 O'clock Somewheres', kept our spirits up by performing on LDVG's Facebook, live, every Tuesday afternoon at 2pm. These sessions were appreciated by everyone but unfortunately this came to an end when Facebook's licencing restrictions came into play. To show our appreciation of their support we sent them a little token of gratitude and a tipple!

Fundraising

Kilt Walk 2020

An unfortunate consequence of lockdown has been the cancellation of many fundraising events, including the Glasgow Kilt Walk which LDVG was set to participate in. This event is a fantastic opportunity for charities across Scotland to raise money for their cause and disappointment turned to joy when the Dundee Kilt Walk was announced as a virtual event to be held in April 2020. Staff, and Board members (Sandra, Laura, David, Rachel, Ronnie, Paul, and Hazel) sprang into action. With Sir Tom Hunter promising an extra 50% on top of what was raised the LDVG team got their tartan on and walked a combined total of over 65 miles and raised well over £3000. Everyone had their own unique way to achieve this including roller skating, walking, and climbing hills. The incredible news doesn't end there as following the event Sir Tom announced he would be doubling his original pledge meaning a final total of £6894 for our charity. Later in the year two members from our walking group joined the Edinburgh virtual Kilt Walk. Fern and Janette put on their boots and marched out on our behalf and raised £354.05 topped up by Sir Tom Hunter to a final total of £708.10.



Plant Sale

Our popular plant sale began a new life online and our Gardening group worked hard to ensure a good selection was available. During June/July and December 2020 our gardeners, led by Sandra, produced an amazing number of beautiful planters, hanging baskets, wreaths and gifts which were quickly snapped up by members of the community. What a fantastic selection they offered and between the two sales an amazing amount of £1343 was raised to add to our fundraising pot.



Harry's Heroes



One of our volunteers, Sheena, kept herself busy during lockdown by knitting and crocheting teddies as health care workers and doctors etc. When she shared what she had been up to we thought they were brilliant, and it was suggested this could be turned into a fundraiser. These handsome teddies were named 'Harry's Heroes' in appreciation of the fantastic care Sheena's husband Harry received at his care home. Other volunteers got involved and together they made 37 bears and dolls. Another online sale was set up and Sheena, Anne A, Helen, Betty, Anne M, Maureen, and Islay raised an amazing £418.

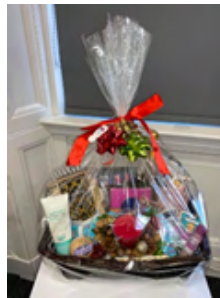


So, as you can see it hasn't all been doom and gloom. We have managed to engage a large number of our members and volunteers, kept some of our groups and services running and formed partnerships with other local community groups. We have all learned new skills and there have been some opportunities for volunteers to be involved, including an assortment of training options which have been offered to people with emails and access to the internet.

Volunteer Week in June was recognised and tokens of appreciation sent out to thank everyone for their help and support in the past, current, and hopefully in the near future. Each day things are progressing, and we can't wait to open our doors to welcome everyone back. All volunteers and members that normally attend will be contacted in advance of any services or groups re-starting. Regular updates will continue on Facebook and by email so please spread the word to friends and colleagues who have no internet.

At LDVG we're all gearing up to GO and looking forward to a healthy and happy 2021.

Christmas Raffle



Laura, our Activities Assistant had the idea that an online Christmas raffle would be fun and set about organising this very worthwhile event.

Thanks to everyone who donated to our hampers which raised a fantastic £160.



Ann Nisbet

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Alison's Story

I started life in Larkhall and after working abroad in Cyprus as a holiday rep, which was hard work but fun, then taking up a career in catering becoming the Catering Manager for the Holiday Inn in Milton Keynes I moved back to my birth town in 2001. I'm a single mum bringing up my two children alone, a boy and a girl both of whom have autism. My son also has ADHD and I work hard to ensure they enjoy a close and happy relationship, supporting them and encouraging them in their endeavours.

I have always enjoyed a variety of hobbies and my current favourite is 'Wild Water Swimming'. Going out a couple of times a week as part of a large group is really enjoyable and as well as making a huge difference to my overall fitness it has had a major effect on my mental health and wellbeing. Other favourites for me are cooking and baking and I make a particularly good Chocolate Orange Cheesecake which some of the staff and volunteers have sampled.



