



Annual Review

April 2016 – March 2017



The Braveheart Association



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Although things are improving, many people in Scotland still smoke, drink too much alcohol, are overweight and take little exercise. The consequence of these behaviours is that today 40% of our population lives with at least one long-term health condition such as cancer, heart disease, obesity or diabetes.

NHS Scotland is increasingly stretched by growing numbers of people with largely preventable illnesses, there is general recognition that we all need to take more personal responsibility for our health.

The Braveheart Association helps people living across Forth Valley take individual responsibility for managing their own health so they can enjoy an improved quality of life.

Focusing on education and ill health prevention, our health and well-being programmes are free of charge to participants and include:

- Self-management programmes, where people come together to learn, benefit from peer support and provide encouragement to one another
- An extensive programme of volunteer led walks encouraging people of all abilities to take gentle exercise and reduce social isolation
- Practical, flexible and creative health activities for individuals and groups

Supported by staff, volunteers are trained as Health Mentors and Walk Leaders. Braveheart services are modelled around the needs of those we support, including vulnerable and under-served groups across Forth Valley.

Chairman's Report

A year of delivery and planning

This was another very busy and successful year for Braveheart. We delivered all that we planned and more. New initiatives were piloted and we developed more innovative ways of delivering what we do to a wider audience.

As part of our strategy, we always evaluate what we do and we were rewarded with very positive ratings and comments. I would encourage everyone to review our recent walking programme evaluation which is available on our website.

We started the year with four core staff and were successful in securing funds to continue their employment and increase the number of hours worked

We are very fortunate to have Anne Black still working hard as the driving force behind what happens at Braveheart.

During the year Anne, Maureen Forbes and Eva Finlayson were joined by our new staff member Munira Farara. Munira quickly began building on the work that Eva Asante began on the Mentoring and Weight Management Programme.

The Weight Management Programme is a great example of innovation as it started as a pilot and we are now working closely with NHS Forth Valley delivering programmes and helping support NHS staff live "Healthier Working Lives".

Our walking programme also increased in numbers during the year and we expanded it to make it more accessible.

Recognising that we are stronger than the sum of our parts if we pull together we held a team building away day for staff and the Board. With very busy working lives it is important to take time to reflect on how we are doing and what we might do in the future. Such was the success of the first event, we are planning another in 2017.

Partnership working was identified in our strategy as essential to the future of the organisation and we have taken many positive steps to develop even better and more fruitful relationships with partners over the last year. In particular, there are great opportunities for Braveheart to continue to work with NHS Forth Valley to help in the delivery of many of the public health programmes that are identified in their own strategic plans.

NHS Forth Valley remains the main funder for our core staffing costs and we are grateful to them for their continued support.

As is always the case, we are nothing without our volunteers who help deliver everything we do. We have a tremendously loyal group of individuals who bring skills and energy to the organisation and we are hugely thankful to them all.

Gordon Thomson

Chairman

The Braveheart Association



*“...another very
busy and successful
year... We delivered
all that we planned
and more.”*

Key Achievements 2016/ 2017



Good progress was made on delivering our Strategic Plan, specifically:

1. Partnership Working

- Great strides forward were made in our partnership working with NHS Forth Valley
- Programmes were piloted including dementia friendly walks and tailored weight management interventions
- Innovative partnerships were developed with Forth Valley Sensory Centre and Forth Valley Disability Sport

2. Communication

- We achieved wider distribution of our Braveheart Newsletter
- Regular Facebook news and website updates were made
- New Community Hub sessions were delivered in the Falkirk Howgate shopping centre
- Staff and volunteers participated in a range of local events to raise awareness of the services that we offer
- Increased number of talks and presentations were given to local groups
- Our walking programme was evaluated and the results distributed to a range of stakeholders

3. Funding

- New funding was secured from Paths For All
- Continued funding was secured from the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) and NHS Forth Valley
- A new Social Enterprise group was established
- Fundraising projects were planned

4. Development of Services

- We engaged with new service users including people living with dementia and epilepsy as well as developing services for ethnic minority groups
- We piloted our new Weight Management and Weight Loss Maintenance Programmes
- A new walk started in the Polmont area as well as a number of additional shorter walks in existing locations

5. Evaluation

- An evaluation of our Walking Programme was carried out
- An evaluation of our Weight Management Programme was planned

Plans for the Year Ahead

"We will seek to become more financially stable by increasing our unrestricted income through developing new fundraising initiatives."

