

John's whirlwind trip to Blackpool

John felt like a weekend trip was well overdue. He had been busy over the summer months and now, with winter fast approaching, he wanted to enjoy the last of the good weather on a short break.

So he teamed up with his support practitioners – Angela and Agnes – to arrange a last-minute trip. Within a few days, John and his team had found a weekend deal to Blackpool for the coming Friday. John could not believe his luck!

The car journey to Blackpool was filled with chatter about all their plans and the exciting things they had in store. When they arrived, John headed straight for Blackpool Pleasure Beach to find out for himself what all the fuss was about. Certainly, a ride on the big wheel with Agnes proved to be a big hit, with Agnes commenting "I've never seen John laugh so much".

John and his team stayed in the Bond Hotel, only a short walk from the beach and an amazing place designed for people with learning disabilities.

The hotel food was brilliant, so much so



John

that John chose to eat there every night. John even had the opportunity to dress up as a cowboy and dance with the hotel staff after dinner! Agnes told us: "you just couldn't fault the service and experience".

Throughout the rest of the trip, John visited the circus, enjoyed a trip to the pub – and had his first ever lager

shandy – and soaked up the view of the city from the top of the Blackpool Tower. John commented "it's the best holiday I've ever had."

Andrea, local service manager, said:

"When John came back from his holiday he was grinning from ear to ear, talking about everything he achieved during his short break away, and sharing that

it was the trip of a lifetime."

John's recent trip is demonstrative of everything we do at Carr Gomm. We are passionate about working with people to make their hopes and dreams a reality – even the last-minute ones – and are truly honoured to be able to journey with people like John on their lifetime adventures.

A note from our Chief Executive



As we enter 2020, we are looking forward to not only a new year, but a brand new decade of achieving goals and supporting people to live safe and well in

their communities. Throughout all of our work, we have a particular focus on 'connectedness'; connecting and bringing people together to deliver the best possible support and build vital social relationships.

We are in the process of distributing smart phones with useful apps to many of our workers, giving them real-time access to the right information and enabling them to stay better connected. We have received fantastic feedback on the impact this is already having: read Matthew's story on page 2.

We are also proud to hear of the new clubs and groups formed within our services for and by the people we support, which are helping to tackle the prevalent issues of social isolation and loneliness in Scotland. You can read about one such group, Circle of Friends, on page 2.

It is vital that we continue to fundraise in order to make these projects and activities possible. With Britain being the loneliness capital of Europe, we know we have much more work to do; so throughout 2020 we are encouraging people to take on a challenge and do something extraordinary to raise money for Carr Gomm. You can read all about our Team Carr Gomm 2020 campaign on pages 4-5.

This newspaper gives just a flavour of what the organisation is doing on a daily basis, so I ask you to imagine the stories repeated over and over with hundreds of people. Congratulations to everyone who makes a difference on a daily basis: and here's to 2020 being our most impactful year yet.

Lucy Wain

With best wishes, Lucy

New technology has got us talking...

Technological upgrades are connecting people across Carr Gomm: people like Matthew.

Matthew lives in Falkirk. His daughters live in Turkey. Planning support has been challenging and at times frustrating for Matthew and his family, who want to be involved in important decisions and ensure Matthew is receiving the best possible support.

Then earlier this year, we started distributing smartphones to our support practitioners.

This opened a new door: the possibility for staff in Falkirk to hold support meetings via Skype. And that's exactly what happened with Matthew and his family.

Propping a work smartphone up on a whiteboard, and angling the phone to capture everyone around the meeting table, Matthew's daughters were able to be virtually present in his support meeting for the first time.

Connecting with Matthew's family has been invaluable. The people who know him best

are now working even closer together to provide support that is tailored to Matthew's specific needs.

Andrea, service manager in Falkirk, commented:

"Matthew's family and staff members feel more confident in Matthew's support. His family are more involved and can now interject, give feedback and add their opinions in live real-time discussions."

Staying connected through adventure



Sarah on the trishaw

Sarah, a former motor-bike enthusiast, has been reconnecting with her thrill-seeking side.

