



# Fife Carers Centre *Newsletter*

Huge thanks to John Taylor of St Leonards School in St Andrews, John Taylor of the Kirkcaldy Lions as well as Jean Croly and the Tuesday Club, Helen Guild and the Kirkcaldy branch of the RSCDS, who are all fundraisers for Fife Carers Centre - read more about how the money will be used on page 2.



## **Making your voice heard – speak up loudly and often!**

By the time this newsletter reaches you the UK general election will be over, the dust will have settled, the soap boxes will have been dismantled and there will be a new UK Government in power.

It was encouraging to hear the party leaders (two of whom are, or have been, parent carers themselves) speak about the importance of supporting carers during their first televised election debate, but it's up to people like you and us to make sure they remember their pledges of support in the future, so if the opportunity arises again for you to point out to local or national politicians what caring means for you - please take it! It has been our experience that unless they have been carers themselves (and sometimes even when they have been), they have very little idea about what being a carer actually means.

It is really important that carers' voices are heard. A great many of the matters that affect carers come under the Scottish Parliament but benefits and the amount of funding available to the Scottish Parliament are decided by Westminster. All those who decide policies here or in Westminster need to be continually reminded of the contribution made by carers to our society.



## **Carers Week 2010**

### **READ ALL ABOUT IT!!**

This year's theme is "A Life of my own" ... and we're

**making it all about you!**

See page 3 for details of events and activities and find out how you can join in!

## **Health Board Elections - support for caring candidates!**

NHS Fife are also having elections to their Board and have sent us an article which you can find on page 4. Again these elections are very important because we have the possibility of electing someone to the board of NHS Fife who might really understand what it means to be a carer. We urge you to read the statements that the candidates give and to use your vote to vote in someone who will champion the cause of carers.

We see this as a great opportunity to have carers' interests represented at the very highest level of NHS Fife and with that in mind we would like to draw your attention to two candidates we are supporting - you can find out more about them on page 4 of this newsletter.

There may be other candidates standing who are caring for someone so please read the candidates statements so that you can make an informed choice and vote for someone who will represent not just the interests of everyone in Fife but also be tuned in to carers needs in particular.



The Princess Royal Trust

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### **How do we help carers?**

We offer carers in Fife the following services:

Up to date information & support.

Benefit Checks

Training Workshops & Information Seminars.

Carer Support Groups.

Complementary Therapies.

... as well as a warm welcome, listening ear and a delicious cup of tea!

### **Fife Carer Centre staff are:**

**Mary Stewart -**

Centre Manager

**Mhairi Lochhead -**

Carer Support Worker

**Cindy Souter -**

Carer Support Worker

**Grant Kidd -**

Carer Support Worker

**Angela Angel -**

Administrator/Finance Officer

**Irene Jones -**

Administration Assistant

**Lesley Childs -**

Information Officer

### **Our drop in Opening times are**

*Monday* 9.30 - 1.00

*Tuesday* 9.30 - 4.30

*Wednesday* 9.30 - 1.00

*Thursday* 9.30 - 6.30

*Friday* 9.30 - 4.00

**See you soon!**

This Newsletter is published quarterly by The Princess Royal Trust Fife Carers Centre, 157 Commercial Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 2NS. Please contact us if you have any articles you would like to contribute or if you would like your details added to our mailing list.

## **Coming up this year**

It's been a busy time for us so far this year! – we've seen more than 98 new carers each month (two years ago we averaged about 40 new carers a month) as well as continuing to see those we're already working with. To help us reach out and help carers with information and advice on a range of topics we've been working with specialist nurses and other organisations to develop a range of information workshop sessions about caring for someone. These workshop sessions will be in the late summer, early autumn and will continue into next year. Included in the programme of sessions will be some which are for male carers only – details of the workshops and sessions will be included in the next issue of the Newsletter and you'll be able to book for any of these through Fife Carers Centre.

