

West Lothian 50+ Network
Minute of Members' Meeting – 18th November 2023

Network Chair, Sue Bedford-Visser, opened the meeting by welcoming members new and old, and introduced the guest speaker, Joseph Witcombe from The Antonine Guard.

1. Guest Speaker

The Antonine Guard is a re-enactment society and a Scottish Charity, founded in 1996 to promote awareness of Scotland's Roman heritage.

Joseph still gave an interesting talk, covering the period of Roman occupation of Scotland and the history of the Roman Empire. He described the life of a Roman Legionnaire, whose uniform he was wearing. Roman soldiers were not necessarily from Rome but could be from anywhere in the Roman Empire. After serving 25 years, soldiers became citizens of Rome and could travel anywhere in the Roman Empire. He went into detail about the uniform he was wearing, describing how and what materials it would have been constructed from back in Roman times as well as covering the day-to-day life of a soldier. After the talk, Joseph stayed for coffee and to chat with members.

2. Tea and Coffee Break

The Legion's charge for tea/ coffee and biscuits was £1.80. The raffle took place during the break.

3. Holidays and Trips

Heather Waddell updated members.

- The next **coach trip** is to Carlisle for the Christmas Market on 2nd December has sold out. Please note if you have already booked that the coach departs from Bathgate Railway Station at the earlier time of 9 am.

- There is no additional organised coach trip in January 2024 as this is the weekend of the Tribute Weekend trip.
- The **Tribute Weekend**, Fri- Sun, 26-28 January 2024 is now fully booked. For those members who have booked, the balance of £129 is due by 1 December.

A new **holiday** for Network members has been organised with Strathmore Holidays. It is the Kyle Line & North Coast 500. The holiday is for four nights/five days, dinner, bed and breakfast and runs from **Monday 8th to Friday 12th April 2024 staying in the Ben Wyvis Hotel, Strathpeffer**. The cost is £339 per person with a deposit of £40. Excursions include travel by train on the Kyle Line from Dingwall, trips to Ullapool and Dornoch.

Booking is from Wednesday 29th November with the balance being due on 9th February 2024. There is a single supplement of £60. Due to the limited availability of single rooms, trustees have agreed that that members may only book their own single room. There are to be no multiple single room bookings.

4. Events

Past Events

- **Thrift Shop:**
A huge thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of our fundraising Thrift Shop. Thanks to all who gave donations to the Thrift Shop. Special thanks go to Kate Blake who coordinated it all and to the many volunteers who worked with her to collect, sort, price and sell. A record-breaking £4559.75 was raised this year for the Network. A most welcome surprise was an additional £500 from the Bank of Scotland Foundation in match funding which resulted from a member's application.
- **Coffee Day for MacMillan**
An amazing £802 was raised for this very worthwhile cause. We are very grateful to all who came to support the event, to our bakers, to those who gave donations and to all the volunteers who served tea and coffee and sold raffle tickets.
- **Coffee and Crafts Morning**
Thanks to everyone who helped to make our Coffee and Crafts morning such a huge success. Despite the blustery weather, almost 100 people joined us for this event which helped raise the amazing sum of £1,154 for Network funds.
Thanks go to all those who attended, to our stall holders and crafters, our bakers, our tea team and the many other volunteers who organized and helped at this event.
- **Ceilidh Evening**
There was a good turnout for our Ceilidh evening on 2nd December with live local band, Cockleroy. Thanks to all those in our Event group who organized this event and to member Alison Saunders for capturing this wonderful social evening in photographs. This was not a fundraising event although it did make a small surplus.
- On Sunday 12th November, Remembrance Sunday, Network, Tom Fairlie, one of our Trustees, laid a wreath on behalf of the 50+ Network at the Bathgate War Memorial. Our thanks go to him for organizing this.

