



# Midlothian Volunteer Awards



Thursday 6 June 2024



### Midlothian Volunteer Awards 2024

Winners

Outstanding New Volunteer Award

## Holly Gibb & Sandra Vick

Befriender/ Mentor Award

Kathleen Ross

Saltire Summit Award

**Emily-May Milligan** Ryan Smith **Eva Caddow Scott Rayner** Tiffany Cummins Callum Gibson **Elliot Cormack** Reuben Ferguson

Climate Change Award

Transform Community Gardening Team





















## Midlothian Volunteer Awards 2024

Winners

Service to the Community Award

## Anne Ainsworth

Health, Wellbeing & Active Volunteering Award

### Paul McNeill

Dedicated Service to Volunteering Award

Lorna Greig

Equality & Diversity Award

Paddy Carstairs

**Transform Garden Adult Mentors** 

Volunteer Team of the Year Award

Volunteer of the Year Award

Rebecca McCosh







### Welcome

On behalf of Volunteer Midlothian, it is a great privilege to welcome everyone to our 2024 Volunteer Awards Ceremony. Each year comes with a theme, in 2022 it was: "Time to say Thanks" and last year we wanted to "Celebrate and Inspire". This year marks the 40th anniversary of Volunteers' Week. Volunteers' Week is all about celebrating the invaluable contribution which millions of volunteers make to society every day across the country. Volunteering builds connections, grows skills, gives back to society, and it's been shown to have a positive impact for the wellbeing of volunteers too.

Midlothian's amazing volunteers are people we admire and we are grateful for. The cost-ofliving crisis has put our lives under pressure, when at times we need to choose whether we can help our family with childcare or use ever so precious free time to help the wider community and those who need it most.

In the future, we would love to see more family volunteering opportunities, or intergenerational nature projects where we won't have the dilemmas of who to help and where we can do things together, instilling the notion of kindness in the young generation. People learn so much from taking part, observing positive behaviour, and listening to inspirational stories of volunteering journeys.

There is a wide variety of volunteering activity that takes place in Midlothian, making a huge difference to people of all ages in our community and to the local environment. This year, the week-long series of events will begin on Monday 3rd June. There will also be a time for the Big Help Out taking place from Friday 7th to Sunday 9th June. Last year, King Charles III encouraged everyone to spend a day volunteering in their communities to mark the King's coronation. The Big Help Out was intended to create a "lasting legacy" of volunteering. It's an opportunity for people to come together and experience how rewarding volunteering can be.

We are delighted that you can join us at this year's event, and we hope that you enjoy the evening. We would like to celebrate the contributions of all who are here today and also those who have not been nominated, yet do so much for the community. Let's make sure when we see them, we appreciate their efforts. Every day we are surrounded by their contributions. This could be an adopted green space, a cup of tea served in a local community centre, a food package for a family, a befriended elderly person, or mentored young person who has someone that finally believes in them.

Volunteers are the champions of our communities – they selflessly give up their time and energy to help others, which really does have the power to change lives, for the volunteer and for the communities the organisation serves. There's no better time to acknowledge and celebrate their invaluable contributions than during Volunteers' Week.

We would like to acknowledge everyone who has made this evening possible. We are grateful to Newbattle Abbey College for allowing us, year after year, to hold the ceremony in such a beautiful setting, and to our award sponsors: EDF Energy, Esk Valley Rotary Club, Midlothian Council Lifelong Learning and Employability, Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership, the Scottish Qualifications Authority and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. We thank Police Scotland for their patronage and Lived Experience Action Group for their support. 'Well Done You Ltd' the trophy supplier, the SQA who supplied printed copies of this programme, our wonderful Bagpiper David Burns, and Kris from Kris Soul Photography. Without their support this event would not be possible.

Thank you,

From the Board of Volunteer Midlothian



### **Programme**

#### Welcome to Newbattle Abbey College

Kirsty Adamson, Depute Principal & Director of Academic Development.

#### **Opening Remarks**

Councillor Debbi McCall, Provost and Volunteering Champion for Midlothian Council.

#### Presentation of Awards:

#### **Outstanding New Volunteer Award**

Elliot Whitson, Station Commander, Prevention and Protection, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

#### Befriender/ Mentor of the Year Award

Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector, Midlothian Local Area Commander & Lauren McAteer, Lived Experience Action Group Health in Mind.

#### Saltire Summit Awards

Nadia Aslam, Volunteer Midlothian Board Member. Jacob Pauley, Saltire Panellist.

### Climate Change Award

Faith Scott, Visitor Centre Coordinator, Torness Power Station, EDF Energy.

#### Service to the Community Award

Rebekah Sullivan, Community Planning Development Officer, Midlothian Council.

#### Health, Wellbeing, and Active Volunteering Award

Gill Main, Integration Manager (Planning, Performance and Programme), Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership.

#### **Dedicated Service to Volunteering Award**

Derek Robertson, President of the Esk Valley Rotary Club and Colin Wilson, Joint Convener of the Youth Committee EVRC.

### **Equality and Diversity Award**

Laura Gemmell, Responsible Business Officer, Scottish Qualifications Authority.

#### Volunteer Team of the Year Award

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Callander, Lord-Lieutenant of Midlothian.

#### Volunteer of the Year Award

Councillor Debbi McCall, Provost and Volunteering Champion for Midlothian Council.

#### Closing Remarks

Councillor Debbi McCall, Provost and Volunteering Champion for Midlothian.























### **Outstanding New Volunteer Award Nominees**





### Sponsored by Lothian Fire and Rescue







This award category is for people who have made an outstanding contribution through volunteering in less than 12 months. It aims to recognise the significant difference that volunteers can make to an organisation in a short period of time. It is open to all types of volunteer role.



### Cathy Carstairs (Newtongrange Development Trust)

Cathy has been a vital volunteer at the toddler group at Newtongrange Development Trust which started in Feb 2023. She initially came along to a consultation that we held to offer support and has committed her time every Monday since then. She sets up the group and ensures that the children have plenty opportunities to play. Having had a career in early years family support before she retired she has lots of experience supporting parents and children which she does in the toddler group. Building relationships with the parents and children and offering a listening

ear. Providing refreshments and tidying up at the end of each session. She has an approachable and kind manner which builds trust. This means that parents feel it is a safe environment both for them and their children and return week after week. Her knowledge of play and relationships really shines through in her volunteering role.

### Holly Gibb and Sandra Vick (Penicuik Cricket Club)

Holly and Sandra lead all of our junior cricket offerings at Penicuik Cricket Club, including training matches, camps, and more. They have been volunteering as junior conveners for a year, totally rejuvenating our youth section and allowing us to offer free cricket in around 10 Midlothian primary and secondary schools. They approach all the admin tasks as well as enthusiastically driving our training and organisation forward. As a result of their work we were able to increase our junior membership hugely setting



the framework for the club to be successful and sustainable in the future. They have achieved a huge amount, both Sandra and Holly have created a program alongside our head coach so that we offer free cricket to an extensive list of Midlothian's schools. They have put in a lot of work, setting the framework for the club to be successful and sustainable in the future. This is amazing community development work especially for children of a low income background and laying the foundation for a girls team. The work they have committed to the role has been nothing short of superhuman and makes the club a better place every day.

