

## SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

October 2018



Welcome to our autumn newsletter. After a glorious summer we have a few weeks to enjoy a season when nature gives us a festival of colour in parks and woodlands and our churches celebrate harvest thanksgiving. Just as each season offers its own unique delights, so we, as the whole body of Christ, each bring our individual talents to our Christian service. On our own we may feel that our efforts don't amount to much, but when we work together to show Christian love in action, God empowers us to bring about beneficial change in our churches and communities.

### ANNUAL GATHERING

Members gathered in Edinburgh in September to hear our keynote speaker, The Rev. Jeremy Balfour MSP, who is Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Disability. He remarked that of all the groups protected in equality legislation, disabled people are the second largest group after gender, and yet often the voices of the 20% of the population who are disabled are not heard. For example, out of 329 MSPs, he is the only person with a declared physical disability. Even within churches disability does not seem to be high on the agenda for change.



**Jeremy Balfour MSP**

One of the challenges is that the term "disability" can have so many different meanings. People with the same physical or mental condition can experience life very differently, depending on their circumstances. That makes it all the more important that many voices should be heard. If their experiences of good practice in being included in their church communities are shared, this will raise awareness of a range of solutions to

apparent obstacles. The Scottish Churches Disability Group therefore has an important role to play in letting individual voices be heard and acting as a forum where churches can learn how to be truly inclusive in access and worship for all people.



**The Rev. Dan Harper**

The Rev. Dan Harper gave the Chairman's address at the Annual General Meeting. He told of the success of SCDG's stand at the Heart & Soul event in Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh, which attracted new members.

Further outreach is planned via the website and new printed resources.

Reports were received from SCDG's working groups. Ian Boe of the Access Group demonstrated SCDG's website. This includes information on adaptations to church buildings, signage and appropriate fonts and background colours to aid people with low vision or dyslexia. Adverts for events can be sent to the Contact section on the website <http://scdg.org.uk/contact/>. There is also a need for more stories of good practice.

Tom Sutcliffe reported from the Theology of Disability Working Group. This group has been gathering literature on this subject with a view to creating a guide in plain English.

The Ecumenical Working Group has sent information about SCDG to churches of many denominations in Scotland and invited two-way communication. A list of Churches Together groups is being compiled, but there are still many gaps and SCDG members are asked to contribute details of such groups in their area.

The Chairman thanked Committee members who have reached the end of their term of office. Ivy Blair and Lindsay Cant have made valuable contributions over 3 years. Committee members for 2018-19 are:

Chairman:	Rev. Dan Harper
Vice-Chairman:	Denis Shovlin
Secretary:	Scott Gillies
Treasurer:	William Walker
Events organiser:	Helena Cant
Newsletter editor:	Barbara Graham
Webmaster:	Ian Boe
Members:	Rev. Rosie Addis, Alex Baird, Marion Blake, Paul Goode, David Nicholson, Joan Pennycook, Judith Roebuck, Tom Sutcliffe, Barbara Walker



## Quaker Disability Group



Liz Anderson, Co-Clerk of the Quaker Disability Group, tells us about its work.

“In the past ten years we have worked with the Society of Friends, Quakers, on improving access for people with disabilities, visible and invisible. We feel this is part of our Quaker witness to equality and inclusion, allowing everyone to take as full a part as possible in the life of the Quaker community, locally and nationally.

An example is our work with Woodbrooke, the Quaker College in Birmingham, by helping them make their library more accessible with material available in alternative formats for visually impaired people. They have also improved their hearing loop systems and made bedrooms more accessible. This year they are looking at how to make their beautiful garden more user friendly and accessible for disabled visitors.

I was pleased to attend the Scottish Churches Disability Group meeting in Edinburgh. It was interesting to hear about their work and how we share problems of old, inaccessible buildings and lack of awareness of the problems within society. I was impressed with SCDG's excellent work on including people with learning disabilities

I had an interesting experience at an event on Disability and Inclusion in our Faith Communities run by Glasgow Interfaith. The panel included academics working on disability issues, architects, planners and representatives from the Jewish, Sikh, Muslim and Christian communities. Their experiences were similar to ours - lack of understanding and unsuitable buildings. One suggestion was to build a multi-purpose, fully accessible building which could be used by a number of faith communities. Different groups could meet on the day that was appropriate to their tradition. Perhaps this is a long way off, but it is something to which we could aspire in order to develop understanding in this divided world.”

