

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING



LARKHALL
+DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER
GROUP



Local

Knowledgeable

Caring

Helpful



2022/2023



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.

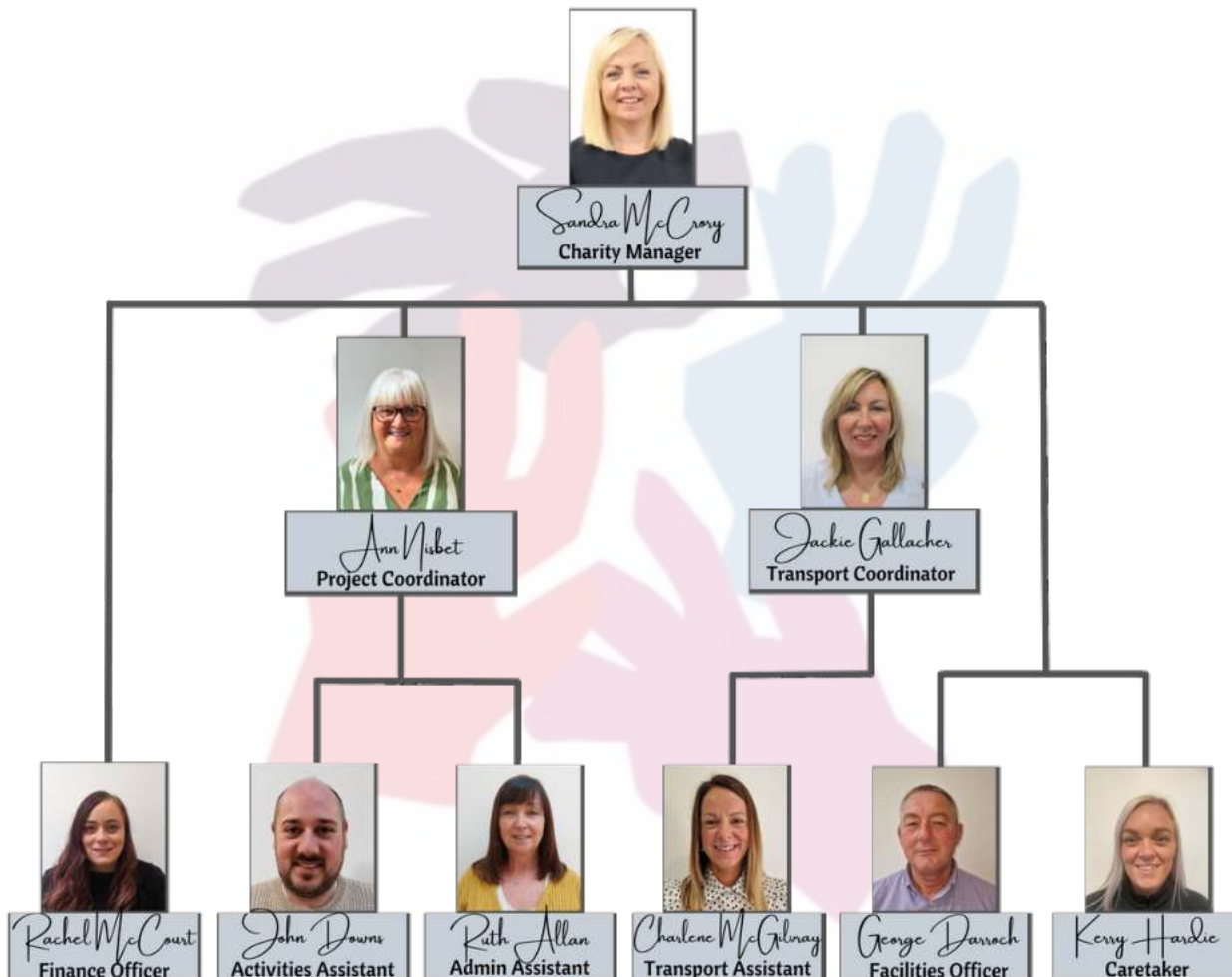
Contents

The Board	3
Staff Structure	3
Charity Manager's Update	4-5
• Awards	5
• Funding	6-7
• Partnerships	8-9
Staff Update	10-11
Welcome to Our New Board Members	12-13
Project Coordinators Report	14-19
Carole's Story	20-21
Transport Report	22-24
Current Services	24
What Our Volunteers Say	25
What Our Members Say	26
Facts & Figures	27
Help us	28
Contact Us, Follow us, Join Us	28

The Board



Staff Structure



Charity Manager's Update

Welcome to our 2022-2023 annual report. It's been a fun but hectic year and we can't believe we are into 2023 already! This last year saw the remainder of the Covid restrictions completely removed and all of our weekly groups and services returned to normal. Our members and volunteers came back with a flourish, and we quickly found most groups filling to capacity – a nice but new problem to tackle.

Most days our building is a buzzing hive of activity between our own groups and people hiring our rooms. We have been delighted to welcome new organisations to LDVG, which in turn has introduced new people to what we do here. It's great to see so many of our community using our facility.

