



Equal Futures



In the Loop

• • **Edition 11 ▪ March 2023** • • • • •

A word from the team

Hello everyone!

Welcome to the March edition of In the Loop. With winter now past, we are excitedly looking ahead to the next few months of longer, brighter, and warmer days. Spring is seeing many new befriending matches flourish too which is fantastic news.

As you may be aware, Jayne Laidlaw has now left Equal Futures. We are incredibly sad to see her go. We wish her all the best in her new post.

Your coordinating team are busy planning a range of gatherings over the spring and summer. As always, we welcome and ideas and assistance from our members. So, if you have any thoughts about future events, please feel free to share these with us.

We would like your input for the newsletter too. Do you have any good news stories you want to share? Any recipes, celebrations, achievements, or creative talents you want to tell us about? We want to hear from you!

Donna, Jane, Stacey, and Shona

What has been happening

Burns Lunch

On Tuesday 24 January, we held a small Burns Lunch for our Ayrshire and Glasgow families.

This was a great success, and we hope everyone had a lovely afternoon. We held the event in Alloway Parish Church and had a lovely lunch of lentil soup followed by shortbread, tea and coffee and some delicious home baking.

Fergus Goldie from Belmont Academy came along to play the pipes. Pupils from Alloway Primary P7 and local boy Calum came along to do a recital.

We were then taken on a guided tour of Auld Alloway Kirk and Cemetery by John and Margaret Skilling.



Once again, all of this was made possible by donations from local organisations and individuals and we would like to offer our thanks to the following:

Tesco Auchinleck Community Page for haggis and Irn Bru
Sharlene Fitzsimmons for some delicious home baked gingerbread and sponges

Fergus Goldie – Piper

Alloway Primary School P7's

Alloway Church Hall

Ailsa Mitchell for some delicious home baked cupcakes and meringues

Pathhead Bakery New Cumnock for bread rolls and shortbread

Mary Gibson for making and serving the soup.

John and Margaret Skilling for a very informative tour

Volunteer recruitment

February has been a busy time for all of us on the coordinating team. We attended several volunteer recruitment events over Ayrshire, Glasgow, and the Lothians. We continue to spend time in local communities spreading the word about Equal Futures. We are always seeking to bring in volunteers who share our mission and values.

A report from Volunteer Scotland about the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on volunteering highlights the difficulties third sector organisations are facing when it comes to recruiting and supporting volunteers. You can read the full report at volunteerscotland.net/research-evaluation

We acknowledge the difficulties facing the sector such as:

- The increased demand for services that specialise in financial support, mental health support, befriending services, food banks, and warmth banks.
- Volunteer shortages as volunteers themselves are facing reduced disposable income - forcing potential volunteers

to work longer hours and have less availability, reducing their ability to volunteer or giving up all together.

- Health and wellbeing of volunteers. Volunteers are not immune to the negative impacts from the Cost-of-living crisis. Especially where they may take on emotionally taxing volunteering roles. They are possibly managing work and carer commitments too.

While filling our volunteer positions may prove tricky at times, when we do, the volunteers who come on board are fantastic! The connections that are made and new opportunities that arise from these matches are priceless. Hear this from one of our volunteers:

“My match seems to be perfect. We spend time together laughing and having fun, but my match has also opened up to me and I am a trusted friend to her, an outlet for her to give out or get upset with. A trusted friend can be priceless at different stages of life.”

- Jacinta

Equal Futures continue to express to potential volunteers the personalised guidance, training and support they can receive from their coordinators.

The wealth of benefits that come from volunteering and the huge impact they have on our beneficiaries by simply donating a few hours of their time.



Volunteer Opportunities

Equal Futures want to take this opportunity to thank our fabulous team of volunteers past and present for their support. We ask our readers to continue spreading the word about all our flexible and rewarding volunteer roles we have available to everyone they encounter.



Your stories

Fiona Dawson

My name is Fiona Dawson and I live in Ayr. I have been a member of Equal Futures for many years and found out about the charity through my very close school friend.

My life has changed so much since becoming involved with Equal Futures. I am heavily involved with other organisations now. I got involved with the Belonging Network through Edinburgh Development Group, where we talk about friendships within learning disabilities.

In 2017 I got involved with the Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD). I won the Sport Achievement Award that year and learned how to stand up for my human rights. I have done loads with SCLD, and I loved every part of it. I loved working with them to help create the Human Rights Town app. I have been involved with Learning Disability Week for several years.

