

People First (Scotland) Fife Newsletter



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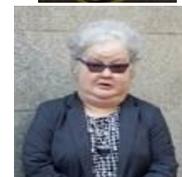


Memories of Fiona Wallace

James McNab, Vice Chairperson, People First (Scotland)

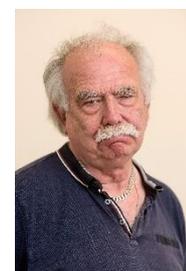


James met with David Scott from the Newsletter Group to talk about his long friendship with Fiona Wallace. Fiona was the Chairperson of People First (Scotland), who, very sadly, passed away in January 2019.



James, please can you tell us how you met Fiona and about the very close friendship you shared for many years.

I first met Fiona in 1983 at Peffermill Training Centre outside Edinburgh. Lothian Rights Group was based at Peffermill and Fiona attended all the meetings. I was there to give a speech about not being allowed to vote. Fiona was shocked that people with learning disabilities who lived in hospital were denied the right to vote.



Through the Lothian Rights Group, I was invited to London to speak at a conference about winning the right to vote in elections. Fiona offered to chum me down and at the conference, Fiona spoke about her learning disabilities. It was during this time we became good friends. We were both keen to support the rights of people with learning disabilities and went to many conferences.



Fiona and I became involved with Edinburgh Council and met Mike Tait; this is how People First (Scotland) came about.



Fiona became involved with People First right from the start, in 1989. Fiona was on the Board of Directors and active in getting new members involved.

Fiona began to campaign for change to get people with learning disabilities out into the community and get real jobs.

Having given up the Training Centre, Fiona worked in Tesco, but always felt she could do more than shop work. Fiona became more involved with People First and spoke at conferences in Toronto, Alaska, America and Madrid.



Fiona was all for people getting their rights. Her goal was to have her own flat. It took a long time, but eventually, Fiona accomplished this, sharing a flat with Frances, with whom she had a close friendship for many years.



At one point, Fiona was employed in an administration role with People First and she supported new staff with inductions. Fiona then got a job with Equality 20/25, advising the UK Government on disability issues.



Fiona didn't want people stuck with the label of 'mentally disordered'. Although aware that her health was fragile, this did not stop her campaigning.



Fiona supported Rangers Football Club all her life and was a brilliant pool player!



Fiona was an excellent Chairperson and raised the profile of People First with those in charge, including Local Councillors.



Fiona was an ambassador for all adults with Learning Disabilities and an inspiration to the Disability Movement.

Fiona was a brilliant friend, a friendship that lasted 33 years. Fiona is sadly missed.



Engender Conference: Disabled Women: Our Bodies Our Rights



Joan Irons gave a key-note speech at this Event, which was held to launch the report 'Disabled women: Our Bodies, Our Rights'.



Joan was part of the Advisory Group right from the start. Indeed, it was Joan who came up with the title!

The aim of the project was to ask women with learning disabilities about their experiences of services that deal with issues such as sex, periods, pregnancy and being a parent.



To gain this information, 2 large events were held in Edinburgh and Glasgow and 7 focus groups were held across Scotland. Individual women were also supported to take part in the research and organisations that work with women with disabilities were consulted.



The report was then written, detailing the findings of the research.

The report details what needs to change to make sure women and girls with disabilities get the information they need about sex and relationships (in an accessible format).

The report also highlights the necessity to ask disabled women what they want and need to make sure they are allowed to make informed choices.

info@engender.org.uk



In her speech, Joan started by outlining the role of the People First (Scotland) National Parents' Group.



Joan also spoke about the fact that parents with learning disabilities still find it really hard to get long-term support and too many children are still being removed un-necessarily.



The work done by the Parents' Group on proposed Scottish Government changes in law, which would make emotional neglect a criminal offence, also featured in Joan's speech. The statement presented to the Government, influenced the subsequent public consultation.



Joan then went on to talk about the importance of the Engender research and gave examples of some of the points raised:



- We were told at Special School not to have children;
- I got into tricky situations because I didn't have much information;
- I didn't get any information in a format that I could understand.

Joan said it is vital that women with learning disabilities are seen as individuals with their own minds and ambitions.