## **Feedback – the breakfast of champions!**

We're always being asked by various NHS or Social Work departments to gather feedback from carers about aspects of work being carried out or carers experiences of services and so on. We think it's important that this feedback is given so that it helps the services better meet the needs of both service users and their carers – but it is difficult for us to quickly gather up feedback so... we have a cunning plan!!

We will form a "Carers Consultation Group" consisting of 12 carers from all over Fife who have different experiences of caring. The group will meet 4 times a year and review any submissions for feedback and then have a nice meal together! The feedback will be put together by Fife Carers Centre and sent on to the department that requested it. We hope that by doing this we will always be able to provide worthwhile feedback that makes a difference. If you would like to be part of this group please telephone Lesley on 01592 642999 or email her on [lesley@fifecarers.co.uk](mailto:lesley@fifecarers.co.uk).

## **Stuff for Sale**

The following items have been offered for sale – please call us for further information and contact details.

Easybather bath lift by Aquasoothe - £600.

Straight stairlift 13 step left hand side fitting – price negotiable

Straight stairlift 13 step right hand side fitting – price negotiable

Adjustamatic electric chair with massage facility and heating £300

Large single electric bed with massage facility £300.

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# **Yahoo! It's Carers Week again!**

We really have gone to town this year with Carers Week. We think the theme "A life of my own" is an excellent one and we decided it gives an ideal opportunity to help carers find out more about getting into employment, adding to their education, knowledge and experience and rediscovering hobbies and interests or perhaps finding new ones. We also wanted to include aspects of how to help carers find the time and confidence to leave the person they care for whilst they have some time to themselves. With all this in mind we have a range of events taking place as part of Carers Week.



*Carers enjoying a delicious lunch at last year's event*

Don't forget if you'd like to come along but have problems with respite or transport to allow you to be there - give us a call and we'll see what we can do to help.

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June** we have the first of our Drop in Information Days for Carers in the Scores Hotel in St Andrews – you'll find stalls from various agencies giving information and advice as well as 2 seminars. One seminar will be on "Administration for carers" and one on "Spotting signs of stress and dealing with it effectively". Anyone can attend and have a look around at the information stalls, but as the seminars are for up to 15 people only, booking is needed – you should find a booking form enclosed but if not please give us a call and we'll take your details.

**On Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June** - A Keep Well Clinic being held in Fife Carers Centre. There will be a nurse on hand to check your basic health and give you advice on how to stay healthy. There are appointments throughout the day and into the early evening and you can book your appointment by telephoning us on 01592 642999.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June** Pop in to the Telecare house at Park Road in Kirkcaldy for information about Telecare products and services and to see them in action – it's very interesting and gives you a really good idea of how they can help you. One of Fife Carer Centre's staff will also be around to talk to.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June** sees our main Carers Week Information and Celebration Event at Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline. There will be a range of interesting activities to take part in as well as information stands about hobbies & interests, getting back to work and adding to your knowledge. The lunch at the Centre is always outstanding. There are 80 places which will be allocated on a first come first served basis so book your place using the form enclosed and get it in quick!

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June** Fife Adult Protection Committee has created an exciting and innovative free conference for service users and carers. It takes place at the Dean Park Hotel, Kirkcaldy on 17th June from 9.30am - 3.30pm. Booking is required, see page 5 for details.

**Also on Thursday 17th June** Inverkeithing Medical Group are hosting a Carers Drop in Coffee morning between 10.30am and 12.30pm in The Ballast Bank community centre in Inverkeithing. Lesley from Fife Carers Centre, as well as someone from the practice, will be there to listen to carers, take feedback back to the practice, and let carers know how the practice aims to support them. Lorna Bateman will be giving advice on stress management and relaxation for carers. We hope you'll come along for the whole time but if you want to drop in for part of the morning you'd be most welcome.

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June** we have the second of our Drop in Information Days for Carers in the Rothes Halls in Glenrothes – you'll find stalls from various agencies giving information and advice as well as 2 seminars. One seminar will be on "Administration for carers" and one on "Spotting signs of stress and dealing with it effectively". Anyone can attend and have a look around at the information stalls, but as the seminars are for up to 15 people only, booking is needed – you should find a booking form enclosed but if not please give us a call and we'll take your details.