"At the start of the pandemic my self-esteem was low, and my anxiety was high," and I felt a bit useless a lot of the time. I wanted and needed to help people and to feel useful and discovered that **"by doing this I felt much better myself."** I realised there were so many people worse off than me, and I was in a position where I could offer help. Having suffered from mental health issues in the past I was able to share my experience to help others in the community and this was really important for me. I began volunteering for the Community Network Group and through this became more aware of LDVG and what they did. I didn't know a lot about the group but recognised the buses and knew that some of my neighbours attended the lunch clubs. I wanted to continue my work delivering meals etc in the community and signed up to become a volunteer for LDVG. I enjoy getting out and about, speaking to people from all walks of life and building relationships.

"Helping others and connecting with people gives me a real sense of purpose and since joining and receiving the regular emails about what's going on within the organisation, I am becoming more involved." I've continued to help with the meal deliveries and am now looking after one of LDVG's garden plots at Hareleeshill Community Gardens. I have always had a big interest in gardening but didn't know where to start but the friendly group of gardeners at the plots are willing to share knowledge and experience and I feel a good sense of community spirit there. I'm looking forward to finding out more about LDVG, the whole range of activities and services provided and seeing the bigger picture. I know people are missing coming to the lunch clubs and want to continue to be involved once things are back up and running at full capacity.

"The highlights for me are when I take a meal to someone's door and their face cheers up. It's really nice to know you're not just dropping off a meal but having personal interactions with the members and making a difference to their day."



Transport Report

Our Transport Coordinator, Jackie was one of 3 staff temporarily furloughed during the year. Thankfully, we had some great volunteer drivers who were able to keep the remaining staff on the right track and enabled us to continue to run a much-reduced transport support until Jackie returned.

Supporting our **NHS**



We were contacted by colleagues at SPT on behalf of the local NHS Distribution Centre in Larkhall. Key front-line staff could no longer car share and were struggling to make it to work, so the NHS were looking for our help. At first, we thought this was not something we could assist with as the morning shift started at 6am and the late shift finished at 10pm – which would mean a lot of early starts and late finishes for our drivers.

However, we made the ask, and unsurprisingly we had 5 drivers step forward to help. Ronnie Nisbet, Jim Hamilton, John Porter, Jane Hamilton and Jim McCann all took on the task of covering the 2 shift patterns, driving people carriers supplied by the depot.

This was a major undertaking for these drivers, and we would like to thank them once again for their ongoing dedication to not only LDVG, but to supporting the NHS.



Supporting the Larkhall Community Network

Our drivers and escorts took on many roles supporting the Larkhall Community Network.

This included:

- Delivering: hot lunches, food parcels, activity packs, pick me up packs.
- Facilitating food pop up stands within local communities.
- Collecting excess food surplus from retailers and food packs from SLC hubs.
- Transporting equipment and a variety of characters for the community fun days.
- Pretty much anything and everything that was asked of them!



Having access to transport and drivers during the lockdowns made a huge difference to the work of the Larkhall Community Network and we thank our drivers for all their help and assistance throughout the last year.

Delivering hot lunches



From the start of lockdown, our drivers have continued to support us by delivering hot lunches Monday to Friday. From May to August this was 5 days a week delivering the Heart of Africa meals. During September, they delivered a reduced number of meals supplied from Supreme Snacks. Then from October we continued our partnership with Heart of Africa, delivering meals Monday, Tuesday and Thursday in line with our LDVG lunch club days.

Huge thanks to our drivers Eric Budgell, Quintin Cassidy and John Porter and out escorts Ann Rodger, Anne Alston and Alison Preston for their commitment to our food deliveries, we couldn't have done any of this without your support.

Return of the shopping bus

SHOPPING BUS SERVICE



LDVG COMMUNITY TRANSPORT



**Smarter Choices,
Smarter Places**

Supporting Sustainable Travel

The Shopping Bus is a weekly service with door to door pick-up and drop-off. Phone us on **01698 888893** to book your place (prior registration is required). This is a free service funded by Smarter Choices, Smarter Places and operated by LDVG.