Joan finished her speech with the following statement:

'To this day, the majority of women with learning disabilities **DO NOT** get extra **help** to get the same chances as everyone else'

Justice, Rights and Support Event

Support for Offenders with Learning Disabilities



David Scott represented People First (Fife) at this event, which looked at two very important issues for people with learning disabilities who come into contact with the criminal justice system.



Support available in court:

Police Scotland will discuss with vulnerable victims and witnesses, the best way to keep them informed of progress in a case. The Police will also highlight vulnerable victims and witnesses to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service to make sure their needs are addressed if they attend Court.



Vulnerable witnesses, including people with learning disabilities, with the agreement of the court, can make use of special measures, for example:

- Familiarisation visit to court;
- Screens to shield the witness from the defendant;
- Live link which enables the witness to give evidence from outside the court;
- Evidence given in private, when members of the public and the press are excluded;
- Video recorded interview, before the trial.



For more information about special measures, please refer to the Vulnerable Victims and Witness Act.

Support with the Police:

If someone has broken the law, the Police will want to talk to them. If this happens, it is in the persons' best interests to tell the Police they have a learning disability. The Police will then make sure an **Appropriate Adult** is there with the person.



An **Appropriate Adult** is independent of the Police and is there for the person. The main role of an Appropriate Adult is to make sure the person understands:



- Their rights, including the right to a solicitor;
- Why they are being interviewed;
- The questions Police are asking.

The **Appropriate Adult** must also make sure the Police understand the answers the person is giving and make the Police aware if the person does not appear to understand what is happening.



The Scottish Government recently held a consultation about Appropriate Adults, which the SOLD User Group and a lot of People First (Scotland) members took part in. Most of the members felt that Appropriate Adult support received in the past was not good enough.



Some of the important things members said should change are:

- More time to prepare and get to trust an Appropriate Adult;
- Support not only in Police interviews, but also in court and meetings with lawyers;
- Better training for Appropriate Adults to make sure they are really good at supporting people to communicate.

VISIT TO SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT

Following a visit to the Glenrothes Group by Jenny Gilruth, MSP, People First (Fife) Men's Group joined up with some members from Glenrothes for a visit to the Scottish Parliament.



Time was spent with Jenny where members asked challenging questions about the current political situation, Brexit and the possibility of a General Election in the near future. Jenny, like everyone else, expressed her concerns about what will happen for Scotland's political future.



Other topics discussed were around lack of housing, homelessness and public transport.



The guided tour of the building was very interesting. The history of the Scottish Parliament and history of the art work were explained in a very knowledgeable way. Members were told about the ghost who allegedly haunts the older part of the building!



Members caught sight of many Scottish MSP's and Craig Bernard was lucky enough to speak with Brian Taylor of the BBC and get his autograph.



A delicious lunch was provided in one of the Committee Rooms, when Jenny joined members and asked them about themselves and People First (Scotland).



Jenny emphasised her desire to continue working closely with People First (Scotland) in Fife.



People First (Fife) Women's Group visit to Glasgow

Members from People First (Fife) Women's Group travelled to Glasgow to meet with members from People First (Glasgow) Women's Group to have lunch together and hold a joint meeting.

It was a great opportunity for women members' from across the areas to meet each other, discuss issues particularly important to women and share experiences.

A speaker was invited, who talked with members about the menopause, why it happens and what to expect. A lengthy discussion on members own experiences of signs and symptoms followed, including the importance of accessing medical support from your GP Practice.

Glasgow members spoke about some work they have been doing with Rape Crisis Scotland, who provide a service for adults with learning disabilities as well as individual counselling.

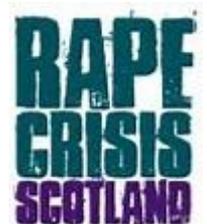
Members in Glasgow also had the opportunity to take part in a Zero Tolerance campaign. Zero Tolerance is a Scottish charity working to end men's violence against women.

Women members in Fife would benefit from knowing about Zero Tolerance and will be asking the Community Safety Police Officers about this.

It is hoped the Fife and Glasgow Women's Groups can meet up once a year from now on!



People First
(Scotland)



People First
(Scotland)

Interview with Brian Rosie

In August this year, Brian Rosie will be retiring from People First (Scotland) after 15 years. Brian has acted as Chairperson of the Dunfermline Group, Chairperson of the Fife Wide Group, Strategic Representative and Director over these years.