### Roofbreakers

A recent edition of [Through the Roof magazine](#) includes opportunities in Scotland. There are articles on resources for churches to welcome disabled people and on how a woman's faith was strengthened as she struggled with long term debilitating conditions. Read these by clicking on the magazine title. For a print copy, contact Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ.

You can meet Edinburgh & Lothian Roofbreakers on Saturday, 10 November, 1 - 4p.m., at Juniper Green Church, 498 Lanark Road, Edinburgh EH14 5DH. For directions see <http://www.jgpc.org.uk/contact.html>. It can be reached on buses LRT numbers 44 and 45, and First Bus numbers 44 and 66.

The programme includes:   Mystery Man: Living with Closed Head Injury  
                                      Active in church and world  
                                      Local Sharing and Prayer

For further information, contact: Claire Wilson at [the@wislons.fastmail.co.uk](mailto:the@wislons.fastmail.co.uk) .

## The Music Man Project

The Music Man Project is the UK's first full-time music education service for children and adults with learning disabilities. It was founded in South Essex by former Deputy Head Teacher, David Stanley, to meet growing demand from parents for accessible musical opportunities for their children. His aim was to access the musicality in everyone, regardless of their learning difficulty or special educational need.

Music Man now operates in Essex, Suffolk, Sussex, London (in partnership with the Royal College of Music), Northern Ireland and South Africa. It delivers inspirational performances which raise awareness and challenge misconceptions.



David Stanley and the Music Man team introduced the project at Kilmarnock Salvation Army Corps in October. People with learning disabilities in Kilmarnock's Pioneer Group quickly learned to play in the Music Man band and to sing or mime new songs. Other activities included arts and crafts and drama which can be used to enhance worship.

To find out more about the project, click on the title [Music Man](#) or contact Bobby Weir, the Salvation Army's Regional Music and Creative Arts Mission Specialist for Scotland, at [bobby.weir@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:bobby.weir@salvationarmy.org.uk) or 0734-186-4326.



**Dates for your diary**



**Church of Scotland & ACTS Conference**



This Conference will be held on Saturday, 27 October 2018, in Edinburgh Methodist Church, Nicholson Square, Edinburgh. The keynote speaker, Rev Dr Charlotte Methuen, Professor of Church History at Glasgow University, will reflect on the

"Appeal to all Christian People" (1920) as a response to the catastrophe of World War 1 in the hope of improving ecumenical relations in Great Britain and Ireland.

Tickets are available through the Eventbrite website. Check the Church of Scotland website under [Events](#) or ring Ros Milne at 0131 225 5722, extension 2370.

## Prospects Scotland

### Annual Celebration Saturday 27th October 2018

This event, on the theme **Be Thankful**, will be held at Burntisland Parish Church, East Leven Street, Burntisland, Fife KY3 9DX. Arrive from 12.30 onwards for lunch of sandwiches, home baking and fruit, followed by celebration at 2 o'clock and refreshments at 3 before heading for home by 4.00pm.

Please let **Ivy Blair** know numbers and dietary requirements as soon as possible.



**07827 939 520** E-mail: [iblair@livability.org.uk](mailto:iblair@livability.org.uk)

### Training and learning together.

We can learn so much from each other. Whether you have been running a group for many years or it's all new to you, please come to our next skills development day on **Saturday 24th November 10.30 - 2.30** at St Columba's Church, Old Aisle Road, Kirkintilloch, G66 3HQ. The day will cover all aspects of running a group and we can share ideas together. Please contact Ivy Blair to book places at this event.

## Carols & Christingles

The Fellowship of Kilmarnock Churches will host an inclusive worship afternoon on Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December at 2 p.m., at the Howard Centre, Portland Road, Kilmarnock, to celebrate Advent. A BSL interpreter will be available and other special needs can be accommodated. The programme will include making Christingles, a symbol of the light of Christ coming into the world.



## Recommended by our members

### **The Edge magazine**

The Edge is the quarterly magazine of the Scottish Episcopal Church's Edinburgh Diocese. The summer 2018 edition has interesting articles on making churches more accessible in various ways and on Sarah Kilbey, a non-stipendiary priest who uses and teaches lip-reading for hard of hearing people who do not use British Sign Language.

