



NEWSLETTER

Kilbryde Hospice Volunteer View

Spring 2026



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WELCOME TO THE SPRING 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.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

EVERYONE in the hospice makes a difference in some way or another. In this issue we highlight how that happens, who ensures that it happens and how the staff member or volunteer finds their work has made a difference to THEMSELVES! It can be something as fundamental as chatting to a patient or more complex, such as certain therapies - BUT EVERYONE MAKES A DIFFERENCE !

ANDY VALENTE/SANDRA DAVIDSON

ANDY was a regular at Day Services which in itself proved to be a major transformation in his quality of life but, over and above that, Sandra Davidson (pictured inset) went the extra mile...or 10!

COMFORT : Andy only had a dining room chair at home which was unsuitable, to say the least, and Sandra arranged a proper armchair for him.

MOBILITY : His ONLY pair of shoes had seen better days and severely restricted Andy in his everyday activities. It got to the stage that he was anxious about leaving the house. Step in Sandra and step out Andy.

MORE INSIDE : Read how making a difference is key to everything we do here.



DAY SERVICES: Andy, a former journalist, catches up with the local news



A FOND FAREWELL TO MARGARET MARY COWAN



“I'm writing this piece to you in my last four weeks as Clinical Services Director at Kilbryde. I can hardly believe that it's over 11 years since Dennis Gallagher took me for a tour round the hospice in a blizzard just after I applied for the job. I remember that day as if it was yesterday.”

How have you made a difference in Kilbryde Hospice?

- It's noisier with me around - no sound of silence Tuesday to Friday but don't ask me to sing.
- I'm one of Joe's Bistro's most predictable customers - no need to second guess my lunch order.
- I think I have done an OK job as part of the clinical team and hopefully I'm still an OK nurse after all these years having my hands off the patients.
- I believe I have made a difference to the care of patients and families at the end of their life for the better - you will be the best judge of that.



IN ACTION: Raising money for the hospice at The London Marathon (left) and at Strictly Kilbryde with dancing partner Thomas (right)

How has the hospice made a difference in your life?

- After a break of living away from East Kilbride for 25 years, taking the job up at Kilbryde was a blessing for us as a family. I was able to be at home to be nearer to my four siblings and to support my wonderful parents until their deaths in 2016 and 2022. You have no idea how much that means to me. There are currently tears pouring down my cheeks as I write this!
- Kilbryde is a place like no other organisation. I have had the privilege of working alongside the most talented, generous (of time, expertise and money) individuals in the team wherever you volunteer. I never cease to be amazed at the impact of each of your efforts.
- In the coming months, when I have a wee bit more time on my hands, I will consider all the times we as a team made a difference to people. Whether that is in our shops, at our brilliant fundraising events, on the hospice reception, in the Kafe or kitchen or in direct patient care. I know we made a difference together.

ALL-ROUNDER VOLUNTEER MOIRA

VOLUNTEER Moira Tiso is an invaluable member of the team at Kilbryde Hospice and, in so many varied ways, makes a difference to so many people.

When Moira spoke to the Volunteer Newsletter she was in the middle of a very busy shift in Day Services, having served teas/coffees, biscuits and pastries before getting the lunches prepared...while also having time to chat to the Day Service patients.

"I feel quite humble to be here and it is a privilege to be here, supporting people who come here because there is a wide range of illnesses that people have and the volunteers get good support from all members of staff.

"We get good feedback from the qualified nurses and, as a 'people person', I learn from people. I also do the Bereavement Cuppa and there are a lot of difficult conversations in those sessions.

"I work with another volunteer and a member of staff as we provide a listening ear and help support people at that difficult time twice a month [on the first and third Thursday monthly].

"We reassure individuals that the grief journey is an individualistic experience.

"We also have drop-in sessions, which involve a wee bit more light hearted conversations, and is for people just to come in to have a chat and break up their day. [This session is on the 2nd Tuesday of the month between 10am and noon]

"There are also carers come in as it's giving them a break - they can also feel a bit vulnerable themselves - and they wouldn't come if they weren't enjoying it.

