

## SCOTTISH CHURCHES DISABILITY GROUP NEWSLETTER

June 2021



It is official! Summer clothes can now be given an airing as we head for mid-summer day! We have waited a long time for the temperature to rise, but now is the time to enjoy the long, light evenings and to give thanks for the sight and scent of flowers all around us.

There has been an even longer wait for “normal life” to resume, but we are drawing closer to the time when we may be able to gather for our Annual General Meeting. As soon as we have confirmed details of the AGM, we shall let you know. If you are interested in joining the SCDG Committee, please contact our Vice-Chairman, Paul Goode, to find out more about how we might engage your talents.

[pgood@btinternet.com](mailto:pgood@btinternet.com) or Tel.: 0771-2650610.

### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The Church of Scotland has set up an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group to support a wide range of groups who may experience discrimination. The aim is to review how the Church engages with all of these people and to “*explore new ways to welcome and celebrate diversity within the Church*”.

As the Working Group’s remit is very wide, sub-groups will be set up for various issues, including disability. SCDG Committee members have expressed interest in collaborating in this work. We hope to bring you further news as this work develops.

### **Investigating Long-COVID**

The University of Glasgow has launched a major COVID-19 study to understand the long-term health of people who have had COVID-19. This is a completely new area of medical research as no one can tell people affected by the after effects of this illness what the prognosis is for their recovery. There are serious implications too for health service providers as they plan how to support these long term patients.



Led by Professor Jill Pell, Professor of Public Health, in collaboration with Public Health Scotland and NHS Scotland, the research project will investigate how many people in Scotland have long-term problems after COVID-19, their symptoms and how it affects their lives.

Scottish adults who have had a positive COVID-19 test, plus a sample of people who tested negative, will be invited to take part in the study. Participants will answer questions about their health before and after COVID-19, and whether the virus has had lasting effects on their lives.

Professor Pell said: “Most people recover quickly and completely after COVID-19, but some people have a wide variety of long-term problems. It is crucial that we find out how many people have long-term problems, and what those problems are, so that we can set up systems to spot problems early and deal with them effectively.”

For some people, symptoms of COVID-19 persist beyond the period of infection. Termed “long COVID”, these symptoms are defined as “not recovering for several weeks or months following the start of symptoms”.

Chief Medical Officer Dr Gregor Smith said: “We recognise the longer term impacts COVID-19 is having on the physical and mental wellbeing of people in Scotland. This new study will be a valuable tool to help us learn more about the effects of what is still a relatively new illness and ensure people receive the best possible treatment and care. If you are contacted to take part in the study, I would strongly encourage you to participate – your insight will be extremely valuable.”

Research studies indicate that common persistent symptoms include breathlessness and fatigue, although people have reported other on-going health concerns. It is thought that some people might initially recover, but symptoms recur later.

For information, contact: [ali.howard@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:ali.howard@glasgow.ac.uk) or [elizabeth.mcmeekin@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.mcmeekin@glasgow.ac.uk) Tel. 0141 330 6557 or 0141 330 4831

## **My Sighted Guide Friends and Family Training**

Guide Dogs Scotland will host a free session on Thursday 24 June at 10 - 11:30 a.m. via Zoom. This is for anyone who supports someone with sight loss. Training includes:

- how to use sighted guiding techniques;
- discussion around practical and emotional consequences of sight loss;
- basic awareness of eye conditions.

Spaces are limited and can be booked by emailing [MSGNIandScotland@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:MSGNIandScotland@guidedogs.org.uk) or by calling **0800 781 1444**.

## Prospects Across Scotland Calendar of Events

Prospects Across Scotland offers a busy diary of events for June and July.

9 June	11 a.m.	Coffee morning
10 June	2 p.m.	Precious Gems
23 June	11 a.m.	Coffee Morning
23 June	7 p.m.	Group Leaders and Helpers Meeting 7 pm
26 June	11 a.m.	Music with Graeme McDonald
28 June	10.30 a.m.	Prospects Forum
1 July	7 p.m.	Prayer time 7 pm

For more details of Prospects Across Scotland activities, contact Ivy Blair at [ivy.blair@prospectsacrossscotland.org.uk](mailto:ivy.blair@prospectsacrossscotland.org.uk) or tel. **07827 939 520**.

## Roofbreakers in Scotland – recent developments



Roofbreakers are disability champions in UK churches. They are supported by a UK charity called Through the Roof. Two years ago, Through the Roof appointed two members of staff to grow the Roofbreaker programme. This has led to exciting developments in Scotland and around the UK.

