



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 2017

Scottish Charity Number SC014778

Management Committee

Christine Moroney	Chairperson
Betty Sutherland	Secretary
Moira Dobbie	Treasurer
Duncan McVicar	
Finlay Nicolson	
Brian Sharp	

Contact Address

Mr B.F. Sharp, 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 digital media i.e. recorded USB Memory Sticks and Players (if required by the Listener).

Currently, for the benefit of the blind and visually impaired in Falkirk and surrounding areas, we record an audio version, weekly, of the local newspaper, the **Falkirk Herald**. The audio version is distributed on USB Memory Sticks. Monthly, we produce a magazine which is also sent out on USB Memory Sticks. In addition we record the quarterly Falkirk Council Newspaper for the Council and distribute it to approximately 120 Listeners.

At 31st March 2017 we had 190 Listeners receiving our service summarised below with comparative figures: -.

31st March	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
CD				151	169
Tape				12	19
USB Memory Stick	190	191	166		
Total	190	191	166	163	188

As a result of continuing relationships with the Forth Valley Macular Group, RNIB representative at Forth Valley Sensory Centre, RNIB funded nurse at the Eye Clinic at Falkirk Community Hospital, Falkirk Council Social Services and applications through our own website we have maintained the number of Listeners over the last year. During the year we had 40 (52 in 2015/6) new Listeners and 41 (27 in 2015/6) cancelling our service through, death, dementia, etc. making a net decrease of 1 Listener (Plus 25 in 2015/6).

Forth Valley Sensory Centre have informed us that 892 people living in the Falkirk Council area are registered blind. Therefore, there is further scope to increase our number of Listeners which we will endeavour to do through the relationships mentioned above and further advertising of our service.

Cost of Equipping a New Listener

As our recordings are distributed on USB Memory Sticks, which are reusable, we require to equip each New Listener with a USB Memory Stick Player *, four USB Memory Sticks (two for the weekly newspaper, one for the magazine and one for the Falkirk Council quarterly newspaper), four Looped Keyrings to assist locating the memory stick should it be dropped on to the floor, four coloured Mailing Wallets complete with Address Cards and Card Holders all at a total cost of £60 per Listener.

* Very occasionally a new Listener will not require a player as they have a computer or other equipment which will play USB Memory Sticks.

The Players are 'gifted' to our Listeners as we don't want to be responsible for PAT testing and the logistics of visiting their home to undertake this testing. Any Players that are returned are checked over and issued to new Listeners. We are unable to insist players are returned from Listeners cancelling our service because they have been "gifted" to them for the reasons above. We do, however, endeavour to recover USB Memory Sticks and Mailing Wallets from Listeners cancelling our "free" service.

We are also extremely grateful to the **NEWSLINE** Volunteers who deliver and demonstrate the Players to new Listeners. Most Volunteers find it an enjoyable and rewarding experience which is greatly appreciated by our new Listeners.

Premises

We moved into our current premises in Falkirk on 30th April 2007 following extensive alterations to accommodate three recording studios and ancillary equipment and facilities. In October 2016 we entered into a second 10 year lease for the premises with the Rosehall Property Company at an increased rental cost of £25 per month. In addition we have to meet the cost of Electricity, which amounted to £917.75 in 2016 / 17 covering the period from 16th December 2015 to 16th January 2017 i.e. thirteen months. 100% charitable rates relief has been granted by Falkirk Council for these premises from 1st October 2006. We have exemption from Water and Sewerage Charges under the Scottish Government Scheme.

Chairperson's Review of our Activities and Achievements in 2016 / 17

We have no new volunteers to welcome since last year as we have such a great team of dedicated volunteers who attend on a very regular basis. However, John McDonald recently left us as he has moved house to Auchterarder and it is a bit too far for him to travel!

On 31 March 2017 we had 190 listeners on our database which is a difference of 1 on the same time last year. The number of wallets going out each week is much lower than we would like but it is difficult to tell whether the Listeners are not returning wallets or the Post Office are not giving us all our mail on a Thursday. Betty is writing to Listeners when there is a significant gap on the record cards.