A massive way in which Moira and the team make a difference, to day service patients and drop-in visitors in particular, is that they can sometimes be able to take their mind off their particular situation.



SMILING SERVICE: Moira giving patient Colin his dessert course in Day Services at the hospice

“I feel quite humble to be here and it is a privilege to be here, supporting people”

"It takes them out and there are very few people in day service in the time I have been here, which is about nine or ten years, who really talk about their illness.

"Of course, it depends on the person and their personality, but they all want a relief from their illness and the bigger picture surrounding it on their illness journey.

"So people will talk about anything but their illness. If it does happen, it does not happen all that often and it is not why myself and my colleagues are there.

“We aim to provide a comfort zone for friendship”

How has volunteering changed your life?



“It makes me feel great inside. Seeing happy staff also makes me happy. Volunteering keeps me busy and I don’t like leaving when my shift is over because I miss the company so much. It makes me get out my bed and enjoy my day when I am volunteering. I enjoy taking to customers when I am working in our shop in Rutherglen. On reception, I like helping visitors to the hospice while it is great completing tasks when I am working in Facilities.”

Craig Lloyd

“I have learned two important lessons since volunteering -

- There are such amazing, kind people in East Kilbride and Rutherglen who give their all to quietly help and support those around them
- I am now so much more thankful for my health, family and a life that has been blessed having learned of the traumas and difficulties so many people face daily whether in their health, mentally or financially.”

Anne Allan



“When I was to retire from Hairmyres Hospital catering department, it was a very daunting prospect after working for so long , so transitioning to the hospice, was a big help to me. I have remained friends with people I worked with, and also made new ones. Making new friends is a big help for anyone and joining the hospice was like starting a new job.”

Norma Parkes

“It gave me the confidence to get back out after some time being a carer. I also feel good about contributing to the hospice, meeting new people and seeing our regular customers in the EK Town Centre Boutique shop. When making a sale and hearing how much the shop has made at the end of my shift helps me realise how my contribution has helped. I also feel I am a role model for my three daughters in making a positive impact in our community.”

Gillian Kirkland



“I was ‘climbing the walls’ after I had to give up my previous voluntary role with a local foodbank as I was struggling to lift heavy items. I had been doing their social media, which I enjoyed, and when I mentioned that as well as my previous career in Journalism at my interview with Fiona, it turned out I was in the right place at the right time to come on board at Kilbryde Hospice to help put the Volunteer Newsletter out. It has been a pleasure to chat with my fellow volunteers and find out all about their lives. Long may it continue!

Frank Cassidy

MUSIC MAESTRO

By Anna Ludwig
Hospice Music Therapist

I did my post graduate training as a music therapist at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London and qualified in 2006. Prior to working here, I worked for six years for Keech Hospice Care in Luton. Keech has both an adult and children's hospice (out-patient and in-patient).

Working in palliative and bereavement care, music therapy can offer emotional, psychological and even physical/functional support in many different ways.

As human beings, we are all born with the ability to respond to music, though it affects us all in different ways. Many people, including myself, would say that music is fundamental to being human.

Often music is viewed as a 'nicety' but many believe that music has always been a necessity. Thousands of years ago when the main aim was to stay alive, music was part of the way of living. 5,000-year-old bone flutes have been discovered and we are all familiar with cave paintings - the arts have always been core to life.

We now know that, through the use of functional MRI machines, music affects both hemispheres of the brain. You just have to think about music when having an MRI and so many parts of your brain light up.

This goes a long way to explain how, when some people are affected by stroke or memory loss, they are still able to sing a song from years ago.

Music reaches across cultures and can bridge divides. There are a few cultures in the world who don't use music as much as we do in this country, but the majority will mark significant events with music - weddings, funerals, birthdays etc.

At the hospice, music is used in many ways. I offer individual and group music therapy sessions plus we have the community choir. Once a fortnight some children from our local nursery school visit our day-service patients and take part in an intergenerational music therapy group. The joy and laughter from young and old is infectious.