I am now a Rapporteur through a program called Include for Good - which is also through SCLD. In 2018 I was a keynote speaker for the World Down Syndrome Congress. Then, in 2019, I was an Ambassador at the International Association for the Scientific Study of Intellectual and Development Disabilities World Congress. In the same year I got involved with the National Involvement Network and I am now the Co-Chair to that organisation. I feel very honoured to be in this position.

During the pandemic I completed a leadership and role model online course called Our Future Leaders. This is where more opportunities opened for me and got me involved in a lot of different organisations and groups.

I am also part of the South Ayrshire Strategy. It led to the

League of Champions through my local health and social care partnership, this has been brilliant for me. I feel I am a rising star and an inspiration to others. I always loved working with learning and physical disabilities, this is something I always wanted to do in my life.

I now facilitate my own circle of support which Equal Futures helped me set up. I no longer class myself as socially isolated as I am involved in so much. I also have a part time job working in a local shop a few hours a week and this helps me meet other people and grow my confidence.

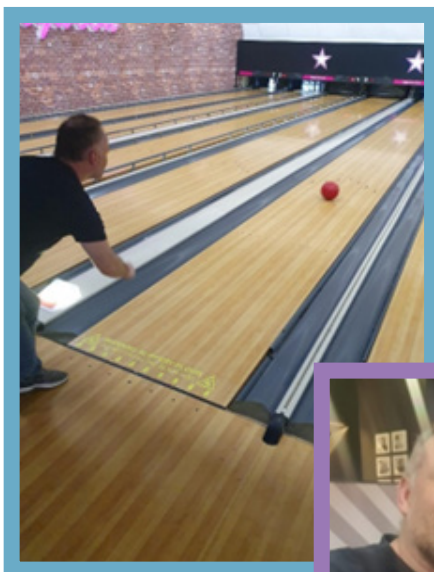
Nothing is impossible, the word itself says “I’m Possible”

Liam and Chris’ First Day Out Together!

Liam and Chris met up for their first outing in February. They had a great evening at bowling.

Chris said “We played 2 games, so we need to have a rematch at some point seeing as it was a draw.”

We look forward to hearing more stories about your meet ups together, Liam and Chris! Who will win the third round?



What is coming up

Glasgow Social Event

A group of us in Glasgow and Ayrshire came together to enjoy an afternoon of gaming at the Boom Battle Bar in Glasgow St Enoch's Centre.

We had lots of fun trying out the games- including 'crazier' golf, pool, table tennis and darts. Some of us may have got slightly competitive!

We would like to thank the Boom Battle Bar for hosting us - we would definitely recommend a visit:

Unit 23, St Enoch Centre, 55, St Enoch Square, Glasgow, G1 4BW | 0141 899 0112 | glasgow@boombattlebar.com

Please keep an eye on our social media for some pictures of the event!

Glasgow Kiltwalk

We will be attending the Glasgow Kiltwalk on Sunday 30 April 2023! We are super excited to do it again this year. At the event, we will raise some money so that we can continue to keep doing remarkable things. We appreciate everyone that signed up already - now to start the fundraising!



If you are not doing the Kiltwalk, please think about sponsoring someone on the Equal Futures team! We will send you the link through our mailing list when our team page is live.

If you or someone you know needs help to sign up or sponsor, please speak to your coordinator. We are happy to help.

The Edinburgh Kiltwalk will be in September 2023. We will have more details closer to the time.

Cannot wait to see you all there!

What is on in Edinburgh March and April 2023

Edinburgh Science Festival

When: Saturday 1 April to Sunday 16 April

Where: Various locations around Edinburgh – check the programme on the website

Cost: Different costs for different events - check the programme on the website

The Edinburgh Science Festival is the world's first – and one of Europe's biggest – celebrations of science and technology. There are many events over two weeks, including a set of 'relaxed' events.

Here are the specific 'Relaxed Performances' detailed in the programme

Find out more at
sciencefestival.co.uk/festival

RP RELAXED PERFORMANCES

These sessions are open to all, but designed for those who prefer smaller crowds, less noise and gentler lighting. For more details on each specific session, please visit our website.

