

# Network News

December 2021



## Network Ends Year on High Note as Membership Exceeds 500

*The Network's membership has exceeded 500 for the first time since it began some 27 years ago.*

Mar Morales (pictured right) became our 500th member in November following a recommendation by her neighbour who is a member of the Two Left Feet walking group. Originally from Madrid in Spain, though a Bathgate resident for many years, since joining the Network Mar has already enjoyed two walks with the same group, which she fits around her part-time job.

2021 has been a record year for new memberships, which at the end of November stood at 505. This is particularly remarkable given that, due to Covid, our activities were on hold for the first 6 months of the year, as well as for most of 2020. It underlines the importance of the Network's core



*The Network's 500th member Mar Morales (right)*

mission, to provide a wide range of opportunities for social interaction to combat loneliness in older people, which clearly has

been sorely missed during the recent lockdowns.

The Network's recent move into larger premises on Bathgate's main shopping street (see page 3) couldn't have come at a better time as a highly visible base from which to launch our growth plans for 2022.



*Members on the Network's November visit to Pentland Plants*

Network members got into the Christmas spirit early with our last coach trip of 2021 on a "behind the scenes" tour at one of the UK's largest poinsettia growers.

*Read more about our popular monthly coach trips inside.*

### Convenor's Foreword

*After a mild November, a couple of frosty mornings and snowfall before December remind us that Winter is here again, with Christmas not too far away.*

What a difference a year makes! It feels very different to this time last year. The Network is busy once more as most of our groups are back, we've had several super day trips and we have a Network holiday to look forward to. How nice it will be to be able to enjoy a Christmas get together again! We'll enjoy it all the more for missing out last year.

One of the surprising impacts of Covid on the Network is that in 2021 we have recruited more members than any other previous year. For the first time ever we have over 500 members, truly remarkable, but entirely understandable as people now understand all too well the importance of reaching out to others for friendship and companionship.

The onus on the Network is to respond to this influx of new members by ensuring we can satisfy demand by opening new groups and expanding our offering outside Bathgate, across the whole of West Lothian.

Our development officer Tracy has been instrumental in making much of this happen and I am sure you will be as sorry as I am to hear that she is

leaving the Network to take on a new role with the Voluntary Sector Gateway. We will be recruiting to fill Tracy's post in the New year, as well as that of our manager, Fiona, who has also recently taken on a new position.

By the time you read this we should have moved our Hub team into our new premises in George Street, Bathgate. This will finally give us our own space to move the Network forward, with the benefit of an easily accessible and highly visible high street location.

We're busy renovating the building interior to give you a bright and pleasant space to enjoy and we'll have our official opening in January, after which we should also be able to host some of our groups.

We are, as usual, indebted to our many supporters who provide funding and other resources to make this all possible, including several generous donations from local councillors.

It was good to meet West Lothian Council's newly appointed Older Peoples Champion, Cllr Chris Horne. He was very interested in what the Network are doing, and we will stay in touch. If there is anything in particular you would like Chris to champion for you, please do let us know,

With best wishes to you all,  
Anne Webster



### Funding Update

We are grateful to a number of supporters again this quarter who are helping us, by means of various funding sources, to run our Network.

We have to thank a number of West Lothian councillors who have supported us through their individual Disbursement Funds. To date this year, this amounts to a total of £1,575 which is being invested in our new premises.

Thanks too to Queensberry House Trust which has awarded us £5,000 towards our hub co-ordinators' salaries.

Employment costs have been further boosted by a grant from the Miss Isabel Harvey Charitable Trust, for which we are very grateful.

Thanks also to Co-op Whitburn for their continued support (see page 15).

**THANK YOU**  
to all of our sponsors!



### New George St

#### Premises

Group leaders had the opportunity towards the end of September to get an early viewing of the space at our new premises on George St in Bathgate.

Willie Webster, committee member responsible for Property and Groups, was on hand along with our development officer and our change manager to talk group leaders through the current outline plans and to listen to their views on how best to utilise the space for our activities.

Thanks to all those who came along and gave the benefit of their thoughts, with their own group, and the wider Network, in mind.

The target date to vacate our premises in Linbar House and to move the Hub team into George St is the weekend of 3rd - 6th December.

It will be a little while before we can start to use the new premises for group activities, although work is well underway to refresh the décor and shape the space to our needs. We're grateful to a number of external sponsors who are helping to fund these improvements, and to all who have lent a hand to expedite the work.