Brenda Kirby and Michael Stirling interviewed Brian to find out about his 15 years with People First (Scotland)



How did you find out about People First?

I used to be on the Steering Group and Management Committee of Dunfermline Advocacy Initiative and was involved in devising the principles for Citizen Advocacy. During this time I found out about People First and became very involved with Collective Advocacy and became a Director for People First. I never looked back and think independent advocacy is brilliant. It is about time people had more control over their everyday lives.



What work have you enjoyed most?

Stagecoach training, working with drivers, supervisors and inspectors, aimed at changing attitudes. We used scenarios based on members' real life experiences, which enabled staff to engage more positively with people with learning disabilities. As we carried this out for 5 years, a good relationship was built up with Stagecoach Managers, which still exists today.



What work was most challenging?

The Joint Social Work Inspection in the Borders, with the late Mary Anderson. We jointly chaired the Borders Council meeting, which was an eye opener! They did not expect adults with learning disabilities to take charge. We introduced the red and green cards!



This meant the Councillors were not allowed to interrupt each other and could only speak when the Chairs invited them to. It was a wakeup call! Following past cases of abuse, we were looking at how the lives of adults with learning disabilities could improve and be safer.



How has People First (Scotland) changed your life?

People First has changed me as an individual, which in turn has supported me to develop local groups. It is really important that members take part in choosing Development Workers and have a say in how they work to support members. People First (Scotland) has supported the overall development of advocacy, for the better, in Fife.



An example is the development of the Dunfermline Group and members who never used to utter a word, but now feel confident to speak up. We support each other, making sure everyone has the chance to be heard and develop their self-confidence and self-belief.



There have been challenges along the way, but that is life.

Do you think there have been changes for the better?

Yes. We can only do what we can within the system we work in and the funding we receive. People First must stay focused on what we do because nothing changes overnight. We need to build on our strengths and speak as one voice – this is a powerful tool.



What will you miss most? What are your retirement plans?

I will miss the company of members and staff and the debates and discussions. I will stay in touch. I plan to play a lot more outdoor bowls and spend more time with my friends.



People First (Fife) Election: 2 May 2019

People First (Scotland) has a Board of Directors made up of only adults with learning disabilities. Directors are elected by local members from regions across Scotland.

A Fife Election to vote for two Directors to sit on the Board of People First (Scotland) was held in St Bryce Kirk, Kirkcaldy, on 2 May 2019.

Brian Rosie, Chairperson of the Fife Wide Group, welcomed members to the Election and introduced Jo Kyrsti, Edinburgh Development Worker, who was overseeing the election.

Jo went over the voting procedure. The three candidates were then invited to give a short speech, outlining why members should vote for them.

After all the votes had been counted, Jo announced the candidates elected to represent Fife on the Board of Directors were Susan Burt and Joan Irons, who both thanked members for electing them.

The four Fife Directors elected to the Board are: Joan Irons, Craig Bernard, Susan Burt and David Scott.



Users and Carers Group, Dundee University

Paul Stevenson is the People First (Fife) representative on this group, made up of people who either use Social Work Services or are Carers. The group feeds into the Social Work Programme at Dundee University.



Paul helped to plan and take part in an **Inter Professional Education Workshop**. Paul talked to Medical and Social Work Students about the importance of communication and taking time to find out the communication method that suits each person.



Paul told students the most important lesson for them to learn was to treat every person with a learning disability as a unique individual, who has the same rights to a healthy and safe life as everybody else.



Paul also worked alongside a group of Social Work MSc Students on the '**Integrated Care**' module. Paul, along with another adult with a learning disability, spoke candidly about his positive and negative experiences of NHS and Social Work support, including the subsequent implications and impact on his life. The final presentation, in which Paul participated, formed part of the student's overall mark for the module.



The strong message to students was that if integrated care is to work, everybody must speak to one another. Paul emphasised this message with feeling, integrity and honesty



Paul's input was greatly valued.



HATE INCIDENT/CRIME PRESENTATIONS

Over ten sessions, Susan Burt and David Scott delivered Hate Incident Presentations to every First Year Class at Balwearie High School, Kirkcaldy.