### **Outstanding New Volunteer Award Nominees**





### Sponsored by Lothian Fire and Rescue









### Karen Soar (Central Dalkeith and Woodburn Pantry)

When the council's cost of living taskforce allocated funding to support the start up of a pantry in the Dalkeith and Woodburn area, Karen stepped up to start the process of setting up a pantry from scratch to support residents struggling with food insecurity. Karen organises the team of volunteers and keeps everything running like clockwork. Her dedication to the pantry is amazing, she brings energy in abundance and along with the other volunteers has created a welcoming community space where, as well as doing their weekly

shop, they can access income maximisation services, find out more about what's happening locally and just have a chat and relax. Karen negotiates with suppliers, drives all over the place picking up resources and groceries, and uses local contacts to get things done. She keeps excellent records and reports on the pantry that will all help as evidence in funding bids, everyone is met with a smile and there is great camaraderie.

#### Marion Hobson (Rosewell Development Trust)

Marion's dedication and commitment to volunteering has had a significant impact on The Steading and the community they serve. Marion has been an integral part of our volunteering team at The Steading since January 2023. Marion's volunteering journey started with our Lunch Club where she volunteers every Tuesday. This is a huge commitment with Marion arriving early each week to ensure that the tables are all set and there is a place setting for each individual helping to alleviate social isolation and loneliness among the elderly.



Her friendly demeanour, warm personality and attention to detail in her tireless efforts ensure that all participants attending the lunch club are well attended to. In addition to her work at the lunch club, Marion took the initiative to start a weekly Ladies Table Tennis group, providing a fun and sociable activity for members. Her positive attitude and dedication inspire others to get involved and make a difference.



### **Newtongrange Development Trust Pantry Volunteers**

The pantry volunteers organise the collection of food/set up every Sunday for the pantry. They serve customers (90 in 2 hours) and clear up after. The volunteers show their commitment every week on a Sunday (and other times to do food collection) working as a team splitting duties to make sure everything is done and we are ready to serve for 11am every Sunday. Initially this was done outside in rain, hail, or snow until we managed to secure an indoor venue. So they have seen it all in all weathers.

### **Outstanding New Volunteer Award Nominees**





### Sponsored by Lothian Fire and Rescue







#### Peter Smyk (Newtongrange Development Trust)

Peter has been massively committed to the Pantry initiative run by Newtongrange Development Trust from the start. He approached us in late 2022 as he was looking to find stuff to do in his spare time since retiring. Initially we gave away surplus food from Costco on a Sunday morning. Peter would collect the food and help to set up. He has approached businesses and other people to help develop the service. Getting free food from Nairns/Costco/Co-op every week. Peter came up with the idea of a delivery service and one of his friends was able to take on the deliveries every week. Peter organises this and visits the



customers at home to get their orders and bags the deliveries ready to go out. These people are not able to get to the pantry so it's a vital service and the personal touch means the residents get a chat on a Friday and a delivery on a Sunday so we are doing a weekly check in to make sure they are ok. Peter has shown commitment, drive and enthusiasm towards helping the organisation go from strength to strength. His motto is: "we talk, we do".



### Sarah Halliday (Health in Mind)

Sarah is a Peer Connecting Volunteer for Health in Mind in Midlothian. This is a befriending role where Sarah is matched up with someone we support for a period of 6 months, helping them to achieve their goals. This can be anything from helping them to overcome anxiety or build confidence in going out and about. Sarah has overcome her own anxieties to attend training. Sarah, who is extremely easy to talk to, is non judgmental and uses her own lived experience to help people with their mental health. Sarah really cares about who she is supporting,

does her research in order to best help the person, and she is always willing to go the extra mile for anyone. She has made a real impact on anyone she has offered support to, she remains positive and generally lights up any room whilst going through her own recovery journey. She gives up her free time while she's working through all her own stuff, to help others. I just think that's admirable.













### Befriender/Mentor of the Year Nominees



This award acknowledges volunteers who have demonstrated a high level of commitment towards improving the lives of others through a befriending or mentoring relationship. This year the category has been extended to incorporate nominations for volunteers who have supported people to be more digitally included.



### **Anne McShane** (Newtongrange Development Trust)

Anne has volunteered extensively with us since late 2022. She attends our remake-repair-recycle hub, 'The Renovate Hub' where she assists inexperienced and nervous participants to improve their sewing skills. Her main volunteering role is as a Pantry Volunteer. In this role Anne packs shopping, checks that people have ten credits worth of items, and makes up the home-deliveries. She was one of the first volunteers assisting people to understand the token system, helping to complete their weekly shop, laying out groceries and fresh food, and packing away. Anne

has volunteered at the Pantry every week since she started. Anne also runs Christmas craft stalls, producing sewn and crocheted goods to sell, then she donates the profits from these activities to NDT. Anne regularly promotes NDT when on a walk with her dog and happily chats to people. But it has not always been the case. Since her husband died early in the pandemic, she had not gone out the house or socialised until she began volunteering with NDT. Today Anne continues to take a leading role in the food pantry and her motto is "Nothing is too much trouble".

### Kathleen Ross (Connect Befriending)

Katie is one of the volunteer befrienders for the Connect Befriending Project at Volunteer Midlothian. Katie has been volunteering since February 2023 and in that time has been committed to providing much needed company and support to several older people in the community. Since the very beginning, Katie has shown love and kindness towards all of the people that she has been matched with. The elderly clients who are referred to the Connect Befriending project have been identified as benefiting from more company as they are at risk of social isolation. Many



older people may not see anyone between Monday to Friday 9-5. Katie mostly focused on providing company and lifting up spirits but also played an important role in highlighting services that an elderly client might need – be this with food preparation, medication or support with personal care. In the space of one year Katie has visited 3 elderly clients on a regular basis and since the very beginning has put their needs first. Katie has a skill of maintaining continuity for clients when everything else is sometimes changing in vulnerable person's life due to worsening health. A regular visit to someone who does not see many people can make an enormous difference. Katie's concern and compassion has been of huge benefit to her matches and has provided comfort to their families.







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### Befriender/Mentor of the Year Nominees



#### Tom McGarvey (Health in Mind)

Tom McGarvey is a Peer Connecting Volunteer for Health in Mind in Midlothian. This is a befriending role where Tom is matched up with someone we support for a period of 6 months, helping them to achieve their goals. This can be anything from helping them to overcome anxiety or build confidence in going out and about. Since February 2023 Tom has made a massive difference to people's lives. He has helped improve their confidence, reduce anxieties and enabled them to get out more.

Tom gives himself 100% to any cause in the community. Tom is a very caring person and really strives to make a difference to people's lives. He has a great sense of humour and has really put his all into Mental Health. Tom wanted to learn more about Mental Health and did a Mental Health and Wellbeing Course while he was volunteering. I feel Tom should win this award as he has never done anything like this before and he really put his all into it.

### **Transform Gardening Adult Mentors**

It is my great pleasure to nominate the adult mentors involved in the Transform Gardening Project who support our young volunteers. Our garden project transcends the generations, reducing social isolation for the adult mentors who support the project, it gives them the opportunity to share a wealth of skills, share knowledge and make meaningful connections with young people and see them thrive!



Their input is invaluable and their contribution cannot be understated, they are totally amazing and collectively they have 10 years of volunteering in this project between them. This is staggering and an outstanding commitment to the project and our young people. The adult volunteers teach the young people about biodiversity and about helping the environment. They teach them about planting vegetables and flowers, how to build bug hotels and raised beds. They pass on their knowledge about composting, gardening techniques, growing veggies and flowers and the importance of leaving wild areas to thrive. They pass on their wisdom, skills and they come every week to do this. Our adult volunteers have remained with us for years racking up hundreds and hundreds of hours of volunteering which demonstrates how much they enjoy the garden and moreover how dedicated they are to supporting the young people and seeing them thrive. Adult mentors work side by side with a young person, developing truly meaningful connections. As one young person said, "I just feel like I am a better person when I am with you".