We're working towards an official opening date in mid January. We'll keep you posted.

### Network's Christmas Event

*The festive season is upon us already and for a while now members have been asking whether we are holding a Christmas party this year.*

With the growth in membership, the difficulty in finding a large enough venue, and the ongoing concerns about Covid, we've decided to do things a little differently this year.

On Saturday 18th December we'll hold a day of Christmas teas, with three slots for which members can request a free ticket.

The first slot is from 10-11.30 am, the second from 12-13.30 and the third from 14.00-15.30. There will be a maximum of 80 members at any one time.

Each slot will have colour coded and numbered tickets and members will receive a ticket on booking, with a duplicate being held for a free raffle.

Your free ticket can be collected from the new members hub at 14 George St, Bathgate.

We're grateful to West Lothian Council for their award of £2,603.48 from the Pensioners Christmas Fund which helps to support this event.



### New Reiki Meditation Group

A new fortnightly Reiki meditation group is to start in Bathgate.

Reiki is a Japanese healing technique for relaxation and stress relief. A natural energy therapy that promotes holistic balance for the mind, body and soul.

We are delighted that one of our members, Elizabeth Robertson, has trained as a Reiki master and has volunteered to set up a Reiki meditation group.

Elizabeth has described the fortnightly sessions as "consisting of a short introduction to our chakras, energy points, meditation, then channelled healing for mind, body and spiritual wellbeing to connect within".

### Tackling the Local Litter Problem

*We welcomed guest speaker Jim Allan of the West Lothian Litter Pickers to our October members' meeting.*

Jim certainly opened our eyes to the shocking extent of the litter problem across our county and his group is a fantastic example of local action to do something about it. Founder Jason Wilcox was so bugged by the litter blighting our environment that he brigaded a massive force of volunteers to get it sorted.

From a small start with neighbours in March 2019, the Group set up themselves up as a constituted Community Group on Facebook, where the membership now exceeds 3,000.

In that short period of time West Lothian Litter Pickers have collected over 30,000 bags of litter and that figure doesn't include the litter that couldn't be bagged, like tyres, traffic signs, traffic cones, beds, mattresses etc, and, on one occasion, even asbestos roof tiles, which were promptly dealt with by specialists from West Lothian Council.

Jim's talk was graphically illustrated with photos of some real "horror stories" where the group have litter picked this year. The worst was a wooded area near Deans Industrial Estate in Livingston, that culminated in over 200 bags of litter collected in just under 2 hours.

The group is run by a team of 6 admins who each focus on a particular area of expertise: finance, secretarial or fund raising. Group picks are organised in "Grot Spots"



Jim Allan

highlighted by their members, but a lot of picking takes place daily by individual members. Some have set up sub-groups in their own areas, such as in Whitburn, Blackridge, Armadale, Broxburn and Uphall, as well as Kirknewton, Winchburgh and Mid Calder, with a host of Livingston sub-groups in Craigshill, Dedridge, Howden, Knightsridge and Deans.

The group has developed a good working relationship with West Lothian Council whose representatives they meet every 8 weeks to help keep the focus on the blight of litter in our county. The council supply the group with litter picking equipment and clear plastic bags when budget is available. There's also a dedicated e-mail address for the group to report litter collections, following which the bags are picked up by council workers, usually within 3 working days.

All of this brings many benefits to our communities, not least the fact that litter picking is good exercise. This helps to keep volunteers fit, as well as supporting mental health and community spirit as people get out and about and meet others in their community.

Biodiversity is also supported as the team regularly litter pick in wooded areas, grass lands and along water courses all over West Lothian.

The good news is that the litter is getting less as a lot of historical litter has now been removed. Jim told us that a crisp packet dating from 1987 had been found which still looked as good as new! Evidence indeed that things which are so easily discarded don't just biodegrade into the landscape!

It's clearly an ongoing battle and the close working with the council that the group has now put in place is vital.

We applaud the work of all the litter picking volunteers that help to enhance our environment.

**Contact West Lothian Litter Pickers via their facebook group if you would like to join them.**







## School Bank Appeal

Guest speaker at the our November Members' Meeting was Collette Moran, Project Co-ordinator for The School Bank West Lothian.

Convener Anne Webster (left) is pictured here with Collette handing over the bucket collection from the meeting which raised £85.