The funding landscape has been particularly tricky this year, with the focus moving on from supporting the Covid-crisis to supporting people with the fuel and cost-of-living crisis. As funders look to adapt how they support organisations, we have seen changing focus and criteria. While covid saw quick decisions being made, we are back to waiting and hoping for good news. Despite this, we have been fairly successful in securing grants for the next year or two and will continue to work hard in this area to ensure our sustainability.

Community Fridge

Thanks to funding from Hubbub and the Coop, we were able to purchase a glass fronted double fridge for our foyer area. Once we had recruited some volunteers to manage the day to day running of the fridge, we did a soft launch in November 2022, with a wider community launch at the beginning of 2023. Although we have been working with Fareshare and Neighbourly for a while now, this new fridge setup has allowed us to improve the service we offer. The aim of the fridge is to reduce produce going to landfill and so our fridge products are available to anyone who comes through our building. Items available vary from day to day and can include anything from bread and vegetables to baby food and jars of mincemeat! It's always worth a look as you never know what you will find that may be of use to you.



Our Kind of Town (Larkhall)

We have had many visitors to the LDVG building, but we were especially delighted to welcome Ian Hamilton (presenter and journalist) and a BBC film crew when we were invited to take part in “Our Kind of Town – Larkhall”, which featured LDVG alongside some of our partners and some well-known faces in the town. The team from BBC Scotland spent the day at the building filming and speaking to various staff, volunteers, and members. It turns out the presenter Ian Hamilton, was originally from Stonehouse and was at school with our very own volunteer James McAllister. The resultant programme was a fantastic representation of Larkhall, the people and the organisations in it.



Awards

This year we were blessed to be nominated and shortlisted for a number of awards. We are pleased to be able to share the following recognition:

Lanarkshire Business Excellence Awards

We were lucky enough to be finalists in the Community Impact award category. Despite not winning, the team enjoyed a fantastic night at the awards ceremony held at Motherwell Concert Hall.



VASLan Long-Serving Volunteer of the Year

We attended the VASLan AGM at the Torrance Hotel in November 2022, where James McAllister was awarded the Long-Serving Volunteer of the Year award for all of his years volunteering at LDVG. Congratulations once again James!



Funding

We have had another successful year in securing grants. Without this funding support, we wouldn't be able to offer the scope of excellent activities and services that we do.

Funding secured in 2022-2023: AGE Scotland, ASDA, Larkhall Community Council, SCOTMID Community Grant, EST Plugged-In Communities Fund, Arnold Clark Community Fund, Flexible Workforce Development Fund, Hubbub, LandTrust, National Lottery Community Led fund (year 2), Network Service Grant, Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Funding (year 2), Paths For All (Smarter Choices, Smarter Places), Robertsons Trust (year 2), Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT), Virgin/O2 media, South Lanarkshire Council, National Lottery Cost of Living fund, Awards for All.



LandTrust: thanks to funding from LandTrust and Patterson's Quarries, we were able to install an interactive communications system in our Peter Corr room to enable us to offer hybrid meetings from our building. We installed a new mobility access ramp at our Percy Street entrance to allow the buses to disembark passengers at the dropped kerb and enter the building easier. Finally, the last of the funds were used alongside funding from the **Youth & Philanthropy Initiative** for some hard landscaping of our garden, including adding some new raised beds.

Awards For All: this funding enabled us to work with our friends at "Feel the Warmth" to provide heat belts and heat pads to the local community. The project was aimed at supporting people tackle the fuel crisis by offering a way to 'heat the person' rather than heat the space. As well as offering support through heat, these belts have a number of proven health benefits including long lasting pain relief, reduction of arthritis pain, increasing blood circulation (promoting a faster recovery and cleansing of your whole body), helps to remove toxins in the body, improves range of motion and promotes stress relief and relaxation.



Co-op Local Cause: from November 2022 until Oct 2023, we are one of three local causes being supported by the Co-Op Fund. During this time, we attended various “meet the funder” events and took part in some in-store promotional events to encourage people to choose us as their local cause. The funding secured will go towards supporting our services and activity groups.



AGE Scotland: we have been able to secure a variety of small grants from AGE Scotland which are project specific and have allowed the team to add some variety and scope to some of our activity groups – including supporting the newly re-launched Thursday Night Social Group with transport.

Plugged-In Communities Fund: securing this fund has enabled us to purchase a new 10-seater electric minibus with tail lift. This will be the second electric minibus to be added to our fleet and we are excitedly awaiting a delivery date.

Love is in the Air

The Covid pandemic saw our Finance Officer Rachel sadly having to cancel her wedding. But on April 27th 2022, Rachel finally got to tie the knot with her fiancée Jack in the beautiful Central Park in New York. The photos were amazing, and we can only imagine how magical their day was.

Congratulations again to Rachel & Jack.



Partnerships

LDVG are committed to working in partnership and supporting collaborative projects where possible. This sees us continue our involvement with the Larkhall Community Network and Hamilton Health and Social Care Forum, as well as working with some new partners.

Larkhall Community Network: we continue to support the work of the network to ensure we are collectively getting the best possible outcome for the community. The partnership offers opportunities to work collaboratively and reduces duplication of work.

Larkhall Community Network Leads: as a member of the leads group, we work closely with Larkhall Community Growers, Larkhall Christians Together and Community Links (South Lanarkshire) to oversee projects to benefit the town. In particular, we are working together to bring support and advice services back to local venues and piloting a befriending project to encourage people to reconnect with their community.

