



COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum
Wednesday 3rd February 2021
3pm – 5pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Claire Bernard (CB) (Chairperson)	CVS Falkirk and District
Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)	CVS Falkirk and District
Scott Malcolm (SM)	CVS Falkirk and District
Alan Grey (AIG)	Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
Allan Robertson (AR)	Social Security Scotland
Angela Bradley (AB)	Kersiebank Community Project (KCP)
Angela Smith (AS)	Corra Foundation – Dawson Centre
Anne Montgomery (AM)	Dennyloanhead Community Centre
Arlene Graham (ArG)	ROOTS
Calum Renton (CR)	Denny and Dunipace CAB
Claire Houston (CH)	NHS Forth Valley
Dave Cameron (DC)	Avonbridge Hall
Donald Johnston (DJ)	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Donald Park (DP)	Forth Valley Voluntary Sector Group
Duncan Hearsom (DH)	Dial-a-Journey
Donna Laidlaw (DL)	Community Link Worker (Strathcarron Hospice)
Geoff Reid (GR)	SACRO Forth Valley
Hannah Gray (HG)	Strathcarron Hospice
Iain Goodall (IG)	Camelon Community Hub
James Bell (JB)	LGBT Youth Scotland
Janine ?	Symington Drive Residents' Association
Jennifer Cochrane (JC)	ROOTS
Jessie Anne Malcolm (JM)	NHS Forth Valley
John Hosie (JH)	Our Place Camelon and Tamfourhill
John Tonner (JT)	Community Focus Scotland CIC
Kate Hughes (KH)	Denny and Dunipace CAB
Lorraine Ferguson (LF)	Dennyloanhead Community Centre
Maggie McAlpine (MM)	Central Advocacy Partners
Mairi Wright (MW)	NHS Forth Valley
Maria Ferrari (MF)	Cyrenians
Martin Allen (MA)	Forth Valley Sensory Centre
Martin Kenny (MK)	Royal Voluntary Service Forth Valley
Narek Bido (NB)	Addictions, Support & Counselling (ASC)
Richard McLennan (RM)	Falkirk Safebase
Sandra Lyon (SL)	The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
Stuart Irwin (SI)	Falkirk Council



Susan Docherty (SD)

Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers
Centre

Tariq Mahmood (TM)

CVS Falkirk

Winnie Delaney (WD)

Aberlour

Yvonne McIntosh (YM)

Maggie's Forth Valley

1. Welcome and Introductions

CB introduced herself, welcomed forum members present and advised the meeting was recorded via Zoom. Introductions were made via the Zoom chat function.

2. Review of Previous Minutes (Wednesday 20/1/2021)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting, with the following updates:

- 2.1 "Action: CVS Falkirk team to create and share one document with food providers' organisation contact details; all providers present agreed."
 - Carried over to the next meeting.
 - **Action:** SM to complete.
- 4. Vaccines for Carers and Frontline Volunteers: CB has an update from Scottish Government regarding vaccine rollout; due to the length of the document and its appendices, SM will send to the forum this week.
 - **Action:** CB to send update to SM.
 - **Action:** SM to send to forum.
- 3.1 "Forth Giving": CB informed members that Phase Two of the funding was now live and the relevant forms would be available soon.
- 6. "Data and Technology": LJ again confirmed that the UK Government's ["Get Help With Technology" initiative](#) is available throughout the UK, including in Scotland.
- 6. "Action: CB to find out more regarding support for device provision from Scottish Government."
 - Carried over to the next meeting.
 - **Action:** CB to complete.
- 5. "Vitamin D Provision": individuals looking for Vitamin D supplements can now request them through the Support for People line, which will then be fulfilled by RVS Forth Valley, organisations which are food providers and children's services will receive their requested amounts soon.
- 8.5 "National Adult Support Day": the Falkirk programme of events will be available soon; CVS Falkirk will share this through their channels and with members.

