



FORTH VALLEY TALKING NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION [FVTNA]

Known to our Listeners as **NEWSLINE**

Management Committee's Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2014

Scottish Charity Number SC014778

Management Committee

Christine Moroney	Chairperson
Betty Sutherland	Secretary
Moira Dobbie	Treasurer
John Gow	
Finlay Nicolson	
Brian Sharp	

Contact Address

Mr B.F. Sharp, Deputy Chairperson, FVTNA, PO Box 42, FALKIRK, FK1 1AA

Recruitment and appointment of the Management Committee

All of the Association's Management Committee are appointed or reappointed by the members at the annual general meeting which is held in May each year.

Governing Document

The Association is a charitable unincorporated association and the purposes and administration arrangements are set out in our constitution.

Charitable Purposes

Our purposes, as recorded in our constitution, are: -

The object of the Association is to relieve the blind, or partially sighted, or those labouring under some temporary or permanent incapacity or disability which makes reading a strain, by the provision of recorded cassette tapes, CDs or other digital media.

Currently, for the benefit of the blind and visually impaired in Falkirk and surrounding areas, we read the local newspaper, the **Falkirk Herald**, weekly, on to a 90 minute cassette tape, or 80 minutes for those receiving the CD version. In addition, we produce a 60 minute monthly magazine, 11 times per year, which is sent out either on cassette tape or in CD format. We also record the quarterly Falkirk Council Newspaper for the Council and distribute it to 92 Listeners.

At 31st March 2014 we had 163 Listeners receiving our service summarised below with comparative figures: -.

31st March	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
CD	151	169	172	184	176
Tape	12	19	27	52	68
Total	163	188	199	236	244

Although we endeavoured during the year to advertise our service to people with other disabilities e.g. Parkinson's, MS, Stroke, etc., at a small charge to cover mainly postage (the free postage 'Articles for the Blind' scheme would not apply). As there was no response we have now withdrawn the offer of this service. Unfortunately the number of Listeners has once again declined during the year as can be seen from the table above. However we did manage to receive good publicity in the Falkirk Herald to increase awareness of our service (see below)

Premises

We moved into our current premises in Falkirk on 30th April 2007. We have entered into a 10 year lease for these premises with the Rosehall Property Company. The lease commenced on 1st October 2006. 100% charitable rates relief has been granted by Falkirk Council for these premises from 1st October 2006. In addition we have to meet the cost of Electricity, which amounted to £429.66 in 2013 / 14 covering the period from 20th December 2012 to 5th December 2013. We also consider it prudent to hold reasonable cash reserves should, for any reason, our Lease not be renewed in 2016 as we are required to leave the premises in an 'as was' condition. Currently we have no reason to believe the renewal of the Lease would be a problem.

Chairperson's Review of our Activities and Achievements in 2013 / 14

Firstly a special welcome to Jim who has joined us since this time last year. Also congratulations to John who attained a 10 year certificate for his volunteering services to **NEWSLINE**.

As mentioned in last year's review we had two milestones during the year. At the end of March 2013 we sent out the 200th edition of the monthly **Magazine** and on 19th December we sent out the 1500th edition of **NEWSLINE**, the weekly recording of the *Falkirk Herald*. This event was marked with a feature in the *Falkirk Herald* on the 19th. Now in our 33rd year, I would like to give a big thank you to all who have been involved over the years and of course to all who have faithfully come out on some very cold, wet Thursday evenings over the past year to record **NEWSLINE**.

Our Listener figures for the last year show a further decline as can be noted in the table above - 169 on CD at the end of March 2013 as against 151 on CD at the end of March this year and 19 on cassette tape at the end of March 2013 as against 12 on cassette tape at the end of March 2014. Disappointingly we don't seem to have the same number of referrals from Social Services, which may be due to staff time pressures or to the fact that the general public may not be as interested in local newspapers. Perhaps we should concentrate on

promoting our well received monthly magazine. Its success is in no small part due to Finlay's sterling efforts.

Seven Volunteers represented **NEWSLINE** at the Scottish Talking Newspaper Conference in the Inchyra Grange Hotel, Polmont, in October. Once again there was a lot of discussion about Talking Newspapers moving to memory sticks. Also the Listeners' Panel at the conference made comment that the length of some tracks were too long and in some talking newspapers, not **NEWSLINE**, each news item was regarded as a separate track! Given these comments we decided to hold a special meeting of all the Volunteers, at the end of November, to discuss the future format of **NEWSLINE**.

