

**WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK
MEMBERS' MEETING HELD ON 15th FEBRUARY 2020
IN THE BRITISH LEGION, BATHGATE**

1. WELCOME

The Vice Convenor, Jim Dixon, welcomed members to the meeting including all new members and asked them to stand so members could welcome them too.

The Vice Convenor announced the death of Les Ward. His funeral took place last week. Les was a member of the Bridge Group and the Men's Group. He also announced the passing of Jean McBride and Linda Mcleish.

2. TODAY'S SPEAKER

Lesley Martin welcomed our speaker today, Heath Brown, from Edinburgh & Lothian Greenspace Trust, project manager of the new Shale Trail. He began by outlining his background and then the aims of the project, which is to create a 16 mile walking route from West Calder to Winchburgh focusing on the communities more than the history. He covered some of the history of shale mining in West Lothian from its inception and the effect it had on the landscape, the people and economy. It is hoped that this project will create tourism and recreation. The project will be upgrading paths and they have already completed 6 miles of core paths. Their aim is also to involve children who will create web content for the website.

The talk ended and the Vice Convenor asked for questions. Two members shared anecdotes and local information. The Vice Convenor thanked Heath Brown for his very interesting talk.

Sue Bedford-Visser advised that she is going to organise a couple of led walks along the Shale Trail with Heath later in the year. More details to come.

The Bridge 19-40 Union Canal Society will also be offering a "walk and float event" in May on the last part of the Shale Trail, from Port Buchan in Broxburn to Winchburgh where the trail ends.

3. TRIPS

Sue Bedford Visser advised members of the trips on offer by the Network for the coming months:

(1) Peebles and Dawyck Botanic Garden – Sunday 23rd February

We will depart at the later time of 10am and head down to Peebles where you will have free time, before going on to Dawyck Botanic Garden to see the snowdrops. There are still spaces on this trip. The cost is £17 and can be paid for at today's meeting or at the Hub during office hours.

(2) Culross & Dunfermline – Sunday 29th March

We are heading to the village of Culross where we will have free time to explore its quaint streets and buildings. Unfortunately, Culross Palace is closed but we have arranged an optional extra tour of the house, gardens and chapel at Dunimarle Castle. The castle, which is privately owned and is still undergoing improvement, is not yet open for the season. It only opened for a short season of three months last year but we have managed to arrange a private tour. We will then travel onwards to Dunfermline for free time there.

The price of £17 includes coach travel and the optional tour of Dunimarle. Without the tour, the cost is £12. Please note that there is no coach parking at the castle. We will walk into the house from the village, a walk of 0.2 miles followed by a gentle uphill walk on good paths and some steps up to the house. Please note that the visit inside the house will involve stairs up to the various floors. You should not book the optional guided visit if you cannot manage steps or an uphill walk. The coach will leave Bathgate Old Railway station at 9.30am and return around 4.45pm.

(3) Glamis & Dundee – Sunday 26th April

The cost of this trip will be £25 which includes a guided tour of Glamis Castle and time to explore the gardens and grounds of the childhood home of HM Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. We will return

via Dundee where you will have free time for lunch and the chance to visit one the city's many attractions including the new V&A Museum, Discovery Point or the Verdant Works. This trip will leave from Bathgate Old Railway station at 9am.

4. HOLIDAYS

In the absence of Heather Waddell, Sue reported on the Network holidays:

(1) Skye Holiday

Balance is due by 20th February. If you have not already settled this, please do so by this date.

(2) Lincolnshire Holiday

As some of you might have heard the Lincolnshire holiday has been cancelled. This is due to insufficient uptake. It has been replaced by a holiday in early December and first opportunity to sign up will be given to those who were signed up to the Lincoln break.

(3) Harrogate & Grassington Dickensian Christmas Market

We will be offering a break from 4th to 6th December staying in Harrogate and visiting the Grassington Christmas market on the Saturday with time on Sunday morning (until 12 noon) in Harrogate. We will be staying in the Cairn hotel which is five minutes' walk from Harrogate centre. The cost of this trip will be £129 with £30 deposit. This trip will be available to book in the hub from Wednesday 26th February.

5. DURING THE COFFEE BREAK

Sue advised that as well as the trips and holidays above, greetings cards will also be for sale and members can pay for the following:

- Membership fee, now due (if you have paid but not received your membership card, this can now be collected from the Hub during its opening hours);
- Daffodil Tea on Sunday 15th March;
- Darts, Dominoes and Pool Social Evening on Wednesday 25th March;
- The balance for the Skye holiday;
- Pledge payments to Soldiers off the Street.

A number of photographs taken over recent weeks at various Network events had been printed from a free photo service. They were passed around during the coffee break. Members were invited to take away any photos of themselves.

The raffle was drawn.

6. GROUPS

The Vice Convenor announced that Doris Cowan is leaving the Network and will no longer be group leader for Nattering Needles. Sheila Joel will take her place. He thanked Doris for her years of service in leading this group and hoped the group will continue to flourish under its new leader.

7. EVENTS

We have two events taking place in March, both at the Glenmavis Bowling Club.

(1) Daffodil Tea – Sunday 15th March 3-5pm, Glenmavis Bowling Club

The first is our Daffodil Tea on Sunday 15th March. Tickets are £5 and can be purchased at the Hub as well as here today. This event is opened to everyone not just members so bring your family and friends along to this event. There will be a flower arranging demonstration, the result of which will be the prize in a free raffle.

(2) Darts, Dominoes and Pool Evening – Wednesday 25 March 7-9pm, Glenmavis Bowling Club

The second event is a Darts, Dominoes and Pool social evening facilitated by Tommy Boyle. This event is also open to everyone. Tickets cost £3 and include pie and beans. This will take place in the Glenmavis Bowling Club on Wednesday 25th March from 7 to 9pm. Tickets are on sale today and in the Hub thereafter.

Network Singers Concert

The Network Singers are repeating their October concert on Monday 24th February at 7pm as a fundraiser for Boghall Parish Church. Tickets are £5 and can be purchased today from a number of choir members present at the meeting.

8. OFFICE

You will know by now the Hub is open to members from 10am to 2pm Monday to Friday. This is possible due to the funding we have received, and we hope it proves a benefit to our members. Our new co-ordinators have been with us for five weeks and I am sure you have all made them feel most welcome.

9. NEXT MEETING

- Our next meeting is Saturday 21st March when our speaker will be Sybil Cavanagh, former local history librarian and published local author who will be talking about the Lost Villages of West Lothian which is quite a good follow on from our talk today.
- At our April meeting, we will welcome Jim Small from the Forestry Commission who will talk about the history of forestry.

We look forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.