This was the first time Susan and David had done this and they were understandably nervous. However, they soon relaxed and became confident in not only delivering the presentations, but also answering questions and speaking with the students.



The presentations start with introductions and an overview of the session:

‘We are here today to talk to you and about Bullying and Hate Incidents’



‘If you think you are being hurt by somebody because of your race/religion/disability/sexuality/gender, then it could be a Hate Incident.’



Following an Ice Breaker, the main focus of the presentations are the very powerful true-life stories of Susan and David, told in their own words.



‘I knew everyone was talking about me and called me spastic. I was spat on and my hair was pulled. I was punched and kicked. My legs were covered in bruises.’



‘I suffered the bullying through my childhood and young adult life. This led to me developing mental health issues.’



the strong message from Susan and David is:
'always tell somebody you trust if you are being bullied'



Following Susan and David's talks, the students watch a couple of DVD's about Disability Hate Incidents, followed by interactive questions.



The end to the presentation is more upbeat, when the students are asked to write down a good name they have been called. With permission, some names are read out and they always raise a smile!



Susan rounds off the presentation by saying she hopes the students have a better understanding of:

- The kind of Hate Incidents faced by people with learning disabilities and how it makes them feel;
- What to do if you or someone you know, is a victim of Hate Incidents or Bullying.
- You understand it is **NEVER** acceptable to use abusive language towards someone with a learning disability or in casual conversation.



'It was hard to tell my story as it brought it all back to me. I felt relieved to be able to tell the students to speak up and tell somebody if they are being bullied, they are not on their own and there is a lot more help out there. I felt so isolated and alone at their age, but they don't have to feel like this.'

'At first I found it quite emotional telling my own story of being bullied as a child and the lasting effects it had on my life. I found all the students respectful and was surprised by some of the questions they asked. I would like to think we got the message across that bullying and name calling are never acceptable.'

SAJE (Sally & Janet Enterprises; Sally and Janet started the Charity)

Research shows that a learning disability makes women more vulnerable to domestic abuse.
(The Guardian February 2015)

SAJE aims to reduce and prevent domestic abuse in Scotland, by facilitating groups for women who have experienced abuse.

Women with learning disabilities can be unaware of the existence of domestic violence support agencies or refuges, or even what domestic abuse is. This is why it is vital that women with learning disabilities know about SAJE in Fife.

Recently, three People First (Fife) members took part in the 'Freedom Project'. This supported members to look at different types of abuse and the impact it has on women and their children.

Following this, members completed the 'Toolkit for Life'. This course supports women who have been abused to develop strategies to move forward with their lives.

If you, or somebody you know is a victim of domestic abuse, you can contact SAJE on:



01592 786701



sajescotland@yahoo.co.uk



www.sajescotland.org



DRILL (Disability Research on Independent Living and Learning) Transport and Toilets

This research looked at barriers to accessing toilets whilst travelling. People with disabilities can be excluded from their communities because of inaccessible transport and a lack of accessible toilet facilities.



Susan Burt took part as a co-researcher in this research and made visits to several local toilets in and around the Dunfermline area to take photographs. Some toilets were very small and not easy, if not impossible, to access and some were unsafe for a number of reasons. Some toilets were very accessible and others were hidden away.



In total over 1000 photos were taken of toilets across Scotland by those involved in the research.



Susan was the only person with a learning disability working as a co-researcher and took part in a filmed interview on her experiences in the role. There is a follow up event at Victoria Quay on 10 June when Susan will be part of a short play to Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government, highlighting these issues.



Susan hopes this will highlight the isolation and difficulties for people who travel on buses and trains and other forms of transport. Susan said the design of accessible toilets is a really important step to getting it right for everyone. Cleanliness and safety of toilets is also vital.



Signage and being able to find accessible toilets needs to be improved so that everyone can get out and about and maintain good health.



People First (Fife) Dunfermline Group

Brian Rosie was the driving force for this Group and gave talks and delivered leaflets about People First (Fife) all round the Dunfermline area.



In July 2005, the Dunfermline Group met for the first time in Carnegie Hall Library, with seven members attending. Brian Rosie was elected as Chairperson, a role he held for many years.