Fortunately we are still receiving several USB players being returned to us when they are no longer required which saves having to purchase new players. Thanks to our Volunteers who collect them and to the Sensory Centre who act as a drop off point so that I can pick them up.

As reported last year we had a letter from Falkirk Council intimating our grant towards running costs could be reduced by up to 15% which did happen. The grant was reduced from £2000 in 2015 to £1700 in 2016. Although disappointing we are nevertheless grateful for the grant and would like to thank the Council.

There was one less Council Newspaper printed this year so that has meant a drop in our income for Audio Description Services. We understand a decision is being made on the frequency of this paper later this year. Some Councils have already discontinued this publication.

At our AGM last year it was proposed we write to local solicitors asking them if they would ask clients to consider including a small bequest to **NEWSLINE** in their Will. The request was timed to coincide with *free* Wills month. We were most surprised and appreciative to receive a cheque for £100 from one of the solicitors.

The *Friends of NEWSLINE* scheme was launched to coincide with our 35th anniversary in November. So far four people have signed up to become "*Friends*" which is generating £41 per month plus Gift Aid. We would like to thank the "*Friends*" and appreciate their generosity.

Congratulations to Finlay who was awarded the Polmont Rotary Club Community Service Award for the work he does on the monthly magazine in collecting material, recording and tidying up the articles and also finding a suitable voice to read the story. Finlay was nominated by one of our Listeners, Lawson Eades.

We were again represented at the Scottish Talking Newspaper Conference at the Inchyra Grange Hotel, Polmont. It was considered the content was slightly better than in recent years. It would be helpful if the programme could be available earlier so that people could decide if they would find the conference of interest.

In September we had a visit from Alison Harris, MSP and Councillor Malcolm Nicol from the Lower Braes area. They were very impressed with the set up and Alison lodged a motion in the Scottish Parliament marking our 35th anniversary.

We celebrated our 35th anniversary in November with a meal and quiz organised by Betty in The Leapark Hotel, Grangemouth. This of course was at our own expense. I am sure you will all agree it was a most enjoyable evening. Thank you to Betty.

In February this year Brian and myself were invited to Grangemouth Rotary to talk about the work of **NEWSLINE** and Brian was able to show a short video of what we do. Brian also attended the Macular Group in the Sensory Centre in Camelon in March and got some feedback from the members on **NEWSLINE's** content. We have changed part of the format as we could not find enough news for the "rest of the news" section. So now we include up to four main features some of which appear in all the Johnston Press publications.

At the time of writing this report discussions are taking place with Radio Royal and the Falkirk Herald on the possibility of using our recording of the paper on hospital radio.

A big thank you as always to our listeners for their donations we have received over the past year. A full list of donations is included in the Accounts but some to mention; include local butcher in Polmont, a further donation from the estate of the late Mr Carmichael, Kirk of the Holy Rood Grangemouth and Grangemouth Rotary who donate annually from their Santa float. All donations are very much appreciated.

Thank you for assistance from Grangemouth Rotary, Soroptomists International of Falkirk and Falkirk Rotary who join our regular team of volunteers who turn out in all weathers to make **NEWSLINE** operate in such an efficient and enjoyable way.

Wearing the well battered hat I personally thank everyone for keeping all our Listeners up to date with local news and the enjoyable articles in the magazine. We have had some extra information this year on audio described performances in theatres in Edinburgh and Glasgow and this information has been passed to other Talking Newspapers.

Thank you to fellow committee members and to all for your dedication and hard work which goes to make **NEWSLINE** such a hit with our listeners.

Management Committee remuneration and expenses

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

Reserves

As a result of the surplus of £1805.26 for the year the balance at 31st March 2017 was £11,785.03

Approved by the Management Committee and signed on their behalf.

C. Moroney, Chairperson
4th May 2017