

**WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK
MINUTES OF MEMBERS' MEETING
Saturday 18 January 2025
St Mary's Hall, Livery Street, Bathgate**

1. WELCOME

Welcome from the Chair. A special welcome to any new members here for the first time. Introduction of Guest Speaker.

2. GUEST SPEAKER

Speaker was Jennifer Howard-Coombs, the recently appointed director of the Almond Valley Heritage Trust, known by many as Mill Farm in Livingston. Jen shared some of the origin story of Almond Valley Heritage Centre, as well as the centre's hopes and challenges for the future, sharing new ambitions from their evolving 5-year Masterplan. She outlined the new Discovery tour which is aimed at groups of older people. Our walking groups are welcome to use the café at Mill Farm.

3. Break for tea/coffee and raffle.

Members are requested to contribute £1 towards their tea/ coffee.

4. DAY TRIPS

25 January, Two Glasgow museums (Riverside Transport Museum & Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum)

There are still a few places (13) available, outing now open to friends and family. **£18**

22 February, Guided tour of Newhailes House, Musselburgh; free time at Dobbies Melville Garden Centre.

Our visit includes a guided tour of the House at Newhailes, a National Trust property. Ww will be split into groups of 10 for the one-hour tour, departing for the tour at 15 minute intervals. We then visit Dobbies Melville Garden Centre, the largest garden centre in Scotland.

Departs Bathgate Railway station at **10 am**, cost is **£33:50 or £21** for National Trust members (remember to bring your card)

On sale from Wednesday 29 January

5. HOLIDAYS

Chatsworth House & the Peak District Mon-Fri 24-28 March 2025

A reminder that the balance of payment for this holiday is **due by 31 January**.

There are still some places available

£ 469 Glentons, Four Nights DBB, Single Supplement £84.

6. EVENTS

Joy to the World, a Christmas Concert, 9th December

A lovely concert was put on by the Network Singers. From the funds raised, the choir made a donation to Armadale Parish Church. Another donation was made to a children's charity by the Network Junior Choir and a further donation of £227.17 was made to the Network.

Christmas Party

Almost 100 members joined us for our Christmas Party. Thanks to the events group for all their work in making this a success. The Dunfermline & Strathspey Fiddle Association provided excellent entertainment.

Some photos of the event were circulated. The photos are now in the hub for other members to see.

Volunteers Lunch

Our annual Volunteers Lunch was held on 15th January at Bathgate Golf Club. This is by way of thanking our many volunteers and I hope all those who were able to join us enjoyed the occasion.

Thanks to Linlithgow Round Table who contributed £500 towards the cost of this event.

New Members Meeting, 23 January, 12.15pm

The next new members meeting will be on Thursday 23 January at 12.15 at the Hub. This is an opportunity for you to bring along a friend that you think may benefit from Network membership.

Quiz Night, Saturday 1st March

The Events Group are organising a Quiz Night on Saturday 1st March 2025 from 6pm -8pm. It will be held in the hub.

Tickets are £3 per person - members friends and family (over 18) are welcome to join in the fun in teams of 4. Maybe build a team from your groups.

Tickets available from the Hub from Monday 27th January, cash only please.

It's a Bring Your Own Bottle (and glasses) event but tea and coffee will be served too.

Coffee and Craft Fair, Saturday 15th November 2025

Advance notice that this annual event will be held on Saturday 15th November 2025. If your group wishes to take part, start planning and making your crafts with this date in mind.

Further information will be given during the summer when you can register your group.

Raffle Prizes

If you have any unwanted gifts from Christmas - bottles, biscuits, chocolates, toiletries etc - the Events Group would be grateful for them for future tombolas and raffles. Please hand into the Hub.

Catering Crew

Our catering volunteers work hard at every event and are seeking new volunteers to join them. If you would be willing to go on a rota to help in this way please give your name into the Hub.

7. GROUPS

Craft Group

Thanks to the Craft for Enjoyment group who made all of the lovely Christmas cards for our members. There is always a lovely selection of their handmade Greeting Cards available in the hub for a number of occasions for a £1.50 donation.