There's not really a typical day for me but it usually involves meeting with colleagues to discuss referrals or being part of a handover or weekly multi-disciplinary team meeting.

I will see individuals for sessions which could be for helping anxiety or perhaps for helping reduce anxiety or for helping with strengthening their voice if it has been affected by illness.

I also work with child relatives of patients known to the hospice. There might be a music therapy group with the day-service patients, or the community choir. If I get the chance I will provide environmental music therapy in the in-patient unit, playing my harp for patients and staff.



I have been fortunate to lead a Creative Arts in the Community project between March 2025 and February 2026. We have been able to reach out into the hospice community to raise awareness of our services and to work with other groups.

We have a great team of volunteers and students - from the Queen Margaret University MA in Participatory Arts course; working with our Dove Café participants in Rutherglen, Cambuslang and Dalserf; Camglen Buddies in Cambuslang; a dementia inclusive network called Sporting Memories; East Kilbride Integrated (EKiN); our Self Management group and day service patients. I am hoping the hospice can host an exhibition of all the work that has been created.

Music brings people together. It can give participants in a music therapy an equal voice, even if they have difficulty speaking. It can build confidence, distract from anxiety and stress and change the perception of pain.

Music therapy sessions can offer a safe space to express your emotions, with or without using the voice. The opportunity to reminisce is a vital part of loss and bereavement work as well as music is, of course, a great toll for this.

Perhaps more importantly, the chance to laugh, cry, communicate your emotions, or to try something creative at the end of life, can make such a difference to a person's quality of life, even during palliative care.

Further information about music therapy in general can be found on The British Association for Music Therapy's website at <https://www.bamt.org>.

Meanwhile, our hospice music therapy web page is at <https://kilbrydehospice.org.uk/supporting-you/music-therapy/>



QUIZ TIME

The Numbers Game...fill in the blanks

- 1) The _____ seas of Rhye (hit single for Queen in the 70s)
- 2) _____ flew over the cuckoo's nest (Jack Nicholson movie)
- 3) _____ days a week (Beatles song)
- 4) The _____ Musketeers (classic novel)
- 5) Back to square _____ (well known saying)
- 6) Feeling like a _____ dollars (another well known saying)
- 7) The first man on the moon happened in _____
- 8) Nelson Mandela walked out free after _____ years in prison
- 9) The Berlin Wall fell in _____
- 10) Why was six afraid of seven?... Because seven _____ nine !

Christmas Quiz answers

- 1 - Reindeer beginning with the letter D : Dancer, Dasher and Donner
- 2 - Actual store featuring in the movie, Miracle of 34th Street : Macy's
- 3 - Elvis did not have a white Christmas, but he had a : Blue Christmas
- 4 - In the song, on the eighth day of Christmas : Eight maids a-milking
- 5 - In which decade did Coca Cola start advertising with Santa : 1920s
- 6 - What country started the custom of putting up a tree : Germany
- 7 - In which country is the most popular Christmas Dinner a KFC : Japan
- 8 - In what year was the 'All I want For Christmas' hit first released : 1994
- 9 - What was the original colour of Santa's suit : Green
- 10 - First Christmas song broadcast from Outer Space : Jingle Bells

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Volunteers and staff tell how they have helped others

I make a difference to the grounds of the hospice, by keeping them clean and tidy. I often ask for more tasks to make even more difference.

**VOLUNTEER
CRAIG LLOYD**

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” – Sherry Anderson, Sporting personality and world champion

I have been with the hospice to date 13 years and have gained lots of valuable experience in that time. I have good experience dealing with customers both selling clothing and furniture and everything else that we sell. I did something similar for the hospice two or three years ago but I have gained more experience since then.