Sarah was widowed a few years ago: both she and her husband were keen bikers, and Sarah regularly reminisces about the times they spent together pursuing their shared interest. Sarah was keen to re-live the experience, but the unsteady and involuntary movements caused by her Huntington's disease meant this was no longer practical.

But Sarah's enthusiasm was sparked when she spotted the Cromarty Care project out and about on their trishaws. Sheena, Sarah's support practitioner, approached the 'Cycling Without Age' team, part of the

Cromarty Care project, and set about making arrangements for Sarah to embark on a trishaw adventure.

Plans came together, and Sarah and Sheena enjoyed an invigorating ride around Cromarty. Whilst it may not have been as noisy and exhilarating as a motor bike, it was, according to Sarah, *"just as good"*.

Sarah is delighted by the support she is receiving, and the new lease of life it has given her:

"I get to go to the places I love, having tea and cake and trying out new things like the trishaw. Going out with Sheena enables me to see the folk I've known for years and keep in touch with them."

Connecting Glasgow

To quote a famous singer-songwriter, *"it's always better when we're together"*. Our Glasgow North West team certainly agree, and have been busy bringing local people together through their peer support group: Circle of Friends.

Through a jam-packed programme of activities and outings, the group offers fun opportunities for people to connect with others and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.

Last year's schedule included sailing on Loch Katrine, a day trip to Luss & Tarbet, a visit to the Gurdwara (the largest Sikh temple in Scotland) and even taking part in Reiki classes.

Mamosa told us: *"The group are always there for each other and I feel supported by them, which has had a big knock-on effect."*

My confidence has grown and I now feel more motivated to clean my house by myself, which I wasn't before. My CPN was amazed to see how much my house has improved and they are now looking into reviewing my medication."

As relationships have grown and people have become more comfortable with each other, the group have started 'skill swapping'; sharing knowledge, skills and experiences to facilitate learning and further strengthen relationships.

Mamosa told us: *"I gave a presentation on skill sets as part of the group and this has given me increased confidence in public speaking."*

It is fantastic to see people feeling able to open up like this with each other; and is tangible evidence of the success and impact of Circle of Friends.



Circle of Friends

Living Well in 2020

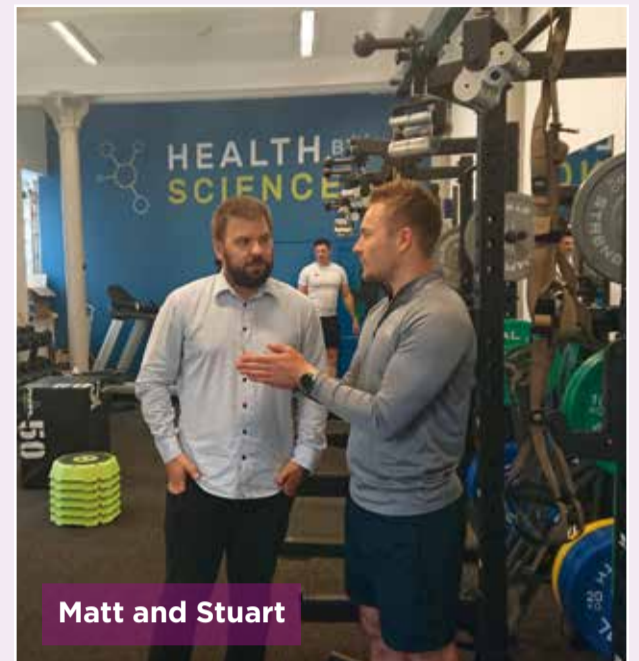
It's the start of a brand new shiny decade; and we're excited about implementing changes in this new year.

Last year, we launched our Healthy Living and Wellbeing project. A first of its kind, our project is upskilling staff to deliver expert healthy-living-related support and to bridge the gap between social care and specialist NHS services.

Health by Science, our project partners, have been taking some of our staff through a 12-week programme delivering training on habit change, physical wellbeing, nutrition, and recovery. So far, 14 managers, 12 support practitioners and 8 community link workers have all completed the programme. So, what's next?

