



NEWSLETTER

Kilbryde Hospice Volunteer View

Spring 2025



ISSUE 4

WELCOME TO THE 4th EDITION OF YOUR REGULAR NEWSLETTER. IT IS FOR YOU - THE KILBRYDE HOSPICE TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS. WE HOPE YOU ENJOY IT. PLEASE SEND US YOUR NEWS AND PICS FOR THE NEXT EDITION.

IN THE COMMUNITY

In this issue we highlight the amazing members of staff, helped by volunteers, who often work outwith the hospice premises taking their vital support to people in their own homes as well as various community venues.

Find out more about Stories for Life, Dove Cafes, Bereavement/Carers Cuppas and much more...plus a new feature called 'My Journey' on page seven.

A CARING PAIRING

Meet Siné MacDonald (left) and Sandra Davidson who carry out roles which involve much care and comfort to people at a vulnerable time of their life, as well as their families also affected.

Sandra is a Social Prescribing Link Worker/ Community Connector (Frailty) who gives non-medical support to those living with life-limiting illnesses including frailty.

Siné is Compassionate Lanarkshire (CLAN) coordinator. CLAN supports people with conditions which leave them unable to get out and about as much as they used to. It operates in three hospices including Kilbryde, funded by the National Lottery.



BEREAVEMENT CUPPA

Volunteer Andrew Ferguson was a 'people-person' for his entire working career in sales. Starting with office equipment he kept pace with technology advances and, prior to early retirement, sold telecommunications items. Sadly he lost his wife almost eight years ago, having been married 30 years. Andrew came to Kilbryde Hospice for help and support which he benefitted from and he now gives that help and support to others.



Andrew (pictured) struggled after his wife died and understands what bereaved families are going through, how they feel, and to have someone there that knows how they are feeling. These were the main reasons which led to Bereavement Cuppa being established.

He said: "A lot of people say to me 'you know what it is like' and I do. Sometimes I relate things that happened to me, and other anecdotes, which establishes a relationship which others may not have.

"From that point of view it is an extra arm which encourages people to open up as well as helping me. It often gives me an opportunity to talk about my wife as you can't always do that. Some people that come along have just recently lost someone, others a bit longer, as everyone feels grief differently - so it is whenever it feels right for them.

"We provide a quiet space. Nothing that is said gets repeated outside the room. There are tears and laughter. What everyone gets out of it is that they are not alone. You are in a room full of people that are all feeling the same pain, hurt and loss. Over the years I have picked up a lot of information which helps when supporting others.

"The feedback we have had is positive. Everyone who comes along says it is so helpful. This shows that it is working - if it wasn't they would not come back! Talking is the best way of dealing with grief because if you hold it in it stays there. In our group it gets out there.

"What we offer is time. Everyone gets the chance to speak. If they don't want to they don't have to. Some sit through a whole session saying nothing. Others bring a friend along. Some people also help others in the group."

- There are two other people running this vital support facility, Senior Nurse Kirsten O'Neill and volunteer Moira Tiso, who also has a background in nursing.
- Among the issues discussed are 'when do you go on holiday again?' as going back to a place you have been with a loved one can be really difficult.
- You never forget, but it becomes easier to remember.

COMPASSIONATE LANARKSHIRE



After working in England looking after children in a private house in Guildford, the lady of the house thought I should be a nurse, but I said: "I don't want to be a nurse!"

She finally persuaded/basically dragged me to the nursing school where I was accepted. So I did my training and worked in Guildford and the surrounding area for 25 years.

I did various jobs - staff nurse, training, manager of the out-patients services, before moving to a private company and several other jobs before coming back home to Scotland.

Sine MacDonald

People that we support through CLAN may lack confidence because of their illness or they are unable to get out because of social anxiety. There are a lot of health professionals and other services that I can, with their permission, signpost them to...occupational therapy, district nurses or whoever I feel can help.

Sometimes if I feel complimentary therapy at home would be appropriate to manage their symptoms I will refer them to a complimentary therapist who works with us two days a week.

Normally I go out and do the assessments and pass on to my colleague Laura (see page 3) who will arrange for them to go out into the community.

I work half-and-half in and out of the hospice between home visits and in the hospice, writing up my visits. I also have another role when I am in Day Services two days a week, working with Kirsten, Linda and Stephen.

Technically it is separate from Clan although it is supporting people who have a life-limiting illness but able to get around, with some social interaction, gentle exercises. It is about promoting a lot of things which are out there that they can attend.

I started work at 16 as a Data Processor in Central Tax Office, worked there for 10 years before moving to Warrington where I worked for Marks and Spencers for two years.