**VOLUNTEER
ANDREW McERLAIN**

I believe I have brought my abilities from previous jobs in life into helping people. I lost my wife, which gave me impetus to join the hospice. My sales career makes me able to understand people, listen to them and talk to them. There has been a lot of positive feedback from the Bereavement Cuppa and Dove Drop-in, saying that I give people time to talk and listen to what they have to say.

**VOLUNTEER
ANDREW FERGUSON**

I had the pleasure of becoming a volunteer with the hospice a while ago. The induction training was interesting and then I completed the EASE course with the wonderful Siné and Laura, and I met fellow volunteers. I helped with fundraising by selling goods at a local market. It felt good to support the great work the hospice does. I also led a creative writing workshop with patients and staff. It was great to see how people engaged with all their senses and created their own poems. I recommend volunteering for the hospice. You will meet new people and gain valuable experience. It really makes a difference.

VOLUNTEER ANTJE BOTHIN

MY JOURNEY

tells the story of a volunteer as they retrace their career path before they came to work at Kilbryde Hospice

My entire career was in sales, starting with helping my mother who was a merchandiser with Schwartz Spices - I would accompany her and watch her talking to shop managers and so on.

My dad and I would load the car with stock and travel the length and the breadth of the country and I enjoyed that freedom, which was also a great learning experience.

We would go to the Royal Highland Show every year, where we had a stall in the food court, and talk to people which I really enjoyed and it helped me with my communication skills right up to what I do in the hospice.

What I loved about my sales career was meeting so many different clients and staying in hotels where I would never stay otherwise, all over Scotland and the north of England.

My first official job was with a company called Office International, based in Glasgow City Centre, which was a stationer and my first role was in the shop, learning the products and helping customers.

We sold dictation equipment and manual typewriters, before word processing came in when you could actually type a line and correct it on a screen before it got printed.

So that was fun and watching dictation being recorded and given to a secretary to type, from my technology learning point of view that was interesting.

Then the first computer came out that we stocked, which was a Spectrum, and I was taught how to use that at 19-years-old and my understanding of IT had begun.

As business picked up, my next activity was to arrange demos of typewriters to leave on trial. I carried these locally to offices in Glasgow with a typewriter under my arm.

It would be left it with the customer for a week's trial and 99 per cent of the time they would buy it because they were loving all the new features.

That was where it all started and, at 21, I was given my own territory, mainly Glasgow and Lanarkshire, and company car.

They would then come into the shop and buy things like ribbons, correction tape and skins for their duplicators.



**ANDREW
FERGUSON**

Then photocopying started to make an impact - it had been duplicators back in the day, so this was a massive change to the business.

That's basically where I learned the trade. Learning all about the products and telling people all about them and able to answer any questions I was asked about the products.

I was a bit of a sponge and taking in everything I was learning, and my career progressed as technology progressed.

I moved from office equipment to mobile phones, based in Hamilton as the first place to get a mast was the M74, so if you were in that area you could use a mobile cellular phone.

At that time they were huge 'bricks' but to be able to go outside and make a phone call was incredible. There had been radio phones up until then in cars which you made your call through an operator.

With these new phones, you could call the person direct. They weren't cheap and the people who could afford them had money, so we fitted phones to motorboats, motorhomes, yachts, horseboxes and all these sort of things.

People going on horse trials would have phones where they could be contacted on and installed cars, such as Rolls Royces and Ferraris, which was a huge learning curve and introduction to a higher value of clientele.

Once I finished mobile phones I moved on to fixed communications which was office telephony, where I continued for the next 27 years.

BT had just been liberalised and Mercury came on the scene who were able to offer cheaper calls and charges, so we were selling smart boxes, which connected your phone system to the network.

Everyone wanted one, so we were selling them in competition to BT, who had been in charge for so long.

As time progressed, we were actually able to sell a phone system rather than just calls, which was huge at the time.

So we were replacing rooms, which had telephony, with something that was the size of a computer, which was hung on a wall and did more...so companies were getting office space back!

Ironically we have now gone full circle and, due to IT, you have to have full rooms with equipment and cooling fans which is needed for the amount of equipment.