Over the coming months, 12 people we support will be starting their own journeys through the programme. But they won't be doing it alone. Every individual will be journeying with their support practitioners, working together to learn, be motivated, and make small, meaningful and long-lasting changes to how they live. Why? So they can make informed choices in how to lead an all-round healthier quality of life; so we can learn from these experiences and share expertise across the organisation, and across Scotland.

Interested to know more? Follow their journeys in real time on our website: www.carrgomm.org/news



Matt and Stuart

#CarrGommRocks: Connecting through kindness

A #CarrGommRocks waiting to be found



#CarrGommRocks is one of the many ways we are promoting our values, mental wellbeing, and kindness.

One simple, kind and inspirational message can change someone's outlook on the day; and what better way to spread such joy and bring people together than via a

giant game of hide and seek.

"I wasn't looking for a rock. I just found it. It was colourful and had a message. It felt like the message was just for me. My heart jumped, and I felt that someone was looking out for me." [Andrew]

Launched in August by Louise, one of our support practitioners, #CarrGommRocks involves painting a bright design on one side of a rock, and writing an uplifting message on the other. Rocks are placed in public spaces - such as local parks and beaches - then a picture posted on social media of the rock in its hiding place using the hashtag #CarrGommRocks.

Then what? The finder is heartened by the kindness written on the back. They re-hide the rock, post on social media, and the joy continues to spread.

So far, #CarrGommRocks have been hidden and found not only in Scotland, but as far as Blackpool and even in Palma Nova, Spain.

Why not get involved yourself? Find out more at: www.carrgomm.org/carrgommrocks

The Carr Gomm Questionnaire

We never settle for 'good enough' because things can always be improved. Our ambition is to strive for better: whether in supporting people to improve their health and wellbeing, bringing people together to make new friendships, or in introducing new technologies to ensure people have the right information at the right time.

A crucial aspect of improving is to regularly check in with people. If we hear of anything that we could do better, then we can crack on and improve it.

Towards the end of 2019, a total of 350 people gave us invaluable feedback through our questionnaires.

93% considered that their support is having a positive difference in their lives: including Rita who told us that *"the service makes a big difference to me; it's the only time that I get out"*, and John who described his support as *"Faultless. Fantastic people! We could not manage without Carr Gomm."*

It is lovely to hear these comments. But it is also important to hear from people like Lorna who told us that we could be better at letting her know when her worker is unwell and that she will be supported by someone else. Thank you for your feedback, Lorna: we will improve on this.

Question	% Yes
If I had a concern, staff would listen to me	93%
The people who work with me understand my needs.	92%
My support is making a positive difference in my life.	93%
I am satisfied with the service I receive.	90%

Stomping out loneliness across Scotland

Over 9 million people in the UK – almost a fifth of the population – say they are always or often lonely (British Red Cross and Co-Op, 2016).

This makes Britain the loneliness capital of Europe; but we can, and we are doing something about it.

Every penny that we fundraise goes directly towards our community projects and activities which are connecting people and tackling loneliness and isolation in communities across Scotland.

Our work has already had a significant impact, but we know there is so much more to do. So we're hosting Team Carr Gomm 2020 to make an even bigger difference.

Team Carr Gomm is all about connection; bringing people together to get active, be social and raise some money along the way.

We're looking to raise £60,000 via a team of at least 100 people all doing something extraordinary, taking on a challenge, and breaking down barriers.