After moving back to East Kilbride I worked as a Revenue Assistant in Centre One. I left there after 12 years to attend South Lanarkshire College where I gained my HNC in Healthcare.

Following that, I worked in Wishaw General Hospital for three years. I left there to work for Police Scotland between 2007 and 2020, working in various departments.



Sandra Davidson

In my current role, I support patients with a life-limiting illness such as cancer, COPD, progressive neurological conditions, end-stage heart disease and frailty.

They can be referred to myself, as a social prescribing link worker/community connector for assessment. Myself or a colleague will meet with the patient and, together, decide on what the person requires.

This can also include support for the informal carer. Support is varied and could be an introduction to a social activity such as an exercise class or engaging in a local community group - it is whatever matters to that person.

Currently I am also working alongside Healthy & Active in East Kilbride to deliver a Self-Management Support Programme over 12 weeks for people who are waiting for health and social care specialist intervention.

The people we are hoping to reach out to are individuals facing health challenges, specifically those with long-term conditions, disabilities, or cancer.

STORIES FOR LIFE

Stories For Life is a national charity, founded by TV Executive Barbara Altounyan in 2017, which works with around 60 hospices in the UK including Kilbryde. Patients nearing the end of their life are given the opportunity to enjoy recording their precious memories. The legacy they leave their family and loved ones is invaluable. Here in Kilbryde Hospice the service is run by Laura Cunningham and volunteer Dorothy Vann.



We spoke to Dorothy (pictured left), who began her teaching career in 1964, working in Nigeria and Kenya as well as Easterhouse then returning home to teach in Claremont and Duncanrig high schools before retiring in 2000 and is now a volunteer here.

She said: "Laura and I were trained by the Stories for Life organisation. We now go to patients' houses if they are at home or in the ward here, talk to people about it and if they are interested, we then put together a rough plan on what they're going to talk about."

"It can be quite tiring for someone to make their recording so we plan for an hour maximum, although the longest we have reached is 40 minutes or so. We give the patient a choice. It could be snippets from their life or concentrating on one thing. So the plan is put in place, one day, with the actual recording taking place another day."

"For one man we recorded his 'party piece' as requested by his family - a song that he had sung at every family gathering all his life. You hear a lot of lovely, interesting stories...people that are in their 70s now were young in the Swinging Sixties!"

"There are some stories to be heard. For some people it's an interview while for others we say 'here's the chapter headings'. There is also an option to ask their families what they would like to be included, which may be a story the family haven't heard before."

"Not everyone wants to do it. I approached one patient to ask if he wanted to do it and he said 'I have already done that myself'. It's a lovely thing for families to have - a legacy for them to have. It is said that the sound of your voice is the first thing people forget. So it is nice to have the sound of your loved one's voice as a treasured memory."

- Two more people, one volunteer and one member of staff are being recruited in Kilbryde Hospice which will bring the team up to four.
- A National Stories for Life week will take place later in 2025.
- Visit www.storiesforlife.co.uk for more information on this amazing support scheme.

DOVE CAFES

Inspirational Laura Cunningham has multiple roles within the hospice, one of which is Dove Cafes. She speaks here about this and some of her other support roles. The reality is that her article only scratches the surface of her incredible work!

My role as a Compassionate Lanarkshire Link Worker (CLAN) is supporting people living with a progressive life limiting condition and their families...writes Laura.

I work as part of a team, alongside the CLAN Coordinator and complementary therapist, working with the rest of the team at Kilbryde Hospice.

Many people living with a life-limiting illness often report feeling alone and lonely in this new and unknown world they now face. Where do they start to find help and support? The pressures of workloads that many health and social care professionals face in an overstretched service can often make the individual feel unheard.

This is where CLAN can offer that time, to listen, to be heard and connected to services that may help improve their quality of life. Building on their assets, and ability to self-manage, whilst making sense and meaning of where they are at in their life.

And to help towards planning for the future with more confidence, by offering supportive calls/visits, signposting to supporting services within the hospice and in the community.

In addition, I match up volunteer befrienders to visit those that may wish companionship and family respite.

Along with the Clan Coordinator I co-facilitate the (EASE) course, and also offer 'Stories for life' for people that may wish to record their life story. (see above)

I also help coordinate the Dove cafes, previously known as Compassionate Cafes, which is a community led movement working in partnership with community groups throughout South Lanarkshire.

These include Whitlawburn Community Resource Centre, Healthy and Happy, Hunter House Coffee Shop as well as potentially opening others



EASE COURSE: Laura is pictured (second right) at a session of the End-of-Life Aid Skills for Everyone course, which was held in Strathmore House, East Kilbride.

WHAT IS A DOVE CAFE?