At the time the alternative phone system market was huge as everyone wanted to change as it was more affordable.

There had only been two companies, BT and Telephone Rentals, with 15-year contracts operating, so when we went in we offered better equipment and functionality for a fraction of the price and over lesser terms.

Eight of us started a company and at that time we all mucked in, which was a constant learning curve, learning from engineers so I was selling AND fixing systems.

We were taken over by Alcatel, a French company, and moved to Livingston. They were a large company which had its benefits and everyone knew them.

If you were a good salesman the rewards were good, things like free holidays. Then people who had been in the original firm left to form Scotia Communications.

Scotia later became Commsworld, where I stayed for the next 27 years, when I retired.

All told, I witnessed the transformation from traditional technology to digital technology to IP - which is using the internet to transfer information and making it much more flexible and feature-rich.

That was yet another learning curve for me as I was learning that a person speaking now would not be heard till later, but technology made it sound and appear like a normal conversation.

As communications change, you can now use mobile phones, tablets and speakers as a means of communication.

Everything changed and, with the internet, an example was that people in Aberdeen could have a Glasgow phone number, which helped businesses.

I believe that being a salesperson taught me how to communicate with others and this has continued into my role in the hospice.

MULTI-TASKER CRAIG

VOLUNTEERING comes as second nature to Craig, who has been with Kilbryde Hospice for two years.

Previously he was a volunteer with Dogs Trust, where he was responsible for keeping the kennels neat and tidy as well as making sure the dogs' bedding was as comfortable as possible.

Before that Craig was with the British Transport Police (BTP), based at Glasgow Central Station, handing out important passenger safety leaflets among other duties.

He said: "When I went for my interview with BTP, I was a nervous wreck, especially as the officer was in full uniform. But I was delighted when he said I had passed and I had been accepted as a volunteer."

Craig also had a volunteer placement in a bike shop called Camglen Bike Town, where he helped customers with bike sales, also making sure the shop was always clean and tidy.

Fast forward to January 2024, and Craig decided to apply to Kilbryde Hospice - and he hasn't looked back, saying: "I love it, enjoy it, and the staff here are fantastic. Other volunteers are nice as well."

Craig is a multi-tasker, carrying out three completely different volunteering roles in, around and away from the hospice.

He works in the Kilbryde Hospice shop in Rutherglen on a Friday, saying: "I enjoy it in the shop and the staff on a Friday are lovely.

"One of the staff members in particular, Mark, is really supportive. There are good days and bad days when business is either really busy or a bit quieter. Part of my job is to make sure the stock is tidy as well as serving customers at the till."

Craig is also the welcoming friendly face of the hospice on the reception desk every Saturday, doing four-hour shifts, continuing the duties that are carried out midweek, such as signing people in, and answering their queries.

"During the summer I work from 1pm to 5pm while in the winter months I am doing 11am to 3pm," he said.



VERSATILE VOLUNTEER:
Retail, reception and facilities all feature in Craig's working week

On the Monday Craig was interviewed for the Volunteer Newsletter, he was outside in the yard moving heavy bags of salt around as a precaution in case of icy patches (pictured).

"I litter-pick the front of the hospice building, making sure it is tidy, and brushing up anything lying on the paths. I also clean the bin area."

Looking at the bigger picture Craig is therefore making sure visitors get a good impression when they arrive outside the hospice and, every Saturday, he does exactly the same thing when he greets everyone entering the building - both very important aspects of the work of Kilbryde Hospice.

Volunteering at Kilbryde has given Craig much satisfaction ... and more.

"I do love volunteering here and, as I am doing it for a good cause, I feel good about myself and am proud of what I do. It melts the heart what the volunteers and staff do in the hospice.

"I am doing so many different tasks that there is no chance I would ever get bored. Fiona [Volunteer Support Officer] has been supportive. She never sits down!

"When I tell her to 'go and put your feet up' she says 'Ah cannae!'".