Cranfield Trust: in November 2022, we approached the Cranfield Trust and were successful in securing consultancy support with two projects. The first project will tackle writing our new business plan, and the second project will look at how we can support, develop, and sustain our Board, including recruiting new trustees. This work has now started, and we are excited to see where it takes us.

Generations Working Together: we are a member of the GWT network and were delighted to host their Lanarkshire meeting in September 2022. We look forward to hosting them again later in 2023.



Larkhall Academy: In June 2022, we met with Andy Smith, head teacher of Larkhall Academy. Through this, we were able to discuss some of the senior pupils volunteering with LDVG as part of their leadership award. This new partnership has introduced new young people to the benefits of volunteering and sharing their skills with an older generation.

SKY Uddingston: In December 2022 we were contacted by the communities team at SKY who were looking to partner with a local charity. Since then they have supported us in a number of ways and we are looking forward to see where this new partnership takes us - and would like to take the opportunity to thank the wonderful team at SKY for their ongoing support.

Chartered Institute of Fundraising Conference: Ann Nisbet and I were the lucky winners of a 2-day conference pass to the 2022 CloF conference in Glasgow. We spent an interesting 2 days attending various workshops and chatting to people about all things funding and fundraising.

Elected members: we have had a number of visits from our elected members, MSPs, and MPs over the year and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their continued support.

University of the West of Scotland: we continue to support UWS by offering Community Learning and Development placements for students. This year we have had Paula in supporting us in gathering and analysing our evaluation feedback. This work allows us to see what we are doing well and where we need to improve – and offers invaluable feedback that we can pass on to our funders to prove the impact we are making in our community.

Staff Team Building

During the summer holidays, while the building was closed to the public, the staff here at LDVG had a teambuilding day.

This involved a lot of fun and interesting tasks and games that were based on communication. These games tested our ability to follow instructions, delivering direction and working together as a team. It was a fun day enjoyed by all.



Looking to the Future

As we look forward to 2023/24, my focus remains on securing funding to sustain and develop what we do. We will continue to be creative in how we increase our self-generated income through our room hires, community transport hires and fundraisers, so we can continue to work with and for the community in Larkhall. We would like to thank everyone who has supported us over the last year with their time, talent, or through donations. We are grateful for all of the support we receive from the community and from our partners and colleagues. Thank you!



Sandra McCrory

CHARITY MANAGER

Staff Update

Who's in and who's out

In April 2022, we saw two popular staff members retire.

Peter Gavin had been with LDVG since 2017, starting off as our Cleaner/Caretaker and moving into the role of Facility Officer in 2018. Peter is one of those people who can turn his hand to anything, so he was able to make a huge impact in ensuring our building remained safe for all who used it. Peter was also known to pick up a mic and sing a song or two at our tea dances, entertaining us all with his smooth, rat pack tunes.

Jackie Gavin was employed at LDVG as our Cleaner/Caretaker from March 2021. Jackie, like Peter, could often be heard singing a tune as she worked and was always happy to help with anything she could. As well as working with us, Jackie had volunteered in the past, and continues to support us with her delicious home baking.

We wish Peter and Jackie all the very best in their retirement and hope they are making good use of their new garden bench, don't be strangers!



Chloe Charles started out as our Admin Assistant last April and then moved on to become our Transport Assistant at the start of 2022.

Chloe worked very hard during her time here at LDVG, especially with the transition of bringing our services out of the pandemic.

She will be missed and we hope to see her regularly. Most of all we wish her so much happiness and luck in her new job and we hope everything goes well.

In 2022 we welcomed three new members of staff to our team.



Kerry Hardie

Kerry initially joined us as a volunteer caretaker, covering in times of need. When the opportunity presented itself, she was very keen to join the team officially. Kerry is doing a fantastic job of looking after the cleaning of our building as well as being a friendly face for our evening room hires. This vacancy came at the perfect time for Kerry as she has 3 young kids and was finally able to get back into work.



Charlene McGilvray

Charlene started in August as our Transport Assistant. Charlene works alongside Jackie, our Transport Coordinator, to ensure the smooth running of our transport operations.

Hi, my name is Charlene and I joined LDVG in August 2022 as the Transport Assistant. I have worked with the public in hospitality for over 17 years which I have always thoroughly enjoyed.

Currently my hands are pretty full as I have two young children who like to keep me on my toes so I have very little time for anything else! My boy Arran is 5 and is starting school in August and my little girl Sienna is 3 and will also be starting nursery in August.

So then I am hoping that I will have more time to do more of the things I enjoy such as eating out, photography, walking & going to the caravan in Ayr!

Over the last year working in the Transport Department at LDVG I have found it to be very rewarding. I didn't realise the extent of social isolation so by arranging buses and day trips it really is great to get people out and about!

For the future I am looking forward to many more years at LDVG!



George Darroch

George started in August as our Facility Officer. A bit like Peter before him, George is also capable of turning his hand to most things, and he has got stuck into his role looking after our building with enthusiasm.