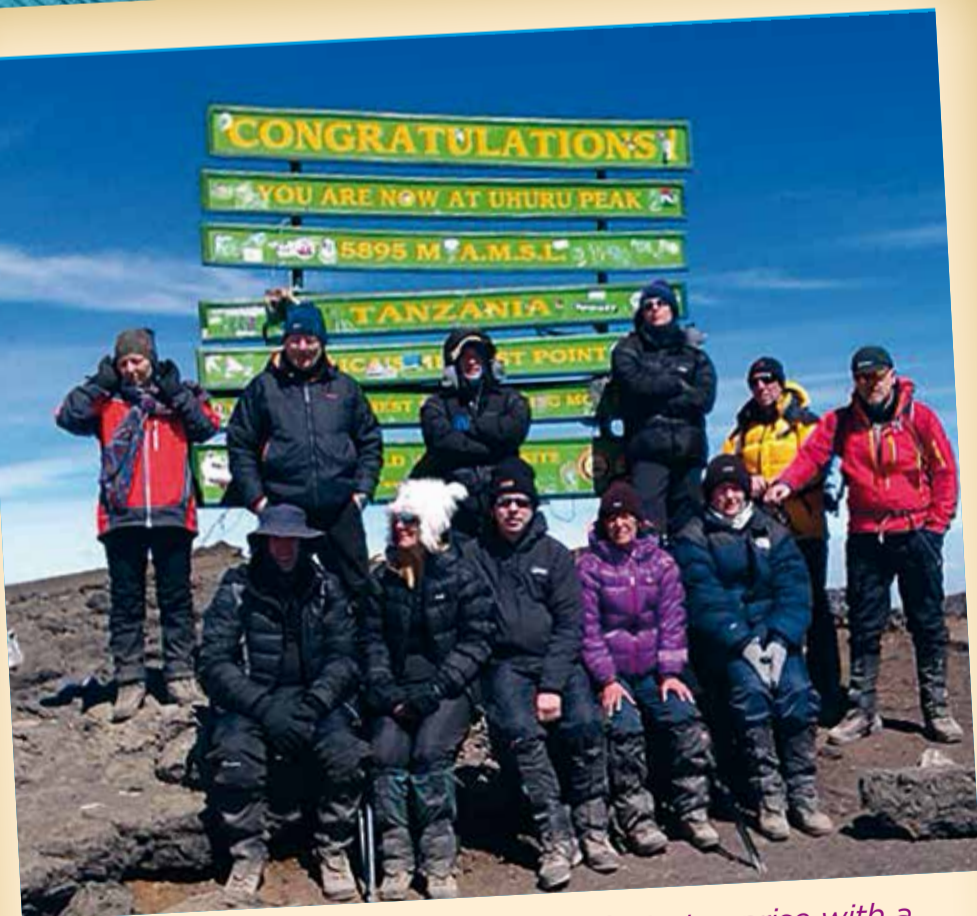
But since this is all about social connectedness, we hope that by taking part in the campaign, every individual will build new, or strengthen existing relationships. We hope that by embracing a challenge of our own, we can support others to overcome the barriers they experience in their own lives.

We know that a challenge looks different for everyone; but whatever the challenge you choose, it just needs to be active, social, and raising money for Team Carr Gomm.

Our website is packed full of inspiration, hints, tips and advice; but we've also laid out some of the highlights that we already know are coming up this year across these pages...



The Kiltwalk comes in all shapes and sizes – from the 5-mile Wee Wander up to the 24-mile Mighty Stride. We have already heard murmurs of people signing up to this iconic event...and with 40% added on to all fundraising by The Hunter Foundation, this is a fantastic wellbeing-boosting fundraiser.



How do you fancy enjoying breakfast at sunrise with a view across Africa on 21 February 2021?

That's right; doing it once just wasn't enough! So Lucy is returning to conquer the Kilimanjaro summit again in 2021. We already have a number of sign-ups...will you be next?!