### Networks

Roofbreakers share ideas and encourage each other through networks. Most networks are local ones, but two are UK-wide.

- **Local networks in Scotland**

In Scotland, there has been a network for Roofbreakers in Edinburgh and the Lothians for about 10 years. Two new local networks have started. One is for Fife and Kinross. The other is for Perth, Dundee and Angus. Contact details for these groups are:

**Edinburgh & Lothians** Phone: [0131 313 4956](tel:01313134956) Email: [elaine@throughtheroof.org](mailto:elaine@throughtheroof.org)

**Fife and Kinross** Phone: [07921915365](tel:07921915365) Email: [info@tillicoultrybaptist.org](mailto:info@tillicoultrybaptist.org)

**Perth, Dundee & Angus** Phone: [07837069565](tel:07837069565) Email: [anne@throughtheroof.org](mailto:anne@throughtheroof.org)

- **UK-wide networks**

Two UK-wide networks are aimed at students and Roofbreakers in rural areas.

- **Contact networks** To see details of all networks, click on this interactive [map](#).

### **UK-wide Facebook group**

Through the Roof have also set up a [private facebook group](#) for Roofbreakers across the UK. It lets Roofbreakers support each other, chat and share ideas for improving inclusion in their churches and communities.

### **Resources**

Roofbreakers now receive a [disability toolkit](#), a [self-assessment questionnaire](#), and a 50% discount on [Through the Roof's own publications](#).

### **More information**

You can find out more about Roofbreakers and sign up to be one on Through the Roof's [website](#). Anyone anywhere in Scotland can become a Roofbreaker: you don't have to live in an area where there is a local network.

## **Promoting equality for disabled people in Scotland**

### **1. Disability Equality Scotland**



Disability Equality Scotland (DES) is a member-led organisation which promotes equality for disabled people in Scotland. DES has developed 6 online information hubs. These are easy-to-access websites that provide information, resources, case studies and news. The hubs are for: accessible transport; inclusive design; inclusive communication; having your say; Access Panels; and disability safety.

DES members receive: DES's magazine 'Open Door'; monthly 'Disability Equality News'; a membership handbook with information on the projects they are involved in; a chance to have your voice heard with DES's weekly polls and policy consultations; invitations to DES member events; a vote at DES's Annual General Meetings.

You can find out more on DES's [website](#) - <https://disabilityequality.scot/>

**Email:** [admin@disabilityequality.scot](mailto:admin@disabilityequality.scot)

**Telephone:** 0141 370 0968

**BSL Users:** BSL users can contact the charity by using **contactSCOTLAND-BSL**, the online British Sign Language interpreting service.

## 2. Inclusion Scotland



Inclusion Scotland is a registered charity governed by a board made up of a majority of disabled people.

Its mission is to achieve positive changes to policy and practice, so that disabled people are fully included in Scottish society. It does this by influencing decision-makers, supporting disabled people to be decision-makers themselves, and developing capacity, awareness and engagement.

Members of Inclusion Scotland receive: regular information bulletins and newsletters; training, capacity building and volunteering opportunities; invitations to events; support to join a local Disabled People's Organisation; and opportunities to say what you think about policies and services.

You can find out more on Inclusion Scotland's [website](https://inclusionScotland.org/) - <https://inclusionScotland.org/>

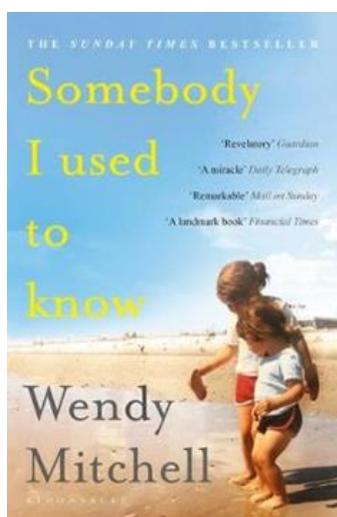
### **Sense Scotland**

Sense Scotland is a charity which supports deaf-blind children and adults. Normally, the charity hosts various events which give deaf-blind people the opportunity to engage in sensory activities and to learn communication skills. During lockdown, however, Sense Scotland has had to find different ways of supporting families.

Their Family Advisory Service focuses on enquiries related to the impact of Coronavirus. Advisers can be reached at [advisory@sensescotland.org.uk](mailto:advisory@sensescotland.org.uk). This service is available between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

For information on Sense Scotland's wide range of services and resources, see <https://www.sensescotland.org.uk/what-we-do/support/> or ring **0300 330 9292**.

