

Some Trustees and Volunteers have already pledged to take part alongside the staff team next year. It would be great if you were there to cheer us on from the sidelines!

We continue to work very closely with our colleagues in Thera Trust Fundraising Team to attract enough income from Trusts and Grants to keep our small charity afloat each year. You can help us enormously by holding your own fundraising events and activities to support our work. This could be by holding a raffle, hosting a Burns Supper, organising a charity ball, running a coffee morning, or holding an auction through your connections with corporate organisations or clubs. Please get in touch if you think you can help.

Finally, we have been working alongside our Communications Team to refresh the Equal Futures logo to create something more modern and representative of what we do. Feedback told us that our current logo is too child-like and not representative of the adults we support. We're putting the finishing touches to a couple of potential new logos and in December we will invite you to vote for your favourite. We're really looking forward to getting your feedback and hope to launch the new Equal Futures logo next year.

Wishing you a wonderful Festive Season and hope you keep safe and cosy over winter.

Jayne

My Equal Futures Journey



My name is Fiona, and I started my Equal Futures Journey in 2001. I had a record of special needs through my school years. When I was 18 my parents arranged for me to have a day to create my “PATH” – Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope.

I invited friends and family to help me with my PATH – this created a circle of support to help me see a way forward in my life.

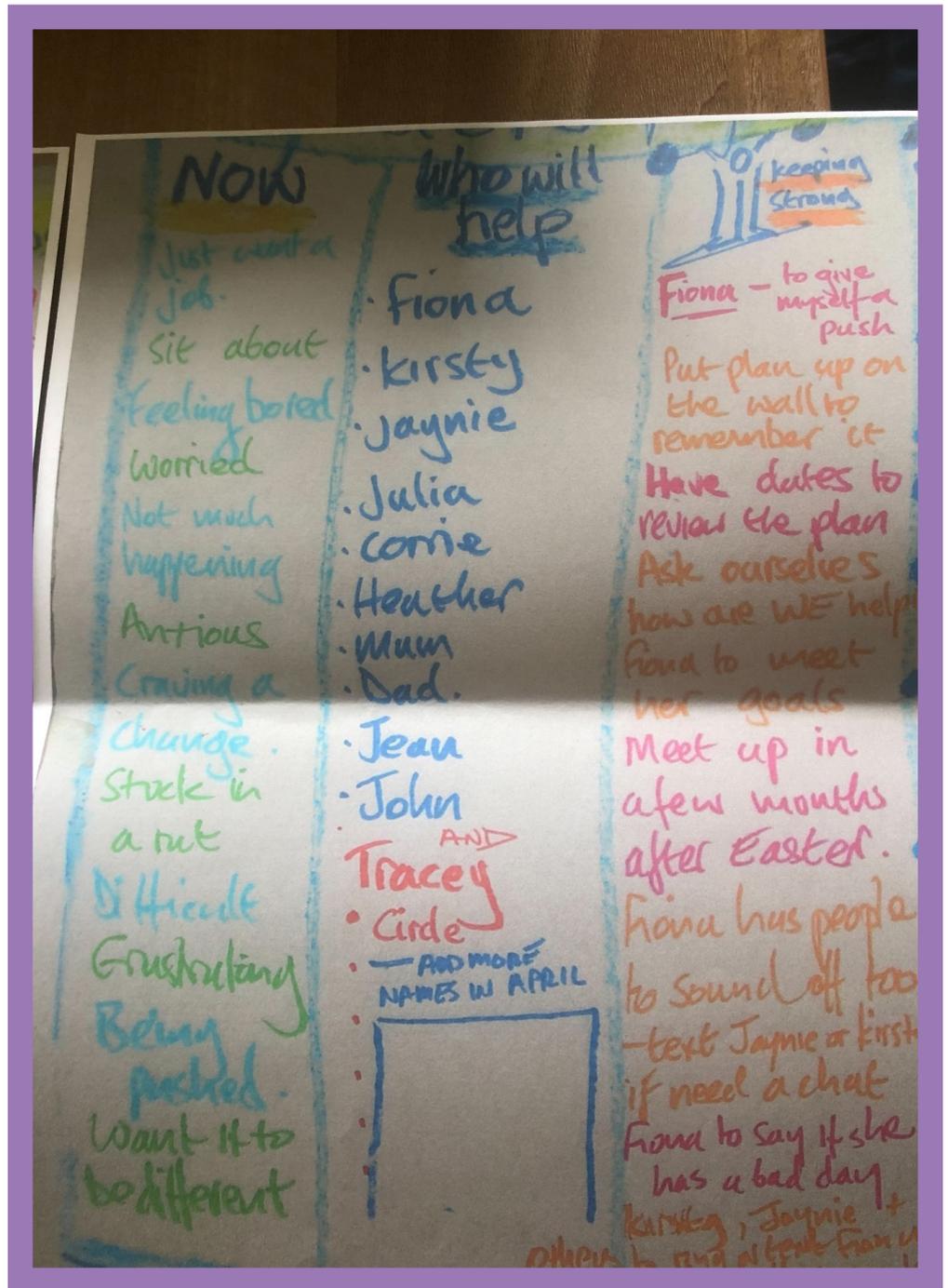
Some of the things I wanted to achieve included:

