



Connecting the Community

SCOTTISH CHARITY SC013502

Annual Report 2023—2024



LINLITHGOW LINK STRUCTURE

Linlithgow Link was established in 1979. It is a voluntary unincorporated organisation governed by a constitution which was revised and adopted in August 2014.

The Chairman, Office Bearers and Committee Members are appointed annually and are elected at the Annual General Meeting in August each year.

The Management Committee are the formal trustees responsible for overseeing the proper governance of Link and usually meets bi-monthly.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - MAXIMUM OF 10

Office Bearers: Chairman - Tom Kerr
Treasurer - Allan Scott
Secretary - Fiona McClay

Ordinary members - Appointed August 2023: Vera Ainsworth, Iain McDowell, Sammy McKee, Myra Steel, Sue Vizzard (Chris Horn later resigned)

LINLITHGOW LINK MISSION STATEMENT

Linlithgow Link aims to provide a voluntary service to promote the concept of a more caring community, particularly within Linlithgow by:

- Providing a visiting and car service as voluntary back up support to the statutory caring services
- Providing support for all identified sectors of the community, particularly the elderly infirm, in the form of social or community activity
- Addressing needs on an individual basis
- Raising awareness of the needs of these sectors of the community
- Promoting and publicising Link and the contribution it makes to the community
- At all times, working in partnership with Linkers, and the statutory and voluntary agencies

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Linlithgow Link, Chairmans Annual Report 2024

The last year has seen Linlithgow Link back to normal operation with a small increase in the requests for car services and new clients. We continue to provide transport to and from Hospitals and the Health Centre, picking up prescriptions and delivering to clients as required.

The Tuesday Group are enjoying meeting up again as usual and a big thank you to Barbara and all the volunteers who continue to make it a success. The Caring Café again is a bit slower to recover from the pandemic but we will continue to work with Alziehmer's Scotland to support this service.

Our Befriending service continues by telephone and home visits with an increase in requests and we have been successful in recruiting new volunteers and are always looking to recruit more Volunteers Befrienders.

Funding is always an issue for voluntary groups including Link. Unfortunately, our previous annual Grant assistance from West Lothian Council has been removed. We have endeavoured to apply to other Council funds without success. On a more positive note we have been fortunate to receive one off support from other Funders. I must thank our Treasurer and other Committee members for their efforts. I also thank all the individuals and local groups who have supported Linlithgow Link. It demonstrates the high regard that Link has within the Linlithgow community.

During my time as Chairman of Link, I have been lucky to have a great Committee to work with. We have new members that have joined in the last year and compliment and bring new experiences to the Committee. A high thanks to all the Committee Members, leaders of the various groups and our volunteers.

To our Co-ordinators Irene and Marion who have built up a great relationship with the Linlithgow Community and kept the office fully operational throughout the last year. I thank them both.

Finally, we are always looking for new Committee members and volunteers and would appreciate if anyone knows of someone who may be interested.

Tom Kerr
Chairman

TREASURER'S STATEMENT

ACCOUNTING PRACTICES / POLICIES

The Receipts and Payments accounts, issued separately, have been prepared on a cash basis in accordance with OSCR [the Scottish Charity Regulator] guidance as the charity's annual income is less than £250,000.

Three months salaries, including employer's national insurance contributions and pension commitments are held as an operational reserve.

Where donations or grants have been received for a specific purpose i.e. not normal running costs, these are identified as separate restricted funds.

Other balances can be used for any of the charity's objectives.

DONATED FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Most significant are the teams of volunteers who deliver the Car Service, provide the Befriending Service and support the activities for the weekly Tuesday Group. In addition, there is the time and expertise of the management committee who are the formal Trustees of the charity.

The facilities used by the Link Tuesday Group (Bield West Port), the Queen Margaret Hall used by the Caring Café.

Linlithgow Link Running Costs and Funding

Annual running costs for Link are now in the region of £31,000 - roughly 60% of which is staff costs and 20% is cost of the office.

Our grant funding agreement with West Lothian Council stopped last year and the prospects of receiving future funding from them are limited.

General Reserves were boosted during 2023/24 by receipt of a £20,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund. We will not know until later in the year whether we can apply again for similar funding - whilst hopeful, there is no guarantee of success.

Income on donations from individuals and local organisations along with our own fund-raising activities usually provides around £10,000 per annum.

Whilst we will continue to explore other grant funding streams it is likely we will have to use part our available reserves, currently standing at £46,600, to fund an anticipated deficit in 2024/25.

SUMMARY OF LINK ACTIVITIES 2023—2024

Our Services

Our services are open to people living in the Linlithgow and Linlithgow Bridge area.

Requests for our car and caring services can be made by social workers, GPs and other health professionals and by those wishing to use our service themselves or by a family member phoning on their behalf.

