



WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK (SCIO)

Scottish Charity No: SC051335

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

Trustees' Annual Report

Independent Examiner's Report

Statement of Receipts and Payments including Statement of Balances
and notes to the accounts.

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

This is the first report of the West Lothian 50+ Network SCIO, marking the first financial year end since the Network transitioned into a new legal entity, a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, on 1 October 2023.

The transition took place in time to begin the Network's 30th year, marking three decades of generous local volunteering and support for older people, and putting the Network in good shape to move forward into the future, hopefully at least for the next 30 years.

Those years have seen the transformation of so many lives, as more and more people found their way to new purpose following retirement, new social activities and new friendships, helping them to avoid the social isolation that so many older people can face.

Whilst the legal structure of our organisation has changed, the underlying ethos has not.

Thirty years ago, our founding members hit upon a formula that continues to work well today. Members doing things for other members, sharing their time, talents and passions, in a spirit of friendship and companionship.

The Network continues to be underpinned by our member volunteers. Including our volunteer trustees, and those who lead and support some 70 different interest groups and activities, some 10% of our members are actively involved in volunteering, a truly fantastic contribution and one which begins to explain the Network's success.

In my first year as Network Chair, I am grateful to have had the support of an excellent board of trustees who apply their skills, talents, enthusiasm and time in the interests of the Network and its members. I would also like to acknowledge the support and enthusiasm of our staff team who keep the wheels turning at the Hub, welcoming and working on behalf of our members on a daily basis.

In this time of rising costs, and increased competition for funding, the Network is having to work harder to seek best value for our members in all that we do. Thanks go to our fundraiser who continues to source funding to help maintain our activities, and to the numerous external funders who have confidence in the work of the Network, entrusting us with the financial support we need to supplement own-generated income to maintain our premises, staff and other running costs and activities.

We go into the next period for the Network buoyed up by all that has gone before, and positive for the future.



ANNUAL REPORT 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024

This is the first report and accounts of West Lothian 50+ Network (SCIO) after all activities transferred from the original West Lothian 50+ Network on 1 October 2023. All assets and liabilities have now been transferred to the new SCIO and all staff are now employed by the SCIO.

The Constitution requires all the Trustees to stand down at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). A number are seeking re-election for a further year and there is a new nomination for the positions of Trustee.

Income from membership fees and our own fundraising events have been supplemented by external funding streams, applied for on our behalf through the services of a professional fundraiser. This has enabled us to maintain our staff, premises and general running costs as well as funding new groups, activities and venues.