The Saltire Awards are a national youth volunteering awards scheme, endorsed by the Scottish Government. The awards are designed to recognise the contribution and commitment of young volunteers in Scotland aged 12-25 years old. The Saltire Awards acknowledge the massive contribution that young people make to volunteering and give young people well-deserved credit for their efforts.

The Summit is the highest level of award a young person can gain. A maximum of 12 Summit Awards are presented each year to young people who have made an outstanding contribution to volunteering in Midlothian. Nominations for Summit Awards are peer assessed by a panel of Saltire Ambassadors.

### **Emily-May Milligan**

To date (March '24), Emily-May Milligan has volunteered over 660 hours of her time to support others over the past 2 years. Emily-May volunteers at Beeslack Allstars where she supports young people with Additional Support Needs, she organises games and activities and helps to build friendships with peers. Emily-May has also been supporting primary school children at Hawthornden Primary where she helped a child with autism with his learning- focusing on Maths. Emily-May also organised a Christmas Afternoon Tea for the elderly last year. She organised around



50 people from a local care home to attend the Christmas lunch with bingo, a Santa visit and presents. Emily-May has made an outstanding contribution to volunteering over her past few years here at Lasswade. The support she has provided to young people through Beeslack All Stars has been second to none. Staff have commented on her contribution and the positive influence she has had on other young people through this initiative. She has become a real role model to children that she has supported.

### Ryan Smith

Ryan Smith is a Library Monitor at St. David's Hight School and has being helping in the Library for the past 4 years. He helps keep the library organised as well as helps to run the Film Club and the Dungeons and Dragons clubs after school. Ryan's library duties and responsibilities are - to assist in the day to day running of the library, keeping it open and available to pupils - to prepare new resources for use (e.g. spine labelling, jacketing, etc) - to assist and supervise pupils using the library throughout the week - to assist in the repair and maintenance of stock - to shelve

materials in the correct order - to assist with creating displays of library resources, the production of library newsletters and other ways of promoting the library. Ryan's main contribution in the library is ensuring everyone's health and wellbeing. He consistently asks every pupil that comes in before school and at breaks and lunch, if they are ok and if they need any help from Pupil Support. Ryan's successful film club is attended by 30 pupils every week and he helps organise the film choice and the various activities he gets them to do each week. Ryan also helps with our Library Monitor scheme and sets up meetings to choose priorities and tasks for the week ahead.











#### **Eva Caddow**

Eva Caddow has volunteered over 464 hours to support others (this is constantly rising as she volunteers on average between 5-8 hours per week!). She volunteers at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People where she provides 1:1 support for poorly children. In addition to this, at Lasswade she runs a breakfast club, offers in-class support to younger years during her free periods and supports the performing arts club. She has become a role model to learners here at Lasswade. Eva is a keen dancer and volunteers weekly to support the KIC dance



as an acro assistant. Eva goes above and beyond to help other people. At the children's hospital she has launched an initiative to go round the ward with a trolley filled with snacks and treats to deliver to children who cannot leave their beds. She provides a huge support to young people at Lasswade through the breakfast club where she will set up in the mornings to offer a warm safe space for learners to eat their breakfast which they are not guaranteed at home. Along with this she supports students in classes helping to boost their confidence and helps at the performing arts academy. Out of school she supports KIC dancing also. It is clear she goes above and beyond and has supported many children and young people. She is a true role model.



### **Scott Rayner**

Scott Rayner volunteered in the community garden run by Volunteer Midlothian for over one year, attending weekly sessions. He helped with tending mending, mowing, painting, planting and lots more besides. He was a long standing and highly motivated volunteer with drive and determination. We are delighted to say he has now moved on to study Rural Skills at Newbattle Abbey College. Before doing so Scott also volunteered at Whitmuir farm. Whitmuir Farm is planning to become Scotland's first community owned farm and Scott has been helping to

develop the site so it can become a thriving space for learning and food growing. Another project Scott has been involved in was Soup2Go in Dalkeith which was created by him and a team of other young volunteers.

Scott is a great team player, his friendly attitude, his kindness and willingness to help others has made him a trusted member of many teams. He is a keen environmentalist and hopes to become a countryside ranger. Scott is keen to share his knowledge of the natural environment and is always willing to share stories and facts. He is very entertaining, informative and inspiring. He is great at coming up with new ideas about what could be done in the garden, what could planted where and he always has something to contribute at our planning meetings, his latest project was making a scarecrow!











### **Tiffany Cummins**

Tiffany was an Activity Buddy with Transform. Transform is a project for young people who have barriers to volunteering. The projects aims to provide volunteers with opportunities to meet new people, learn new skills, increase confidence and improve their future prospects. Tiffany has helped us out at Woodburn After school club for 1 year, she also helped out with our Event Volunteers programme in the summer of '23 and has now moved on to our intergenerational project supporting our elderly friends at Chrystalmount residential home where she supports the tenants



to play physical and mental games such as curling, balloon tennis, musical bingo and quizzes, and of course there is always lots of lovely chat. At the after school club Tiffany helped set up sessions, putting out games and play equipment, preparing snack and working with children by encouraging their participation and helping them navigate and understand the rules of new games and she often stepped in as referee sometimes tackling quite challenging behaviour which she did with care and empathy. Her contribution to our summer pop-up and play event was invaluable, she is a fantastic team player and she worked hard to help us plan, organise and host a wonderful play event for our community. I have never come across anyone quite like Tiffany, she exudes empathy and kindness and is one of the most genuine individuals I have had the pleasure to meet. Tiffany is an exceptional volunteer and fully deserves special acknowledgement for her commitment and dedication to all of the projects she has made such a great difference to.



### Callum Gibson

Callum volunteers in the community garden (Transform project) helping with tending, mending, mowing, painting, planting, and lots more besides. He is a long standing and highly motivated volunteer with drive, determination and the willingness to try anything new, and he does so with great passion and enthusiasm. Callum is a great encourager and his kindness and willingness to help others has made him a trusted and very valuable member of the team. Callum is totally committed to his volunteering role. He arrives at sessions on time and always brings a new

idea or shares something he has learnt about gardening with the team. His commitment is commendable, and he has over 100 hours of volunteering with us. When sessions are not on he will often pop in and water the garden if he is passing which demonstrates his commitment to the garden. He is very keen on growing vegetables and has brought a wealth of knowledge with him and we have tried growing a variety of new veggies with his direction and support including kale and pak choi and other stir fry selections! Callum is a very creative individual and is a amateur videographer and photographer, he has taken some wonderful photographs of the garden which we were able to use in our garden newsletter. He also made an incredible short film of the garden project for us, spending a lot of time filming and even longer editing! In the end he produced a wonderful, informative and inspiring video for Transform and Volunteer Midlothian which allows us to showcase the work we do in the garden on our website.









#### **Elliot Cormack**

Elliot Cormack began volunteering for the Community Café in October 2022, when his big sister became one of the Trainees in the café. Every Saturday morning, without fail, he helps in the café by serving customers, greeting new people, working the till, making teas and coffees and generally being a wonderful friendly face to meet. He often pops into the kitchen to clear and help with the dishes. Elliot is a young person who, without even trying, 'makes your day'.