The volunteer-led charity aims to improve the lives of children in local families experiencing financial hardship by providing them with new and used school uniform, as well as other clothing and equipment such as school bags, PE kit, and stationery, required for the school day.

Having the appropriate school uniform and equipment at school is important to promote the feeling of inclusion and improves the mental health and well-being of both child and carer/parent. It helps to reduce bullying and stigma of poverty, helps the child to focus on learning rather than appearance and can even improve school attendance.

The charity works from referrals from professionals such as teachers, health care workers and social workers, who encounter children and families in need of support.

In the few years since the charity was established, the number of children and families supported has grown year on year, and now over 1000 children a year are benefiting.

The charity has recently launched their Winter appeal and needs warm coats and jackets, and other winter wear including sturdy shoes and wellingtons.

The Network can accept donations of new and used school clothing at the Hub for drop off to the School Bank. The School Bank is also the Network's elected coin jar charity for this year, raising £124 so far, so please remember to drop in your loose change when you call into the Hub.

*To find out more got to <https://schoolbank-westlothian.org/>*

## Dates and Speakers for Future Members' Meetings

**18th December** - no meeting / Members' Christmas Teas event

**15th January** - Ruth McNamara.  
Ruth is a very popular speaker on the subject of old films.

**19th February** - Ross Walker Police Scotland  
Police Scotland Youth Volunteers  
Co-ordinator / countryside vandalism

**19th March** - Network event

**16th April** - Sambalistic Drummers and Workshop  
or  
**Brock Centre** - a Broxburn group supporting mental health through gardening and craft work

**21st May** - West Lothian Museums, Galleries and Archives  
Their work, projects and origins

**18th June** - Bog Burn Regeneration Project

*Members' meetings take place on the third Saturday of the month in the Royal British Legion in Bathgate from 10:30am to 12 noon.*

*We look forward to seeing you there.*

**If you are interested in joining any of the Network's special interest groups or activities, your first port of call is the Hub.**

### Fun and Games



*Win or lose, 50+ Network members Jane and Diane are delighted to be back playing Mahjong.*

In the group's relaxed atmosphere, no-one minds that, in the months since the group last met, some reminders of the finer points of the game are needed.

If you'd like to learn to play this fascinating game, and spend a couple of hours in good company, get in touch to find out more.



*Canasta or Scrabble? Choose either game when you join this 50+ Network group which meets every Friday afternoon in Bathgate.*

With the cooler weather setting in, it's a great way to spend a couple of hours in good company.

### Attendance Reports

*Group leaders are being asked to record attendance of members at all group activities.*

There are several reasons that we need to retain attendance records for our activities. They are important for insurance purposes, of interest to our funders, and now essential to comply with the current Covid guidelines.

Our insurance policy includes the running of groups and covers the Network for any unforeseen incidents. Our funders also request information on the number of activities we run, the number of participants and the frequency of participation when reviewing our applications for funding.

Currently COVID guidelines require us to keep a record of members attending group activities for track and trace, with records being kept for a minimum of 21 days.

Group leaders are therefore asked to record attendance each week to help us to gather this information. We ask that it is shared with the Hub within 24 hours of an activity where these records will be retained securely in line with GDPR guidelines.



### Older People's Champion Visits Network

West Lothian's recently appointed Older People's Champion, Cllr Chris Horne, was in Bathgate at the end of October to meet 50+ Network trustees Anne Webster and Sue Bedford-Visser. Chris visited the Network's new premises in George St to explain the aim of his new role and to learn more about the 50+ Network.

Promoted throughout the country by Age Scotland, Older People's Champions aim to improve life for older people and ensure they have a strong voice. The role involves identifying issues affecting local older people and standing up for their interests.

Councillor Horne said: "It was a pleasure to meet with trustees and learn more about how the West



Lothian 50+ Network is a valuable outlet for many in our communities. Events and activities run by the Network provide opportunities for

much needed social interaction which is something that we all know shouldn't be taken for granted."

### Cycling Group Back in the Saddle

Bathgate councillor and keen cyclist Harry Cartmill joined the Network's cycling group recently for their ride to Armadale from the Morrisons in Bathgate.

On a beautiful sunny afternoon the group of nine headed west along the NCR75, a pleasant change from the challenges posed by the rain on recent outings.

After reaching Armadale railway station the pristine tarmac of the new Armadale/Whitburn link path was much appreciated.