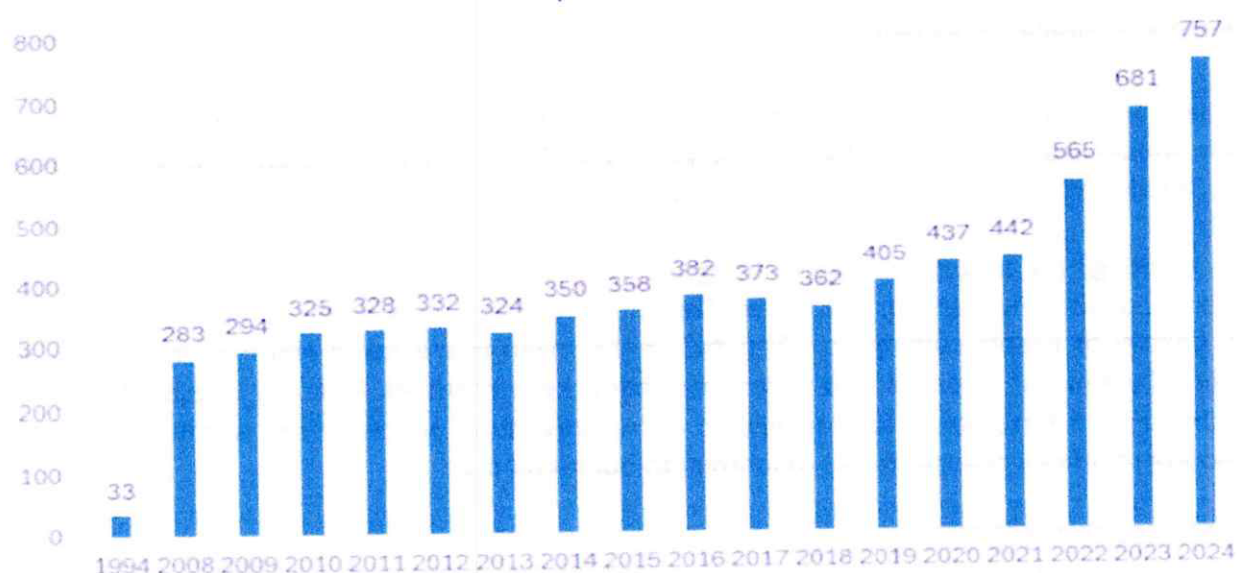
MEMBERSHIP

Membership has continued to grow with 89 new members joining in the 6 months October – March 2024. Membership stood at 757 on 31st March 2024.

The Network is still getting to grips with the post Covid surge in memberships which highlighted the important role that the Network plays in providing older people in West Lothian with opportunities to socialise. Statistics show that 62%, almost two thirds, of the membership joined in the last three years (2021 to end March 2024), which has resulted in a large cohort of new members, and unprecedented demand for group membership.

We remain committed to our aim of extending our membership across West Lothian. Though the membership is still predominantly based in Bathgate (around 40%) we are starting to see gains in membership growth from other parts of the county.

Membership Levels 1994-2024

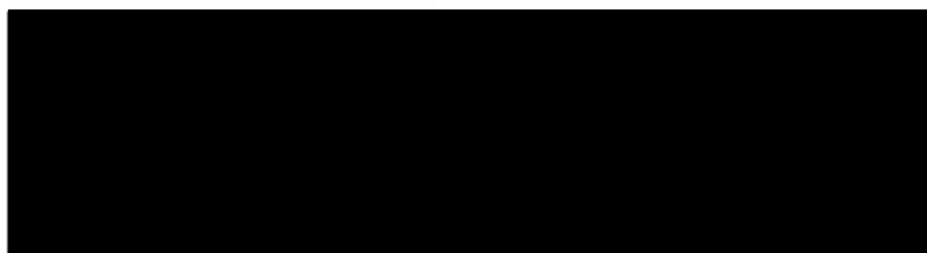



DIRECTION AND STAFF

The Network is overseen by a Board of Trustees, all of which are volunteers elected from the membership. The trustees give the Network strategic direction and ensure that the funds are properly managed. There are four Office Bearers: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. In addition, individual trustees oversee areas such as Activity Groups, Trips and Holidays, Marketing and Communication, Premises, Speakers and Events.

Day to day operations at our Members' Hub/administrative centre are run by a part-time charity manager, two part-time member support staff and a part-time Volunteers and Activities Coordinator.

The trustees who have acted during this period and to date are as follows:



 resigned from the Board of Trustees in November 2023.

PREMISES

Our Members' Hub and administrative centre in the centre of Bathgate continued to be well used by many of our activity groups, with 23 groups meeting in the designated Activity space on a regular weekly or fortnightly basis. The Members' area to the front of the building is used as an informal meeting space/drop in area for members and visitors. Tea and coffee are available thanks to our funders, as well as information on the Network and its activities. There is also space for information on community activities. This space remained very popular with members providing a social space to sit and meet others, enjoy a free cuppa, or take a book or puzzle from our bookshelves.

MONTHLY MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Members' Meetings were held on the third Saturday of each month, except for October (replaced by our annual Craft Fair and Coffee Morning), December (when we held our annual Christmas party), and March (when we held our annual Daffodil Tea).

These meetings are an opportunity to bring our members up to date with the business of the Network and with any plans for the future. They provide opportunity to let members know of any trips, holiday or events coming up. Minutes of the meeting are taken and are sent out to all members by email or by post so that every member is kept informed. A variety of guest speakers, including a local historian, a former wildlife crime prevention police officer, and the local arts development officer, brought topics of interest to our members.

NEW MEMBERS' MEETINGS

Informal regular drop-in meetings have been introduced for members who have recently joined the 50+ Network or for those who are interested to find out more before taking the plunge. These well-

attended meetings give new members the chance to meet informally with other new members and Network trustees, and to find out more about the Network.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

An extremely important aspect of the Network's activities is the wide range of group activities and social opportunities on offer. These are one of the mainstays by which the Network fulfils its aim of providing opportunities for companionship and helping members keep active in mind and body.