All of the events are free to attend and we're sure you'll find something of use or interest to you so please come along – we'd love to see you!

## Health Board Elections

The parliamentary election is not the only opportunity that people in Fife will have to vote in 2010. Look out for the ballot papers for the Health Board elections!

NHS Fife is one of only two Boards in Scotland that have been chosen to be a pilot site for Health Board election. This is a new way of giving members of the public a say directly on who should be at the Board-level of an NHS organisation.

The election is by postal ballot. Ballot papers are being issued round about 10th May and have to be returned by 10th June. For the first time 16 and 17 years olds who are on the electoral register will be able to vote.

At present NHS Boards are appointed by the Scottish Government. There are different types of Board Members. These include what are called stakeholder members, that is, people representing our staff organisations or our clinical forum or nominated by Fife Council. They include the senior managers of the organisation like the Chief Executive or the Nurse Director. They include people appointed from outside who bring to the Board, as Non-Executive Members, skills and experience they have gained from other organisations and careers.

An elected Fife NHS Board will consist of:

12 directly elected Non-Executive Members

12 Members appointed by Scottish Ministers (including the Chairperson, Non-Executive Members, Stakeholder Members and Executive Members)

1 Councillor Member nominated by Fife Council

This will achieve the Scottish Government's objective that over half of the Board members will be elected. As at present, all Board members will be expected to work together on behalf of the population of Fife as a whole and to be accountable to the Scottish Government for the delivery of its health policy.

So please – look out for the ballot papers coming through your door and make your choice of candidate! Two of the candidates with a strong interest in representing carers interests are Dawn Norton and Lesley Childs.

Dawn told us "I am a single parent of two teenage boys. I am also a full time carer for one of my sons, who has profound special needs. I was born and brought up in Fife.

I have had contact with various services within health in relation to my son and other members of my family. My experience has been both positive and negative and I now feel strongly that I wish to be involved in promoting the best possible health for all in Fife. I believe that my experience of caring for my son will bring a different aspect to the board although I am very aware of the need for impartiality and objectivity. My caring responsibilities prevent me taking up employment at the moment but I am keen to make a significant contribution to my community."

Lesley is the Information Officer at Fife Carers Centre and in common with all the staff here has some caring experience herself. In addition to that she has lots of experience of working in committee led and monitored activity, having previously worked with the military and now with both NHS Fife and Fife Social Work since she began work with us. She feels this experience gives her the confidence to speak up and put across points effectively. She told us "I feel it's important that carers have a clear voice speaking out and representing their interests at this level and my work and life experiences mean I have knowledge and understanding that will help others understand what "Partners in Care" really means for carers and those they interact with."

## Supporting carers of older people.

According to Scottish Government statistics, one in eight people in Scotland provide unpaid care at any one time and over half a million of those are providing care to someone outside their own home. It's estimated that in Fife there are around 42,500 unpaid carers – that's more than the population of Glenrothes! Many of those being cared for are over 65 and there is now a service called Care Information Scotland which is a telephone and website service providing information about care services for older people living in Scotland. On their website you will find information about:

- Support for carers - services and support to help unpaid carers
- Care needs assessment - why do you need one?
- Care at home - services to assist you while living at home
- Supported housing - services and adaptations to support independent living
- Care homes - places to live which offer full-time care. What are the options for finding and paying for a care home?
- Your rights - what rights do you have?
- Advice and support - organisations that can offer information and assistance

If you would prefer to talk to someone, please call their helpline on 08456 001 001 (calls charged at local rate). If English is not your first language, a translation service called Language Line is used which can provide someone to translate between you and the helpline staff member.

## Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

We've been very lucky to be picked as the recipient of some donations from fundraising activities. John Taylor, who is a carer and teacher at St Leonard's school in St Andrews, raised money with a sponsored beard shave in front of the school assembly, Lesley went along and spoke about the role of carers and how we support them and would like to thank the staff and students for the very warm welcome and generosity, not to mention John who is now beardless for the first time in 13 years!

