



in new areas. We are considering extending what we do beyond Scotland into England. This would not be possible if no one recognised the value of what we do in befriending people and developing circles of support.

My thanks go to all the staff and volunteers who do such a marvellous job and have got us this recognition.

The Board is determined to do its best for Equal Futures, so I'm glad to take this chance to thank the other Board members - Ken, Alex, Simon, and Francesca - for all their work, along with Shona and Katie for all they do for the Board too.

I have had the opportunity to attend some great events organised by coordinators and look forward to attending more in the future. I hope this gives me a chance to say hello in person.

## Thera Trust Staff Awards

Last month the Equal Futures team attended the Thera Trust Staff Awards at their head office in Grantham. Our Project Coordinators, Jane and Shona, delivered a presentation highlighting the fantastic work that Equal Futures do.

It was a wonderful opportunity to meet our Thera Trust colleagues who we work with on a daily basis but have never met face to face.

The team received glowing feedback from Thera staff, who were fascinated to learn more about the work we do, the people we help, and our wonderful volunteers.

Jane and Shona certainly have a flair for public speaking - there will be no stopping them now.



## The Glasgow Kiltwalk 2023!

We completed the Glasgow Kiltwalk on Sunday 30 April. The weather was dreich, but I suppose we are used to that living in Scotland. The atmosphere was amazing, and it is lovely to see all the walkers out raising money for their chosen charity. To date, we have raised £1,135. We would like to say a massive thank you to everyone that's donated and to everyone that took part in the walk with us.



We will be taking part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk in September. If you want to take part, please let your Coordinator know. Contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

Special thank you to Chris McFadden for his fantastic fundraising efforts at the Glasgow Kiltwalk.

Chris raised a huge £555 for Equal Futures.



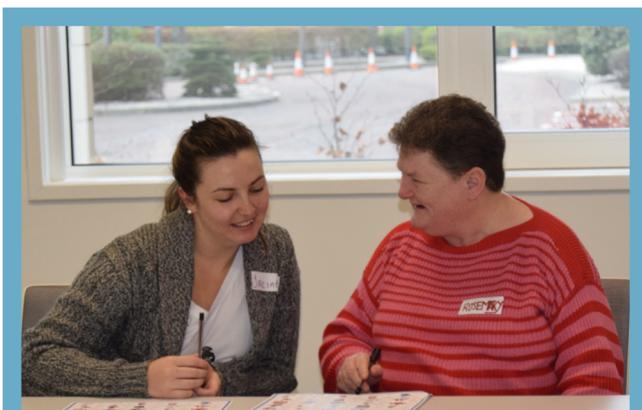
# Scottish Learning Disability week



To Celebrate Scottish Learning Disability week at the beginning of this month, Equal Futures teamed up with Gig Biddies and Thera Scotland to host a Leadership Conversation Café - #LeadToChange.

Thanks again to the super staff at Motability operations for providing the venue.

It was a fantastic opportunity to get the people we support and befrienders together to learn about leadership and discuss how they were leaders in their own lives.



## Volunteer Training April 2023

We held our latest Volunteer training at Virgin Money Bank in Glasgow. They kindly let us access one of their training rooms where we were able to deliver our training to a group of new volunteers.

Feedback from the trainees on the day was very positive. It was heart-warming to see all the new skills, experience and knowledge this new intake would bring to our existing volunteer cohort

We covered - amongst a host of subjects:

- the history of Equal Futures, our mission, and our values
- an introduction into learning disability and autism
- communication
- forming new relationships
- confidentiality and boundaries
- the different volunteering roles within Equal Futures
- importance of measuring the impact we make.

We love being able to run training face-to-face when we can. It is a fantastic opportunity to bring some of our superb volunteers together as a group and promote the strong team ethic we have at Equal Futures.

## Volunteer Fair Glasgow

We have recently began working in partnership with City of Glasgow College. We are now part of their Volunteering Hub and are advertising our opportunities within the college.

We were invited along to their recent Volunteering Event in April. It was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the great work we do and speak to potential volunteers.

## What is a Circle of Support?

A Circle of Support is a group that meets approximately every 2 months to support a person with a learning disability or autism. This support can also offer benefits to the family of the person supported, such as community and advice.