**LARKHALL
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In August 2020 we were able to restart our Strutherhill & Birkenshaw Shopping bus service. Some of our members had been shielding since the start of the lockdown and were delighted to be able to get out shopping again. This also gave them the opportunity to go for a coffee and a catch up with fellow members.

Due to social distancing restrictions we decided to supply two buses each week to allow everyone to get their shopping. Over this eight-month period our committed volunteer **John Cowan** gave 174 hours of his time to take 348 passengers on 58 Journeys to various local supermarkets.



Our New Hareleeshill Shopping Bus Service will be available to book every Tuesday from 10am until 12 noon from 29th April 2021

We've had some right characters on our bus, but this lot took the biscuit!



Grocery pop up stalls within local neighbourhoods.

Due to social distancing restrictions, we are limited to how many passengers we can accommodate on each journey, this made it impossible for our group hires and self-hire bookings i.e. football, sheltered housing & care home outings.

During this time our transport services being delivered on a weekly basis are as follows:

HAO food delivery 3 days per week

Shopping Bus Service 2 days per week

Hamilton After School Service 3 days per week

Our volunteer drivers have all worked well as a team supporting each other, ensuring all risk assessments are being carried out to keep our passengers safe.



Jacqueline Gallacher

TRANSPORT COORDINATOR

Building Update

While our building was closed, we made the most of the time by making some much-needed building improvements. Our Facility Officer Peter was initially furloughed for a short time, but on his return, we kept him busy overseeing the many jobs we undertook. Peter also took on the mammoth task of making sure all of our risk assessments and new Covid-related procedures were in place to ensure we remain compliant and keep everyone as safe as possible.

New roof!

We took the opportunity of the building being closed to have our roof replaced. The old roof was letting in water and wind, and letting out the heat, so, thanks to some funding from South Lanarkshire Council Renewable Energy Fund, we managed to source local company GDS Roofing who did a great job updating our roof. We are delighted with the finish and even more delighted to be water and wind tight.



New central heating!

Our old electric heating system was leaving us feeling less than warm and toasty. Once we had our new roof on, we then set about updating our heating system to one that is fit for purpose. The result is a brand-new system which better heats the spaces we have. We also took this opportunity to give everywhere a fresh coat of paint, so we are looking just as sparkly on the inside as we are on the outside! Thanks to Precis Install for a great job!



Garden & bus yard

Once we were happy with the roof and heating work, we set about updating our garden area. We thought it would be much nicer if our members could sit in our garden and not have to look at our buses – as nice as they are! So, we enrolled the services of WHN landscaping, to erect a lovely trellis and secure gate, to separate the 2 areas. We think the end result is stunning and our gardening group have planted some lovely climbers for us to enjoy when sitting outside enjoying the garden.



Covid safe

As well as these major building changes, Peter has been busy making sure our building is Covid safe. That has meant installing hand sanitiser dispensing units throughout the building, updating Health & Safety posters, updating risk assessments, implementing a new cleaning system and installing plastic screens on staff desks.



This attention to detail has meant that those staff who have already returned to the building, feel secure and safe when at work.

What Our Volunteers Say

"I really enjoy volunteering. It makes me feel good and **makes me happy** to see other people happy."

"I feel proud to be part of LDVG as it **gives so much to the community.**"

"Enjoy being part of a caring organisation, **supporting others** and in turn, **being supported myself**"

"LDVG allow me to make a small contribution to the community."

"Gives me a **sense of community spirit!**

Opened up my learning facilities after being retired for many years."

"Chatting on call line **helped my mental health during lockdown**"

"When I see the expressions on people's faces and their voices when they express their appreciation for all that we are doing for them."

A HUGE THANK YOU GOES OUT TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, FOR THEIR HELP AND ASSISTANCE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR AND DURING THESE DIFFICULT TIMES, FOR BEING DEDICATED, CARING AND SUPPORTIVE AND FOR FINDING THE TIME TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN OUR ORGANISATION. WE COULDN'T DO WITHOUT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU!



"Members can confide things and unburden themselves, everyone needs someone to talk to who they feel will not judge but understand, or even share their anxieties. To make someone laugh at an anecdote or lift their spirits is priceless and **can only be beneficial.**"

"Being able to help people in our community who see this **service as a lifeline** and often can be the only human contact they have that day."