Future Events

- Eleanor Shaw has organized this month's Seniors Session at Bathgate Cinema on Thursday 30th November at 10.30am. The film is The Great Escaper starring Michael Caine. This is the true story of Bernard Jordan, a WW2 veteran who in 2014 absconded from his care home to go to the 70th Anniversary of the D-Day Landings. Coffee or tea, biscuit, and film £6. No need to book, just turn up at the cinema.
- There are still a few tickets left in the Network's allocation of tickets for the Reconnect Regal Pantomime, Cinderella, Thursday 14th December at 12.30pm. Fifty-three tickets have been purchased by our members, with 11 remaining. Purchase at the Hub, £10. Access seats will be available, please let the Hub know if you need this when booking.
- **Coffee and Christmas Wreath Demonstration**
This will take place on Saturday 9th December in the Hub in Bathgate. Tickets cost £3.50 and are now on sale from the Hub. Attendance is limited to 50 members.
- **Christmas Cantata**
Vanda spoke about the Christmas Cantata: The Network Singers along with the Network Junior Choir are performing their annual Christmas concert this year at Armadale Parish Church. This year, as well as the story of Christmas in music and words, there will be some traditional carols and Christmas songs plus tea, coffee, and mincemeat pies after the concert. Tickets by donation

are available from the Hub and will also be on sale at the door of the performance evening itself on Monday 11th December.

- **Christmas Party**
This takes place on Saturday 16th December in St Mary's Church Hall, Bathgate. Members have been asked to note their interest in attending the party by Monday 20th November, stating a preference for a morning or afternoon party. The time will be confirmed and communicated to all as soon as possible.
- **Volunteers and Group Leaders' Lunch**
Volunteers and Group Leaders are asked to make a note in their diaries for this "thank you" lunch which will take place on Wednesday 17th January 2024. The lunch is an annual occasion to acknowledge the efforts of our amazing volunteers over the year. Invitations will be sent out soon.

5. **Groups**

- **Veteran's Group**
Gerry Stryker spoke about the Veterans Group which will meet again on 27th November. Currently drop-in sessions are being arranged but, once there are more members, outings will be organised.
- **First Aid Courses**
Allan Dungavel spoke about this. There are still places on the First Aid Courses for which we have received funding. Two dates have now been confirmed with the provider, Saturday 3rd and Saturday 10th February in the Hub. Priority will be given to Group Leaders or group representatives who will be re-offered these places as well as members of the catering group and those who assist with moving of furniture. Hub staff will also be trained. An email will be sent out soon.

Waiting Lists for Groups: If you have put your name down for groups and then find you are unable to join or attend, please let the Hub know to help us keep waiting lists to a minimum.

6. **Staff**

Sue was pleased to announce that the Network have successfully recruited to the new role of Volunteers and Groups Co-ordinator, which bring us up to our full complement of staff. Alison Shedden joins us on 20th November, and I am sure you will make her welcome in the Hub or out and about as she takes on this new role and starts to make contact with our groups.

7. **New Members Meetings**

The next New Members' Meeting will take place in the Hub on Thursday 23rd November at 12.15 pm. Invitations have been sent out to members who have recently joined the Network. If you have a friend that you would like to introduce to the Network, this may also be a good time to invite or bring them along to find out more.

8. **AOB**

- Vice Convenor, Frank Ellam, has recently represented the Network at a Parliamentary Reception arranged by Age Scotland to celebrate their 80th Anniversary.

- Parking at the rear entrance to the Hub – Sue advised members that the parking space at the back of the Hub is for offloading and collection from the Hub. Our neighbours at Home Aid also require access for their van to drop off and collect donations. If dropping someone off, or offloading items, please park your car elsewhere afterwards in the car park. The back door is a fire exit and should be kept clear.
- With the Hub closed for two weeks over the Christmas period, and many groups taking a festive break, we will host a tea/ coffee drop-in session at the Hub for anyone who wants some company and a chat. There's sure to be some Christmas goodies too!
Meet them at the Hub on Thursday 28th December between 10.30 and 12.30 pm.

9. Next monthly Members Meeting

Our first Members Meeting in 2024 will be on Saturday 20th January in St Mary's Church Hall, Livery St, Bathgate. Speaker to be advised. Please note this change of venue.

10. Opening Hours of the Hub

Please note that the Hub will be closed over the Christmas period from Friday 22nd December and will re-open on Wednesday 3rd January 2024. Please note that some groups may still run in the Hub during this time, but that will be up to the Group Leader.