



Glasgow Forum



Gowrie Care Glasgow Forum held their first meeting at Hillcrest's Canongate office, Edinburgh on Wednesday 23rd of September, here's what one member of the Forum has to say.

Tom picked us up early morning for our day through in Edinburgh, we travelled on the Mega bus and arrived at midday. Lunch was provided for us at the Hillcrest office. At lunch we met area manager Graeme Brown, we had an open discussion, airing our views about the service for an hour.

the Peoples Story and Edinburgh Museum which were free to the public. After this it was down to the Scottish Parliament where at 2.30pm we sat in the public gallery and listened to debate on Television Rights.

We all arrived home at 6pm rounding off a fantastic day out.

After lunch we toured a couple of museums,

IAN FAULDS

It was wonderful to spend some time with people who work with the Community Team in Glasgow. Due to the nature of the service, and the nature of my job, I don't often get the chance to meet with people who use our services and it was really useful for me to hear what people are experiencing from both our service and homeless

and housing services in general in Glasgow. Most of the work I manage is Edinburgh based and I learned a lot from the discussion we had. I'm sure that our discussion would have made far more sense than the debate folk heard during their visit to the Scottish Parliament!

GRAEME BROWN

Dare you venture into the beautiful slipstream
Between the viaducts of my recurring dream;
No Heaven, no Hell, no future or past
Caught in my moment of 'tranquility at last.'

Locked up and lonely with a tormented mind
Time stops for no-one, you can never rewind;
Life owes you nothing, you have no entitlement
But believe me dear friend, you can find enlightenment.

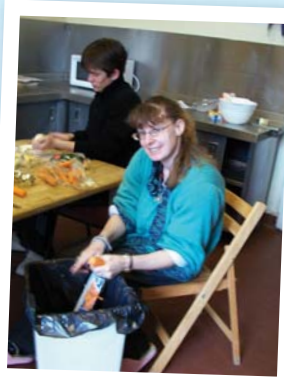
Shed all your negative thoughts and emotions
Don't give up when going through the motions;
Like sadness, anger, jealousy and rage
These conscious emotions, keeping you in a cage.

Your body endures any physical withdrawal
But your mind continues in psychological turmoil;
So free it from life's, troubles and toil
Find your own peace that no-one can spoil.

So if you venture in the beautiful slipstream
Between the recesses of your own life's dream;
To live at peace with your future and past
Then you've found your moment of 'tranquility at last.'

Po Yet

Towards the end of last year the staff at Bruntsfield wrote a letter to Ikea asking for donations of kitchen utensils. Ikea donated £150 worth of kitchen utensils to the project so on Thursday 25th Feb Service users and Staff had a participation day when we got to use some of the donated items to make soup and shortbread.



The staff at Bruntsfield would like to thank the Improving Lives team for giving the Bruntsfield Project £250 to use to improve our group work and drop in nights



Glasgow Service Users Hampden Trip

On a blustery, chilly, rain splattered afternoon a tour of our national stadium took place for our service users and staff.

To the strains of Scottish stirring melodies all attending got to feel what it was like to score a goal at Hampden, and to experience first hand these hallowed portals of Scottish football.

All involved agreed that it was brilliant to experience first hand this iconic football ground, and service users Jim D stated that he thoroughly enjoyed the day out.



Queen Mary Avenue

We are looking forward to busy months ahead in the garden at Queen Mary Avenue. We were awarded money from the Improving Lives Fund for a summerhouse which has proved to be a lovely feature, and will no doubt come in very useful as shelter. We were lucky to have received further funds from Community Food & Health (Scotland) for developing a kitchen garden. We had to put our plans on hold through the winter, but now the cold is easing off a little we are raring to go.

Our first job was to build our greenhouse. For this we enlisted the help of community reparation service, SACRO, who did a speedy and professional job. Many thanks to them for that.

As we are all novices in the art of gardening we also had to look for help with the initial set up of the project. Toryglen based environmental group Urban Roots have provided first class support from help with the initial buying of soil and seeds, etc through

to instruction in how to plant them. They have offered ongoing support as things, hopefully, develop. We are very grateful to them for all the help so far.

And so now it's down to the staff and service users of Queen Mary Avenue to get stuck in and get our hands dirty. As you can see from our photos, we have a way to go yet. We are a determined bunch though and are looking forward to our garden providing ingredients for a tasty salad to accompany the summer BBQ'S!