He is warm, friendly, approachable, cheery and it is obvious that he has the ability to challenge any negative perceptions people may have of young people. He is such an asset to the community café, he is able to support others and show them the ropes.



### Reuben Ferguson

I am writing to nominate Reuben Ferguson for the Midlothian Volunteer Awards in recognition of his contributions to volunteering at Rosewell Development Trust, at The Steading. Reuben, aged 13, has shown dedication and initiative since taking up his volunteering role in summer 2023. Since starting he has volunteered with our summer children's activity programmes providing support with our Technical Lego sessions, been an Elf for our Santa experience and at our annual Christmas light switch on.

More recently Reuben has taken the initiative to establish a chess club for children in primary 4 to High School. Providing them with a platform for social interaction and intellectual stimulation. Through this initiative, Reuben has helped us with our work to combat social isolation and loneliness among our younger community members. He will also be volunteering at our Easter activities sessions and will be hosting a non-contact Rugby taster session for primary school children. The impact of Reuben's efforts extends beyond his activities at The Steading, he also attends and volunteers with Bonnyrigg Scouts as well as serving as a ball steward for Boroughmuir Rugby Club. Reuben's commitment to his various volunteering roles demonstrates his dedication to serving his community and making a positive difference in the lives of others. Through this nomination, we hope to shine a spotlight on Reuben's contributions and inspire other young individuals to take an active role in addressing social challenges within our community. Reuben exemplifies the spirit of volunteering and embodies the values of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility.



### **Climate Change Award Nominees**

Sponsored by EDF Energy





This category is for volunteers who have taken on an active role such as improving the environment, making a positive impact on our planet, volunteering outdoors or assisting with physical activities and sports.



#### **Dalkeith Guerrilla Gardeners**

Dalkeith Guerrilla Gardeners are determined to restore community pride. This group of volunteers decided to make a difference and dared to start looking after neglected public spaces in and around Dalkeith. They have dedicated their time and effort to doggedly weeding, planting and maintaining more and more of these pieces of land. Over-looked, over-grown areas have been

changed either to show again their original design e.g. Komaron Court; or to be planted out with native species, bee-friendly beds and trim shrubbery and bushes, e.g. outside sheltered housing. It is astonishing to see that this group has been going for over 5 years now. They join in community events and are very much part of the Dalkeith scene. Individually, or in pairs, or as a group, they go out in all types of weather. Most Sundays they finish their volunteering with a cuppa and some cake! They also challenge some anti-social behaviours and encourage folk to "bin their butts" and poo bags, they also litter pick! They do not blame the "cooncil" for the state of things: rather they appreciate that Midlothian Council is stretched due to underfunding of public services and that the level of maintenance that can be provided is declining. So, as volunteers who care about Dalkeith, they work in partnership with the Council improving the natural environment of our town. This impacts positively on the mental health and well-being of those who see the results as well as of those who create these changes. They feel that we have a collective responsibility to our town and our children who will grow up and inherit these spaces and our natural environment.

### **Gorebridge Community Gardeners**

Gorebridge Community Gardeners volunteers look after the community garden at the Gorebridge Beacon, and adopted spaces in our village. They came together during covid and they have clocked up 1000's of volunteering hours. They have transformed a space into a community garden where so many groups use the space on a daily basis including a wild meadow, sensory garden, children's garden and a growing space.



Our volunteers have turned a piece of wasteland (grass on mud) into an area where we can hold family gardening sessions, picnics, community events (e.g. garden parties and winter lights festival). They have made an area accessible to all. They have put in paths that are accessible, built potting sheds, and worked with other groups to grow food for the local pantry, made a meadow, and all the time working with the climate.



### **Climate Change Award Nominees**

Sponsored by EDF Energy







### **Newtongrange Community Garden Volunteers**

Within a year the Newtongrange Community Garden volunteers have transformed a derelict brown field site, in to a haven for people and wildlife. The space has opened up green space access to those in the village who do not have any, as well as allowing residents to have access to free local food, whether that be through the pantry initiative or organic fruit

and veg box at the gates of the garden, where people can take food for free, or leave a donation to the garden. Newtongrange Community Garden currently is only 1 year old and in the last year, volunteers have made a huge impact in the local community, teaching people from all walks of life how to grow and share local organic food. The garden last year gave 75% of their food production to the local pantry, for free, so that everyone in the village can have access to local organic food. The garden also has a massive amount of wild space, that allows many creatures a home without the use of pesticides. Any food waste is then returned to Newtongrange Community Garden to create compost – it's a true circular economy!

### Rebecca McCosh (Newtongrange Guerrilla Gardeners)

Rebecca co-founded the Newtongrange Guerrilla Gardeners in 2021 and since then has worked tirelessly to brighten up the village and make it a greener place for residents and wildlife to enjoy, by litter-picking, weeding, planting, sowing and growing. Thanks to her infectious enthusiasm and passion for protecting the environment, she has grown the informal meet-ups into regular weekly gardening sessions in the village, with areas around the primary school, library, and historic miners wheel all transformed. Rebecca was also the driving force behind ScotRail's 'Adopt a Station' initiative to



promote an eco-friendly and more sustainable place to live, Rebecca has planted all sorts of butterfly and bee friendly plants and flowers in planters and beds around the platform and car park to give commuters a valuable opportunity to connect with nature. She launched a successful social media and PR campaign for the 'Adopt a Station' and the garden at Newtongrange to galvanise support. This resulted in a huge response from local residents who were inspired to donate garden tools, plants and seeds. More importantly, they were inspired to roll up their sleeves, grab a spade and get stuck in! Her press releases have been picked up by countless news publications. In fact, one went global and was published in 'City Farmer News' in Canada! Rebecca's campaign has also been successful in changing people's attitudes. Newtongrange has a proud history of being a mining village and a longheld association with fossil fuels. But Rebecca's hope was that by engaging and educating locals through her campaign, the village could carve out a new reputation as a shining example of sustainability - and she has succeeded.



### **Climate Change Award Nominees**

Sponsored by EDF Energy







### **Transform Community Gardening Team**

Climate conscious volunteers from Transform Gardening have created a wonderful habitat for nature, our community and themselves. Collectively the team are increasing biodiversity and helping the environment by building bug hotels, using recycled materials to make raised beds, learning about composting, gardening techniques, growing veggies and flowers and the

importance of leaving wild areas to thrive. The garden is a place of wellbeing and also gives the community somewhere wonderful to sit, relax, enjoy nature and the beautiful surroundings that have been created by all of our volunteers. The garden project transcends the generations, reducing social isolation for the adult helpers who support the project. Their input is invaluable and their contribution cannot be understated, they are totally amazing and collectively they have 10 years of volunteering in this project between them, this is staggering and an outstanding commitment. Our adult volunteers come every week to support young people, to share their time and their skills and have been instrumental in increasing the activities that the younger volunteers can take part in such as joinery, making birdboxes, repairing raised beds and fences. The longevity of our volunteers demonstrates how much they enjoy the garden and supporting the young people and seeing them thrive. It is a fantastic team to be part of.