To read these articles, click on the magazine title. Alternatively, you can request a copy from the Diocesan Office, 21a Grosvenor Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 5EL.

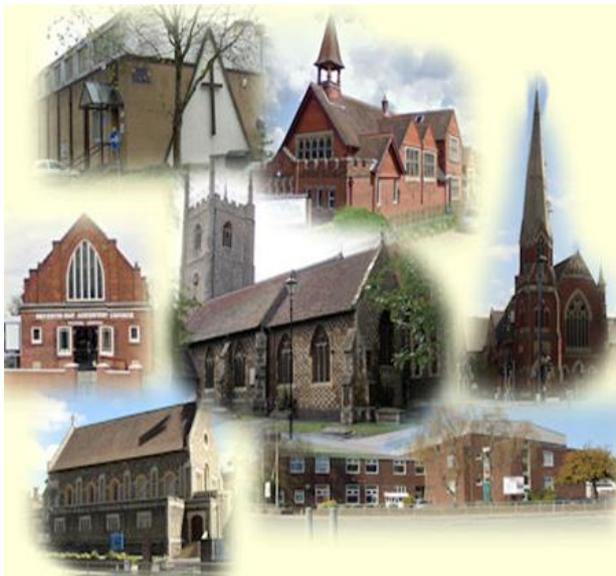


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### **See the Possibility: Ellie**

This video shows how Ellie, who has cerebral palsy and slight learning difficulties, has joined the worship team in her church, thanks to support from Through the Roof. You can watch the video by clicking on the title above.

## **Churches Together Groups around Scotland**



If your church belongs to an ecumenical Churches Together Group, please suggest inviting a member of SCDG to come and speak at a meeting. If we do not have a speaker in your area, we can provide a brief Powerpoint presentation and notes. To arrange a visit, contact the Secretary or the Newsletter Editor.

We are compiling a list of Churches Together Groups. If you have such a local group, please send contact details for it to the newsletter editor, Barbara Graham, at [barbara.graham74@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.graham74@btinternet.com).

### **Keeping in touch with you!**

New data protection laws state that we cannot keep e-mail addresses unless members have given their consent. Many of you have already sent a form to our Secretary. If you have not yet told us if you do or do not wish SCDG to keep your contact details, please complete the form on the next page and send it to **Scott Gillies** at the address or e-mail address on the form. If he does not receive this, we shall assume that you no longer wish to receive our newsletter and invitations and we shall **remove you from our mailing list**.

## SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP

### Keeping your information safe

When you give your contact details to the Scottish Churches Disability Group, we shall use this information to send you newsletters and details of our events and those of related organisations. We shall not give your contact details to other individuals or organisations without your specific consent.

To allow us to contact you, please complete this form and return it to Scott Gillies:

- by e-mail at [rowantreeass@outlook.com](mailto:rowantreeass@outlook.com) ; or
- by post to 35 Moira Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 6TD.

Please tick the boxes below to give your consent.

I agree that the Scottish Churches Disability Group may record my contact details in order to send me SCDG newsletters and information about relevant events.

I understand that my contact details will not be passed on to other individuals or organisations without my specific consent.

You may contact me as follows. Please tick the methods to which you agree:

e-mail

post

phone

**Name:**

**Address:**

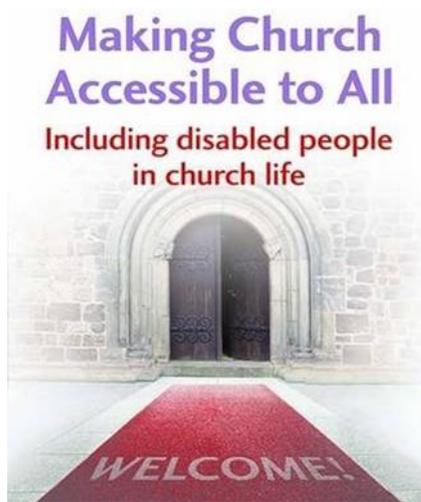
**E-mail address:**

**Telephone:**



<http://scdg.org.uk/>

Please encourage your friends to visit our website, which is useful not only for people with disabilities, but also for churches which want to be more inclusive. We welcome feedback so that we can improve it.



**Scottish Churches Disability Group**  
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