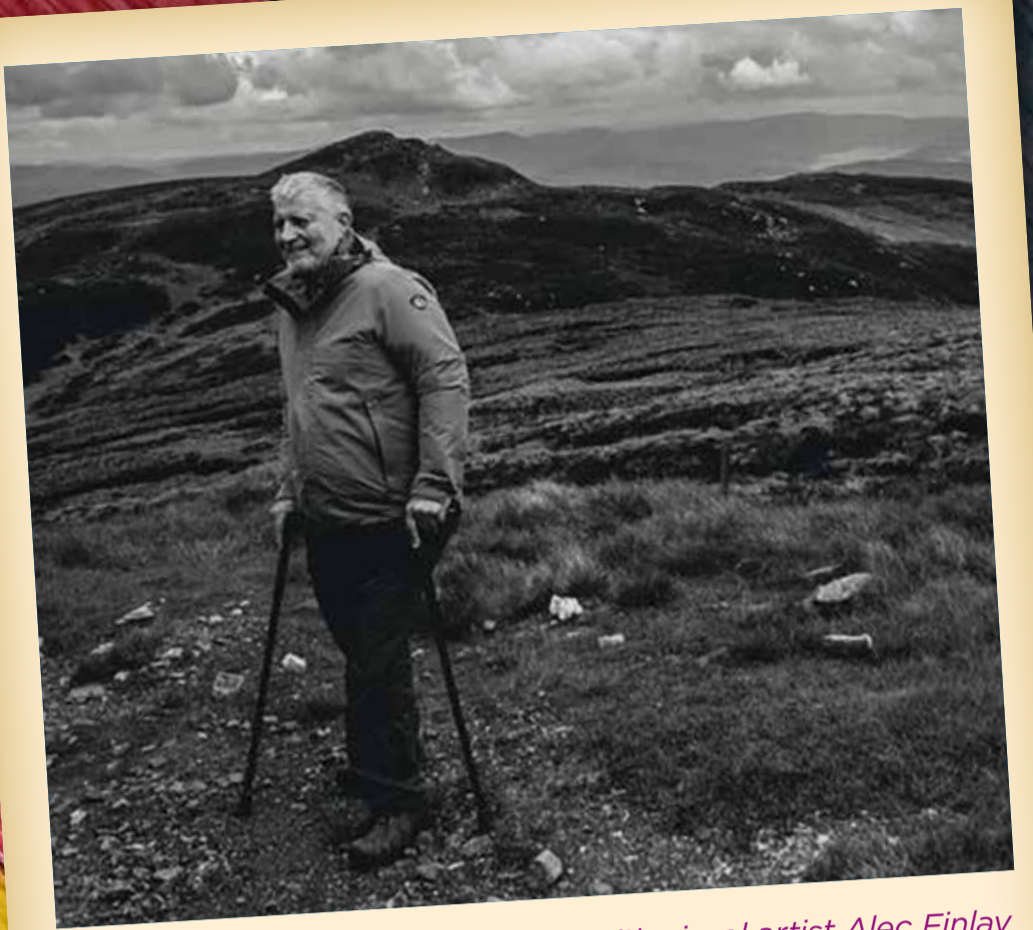
Some of our supporters are positively bouncing with enthusiasm at the prospect of a dare-devil bungee jump for Team Carr Gomm.

Why not follow their lead and get your adrenaline pumping with a 2020 bungee jump of your own?



Got any plans for September 2020?

Anna and her cycling group are planning an exciting 4-day ride from Edinburgh to John o' Groats from 12th-15th September. Fancy joining them on this 300-mile, scenery-filled, wellbeing-boosting adventure?



We're delighted to be partnering with visual artist Alec Finlay in his Month of Access project. It will provide opportunities for people we support to get up into the hills in 4x4s...a truly fantastic experience for those who normally cannot access the great Scottish countryside.



Break down barriers and do something truly extraordinary in 2020 with a wheelchair abseil. We have partnered with Activity Scotland to offer this exhilarating experience; we would love to see you taking part.



Ceilidhs are a beloved Scottish tradition, and with Carr Gomm being a Scottish charity, what better way to bring the two together than a good old fundraising ceilidh? Our 'Ceilidh in a Box' outlines everything you need to organise a fundraising ceilidh. We know of at least two that will be taking place already...

Get involved with Team Carr Gomm

Are you feeling inspired? Or do you know of someone who would love to get involved? Tell them. Tell your friends, your networks, your worlds that we are looking for people to accept our challenge; to buy into our dream of a connected world where no one faces a lonely and isolated life.

Join Team Carr Gomm today! www.teamcarrgomm.org
Follow us on social media for regular updates and inspiration
Facebook: @CarrGomm
Twitter: @CG_CarrGomm

NOTICEBOARD

Send us your stories

Do you have a great story that we can shout about? We're always looking for content for our star story and noticeboard pages.