Our car service takes members of our community, who are unable to use public transport by virtue of age, infirmity or disability, to health appointments.

Our caring service aims to increase wellbeing by bringing people together at our befriending groups, on our outings, at our Burns Lunch and through various other activities.

Clients registered to use any of Link Services	221
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Car Services

Our volunteer drivers use their own vehicles to carry out car services. Service users make a payment of 45p per mile directly to the driver. This charge covers petrol, insurance etc. The service user will be advised of the cost prior to undertaking the journey. A return journey to St Johns, for example, costs £9.00.

The following are the statistics for the year April 2023 to March 2024

Clients who benefited from all our services (on multiple occasions)	121
Car Journeys carried out	175
Service referrals from Social Work/Medical Establishments	9
Volunteers Registered (in total across all services)	43

Service users comments about the Link during 2023—2024

I enjoy the Tuesday Group very much, I met up with my friends and we have a tea and cake and a chance for a chat and enjoyed our outing to the Tee Caddy

Another visit to McKinnon Mill, nice lunch and a chance for a bit of shopping. So enjoyable

The Volunteers and staff are so helpful, couldn't do without you

The Link staff and volunteers do a great job, friendly and courteous, and will go out of their way to help in any way they can

Thanks to all the Volunteers who go to such lengths to ensure our wellbeing and safety in bringing us to these uplifting occasions

CARING SERVICES

The caring services provided by Link come in many forms:

Caring Café

The Caring Café is held the third Wednesday of each month for anyone suffering from Dementia or memory loss, family members or carers are also welcome. A member of staff from Alzeihmers Scotland also attends and can provide advise and support. Refreshments are served while enjoying some light entertainment.

Befriending

Due to demand we have recruited a few more befrienders during the last year, Our befrienders will either pop in for a chat or call their clients on a weekly basis. Our befrienders find it rewarding and generally every quarter the befrienders meet up and get a chance to get to know each other and share experiences.

Tuesday Group

The Group meet most Tuesday afternoons in Bield West Port. Link volunteers take house-bound members of the community to meet with the residents of Bield West Port and the group enjoy a varied programme of events. It is very popular and we currently have a waiting list. During the last year the group have gone out for afternoon tea, folk singing, story telling, prize bingo, flower arranging demonstrations, cycling without age where the clients have enjoyed a trip on the trishaw bike, craft work. A group of dedicated volunteers make this group possible and provide transport for clients. Currently between 18—22 attending each week .

Burns Lunch

We held our Burns Lunch at Linlithgow Golf Club which was enjoyed by everyone. Raised £152.00 in the raffle.

Outing to McKinnon Mill

Due to popular demand we returned to McKinnon Mill which was well attended. Those who attended enjoyed a light lunch and were able to do a bit of shopping. An ideal venue as it is all under the one roof. An enjoyable day out for everyone.

Easter and Winter gifts

Our Easter and Winter gift projects target households where people are mainly house-bound. At Easter, Link organised the distribution of a box of Easter Cakes and an Easter Card to such 50 households. And at Christmas, distributed a tin of shortbread along with a Christmas Card. The children from the local primary schools prepared the lovely greetings cards. From the correspondence and calls to the office, we know that these gifts are greatly appreciated.

Christmas Lunch

The Link organised a Christmas Lunch for the Tuesday Group and guests at Linlithgow Golf Club during the month of December. An excellent lunch was provided by the Wee White Dog caterers and the service was first class. Despite the weather being dreadful that day, everyone was in high spirits and thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

FUNDRAISING

50/50 Prize Draw

November 2023 saw the seventeenth year of our 50/50 prize draw. Half of the money raised goes to the prize fund and the other half to Link's funds - hence 50/50.

For the year ending March 2024, £682.50 was raised for Link funds with the same amount being awarded in prize money although some of that was generously returned to Link as donations.

The prize draw is a valuable part of our fundraising strategy. Memberships will be due for renewal in October 2024 at a cost of £12. Details of how to join can be obtained by speaking to one of the Co-ordinator's today or by calling the Link Office.

Xmas Fayre

The Link organised a stall at the Christmas Fair. A tombola was held along with the sale of home made tablet (which was a great seller) A total of £593.00 was made.

Donations

Between April 2023 and March 2024 donations were received from various local organisations and individual members of the community. To everyone who donated, whether large or small, please accept our heartfelt thanks and appreciation. Every donation is welcome and helps Link to continue to provide the services already mentioned in this report.



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LINK OFFICE

Link Co-ordinators – Marion Fleming and Irene Mulholland

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Email: co-ordinator@linlithgowlink.org.uk

Website: www.linlithgowlink.org.uk

The Link Office is open Monday to Friday from 9.30 – 12.30
Answering machine out with these hours