Circles of Support provide friendly groups for the person we support to make plans, set targets to aid progress, and gain relevant support.

Circles of Support include:

- people who know the person well – including any appropriate family members and friends
- volunteers
- an Equal Futures Project Coordinator who organises and attends circle meetings
- an emphasis on helping a person achieve their goals, try new hobbies, and make meaningful social connections
- a person-centred approach focused on the person we support's voice and needs

Does this sound like something you want in your life, or do you know someone who may benefit from having a circle of support? Could you help someone by being a part of their circle?

If you said yes to any of the above, please get in touch with your Coordinator. Contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

## Volunteer Week

Volunteer week is from Thursday 1 to Wednesday 7 June 2023. We are sure you will agree that our volunteers do an amazing job!

We are looking for any quotes or stories you have about your volunteer that we can use during that week. Please get in touch with your Coordinator. Contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

# What is on in Edinburgh and Lothians

## Edinburgh Canal festival

**Where:** Union Canal between the Lochrin Basin and Harrison Park

**When:** Saturday 17 June 2023 (12pm to 4:30pm)

**Cost:** Free

There will be loads of free activities and entertainment as you travel along the canal in the heart of Edinburgh.

Find out more at [www.edinburghcanalfestival.org.uk](http://www.edinburghcanalfestival.org.uk)

## Leith Festival

**Where:** Leith, Edinburgh -various venues

**When:** Saturday 10 June to Sunday 18 June 2023

**Cost:** Free

Leith Festival gives the opportunity for professional and amateur groups alike to be involved in theatre, music, arts, history, song, in fact pretty much anything within their local community

Find out more at [www.leithfestival.com](http://www.leithfestival.com)

## Meadows Festival Edinburgh

**Where:** The Meadows - The Meadows Melville Drive, Edinburgh South, EH9 1ND

**When:** Saturday 3 June to Sunday 4 June 2023, 11am to 6pm

**Cost:** Free

The Meadows Festival Edinburgh is a community festival run by volunteers. It a wide variety of entertainment and activities suitable for everyone – including live stages, a dog show, sports, performances, food vans, and an outdoor market.

Find out more at [www.meadowsfestival.co.uk](http://www.meadowsfestival.co.uk)

# What is on in Glasgow

## Aye Write! Glasgow Book Festival

**When:** Friday 19 May to Sunday 28 May 2023

**Where:** Glasgow City Centre – Mitchell Library and Glasgow Royal Concert Hall

**Cost:** Prices vary - check out the website for the full programme

Aye Write, Glasgow's Book Festival, is back for 2023 with a line-up of events for this literary celebration. The festival covers a range of topics and cultural themes, including the cost-of-living crisis, the war in Ukraine, health and wellbeing, the environment and climate crisis, today's political environment in the UK, sport, and the criminal justice system.

Find out more at

**[www.glasgowlife.org.uk/whatson?page1&programme=aye%20write](http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/whatson?page1&programme=aye%20write)**

# What is on in Lanarkshire

## The Townhouse Hamilton

**When:** Various dates through the year

**Where:** Hamilton Town House, 102 Cadzow Street, Hamilton, ML3 6HH

**Cost:** varies depending on event.

The Town House Hamilton hosts a variety of performances, from West End productions, national companies through to local amateur groups.

This venue is disability friendly – it is fully barrier free with level access to all areas. It has 12 separate disabled toilet facilities, lifts, low level service points, induction loops at all service points, infrared hearing enhancement facilities, ramps, automatic or button press doors, and 3 disabled parking spaces.

For more information contact the Box Office on **01698 452 299** or visit the website at **[www.slleisureandculture.co.uk/info/50/the\\_town\\_house\\_hamilton](http://www.slleisureandculture.co.uk/info/50/the_town_house_hamilton)**

## How to contact us

You can reach your Project Co-ordinator for your area by email or telephone:

**Jane Mcallister (Edinburgh and Lothians):**

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**Donna McCallum (Lanarkshire):**

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**Shona Fleming (Ayrshire):**

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0778 751 6597

All of us are home-based and do not have an office.

If you do not want to get In the Loop anymore, please contact Shona Fleming.

Our members are at the heart of everything we do. If you have a good news story or something to celebrate, please let us know - we would love to hear it! Contact your project coordinator today!