



Connecting Volunteering Third Sector Forum

Wednesday 24th July 2019

10am – 12pm

CVS Falkirk and District Offices

Present:

Scott Malcolm (SM) (Chair)	CVS Falkirk and District
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Caroline Storey (CS)	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Geoff Reid (GR)	SACRO
Julian Crispin (JC)	C-Change
John McGhee (JM)	Scottish Seniors Computer Club Falkirk
Jim Thompson (JT)	Falkirk and District Association Mental Health (FDAMH)
Katie Hopkins (KH)	PLUS Forth Valley
Kelly Smith (KS)	Dates N Mates
Lynsey Hansford (LH)	CVS Falkirk and District
Sue Bytheway (SB)	Cyrenians
Sandy Hunter (SH)	Loretto Housing Association
Sam Jelf (SJ)	Families Outside
Sandra McGregor (SMc)	U3A Falkirk and Age Concern Falkirk

Apologies:

Arlene Bowmaker	Life Fit Physiotherapy
Carol Bell	Scottish Canals
Debbie Jupp	Committed to Ending Abuse (CEA)
Janine Rennie	Wellbeing Scotland
Kate Hughes	Denny and Dunipace Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
Lisa Robertson	British Heart Foundation
Roy Kerr	Scottish Seniors Computer Club Falkirk



Sandra Lyon

Tamara Horton
Vicki Ferguson

The Conservation
Volunteers (TCV)
Falkirk Community Trust
Forth Environment Link

1. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed forum members to the meeting and introductions were made. The apologies were noted as above.

2. Review of Previous Minutes

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the previous meeting.

2.1 Minutes of the Meeting on 1.5.2019 – Matters Arising

3.2 Forth Valley Sensory Centre

An update on Tamara Horton's action to contact CS regarding sensory awareness sessions will be carried over to the next meeting in October.

Action: Tamara Horton to contact CS regarding sensory awareness sessions.

3.3 PLUS Forth Valley

An update on GR's action to contact PLUS Forth Valley regarding a potential volunteer will be carried over to the next meeting in October.

Action: GR to contact PLUS Forth Valley regarding a potential volunteer.

These minutes were agreed as accurate by the forum members.

3. Third Sector Partner Updates

3.1 Loretto Care

SH's remit focuses on homelessness services; Loretto Care has 3 building-based services across Falkirk and Grangemouth, with one tenancy sustainment service.

They support roughly 250 people every week; they are keen to recruit volunteers to assist with their services, but also to help the people they support find volunteer roles that best suit them.

3.2 U3A Falkirk and Age Concern Falkirk

Both groups are currently looking for local volunteers to be part of their operational committee or board.

In addition to Age Concern Falkirk's 120 members, they run 25 interest groups, including a choir, keep fit classes, and dancing classes. As part of their policy, they have no paid staff – all of their team are volunteers. It was noted that there may be possible issues around replication of activities and Age Concern groups across Falkirk, and that the committee is looking into this.

Regarding U3A Falkirk (which has been operational in Falkirk for 5 years now), board members are restricted to only 4 years each. The majority of the current board are coming to the end of their 4 years soon.

The Chair reminded members that CVS Falkirk is available to support their organisations and groups in finding volunteers.

3.3 Cyrenians

Cyrenians' next event will be celebrating the restored floral clock in Dollar Park, on Wednesday 31st July. The event is invite-only.

However, the Summer Fete (which takes place on Saturday 17th August, 12pm – 3:30pm at the Walled Garden in Dollar Park, Camelon Road, Falkirk, FK1 5SQ) will be free to attend, (though some activities may charge), and open to all.

There will also be live music, and plants grown in the Walled Garden for sale, along with martial arts, children's games, face-painting, and a Vintage Bike Display. Attendees can also view and learn more about the floral clock.

For further information, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](http://www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk) website.

3.4 Forth Valley Sensory Centre

The centre is currently quiet for the summer, but work has begun on the new community kitchen garden. They have also started new taste schools, which teach young people to grow and cook their own food, especially vegetables.

Next week, they will be launching "urban eye tests" next week, where the idea is that if someone cannot see the clock, they are encouraged to have their eyesight tested.