"Its good to donate time to help people and continue to **grow as a person.**"

"Hopefully members feel someone is there to be interested in their day and help create an interest in someone else's day beyond their home especially during lockdown."

"I feel it **makes a difference to people in the local community** and therefore makes me feel I am able to contribute something to my community due to the organisation by LDVG."

"Maintained an interest, **kept my mind active**, kept contact with the group through difficult times. Whilst at all times being part of a great group of people."



"I hope that I have been able to provide support and **improve wellbeing** of those who are vulnerable and lonely."



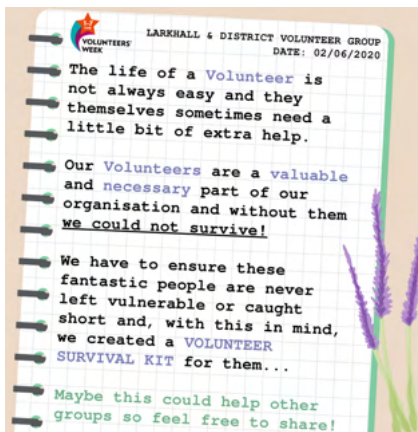
"Everyone involved in LDVG, both staff and volunteers is at all times trying to improve and support those in need throughout their catchment area, and, especially over the last year adapt and change how they can best **help those in need.**"

"Having volunteered in various forms over the past 40+ yrs, it has been a pleasure to have become a member of the LDVG team. The staff and fellow volunteers are organised and very welcoming. I have thoroughly enjoyed my first few months being a member of this exceptional group and look forward to many more years of being a **small cog in this caring team.**"

"I feel I'm probably helping people less fortunate than myself during lockdown. Some of these people over the last 10 months or so don't see another person that day."

"I really enjoy being able to drive members of the walking group and have made many friends along the way. The **welcome received and camaraderie of members and staff encourages me to do more.**"

"It lets the community see that there are people out there who are willing to help them no matter the risk to themselves."



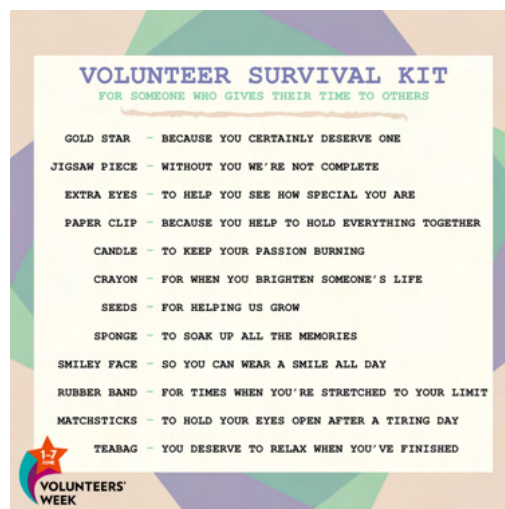
"Made me more determined to keep active and positive in attitude."

"Given me an interest and purpose in life to combat the sense of loneliness of lockdown"

"I enjoy being a volunteer with LDVG. I like the challenge when on the phone to get the members to have a chat and hopefully it will **brighten up their day and make them feel less lonely.**"

"I have been volunteering for a number of years and **without LDVG my life would be more empty.** I feel connected to the community and would not be out if not for this."

"Everyone involved in LDVG, both staff and volunteers are at all times trying to **improve and support** those in need throughout their catchment area."



"I am confident volunteering with LDVG as I feel the activities are well thought out and organised. **Members safety and care are a priority.**"



"·Gives me a purpose in my life, even more so during pandemic
·Have met a lot of new people
·**Keeps me positive** about the future
·Gives direction to my life
Keeps me active"

"I feel more confident and more worthwhile. It gives me a reason to get out of bed in the morning. I'm very **proud to be a valued member of LDVG** and a call line volunteer. I would be very lonely without the volunteers and I am kept busy and feel I give something back to the community every time I attend."

"Staff, other volunteers and group members have been very **caring and supportive** during what has been a very difficult year for me personally."

What Our Members Say



"I love going to the lunch club but I'm **missing it**. Really looking forward to going back."