On our first week back in 2014, i.e. 9th January, we changed the content and running order of the weekly audio recording of the *Falkirk Herald*. This followed a survey of some of our Listeners in November who gave their views on the current recording. Given their feedback it was decided to drop the Editorial and the Kate Livingstone columns from the newspaper and give more time to news by reducing the length of the two main news sections to 10 minutes each and adding a "More People & News" section as well as bringing together the short news items into a section called "News in Brief". A little more time was also allocated to Court Reports and Sport. Following the suggestion of one of our Listeners in our survey we have introduced a new section at the end of the recording where we repeat "Contact Information" i.e. telephone numbers, etc. for items which have been included in other sections.

At the November meeting it was also decided to change format to USB Memory Sticks given that our Cassette Tape duplicating equipment is over 20 years old and Sony stopped manufacture in 2005 so replacement parts would be difficult to source. It also meant we were having to record in two formats - tape being analogue and CD digital. It is not possible to fast copy between formats. Also given the demise of Cassette Tapes we considered the same could happen with CD's as the majority of music is now purchased by downloads from the internet or by subscribing to internet music libraries. We were also aware RNIB, Falkirk Council Library Service and others were planning to move on to Memory Sticks. As we don't know the age of our Listener's CD players we have been having to issue CD-R's (one trip) as the rewritable CD's will not play on older CD players. This has meant 9,600 CD's have been going to landfill in our area at a cost of £1,250 per year.

Brian undertook the task at the start of 2014 of applying for funding to enable the purchase of 160 USB Memory Stick Players (£4,000), 600 Memory Sticks (£2,520) and two Memory Stick Duplicators (£ 2,397.60) plus £30 delivery. It was agreed we would commit some of our reserves to this project given the potential reduction in operating costs. Eight applications were made, some of which extended to 20 pages, over a period of two weeks. I am pleased to say we were successful with two of them. The Agnes Watt Trust gave us £2,725 and the Awards for All (Big Lottery) awarded us £5,774 which was paid into our bank account in April. We were also able to withdraw some of the other applications once we were aware of the funding above which will enable us to apply in the future should the need arise. Being successful with two of our applications we have received more than first estimated and this has enabled us to purchase a third Memory Stick Duplicator, 600 Keyrings to enable our Listeners to locate the memory sticks more easily should they drop them on the floor and new cassette tape size mailing wallets which have extra padding and are more suited to transporting USB Memory Sticks.

This has been a large administrative project - gathering information from our Listeners, checking to see if they have suitable equipment to play USB Memory Sticks and obtaining contact details to enable arrangements to be made for the delivery of a USB Memory Stick

Player. Following a training session in early April, six teams of two volunteers undertook the task of delivering the players. Everyone involved has to be thanked for all their efforts. This is the first time we have had the opportunity to meet our Listeners and all of our volunteers found it a delightful, rewarding experience. Our Listeners in turn were pleased to meet the 'voices' they have come to know over the years. As I write this report the delivery of the players has gone extremely smoothly, cassette tape production stopped at the beginning of April and the 24th was the last time we produced our recordings on CD. Therefore, from 1st May 2014 all our recordings are now on USB Memory Sticks. Unfortunately we have lost a handful of Listeners who thought they wouldn't be able to cope with the new technology despite offering to go out and demonstrate the new equipment to them. The feedback so far is that the sound quality is much clearer and our Listeners find the new equipment easy to navigate around to find specific items on the recording.

We have worked with Age Scotland and produced an audio version of the Age Fire Safety Fact Sheet. In turn we were featured in their Advantage Spring Magazine. We are now confirmed as an Age Scotland member which enables us to apply for funding and support.

Our grant from Falkirk Council this year was £2,500. This was up by £500 on last year.

On 3rd August **NEWSLINE** held a flag day in the Howgate Centre which raised £179.99 We were also allowed to collect at Falkirk Stadium on 23rd November and this raised £260.32. A thank you to all who helped in any way with both flag days - out collecting money, counting it and of course to those people who placed donations in our buckets.

Our thanks as always to Soroptimist International of Falkirk who help every fortnight with reading and Grangemouth Rotary Club who also come along on alternate weeks to read. We must also thank Grangemouth Rotary for their £200 donation received in February. Thanks go to Falkirk Rotary Club who come along for a couple of months over the summer holidays to assist when our volunteer numbers are down. Details of all donations are included in the Notes to the Annual Accounts. We are also grateful to our former Treasurer, Margaret Harvey, for her monthly donations through her employer's charitable giving scheme. Thank you, of course too, to our Listeners who have sent donations over the past year.

On behalf of the Listeners and myself A BIG THANK YOU for all the time and work you devote to **NEWSLINE**.

Management Committee remuneration and expenses

None of the Management Committee received any remuneration or expenses during the year.

Reserves

As a result of the deficit of £4,916.14 for the year the balance at 31st March 2014 was £5,537.42 which is all unrestricted.

Approved by the Management Committee and signed on their behalf.

C. Moroney, Chairperson
1st May 2014