They are also looking for 3 new volunteers: one based in Stirling, one for their reception desk, and one to assist with the Sensory Centre



website. One of the other forum members noted they may have a potential volunteer for the website.

Action: JM to contact CS regarding a potential website volunteer.

3.5 Dates N Mates

Dates N Mates is new to Falkirk, though not the Forth Valley area. The project is part of C-Change, and operates as Scotland's national dating and friendship agency for adults (over 18 years old) with learning disabilities.

The group is run by users, for users, and organises weekly events, meals, nights out, and for members to visit larger events such as TRNSMT. They are currently looking to raise awareness of the group, and develop their membership and volunteer numbers.

3.6 C-Change

C-Change has been in Falkirk for 2 years, often working one-to-one with their users. They provide outcome-focused personalised support for people with additional support needs, aiming to be creative, flexible and adaptive to the needs of each individual person.

They have experienced challenges in finding volunteers in the past, partly due to the level of commitment required. However, they are about to set up an office in the Callendar Square mall, and will be using this opportunity to take forward a different approach, where they match people to the individual person, then train them with what they need to know about their individual.

3.7 SACRO

In addition to their [various projects and services](#) (including the [Caledonian Work Programme](#), and the [Shine](#) mentoring service), SACRO currently has 4 volunteers undergoing induction. These volunteers will go on to shadow staff members, before being shadowed themselves by the staff. The member noted that, as it is their role to direct the volunteers, identify training and conduct the induction, they personally find it a very rewarding process.

The whole SACRO team will also be attending a Development Day the day after the forum meeting, which takes place at the CVS Falkirk offices.

3.8 Families Outside

Families Outside support families affected by the criminal justice system, especially of those in prison. Families of someone in prison often face social stigma in the community, which can impact on their



financial and mental health. Amongst other support mechanisms, Families Outside provides a helpline for families, as well as their team of one-to-one co-ordinators.

The forum member mentioned that they are currently creating a national volunteering model, to be used throughout the whole organisation, and that they are keen to make connections and begin work in rolling out a new befriending programme across Forth Valley.

3.9 Scottish Seniors Computer Club Falkirk

The Falkirk branch is one of 8 groups, with up to roughly 12 members at any time. With 6 tutor volunteers, this leads to a 1:1 or 1:2 ratio of tutors to members, which they feel is a good balance and allows the volunteers to devote time to the individual members' needs and enquiries. Members also then feel they can drop in and out of the club as they need to.

Group meetings generally consist of problem solving and tutoring, with the occasional presentation on relevant topics, such as cyber security.

3.10 Falkirk District Mental Health Association (FDAMH)

FDAMH is a local mental health association; the forum member's role is to recruit volunteers to support FDAMH's activities. This includes their one-to-one befriender service, but most volunteer with the different groups FDAMH runs.

The member is also responsible for the new community café project, and recruiting volunteers to get involved. Eventually, they hope to expand the project beyond Falkirk into the wider Forth Valley area. Discussion took place around the location of the various cafes participating in the project, and the difficulty in writing a volunteer role for the project, given the balance between a paid role and a volunteer role. Members also discussed how best to ask for feedback from the people who benefitted from the project, the logistics and the nature of the volunteers' role in this instance.

It was noted that there has been some difficulty in finding men to volunteer; some discussion took place around whether this is to do with some of the stigma around mental health in men, and in general. The forum member is keen to develop a regular flow of local volunteers, including men.

4. Update from CVS Falkirk

The Chair informed the forum of the following resources from the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO):



- the new Good Governance Checkup Tool, designed to use in conjunction with the [Scottish Governance Code for the Third Sector](#), in order to help new trustees review their governance; for further information, visit the [CVS Falkirk](#) website
- the Cyber Resilience and Cyber Essentials Grants, a rolling grant scheme delivered with Scottish Government to help third sector improve their cyber resilience and achieve cyber resilience accreditation and training; for further information, visit the [SCVO](#) website.

5. “Write the Right Roles”: How to Write Appealing Volunteer Role Descriptors

LH delivered a workshop on writing the volunteer role descriptor or advert which best suited and described an opportunity, but was also engaging and to the point, in order to “attract the right volunteers for the right roles.” The workshop also touched on volunteer retention, and long term roles versus short term roles.