- joining a Choir
- learning to Drive
- going on holiday without my parents
- visiting Ibrox Stadium

Fiona...
invites you to a
Planning day...

the purpose is to help
me, my family &
circle of support,
to see a way forward
for my
Life...

: Saturday 12th Jan.
9 Craighall Place.
Alloway..
9.30am for 10am.
Buffet lunch at 1pm..



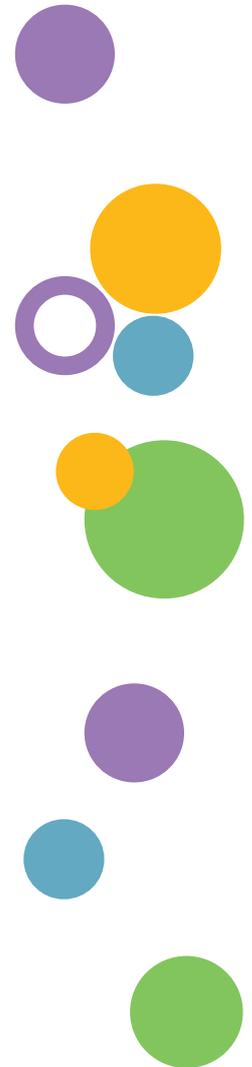
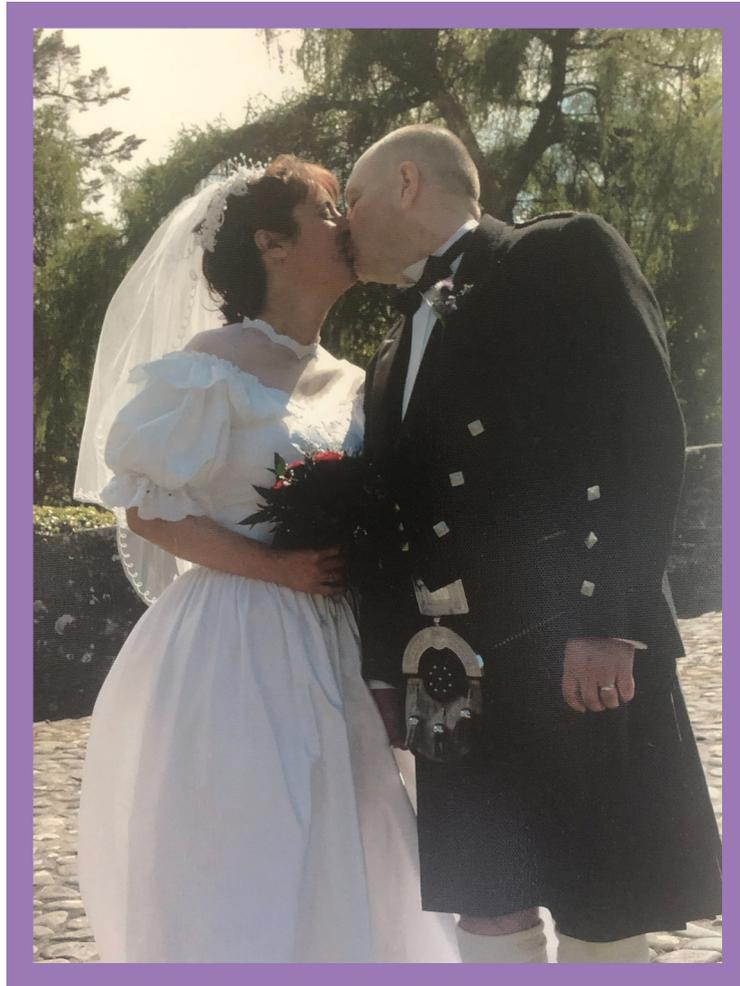
With the support of my Circle, I was able to do all of these things. I have travelled to Australia several times. I have been to Croatia, Malta, and Tenerife. I have learned to drive and I am a member of my local church choir.