3. Community Choices Initiative: Participatory Budgeting in Falkirk

SI gave a presentation on [Community Choices](#), Falkirk Council's new [participatory budgeting](#) initiative, launching on Monday 8th February. The presentation was designed as a brief introduction to the initiative, with an opportunity for questions. Key points included:



- By law, 1% of Scottish local authority budgets is dedicated to participatory budgeting.
- The initiative is focused on working with communities, with communities themselves deciding how this money should be spent in their neighbourhoods. SI is keen for the initiative to be a way to capture local ambition and aspiration.
- There are 3 parts to the initiative:
 - Small Grants: with approximately £10,000 available per Falkirk Council ward, communities and groups can submit proposals of up to £1500.
 - Place Based: £3 million of capital funding is available over 2 years, with applications over £5000 welcomed; this is organised based on child poverty levels in each area, and features two options for communities: community delivery and direct funding, or the ability to direct Falkirk Council's delivery.
 - Mainstreamed Co-design: the plan for year 3 and on, with service review at the heart.
- Community Choices aims to support proposals that can make local areas "Fairer, Healthier, more Connected and more Inclusive".
- Expressions of Interest should be received by **Friday 5th March**, with final applications due Friday 9th April; public voting will open Monday 26th April.
 - Public voting will mostly be online due to COVID-19 restrictions; however, SI noted that the team are looking into other available, safe methods (such as postal voting).
 - A new website will be launched, which will include info on each proposal.
- Application decisions will be made by an [advisory panel](#), with a split between the community and third sector, and council staff.
 - Further information on how to get involved with the advisory panel is available via the CVS Falkirk website.

The presentation is available to view or download as a pdf from the [CVS Falkirk](#) website.

Members then asked a variety of questions, with multiple noting the challenging timescales. SI noted that the initiative was due to begin last year, but was delayed by COVID-19, and elected members are now keen to move forward; however, he did take the point and informed members that support would be available from himself and the rest of the team.

CB pointed out that timescales need to be realistic, as the third sector needs time to organise, and asked that this be taken into consideration in future. Other members agreed, with HG noting that some communities are very organised, but tight timescales could easily perpetuate inequalities, with the most organised



communities possibly the loudest and most successful in the process, and others quieter, more nervous, and possibly missing out.

Other questions included:

- Is this a replacement for other funding, such as Fairer Falkirk?
 - SI believes this is additional, but will confirm; the School Holiday Food Fund and Community Grants are both separate and still ongoing.
 - The [Community Conversations](#), part of the current strategic property review, are also separate.
- Are there any qualifications required to be on the advisory panel?
 - No, this is open to anyone, and they welcome experience over qualifications.
- Can anyone apply with a proposal, including individuals, or do they have to be an established group? Does this group have to be constituted?
 - No to both; Falkirk Council is keen to encourage anyone to submit a proposal.
- What will the reporting process be like?
 - A short form at 6 months into the project, then 12 months.
- Do Expressions of Interest need to include accurate costs?
 - Ideally these should provide an estimated cost, but those interested shouldn't let this put them off; "not sure" would be an acceptable answer at this stage.

Members also spoke about ideas for proposals, with SI highlighting that the capital funding Place Based funding has very clear criteria stating projects must be physical (eg. the funding cannot be used to establish a network). One mentioned that, where projects directly benefit young people and children, it would be good for them to help with the various forms, which SI agreed with.

For further information, including how to submit a proposal, please visit the [Community Choices](#) page, or contact SI by email: stuart.irwin@falkirk.gov.uk

Action: SI to send SM and LJ presentation.

4. Energy Best Deal

CR delivered a presentation on the Energy Best Deal and the support available for people to reduce their energy bills. This presentation is available to view or download as a pdf from the [CVS Falkirk](#) website.

Key points included:

- The definition of "fuel poverty": when a household is spending 10% or more of its income on utilities each month.