Members were given example volunteer role descriptors in order to discuss errors and issues within (both obvious and less apparent), and to highlight what works well.

The following key points were noted during workshop discussions:

- Where do volunteers come from? Is recruitment a strategic operation, or do they come to the organisation organically? Is it a new role, or has it been “revamped”?
- The difference between building the role around an individual, or finding a volunteer for a specific role, and the benefits to both generic and specific role descriptors (as with Dates N Mates).
- Issues around job replacement, and why clarity is required around the role descriptor and person specification.
- The balance of benefit between the organisation and the volunteer.
 - LH noted that this is very much about context, especially in circumstances where the organisation or group’s whole team is unpaid (highlighting Age Concern Falkirk as an example).
 - Members also discussed the difference between hours for volunteers and employees, what organisations could reasonably expect to be done in those hours, which again crossed into issues around job replacement.
- The difference between, and importance of, work experience and training available.
- How constraints on time (both the volunteer’s and the role’s) may impact on those interested and able to volunteer.



- Is your opportunity (as described in the role descriptor) something a volunteer would want to do?
 - Members were asked to consider why their current volunteers were with their organisation or group, and would they want to take part in the role? Answers included:
 - pre-existing (often, but not necessarily, positive) personal connections
 - physical presence in their area (such as a charity shop or an office)
 - similarity to their previous roles, either as a volunteer, at work or in their personal lives
 - as a pathway to their chosen career, or at least gaining experience in that field
 - having received support and wanting to offer the same
 - looking to give back their community of choice
- Retention – how do organisations measure this, and why it is often the key to going forward.
 - At this point, members discussed the idea of a “volunteer bank” (similar to in nursing professions), allowing volunteers to be shared amongst organisations and groups.
- When writing a role descriptor, organisations and groups should think about their cause: is it universal, niche, or even transient? Consider who they are looking to target and recruit.
 - LH advised members to be honest about their organisation, and how well people understand what they do.
 - One member mentioned that they often find this to be an even split, as their cause, the attraction of volunteering with them, completely puts off some people, and yet is exactly what others are looking for.
 - There was quick discussion around students as volunteers, their ability to commit due to external factors (exams and assignments, moving on from area) versus the benefit of knowing when these factors are likely to occur.
- What perks do organisations and groups offer their volunteers? Do they offer training, experience, or a reference? Do volunteers benefit from increased social or personal status as a result of their volunteering?

Discussion took place amongst forum members around specific examples within their organisations and groups, and what they considered essentials from volunteers. Commitment was agreed to be one of the most important qualities to the members present.

LH asked members to keep in mind when writing their roles that volunteering is an informal agreement, and should be as flexible and transparent as possible.

The Chair and LH noted that CVS Falkirk has a basic role descriptor available [on their website](#), which organisations and groups can use and build on when creating their own.

6. AOCB

6.1 "Age Is Just A Number" Event, Tuesday 1st October

CVS Falkirk's annual Older People's Day event is returning as "Age Is Just A Number", taking place on Tuesday 1st October, 10am – 2pm at Falkirk Trinity Church, Manse Place, Falkirk, FK1 1JN.

The Church is a short walk from the High Street, Howgate Shopping Centre, and the bus hub at Newmarket Street.

This year, there is a new focus on "Keeping Safe and Well in Your Community"; confirmed activities and guests include the return of ever-popular blood pressure and hearing checks, along with Police Scotland and their fake ATM machine. Attendees will also be able to learn about details on how to find healthy walking and social groups from Braveheart, find opportunities for participation in lifelong learning from U3A Falkirk, and speak with the team from Forth Valley Sensory Centre's new "Making Sense of Energy Saving" project.

The event is open to everyone, no matter their age – whether they want to find out more about ATM fraud and scam awareness, start on some positive forward planning around Power of Attorney for themselves or any of their loved ones, or just want to know more about what's available in Falkirk for them, their parents, grandparents, or anyone they care for.

Members who are interested in having a stall at the event were encouraged to contact LJ by phone: 01324 692003, or email: laura@cvsfalkirk.org.uk

Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 30th October 2019, 10am – 12pm, CVS Falkirk offices.

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