I came into the role with over 40 year's experience in engineering and inspection having completed an apprenticeship as a Mechanical Handling Engineer. I continued in this role until I enrolled in college to further my education to allow me to pursue a career within the Insurance inspection sector.

After completing 20 years as a Engineer Surveyor with Allianz Engineering I took early retirement, but during my time as a surveyor I met Peter Gavin the previous Facilities Officer at LDVG as our paths crossed many times over the years. Peter contacted me to see if I would be interested in applying to take over from him as he was planning to retire.

Away from work I enjoy playing guitar, reading, gardening, walking my dogs and spending quality time with my wife, children and grandsons.

I have recently bought a campervan and although I haven't been away, my wife and I are currently planning journeys for this summer.

New Board Members

In the last year we were delighted to welcome 2 new board members to our Charity. You can read a short introduction to them below:



Alan Blyth

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am Alan Blyth, and I am an accomplished IT Executive with extensive experience in driving digital transformation and change programmes across many different industry sectors.

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

I joined the board as a trustee and vice chair because I strongly believe in the mission and values of LDVG. I am passionate about making a positive impact in the community and helping those in need. By becoming a trustee, I saw an opportunity to contribute my skills, experience, and knowledge to support LDVG and the board in its efforts to make a difference within the community.

Why did you choose LDVG?

I chose LDVG because of its exceptional reputation in the community and the valuable work it does. The charities commitment to helping others, promoting volunteerism, and addressing important social issues aligned with my own values and aspirations. I wanted to be part of a well-established group with a track record of success and a strong network of dedicated volunteers making a difference in the community.

How have you found your first year?

In my first year as a trustee and vice-chair, I found the experience both fulfilling and challenging. It was a period of learning and adapting to the charity's operations, strategic direction, and governance practices. Building relationships with fellow trustees, staff, and volunteers was an important aspect of my first year, as was understanding the needs of the community and LDVG's impact.

Do you have any particular highlights?

During my first year, there were several highlights that stood out. For example, witnessing the positive outcomes and impact of LDVG's programs and initiatives on the lives of individuals and the community was incredibly rewarding. Collaborating with passionate and dedicated volunteers and witnessing their commitment and enthusiasm was also a highlight. Last, but not means least, I have enjoyed helping with the direction of the charity and attending the events and the monthly board meetings.

What are you looking forward to next as a Trustee?

As a trustee, I am looking forward to further strengthening the LDVG's impact and expanding its reach within the community. I hope to contribute to the development of new programs, initiatives, and partnerships that will enable the LDVG to address emerging needs effectively. Additionally, I aim to continue fostering a positive and inclusive organisational culture that empowers volunteers and staff to make a meaningful difference in people's lives.



Sandra Gilfillan

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I am a mother of twin daughters who enjoys running, shopping reading and socialising with family and friends. I recently completed an "Into Headship" qualification at Strathclyde University. I have worked in education for almost 22 years, initially as a Drama teacher. I am about to embark on my first post as Head Teacher.

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

I am a born and bred Larkhall girl and having worked with the town for over 20 years, the well-being and happiness of its residents are important to me. The work of LDVG inspires me and I was keen to support the group in its journey.

Why did you choose LDVG?

After Covid, I became more aware of the deterioration of community spirit and the importance of working together. When I heard of the incredible work LDVG do to sustain community spirit and activities for all I was hooked! They provide such a valuable service.

How have you found your first year so far?

As a very new trustee, I have enjoyed hearing of the developments and plans for the future. The commitment of the staff and volunteers is amazing.

Do you have any particular highlights?

Visiting the site when activities are on. To see the community working together and enjoying each other's company was very heartening.

What are you looking forward to next as a Trustee?

Learning more and supporting the group in plans for the future.

Why are trustees important to a charity?

Trustees are the volunteers who lead charities and decide how they are run. You may have heard them called board members or the board. Trusteeship is a great way of contributing to causes you care about and developing strategic and leadership skills at the same time.

If you would like to find out more about becoming a Trustee, please contact Chair@ldvg.org.uk for more information.

Project Coordinator's Report

Another fantastic year at LDVG with time well spent growing, nurturing, and developing our services and activities to best meet the needs of our local community.

We started the new year with bright optimistic enthusiasm which has followed us throughout and staff, volunteers and members continue to provide and enjoy a vast, diverse range of activities and opportunities.

Services

Our extremely busy call line service continues to go from strength to strength and more and more people are benefiting from the handyperson service. LDVG lunch clubs are so popular we now have a waiting list and we added to our community-based clubs with the opening of the Dalserf club held at the primary school annex on a Wednesday.



Activities

Walking Group - Always on the go our sprightly group of members continue to enjoy a variety of walks taking them all over, from local walks to further afield. Popular destinations include the Ayrshire coast, Peebles, local walks and an annual hike in Millport. Lunch at a local café is a must on most occasions and members enjoy their time together walking, talking, and eating!



Craft Group - Thanks to some funding from the Scotmid Community Grant we were able to buy a new sewing machine for the group. The first task was to complete a new cover for the machine and all the members enthusiastically joined in. Age Scotland's Supporting Good Connections provided a social outing for the group when they enjoyed a lovely visit to the SECC for the Craft Fayre in Glasgow. The volunteers work hard to ensure this group operates a varied and interesting programme enjoyed by all.