The Dunfermline Group has gone from strength to strength over the years and now has twenty members, three of whom were part of the original seven!

Group membership is made up of a mixture of ages, both male and female.



The life experiences of all members, positive and negative, is invaluable when feeding into local and national surveys.

As with all Groups, members discuss/debate topics to be discussed and visitors to be invited. Police Scotland and Fire Scotland are regular visitors and the advice they give members is always appreciated. Human Rights, Public Transport, Adult Support & Protection, Benefits and Healthy Living are among the many topics discussed.



The Dunfermline Group meet once a month on a Wednesday afternoon at the Dell Farquharson Centre.



Contact details for further information are on the back page.

INTERVIEW WITH KATE AND ANDREA

As Andrea is retiring at the end of June, the Newsletter Group decided to interview Kate and Andrea, to ask them about their many years working together as Fife Development Workers with People First (Scotland).



Many Years Ago!

Can you both tell us how you first became involved with People First (Scotland)?

Andrea

In 2001, when I was a mature student, James McNab asked one of my lecturers if he knew of any student interested in being a volunteer with a group of adults with learning disabilities. That was me! I had always said I wanted to work with adults rather than children! When I graduated in 2003, I worked with SENSE Scotland for a year. However, towards the end of 2004, funding was secured for a Development Worker post in Fife, which I applied for and have been here ever since!



Kate

I was holding an Advice Clinic at Lynebank Hospital and writing a monthly article in Fife Disability Newsletter when I first found out about advocacy. I became part of the Steering Group for Dunfermline Advocacy Initiative and heard about other advocacy agencies, including People First. I bumped into Monica Hunter, who is a former Chairperson of People First, in the City Hotel in Dunfermline. It was inspiring listening to Monica speak about People First, so when a position came up in People First, I applied for it. I started working for People First in May 2004.



Why did you want to work for People First (Scotland)

Andrea

Being a volunteer with People First when I was a student, opened my eyes to the discrimination and injustices faced by adults with learning disabilities, on a daily basis. I truly believed in the ethos and values of People First (still do!). I admired the members and their determination to improve life for all adults with learning disabilities, both those living in hospitals and in the community. From then on, all I wanted do was work with People First (Scotland) and I count myself as being extremely fortunate to have worked as a Development Worker in Fife.



Kate

It came about because of my Welfare Rights work when I visited people in Lynebank Hospital and supported them to claim Disability Benefits. I observed that life for people living in hospital was much more restricted than people living in the community. Having become interested in advocacy generally, I applied for a part-time Development Worker post with People First in 2004. At my interview I was asked a question which I will never forget! “Kate, what are you like when you get up in the morning?” and it made me think, “I would love to get the job”



What changes have you seen in People First (Fife)?

Andrea

When I first started as a Development Worker in Fife, there were only two groups in Fife, one in Kirkcaldy and one in Dunfermline. There were also two groups in Lynebank Hospital for residents. The membership has increased rapidly over the years and we now have groups across the whole of Fife, including a Men’s Group, a Women’s Group and a Parents’ Group.



Members are also involved as representatives in strategic meetings and deliver training/presentations on a number of topics, including Disability Hate Incidents. There are often short-term working groups on the go looking at subjects such as Human Rights, Adult Protection and Easy Read. I have seen countless members go from strength to strength and develop self-confidence, self-belief and self-worth through their involvement in People First.

Kate

Over the years, People First has been in a number of different offices. We started off in a nice office in Lynebank but we were quickly moved to another room, next to the boiler! We then moved to a room on Ward 12, which we shared with the Minister. Following Lynebank, we moved to the Round House in Kirkcaldy, which was a great office with lots of space and meeting rooms. Unfortunately the building was condemned and we were on the move again! Next stop, Dunfermline Business Centre, which used to be a maternity hospital. Our office is the smallest room in the whole building but there are many pluses, such as main reception, mailing facilities, car parking, meeting rooms and kitchen facilities.



What is your working relationship like?

After all these years we know one another very well and have become close friends as well as colleagues;
We laugh a lot and share the same sense of humour;
We have cried together when sad things have happened, such as members passing away;
We have supported each other through happy times and stressful times;
We share the same values;

We appreciate one another's skills: Kate's are definitely not computer orientated!