The alarming increase in type 2 Diabetes within our population is diminishing the quality of life for thousands of people. The condition is largely preventable and even for those who already live with it, improvement can be achieved through positive lifestyle changes.



The NHS has limited resources to tackle the problem at the root and is often dealing with the acute end of the problem. A partnership approach is needed and over coming years Braveheart will continue to work with NHS Forth Valley as part of the community based solution needed to help tackle this issue effectively.

To help minimise the risk of diabetes and a host of other long term health conditions, we will continue to offer free practical exercise and walking programmes designed for people who have a health condition or are less active.

Above all, we will continue to provide education and support with the two key lifestyle factors which need to be improved: a healthy diet and active lifestyle. These issues can lead to an increase in obesity, which is highly correlated with diabetes and ill health. Additionally, as we get older or less active, social disconnection increasingly becomes a risk factor for ill health.

In the current economic environment, charities are struggling as sourcing funding becomes more challenging. Braveheart is striving to become more financially stable by increasing our unrestricted income through the development of new fundraising initiatives.

For example, we plan to develop a Social Enterprise Group to increase opportunities for social interaction and raise additional funds.

A series of day trips will be developed by staff and volunteers giving people the chance to get 'oot and aboot' visiting new and interesting places which are not easy to travel to by public transport. Ideally a small level of profit on the ticket price will go towards helping enable Braveheart services to continue.

Our other key aims for the coming year are to:

1. Work in partnership to minimise the increase in Type 2 Diabetes and obesity across the Forth Valley area

By working with NHS Forth Valley to pilot and deliver new programmes with patients and staff

By providing healthy eating and healthy activity programmes in the community



Plans for the Year Ahead



2. Offer specialised support serving people who have an existing health condition or who are at risk of developing a health condition. In particular those who:

- Are overweight
- Are less active
- Are visually/sensory impaired
- Are living with dementia
- Are socially isolated
- Are carers

3. Increase community engagement and awareness of Braveheart services through:

- Falkirk Community Hub
- Talks and presentations to groups
- Newsletters and website updates
- Stalls and public events
- Social media

4. Provide appropriate tailored support for individual volunteers through:

- Training,
- Meetings, both one to one and group
- Recognition events
- Meeting operational costs for volunteer support and training

5. Secure funding for existing work and for new initiatives

- Source funding for the Development Officers who support volunteers
- Maintain funding stream for core costs
- Seek funding to continue to innovate

6. Investigate and implement new fundraising ideas to support core costs

- Set up the new Social Enterprise Planning Group and test the feasibility of day trips as an income generator
- Initiate a 'Friends of Braveheart' Monthly Draw
- Hold a sponsored walk
- Generate additional fundraising ideas

Altogether, we are looking forward to stretching our ambitions over the coming year.

Anne Black

Manager

The Braveheart Association

"I prefer to be outdoors, and being part of this group allows me to feel safe and make new friendships."



Programme Overview: Walk With Braveheart



Key Achievements 2016/2017

1. 6,500+ attendances and 484 volunteer led walks
2. 68 walkers joined our partnership walks between Braveheart & Inner Forth Landscape Initiative
3. 72 walkers participated in our 2016 Big Fit Walk
4. Established eight new partnerships with local organisations

"I love the walks since retiring. They have filled a void."