Garden Group - This group also benefited from funding from the Scotmid Community Grant and decided to use their money to purchase items to keep them busy on rainy days. The plan was to design and paint pots for personal use or to sell at the coffee mornings etc. The group has gained an excellent reputation in the community for the quality of the planters and hanging



baskets they produce as a fundraiser for the organisation. The upkeep of our newly renovated flower garden at the centre keeps them busy and our plots at the Community Gardens site provides us with some delicious fruit and vegetables grown there.



Genealogy Group - A big thank you to Tony our lead Genealogy volunteer who retired this year. His very able assistant Maureen kindly agreed to take on the role and with the assistance of newly recruited volunteers is leading the group in their search for family history.

I.T Group - Teaming up with students from Larkhall Academy provided members with the opportunity to increase their technical skills. How to email, shop online and work a mobile phone were some of the areas covered teaching members new skills and helping them understand how it all works.



Armed Services Community Group - Numbers are gradually building for this group who have enjoyed lunches, outings, and speakers over the last year. They had a games afternoon and even enjoyed a flight simulator session provided by one of our members. His self-made programme let others fly a plane in real time, taking off, flying over the local area and landing.

Thursday Night Group - This re-vamped activity group started back in January 2023 and provides a variety of options for people including dominoes, quizzes, learning new skills and making friends. A barrier to the group has been removed for many as LDVG now provide transport to and from the group. This has had a huge impact which is evident by the increase in members attending.



Exercise Groups - The format of the group has changed slightly under the leadership of Darcy our new instructor. She has brought a fresh new approach to the group and members are getting fit and active following her relaxed but beneficial routines.

Over the year we have seen growth and development in all our groups. Referrals from the NHS and other care agencies have added to our numbers as the word spreads about our beneficial activities and services.

Fundraising

Summer and Christmas coffee mornings and plant sales – On July 2nd and November 5th there was a great buzz around the centre when we hosted our Coffee mornings and plant sales. There were stalls offering a wonderful array of handmade goods for sale, games, tombola, raffle and our usual selection of delicious home baking supplied by our talented volunteers. The events were supported by staff, volunteers, members, local businesses and the Larkhall community who helped us raise a massive £2473.



Garden group plant sales – Our plant sales are popular throughout the year and online sales continue to boost our fundraising goal. Thanks to all the hard work from our members and volunteers who work hard to deliver beautiful garden planters and baskets for sale.



Larkhall Gala Day and Christmas Market – We are now regulars at both local events and recognised for our beautiful planters and assorted craft items for sale. These are ideal occasions for us to be involved in the community and to share information about our activities, services and volunteering opportunities that are available. Can you identify the staff member posing as Mrs Clause? She was in full festive mode spreading lots of good cheer at the Christmas market where we raised another £400 for our funds.

Charity Race Night at the Applebank – In November the popular Applebank Inn in Larkhall organised an event in support of LDVG. This was in the form of a RACE NIGHT and included a raffle with an amazing assortment of prizes. Thanks to all involved in this brilliant fundraiser which brought in £1095 of our organisation.



Funded Events

Thanks to funding secured by our Charity Manager Sandra, we were able to host several lunch events for our members and volunteers. These events provided an ideal opportunity for LDVG members and volunteers to socialise, meet new people and in many cases put a face to a name.

Call Line lunch event – Funding supplied by the Larkhall Community Council provided an Easter themed lunch event in April for our call line service members and volunteers. What a brilliant opportunity this was for everyone to come together, many meeting face to face for the first time. 39 people attended over the course of two days and feedback confirmed that this was a huge success.



Queen's Jubilee Celebration Lunches – Thanks to the ASDA Foundation Bringing Communities Together fund we were able to offer celebration lunches to our members and volunteers from our activity groups and lunch clubs. 5 events held in July delivered a buffet menu bringing together British and African culture. The food was prepared by Mr T and his team from Heart of Africa. Raffles and tombola rounded off these very enjoyable occasions.

Christmas with SKY – A free Christmas lunch, courtesy of our partners at Sky Cares was enjoyed by members and volunteers. They not only covered the cost of our LDVG clubs but also paid for the 3 community-based clubs lunches delivered by SLC. Other members enjoyed hospitality at SKY's headquarters in Uddingston where the team pandered to their every need and provided a festive feed. Huge thanks to the SKY team for making this a memorable event.



Promotional/Special Events

Larkhall Coop – We were delighted once again to be chosen as one of the Coop's local causes. We have regular representation in the store when John our Activities Assistant sets up his stall promoting who we are and what we do and encouraging shoppers to support LDVG. If you download the coop app, choose LDVG as your nominated charity you can help us continue to make a difference in the community.



Strathaven balloon festival - Through our connection with Scotmid's Community Hub we were invited to take part in this local annual event in Strathaven. It was an excellent opportunity for us to promote LDVG to a wider audience and to network with other local organisations. The level of interest was positive, and we can hopefully repeat the experience again in the future.

Ten for Zen mindfulness sessions - In September we welcomed Martin Stepek (mindfulness teacher and author) to lead a session on mindfulness techniques. Staff, members and volunteers were invited to take part in this 'Introduction to mental wellbeing and mindfulness' activity and learned about the importance of taking time for ourselves, keeping a calm mind, appreciating what we have and the beauty of everything around us. An enjoyable event which sent everyone away feeling relaxed and energised.