I also told my Circle that I wanted to get married. My mum was dubious and said she would need to knit me a husband.



However, I married my husband Stevie in Alloway Parish Church in May 2012. Since then, we have spent 7 years working as wardens at Haven Seaton Sands on the East Coast of Scotland. After last summer we decided to move back to my hometown of Ayr. I now have a job at my local Dobbies Garden Centre.



I also volunteer at my local church parent and toddler group and help with activities at my local primary school.

I would never have been able to do all of this if it wasn't for the support of Equal Futures and my Circle of Support. I now live a meaningful, independent life, and I am excited about what the future holds.

Befriending Match



Meet David and Brian

David lives in Lanarkshire and has been waiting for a Befriender. Brian joined us as a volunteer back in the summer- he became a successful match with David. They hit it off straight away with lots of common interests. They have been plotting different places to visit and we can't wait to hear all about it! David also wants to show Brian around his local community and attend some groups that he used to be involved in before COVID-19.

Glasgow and Lanarkshire Event

We went to Hollywood Bowl in Coatbridge for our latest event. It was such a great night that it's been suggested we do it again soon. Lots of laughs and friendly competition. Congratulations to the winners! A massive thank you to everyone that came along!



Meet our new Volunteer Likhith

Hi I am Likhitha. I am 24 and I moved from India last year to study a master's degree in psychology. I have completed my course from University of Glasgow. I have a bit of experience with social work, and I am working right now as a support worker for people with disabilities.



I started volunteering for Equal Futures as a Befriender to learn, observe, and grow. It is a very rewarding and informative experience that helps me develop a better version of myself. Volunteering with Equal Futures has not only helped me grow personally, but also professionally as an aspiring clinical psychologist. The training I have received from Equal Futures is also worth mentioning. It has opened my eyes and enlightened me in understanding more about learning disabilities and autism, and how to help support individuals who have them. On the whole, it has been an amazing journey I look forward to continue working with them.

Meet our new volunteer Brian

My name is Brian. I live on the Southside of Glasgow, and I'm looking forward to getting my Older Person's Bus Pass next year!

I don't think I was the only person who felt helpless during the pandemic lockdowns. I live alone, so in one way I was lucky. I could follow the rules and stay indoors to keep people safe, quietly, on my own. But for many, the lockdowns would have been tough.



My heart goes out to anyone who struggled with an elderly or disabled loved one. Those enforced periods of isolation brought home to me what loneliness must be like. Then, as lockdown restrictions lifted, I don't think I could have been the only person who wanted to do something to make a difference for someone.

So, when I saw the Equal Futures pamphlet asking for a befriender, it seemed the ideal opportunity to make a difference for someone who may have been going through something like my lockdowns for much, much longer. It seemed such a simple thing to do, to spend some time with someone else.

Of course, it turned out it's not as simple as that. There was an interview, followed by excellent training sessions that raised important issues I hadn't considered before. I was told that support was only a phone-call away. It was then I felt a wee bit of apprehension creeping in. I always thought I was easy to get along with. I rarely, if ever, had any problems with new flatmates, new colleagues or new neighbours, but maybe this Befriending would be something different, and perhaps more complex.

In the end, I needn't have worried. Yes that procedure of an interview, followed by training and support (and yes, the protecting Vulnerable Groups checks) are all essential. But in the end, once you've completed all of that, it really is just spending some time with someone, getting to know them, and hopefully helping them feel less alone. To anyone who might ask me, I'd recommend they become a Befriender. It's such a simple, human thing to do, to spend some time with someone.