At 31 March 2024 the Network offered some 73 special interest groups, with 61 members involved as volunteers to lead them. The Network and its members greatly appreciate the time and support given by these volunteer leaders.

The Network also subsidised (with external funding support) certain taught classes for which a specialist instructor is required (such as Yoga or Move and Improve). Any member with a special interest or skill is encouraged to start a new group if there is sufficient demand.

Our groups met in a variety of locations, and we continued to start new groups in locations both within and outwith Bathgate, aiming to improve access to activities for members across the county.

One of the key challenges of our growing Network is meeting the demand to join activity groups.

Network groups include the following interests:

Art (2 groups)	Monday Stitchers
Badminton	Move 'n' Improve (3 groups)
Book & Blether	Nattering Needles
Book Club (2 groups)	Network Singers
Bowling (2 Groups)	NuYu (exercise and healthy eating)
Canasta	Patchwork
Chess For Fun	Photography
Classic Silver Screen	Pins and Needles
Coffee Club (5 groups)	Reminiscence
Coffee and Games Group	Rummikub
Crafts (2 groups)	Saturday Cycling
Creative Writing	Scrabble (2 groups)
Culture	Spanish
Cycling	Squawkers
French (2 groups)	Supper Club
Gardening	Table Tennis (2 groups)
Genealogy	Tai Chi
Italian (2 groups)	Ten Pin Bowling
Jewellery	Theatre/Cinema
Line Dancing	Ukulele
Lunch Club (2 groups)	Walking (8 groups)
Mah Jong and Games	Weekenders
Men's Group (2 groups)	Yoga (2 groups)
	Zumba

DAY TRIPS

We continued to run monthly day trips by coach throughout the period with a base cost set at £18pp excluding attraction entrance fees. The trips all proved very popular, with most being oversubscribed.

Trips during this period took members to Callander & Loch Katrine; Carlisle Christmas Market; Dawyk Botanic Garden; and Culross & Stirling.

HOLIDAYS

During the period we organised two short coach holidays, taking members to Cumbria for a Tribute weekend and to the Scottish Highlands to explore part of the North Coast 500 route.

FINANCES

The organisation holds a current account and a savings account with the Bank of Scotland.

The accounts are formally reported on by our external examiner, Brian Maloney F.C.C.A.

RESERVES POLICY

The Trustees review the Reserves Policy for the Network each year. To ensure a viable future for the organisation, it is necessary to retain a sufficient reserve to cover essential running costs.

The Trustees consider 6 months of core running costs and salaries to be a minimum level of reserves - some £55,000 based on our budget for 2024/25.

Unrestricted funds at the period end were £24,152 and so are less than 6 months of core expenses.

However, £49,504 of the restricted funds at 31st March 2024 were specifically for core costs so the Trustees are content that the reserves policy is met.

Steps need to be, and have been, taken to increase unrestricted reserves, including an increase in the membership fee from 1 October 2023, increased membership numbers and a review of class fees. Other fundraising initiatives are under review to assist with growing the level of unrestricted reserves to satisfy the Reserves Policy.

EXTERNAL FUNDING

Much of the work of the West Lothian 50+ Network is funded by several external funders and sponsors, and we are indebted to them all for the support and encouragement they give us.

We continued to use a specialist fundraiser who takes on the work of making appropriate applications to funding sources. As most of the funding the Network receives is restricted in how it can be spent, our fundraiser also undertook the necessary follow up work to report back on how the funding has been applied.

Our thanks to the following organisations which funded us recently and have assisted us with expenditure during this period:

- Albert Hunt Trust
- Bank of Scotland Foundation
- Baillie Gifford Community Fund
- Basil Death Trust
- GVC Fund
- JTH Charitable Trust
- Merchant Company Endowments Trust
- PF Charitable Trust
- The Row Fogo Charitable Trust
- Thistledown Trust
- The Conundrum Trust
- The Hugh Fraser Foundation
- The Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
- The National Lottery Community Fund – Awards For All
- The Stafford Trust
- The Walker-Shoolbraid Charitable Trust
- West Lothian Council – Pensioners' Christmas Fund
- Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund (Scottish Government Fund, administered by VSG WL)
- A number of West Lothian councillors have supported the Network through local disbursement funds

MEMBERS' FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

The total annual cost of running the Network is almost £140,000. That includes salaries, rent and repairs, insurance, electricity, stationery, telephone and internet, bank charges, professional fees, refreshments, IT support, cleaning and rubbish removal, equipment, postage, group venue costs, the Christmas party and other miscellaneous costs.