The group returned by the same route but with the wind behind this time to speed things along. With group leader John Matthews and Angus Meiklejohn at the helm and Maggie Matthews as backmarker, everyone made it safely back!



The Cycling group meet every Tuesday at 1.30pm and ride for around an hour.

They stop for a coffee afterwards, making it a gentle, social cycle where you can chat and enjoy the company of others.



### Coach Trips Proving Popular

*Our monthly coach trips continue to prove popular as members enjoy the opportunity to explore new places again.*

There was lots to see and do on the Network's coach trip to the **Kelburn Estate and Largs** on **26<sup>th</sup> September**.

The weather held as we took in the colourful castle, Viking displays, alpacas, woodland walks and waterfalls, wooden sculptures, walled garden and breezy walks along the prom to work up an appetite for a fish supper.

Fifty five members joined our day trip on **30<sup>th</sup> October** when we enjoyed a scenic drive taking in the Autumn



colours of **Killin, Kenmore, Aberfeldy, Birnam and Dunkeld**.

Our first stop was at the Falls of Dochart, full and powerful after the recent heavy rains.

After a drive along the north shores of Loch Tay we passed through Kenmore, then on to Aberfeldy, where most took lunch and had a stroll around the town, some visiting the fast-flowing water in the Moness Gorge in the wooded area known as the Birks of Aberfeldy.

The last stop of the day was in Dunkeld, a chance for some to visit the Beatrix Potter garden and the great Birnam oak. Others visited the cathedral and enjoyed views of the Tay in the sunshine which made an appearance towards the end of the day.

The festive season started early for 45 Network members as they joined our coach trip on **27<sup>th</sup> November** for a behind the scenes glimpse at Pentland

Plants, one of the biggest poinsettia growers in the UK. We enjoyed the spectacular sight of the extensive nursery glasshouses in full bloom, where some 60,000 poinsettias are grown each year for the festive season. Carolyn Spray, co-owners of this long-established family business, and former presenter on the Beechgrove Garden, led one group who learnt all about what's involved in these hard to raise plants.

The sun shone for our onward journey through the hills to UNESCO World Heritage site, New Lanark for our second stop of the day, and treated us to a beautiful sunset as we're returned to Bathgate.







### Skye Holiday

There was huge demand for our short holiday to the Isle of Skye in April 2022 - in fact it was fully booked on the same day it went on sale.

A reminder to everyone that has paid a deposit for this holiday, the balance of £335 is due by Friday 25th February 2022.

### Dunkeld Walking Day

Dunkeld was the focus for our walkers outing on 9<sup>th</sup> October. Fifty members took part, opting for one of four different walks around the town, with something to suit all abilities.

In total, collectively over 220 miles were walked and enjoyed, in spite of damp conditions.

There were huge ancient trees to see, the fast-flowing river Tay and, in this season of "mists and mellow fruitfulness", many types of fungi and leaves beginning to change to their Autumn colours.

Some visited the Beatrix Potter garden and the Birnam Oak, made famous by Macbeth, others encountered the Fiddlers Oak, named after Neil Gow, the famous Scottish fiddler who composed much of his work in the area, and those that chose the longest walk, admired the views – through the mist - from Pine Cone Point and the Hermitage.

Back in the town, with time to spare before the coach home, we enjoyed the hospitality of local tea shops and pubs, paid a visit to the cathedral and had a wander around the shops.

Thanks to all our walk leaders.



### Staff Moving On

*Sorry to say, but two members of our staff are leaving for pastures new.*

Our change manager, Fiona Cochrane, left on 19th November to start her new job in retail on 1st December.

Fiona spent 8 months with the Network, assisting us to navigate our way through the Covid regulations. We wish her all the best.

Tracy Kerr, our development officer, leaves on 10th December. She has been with us for 3 years and has been a great support to the Network and its members during this time.

Tracy played an important role liaising with members during the Covid lockdowns and has done important work to develop our partnerships and grow the Network. We will miss her hard work and cheery smile.

Tracy goes on to join the Voluntary Sector Gateway as its Development Officer - Partnerships.

We wish her every success in her new position.





## The Enchanted Forest: October 2022

We recently asked for expressions of interest in a visit to the Enchanted Forest in Pitlochry in October 2022. There was sufficient interest for the Network to reserve up to 60 places for our members.