Meet our new trustee, Frankee

Hello! I am Frankee Fouin and the most recent trustee to join the board of Equal Futures. It was a pleasure to meet some members and those working, volunteering, and being supported by the organisation at this year's Annual General Meeting.



I wanted to share an introduction with you all letting you know a bit about me and why I chose to become involved with this wonderful charity. Alongside my role with Equal Futures, I am currently working with a mental health charity to provide support to those who self-harm and to raise awareness about how we can support individuals who cope through the means of self-harm. In addition to this, I am the director of diversity and inclusion for a charity that aims to reduce inequality and increase sustainability within business regarding everything from environmentalism to human rights.

I am also in my final year of my Master's degree in Counselling after beginning my trainee counsellor journey in 2018. Prior to this, I spent nearly 8 years in a role where I supported a young man with autism and a learning disability. These were golden years of my life that involved a lot of learning and growth.

The reason I was drawn to this job was due to my personal experience as the primary carer of my mother who was physically disabled during my teenage years, which set me up for working in social care for many years afterwards but also gifted me the empathy needed for families who rely on outside organisations to provide care to those we love. I was lucky enough to take on a second job for some time during

this period where I worked as a support worker during holiday clubs and after school clubs for children and young people who had a variety of different needs.

These roles that I have had the pleasure of being involved in have further inspired me to do what I can to help improve the lives of those who I cross paths with, however directly or indirectly. I hope to use my first-hand experience from being in a supporting role to advocate for excellent care and support provided to others who are supported by Equal Futures.

It has been a privilege for me to be trusted with a position on the board where I can help make informed decisions about the work we do. I hope to meet more of the fantastic people involved in carrying out this work very soon, not to mention those who are supported by Equal Futures! Thank you for your trust. Please feel free to approach me for a chat if you see me at any future events.

Volunteer Training

In October our Equal Futures coordinators were thrilled to be able to deliver our first face to face volunteer training session since the pandemic.

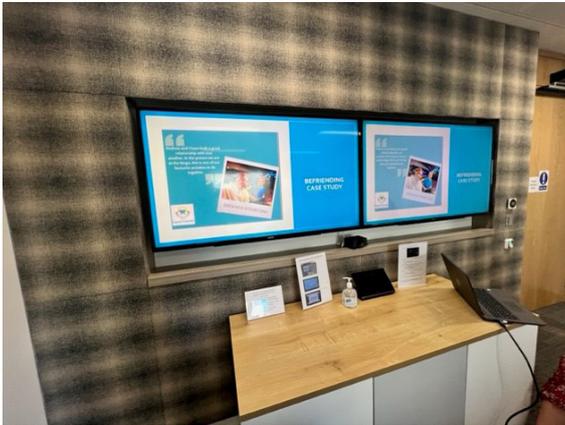
We were very appreciative to be offered the use of a fantastic meeting space within the **Motability Operations Limited's** new office building at South Gyle business park, Edinburgh.

We were delighted to run a 1-day training session which allowed for some good old fashioned, in-person interactions.

4 new volunteers have now completed our training and are ready to be matched with people we support in Edinburgh, Ayrshire, and Glasgow.

Congratulations to our newly trained volunteers, we are

confident you will all do some fantastic work, and we are happy to welcome you on board!



Baking section

Mulling Syrup Recipe

By Jane Mcallister

Around this time of year, I always make up a big batch of mulling syrup. I have used it over the festive season. Brewing up a batch always makes my house smell like Christmas, and it always gets me in the festive spirit. So I

thought I would share my recipe with you all...

Mulling syrup recipe

Ingredients:

- 1.5 litres of water
- 500g dark muscovado sugar
- 500g granulated sugar
- Tablespoon of whole cloves
- Tablespoon juniper berries
- 5 small cinnamon sticks
- 50 g mixed spice
- Teaspoon of ground ginger
- 1 vanilla pop or teaspoon vanilla extract

Method:

1. In a heavy bottom pan, add 1.5 litre of water
2. Hold onto the vanilla – we will be adding this later - but add all the other ingredients to your pan
3. Stir the mixture gently to help the sugar to start to dissolve.
4. Simmer on a low heat – stirring occasionally for at least 30 minutes
5. You will see the mixture reduce and begin to thicken – if it has not thickened, simmer for a little longer.
6. Cover this pan with a lid and leave the mix to sit for a minimum of 3 hours (I like to leave it overnight to let the flavours infuse).
7. Add the vanilla after the simmering stage when the mix begins to cool)
8. After the liquid has completely cooled, pour it through a sieve into another clean bowl or pot. This will collect all the cinnamon sticks, cloves, juniper berries and other chunky bits. It should leave you with a smooth syrup a little thinner in texture than honey.