### **Book review: Somebody I used to Know**



This book is an honest account of early onset dementia when Wendy Mitchell received that diagnosis at the age of fifty eight. The autobiography contrasts the 'somebody I used to know' with details of her early days and as a very capable single parent to the present day account of learning to cope with the condition. She was greatly admired at work for her wonderful memory, as the 'go to' person for details for colleagues which she kept in her head, enabling the smooth operation of management. It was a bitter blow to admit that she couldn't keep up with the work, despite putting coping strategies in place to camouflage her deteriorating condition.

There are 100,000 people living with dementia in Scotland, with this figure increasing by around 20,000 every year. This book is helpful for anyone caring for those living with dementia, but it is useful for all of us to develop our understanding of what it is really like for people with dementia.

I worked for 14 years in Care Homes with those with dementia and I would have benefited from reading a book like this. Wendy conveys not just the confusion of the condition, but the terrible fear that can come over someone when they are in a familiar place, but suddenly have no idea why they are there. She demonstrates the huge sense of loss, not only of employment, but also of the ability to drive which curtails her freedom. Wendy details the effect of the brain on walking and balance, eating and sleeping and life's general struggles. Her concern at not being the Mum to her grown up girls that she wants to be is portrayed well.

This is a very practical, readable and inspiring book for anyone wishing to find coping strategies for those in their charge with dementia, from alarms to remind people to eat, to choosing the right kind of furnishings and home decor.

A diagnosis of the condition does not mean one is "suffering" from dementia, but 'living' with it. This book is not without humour, as Wendy demonstrates how, despite those struggles, she has made the very best of living with dementia.

Review by Irene Munro



SCDG's web pages have links to a wide range of charities which support people with disabilities. See <http://scdq.org.uk/finding-help/> for details of these groups:

Churches for All

Disability and Jesus

Faith and Light

Faith in Older People

Through the Roof

Torch Trust

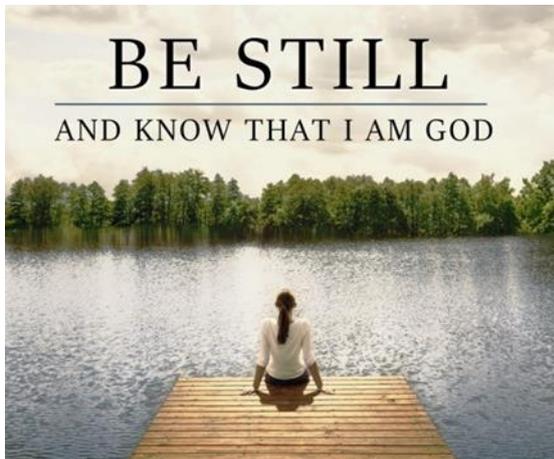
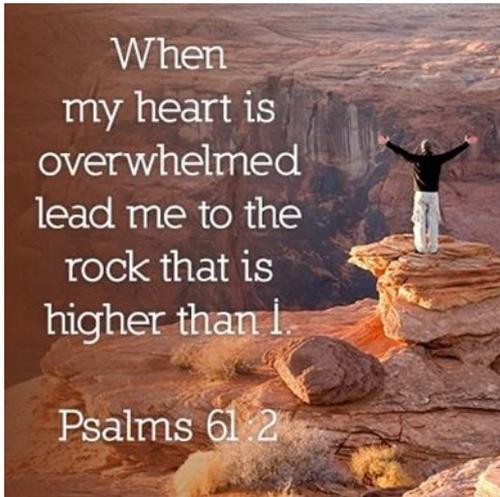
Our Webmaster adds links to video clips, some with BSL and Makaton signing.

[List of hymns](#)

[List of hymns with signing or Makaton](#)

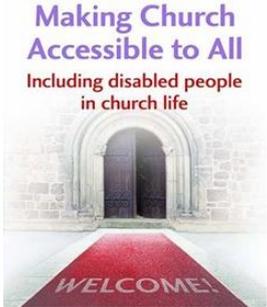
To contribute to our website, contact Ian Boe at [website.editor@scdq.org.uk](mailto:website.editor@scdq.org.uk). Please tell others in your church and organisations about this website and our newsletters. Feel free to pass on our newsletter to anyone who may be interested. Extracts can be included in church magazines or other relevant organisations.

## Inspiring verses



## How to contact SCDG

Please send your news to the Newsletter Editor, Barbara Graham:  
[barbara.graham74@btinternet.com](mailto:barbara.graham74@btinternet.com) or Tel. 01563-522108.



Scottish Churches Disability Group  
A registered Scottish charity, No. SCO39567