We now need you to confirm your booking, either by payment in full, or with a £20 deposit, with the balance payable later in the year.

This will be a day trip, returning to Bathgate in the late evening.

The cost is £39, which includes the coach to Pitlochry and your transport and admission to the Enchanted Forest. There is the option for High Tea at Fishers Hotel at an additional cost of £16.

**Booking from Weds 26th January 2022.**

## Men's Group Highland Adventure

The Network's Mens' Group had a grand day out in October on their Haggis minibus tour to the Highlands.

First stop was the viewpoint above South Queensferry to take in views of the three Forth bridges. Then onto Dunkeld for a visit to the cathedral, views of the River Tay and the Black Linn Falls below Ossian's Hall at the Hermitage.

Next to Pitlochry and the Queen's View, before ending the day at Dewar's whisky distillery at Aberfeldy. What a great day out!



## Upcoming Day Trips

*With the higher risk of poor weather, our first two trips of 2022 focus on indoor destinations.*

### 29th January 2022

Our first coach trip of the year is to the Scottish Antiques & Art Centre at Abernethy, Perthshire. More than 100 onsite dealers offer an unrivalled selection of antiques, collectibles, vintage furniture, jewellery art and much more. We'll go on to Perth where we have arranged a 3-course lunch at the Royal George Hotel, followed by free time in the city. Total cost £28.95 including lunch, or £15 coach only.

**Booking from 1st December 2021**

### 26th February 2022

In February we'll head for the museums and galleries of Glasgow, taking in the House for an Art Lover, the Transport Museum and Kelvingrove/ West End. Price £20 including admission.

**Booking from 26th January 2022**



### Funding for Groups

*Does your group need to update or refresh its equipment? Or are you thinking about starting a group but need a helping hand to get going?*

The Network is keen to support our groups with their activities, and to help kick start new groups to help our Network grow.

If you need equipment or costs covered to improve or start a group, please let the Hub know. You will need to furnish them with the following information:

- ◆ A quote for the equipment that you require
- ◆ Information on the impact/difference this will make to your group
- ◆ Information on what the equipment is for – how it will be used and what it does

Your request will be reviewed at a monthly committee meeting, after which you will be contacted by the Hub with the committee's decision.

Examples of equipment that has been funded previously includes bowls, scrabble boards, chess sets, music equipment, craft equipment etc.

Please note that any equipment purchased will belong to the Network, not to the group, nor to any individual in the group.



Funding totalling £198.26 was made available to the **Craft for Enjoyment** group to buy new equipment for their greeting card making activities. This included a Gemini electric die cutting machine, dies for the same, a paper trimmer, a paper guillotine cutter, and new plates for their Sizzix die cutting machine. The group make many of the cards that can be found on sale in the Hub.

### Walk Leaders Needed

Led walks are one the Network's most popular activities, with seven different walking groups under the Network's umbrella, catering for a range of walking abilities.

Some 178 members now belong to a Network walking group, 35.1% of the total membership. As well as improving fitness, the weekly walks provide fantastic opportunities for social interaction with lots of chat along the way, and, where possible, a refreshment stop at the end. The less able take short walks closer to home, whilst others use public transport to travel further afield and discover new places.

As the Network's membership grows, so does the demand for a place on a walking group, and we're therefore appealing to members who would consider starting a new group.

Support will be given as to what's involved, and existing leaders are willing to help by including new leaders on their walks to introduce them to new routes, and sharing walk programmes.



### The Green Thing

*With recent news full of the COP26 talks and the global challenges of climate change, the following story doing the rounds on the internet will strike a chord with many of our members.*



Shopping at the supermarket, in the queue at the checkout, a young cashier was heard to suggest to a much older lady that she should bring her own bags, because plastic bags are not good for the environment.

The older woman apologised, then sighed: "We didn't have this 'green thing' back in my day."

The young woman responded, "That's the problem. You folk didn't do enough back then to save the environment for future generations."

The older lady replied: "Back then, we used string bags for our shopping, heaping in our fruit and vegetables which were not packed in plastic. We

returned milk bottles, lemonade bottles and beer bottles to the shops so that they could be sent back to the factory to be washed, sterilized and refilled. Those same bottles were used over and over."

"Back then, grocery shops put our groceries into brown paper bags that we re-used for numerous things, including to cover our school books. We bought ingredients to make meals from scratch. Ready meals with all their plastic packaging were not really a thing for us".

