



October 2020

In this issue our longest serving team member Lorna Bryson, who has worked with OPAL for 7½ years, tells us a little about herself.....

My role at OPAL: I am one of three Senior Service Coordinators who recruit and train volunteers, assess clients and match them with a volunteer, deliver groups, link with other local organisations and, best of all, get to see the benefits of how this supports older people in West Lothian to become more active and make new friends.

My best day at work ever: One of our clients who had been working with her volunteer over some time to rebuild her confidence, came to Bathgate by bus on her own and dropped into the office to say hello. It was great to see how the one-to-one support had enabled her to get out and about and be independent. There was no stopping her after that and a few weeks later she popped in to say hello again on one of the wettest and windiest days there was, as she had been shopping in Poundland.

What I enjoy when I'm not at work: Spending time with my family and friends and walking my dog (Archie). I spend a lot of time with my two nephews which usually involves bike riding, playing on the swings, building sand castles, splashing in puddles and just having fun. I fill in the gaps with good books and Netflix.

What I've learned during lockdown: Life is too short and not to take things for granted!



Online Groups



We are continuing to develop our range of online groups to connect as many people as we can. Currently we have three regular groups, with more in the pipeline:

OPAL Zoom Room Wednesdays, 2 – 3 pm Quizzes, activities and chat for all

Musical Memories Thursdays, 2 – 3 pm Dementia friendly

OPAL Kitchen First Monday each month, 2 – 3 pm Cookery demonstrations & tips

All are welcome at any of our groups and help is available for anyone struggling to get online

Embracing Technology: FABLink

One of our new initiatives is for anyone over 60 in the Fauldhouse and Breich Valley area to help them keep in touch with friends and family. Support is available for getting online, video calling, using email or buying a new phone or computer. This project is funded by a Small Grant from the Tormywheel Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund.

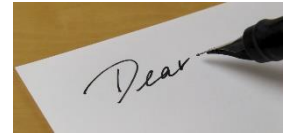


OPAL by Numbers



Keeping in Touch

We recognise that some people may not want to use technology and we are continuing to help people to engage in more traditional ways. Our volunteers are making regular calls to all our clients, our Blether Buddies and Mail Mates are going strong and some of our clients and volunteers are participating in a UK-wide Creative Postcard Exchange project coordinated by Befriending Lewis and Harris and a pen-pal exchange in England.



Doorstep Visits



Our volunteers and staff are making doorstep and garden visits, an opportunity to see a friendly face and have a wee chat. We'll continue this in line with current regulations and with safe social distancing as long as the weather allows.

Community Links

We're continuing to extend links within our local community including Hope Scotland CIC who made us some wonderful painted stones and Narrowboat Farm who gave us some Veg Growing Starter Kits to deliver to our clients. We're also working alongside the Health and Social Care Alliance Scotland so that our clients can input to the Mobilisation Recovery Group and we continue to work closely with Carers of West Lothian and Alzheimer Scotland to support those people with Dementia and their carers.



OPAL Volunteers



Our incredible volunteers continue to support our clients with regular telephone calls, doorstep visits where possible and by participating in our Zoom groups. We also have a Virtual Coffee Morning for volunteers on the first Friday of every month at 11.00 am which is a great opportunity to catch up.

Our volunteer training courses are now delivered online and so far have included Core Skills, Mental Health Awareness, Diabetes Awareness, Deaf Action and Dementia Friends.

Coming Soon

It is important that we respond to the evolving landscape of this Coronavirus pandemic and we're continuing to plan new initiatives to meet the changing needs of our clients.

Coming up in the autumn we have an exciting virtual event "Tea in the House" on Wednesday 21st October with music and activities, themed activities at our regular groups such as Halloween storytelling and new groups including a travel interest group: OPAL Around the World.

Look out for our Winter Programme which we'll be sharing soon.

And Finally...

A quote from one of our clients: ***"I feel part of the world again"***

This is why we do what we do

The Cyrenians OPAL Staff Team are:

Pauline Moffat - Service Manager
Lorna Bryson - Senior Service Coordinator
Jane McColl - Senior Service Coordinator
Billie Skene - Senior Service Coordinator
Naomi Williams - Service Support Assistant
Sylvia Forshaw - Administrator and Service Support
Peter MacLeod - Communications and Systems Support Officer
Sandy Stewart - Groups Support Assistant
June Gilfether - Groups Support Assistant

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Scottish Charity Number: SC011052