



FORTH VALLEY TALKING NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION [FVTNA]
Known to our Listeners as NEWSLINE

Committees' Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009

Scottish Charity Number SC014778

Committee

Mrs Christine Moroney Chairperson
Mr Brian Sharp Deputy Chairperson
Mrs Betty Sutherland Secretary
Mrs Margaret Harvey Treasurer
Mr Bill Buckner Recording Manager
Mr Finlay Nicolson Magazine Editor

Contact Address

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

Recruitment and appointment of the Committee

All of the Association's committee are appointed or reappointed by the members at our annual general meeting, which is held in April / 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, CD's or other digital media.

Currently, 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, for the blind and visually impaired in Falkirk and surrounding areas. In addition, we produce a 60 minute monthly magazine, 10 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 86 listeners.

At 31st March 2009 we had 240 (2008 – 281, 2007 – 305) listeners receiving our service. Of the 240 listeners at the end of March, 105 receive their recording in CD format. (see Chairperson's Review 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 £172.80 to 29th November 2008. Under the terms of the lease we are also responsible for any Water charges levied by Scottish Water Business Stream. As we have charitable status with them we have been granted full exemption for Water Charges from Scottish Water Business Stream for 2008 / 9.

Chairperson's Review of our Activities and Achievements in 2008 / 9

Firstly, I would like to extend a special welcome to Moira and Robbie who joined us during the year.

At this time last year we were analysing our listeners' survey to find out how many people would be interested in receiving their weekly news and monthly magazine on CD. We thought more people would have taken the opportunity as a lot of listeners have the use of a DAISY Talking Book Machine from the RNIB. To coincide with our 27th anniversary on 13th November, 2008 we introduced a CD version of the weekly recording of the Falkirk Herald, which was initially taken up by 95 of our Listeners. In addition our monthly magazine and the Falkirk Council Quarterly Newspaper is also provided in CD and cassette tape formats. Any new listeners joining our service are all opting for the CD format. As with all new projects there have been some teething troubles along the way but the new CD format is much preferred by listeners I speak to. Brian wrote an article on the change and it was published in the Falkirk Herald and the recent spring edition of the Talking News Federation (TNF) magazine.

In September I spoke to Falkirk Round Table. They told me we would receive the proceeds from a Ceilidh they were holding in November and invited some of us to go along. Margaret and I attended and a few days later we were told we would receive a cheque for £750 which would go towards the cost of 2 new CD Duplicators.

The annual conference for Scottish Talking Newspapers was held once more in the Grange Manor Hotel, Grangemouth and NEWSLINE was well represented. Music on our recordings came to the fore again and all Talking Newspapers (TN's) had a lot to think about concerning copyright. Brian put forward a suggestion at the conference that an annual licence which could be incorporated into our annual membership fee (approximately 40p per TN in the UK at indicative licence fee rates) could be taken out by TNF to cover all TN's. This would allow TN's to use music comfortably within their recordings. We are still awaiting the outcome of this.

I had a phone call during the year from Ella Kennedy of Rocktalk TN in Stirling asking if our listenership was dropping. We had recently gone through our database and our numbers had fallen as well. It was also mentioned in a TNF magazine that TN's were experiencing a drop in numbers. This is probably due to the fact that news is so accessible through the Internet and more visual impaired people are computer literate.

Our listeners have been very generous again with their donations. We have also received the retiring collections from the funerals of Ella Stirling and Betty Cockrill. The money we received from the Cockrill family bought another duplicator for CD's. Each new CD Duplicator is capable of producing 11 copies per run. These duplicators, combined with our existing machine, give us the capability of producing 40 copies of the CD per run.

The Sight Sound Exhibition which usually takes place in Glasgow each year was cancelled and it was suggested Forth Valley have a mini exhibition. The 3 local talking newspapers were invited to take a stand and we spent the day in the Sensory Centre in Camelon. There was a very good display board and information from NEWSLINE and Rocktalk. As well as having the opportunity of meeting some of our listeners we were able to make contact with a few professional people from around the country who showed an interest in what we do. Thanks to all who gave their time to keep the stand manned.

Our Flag Day was in March and the weather was very good to us. The Falkirk Town Centre was busy for the first 2 - 3 hours then things slowed a bit. However, we had 5 collectors at the Falkirk Stadium, which proved worthwhile. They collected £220 in an hour. We are keeping our fingers crossed Falkirk doesn't drop a division for next season and we are able to collect at the Stadium again next year.

Our thoughts and best wishes go again to Bill Buckner who has had a very bad year healthwise and we trust things get better for him soon.

Thanks to Betty who arranged a very enjoyable night out for us in the Leapark Hotel. The food was much enjoyed and the quiz put our brains to the test. Our Volunteers were happy to pay the reduced price which she had negotiated as it allowed them the opportunity to socialise as time is limited for this on a Thursday evening.

Our thanks once again go to Grangemouth Rotary who gave a donation from their Santa Float collection (£250). Thanks also to them for their help reading every fortnight, also to Falkirk Soroptimists for reading every fortnight and Falkirk Rotary Club who help over part of the summer. Thanks also to Larbert Rotary Club (£500), Polmont Rotary Club (£300), Polmont Rotary Wives (£250), Falkirk Old and St. Modan's Lunch Club (£1000), Forth Ports PLC (£330) and Avecia Grangemouth (£225) for their donations over the year.

Thanks on behalf of all the listeners to our dedicated team of Volunteers for all they have done over the year to keep us all informed and entertained. I know it is due to their many hours of work that NEWSLINE is up there as one of the best.

Committee remuneration and expenses

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

As a result of the surplus of £973.64 for the year the balance at 31st March 2009 was £8,821.26 which is all unrestricted.

Approved by the Committee and signed on their behalf.

C. Moroney, Chairperson
30th April 2009