John Taylor from the Kirkcaldy & District Lions has nominated Fife Carers Centre to receive the money raised from their Charity Big Band Night that will be taking place on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May between 7.30 & 11.30 pm in the Templehall community Centre in Kirkcaldy. Tickets are £10 and money raised will come to Fife Carers Centre and you can find out more or buy tickets by calling 01592 200650.

Jean Croly had nominated Fife Carers Centre to receive the donation from the Line Dancing social club group she attends and we were really impressed to receive £243 from them – Yeeha! Thanks guys!

Thanks also to Helen Guild who collected a donation of £61 for Fife Carers Centre at the AGM of the Kirkcaldy branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dancing Society.

The money raised from all the fundraising activities is going to be put towards the cost of the alternative and complementary therapists that we use at the centre to deliver relaxation and stress management therapy sessions to carers – and any of you who have enjoyed one of these sessions so far will know how wonderful they are!



*John Taylor – beard on...*



*John Taylor – beard off!*

### **Gonnae no dae that! Stop Harm - Speak Up**

Fife Adult Protection Committee has created an exciting and innovative free Conference for Service Users and Carers. It takes place at the Dean Park Hotel, Kirkcaldy on 17th June from 9.30am - 3.30pm. Come along and have your say!

Work to protect adults at risk of harm in Fife is going from strength to strength. The Conference will give you more information about Adult Protection and how services in Fife are working together to protect adults at risk of harm. Carers & Service users from any of the following groups can go along:

Learning disability, Physical disability, Mental health service users, Older people.

Why should I go? You can make your voice heard; Give your opinions and ideas; Find out more about the Adult Protection Committee and the work it is doing in Fife; Meet other service users and carers; Help to influence Fife's Act Against Harm' campaign

At the Conference there will be a Keynote Speaker, uplifting and energising sounds from 'Buddybeat', interesting workshops and discussions to join in and a chance to share ideas and opinions

How do I book my place?

You can phone Helen King on 08451 55 55 55 ext 441924 and she will send you a booking form in the post or download a booking form from [fifedirect.org.uk/adult-protection/conference](http://fifedirect.org.uk/adult-protection/conference).

### **Calling all carers of adults with a learning disability!!**

The "Same As You" definition of an adult with a learning disability is "a significant, life-long condition that started before adulthood, that affected their development and which means they need help to understand information, learn skills and cope independently".

If you're a carer of an adult with a learning disability, then NHS Fife would like to hear from you. They would like you to tell them what you think good health means to the person you care for.

They propose to arrange group discussions lasting no longer than an hour. The dates, times and venues have to be confirmed. The information you share will help them know what's working well and also help identify areas for improvement. All the information you give will be recorded anonymously.

If you would like to be involved in any of the group discussions then they would be delighted to hear from you. If you would like to note your interest or require further information please contact Julie Burza, Health Promotion Officer on 01383 565334 or email her at

[Julie.Burza@nhs.net](mailto:Julie.Burza@nhs.net)

## Support Groups in Fife

There's a good number of support groups in Fife catering for people affected by a wide variety of conditions and many of them welcome carers along as well as the person affected by the condition. We're always interested to hear from these groups so that we can pass on the information about them to carers and those they care for.

So it was great to hear from Moira Pillans about a new support group that she is involved in - The Hypermobility Syndrome Association (HMSA) has a network of local groups around the country which get together for coffee and a chat. They are also a useful means of finding out about the support available in your local area or as means of raising awareness of HMS. The Fife group has just had its first meeting and will be meeting in future between 12 noon and 2pm on the last Saturday of each month in Hayfield House (at Victoria Hospital) in Kirkcaldy. If you'd like to know more please contact Moira Pillans on 01592 569184 or by email to [fife@hypermobility.org](mailto:fife@hypermobility.org)

## Carer credits available from April

From April carers caring for 20 hours per week or more can apply for Carer's Credit to protect their State Pension - both the Basic and State Second Pension. The new changes to National Insurance (NI) contributions will benefit carers in a number of caring situations including those caring for more than one person, situations where there is more than one carer involved or carers who are supporting someone who refuses to claim disability benefits. To order a booklet which explains the changes in more detail please contact Carers UK on 0808 808 7777 or download a pdf version at the Carers UK website.