### Pilar Scorza (Newtongrange Development Trust)

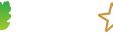
Newtongrange Development Trust began a new online charity shop called 'Newtongrange Thrift Mine' in November 2023. Pilar Scorza has been a volunteer from the very beginning. As a Charity Shop Volunteer she helps to take in donated items, sort them, photograph them, describe them and upload them online, and to price, package and post them. This way she is raising funds for community projects, keeping wealth in the community and diverting unwanted goods from landfill. NDT has made more than £2,500 from sales so far, thanks to Pilar who also partakes in the repair, repurpose and upcycling of items. Pilar has volunteered multiple times a week, helping get many items uploaded. In no small part, thanks to her consistent



contribution, she has taken a lead on diverting items from landfill. NDT has not had to purchase any packaging materials other than sellotape for their sales, mainly due to Pilar's resourcefulness, sourcing and supplying second hand packaging materials. Pilar makes clothing, that is unsuitable for re-sale, into beds for the Lothian Cat Rescue. Pilar has identified many channels by which we can pass on items to individuals and groups who can use them. Pilar's passion is to avoid waste, re-circulate goods and enable people to have things that they need and which are useful to them. In NDT's online charity shop project Pilar has helped turn unwanted goods into profits saving many items from unnecessarily going into landfill and impacting the environment. Since climate change is caused by overconsumption of the earth's resources NDT is delighted to nominate Pilar to be the Climate Change Volunteer of 2024.

Sponsored by Midlothian Council





This category is for volunteers who give their time and input to provide valuable services in their community. Without these volunteers, organisations might not be able to sustain the work they do on behalf of others. Examples could include helping in a community café or lunch club, being a volunteer driver, working in a food bank, or taking on a role as a Trustee of a local charity.



### Sweet Dignity Volunteers

Sweet Dignity volunteers support those in the community, many of whom are vulnerable with limited to access to clothing, household items, including furniture. Our volunteers have developed an ease in contact with all our clients where they treat all who use the service with dignity and respect.

They also support each other as many of our volunteers have additional needs and face issues of their own. Many have volunteered for 3 or more years. The volunteers for Sweet Dignity treat everyone they meet with the utmost dignity and respect. They are empathetic to the needs of those who use the service and have learnt to understand the wide variety of circumstances people experiencing the cost of living crisis can find themselves in. Their dedication and commitment exceed what is required on days we are open. They field messages, link into local schools and groups and volunteer extra hours to ensure the service runs without hitch. They are more than volunteers, they are a massive support, excellent listeners, sign posters and tea makers! They always go above and beyond.

### **Girlguiding Midlothian Volunteers**

Girlguiding Midlothian's team of more than 280 adult and young volunteers plan and run a variety of activities for girls and women aged 4+ across the whole of Midlothian. These activities mainly take the form of weekly evening activities for Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers but also include day trips, weekend residentials and even international trips across the globe!



Alongside these activities we have a county team who take on additional roles such as advisors, organising Leaders' training, and safeguarding & compliance. In total the team of volunteers have given approximately 2,750 years' of collective service to Girlguiding. The team of volunteers give more than 1,250 girls and young women the opportunity to have fun, adventure and the space to discover their potential. Many of our members go on their first ever sleepover, canoe on rivers, learn about body confidence, and lead their own camp. Or sometimes they simply have fun and try new things with friends. Girls take what they do in Guiding with them as they grow up. Everything from working in a team, to taking the lead, to speaking out on issues they care about. It helps them develop the skills and confidence to become the young women they want to be. And to make a difference to the world around them.

None of this would be possible without our wonderfully dedicated volunteers!

Sponsored by Midlothian Council







#### Lauren McAteer (Health in Mind)

Lauren McAteer is an inspiring young woman and volunteers in various roles at Health in Mind. She has volunteered for quite a few years, and in our eyes, is already an award-winning volunteer. The kindness and compassion she brings to all her volunteering roles is felt by all she meets and the time and effort she puts into her roles is awe-inspiring. Lauren is heavily involved in our Lived Experience Action group using her own lived experience to help others in this role. She also heads the Fundraising Group arranging ways to

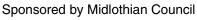
fundraise for our organisation. She co-facilitates the Creative Wellbeing Group bringing her knowledge and expertise of arts and crafts into a group setting promoting mindfulness and wellbeing. She volunteers at the Women's Wellbeing Group helping others find coping strategies to self-manage their mental health and wellbeing. Lauren's contribution to all her volunteering roles has impacted the people we support in such a positive way. She has great communication skills and has been described as 'warm, kind and friendly' and in her groupwork people we support have said that she makes them feel 'comfortable' and 'at ease'. She is always happy to help people who are struggling. We believe Lauren should be nominated for this award for her compassion, dedication and time she puts into her volunteering roles. Many of these services may not be possible without her contribution.

### Central Dalkeith and Woodburn Pantry

The Central Dalkeith and Woodburn Pantry opened its doors in October 2022 and is purely run by volunteers. There are 22 volunteers, 9 of whom have been with the project since day one. The Pantry has now been in operation for 17 months and has grown to 433 members. The team of volunteers are responsible for getting the supplies in, stocktaking, creating a warm



and inviting environment for customers, applying for funding, networking with partners and suppliers and monitoring budgets. The pantry was set up as part of measures to support people through the cost-of-living crisis Typically, there are around 70-78 shoppers per week and the pantry is not just a pantry, it has become a community space where people get to chat and find out more about what's happening locally. The energy and commitment of the pantry volunteers is amazing and the amount of time that goes into the pantry should not be underestimated. Every Friday the pantry is open from 1.30pm-5.30pm but the amount of additional hours put in during the week so that the opening runs smoothly involves numerous trips to suppliers, sorting out rubbish, liaising with other pantries, record keeping and completing funding applications. The social aspect of the pantry is extremely important, sometimes there's a singsong, they've had Christmas and Halloween activities and sometimes there's soup and crusty bread on offer. The pantry volunteers deserve to win this award as they are providing an essential service to tackle food poverty in the area of highest deprivation in Midlothian.













The Gorebridge Pantry volunteers deliver the pantry project/service for Gorebridge residents. They are the most amazing group of people, from all walks of life, ages and lived experience. They pretty much 'run the pantry'. Since we began the last week in June 2023, they show up week on week, often arranging themselves in shifts to sort out deliveries, arrange the stock, they make the pantry a lovely place to be, they have embraced the whole concept of what a pantry should be, they order, they serve, they count.

They have meaningful conversations with users, they make the space/service a fun, inclusive, friendly, engaging and lovely experience for all who visit. They have taken it on (the Pantry) wholeheartedly, and they also ensure that any young people coming to help from other organisations (e.g. CLLE) have a positive volunteering experience. They are amazing. And we simply know we couldn't (as a charity) do it without them.

Through their commitment, time, understanding, lived experience, personalities, dedication, they have enabled access to affordable food. This also means reducing food waste, addressing food poverty and overall providing a really positive experience. They talk, have banter and build trusted relationships with all those who use the pantry service during this cost-of-living crisis, financial hardship and burden of low income. They go above and beyond to ensure that the pantry experience is about choice, dignity and inclusion.

### Rhona West & Willie Reid (British Red Cross)

Rhona West & Willie Reid are currently Crisis Response volunteers with the British Red Cross, covering the East Scotland area. They have a combined 70 years of voluntary experience with the organisation, and have held various roles and responsibilities over this time, as part of the Events First Aid service and as First Aid tutors. As Crisis Response volunteers, they support vulnerable people at times of crisis, whether this is delivering food



parcels to those in need, or supporting partner agencies to respond during adverse weather events such as Storm Babet. Whilst it would be fair to nominate Rhona & Willie for the accumulative 70 years they have volunteered for the British Red Cross in the Midlothian/ Edinburgh area, what has prompted this nomination is their recent contribution to the Midlothian Meals Scheme which was run in partnership with Midlothian Council. The aim of the scheme was to support vulnerable clients with 5 reheatable meals a week for the duration of a 13 week period from Oct 2023- Feb 2024. In total, 2990 meals were delivered to clients in Midlothian with fantastic feedback from the clients in receipt of those meals. Deliveries were completed every Saturday, with Rhona and Willie delivering parcels in 28 of the 30 planned delivery days. Both work full time, and to volunteer this amount of time to support those in need in Midlothian is an incredible commitment to the values of compassion and kindness the British Red Cross espouses. They also did all of this with good humour, and offered leadership to our other volunteers who took part in the project.