In a good year, grants received as a result of the work of our professional fundraiser may cover 75% of this or some £98,000, leaving £35,000 to be covered by our own fundraising activities. This helps to meet a realistic expectation from external funders that the Network has the capacity to raise some of its own running costs.

Membership fees currently raise around £16,000 each year, less than half of that total. This leaves £19,000 to be raised each year from members' fundraising activities. These typically include our annual thrift shop, events such as the craft fair, the ceilidh, the daffodil tea and concerts performed by our choir, raffles and donations, book, jigsaw and card sales, surpluses on coach trips and holidays, gift aid recoveries and bank savings account interest.

Trustees greatly appreciate the contribution of an active Events Group which has successfully planned and run a number of these activities.

CHARITY COLLECTIONS

The Network has a tradition of supporting others with our annual Coin Jar collection. In this period, we elected to support Alzheimer Scotland in this way.

We also had regular charity collections for the charities and organisations represented by speakers at our monthly members meetings (including Canine Concern Scotland Trust, Quilts for Care Leavers and the Antonine Guard Re-enactment Society).

COMMUNICATIONS

We communicated with our members using traditional methods as well as electronic / online media.

- **Minutes of Monthly Meetings:** We distributed, by email or by post, a Minute of the Members' Meeting to all members. This benefited those unable to attend whilst providing a written reminder of key points and dates.
- **Minutes of Trustees' Meetings:** In the interests of transparency, minutes of Board meetings were made available in the Hub.
- **Website:** Our website www.westlothian50plusnetwork.co.uk provides a wide range of information about the Network and is a good source of information for our members, our partners, our funders and anyone considering joining the Network. This is well used by potential members, external funders and interested parties.
- **Facebook:** We use our Facebook page **@westlothian50plusnetwork** to share upcoming events, trips and other activities with our members in a way that encourages interaction with and between members. We also share information and activities organised by our partners and other organisations which may be of interest to our members.
- **Email:** Email is by far the most cost-effective means of communicating with our members.
- **Print:** A minority of our members have continued to receive postal communication, however as this has become increasingly expensive, we ask all members to provide an email address where possible.
- **Telephone:** Our telephone lines are answered during our advertised office hours, outside of which voice messages can be left.
- **Face to Face:** Our Members' Hub is our primary point of contact for members wishing to drop in to join/ renew their membership, enquire about or book events, trips and holidays, or just to find a friendly face when they need one. We have a members' area where all members can drop in at any time to pick up a book, jigsaw or simply have a tea or coffee and chat with friends.

THE FUTURE

West Lothian 50+ Network (SCIO) will continue to play an important part in the lives of the over fifties in West Lothian, offering many and varied opportunities to combat social isolation.

A growing Network presents a number of challenges. We will continue to strive to meet the needs of a growing membership by developing relevant new groups and activities. New, younger members will be encouraged to take an active part in the organisation.

Whilst the Hub now offers a bright, purpose designed space under our own management, as part of our strategy to become less centred in Bathgate, we continue to use and seek out alternative new venues to further our aim of extending our activities across the wider West Lothian area.

Work began this year on the development of a new three-year Business Plan (2024-2027). We have begun to take stock of the impact of the recent period of rapid growth, considering its implications for member activities, staff, volunteers, premises, funding and our relationships with other organisations in the wider community.

Our plan for the next three years will focus on these key areas as our main themes. Whilst we aspire to continue to extend the benefits of the Network to all those that could benefit, and continue to increase our geographic spread, for the first year at least, there will be an emphasis on sustaining our existing membership and consolidating what we do versus growth and expansion.

This report has been approved by the Trustees on 7th August 2024 and is signed on their behalf.

WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK (SCIO)
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT
for the period 1st October 2023 to 31st March 2024

	Unrest'd £	Restricted £	01.10.23 - 31.03.24 £
Receipts			
Membership Fees (note 1)	6,776	0	6,776
Gift Aid	147	0	147
Grants Received	0	38,984	38,984
Donations Received	142	0	142
Class Fees	1,909	0	1,909
Charity Collection	0	0	0
Holidays and Trips (note 2)	31,112	0	31,112
Thrift Shop	519	0	519
Fund Raising & Other Income (note 3)	4,427	530	4,957
Bank Deposit Interest	272	0	272
	<u>45,304</u>	<u>39,514</u>	<u>84,817</u>
Payments			
Donations and Gifts	160	0	160
Salaries and Related Costs	60	29,103	29,163
Rent and Service Charges	1,896	8,205	10,101
Insurance	0	0	0
Holidays and Trips	24,250	0	24,250
Telephone and Internet	602	10	612
Heat and Light	896	3,686	4,582
Stationery, Promotion and Office Costs	609	584	1,194
Cleaning and Repairs	247	470	718
Equipment	0	957	957
Postage	1,432	0	1,432
Social Events	427	3,141	3,568
IT Support	1,642	0	1,642
Professional Fees	3,850	1,497	5,347
Group Venue and Activity Costs	1,702	1,049	2,751
Bank Charges	627	0	627
Sundry Expenses	308	90	398
	<u>38,708</u>	<u>48,793</u>	<u>87,501</u>
Net (deficit)/surplus for the period	6,596	(9,279)	(2,683)
Funds transferred from West Lothian 50+ Network	26,733	71,270	98,003
Closing Funds	<u>33,329</u>	<u>61,990</u>	<u>95,319</u>

Notes:

1 Membership Fees	
Received for current period	652
Received in advance for following year	6,124
	<u>6,776</u>
2 Holidays and Trips (Income)	
Received for current period	28,333
Received in advance for following period	2,779
	<u>31,112</u>
3 Fund Raising and Other Income	
Includes monies received for following period	271

WEST LOTHIAN 50+ NETWORK (SCIO)
STATEMENT OF BALANCES
at 31st March 2024

31.03.24

£

Bank and Cash In Hand

Funds transferred from West Lothian 50+ Network	98,003
Surplus/(Deficit) for the period	<u>(2,683)</u>
	<u><u>95,319</u></u>

Split Between Funds

Unrestricted Funds	24,155
Members' Funds	9,174
Restricted Funds (note 4)	<u>61,990</u>
	<u><u>95,319</u></u>

Made Up As Follows:

Bank Current Account	9,943
Bank Savings Account	85,277
Cash In Hand	<u>100</u>
	<u><u>95,319</u></u>

Notes:

4 Reconciliation of Movements in Members Funds

	Transfer from Old Network	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	As At 31.03.24
Unrestricted Fund	26,733	45,304	(38,708)	33,329
Restricted Funds				
The Walker Shoolbraid Charitable Trust	0	2,000	0	2,000
Thistledown Charitable Trust	0	1,000	0	1,000
Merchant Company Endowments Trust	0	1,200	0	1,200
West Lothian Councillors' Disbursements	0	450	(450)	0
W.L. Community Mental Health & Wellbeing (year 3)	0	30,000	0	30,000
W.L. Council Pensioners Christmas Fund	0	1,360	(1,360)	0
Albert Hunt Trust	0	2,000	-	2,000
JTH Charitable Trust	0	500	(466)	34
Hugh Fraser Foundation	3,000	0	(3,000)	0
Row Fogo Charitable Trust	4,900	0	0	4,900
Baillie Gifford Community Fund	625	0	(625)	0
National Lottery Communities Fund - Awards for All	6,974	0	(4,603)	2,371
Nancie Massey Charitable Trust	1,065	0	(1,065)	0
Stafford Trust	2,353	0	(751)	1,602
W.L. Community Mental Health & Wellbeing (year 2)	12,503	0	(12,262)	241
P F Charitable Trust	4,467	0	(4,467)	0
Conundrum Charitable Trust	1,497	0	(1,497)	0
Coin Jar	44	0	0	44
Other, Older Funds	33,843	1,004	(18,248)	16,599
	71,270	39,514	(48,793)	61,990
Total Funds	98,003	84,817	(87,501)	95,319