If there's anything you'd like to share, from a heart-warming story to a recent outing or even a recipe, poem or fun fact about yourself then we'd love to hear from you!

@ Send us an email

marketing@carrgomm.org

☎ Pick up the phone

0131 659 4734

✉ Write us a letter

Marketing Team, Carr Gomm, SPACE, 11 Harewood Road, Edinburgh EH16 4NT

We can even come to you. Just get in touch and we'll arrange a time to meet.

Thank you.

[@CG_CarrGomm](https://twitter.com/CG_CarrGomm)

www.facebook.com/CarrGomm



Inverness Coffee Morning

It was the second year in a row for the Inverness coffee morning. The event, which attracted around 25 people, is a great opportunity for people to spend time together and blether in a stress-free environment. Not only were there tea, coffee and cakes, but also a raffle with great prizes, a piano accordion playing music and a few games of bingo.

Leanne, operations manager in Inverness, shared: *"everyone had an absolutely amazing time - they just loved it"*. Following the success of the event over the past two years, there are now plans to open it up to even more people in 2020!



Photo - Alex Clark

Hand Bells and Carols Concert

Christmas came early in Oban with Fumiko's Hand Bells and Carols concert in aid of Carr Gomm. Fumiko decided to run the concert following the great response she received last year from people we support and the public - raising £100 overall to go towards Carr Gomm's isolation and loneliness projects. Fumiko plans to run this event again next year; and many of the people we support are already signing up to be involved, connect together again, and raise money for this important cause.



Branching Out

A beautiful partnership with the Forestry Commission has led to the resounding success of our Branching Out project in Edinburgh. The programme, which took place every Monday for 12 weeks, centred round mindfulness and connecting people with nature. A group of seven people we support and their support practitioners visited areas around Edinburgh, engaging in activities such as bird watching, flower planting, picking berries for vinegar making, and even taking a trip on a barge down the Union Canal.

"All of us learnt so much about the benefits of being outside and the importance that having some time in nature can have. It has really transformed people, given them a lot of confidence, and sparked new friendships". [Kat]

Everyone who took part received John Muir Award certificates at a special awards ceremony.

Corstorphine Birthday Celebrations

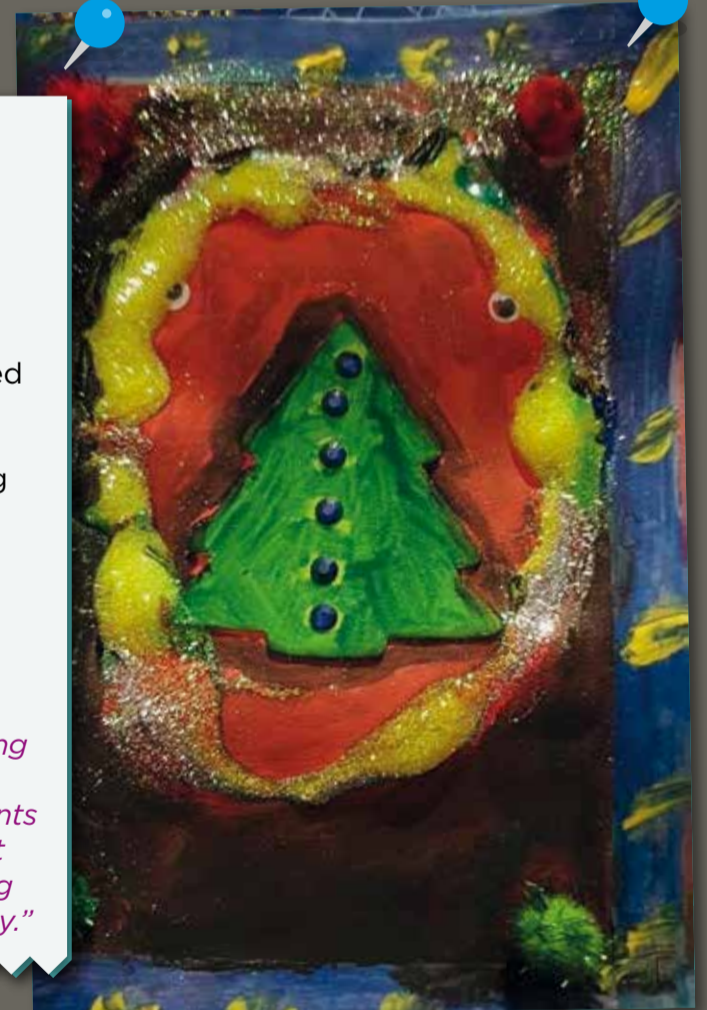
In December, we were delighted to celebrate the 10-year anniversary of our Corstorphine service, following its launch in 2009. It was a truly momentous occasion which brought together everyone connected to the service. Hosted in the local hall, people shared memories and stories from the past 10 years, enjoyed a delicious buffet and anniversary cake, and were entertained by local dance group Gemini Pom Pom Troupe. Here's to another fantastic 10 years in Corstorphine!