Sponsored by Midlothian Council







#### Penicuik Storehouse Volunteers

Penicuik Storehouse is a community-owned shop, café and meeting space, run mainly by volunteers from the local community. Our mission is to bring our community together, to promote sustainable living and encourage healthy eating for all. Our ethos is one of inclusivity, offering volunteering, training, learning, and employment opportunities to local people. We currently have 74 volunteers, 20 of whom have additional support needs. Nine of these attend with their carer. Over the past year, we have welcomed volunteers from CLLE,

Richmond Fellowship Trust Scotland, Neighbourhood Networks, Garvald, YCATs, Teens + and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards programme. We provide a free 3 course community meal every week to Penicuik locals, with a dedicated team of volunteers offering this service. Penicuik Storehouse would not exist without its volunteers, and they play a vital part in helping members of the local community. Our volunteers are a friendly team of people who offer a smile and warm welcome to people coming into the shop and café. They have got to know many individual local residents. For some customers, this is the only social contact they have in a day. Our volunteers have recently become involved in several new initiatives helping people in our local community. We've learnt that the main reasons for volunteering with us include improved social contact and better mental wellbeing. The Storehouse has set up a new mentoring and training system in response to this, which is included in the induction process for all new volunteers and is being rolled out for existing volunteers. The overall aim is to assist our wonderful volunteers with both life and career progression.

### **Anne Ainsworth (Rosewell Development Trust)**

Anne Ainsworth's dedication and commitment to volunteering has had a significant impact on Rosewell Development Trust at The Steading and the wider community. Anne has been kindly donating her time for over 4 years now. Anne is a retired Home Economics teacher who has been sewing for her whole life. She approached The Steading back in 2019 when she had the idea to start a community sewing group. With her calm, kind nature and sewing expertise, Anne soon found that her Sewing Bee was a service that the community needed. The people who

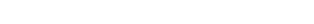


attend love the fact that they are meeting new people and learning new skills, they describe Anne as patient, approachable and extremely knowledgeable. Every Tuesday Anne arrives to facilitate and tutor the group, ensuring that everyone is welcomed and assisted with their various projects. The Sewing Bee has increased in popularity over the years and has around 20 active members. It's a wonderful service for the community which has enabled friendships to grow. In addition to the weekly Sewing Bee group, Anne also organises several outings. A particular highlight of the year is a trip to The Creative Craft Show in Glasgow. This gives everyone an opportunity to have a fun day out, find inspiration and make happy memories. Anne truly deserves this award as she has shown time and time again that by volunteering and dedicating yourself to the community you can make a difference to people's lives. We are blessed to have Anne volunteering with us, she is truly inspirational.

Sponsored by Midlothian Council







**Midlothian Federation of Community Councils** 

Ken Brown (Penicuik) Barbara Mackie (Eskbank & Newbattle) Joanne Gillies (Damhead).







Midlothian Federation of Community Councils is a group that has been operating for more than 2 decades. The Federation comprises members of the 15 Community Councils in the county. All Community Councillors are also members of voluntary organisations run by local residents to act on behalf of their area.

As the most local tier of elected representation, Community Councillors play an important role in local democracy. Community Councillors are people who care about their community and want to make it a better place to live. Communityouncillors facilitate a wide range of activities that promote the well-being of the communities they represent. They work as a member of community-based organisations that bring local people together to help make things happen, protecting and promoting the identity of their community. They advise, petition, influence, and advocate numerous causes and cases of concern on behalf of local residents. Midlothian Federation of Community Councils members have made a considerable contribution to supporting, improving, and representing their local communities. They have worked with Midlothian Council officers and national Third Sector organisation officers, to undertake training to develop knowledge and skills and capacity to create Local Place Plans. Through the work and representation of MFCC members, local residents have been able influence service provision and expenditure on Capital Works and Residential Street programmes. MFCC members, as individuals and collectively, influence service provision at a local and national level. They use their knowledge skills, time, and dedication to improve the lives and experiences and outcomes for the residents of the communities they represent.







# Health and Wellbeing & Active Volunteering Award Nominees



Sponsored by Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership







This award celebrates volunteers who care about the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable in our communities. Activities could involve assisting vulnerable people with health conditions to access services, provision of peer support, or campaigning to improve awareness around physical and mental health. This award also recognises the value of physical activity towards improvement of overall health and wellbeing through sport and outdoor activities.



### Paul McNeill (Andy's Man Club)

Paul McNeill set up an Andy's Man Club in Pathhead in 2022. Andy's Man Club (AMC) is a national charity with the aim of reducing men's suicide rate and also helping to improve men's mental health through talking to other men. Local AMC groups are set up by volunteers who are taught to be facilitators in men's talking groups. Their motto is #itsoktotalk. Paul researched and then set up this group off his own back. He sought out a place to hold the weekly group, which is held all over the country at the exactly same time. Paul did all the necessary administration, spoke with

others in the charity, went on the essential training course with Andy's Man's Club and persuaded 2 other friends to go through the course to help as facilitators – a minimum of 3 are required. Paul was open with his friends about his own challenges to encourage them to come along on the first Monday evening. The AMC group in Pathhead was the first in Midlothian and was certainly not well known about. Paul did lots of advertising in the local area and across Midlothian to ensure a small but keen group attended on the first night. His advertising work included precariously standing on a ladder to put up a banner at the venue and standing outside each night with a sign to welcome men in!

There were a few men at that first night, all of who felt the ability to share their experiences in a supportive atmosphere, was a great help with the mental health challenges they were experiencing. Paul was open and welcoming and his attitude helped everyone feel at ease and able to talk.

Many of the attendees help each other out on a day to day basis whether helping with practical tasks, discussing real-time issues or just going for walks. Paul has spoken at local events and on Facebook to encourage men to attend. Two years on the club has grown and now has many members. Paul started this AMC group in Midlothian by himself and had both the courage to do so and vision to see the value it would have. It is now a valuable resource for the men in Midlothian and continues to thrive because of Paul's ongoing efforts.

# Health and Wellbeing & Active Volunteering Award Nominees



Sponsored by Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership









### **Ageing Well Volunteers**

Ageing Well volunteers run 55 groups per week, over 17 different activities throughout Midlothian, attracting over 700 participants, all over 50 and many with long term health conditions. The volunteers have dedicated over 5,500 hours to the project over the past 12 months. We have volunteers who have been with the project for over 20 years and other volunteers who have recently signed up.

Some of our newest volunteers have started up a new activity called Pickleball which has been thriving recently and attracting new people to the project. Our volunteers encourage the over 50's to lead a healthy lifestyle which is the main achievement of the volunteers, and the way they use their enthusiasm and caring nature encourages people to stay with the groups. The welcome they give to new participants is amazing, as is their commitment to ensure the group runs smoothly and everyone has a great experience. New friendships and greater confidence have both been reported within groups and we have seen health improvements from participants. The volunteers dedicate so much time to others and I feel privileged to be working with them. This service would not exist without these volunteers and I want to thank them so much.