"I don't want to go outside because I'm scared and worry about my health but I still want to have someone to talk to."

"What more could you ask for? Getting a call every morning to see are you up and going about. I think it's a wonderful thing - I honestly think whoever designed it should get a wee gold star put on their brow!"

"When my husband died 2 years ago I thought 'What am I living for? What am I going to do on my own?' but now I have a joy to get up to!"

"The volunteers are absolutely brilliant. I love speaking to Karen, she's like a second mammy to me now. She could talk for hours, it's great. Islay too! I think she's very young at heart, it's a **pleasure to speak to her**. She's always so upbeat and enthusiastic."

"**Absolutely fantastic** everything that the volunteer group does for Larkhall. I feel like not enough people recognise what the volunteer group do."

"If it wasn't for the clubs I wouldn't have nearly as many friends as I do. It's always a **good catch up and it's a laugh.**"



We are waiting with open arms to welcome our members back to the building when it is safe to do so, so we can all enjoy the space like we used to.....



"I **don't know what I would have done without you**, everyone's cheery and chatty and it gives you a wee lift. You've helped me a lot and anything I can do to help you I would."

"I do look forward to my calls and I try to have my phone to hand. One of the volunteers told me about how you follow up when you don't get an answer and that underlines the importance of the service. If I don't pick up that day, I **feel secure that someone is checking on me** and that's why I try and get back to people [LDVG] if I miss the call."

"See that chap who runs the bus [John], he's **always very helpful and helps me out by lifting my bags for me**. He's a good man, very helpful."

"Thanks for everything! The meals I have been getting are great."

"Brilliant! I hadn't been out in ages and my son and daughter had been doing my shopping. I was getting sick of phoning them because I'd forgot something. It lets me go to the shops myself and see what I need. I think all the **precautions you've taken on the bus are very sensible.**"

"The staff in the office couldn't be any nicer and the girls at the exercise group are really nice! **Looking forward to getting back to the exercise group.**"



....but in the meantime
we will continue to
provide the services
which we can safely
deliver!

"I enjoy going to the genealogy group, the **volunteers are absolutely excellent**, Maureen and Tony are excellent at helping me."

"When I was going out shopping before I was just going to the wee shop up the road. I was having trouble getting my big shop, I was rarely able to. It's **made that much easier** for me."

"It was great when the bus was going further out. It went to places I wouldn't have gone or couldn't have got to otherwise. I know it can't at the moment but it was really good. "It's always good to get a blether. I'll talk away to everyone on the bus." It was great, really good. I wasn't going out at all and hadn't seen anybody in months so it was good to **finally have a reason to go out again.**"

"I really enjoy going to the exercise class and the volunteer group do a great job!"



"To tell the truth, it's the **only way I get my proper shopping**. I can't walk down, and I could get the bus to Hamilton but I don't particularly like to go on the buses just now. I'm not quite comfortable with it."

"It gives me confidence that I have back up, if anything did happen someone would recognise it. It's a link that connects me to people, anybody that phones I aye get a blether. I was **particularly pleased to get a call on Christmas day.**"



"Attending the walking group and tea dances has **made my life a lot richer.**"

"They all just like listening to my wee stories. Even when I'm having a bad day, **it's easy to be cheerful for them.**"

"The people that run it are nice and friendly and makes it worthwhile – **can't do enough** to please us."

"I would have been very bored. It makes such a difference having **something to look forward to each week**. The staff are excellent and keep you up to date with all that is going on."



"The **clubs are fantastic** and I can't thank the group enough. I've nothing bad to say about them."

"The **people who phone her have been great**. It's good to know she's getting that point contact. It makes her feel good that somebody is phoning her."

"I live in Ashgill and I enjoyed receiving lunches throughout lock down, really nice lassies – **not got a bad word to say!**"

"You've no idea the friends I've got from going to the lunch clubs. I'm not easy to make friends with but I've made great friends at the clubs. I **can't wait until they start up again.**"

Facts & Figures



Call Line

- 17 volunteers made a total of 20,767 calls on the call line service – an increase of 69% on the previous year.
- 1,840 hours spent chatting to members over the past 12 months.



