

GIVING A VOICE TO YOUR EXPERIENCE

Voice
of
Experience
Forum

ISSUE 70
APRIL 2026

REGISTERED CHARITY
NUMBER SC037466

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE FORUM NEWSLETTER



Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
Events & Motherwell Seniors Forum	1
Health Improvement Event	2
VoEF Outreach	2
Chat Cafes	3
2026 VoEF Information Calendar	3
Lanarkshire Links	3
Engagement & Participation Network	4
Current Scam	4

Contact us at:

Airdrie Business Centre,
1 Chapel Lane,
Airdrie
ML6 6GX

Tel 01236 439550

Mobile
07305692098

Email:
info@voef.org.uk

Welcome to our Spring Newsletter

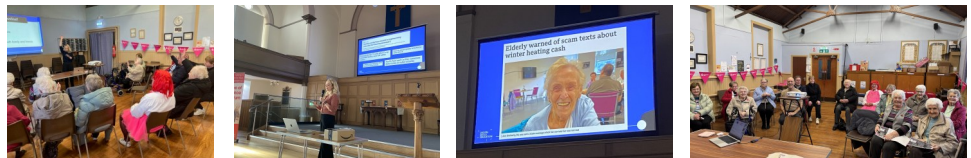
Welcome to the first edition of our 2026 newsletter. Since our last newsletter in November, we have been involved in several events and have been working hard to increase our membership. If you know of anyone who would be interested in becoming a member, please pass on this newsletter.

LOTTERY FUNDED EVENTS



We have recently delivered our 5th Digital Safety Awareness event, this time at the Kirk at the Cross, Motherwell.

The event was run as part of Motherwell Seniors Forums monthly meeting and was well attended by local older people keen to improve their knowledge of how to safe online.

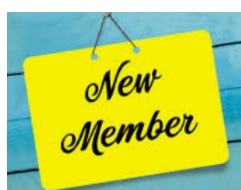


We have one final digital safety event and one health improvement event to provide in the next few months. Please keep an eye on our social media pages for details of when these will take place.

Once again we would like to thank The National Lottery Community Fund for supporting us financially to enable us to provide these events to older people across North Lanarkshire.

If you or your group are interested in attending any of our events, please contact us at info@voef.org.uk

MOTHERWELL SENIORS FORUM



MSF are looking for new members to join them. The group is open to anyone over the age of 60 and living in the Motherwell area. The group meets monthly in The Kirk at the Cross, Motherwell with guest presenters, time for a chat and days out. If you are interested, contact us and we will pass on your details.

NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY GRANTS

This edition of our newsletter is funded by the Community Grants Scheme. We would like to thank them for supporting and informing our members and older people across North Lanarkshire.



VOICE OF EXPERIENCE FORUM — YOUR VOICE AND VIEWS MATTER



Come along to our **FREE EVENT!**



UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2026



Put a Spring in your Step to Better Health



St Brides Hall
Motherwell
ML1 1PP

Wednesday 29th April
10am-2pm

- ~FREE LIGHT LUNCH
- ~Bring your dancing shoes for our disco
- ~Learn simple ways to improve your strength and balance
- ~Chat to NHS teams
- ~Tell us what matters to you in your community!

MUST Book your place, call
Frances McKay- 07812485135
or Marc Howard 07973785190

VoEF, in partnership with NHS Lanarkshire's Health Improvement Team, will deliver a health awareness event on **Wednesday 29th April 2026** at St Brides Hall, Motherwell from 10am to 2pm.

The event will include information stalls, discussion and consultation with older people. A free buffet lunch, tea and coffee will be provided as part of the event, and a silent disco—music for all generations.

The localities of Motherwell, Bellshill, Wishaw & Shotts are the primary focus of the event however a waiting list will be open for any older person or group outwith these locations wishing to increase their knowledge or share their views on this subject.

We expect this event to be popular, so please phone **07812485135 (Frances)** or **07973785190 (Marc)** to register for this event.

VOICE OF EXPERIENCE FORUM COMMUNITY OUTREACH

ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION NETWORK EVENT—JANUARY 2026

As a founding member of the Engagement & Participation Network (E&PN), VoEF participated and facilitated attendees responses to questions at this event. We are pleased to report that the event was successful in highlighting the achievements of the E&PN and the great work delivered by the Growth Pot Fund. Recipients of funding were consulted on how best to support and communicate with groups to ensure the best outcomes for their members.

How do you feel at the end of this meeting?



It was great to see that at the end of the meeting the community groups attending felt much more engaged and positive about the way forward. Feedback on the event from our funders, Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire, was very positive.

Hospital Information Stalls:

Voice of Experience Forum continues to host stalls at both University Hospital Wishaw on the 1st Tuesday of the month, and University Hospital Monklands on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

Community Group Presentations:

Community Action Newarthill were provided with a scams awareness presentation by our Development Worker, Denis. If you would like a presentation on this, VoEF, Growth Pot Funding or Social Security Scotland Benefits, please get in touch to find out more.