A drop in cafe, where citizens can come together and support each other over a cup of tea and cake, designed to foster kindness, connection, and support to those that may have experienced loss, bereavement or affected by a life limiting illness, including frailty.

Friends of Dove Cafe are skilled volunteers from Kilbryde Hospice who give of their time and offer a listening ear, to hear their narratives, build connections, and help develop friendships. The aim is to combat loneliness and promote well-being.

We have five friends of the Dove cafes, from Kilbryde Hospice, offering their time to listen and be alongside the people of South Lanarkshire. The volunteers have also been busy placing Dove Cafe posters in venues across the community advertising this community service as a safe place to have a cup of tea and chat.

Dove cafes are held monthly, the 'Healthy and Happy' cafe in Rutherglen has been running since 13th December 2023, and co facilitated with the 'Transforming Lives team'. The number of people attending are around 5-7 men and 2-4 women. The Dove cafes grew organically as it was local residents who wanted more information on loss and bereavement.

Behind the scenes at Kilbryde Hospice

IN PATIENT UNIT MANAGER

We spoke to Ann Majella McFadden

I lead the team here which is myself and three who deputise and our role is to see that everything is done as well as it possibly could be. My role is overseeing a team of nurses who provide palliative care which at times can be complex.

We sometimes see patients who are imminently dying and others who are here to get their symptoms controlled, quality of life enhanced before going back home into the community. I was always in roles of patient-facing including the field of cancer care, in the very early part of my career, including 14 years in The Beatson.

This job in the hospice is a privilege and one that I love - patient care, working with families, palliative care and symptom management.

When patients come here, in pain or unusual symptoms, we can use our expertise and skills to make things much better. In my position I have to ensure that standards are met, with patient safety at the heart of everything to ensure they are cared for in the best way.

We talk to patients about what matters most to them and usually you will find that it is their family, people they love who have supported them and been on the journey with them.

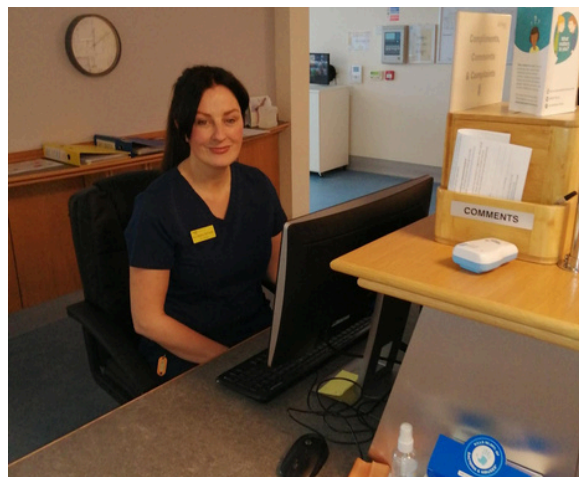
The unit has a different staff/patient ratio, for many reasons, one of which is to establish a relationship with patients' families which is essential to the care that we provide. Sometimes our patients get a lot from knowing that their loved ones are being supported.

Everyone deals with what we face in here differently so, as we have a great team, a lot of the support we give is to each other. Having a debrief to break things down is a good way to support each other and for me to support the staff.

Also learning from situations - if things have gone well or not so well - but there is no doubt that you are facing situations which are the most vulnerable times in people's lives. Sometimes it is difficult to see patients going through a lot but, when you know that you have given your best, have provided a good standard of care and done everything that is important to the patient, you get a lot from that.

There are some occasions when you cry on the way home. That's okay and I'll tell the team that it is okay. As long as we support each other and recognise when a colleague is struggling - particular situations can affect different people in different ways - we try and cope.

Maybe some time away or reiki or a massage from the Complementary Therapy team when times get really tough? We will also come together as a group and speak about how we are all feeling which is really helpful.



VITAL VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteers are critical to patient care and throughout the organisation in areas such as administration and volunteer co-ordination.

Being honest, when Margaret Mary [Clinical Director] raised it with us several years ago I thought it was a huge ask for volunteers to be here in the unit.

We invested a lot of time in selecting the appropriate volunteers and training them and, by goodness, it has been really fruitful. There are now four volunteers here who cover most of the week.

They come in at various times and the patients get to know them really well. They have some wonderful feedback from patients and their families, having established relationships - and from the team!

A 'Volunteer Handover' has been created so they are given the appropriate information when they start their shift, almost like a safety brief for our volunteers, which is really important.

Then they work with the team but, crucially, they can work independently which can involve sitting with a patient for a chat or if the nurses are caught up dealing with medication or other issues which can crop up.

For some it is making sure everything is in the correct place and, although there are limits as they are unable to get involved in direct patient care, it is lovely to have their presence around in a supportive role.