Volunteers

What would we do without them? PROBABLY NOT A LOT!!

Volunteer Party - Our volunteers are the best of the bunch and deserve recognition for their continued support and dedication to LDVG and its members. We show our appreciation in a variety of ways, but a yearly highlight is the Volunteer Party which is usually held in February. This year was our busiest yet with over 60 people attending. Everyone enjoyed a fabulous buffet, a free drink at the bar, a handmade gift and free raffle ticket. We played games, tested our brains

in the obstacle/quiz challenge, and finished off the night dancing and singing along with karaoke. Volunteers were praised in a personalised poem and raised hearty voices singing the most recent volunteer song. OH WHAT A NIGHT WE HAD!



Volunteers' Week – We celebrate our volunteers every day but raise particular awareness during Volunteers' week between 1st and 7th June each year. Without their constant support and dedication, we would not be able to deliver the amazing range of activities and services for you all to enjoy.

This year our theme was "You are an essential piece of our puzzle". As individuals, our volunteers have strengths and skills to share, a vital part to play and without them we would not be complete. We ask members to support the event by adding their comments of appreciation to our wall of thanks.

Everyone received a personalised card and our daily Facebook posts highlighted all the opportunities they help provide. Look at all the amazing people who make such a difference in the community, impacting and improving the lives of many.



Positivity & Enthusiasm

We will continue to work hard, to grow and develop the organisation, to listen to what people have to say and to meet the needs of our members and volunteers as much as possible.

Let's all become join together to complete the picture and provide the best opportunities to all concerned going into this next year with positivity and enthusiasm.



Ann Nisbet
PROJECT COORDINATOR

Carole's Story

Carole's Journey to Finding LDVG

Growing up down South, after attending City of Worcester School for Girls and working in a local department store for 5 years, I got married and had my daughter Melanie. My husband at the time decided that he wanted to get into the licensing trade. In support of him, I spent 15 years happily as a landlady. We had a fantastic place where we'd get people to come and entertain our residents. This all changed during our family holiday to Benidorm, where I unexpectedly became a widow at the age of thirty-eight after my husband had a fatal heart attack whilst there. This changed everything for Melanie and I. Living on site meant that we then had to move after selling the building. I then remarried and spent 20 years working for Tesco as a Cash Office Manager. This was a big change from what I was used to, but I did enjoy it.



By this time my daughter was living in Glasgow, where she had been for 22 years until recently. I would travel eight hours each way and visit her for holidays and to spend Christmas with her, her husband, and my granddaughter. I was then widowed again at sixty-eight and thought to myself *"why am I travelling such a long distance when my life is now up here"*. This led to buying a lovely big house in Chapelhall

where we could all live together. It was a beautiful house that I put so much money and effort into making a home, I was so proud of what was achieved but this was short lived after my daughter separated from her husband.

We looked at areas such as Carluke but couldn't find what we were looking for. We ended up in Larkhall, in what I knew wouldn't be our forever home due to its size but as our time to move was getting closer, we bit the bullet and moved in.

My daughter is a busy florist and has a passion for horses and loves to go riding. I used to take her to classes when she was younger and recently bought her a horse for her birthday. At 74, I needed something to keep me busy. I needed to be out and about, mixing with people to keep me sane. I'm the type of person who will talk to everyone, whether I'm on the bus, out on the street or attending clubs.



This is when Melanie found out about LDVG, thanks to their Facebook page. She signed me up for the Gardening Group and next day I was dropped off at the building ready to attend. I found the building so deceiving; it looked so small from the outside but when I walked in, I was amazed at the size of the place.

I attended a talk that John (Activities Assistant) did in the local Church, and I was astounded at the number of other activities there were on offer at Larkhall & District Volunteer Group. I was only here a short time before I was also a regular member of the Craft Group. Islay and Maureen (Craft Group Volunteers) are lovely and with myself not being artistic in any way, they really have been patient with me and shown me so many things that I can do, it builds your confidence.



The opportunity to move suddenly appeared and we found a lovely townhouse in Lesmahagow, but I worried about this. How am I to attend LDVG if I live in a place that's not so local? How can I walk away from the life that I was just starting to build for myself? But, with help from LDVG I was able to make these classes by local transport, there's now a bus every thirty minutes to get me here so I never have to miss a class again.

I would be completely lost without LDVG. LDVG has helped me in so many ways. Mentally, **it has changed me for the better** as before I was rarely out the house, and I spent a lot of time on my own. I like my own company on a Saturday, but I now have something to attend every other day and it feels fantastic.

Now I also attend the Lunch Club on a Monday and Exercise Group on a Friday. I would say the latter has made the biggest impact on me. I attended the exercise group alone initially, but this is where I have created such a great bond with a few other members. There is a group of three ladies who all came together every week and one day they basically took me under their wing, and I was instantly part of the group. We go for lunch every Friday after the class, usually to the local Garden Centre but sometimes stray further afield.