Our open and friendly relationship encourages and supports members to build similar relationships with each other; We, along with members, all work as a team.

What Next?

Andrea

I will be spending more time with my family and friends. I hope to get out walking in the beautiful Fife countryside more. I am looking forward to being able to spend more time gardening. I love baking and hope to try out many new recipes. I will definitely not miss getting up early in the morning!



Kate

I will 'carry on' in Fife! I am looking forward to getting to know Lisa and support her to build relationships with Fife members. I will do my best not to miss Andrea's Millionaires Shortbread and Tablet too much! I will certainly miss Andrea.



Introducing Lisa

Lisa first worked for People First when she covered the administration post in 2015. During this time, Lisa got to know the organisation and met a lot of members. In June 2016, Lisa started working as a Development Worker for the Law & Human Rights Group. This post was funded by Comic Relief for three years. Lisa enjoyed the work with the Law & Human Rights Group and is now looking forward to starting her new role in Fife.



Contact:



[lisa.weylant @peoplefirst.org](mailto:lisa.weylant@peoplefirst.org)



07736821596



What's new in Adult Support and Protection?

There is lots of Adult Support & Protection information available in Easy Read Format at:



www.fifedirect.org.uk/adultprotectioneasyread

Easy Read uses simple language, short sentences and picture symbols. People First (Fife) members have helped to make sure our Easy Read booklets are easy to understand.



We have booklets on:

Advocacy; Disability Hate Crime; Domestic Abuse; Financial Harm; Forced Marriage; Internet Safety and Sexual Abuse.



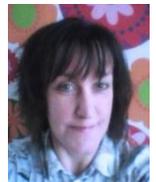
If you would like copies of any of our booklets, contact:
Shona McEwan



03451 555555 extension 442134



shona.mcewan@fife.gov.uk



If you or someone you know is at risk of harm call the Adult Protection Phone Line:  01383 602200

If it is an emergency or you are in danger call 999.

Fife Groups

Local collective self-advocacy groups, run by and for adults with learning disabilities.

Groups meet once a month. Please contact us for dates.

kate.croft@peoplefirstscotland.org

andrea.ladyka@peoplefirstscotland.org



01383 624885

Crossgates

Thursday 10.30am – 12.00pm

Crossgates Community Centre, KY4 8AL

Dunfermline

Wednesday 1.30pm – 3.00pm

Dell Farquharson Centre, Nethertown Broad Street, KY12 7DS

Mayfield, Lynebank

Wednesday 6.30pm – 7.30pm

Mayfield Unit, Lynebank Hospital, KY11 8JH

Kirkcaldy

Friday 1.30pm – 3.00pm

St Peter's Church, Townsend Place, Kirkcaldy KY1 1HB

Glenrothes

Friday 1.30pm – 3.00pm

St Columbas Church, Glenrothes KY6 1BN

Leven

Thursday 1.00pm – 2.45pm

The Centre, Commercial Road, Leven KY8 4QY

Cupar

Monday 1.00pm - 2.45pm

Dalgairn Building, Bank Street, Cupar KY15 4JN

St Andrews

Tuesday 5.30pm – 7.00pm

Cosmos Centre, Abbey Walk, St Andrews KY16 9LB

Women's Group

Monday 1.00pm – 2.45pm

St Peter's Church, Townsend Place, Kirkcaldy KY1 1HB

Men's Group

Friday 1.15pm – 2.45pm

St Bryce Kirk, Kirkcaldy KY1 1ET

Fife Parents' Group

Friday 11.00am – 12.30pm

People First (Fife) Dunfermline Office, Izatt Avenue, KY11 3BZ

Fife Wide Group (meets 6 times a year)

Thursday 1.00pm – 2.45pm

St Peter's Church, Townsend Place, Kirkcaldy KY1 1HB

Contacts:

Email: People First (Fife)
Development Workers



kate.milliken@peoplefirstscotland.org



andrea.ladyka@peoplefirstscotland.org



Office: 01383 624885



07834328821



07841362170



People First (Fife)
Unit 17A Dunfermline Business Centre
Izatt Avenue, Dunfermline KY11 3BZ



www.peoplefirstscotland.org

Newsletter Group Members



Michael
Stirling



Brenda
Kirby



Susan
Burt



David
Scott