Mary Rose mixing soil



GowrieNews





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WELCOME

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of your newsletter. As you will read, this edition is packed full of fantastic articles and poems.

Thank you to all you budding writers for sharing your talent. The newsletters would not be possible without your input. If you have taken part in an interesting activity or if you have an exciting story to tell put pen to paper and let us know. We are always eager to hear from you.

You can send any contributions through to the contact details below. If you need a helping hand speak to your support worker, who will be happy to help.

Enjoy!

Craig

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Oxgangs Street terrorised by 'killer snake' (... Well, 3ft pet snake!)

It was a usual busy Friday on 18th Sept 2009; Louise and I where in the office, Mags was in flat 4 and Anthony was away to collect keys.

Louise said she was going to pop to the flats to see if she could round up some folks for a residents' meeting scheduled for that day, but first she was going to 'powder her nose'. A few seconds later I heard her screaming and run down the hall. I rushed to the office door to find Louise looking as white as a sheet, I asked her what was wrong and she started rambling on 'has that been put in there for a joke? Is it rubber?', I asked 'what is it?'. To which she replied 'go and see'....my thoughts?! 'Eh no mate, not til you tell me what im going to see'. I advised Louise of this to which she replied 'theres a snake in the bath!!'

Sure enough once I'd popped my head into the bathroom, I saw a long, slippery snake in the bath....yuck! I immediately pulled the bathroom door shut and called Temp for the number of Pest Control and was advised that Temp would get someone out ASAP and call me back. By this time Anthony has arrived back at the unit to hear about our 'newest recruit', he didnt believe us but once he'd popped his head around the bathroom door and bolted back out he was a believer alright!

Louise and I left Anthony with 'Sid' to go up to flat four to

let Mags know what was happening. She too, thought we where winding her up and came down to see. Mags, unlike the rest of us, was not fazed in the least by the slithery creature and was practically crouched over the bath to inspect the wee fellow! By then Temp had rang Anthony back to advise the SSPCA where going to come out and collect the snake.

After 20 minutes Louise rang the SSPCA to find out when they where going to arrive; just at that a SSPCA van pulled up. Turns out the wee visitor was a corn snake approx 1 year old and 3 foot long. He was probably a pet of someone locally. He wasn't very happy at being removed from 'Hotel Oxgangs' and tried to bite (which would have hurt but is not poisonous) however the SSPCA officer was well prepared in her thick gloves and into a bag 'Sid' went. The inspector advised us that the wee snake could not have came up through the toilet or bath as they cannot breath under water but could have came in from behind the sink or perhaps in via a vent in another room and made his way to the bath!!

So....the drama was over, however Louise never did get around the flats to drum up interest in the residents' meeting....oh well, maybe Sid wanted to attend!!

Representing Our Views

By Ryan Fox (28) and Valicious Robbin (31)

We have both recently been elected as Service User Representatives for St John's Hill. St John's Hill is a supported accommodation for 21 adults who have experienced homelessness. Representing the views of 21 residents can often be challenging, but is ultimately rewarding as it gives you a sense of achievement through helping others and reinforces a sense of self belief.

In order to become Service User Representatives, we had to be democratically elected by a majority of our fellow residents. As with all good elections, it was a closely fought campaign and we both came out with an equal number of votes.

As Service User Representatives, we both want to play an important role in making people feel positive about their stay at St John's Hill. Our role is about bringing residents and staff closer together by communicating residents' views. We attend residents' and staff meetings on a regular basis and encourage residents to approach us with any issues that they would like brought to staff. At present, we are also involved in 2 ongoing pieces of work; the re-designing of the project garden and the establishing of a set of guidelines for using the project drop in room that all residents are happy with.

On a personal level, being a Service User Representation gives you a sense of personal achievement and allows you to help contribute to making positive decisions within the project. The role encourages you to think about the needs of others as well as your own and encourages a friendly, sociable atmosphere.



Christmas in Glasgow

Robins were a rockin' and bells were a jinglin' at a party organised for the service users' children. The children got to play games, sing Christmas songs, and eat lots and lots of sweets, but best of all they got to meet Santa who of course gave them all a present. The party was a

great success and everyone who attended said they had a really good time and that they can't wait for next year's festive celebration.



Tatties Galore!!