- Energy suppliers have a number of requirements they must follow, by law; this includes helping people making their home more energy efficient and reducing their energy bills.
- Five questions when considering how to reduce energy bills and save money:
 1. Would switching supplier(s) save me money?
 2. Am I on the best energy tariff, most suitable for my needs?
 3. Am I on the best payment option?
 4. Could I get a grant to improve the insulation and energy efficiency of my home?
 5. Could I get welfare benefits and could I get the Warm Home Discount?
- Six tips when switching energy providers:
 1. Find your new deal either online, or by contacting suppliers directly.
 2. Contact the supplier to agree new deal.
 3. Make sure you confirm what deal you would like, e.g. the name of the tariff.
 4. You will be sent a contract; check it's correct and the date you change supplier.
 5. Ensure you have paid all outstanding bills with your current supplier.
 6. Take a meter reading on the day you change supplier so you can check your bills.
- There are 6 key schemes designed to provide help:
 - [Priority Services Register](#), especially relevant to homes with vulnerable people
 - [Warm Home Discount](#), for older people and those on certain benefits ([additional information](#) on winter 2020/21 from USwitch)
 - [Winter Fuel Payment](#)
 - [Cold Weather Payment](#)
 - the [Energy Company Obligation](#) (ECO), aiming to help reduce carbon emissions and reduce fuel poverty
 - the [Home Energy Efficiency Programmes for Scotland](#) (HEEPS), currently managed by Home Energy Scotland
- Additional energy saving tips, including taking a shower instead of a bath where possible, avoiding placing furniture in front of radiators, and using a washing up bowl instead of running the tap when washing dishes.
- Home Energy Scotland is available to offer support throughout Scotland, either [online](#) or via their free helpline: 0808 808 2282 (Monday – Friday, 8am – 8pm; Saturday 9am – 5pm)

5. Forth Valley Migrant Support Network

AlG spoke about the Network's key activities and aims, highlighting the work they do with those who have moved to the local area from outside the UK (including those whose first language is not English, and those who did not go through the immigration process).



Amongst other points, AIG dispelled some of the myths around immigration, and noted that “illegal immigrants” cannot receive benefits, unless they have been granted asylum or refugee status. He also described the differences between immigrants, refugees and “ex-pats”, and noted that, “Everyone has prejudice, but how it manifests is what makes you a racist or a bigot.”

Forth Valley Migrant Support Network is also taking part in the Child Poverty Action Group’s (CPAG) initiative, [End Child Poverty This Valentines](#). They will be holding an online meeting via Zoom with local people and groups, and have invited Martyn Day, MP for Falkirk East and Linlithgow, to urge them to act on child poverty.

The meeting takes place at 10am on Wednesday 10th February; those interested in attending should contact AIG by email: info@fvmigrantsupport.com

6. Mental Health MentiMeter

Using MentiMeter, the CVS Falkirk team asked members:

- “What topics do you need more info about?”
- “In relation to mental health issues, what do you need to know more about?”
- “Is there anything else you want from this forum?”

Discussion then took place around the answers provided, with the most common themes including training, signposting, and isolation.

The information in relation to mental health issues will be used to inform planning of an information session for communities to assist them in supporting others with mental health issues. This could be people they work with or their own staff and volunteers. More information will be provided on this soon.

7. Partnership Updates

7.1 Dial-A-Journey

Dial-A-Journey are now offering a prescription collection service for anyone who is struggling to access their pharmacy or prescriptions.

7.2 RVS Forth Valley

RVS Forth Valley is also providing prescription collection, through Support for People; they are also working to support those experiencing difficulties in paying for utilities.

7.3 Forth Valley Voluntary Sector Group

DP informed the forum that the group, who offer support in extreme conditions, has been put on standby regarding emergency response due to expected snow; their 4x4s will be available as needed.

8. CVS Falkirk Updates

CB and LJ provided updates on the following events:

8.1 Forth Valley Third Sector Conference

Booking for the conference (taking place Tuesday 9th February) had closed the evening before; anyone who had experienced any issues in securing their place should contact LJ as soon as possible.

8.2 Falkirk Funders Fayre 2021

CB and LJ confirmed the Falkirk Funders Fayre would be going ahead, though online due to COVID-19 concerns, with an adapted format as a result.

The event will take place via Zoom over 3 days, Tuesday 9th March – Thursday 11th March, with short presentations from different funders and support organisations. As with the physical event, places are completely free, and attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions.

Further information will be released via the [CVS Falkirk website](#), e-bulletin and social media in due course.

**Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 3rd March, 3pm – 5pm
via Zoom**

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