MEET

THE CANBERRA CRONIES

SHOP VOLUNTEERS : From left - Anne, Shona and Christine at our new retail unit in EK Town Centre



FOUR retired teachers have joined the retail team at the new shop in EK town centre, with Anne also working in the Rutherglen unit on a Tuesday.

Missing from our picture is former senior teacher, Sandra, but the amazing coincidence is that they all taught in Canberra Primary, hence the name...which they had long before they retired!

Anne and Shona also helped with a recent Recruitment Drive in the centre and signed up more than 30 potential volunteers.

Some of them were friends and Anne said: "We now have a Canberra Crew. I think being a teacher has helped us with working in the shops as we have organisational ability and communication skills as well.

But volunteering is the best thing I have ever done. You meet lots of lovely people . In

Rutherglen I know all the elderly customers, some have lost their wives. It's not all about selling things."

"We retired one after the other - one of the pupils asked 'is that the last of the Canberra Cronies?', so that is now our WhatsApp group chat name."

It was Shona's first day when she spoke to the Volunteer Newsletter and she explained that it [volunteering] is something that she has always wanted to do since she retired.

She said: "So I am finally here and, although I am a wee bit nervous I have friends here to help me, which is great."

Anne is also on the Volunteer Voice panel, representing retail, and thoroughly enjoys working with Dorothy, also an ex-teacher, along the road from Canberra, at Duncanrig High!



Teddy's Travels



SPAIN-MALAGA : With Kirsten O'Neill, enjoying the sun..and food !



SOUTH -EAST LONDON
Margaret Mary Cowan recently met her new born grandson Finlay for the first time in London.

Teddy hitched a lift in Finlay's brand new pram as well as joining Margaret Mary when she took part in the Dartford Parkrun.

Although he enjoyed his trip, Teddy was excited as ever to cross the Border as he headed home.



My Bucket List

We all have something we dream of doing some day—a 'bucket list' moment that would make a real difference in our lives. It could be big or small, adventurous or meaningful, something you've always hoped to try or experience.

WE ASKED: "What's one thing you dream of doing that you feel would make a difference in your life?"...AND YOU RESPONDED.

"I have had a bucket list for quite some time and have actually done a lot of these things already - spoken word poetry; stand up comedy; horseback riding; climbing ropes doing a leap of faith; ice-skating; swimming; driving; being visible online; leading workshops; coaching people; talking in groups...you name it, I am running out of challenges?! 😊 Perhaps running an assertive communication and mindful creative writing and poetry retreat for introverted women over several days to build confidence?? - If you know something new and exciting, I may be up for it!"

Antje Bothi

I've still to go to Murrayfield to watch a rugby match

Norma Parkes

Growing up with a dad who spent many years in the navy, and who lived for a few years in Malaya, I have spent many an afternoon looking at pictures of monuments and landmarks in Asia...as well as lots and lots of ships and submarines.

My bucket list includes walking on The Great Wall of China and visiting The Terracotta Army.

Fiona Swinger

I would love to visit Bhutan, or Nepal



Donald Campbell

I would like to visit Japan and see the culture, their food and things like the tea ceremonies...although I might be slightly worried about earthquakes!

Laura Cunningham

Driving Route 66 in the United States would be my first choice and I would also like to see the fjords in Scandinavia, sailing through on a cruise ship.

Catherine McDonald

Top of my bucket list is to cuddle my wee grandson Finlay as often as his mum and dad will allow me. Second top is to travel with my husband Alan in our wee motor home around Scotland, seeing places and sights that I haven't been to yet.

Margaret Mary Cowan

"My dream is go for a flight in a fighter jet and experience going through the sky supersonic and experience the G-Force. My other dream is to go to Krakow in Poland, which is a nice place to visit."

Craig Lloyd

"The one thing I dream of doing is biking out in the middle of the forest and hillsides. Most of the time when it came to riding on a bike, it mainly involved going out on the streets in my home area and on roads, but never much in the middle of nowhere where you can see trees and mountains and it feels like a relief to me to place it on my bucket list."

Steve Lynn