## Sharing experiences of health and illness

Healthtalkonline is an award winning charity website that lets you share in other people's experiences of health and illness. You can watch or listen to videos of the interviews, read about people's experiences and find reliable information about conditions, treatment choices and support. Why would you want to do that? Well, often people find a great deal of comfort in finding out that their own experiences are shared by others; it often helps to know that others felt the way you feel now or have stories which might help prepare you for a future event. You might find a story about an aspect of your treatment that you hadn't expected to affect you the way it does and in the carer section you will find many stories of people affected by their caring role. If you have a story you would like to share with us here at Fife Carers Centre to be included on our own website please contact Lesley on 01592 642999 or [lesley@fifecarers.co.uk](mailto:lesley@fifecarers.co.uk)

## Virtual Protest

The photos on this page and the front page have been taken (with permission) from the Carers UK Virtual Protest. When illness or disability strikes it comes as a shock to find out just how little support is available. Every year 2 million people in the UK start looking after a family member or friend. Many will pay a high price for the care they provide - no money, no breaks, no life of their own and a constant battle for support. Some are pushed to the point of collapse. This protest recognises that many carers feel strongly about their situation but because of their caring responsibilities they are unable to take to the streets and protest. So Carers UK are compiling a photographic record that will stand as a record of a "virtual protest" that shows how carers feel. You can see more of the pictures and join the protest at [http://www.flickr.com/groups/time\\_to\\_support\\_carers/](http://www.flickr.com/groups/time_to_support_carers/)

*Virtual Protest carers have their say.*



## Keeping the lines of communication open

One of the keystones to a successful relationship is the ability to communicate with each other and this is especially so when you are caring for someone. It is often hampered by the fact that more than 41% of over 50 year olds have a hearing loss. It can cause huge frustration at being not able to understand what people around you are saying and simple conversations can turn into disagreements when one of you hasn't heard the other correctly. Learning to lipread and to use basic communication tactics will help. For example:- Always make sure you are facing the other person and that your mouth is not covered by your hand (or moustache!). Speak clearly but don't shout - this just destroys the lip shapes and rhythm of what you are saying making it more difficult to understand. Try to have the light on the speaker's face not on the listener's. Switch off background noise if you can e.g. television, music, etc and always have a pen and paper handy to sort out misunderstandings. To learn more why don't you both enrol in a lipreading class? It's fun and friendly and is often available for free. For more information please contact Alison on 01383 623708 or email [alison@pendlowski.plus.com](mailto:alison@pendlowski.plus.com) or come along to the Carers Meeting Point Lunch at the end of May when Alison will be the speaker.

## Getting the Car Parking Blues

Have you got a Blue Badge Parking Card? Avoid the parking ticket blues and remember to apply for your next one too!



If you have a Blue Badge (a Parking Card for Disabled People) you'll need to make a note of when it is due to expire and mark it on your calendar – in times past you would have been sent a reminder letter. In future Fife Council, like other local authorities in Scotland, will no longer be sending out reminder letters. You need to make sure that you apply for a new badge six to eight weeks before your current badge runs out. You can do this by calling 08451 55 00 66 or emailing [european.parkingbadges@fife.gov.uk](mailto:european.parkingbadges@fife.gov.uk). You can also pop into your local service centre or download an application form from [www.fifedirect.org.uk/bluebadge](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/bluebadge).