Plans for the Year Ahead

We will:

- Continue to provide tailored support for individual walkers
- Further develop our Dementia Friendly walks
- Increase key links with Hawkhill Community Centre
- Increase the number of Inner Forth Landscape Initiative walks in this final year of the project

Friendly training

- 8 Walk Leaders received RNIB (Royal National Institute of Blind People) training
- 5 Walk Leaders completed Epilepsy Awareness training
- A further 7 Walk Leaders trained in Safety Outdoors through Paths for All
- A further 5 Walk Leaders completed Strength & Balance training through Paths for All
- All relevant volunteers updated Heart Start or First Aid training as appropriate

Volunteer Walk Leaders

"I've been a Walk Leader with Braveheart since 2006 and find it very fulfilling. I've seen many new walkers make new friends as well as improving both their mental and physical health through it." Ian, Walk Leader

- 8 Walk Leaders recruited during the year
- 11 Walk Leaders received Dementia

Again we'd like to thank each of our leaders for the outstanding support they give to Braveheart. Their contribution is greatly appreciated and our service users tell us that the Walk Leaders provide them with support and encouragement which makes all the difference.

Weekly & Monthly Walks

Our Weekly and Monthly walks performed extremely well with 484 walks led and 6,511 attendances.

In response to the needs of our service users, since the beginning of 2017 Monthly Walks all have both a short and long walk option available. We also added a 45 minute walk option to the 30 minute and one hour options on two of our busier Weekly Walks. This makes our walks accessible to less able people.

We welcomed our new Monthly Walk Mascot Wallace to our first walk in 2017.

Inner Forth Landscape Initiative Walks

"Braveheart walks allow people of all ages and fitness to come together to improve their health. I think many of our walkers would really miss Braveheart if they did not have it in their lives." Jean, Walk Leader

Walk with Braveheart continued in partnership with Inner Forth Landscape Initiative (IFLI) to provide 3 Monthly Walks throughout the year.

A particularly popular venture was our Cambus Whisky and Wetlands walk at which we welcomed 36 walkers. Many of our Walk Leaders also completed History & Wildlife Training kindly delivered by IFLI. We appreciate the great support IFLI give Braveheart and our walkers thoroughly enjoy seeing and learning more about the Inner Forth area.

Sponsored Walk 2017

Thirty walkers joined us for our golf ball themed Sponsored Walk in Larbert raising over £400 and enjoying refreshments at Carmuirs Golf Club after our walk. Many thanks to all who took part.

Big Fit Walk

For 2016 we partnered up with EasyWays Walking Holidays, Polmont, for our Big Fit Walk. We welcomed a staggering 72 walkers who learned about the local paths and history of Polmont. Thank you to EasyWays for their support.

Walker Support

We are proud of the support we give our walkers across many of our walks including our Dementia Friendly and epilepsy awareness walks.

We also give RNIB support for walkers with a visual and hearing impairment and hope to increase this support and further strengthen our partnerships with the following organisations over the coming year.

- Inner Forth Landscape Initiative
- Alzheimer's Scotland
- Forth Valley Sensory Centre
- Epilepsy Connections
- Penumbra & First Bus
- ASC (Addictions Support & Counselling)
- Hawkhill Community Centre
- Forth Valley College



"I love the company on the walks as I'm wary of walking alone."

Programme Overview: Health Mentoring



**98.9% of participants rated their experience of
Lose Weight with Braveheart as “excellent”**

Key Achievements 2016/ 2017

We continued to strengthen our links and forge new partnerships with local organisations to enable us to provide services for those most in need.

In addition:

- 21 talks and Optimise sessions were delivered to various community groups
- 217 local people joined Braveheart Optimise and Weight Management groups
- 34 men and women participated in the Weight Management programme
- 36 carers benefitted from Braveheart Optimise sessions
- Healthy Living and Strength & Balance sessions were delivered to Braveheart Plus Coronary Heart Disease and Type 2 Diabetes groups
- 7 new volunteer Health Mentors were recruited
- We promoted our services at 3 major community events with large attendances