I stopped driving after we moved from a lovely market town to such a busy city centre, four lane driving does not appeal to me. Margaret, one of my newly made friends through exercising drives and we go as a four on trips, most recently Moffat where we had lunch in the hotel there, a lovely time was had by us all. A day I would not have known if it wasn't for attending LDVG. I am so grateful to everyone who keeps the place going and very grateful to my daughter for finding it. It has changed my life completely.

Honestly, **I mean this whole heartedly, that attending LDVG has been a lifeline for me.** Communication makes the world go round; I can't sit at home looking at four walls all day. I now attend so many services and activities that I can't see stretching myself any further at this time. I am very content, and I honestly do not see myself leaving LDVG. I love coming here, there's always someone nice to talk to no matter what group you are in. You get to know people, its not just a "hello" in passing, you genuinely learn so much about them. I appreciate everything LDVG has done for me and continues to do for the community.

Transport Update

LDVG Community Transport provides more than transport: it is a value-creating activity for all involved. For instance, our transport is providing a space to connect our community, and to build relationships. Community transport can be a valuable tool to prevent social isolation and fills an important gap for those with no (or few) other options, especially older people living in rural areas. Without our community transport, many people would have unmet travel needs and be more socially isolated. In this way, our transport addresses important needs among many older adults living in our local community.

Strutherhill & Hareleeshill Shopping Bus

We are happy to have once again received funding from Paths for All, Smarter Choices, Smarter Places until 2024 for our much-needed free shopping service. This has made a tremendous difference to both communities.



"Everyone has been really lovely, and the volunteers have been so very helpful with everything!"

Community Health & Wellbeing Trips

Our funding from the "Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund" has been extremely popular and we continue to provide our members with a free monthly social shopping trip to some of the larger shopping outlets. Members can meet new people, visit new places and enjoy socialising over lunch.

"It is good to be able to get out and about and meet lots of different people which is good for my wellbeing."



Group hires - This year has been extremely busy with our fully accessible minibuses covering over seven hundred journeys. A variety of new groups and organisations used our services, including day centres, children/youth groups, elderly/social groups, and schools, on a regular basis or one-off trips. We continue to provide individuals members with a door-to-door service to a variety of LDVG activity groups and very busy lunch clubs, as most members have no (or few) other transport options.

Community car scheme - This year our community car service to non-emergency NHS appointments has played a crucial role to patients with limited mobility and/or access to public transport. Our volunteer drivers have gone the extra mile, ensuring that patients in their community attended many important health appointments. Volunteers in most cases help the patients to check in for their appointment if necessary and wait with them, giving that little extra support.

Unfortunately, this service is no longer funded by the NHS and due to this, the service will no longer be free. As of the 1st of July 2023 we will be introducing a charge for each return journey. The increases are necessary due to rising overhead costs while we explore other funding options.

"We don't know what we would do if we didn't have this service. It is a very big help and means a lot."

"Really pleased with the driver. He made sure I got in the car OK and when we arrived at the clinic, he came inside to make sure I got to the right department. Can't thank him enough!"



Fleet Vehicles

New Fiat Ducato wheelchair accessible 10-seater Electric Minibus

Our new electric car and minibuses significantly reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to Scotland's climate goals. Within our fleet we have two 17-seater wheelchair accessible minibuses which meet the new Low Emission Zone (LEZ) across Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen.

We have also been extremely lucky to have secured further funding from the Plugged in Communities Grant to purchase an additional wheelchair accessible electric minibus which should be with us later in the year.



New Recruits

In August 2022 we welcomed Charlene McGilvray as our transport assistant, Charlene has settled in very well to her new post and we don't know how we coped without her!

We welcomed our volunteer drivers Graham Allan, Tommy Black, Jim Dorricott, Bobby Sanders, and John Tait to our team of volunteer drivers.

Maintenance of Buses

We are extremely fortunate to have our mechanic Ian Picken agreeing to be our registered mechanic for all maintenance work. Ian has gone above and beyond to keep our buses on the road, any issues arising he's there at the drop of a hat, always trying to save the charity money as costs for all parts have gone through the roof.

Jacqueline Gallacher

TRANSPORT COORDINATOR



Current Services



SERVICES TIMETABLE 2023

Day	Service	Time	Description	Cost
Monday & Tuesday	Call Line	9:00am—2:00pm	Receive a call from one of our friendly volunteers and have a chat with them about your day.	N/A
	LDVG Lunch Club	11:30am—1:30pm	Members of LDVG get together here at our centre to enjoy meals made by Mr T and his team at Heart of Africa followed by some bingo.	From £3.50
Wednesday	Call Line	9:00am—2:00pm	Receive a call from one of our friendly volunteers and have a chat with them about your day.	N/A
	Dalserf Lunch Club	11.30am—1.30pm	Residents of Ashgill get together for lunch in Dalserf Primary School Community Wing provided by SLG.	£3.50
	Hareleeshill Lunch Club	11.30am—1.30pm	Residents of Hareleeshill get together for lunch in Hareleeshill Primary School provided by SLG.	£3.50
	Strutherhill Shopping Bus	10.00am—12.00pm	Our shopping bus service encourages our members to get out and about in the community by taking them to do their weekly shopping at local supermarkets.	N/A
Thursday	Call Line	9.00am—2.00pm	Receive a call from one of our friendly volunteers and have a chat with them about your day.	N/A
	LDVG Lunch Club	11.30am—1.30pm	Members of LDVG get together here at our centre to enjoy meals made by Mr T and his team at Heart of Africa followed by some bingo.	From £3.50
	Strutherhill Lunch Club	11.30am—1.30pm	Residents of Strutherhill get together for lunch in Craigbank Primary School Community Wing provided by SLG.	£3.50
	Hareleeshill Shopping bus	10.00am—12.00pm	Our shopping bus service encourages our members to get out and about in the community by taking them to do their weekly shopping at local supermarkets.	N/A
Friday	Call Line	9.00am—2.00pm	Receive a call from one of our friendly volunteers and have a chat with them about your day.	N/A
	Community Fridge/ Cafe	12.00pm—2.00pm	Help us reduce waste sent to landfills by helping yourself to a variety of excess food provided to us from local supermarkets. The fridge is here at our centre. Enjoy refreshments and banter at our community café.	N/A