Expressing feelings at Christmas

One of the people we support in Edinburgh wanted to express and share her feelings. So she made a Christmas card representing how she felt at Christmas time; and we're delighted to be able to share it in our newspaper. She explained:

"It is dark on the outside. In the middle is a face representing people watching me all the time. In the very centre is a tree that represents the light of Christmas. So let the light shine through lifting the cloud and darkness away."



Club Fun Halloween Party

There was another great turn out for the annual 'Club Fun' Halloween party - with everyone dressing up, dancing and getting involved in the Halloween games. The day was filled with fun, friends and laughter, with a few spooky costumes too.



Introducing...the Wednesday Group

A new initiative has sprung up in Falkirk: the Wednesday Group. Launched in August 2019, the group now sees around 20 people in attendance each week. It is a fantastic opportunity for people to socialise in a warm, safe and friendly space whilst enjoying refreshments and entertainment.

The group was formed to encourage people to plan activities together, create friendships, and build confidence. Many of the individuals who attend the group can feel lonely and enjoy coming along every week to connect with others. They are particularly fond of arts and

crafts – such as making their own Halloween decorations (pictured) – playing board games, and singing Karaoke.

New friendships have already blossomed and existing ones have strengthened. Andrea, local service manager, shared: *"the Wednesday group often meets up with Club Fun, another of our local social groups. Two of the people we support actually met through this integration and it quickly became apparent that they already knew each other, despite neither using words as their form of communication. If it wasn't for this group, they may have never crossed paths!"*

It is heart-warming to see life-long friendships being created through Carr Gomm.



AGM AND AWARDS

Our Annual General Meeting

The Carr Gomm Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Friday 29th November in Edinburgh; and what an event it was. It was the last meeting to be convened by Anne Austin, who is now standing down from the board after serving her maximum six year term. Derek Robertson and Val Rogerson also stepped down, having equally served for six years on

our Board. We are very grateful to all three of them for their commitment, diligence and expertise over the past six years and wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

The AGM enthusiastically approved the appointment of five new board directors (George Sparrow, Nicola Wee, Greg MacKay, Simon Mayberry and Caroline Patterson), acknowledged a robust set of financial

accounts in a very challenging environment, and approved RSM UK as our auditors for 2019-20.

Following the official business of our AGM, Lucy had the enormous pleasure of presenting the Time to Shine Staff Awards. Below, you will find out who took home each of our awards, including our new category of Special Recognition Awards.

Time to Shine Award Winners



Involvement

Award Winner: The Falkirk Forum Planning Team



Team of the Year

Award Winner: The Glasgow North West Team



Special Recognition Awards

National Service Winner: Naomi Valencia, Compliance, Administration & IT



Special Recognition Awards

Rural Services Winner: Maureen Burnett, Campbeltown



Most Inspirational Individual
Award Winner: Naomi Ness



Partnership of the Year

Award Winner: St Stephen's Team in Partnership with Lothian Green Space Trust



Special Recognition Awards

West of Scotland Winner: Paul Ross & Wendy Howarth, Forth Valley Services



Special Recognition Awards

East of Scotland Winner: David McKenzie, Dundee Visiting

Carr Gomm Futures

Award Winner: Caroline Barnes