Wellbeing Calls

- 781 calls were made by 5 Volunteers
- 124 hours spent on the phone with 62 members.

- 6 drivers & 3 escorts covered 8,073 miles
- 447 journeys!



Transport Hire

Lunch Clubs/Deliveries

- 657 meals delivered by a team of 8 volunteers between August and March.

- When COVID restrictions allowed, 15 jobs were carried out by 2 volunteers



Handy Person

Strutherhill Shopping Bus

- 248 passenger journeys made over the year.
- 3 Volunteer drivers helped 12 members with their weekly shopping.

Craft Group

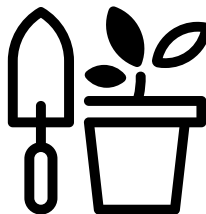
- 141 attendances online via Zoom.

- 134 attendances via zoom with 2 volunteers

Genealogy Group

Gardening Group

- Suspended due to pandemic, but able to raise £1,401 throughout the year



Tea Dances

- 14 online tea dances were held throughout lockdown.



LARKHALL
+DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER
GROUP

Fundraising

- 25 volunteers have assisted with admin and fundraising activities.
- £7,602 raised through the Kiltwalk.
- £418 from Harry Heroes Teddy Bears.
- £238 through raffles and crafting!

Help Us Sustainably

#live local #shop local #love local

In the past, we have been asked if there is a simple and easy way for people to support us on a regular basis, like you can do with larger charities. So, just before Covid hit, we introduced a new way of supporting LDVG using @Sustainably. You need to download the app onto your phone and you're ready to start having a positive impact every day!

Giving on Sustainably:

With @Sustainably you can choose from two ways to support us. Whether you want to save your pennies towards a donation every time you shop with Round Up's or set and forget with a monthly donation through Monthly Happiness, the free app makes it really easy to see your impact and stay in control of your giving!

Giving with Round Ups:

You can support us on the @Sustainably app by rounding up your spare change when you shop. Simply connect your card and Sustainably will securely round up and donate your spare change every time you shop, so you can easily support us just by buying your coffees, groceries or new shoes! You can set a limit for how much you want to donate, so you still have totally control over this.

Giving with Monthly Happiness:

You can also support us on the @Sustainably app with totally flexible monthly donations. With Monthly Happiness you can easily pause your giving or change it at any time. No questions asked. And it's super easy to keep up to date with the impact you're having!

See the impact your having:

When you give to LDVG on @Sustainably you can easily see the impact you're having. Just log into the Sustainably app and take a peek at your impact feed. It's a great way to stay updated on the work we're doing, thanks to your support

Staying in control of your giving:

Donating to us on the @Sustainably app makes it super easy to stay in control of your giving. You'll never get asked to give more and you're free to stop, start, pause or change your giving at any time. Nice!

Adding Gift Aid:

Supporting us on @Sustainably means every £1 you give, much more goes to support LDVG. Sustainably is a free app and takes no fees from your donations and with Sustainably you can add Gift Aid, supercharging your donations by 25%

If you need any more information, or any help with installing the app, please speak to a member of staff next time you pop in the building. Thank you!





JUST GIVING

This page can be used for all donations or to start your own fundraising event for LDVG!



EASY FUNDRAISING

This allows you to make a small donation to LDVG as you shop online at no extra cost to you!



AMAZON SMILE

With this program, Amazon donates 0.5% of eligible purchases to LDVG!

CONTACT US

You can reach us by phone, email or post using the details below. Normal working hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm.

• **Phone:** 01698 888893

Email:

- *General* - admin@ldvg.org.uk
- *Bus Hire* - transport@ldvg.org.uk
- *Room Hire* - finance@ldvg.org.uk

• **Address:** Registry House, 55 Victoria Street, Larkhall, ML9 2BL

FOLLOW US

Please follow us on social media or visit our website for our most up to date news.



@LarkhallVolGrp



Larkhall & District
Volunteer Group



LarkhallVolGrp



www.ldvg.org.uk

JOIN US

Interested in volunteering?

Talk to us.

LDVG offers a diverse range of volunteering opportunities that can work with your skills and around your schedule.

Interested in becoming a trustee?

Our Board of Trustees is vital to LDVG and you could work with us to help steer LDVG towards its goals.