Young at Heart Coffee Group

Thank you to members of the Young at Heart Coffee Group who meet weekly in the hub for their donation of £100 to the Network for running costs.

Darts and Dominoes

Thanks also to members of the **Darts and Dominoes Group** who have made a donation of £260.00 to the Network.

Saturday Night at the Movies

The next movie at the hub will be on Saturday 8th February at 3.30pm. Film to be confirmed
Sign up at the Hub if you would like to attend

NUYU

The NuYu Group has a few spaces available. If you enjoy Line Dancing and like to keep track of your weight, this could be the group for you.

Monday Chain Runner Coffee Group

This group will welcome new members. They meet on Mondays 10am -12 noon at the Chain Runner in Livingston town centre.

Tuesday Evening Canasta

The first meeting of the new fortnightly Tuesday evening Canasta Group took place recently and will be every second Tuesday from 6 – 9pm.

This is in addition to the weekly Canasta group which meets on Friday afternoons. Please get in touch if you'd like to come along. Beginners welcome.

Two Left Feet Walking Group

Due to injury, a new walk leader is needed for this group if anyone would like to come forward.

Network Singers /Choir

Vanda Collins was pleased to announce that the Network Singers have found a new Choir Director, Scott Gilchrist. In order to accommodate Scott's working hours, there is a change of meeting time for the choir, which will be at the Answer Centre in Whitburn on Mondays from 3.45 to 5.15 pm. The choir would welcome new members, especially a boost to male voices.

Funding for Group Resources

Funding is still available for starting new activity groups as well as to buy resources for existing groups. These must be tangible resources which remain the property of the Network. Please let Alison know if you have ideas for new groups or want to apply through existing group leaders for funds for equipment.

OTHER BUSINESS

FIRST AID TRAINING

Thanks to **Vital Signs Scotland** who sponsored three 3 places on a TQUK Level 3 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work course in the second week of January. We now have three more qualified first aiders: 1 member of a walking group, 1 more member of staff and our yoga instructor.

The Network has been offered 3 more sponsored places on a one-day course on **Monday, 10th February 2025**, from 9:45am – 16:45pm at the Voluntary Sector Gateway premises in Bathgate. Please give your name to the hub if you are willing to undertake this training.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

We are grateful to the **Walker-Shoolbraid Charitable Trust** for their donation of £2,000 in November towards MSO salaries.

MEMBERS SURVEY

Thank you to everyone who completed the members survey in December. There were 124 responses. The results are still being collated but will be circulated in due course.

MEMBERSHIP FEE

The board of trustees discussed membership fees for 2025/2026 at their meeting on 8th January. Whilst no-one wants to see fees increasing, the decision was informed by up-to-date accounts (produced to end Dec 2024 thanks to Frank Ellam) and the current environment of rising staff and building costs.

The annual membership fee will therefore increase from 1 April 2025 to £36 pa. This is equivalent to £3 per month (for comparison, price of a cup of coffee, NTS £5.55 pm (over 60s) and Historic Scotland £3.66 pm (over 65s).

STAFF UPDATE

Our manager Emma Queen is leaving us at the end of February. We will be sorry to see her go and wish her all the best for the future.

Debbie McKay joined us on 6th January as our new Member Support Officer. I am sure you will make her very welcome.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Resignations: Richard Darby and Allan Dungavel have both resigned from the board of trustees. We thank them for their service to the Network.

Appointments: Two new trustees have been co-opted to the Board since our last update. Thank you to Margaret Campbell and Linda Ferrier for accepting these roles.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Heather Smart asked members if anyone would like to volunteer for a technical role with Boomerang, a registered charity which provides a talking newspaper service for the visually impaired in the West Lothian area. Heather was pleased to report that a volunteer had come forward at the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Our next members' meeting will take place on Saturday 15th February 2025 in St Mary's Hall, Bathgate at 10.30 am. Our guest speaker at this meeting will be Keith Jackson who will speak about Winston Churchill.