What Our Volunteers Say

**Very friendly and helpful staff.
Great Board.**

Life can be lonely at times , but LDVG fills that void and gives me something to look forward to.

We love LDVG!

I have volunteered for many years. I can't imagine my life without LDVG.

PROUD TO BE PART OF
AN AMAZING CHARITY.

**PROUD TO
BE PART
OF A
FANTASTIC
CHARITY.**

After working my whole life in the NHS, after I retired I still wanted to help people. LDVG has allowed me to continue to do this and makes me feel like a valued member of the community.



“ I had separated from my husband and moved into a flat. I was not going out and just looking at four walls, getting quite depressed. I started going to some classes with a friend and then I was put forward as a volunteer. ”

**I ENJOY WORKING
IN THE KITCHEN
WITH THE TEAM
AND LEARNING NEW
TASTES FROM A
DIFFERENT CULTURE
AND STYLE OF
COOKING.**

Prior to volunteering I hadn't worked for a while. By taking this role I feel it has given me more routine to my weeks. I feel I am now contributing to my community in a positive way and I am helping with some members wellbeing. By volunteering my self-esteem has been increased.



**I HAVE BEEN LEARNING NEW
SKILLS AS PART OF THE
BOARD. ITS GREAT TO SEE HOW
A CHARITY WORKS.**



**I HAVE BUILT A GOOD RAPPORT
WITH THE SERVICE USERS.**

“ It's good to be part of things that are worthwhile, reducing loneliness and isolation for members of the community. ”

What Our Members Say

“LDVG Handyperson attended my house, very well dressed and mannered. You wouldn't believe he was a tradesman. He fixed the problems I've had after 4 years and 2 plumbers! Magnificent service.”

“The transport to the hospital has been a godsend as it's vital for my health. I can't thank the volunteers enough for taking me to my essential appointments as I would struggle without them.”

**MY HEALTH AND WELLBEING
AS WELL AS MY MINDSET HAS
IMPROVED THANKS TO LDVG
AND CONTINUES TO IMPROVE.**



LARKHALL
DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER
GROUP

Having Call Line gives me an outlet, and knowing there is someone at the end of the phone to talk to helps my health and wellbeing. Knowing somebody cares to check up on me, It's a great service.

**STAFF ARE
ALWAYS
HELPFUL AND
PLEASANT, KEEN
TO KNOW NEW
IDEAS FROM ALL
OF US.**

**I am a lot more
optimistic since
joining LDVG.**

Those of us that are retired, LDVG gives us purpose and a feeling that we are a part of something.

Attending LDVG makes me feel good about myself

EVERYONE IS FRIENDLY, IT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.

**LDVG
FACILITIES
HAVE
IMPROVED
SO MUCH**

The bus drivers do a great job and are always friendly. I don't know what I would do without them helping me getting to and from the centre.



Facts & Figures



Call Line

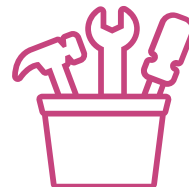
- 31 volunteers made a total of 14,288 calls on the call line service
- 1,857 hours spent chatting to members over the past 12 months.

Hareleeshill Shopping Bus



- 48 passenger journeys made over the year.
- 4 Volunteer drivers helped 10 members with their weekly shopping

Handy Person



- 63 jobs were carried out by 4 volunteers

Strutherhill Shopping Bus

- 4 Volunteer drivers helped 22 members with their weekly shopping
- 48 passenger journeys made over the year.



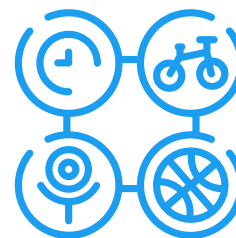
Lunch Clubs

- 3,479 meals served by a team of 22 volunteers between April and March.



Activity Groups

- 1,616 activity sessions took place with 141 members attending.
- 1,436 hours were spent volunteering for these groups.



Gardening Group

- Garden Group raised £1855.50 from Summer and Winter plant sales



Special Events



- 8 Special Events took place celebrating our members and volunteers.



LARKHALL
+DISTRICT
VOLUNTEER
GROUP

Fundraising

£3816

was raised by fundraising this year!

HELP US

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!



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.