Staff and volunteers get to know one another really well. In December I had been off for a few weeks and when I came back staff had organised a collection to buy our volunteers a Christmas gift each.

The presents were chosen individually for each volunteer and I was blown away by the staff's kind thoughts.

Ann Majella McFadden

SUCCESSFUL SANTA DASH



LINING UP: The participants are ready to make tracks



We know it was a while back but feel it is important to recognise the efforts of a team of volunteers and staff who helped raise an amazing £12,600 at the event.

Their hard work on the day ensured that everything ran smoothly as those taking part created a superb feelgood factor, including the younger dashers (pictured below).

The snack bar, manned by volunteers (left) was exceptionally busy, while others manned a variety of stalls (below left and centre).



MY JOURNEY

In a new feature, your Volunteer Newsletter will tell the story of a staff member or volunteer as they retrace their career path



We begin with Laura Cunningham, a Compassionate Lanarkshire Link Worker (CLAN)

“My first job was as a comptometer operator in an accountant’s office and working with horses at a local riding school. I wanted to become a mounted police officer, though followed a nursing career starting my training at Philipshill Hospital where I undertook training for orthopaedic nursing.

“I completed my Registered General Nursing at the Victoria Infirmary, then midwifery training at Rutherglen Maternity Hospital before qualifying as a District Nurse after attending Glasgow College of Technology.

“After a short break to have my family, I returned to work part time in the evening /night services as a Marie Curie nurse, and community nursing services.

“During that time, I gave up reading papers and magazines to read specialist palliative care research and qualified as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), working in palliative care at St Margaret’s Hospice.

“My most challenging and greatest learning came from working as a Clinical Nurse Specialist supporting people affected by Motor Neurone disease. I retired in April 2021 after 45 years in nursing.

“I enjoyed 18 months of time out for some ‘me time’ and home crafting projects. However, in September 2022 I became restless and applied to Kilbryde hospice for the Compassionate Lanarkshire Link worker role and joined the Clan /Kilbryde hospice team in November 2022.”

Competition Time



QUIZ - How much do you know about the country we live and work in...Bonnie Scotland ??



1. What is the the official animal of Scotland?
2. Where did US President Ike Eisenhower have a residence ?
3. Which Aberdeenshire castle was the inspiration for Bram Stoker’s Dracula?
4. The first successfully cloned lifeform, a sheep, was created in the University of Edinburgh...what was it called?
5. Careful with your answer here! Does the Loch Ness Monster really exist?
6. “Whit’s fur ye’ll no go by ye” - translate this popular saying into English.
7. What’s our ‘other’ national drink?

- 8 Formed in Glasgow, our lead singer is called Jim, what is our rock group’s name ?
9. I was a successful athlete from Dundee who won Olympic silver. My daughter is now also an accomplished runner. Who am I ?
10. I managed East Stirling, St Mirren, Aberdeen and Manchester Utd. Who am I?

This quiz is just for fun!
Test your knowledge or have fun Googling the answers

Strictly Come Teddy



Having recovered from his massive trek Down Under, Teddy stole the show when Siné MacDonald took him to the Hydro in Glasgow to see the stars of Strictly Come Dancing live on stage

ARE YOU GOING LOCO DOWN IN ACOPOLCO ?
HEADING FOR HONOLULU OR HELENSBURGH ?
HAVING A BREAK IN BARCELONA OR BALLATER ?

Take Teddy with you, take some photos and send them to volunteering@kilbrydehospice.org.uk for the next edition of your newsletter



VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION



FESTIVE FAVOURITES:
Provided by the pupils
of Kirktonholme
Primary School choir



HEARTFELT THANKS:
Clinical Director
Margaret Mary praised
our volunteers



ELDERLY BROTHERS: Kept
toes tapping all afternoon
with some great music



RAFFLE WINNERS: Huge
hamper of super items



RAFFLE WINNERS:
Rounded off a perfect
day by going home with
some goodies

A festive event was held in day services just before Christmas to thank our volunteers for their contribution to Kilbryde Hospice. Musical entertainment was provided by the excellent Elderly Brothers (who confirmed to one of the volunteers that they are actually brothers!) and the children from Kirktonholme Primary. The popular quiz was eagerly contested with answers being called out from all around the room...most of them correct! Nearest to the Bottle provided intense competition and lots of laughs (see below) while the free raffle had some first-rate hampers full of prizes and the food was amazing. A huge thanks to our wonderful Kilbryde Hospice catering team, Mortons' Rolls and Zucca restaurants



GAME PLAYER: Fiona is seeking
for an answer during our
Nearest to the Bottle
competition



PRIZE DRAW: With the
help of MC for the day,
Siné MacDonald