9. The syrup will now be ready to use!

Your syrup will keep in a container in the fridge for at least 2 weeks - or it can be kept for months in a sterilised container.

Jane's favourite uses for Mulling syrup:

Mulled wine: Heat 1 cup of your syrup gently in a pan with 1 bottle red wine and a splash of fresh orange juice.

You can garnish with some orange sliced spiked with cloves and cinnamon sticks. Yummy!

Pour the syrup over your favourite ice-cream

Hot mulled apple juice or cider

Add a splash to a glass of bubbly



What's on in your area

Light shows in Edinburgh and Lothians

Light shows and trails, after our enchanting visit the

Christmas at the Botanic last year we have found a roundup of the best light trails across the Lothians.

We have great choices in the area if you would enjoy an enchanting light trail.

Christmas at the Botanic - Edinburgh

www.rbge.org.uk/christmas

Castle of light - Edinburgh Castle

www.edinburghcastle.scot/whats-on/castle-of-light

Bee Craigs festive forest - West Lothian

www.bee-craigs-festive-forest.com

Spectacle of light - Dalkeith Country Park

www.spectacleoflight.co.uk/dalkeith-country-park/

Little Stars Light Up in Ayr

Date: Sunday 20 November, 12pm to 5pm.

Venue: Ayr High Street

Cost: Free

This family friendly event will be bursting with free festive activities and events. There will be three stages for entertainment, and a switch on for the lights at 5pm.

“In celebration of [Scotland’s Year of Stories](#) and as part of our Once Upon a Time in South Ayrshire programme of events, we are delighted to be hosting ‘Little Stars Light Up in Ayr’ on Sunday 20 November from 12 noon to 5pm. With

support from Event Scotland, Ayr High Street will be bursting with activities that is sure to get you feeling festive.

This event is proud to showcase the talents of local youngsters and this year we have not 1, not 2 but 3 stages full of entertainment from our very own Little Stars of South Ayrshire!

Join us for an afternoon bursting with free activities, attractions and entertainment to keep you busy until the countdown to the big switch-on at 5pm. We Ho Ho Hope you can make it!"

Find out more at: www.destinationsouthayrshire.co.uk/little-stars-light-up-ayr

Other events in your area

Learn to Dance With LEROC

Date: Every Wednesday. Beginners at 7:30pm, intermediate class at 9pm.

Venue: St Leonard's Church Hall, St Leonard's Road, Ayr

Cost: £7 at the door

Sleeping Beauty Pantomime

Dates: Friday 25 November to Saturday 31 December at various times

Venue: The Gaiety Theatre, Carrick St, Ayr KA7 1NU

Cost: Various prices

25 Nov to 31 Dec 2022 Various Times

Relaxed, BSL, and Audio Described Performances

available.

Come see this classic fairytale reimagined as a bright pantomime that is fun for everyone. The theatre company says 'See the Gaiety pantomime this Christmas and discover that there's no one more powerful than a girl who trusts her own heart.'

Find out more at: www.thegaiety.co.uk/sleepingbeauty

Starting from the 25th of November and running till December 31st Sleeping Beauty is a panto experience not to be missed.

With a variety of evening and matinee show times throughout the run you can find the perfect time to come and enjoy a festive day out to the theatre with friends and family of all ages!

Fresh from the dizzy heights of success of 'Jack and The Beanstalk' and 'Jamie & The Unicorn' – our enchanting writing duo Fraser Boyle and Ken Alexander spin you into the magical tale of 'Sleeping Beauty'.

The Kingdom of Ayrshire and Arran awaits the return of its Princess and future Queen after eighteen years in exile. The Castle and everyone in it have been prisoners of the Curse of the wicked sorceress Carabosse, Bride of Maybole, who wants the throne all to herself – she's got a pet dragon waiting in the wings to back her up claim!

