



Cyrenians

OPAL Older People, Active Lives

APRIL 2022 Newsletter

As Spring is the season of new beginnings and welcoming in light and laughter after the darker winter months, OPAL is delighted to have many positive updates for you all - including the return of most of our face to face groups across West Lothian and the reopening of our office in Bathgate. We hope everyone is enjoying this joyous time of the year!

Get to know the newest member of the OPAL team - Erin Page! April has been an exciting month here at OPAL, with Erin joining as staff in the role of our new Volunteers Coordinator. Erin has been volunteering with OPAL for just under a year and a half and we've known Erin as a bubbly and compassionate individual as a volunteer and know she will be a great asset to the team as staff. We hope you will join us in giving Erin a very warm OPAL welcome!



My role at OPAL: As the Volunteers Coordinator, my main duties include supporting, managing, training and recruiting volunteers to meet the service needs. My role also includes assisting and supporting other areas such as one-to-one and groups. I have also volunteered with the service since December of 2020!

My best day at work (so far!): My first day! As everyone was so lovely and of course, I got to meet the lovely team! I came in extra early to unpack all of my desk stuff which was very fun!

What I enjoy when I'm not at work: Anything to do with my dog – Angus.

What I'm looking forward to in the year ahead: Going on holiday with my dog and spending time with my friends and family!

OPAL'S EASTER TRAIL - COMMUNITY CRAFTING IN WHITBURN

This year, Whitburn was home to a very special Easter trail that was organised by our Community Worker, Billie. As you may already know, at the beginning of the year, Billie moved from her position as the Groups Coordinator into the exciting, brand new role of Community Worker. Since then, Billie has been meaningfully engaging with various communities across West Lothian, especially the town of Whitburn.

For this Easter Trail, Billie put together lots of free Easter craft packs that residents of Whitburn collected from the Whitburn Community Fridge, the Hub in Whitburn or the OPAL office. She also distributed them to Big Bird nursery, Polkemmet Primary School, Whitdale Primary School, Answer House day centre and Weavers Court retirement housing.

The Easter trail was embraced by those of every generation; with children to older people all taking part in the crafting and proudly displaying their colourful creations on their windows, doors and walls.

As arts and crafts are a fun and positive activity for people's wellbeing, it is a brilliant way to welcome Spring into our homes.

Billie said of the success of the Easter trail; "It was great to see so many people in the community getting involved!"



"It has been good because I am on my own – people all very friendly and walk not too strenuous. Very grateful for the company and so grateful I have found that walking group" - OPAL client

HOORAY - IN-PERSON GROUPS RETURN THIS SPRING

We are pleased to announce the brilliant news that all OPAL's face to face groups have either already returned or are set to very soon!

We have been gradually resuming the groups since the beginning of March, with the final group scheduled to return in May. Our groups take place in various venues across West Lothian and open to those aged 60 and above, with new members always very welcome to join in the fun! OPAL's in-person groups include several social and activity groups, as well as Singing for Health (in partnership with Xcite), our Mates & Meals evening dinner group and fortnightly walking groups - Bathgate Wanderers and Linlithgow Wanderers.

We now have a total of 16 social, activity, learning, walking and online groups as well as digital skills sessions. Please contact the OPAL team to register your interest for the full list of locations, dates and times. Further, please note that we require people to book their place prior to attending by calling the OPAL office on 01506 815815.



DISTANCE LANYARDS AVAILABLE

From Monday 18th April, the legal requirement to wear masks will become guidance for shops, certain indoor settings, and public transport. We are continuing to encourage people to wear masks when moving around and use sanitiser, wipes etc however we will not be able to enforce this and the rules will simply be led by the venue and law going forward. We would like to make everyone aware that we have a supply of 'PLEASE BE DISTANCE AWARE' badges on yellow lanyards which are available for anyone it would help to feel more comfortable attending groups or visits. Please get in touch if you would like one.

HELP US REACH OUR GOAL FOR NATIONAL WALKING MONTH

Did you know May is National Walking Month? OPAL have set a challenge of reaching 500,000 steps by 31st May - and we are asking staff, clients and volunteers to help us achieve our goal! To take part in the challenge, people can call or email us with their step count which we will then add to our total. If they do not have a way to record their steps, an estimate is more than satisfactory. We also welcome people to send us photos from their various walks. Our walking groups will be on throughout the month and we are encouraging people to pop along if they can to enjoy the fresh air whilst they gather steps!



AND FINALLY...THE OPAL OFFICE IS OPEN!



We would like to make everyone aware that our office, located in Bathgate's precinct, is once again open for people to pop in for a chat with the team. The office is open Mondays through Thursdays 9.00am - 5.00pm and closed on Fridays. However, on Fridays you can still contact OPAL by email or phone during our working hours of 9.00am - 4.30pm.

"Thank you all for the lovely opportunities you have given me to connect with those that need it." - OPAL volunteer

The Cyrenians OPAL Staff Team are:

Pauline Moffat - Service Manager
Billie Skene - Community Worker
Lorna Bryson - Senior Service Coordinator
Sylvia Forshaw - Senior Service Coordinator
Erin Page - Volunteers Coordinator
Rachel Lee - Team Administrator
Naomi Williams - Service Support Assistant
Peter MacLeod - Communications and Systems Support Officer
Sandy Stewart - Groups Support Assistant
June Giffether - Groups Support Assistant
Linda Clark-Patterson - Groups Support Assistant
Sandra Stark - Groups Support Assistant
Jackie Jackson - Groups Support Assistant

Contact us at:

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or 01506 815815

www.cyrenians.scot/OPAL www.facebook.com/OPALCyrenians

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