### Lisa Hay (Y2K)

Lisa Hay has been volunteering with Mayfield and Easthouses 2000
Youth Project (Y2K) for 5 months now within our evening drop in services. These provide a safe, inclusive space for young people aged 11-21 to spend time, have fun and take part in a wide range of activities. Lisa has been volunteering her time every week, supporting the youth work team to run the sessions and building positive relationships with local young people. Lisa's volunteering role involves supporting activities, building trusting relationships with young people and ensuring that everyone is included and made to feel welcome.



She has quickly become a popular and much valued member of the team. Lisa has a fantastic way with young people, who have excellent relationships with her and look forward to seeing her every week. She has great energy and enthusiasm and always goes out her way to make young people feel welcome and support their involvement in activities. Her patience, empathy and positivity helps those who may be feeling anxious or young people who are maybe having a challenging time. Young people feel supported, listened to and valued by Lisa. She is great fun and goes above and beyond to support young people and the youth work team, and to ensure the success of the services we provide. She is always smiling and it is clear for all to see how much she enjoys her role and takes pride in the work she does for the local community. Lisa always takes the time to really get to know our young people and her warm, bubbly personality helps our service users feel at ease and enjoy their time at Y2K.

# Health and Wellbeing & Active Volunteering Award Nominees



Sponsored by Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership









### Rhona Simpson (The Breastfeeding Network)

Rhona Simpson completed her training with The Breastfeeding Network to become a peer supporter in 2019. She was part of the flagship training group funded by Growing Families Midlothian which allowed breastfeeding support groups in Midlothian to be run by trained peer supporter volunteers. Vitally, this was the training and continued supervision and learning that allowed for healthcare professionals to be able to signpost mothers to these community groups. Rhona has been committed to supporting breastfeeding in her community of Gorebridge ever since the

pandemic put a hold on face-to-face initially, but since then she is in the Beacon every Friday morning come rain or shine. There is very little that holds Rhona back from being where she knows she is serving a useful purpose. The biggest contribution Rhona has given to the project, and more specifically to the people of Gorebridge, is her consistent commitment. This consistency has played a huge part in the growth of the group and the support that Rhona has been able to give. Some people find they are not sure what to expect from a breastfeeding support group and can put off going. But to have one available every single week, close to where you live, really is a fabulous resource, and Rhona is the reason this resource is available in Gorebridge. Rhona has gone for weeks at a time with no attendance, and whilst this may have been incredibly discouraging – she didn't give in! She had complete trust in the process; that turning up every week is what was key to being able to provide support. Something to consider is that Rhona doesn't just talk about breastfeeding positioning and attachment at her groups. Many new mums will find self-doubt creeping in in the early stages of being a parent – so the support Rhona gives is far more than what it looks like on the surface.







### **Dedicated Service to Volunteering Award Nominees**





Sponsored by Esk Valley Rotary Club







This category is for people who have dedicated their time to a cause or organisation for an extended period of at least 18 months, however it could be significantly longer. This would include people who have managed to 'stick at it' and adapt to changes in their role because of the pandemic. Do you know any volunteers with remarkable resilience who deserve recognition for their long service to good causes in their community?



### Valerie Holland (Health in Mind)

Val is a Peer Connecting Volunteer for Health in Mind in Midlothian. This is a befriending role where Val is matched up with someone to support for a period of 6 months, helping them to achieve their goals. This can be anything from helping them to overcome anxiety or build confidence in going out and about. Val also is an active member of Health in Mind's fundraising team and does loads of work in helping Health in Mind to raise funds. Without Val the energy in the fundraising wouldn't be the same. Val has been involved in the micro grant applications and the

Lived Experience Action Group. But Val also helps out whenever she can and really makes a great contribution to Health in Mind as a whole. Val has been with us since April 2020. Val is a very friendly and approachable person, and uses her own lived experience to help others. Val has been an amazing asset to the team and always has loads of great fundraising ideas.

### Lorna Greig (Girlguiding Midlothian)

Lorna has undertaken many roles during her +50 years of service with Girlguiding Midlothian. She volunteers with Roslin Guides but has also been a Mentor, Camp Adviser, Division Outdoor Activities Adviser and County Outdoor Activities Adviser – a role she has held since 1987 until recently. Serving on several committees including task and finish groups for county events, Guiding Development committee, Vogrie Property Management Committee and the County Executive Committee, Lorna's experience and enthusiasm has always been welcomed and appreciated



by those she works with. In her spare time, Lorna is an active member of Midlothian Trefoil Guild and continues to share her experiences and skills with friends and community. Lorna's passion for camping is evident as she looks after our campsite at Vogrie including bookings, maintenance and improvements to the site including the installation of a fixed wooden fire shelter, a new, large hub (with electricity and running water) and wood store. One of our other volunteers said, "Lorna is a very valuable colleague, and a trustworthy member of any team. Her attention to detail is something she is well known for and that helps to make the event run smoothly for girls and leaders alike. In her time as County Outdoor Activities Adviser, Lorna has supported and awarded more than 150 qualifications – the downstream impact this has had on our young members is immense.

### **Dedicated Service to Volunteering Award Nominees**





Sponsored by Esk Valley Rotary Club









### Margaret Dowling (Rosewell Development Trust)

Margeret Dowling volunteers with Rosewell Development Trust at The Steading. Margaret's unwavering dedication and selflessness have made a significant impact on our organisation and the community we serve. Since starting as a volunteer with Rosewell Development Trust in August 2021, Margaret has been a cornerstone of our volunteer team, generously and regularly giving her time twice weekly. Her primary role as a welcome desk volunteer encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including answering phones, greeting visitors, managing

bookings and taking payments for room hires. She also helps maintain cleanliness and orderliness within our facilities. Margaret's versatility is truly meritorious, as she willingly assists with various tasks such as preparing for arts and crafts activities and providing support with administrative duties. Margaret's dedication extends beyond her assigned duties, Margaret eagerly volunteers for special projects and events throughout the year. Her patience, kindness, and ability to make others feel relaxed and at ease have been invaluable in nurturing a supportive and inclusive volunteer environment. Margaret's willingness to go above and beyond, including volunteering for full days during special events, demonstrates her reliability, and unwavering dedication to serving others.

Margaret's generous spirit and selfless contributions have had a profound impact on The Steading and the wider community.

### Rebecca Lewis (Riverfly on the Esk)

Rebecca Lewis, as a volunteer, coordinates the Riverfly on The Esk project, works with schools and is an advocate for healthy river environments. In her 6th year, Rebecca puts in, on average, approximately 20 hours of volunteering a week! She has trained over 50 people in Riverfly monitoring throughout Midlothian, which has enabled over 200 surveys to be carried out on the River Esk. Surveying the river enables us to know what species of invertebrates are living in the river and also check the water chemistry. It is through taking these regular samples, that



changes can be detected – and act as an early warning system for example – if there is a pollution incident. Rebecca has achieved an enormous amount and brought over 50 volunteers together - provided training and opportunities to support this cause. She collates the information from the river sampling and gives it to environmental agencies such as SEPA which fills in any gaps and contributes to a better understanding of the health of our river environment and any changes that may occur due to pollution or climate change. The project 'Riverfly on the Esk' has become one of the biggest citizen science projects of its kind in Scotland. As well as coordinating activities of volunteers to monitor the river, Rebecca has also worked with landowners in Midlothian to plant trees along riverbanks where they act as a buffer – reducing the effects of pollution, improving wildlife bio-diversity and helping to reduce flooding and the impacts of flooding. Rebecca is very deserving of this award as her drive, dedication, commitment and enthusiasm are awe-inspiring and contribute to better protection of our environment. She lays the foundations for stewardship of our beautiful Midlothian into the future.