Only true love can break the spell – but with the Princess Aurora in hiding and Prince Robbie not keen on marrying someone he's never met; how can the Kingdom be saved? Can Bella, the Arran Fairy, overcome confusions about her name and protect the land from evil? Will faithful servant Briar Rose ever be able to leave the Castle and travel the world? Will Nanny McCuddles have a new baby to look

after, or will she retire to Benidorm? And will that wee Joker, Jimmy Jester, ever hold down a proper job?

Our five-star creative team led by Director Ken Alexander once again bring you a supercharged seasonal show that's full to bursting with quality, sizzling choreography, great songs, beautiful costumes, glittering scenery, bustling energy and gags galore. You'll love it so much you'll want to come and see again and again!

Snow White Pantomime

Dates: Friday 25 November to Friday 30 December at various times

Venue: Place Theatre, Kilmarnock

Cost: Various prices - there is also a £2 transaction fee

If you'd like to see a pantomime but want something different to Sleeping Beauty – or perhaps you want to see all the pantomimes possible – The Palace Theatre will be showing a reimagining of Snow White as a pantomime.

The Tuesday Friendship Club

Dates: 6pm Every Thursday 17 November

Venue: The Fairfield Club, 211 Crossloan Road, Glasgow South Side G51 3QD

Cost: £3

The Tuesday Friendship Club - TFC is a club for adults with learning disabilities and additional support needs. If you like to socialise, build and sustain friendships and mostly have a brilliant bespoke night in a safe and secure environment, look no further than the TFC.

Find out more at: www.whatsonglasgow.co.uk/event/094231-tuesday-friendship-club/ or Phone Call 0787 611 1806.

Glasgow Fort Christmas Market

Dates: Friday 18 November 2022 to Monday 2 January 2023

Venue: Glasgow Fort Junction 10 M8, Glasgow East End G34 9DL

Cost: Free to attend, various costs to purchase items from vendors

Get festive at the traditional Christmas market, at Glasgow

Shop an amazing array of stalls, sample delicious hot food and take home unique, hand-made gifts including gourmet cheese hampers, authentic chocolate kisses and Christmas sweets and spirits.

Enjoy a beverage at the Bavarian bar, fill up on traditional sausages and be tempted by decadent fresh churros, fudge and mini Dutch pancakes!

Find out more at: www.whatsonglasgow.co.uk/event/098120-christmas-market-at-glasgow-fort/

Whats On In Lanarkshire

M&D's 'On Ice'

Dates: Saturday 26 November 2022 to Sunday 8 January 2023

Venue: Strathclyde Country Park, Motherwell, Scotland ML1 3RT

Cost: 45 minute sessions with skates included are £7.95 for adults and £6.30 for children under 12, plus £3.50 booking fee per booking. You can also hire skating aids from £3.

M&D's theme park are hosting an open-air skate rink. There will also be a Bavarian Bar, festive food and drink, as well as rides and other attractions (these may cost extra).

Featuring a Bavarian Bar and festive food and drink and lots more. While there try out some of the festive rides and attractions too!

Each skating session lasts 45 minutes, and start on every hour.

Ice skates will be provided. Skating aids are available on arrival, subject to availability from £3.00.

Find out more at: www.scotlandsthemepark.com/event/mds-on-ice-open-air-ice-rink-2022

MacKinnon Mills Indoor Carnival and Craft Market

Dates: 5:30pm to 8:30pm, every weekend through November and December, including Christmas Eve. Thursday evenings from Thursday 8 December.

Venue: Mackinnon Mills Kirkshaws Road, Coatbridge ML5 4SL

Cost: Entry to Santas Grotto from £7. Indoor Carnival tokens package available from £9.50

Santa and his real reindeer arrive back at MacKinnon Mills for Christmas 2022

Santas Grotto and our Indoor Christmas Carnival and Craft Market will be open every weekend throughout November

and December including Christmas Eve.

We will also be open late on Thursday evenings in December starting from the 8th. Opening times are 5.30pm until 8.30pm.

Find out more at: www.whatsonlanarkshire.co.uk/event/098570-mackinnon-mills-indoor-christmas-carnival-and-craft-market