"Back then, we walked to the shops and didn't get into a car every time we had to go 200 yards. People took the bus and kids rode bikes to school or walked instead of turning their mothers into a 24-hour taxi service in a car which cost what a whole house did before the "green thing".

"Back then, we washed babies' nappies because we didn't have the throw away kind. We dried clothes on a line, not in an energy-gobbling machine. Wind and solar power really did dry our clothes back in the day. Kids got hand-me-down clothes from their brothers or sisters, not new clothes for every occasion".

"Back then, we had one radio in the house - not a TV in every room. If anyone did own a TV, it had a screen the size of a handkerchief, not the size of a football

pitch. When cooking we blended, stirred and kneaded by hand, we didn't have electric mixers and bread makers and all manner of kitchen appliances. When we packaged a fragile item to send by post, we used layers of old news papers to cushion it, not plastic bubble wrap or Styrofoam".

"Back then, we didn't fire up an engine and burn petrol, or plug in a mower just to cut the lawn. We used a mower that ran on human power. We exercised by working so we didn't need to go to a health club to run on treadmills that operate on electricity".

"We drank water from a tap when we were thirsty and carried a hot drink in a flask on a day out instead of buying a plastic bottle or a disposable cup every time we had a drink. We refilled writing pens with ink instead of buying a new pen, and we replaced the blade in a razor instead of throwing the whole away just because the blade got dull."

"Oh and we had one electric socket in a room, not an entire bank of them to power a dozen appliances. And we didn't need a computerized gadget to receive a signal beamed from satellites 23,000 miles out in space in order to find the nearest leisure park or takeaway".

How sad that younger generation laments how wasteful we old folks were, because we didn't have the "green thing" back then.



### Could You be a Safeguarding Volunteer?

The Network is looking for safeguarding volunteers. It's all about protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect.

Safeguarding is actually everyone's responsibility. Every organisation, small group and individual should be aware of their responsibility, in work and society. But the Network wants to encourage its members to enhance their knowledge about safeguarding and to consider volunteering to take an active part in safeguarding fellow members.

We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with respect and dignity. Everyone deserves to be safe.

Safeguarding involves people and organisations working together to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect.

Could you make a difference by acting as a safeguarding contact for other members? Volunteers will learn about the different types of harm and abuse; discover how to spot the signs; record any concerns you may have; and report your concerns to the Network's Safeguarding Officer.

Training will be provided for anyone getting involved. If you would like to volunteer or find out more, please contact the Hub.

### NuYu Keeping Fit

*A number of groups in the Network aim to keep our members fit and active.*

One such group is the popular NuYu, which meets every Tuesday in Bathgate's Partnership Centre.

The group's aim is to keep fit and healthy, achieved through an hour of line dancing, then the fun begins with a weigh-in and discussion about weight loss or gain and any other issues.

A large group of NuYu members spent a wonderful day out together in Largs enjoying warm sunshine at the end of September.

Their coach trip got off to a great start for two lucky raffle winners.

First stop was at Cardell garden centre at Gourock, a great stop enjoyed by all and directly across from the bay for those who didn't want to shop.

The group then went on to Largs where everyone did their own thing, a few taking the ferry over to Millport.

All agreed the weather helped to make it a fabulous day out for this friendly group.

### First Aid Course

Are you interested in attending a basic one-day First Aid course?

This could be useful for everyone and especially if you are part of a large group.

If so, please let the Hub know. If there's enough interest we will try to arrange this.



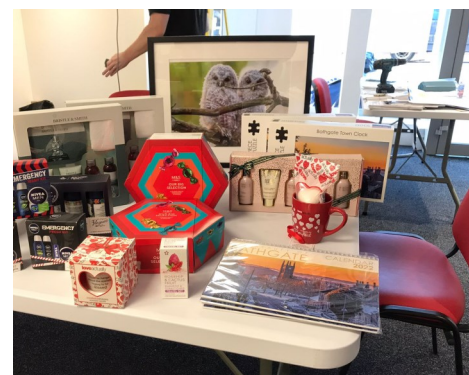


### Raffle Prizes

A big thank you to David and Lisa of the Bathgate Calendar who have donated some amazing prizes for our Christmas raffle.

If you would like to secure a calendar containing beautiful shots of Bathgate or a jigsaw of a snowy Bathgate scene for friends and family, please contact Bathgate Calendar directly.