As this was the first planting of our new vegetable patch we really did not expect the crop we got.

The potatoes lasted throughout the summer and were used for individual tenants within their own homes and also for the communal meal on a Friday. What was left over went to make our famous tattie soup for the winter. .

Along with the potatoes we planted carrots, beetroot, and lettuce and all exceeded our expectations.

We have now planted our winter crop of sprouts, leeks and winter cabbage.

Staff and tenants are at present deciding and planning what we should plant in the spring.

The cold frame that was made for us by RBS has proved very beneficial as tenants have been able to go through the whole process of planting seeds to moving them to the greenhouse to transferring them to the ground.

Not only has having the vegetable patch saved us money it has enabled tenants to think about their eating habits , when the produce is on their doorstep, they took advantage by making simple dishes such as baked potato, soup, mash and bubble and squeak.

I would like to thank all the staff and tenants for their efforts and look forward to this year's crop!!!!

Ann Dickson, Unit Manager



Service users' Interviewing for new staff

By Lynne Bruce & AD

We where both asked by staff if we would be interested in participating in interviewing candidates for the new Project Assistant post advertised at Oxgangs Street.

AD; 'I spent time the previous Friday in the staff office with another service user devising possible questions for the interview process'.

LB; 'I was really nervous as I didn't know what to expect...'

The day of the interview arrived and we where both apprehensive as to what was expected of us also we had never met each other before, despite living in the same building! I (LB) had never really interviewed before but (AD) had some experience so he gave me some help in understanding what was expected of us. It turned out to be a lot easier than we expected and it was fun aswell. The experience was a great pleasure and a joy to do!

The interviews took place in my (AD's) flat with Stacey (Project Worker) taking down the applicants answers. The first applicant did not show up! This meant we had about an hour to wait for the next person but it gave us both time to chat and get to know each other, plus staff had provided us with tea, coffee and biccies!

The 2nd applicant arrived and we asked him our 6 questions. We then joined the staff team in the office for lunch where we had a good chat and a laugh, it was good to be in an adult environment again for a while and it was also interesting that we had a different experience with staff to what we where used to.

After the final two applicants had been interviewed, we went back to the office and had a lengthy discussion about how the interviews went, the answers given and how the applicants did. All three applicants did really well and it was a really tough decision but eventually we all agreed on the successfully applicant. What we found really good was that us and staff where in agreement on all aspects of the interviews; this was really good to see as it showed us that staff are aware of what service users are looking for in a good support worker!

Overall we both agreed that this was a positive experience. After all, we will be the ones in receipt of the support from the successful candidate! So we would advise any service users who get the opportunity to interview for staff to go for it!

Here are the questions we devised for the interviews;

1. A service user who is addicted to drugs, is having a really bad day and is on the verge of using again after having gone without for a few weeks, they come to you to let you know this, what would you do/say?
2. What experience do you have with homelessness and people with addictions/mental health?
3. What would you like to achieve/ what are your main goals if you are successful in the post?
4. How would you deal/react to a service user who became very agitated and verbally abusive/aggressive towards you?
5. How would you feel being disturbed in the early hours of the morning on a sleepover, for spare keys or to let someone into the building who has come back late?
6. You are about to finish after doing a backshift/sleepover/early and a service user you are keyworking comes to the office quite agitated and wants to talk to you, how do you react?

We also had an 'in-house' applicant therefore we modified the questions for them and asked;

1. If you could change one thing for the better in this unit what would it be and why?
2. How would you deal with 3 female service users who are not getting on with each other in a shared flat, when there is no where else you move any of them to?
3. How would you deal with someone who is finding it difficult to communicate?

We would like to hear feedback from service users and staff in other Gowrie Projects i.e. what questions would you have asked? What answers would you expect to get etc. Thanks!

Your mind so curious
We gave each other a try;
We found each other magical
And out time flew on by.

We loved each other
Wrapped in our dreamy glow;
Together for a while
Not wanting to let go.

We never did worry
About our love or your wealth;
Changing all your looks
And toying with your health.

You see, no-one last forever
But no gravestone bears my name;
Each and every curious soul
To me is just fairgame!

Then you tried to leave me
But from that point 'there in'
You'll never forget me
My name is 'Heroin'.

Ps
Some others meet my cousin
The so-called 'cool cocaine';
He only tries out do me
Wasting body, soul and brain.

PoYet