COMMUNITY AND WIDER INFORMATION

NEWS FROM ACROSS THE REGION

CHAT CAFES IN NORTH LANARKSHIRE



An initiative which supports integration and promotes community cohesion has been hailed as a fantastic example of a project which strengthens community bonds. Held in community centres and libraries in Bellshill, Wishaw, Motherwell, Airdrie, Cumbernauld and Coatbridge, the weekly sessions run throughout the year and are shaped around the interests of learners themselves. Conversational topics are chosen in partnership with participants and supported by experienced CLD staff, ensuring every session is relevant, engaging and empowering.

Our Older Persons Champion—Councillor Michael McBride, Convener of Education, Children and Families, praised the initiative: “Our Chat Cafés are a fantastic example of how we can support people to build confidence, develop vital language skills and feel connected within their communities”.



VoEF 2026 CALENDAR

2,000 paper copies of our **free** 2026 calendar have now been distributed across all North Lanarkshire localities, achieving the outcomes & impact we aimed for — improved access to information, increased awareness of community resources, strengthened community connections, enhanced wellbeing and providing learning for future editions.

The winner of our prize wordsearch will be announced in our next edition. Once again we would like to thank The National Lottery Community Fund for generously funding the 2026 edition.

LANARKSHIRE LINKS is the commissioned engagement and participation organisation dedicated to ensuring that the voices of mental health service users, their carers, and families are not just heard, but are core to the design and delivery of services across Lanarkshire. They understand that living with challenges to our mental health or caring for someone with a mental illness brings a unique set of challenges, often accompanied by feelings of isolation and stigma. Your lived experience offers invaluable insight into what truly works and where the gaps lie.

They are committed to moving past simple consultation towards true **co-production**, with the NHS to shape the future of mental health care. LL believe that including your specific feedback is essential to creating a culture of openness and improvement.

Lanarkshire Links also offer a sanctuary for your own recovery and resilience and invite you to join their **wellbeing groups**, where you can access holistic therapies, engage in creative activities, or simply find genuine peer support in a safe, non-judgmental space. Your voice has the power to influence change, and they are here to support, encourage, and empower you to use it. Please visit their website to find out more information about groups local to you at www.lanarkshirelinks.org.uk, call them on 01698265232 or email admin@lanarkshirelinks.org.uk

INFORMATION FROM ACROSS NORTH LANARKSHIRE

VoEF Membership

FREE Membership of Voice of Experience Forum is open to anyone over the age of 60 and organisations representing older people in North Lanarkshire.

Benefits of becoming a member include:

- Regular Newsletters
- Invitations to events
- Involvement in consultations
- Your views & opinions being heard by other agencies
- Influence in the planning of service provision for older people

VoEF also deliver presentations throughout North Lanarkshire.

If you run a group or attend a group for individuals over the age of 60 and would like to book VoEF for a presentation, please get in touch with Denis O'Keefe using the details on page 1.

Remember, Membership is **FREE!**

ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION NETWORK—JUNE 2026

The Engagement and Participation Network brings together grass-roots community groups, local charities and statutory partners to share lived experience, strengthen representation, and shape how health and social care services are developed across North Lanarkshire. The Network plays a key role in the University Health & Social Care North Lanarkshire Engagement and Participation Strategy, ensuring that people with support needs feel heard, involved, and genuinely influential in local decision-making.

Through collaborative discussion, shared learning, and insight from members, the Network works to highlight gaps in representation, promote best practice, and support meaningful engagement activity across the area. This includes widening participation through initiatives such as the Growth Pot Fund, which helps remove barriers for under represented groups.

We'd love to welcome community members and colleagues who want to contribute to this shared vision of inclusive, community led engagement.

Our next Network Meetings will take place during the day on Wednesday 10th June at Bellshill Cultural Centre.

To make the sessions as accessible as possible, **we're also offering an evening meeting on Tuesday 9th June, with the option to join in person or online.**

To sign up, email engage@nldforum.org.uk or call the North Lanarkshire Disability office on 01698 275710

The Scam

North Lanarkshire Council have announced that they will be carrying out electrical testing in their properties so this is a timely reminder to check visitors who claim to work for the council.



There have been several reports from across Scotland of cold callers who say they are working for or on behalf of the local council and offer to carry out work for a discounted rate or provide misleading information about funding.

How to Avoid

If someone knocks at your door and says they are working for or with the local council, ask them to wait and **close the door while you phone the council to verify their identity.** Genuine callers will be happy to wait while you do this.

AVOID

Most councils will send letters to residents if they are going to be working in their area. They will only attend properties to carry out checks by pre-arranged appointment.