Thanks also go to the Co-op Whitburn who have donated a large hamper of tasty food treats to be raffled at Christmas.



### On With the Show for Theatre & Cinema Group

Members of the Network's Theatre & Cinema Group have been meeting up again since lockdown ended. After keeping in touch for months by sharing ideas for streamed events from theatres, television dramas and films, twelve members attended their first face to face meet up for a meal at the Cairn Hotel in Bathgate.

Since then, a few members attended *No Time To Die* at the Vue in Livingston, and in early November four members went to see a short play at Howden Park Theatre, enjoying pre-theatre soup and sandwiches and a question and answer opportunity with the actors afterwards. November also saw sixteen members enjoying another restaurant meal together.

Group leader Eleanor Shaw explained: "The aim of the group is to provide members with information about events, shows and film opportunities, allowing them to choose which events they want to attend with a small or large group. Coffee meet ups are organised, where future events can be discussed and planned, members get to know each other and friendships are formed."

"Theatres and cinemas have re-opened but many members are not confident enough to venture into them yet, even though theatres are asking for proof of vaccination or a negative test, but sitting in close

proximity to a stranger is not appealing."

"Many shows are being advertised for 2022 and prices have certainly increased, we're waiting for that one show which might tempt us to book."

"Let's hope that the group can go confidently and safely forward into 2022, and visit theatres, cinemas and restaurants for after show meals".

"There is nothing more enjoyable than stepping into a building, where for 2 to 3 hours, your mind is transported elsewhere, a new experience has been gained and we have been out with friends, made through the Network".



### Co-op's Local Community Fund



Committee members Anne and Sue were at the Co-op in Whitburn in November to collect a cheque for £1,072.89 on behalf of the 50+ Network.

It was a great opportunity also to meet with representatives from West Space and the Whitburn and District Community Development Trust who run the fantastic Community Fridge, who also received cheques to support the work they do in the community.

Many thanks to all Co-op members and the Co-op Local Community Fund who have supported us over the past year.

The good news is that West Lothian 50+ Network is also one of the Local Community Fund charities for Whitburn Co-op Foodstore and Bathgate Co-op Funeral Care for the forthcoming year so you can still become a member and support us. Find us online at:

<https://membership.coop.co.uk/causes/49585>

### Second Coffee Club for Bathgate

Our coffee clubs are a great way for members to meet new people in a relaxed environment, so we're delighted that a new weekly coffee club has started in Bathgate.

Coffee n Cookies - Bathgate met for the first time on 29th November and will meet each Monday morning in the restaurant area of the Fairway Hotel. The cost is £2 for coffee/tea and biscuits.

This is a great addition to our existing Bathgate coffee club which meets on Wednesdays, and our Livingston coffee club which meets every Tuesday.

***Please let the Hub know if you are interested in the new group – or if you would like to see a coffee group starting in your area.***

### Friends Remembered

Since our last newsletter we have sadly heard of the passing of Jean Turpie and Kay Nimmo. Our condolences to their friends and family.

Please let the Hub know about any members you know of who are in hospital or ill at home so that we can send our well wishes.



### What is the West Lothian 50+ Network?

The West Lothian 50+ Network is a group of active over fifties run by members for members.

We facilitate a wide range of physical, social, educational and cultural activities for our members, with the aim of keeping active in mind and body whilst combating social isolation.

Under normal circumstances we meet monthly with an interesting speaker, offer over 50 special interest groups and run day trips, holidays, concerts, dinners and other events.

#### Limitation of Liability

West Lothian 50+ Network does not assess its members' fitness for participation in any of its various activities.

The decision about your fitness to undertake any activity lies within yourself, together with any medical advice you wish to take. It is your own responsibility to ensure your personal safety and that of your belongings.

### We want to hear from you

*Do you have a story you'd like to share with other members?*

Or an idea for a topic you'd like us to cover?

We'd love to know what you've been doing over the last few months.

Have you mastered the use of a new technology, taken up a new hobby, or found new places to visit?

Send us your stories and we'll aim to include them in the next issue of Network News.

### Christmas Closure

*Please note that our Members' Hub will be closed between 23rd December 2021 and 5th January 2022.*

### Contact West Lothian 50+ Network

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Website: [www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk](http://www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk)

Facebook: [WestLothian50PlusNetwork](https://www.facebook.com/WestLothian50PlusNetwork)

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