If you have not had a Blue Badge before and would like to apply for one you first need to check if you are eligible. If you receive any of the following you will qualify automatically for a Badge:

>The Higher Rate of the Mobility Component (help with getting around) of the Disability Living Allowance (previously known as Mobility Allowance)\*\*

>A War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement (A War Pension in itself is not a qualifying benefit - it must have the mobility supplement and this must be detailed in the proof provided)

>A vehicle supplied by the Scottish Executive or Department of Social Security

>A grant towards your own vehicle e.g. Motability

If you are registered Blind under the 1948 National Assistance Act.

**\*\* Attendance Allowance, both rates, Disability Living Allowance Care Component all rates and the Lower Rate of Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance are not qualifying benefits.**

### **Q. If I get Attendance Allowance how do I get a Blue Badge?**

Fill in parts A, C and D of the Parking Card for Disabled People application form and submit it – your GP or consultant will be contacted to confirm your walking abilities.

### **Q. What proof of benefits do I need/What can I use as proof?**

>A letter from the Benefits Agency, dated within the last 12 months, telling you that you will be paid the Higher Rate of Disability Allowance for Getting Around, mobility component, (not the care component) showing the date on which this is due for renewal or the date to which it is due to be paid.

>A letter showing that you are in receipt of Motability Allowance to buy a car and also showing the date on which this will cease.

> A letter confirming that you have a War Pension – but only if it says that you have a Mobility Supplement paid along with your War Pension. This should also show when this is due for renewal or the date to which this is due to be paid and be dated within the last 12 months.

*Please note that your proof must be dated within the last 12 months and show that you will be in receipt of the relevant benefit for longer than 12 months from the date of application. If the only proof you have is for a period shorter than 12 months you will be contacted for further information so that your application can be assessed under the discretionary category.*



## Diary of forthcoming events

### **CARERS WEEK EVENTS!**

**Don't miss out - get your booking forms in early - first come first served!**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June** Drop in Information Day for Carers at the Scores Hotel in St Andrews (booking required for the seminars – please use the form enclosed or give us a call).

**Monday 14<sup>th</sup> June** - A Keep Well Clinic being held in Fife Carers Centre – book your appointment by telephoning us on 01592 642999.

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June** The Telecare house on Park Road in Kirkcaldy will be having an open day for carers with plenty of information about Telecare products and service and a chance to see them in action. It's quite a small house so places are limited to 10 visitors an hour! Call us here at the Carers Centre on 01592 642999 to book your place.

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June** Carers Week Information and Celebration Event Carnegie Conference Centre in Dunfermline book your place using the form enclosed.

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June** Fife Adult Protection Committee has created an exciting and innovative free Conference for Service Users and Carers. It takes place at the Dean Park Hotel, Kirkcaldy on 17th June from 9.30am - 3.30pm booking is required, see page 5 for details.

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June** Inverkeithing Medical Group are hosting a Carers Drop in Coffee morning at between 10.30 and 12.30 in The Ballast Bank Community Centre in Inverkeithing.

**Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June** Drop in Information Day for Carers at the Rothes Halls in Glenrothes (booking required for the seminars – please use the form enclosed or give us a call).

**Carers Drop In Meeting Point Lunches – Between 12noon and 2pm on the last Friday of each month for carers and those interested in carer issues.**

**Friday 28<sup>th</sup> May** – Alison Pendrowski will be speaking about Lip-reading and tips for speaking with those who are hard of hearing.

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June** – Hayley Williamson from Fife Environmental Services Strategy Team will be speaking about the Waste Aware Campaigns and how we can all reduce, reuse and recycle.

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> July** – Lyn Prestwood from Fife Credit Unions will be telling us about Credit Unions and the work that they do.

**Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August** – John Hughes from The Ecology Centre at Kinghorn who will be telling us all about the work they do and how you can join in.

**Friday 24<sup>th</sup> September** – Andrew Parry from Fife Arts and Crafts Enterprise Training (FACET) will be talking about the Vocational Training Workshops for people affected by disability/illness that they run.

We really enjoy seeing you so please come along to one of our events - we're sure you'll find it enjoyable and interesting too!