## **Equality and Diversity Award Nominees**



Sponsored by Scottish Qualifications Authority





This award category celebrates equality and diversity, shining a spotlight on volunteers that have worked with people who carry protected characteristics under the 2010 Equalities Act, for example: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. This category also includes anti-poverty work and volunteering to address socio-economic disadvantage. We want to see nominations for volunteers whose actions have demonstrated fairness and a commitment to social justice, equality, inclusion. It is also an invitation to recognize volunteers who had to overcome additional challenges in their volunteering journeys.



#### **Conversation Café Volunteers**

Since April 2023 our dedicated team of Conversation Café volunteers (Volunteer Like a BOSS – Volunteer Midlothian) have taken an active lead in running our twice weekly Conversation Café at The Salon in Dalkeith. They support our learners with their conversational English skills through sharing their own experiences. This growing team of volunteers have

supported our learners to increase in confidence with many of them being able to go on to explore volunteering opportunities and even going on to college or employment, something our earners felt might be impossible. Our volunteers are always willing to go above and beyond to help the learners feel welcome and supported not only at our Café but in the wider community.

### **Paddy Carstairs (Newtongrange Community Garden)**

Paddy Carstairs (Newtongrange Community Garden) has volunteered with the community garden since it opened just over a year ago. Paddy always gives so much attention to the garden, as well as his litter picking and other voluntary work. He's incredible and deserves to be honoured for all the work he does and for how gracefully and modestly he does it. He's an amazing presence in the garden, always up-beat and incredible, interacting with all our volunteers, from children to people with learning difficulties and mental health issues, he is passionate about nature and inspires others to never give up.





## **Equality and Diversity Award Nominees**

Sponsored by Scottish Qualifications Authority







### **Lived Experience Action Group** (Health in Mind)



Lived Experience Action Group with Health in Mind are a group of volunteers that have a voice and want to use it. They are a diverse group who between them have lived experience of mental health, addictions, and of the criminal justice services in Midlothian. They meet with Health in Mind staff and professionals from other organisations such as CAPS, MVA (Midlothian

Voluntary Action), and the Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership. They use their voices, knowledge of services, and their awareness of gaps in service provision to have a real say on funding and strategy across the Midlothian community. Four former members of this group have gone on to paid peer roles with Health in Mind.

### Jo Wilson (Lasswade High School Volunteer)

Jo gives up her time to meet 1:1 with some ESOL students mainly from Hong Kong. Although they will look at work/homework/organisational supports together, she is also about building that relationship, helping the pupil feel supported and integrated into the school and trying to stop any language issues from being a barrier to them both in learning and socially. Jo has been building relationships to support pupils to integrate with others, breaking the language barriers, acting as a supporter/middle person to be a voice for those who may otherwise



stay unheard. Jo's incredibly positive and friendly outlook is so warm and welcoming that it makes others feel valued, respected and included.















### Volunteer Team of the Year Award



This is an annual award selected by Lord-Lieutenant of Midlothian from all the team nominations received. The winning team should display an outstanding level of teamwork and effort impacting positively on lives of others. This award will be presented by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Callander, Lord-Lieutenant of Midlothian. The Lord-Lieutenant acts as His Majesty The King's personal representative in Midlothian, and his role is to foster a spirit of cooperation between voluntary, benevolent and business organisations within Midlothian.



### Volunteer of the Year Award



This is an annual award selected by Volunteer Midlothian Board Members from all the individual nominations received. The winning volunteer should display an outstanding level of passion and commitment, impacting positively on lives of others. This award will be presented on behalf of the Volunteer Midlothian Board Members, by Councillor Debbi McCall, Provost and Volunteering Champion for Midlothian Council. The Provost is Midlothian's civic leader and represents the council and local communities at ceremonial and other events throughout the year.



### **Mascot Compaign**



Previous mascots Bramble the bear, Pretzel the panda, and Ringo the rhino.

This year the mascot campaign is a little different. Each year we usually have a student placement who works with us to organise a competition and campaign with a brand new mascot.

This year, we don't have a student placement but we couldn't *bear* to have Volunteers' Week without a mascot! We brought back mascots from previous years, Bramble, Pretzel, and Ringo to keep the tradition going. We hope these mascots will find someone to look after them next year!









### **Our Sponsors**





www.firescotland.gov.uk

Scottish Fire and Rescue is part of Midlothian's Community Planning Partnership and is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the people of Midlothian. Scottish Fire and Rescue's ethos and values encompass four key themes: Safety, Teamwork, Respect and Innovation.



www.edfenergy.com

EDF is one of the UK's largest energy companies and its largest producer of low-carbon electricity. Achieving their mission means delivering a safe, socially responsible and competitive service that exceeds the expectations of stakeholders. Torness is a nuclear power station on the east coast of Scotland. It is capable of supplying electricity to over 2 million UK homes.



Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership brings together NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council services across primary, community and social care under one partnership arrangement for Midlothian. The Partnership is responsible for delivering and improving the health and care needs of the population, to ensure that those who use services get the right care and support and are encouraged to live well.



The Esk Valley Rotary Club is a local club, but part of a worldwide movement which mission is to "provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through the fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.".



Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) helps individuals to realise their potential and achieve their ambitions by providing a range of high quality, internationally recognised qualifications and associated services. SQA staff work with schools, colleges, universities and training organisations to develop, deliver and accredit qualifications that accurately reflect learners' knowledge and skills, providing routes to jobs or further study. They are based in Midlothian, Scotland, but work throughout the UK and internationally.

Thank you to SQA for supplying printed copies of this programme.



### Our Supporters



Well Done You Ltd are a manufacturer of sporting and bespoke awards with onsite engraving facilities and showroom area located in Jedburgh.

Police Scotland is one of the key partners in Community Planning in Midlothian. By embracing community planning, Police Scotland contributes to the creation of safer, healthier and stronger communities.

Award winning Soul Photography, established in Edinburgh was created especially for people who are looking for an affordable photographer and videographer in Scotland.

www.krissoulphotography.co.uk

David Burns is a Scottish bagpiper based in Midlothian who is available for Weddings, Special Occasions, Corporate Events, Burns Suppers, Funerals and Memorials.



### **About Newbattle Abbey College**

As 'Scotland's Life Changing College', Newbattle Abbey College offers support for adult learners and young people at points of transition, seeking to improve their life chances and lifelong learning opportunities. Adults with few or no qualifications have the chance to experience a high-quality transformative learning experience within a historic heritage site. The college is set in 125 acres of beautiful parkland and the historic 16th century building and peaceful surroundings make it a unique place to learn and study, to take stock and embark on new opportunities. The college also provides a unique venue for weddings and corporate events and is an active member of the Community Planning Partnership in Midlothian.



#### **About Volunteer Midlothian**

As one of the partners in Midlothian's Third Sector Interface, Volunteer Midlothian aims to encourage and inspire more people in Midlothian to volunteer and ensure that organisations have access to the best possible expertise and guidance on volunteering policy and practice. Volunteer Midlothian is also an active member of the Community Planning Partnership in Midlothian.

We are proud to host the 2023 Midlothian Volunteer Awards with the support of our sponsors and Newbattle Abbey College, in order to recognise and reward the contribution that volunteers make to communities across Midlothian.



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