Plans for the Year Ahead

Going forward, Braveheart Health Mentoring plans to -

- Strengthen our partnership working with NHS Forth Valley Public Health, Dietetic Department, Health Promotion and Healthy Working Lives teams
- Seek referrals from GP practices
- Continue providing our community health programmes
- Continue to recruit, support and train new volunteer Health Mentors
- Continue to support Braveheart Plus groups and use the same model to form similar groups for people living with long term conditions such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
- Pilot a Weight Management Programme for NHS staff
- Identify new opportunities to promote what Braveheart health mentoring can offer
- Tailor support for participants from ethnic minorities
- Focus on the outcomes and evaluation of everything we do

Programme Highlights

Optimise with Braveheart

"I've learned more about my diabetes management in these three sessions than I have during the last seven years" Braveheart Plus participant

We continued to develop our Optimise services throughout the year.

"The Healthy Eating session was very motivational and informative"
Make It Happen 50+ group member

Our flexible approach allowed more people to access and benefit from our services and to Braveheart forging new and stronger connections with community groups including:

- Make It Happen 50+ group
- The Central Carers
- Rainbow Muslim Women group
- Epilepsy Connections
- Falkirk Muslim Club 55 and over



Weight Management Programme

Braveheart Weight Management Programme had much success over the year with 34 men and women participating in NHS approved weight management sessions.

The weekly sessions focus on dietary choices, encouraging physical activity, behavioural change and self monitoring. They align with the Scottish Government's Obesity Route Map Action Plan and the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines.

We also introduced Weight Maintenance sessions to support people in maintaining a healthy weight.

Volunteer Health Mentors

Volunteers are the backbone of all Braveheart programmes; their expertise and experience is invaluable in helping to deliver our services and we are committed to developing and enabling them with support and training

Over the year

- 7 new volunteer health mentors were recruited
- 4 volunteers completed Strength and Balance training
- 4 volunteers participated in the Food and Health (Nutrition) course

"I liked being part of this group. It has been life changing for me. I've learned so much in relation to my diet and activity choices; from portion size and reading food labels to how to fit activity in my daily routine and, most importantly, how to change my habits."

Rainbow Muslim Women group participant.

Developing Volunteering



We believe that engaging local people as volunteers creates a rewarding experience for volunteers, fosters community engagement in Braveheart services and enables us to provide an affordable health improvement service in Forth Valley.

We will continue to work hard to develop and support volunteers who play such a vital role in the delivery of Braveheart services.

Thank You

Thank you to Braveheart's Staff Team - Anne Black, Maureen Forbes, Eva Finlayson and Munira Farara.

Thank you to Braveheart's Board of Trustees – Gordon Thomson, David Bremner, Claire Tucker, Lorna MacIntyre, Vicky Junik and John Holleran.

Thank you to NHS Forth Valley, Falkirk Integrated Care Fund, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Natural Heritage, the Inner Forth Landscape Initiative and Lloyds TSB Foundation For Scotland for their support in making the outstanding successes of this year possible.

**Thank you to all our supporters who contributed to
Braveheart's Sponsored Walk which raised over £400.**

Our heartfelt thanks to all our dedicated volunteers who offer their time and talents so generously throughout the year.

**THANK
YOU!**

Start a Healthier Life

People who are active and involved in communities, and who feel able to access formal and informal support, are both happier and healthier.

Braveheart programmes have been designed to provide resources and support to improve the health and wellbeing of Falkirk communities.

Braveheart creates community led activities and outreach health services to improve the health and wellbeing of local people.

We help our community:

- Make healthier choices
- Take part in regular healthy activity
- Increase skills and understanding for health and wellbeing and resilience
- Live well with long-term health problems
- Attain and maintain an ideal weight
- Have regular fun social experiences

You can help Braveheart help our community by:

- Joining our Board of Trustees
- Volunteering as a Walk Leader
- Volunteering as a Health Mentor
- Volunteering as a Fundraiser
- Volunteering as an Administrator
- Making a donation

All our services are free and delivered by trained volunteers

For further information or to get involved,
visit our website or contact the Braveheart team.

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