P.21	POUNDS AND PENCE – THE SCIENCE IN YOUR POCKET: COINS MON 3 APR 10AM MUSEUM ON THE MOUND
P.21	POUNDS AND PENCE – THE SCIENCE IN YOUR POCKET: BANKNOTES MON 3 APR 11AM MUSEUM ON THE MOUND
P.11	EMILY DODD WED 5 APR 11AM NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND
P.11	EXPERIMENTAL LIFE RELAXED OPENING SESSION THU 13 APR 9AM NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND
P.13	TWO IN A BARREL SAT 15 APR 11.45AM NATIONAL MUSEUM OF SCOTLAND

What is on in Ayrshire

Active Travel Hub Kilmarnock

When: Various times, with specific events

Where: All over Kilmarnock

Cost: Prices depend on different events, most are free

The Active Travel Hub is a group for people who say, 'if it's not too far, leave the car.' You can sign up for membership, or for individual events advertised on their Facebook page – there are events for a range of abilities, including easy and relaxed walks.

Find out more at athubnetwork.co.uk/kilmarnock-active-travel-hub or facebook.com/athkilmarnock

Fairy Trail and Kindness Rock Project

When: No opening times listed

Where: Girvan, Scotland, KA26 9HN

Cost: Free to view – if you take a rock, you might like to leave one in return

The rockery garden at McCreath is full of little doors and fairy houses made by adults from Girvan Opportunities. The Kindness Rock Project lets people leave stones painted with art or words of kindness – visitors are welcome to take one, share one with a friend, or leave a stone for someone else.

Find out more at: whatsonayrshire.com/fairy-trail-kindness-rock-project

What is on in Lanarkshire

New College Lanarkshire Community Open Days

When: Saturday 18 March from 10am to 1pm (Cumbernauld and Motherwell) and Saturday 25 March 10am to 1pm (Coatbridge)

Where: New College Lanarkshire, Cumbernauld, and Motherwell campuses (18 March), and Coatbridge campus (25 March)

Cost: free to attend, some events and vendors may charge

New College Lanarkshire is throwing an open day party for their 10th birthday. There will be live music, scavenger hunts, and other events – you can even take a tour of the campus and learn about their courses.

Find out more at

www.nclanarkshire.ac.uk/events/open-days

Ceramics Handbuilding Workshop

When: Saturday 25 March, 1pm to 3pm

Where: Grace Health and Fitness – 2c Orbital Court, East Kilbride, G74 5PH

Cost: £40

Learn ceramics and make a lidded pot. This class is suitable for beginners and experienced alike.

Find out more at: whatsonlanarkshire.co.uk/

[event/115968-ceramics-handbuilding-workshop](http://whatsonlanarkshire.co.uk/event/115968-ceramics-handbuilding-workshop)

What is on in Glasgow

Springfest – The Scottish Food and Drink Festival

When: Saturday 1 April to Sunday 2 April, 10am to 5pm

Where: Loch Lomond Shores, Ben Lomond Way, Balloch, G83 8QL

Cost: free to attend, vendors and activities may have costs

If you fancy yourself a ‘foodie,’ this huge food and drink festival could be a lot of fun! There are cooking classes, drink tastings, and lots of food vendors.

Find out more at lochlomondfoodanddrinkfestival.co.uk

The Night Market Glasgow – Spring Fling

When: Friday 31 March, 5:30pm to 10:30pm

Where: Cottiers, 93 to 95 Hynland Street, Glasgow West End G11 5PU

Cost: £3.50 for general admission, £3 for students, £6 for two people if you book online. Children 12 or younger can attend for free. Vendors will charge additional for purchases.

The Night Market advertises having some of Scotland’s best artisans, designers, and vintage merchants in one place. There will also be street food and a guest DJ on the night.

Find out more at:

ticketsource.co.uk/the-night-market-uk/e-edrjye

Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust Open Sundays

When: The first Sunday of April, May, June, July, August, and September. 11am to 4:30pm.

Additionally, there is a Family and Community Fun Day on Sunday 30 July. They also have an annual open weekend on 14 and 15 October.

Where: Glasgow Vintage Vehicle Trust, Bridgeton Bus Garage, 76 to 136 Fordneuk Street, Glasgow East End, G40 3AH

Cost: £5 for general public, £3 for people under 15 or over 65, £12 for a family of 2 adults and 2 children, or 1 adult and 3 children. Children under 5 can attend for free.

These Open Sunday events allow you to see 140 buses, coaches, fire engines and commercial vehicles -many of which are fully restored and working. A free shuttle service runs every 30 minutes between the Garage and the City Centre.

Find out more at gvvt.org/open-sundays

How to contact us

You can reach your Project Co-ordinator for your area by email or telephone:

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All of us are home-based and do not have an office.

If you do not want to get In the Loop anymore, please contact Shona Fleming.

Our members are at the heart of everything we do. If you have a good news story or something to celebrate, please let us know - we would love to hear it! Contact your project coordinator today!