

APPAWS FOR AUTISM INFORMATION & SUPPORT SERVICE



Appaws for Autism



Tel 07599963719 / 07854659568

www.appawsforautism.org

Scottish Charity SC.046114

APPAWS NEWSLETTER – WINTER 2017

Welcome to our festive newsletter. There's been a lot happening recently at APPAWS and we have news to share with you for the coming months and the New Year.

OUR NEW HOME

On October 27th we held our first Fun Club Halloween Party at the **46th Fife Scout Hut in Wemyss Street, Cowdenbeath**. **This is going to be our new regular venue and we are looking forward to working in partnership with the Scouts in our new home**. We have more space and access to an outdoor area which is much better for the families coming to the club. It also means we don't have to restrict our numbers and we will hopefully manage to develop our services once we recruit more volunteers.

From 1st December 2017 costs for attending the Fun Club will be as follows:-

£5.00 per family (2 adults and up to 3 children) (includes tea/coffee/juice/snack and activities). Extra adults or children £1.50 each.

This will be payable weekly when you arrive and sign the Attendance Register.

UPDATE ON DIRECTORS

All our current Directors remain although there have been some changes to roles, as follows: -

CAROL CHISHOLM Original Founder/Advocacy/Be A Tree/Training
Carol has stepped down as Chairperson/Managing Director due to health problems. She does remain involved with the charity but in a less stressful role.

LINDA WILSON Director of Advocacy and Children's Services and
Temporary Chairperson/Managing Director

NIEL CHISHOLM Director of Finance, IT and Community Liaison

LISA HARVEY Director of Marketing & Community Liaison

JULIE MARSHALL Director of Fundraising

MARCELLE MERRIGAN Director of Administration and Media

We are all looking forward to continuing to work together to support the autism community within the Fife area and beyond and will endeavour to bring you the much needed services to help you in your journey with autism.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

KIDS FUN CLUB

See information above regarding our new venue at The Scout Hut. Fun Club has continued most Saturdays although we have been slightly limited with the service on offer due to moving location and temporary storing of resources. However, now we are installed at The Scout Hut, we hope to develop this service in 2018. This is still a free play session where children can take part in any of the activities available ie ARTS & CRAFTS, VIDEO GAMES, SENSORY SESSIONS, BOARD GAMES, ACTION FIGURES, INDOOR & OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES. Children can do as much or as little as they wish and there is a Sensory Area available for calm down time if it all gets too much. Activities will change every week and we are always willing to introduce new ones requested by centre users. Parents are required to stay with their child and are responsible for them throughout the session. The club is open to the whole family including siblings, mums, dads, grans and grandads or any other carer/guardian.

We hope to have other clubs, workshops and sessions for children and teenagers if there is a demand for them and we have more staff available to run them.

PARENTS/CARERS SESSIONS

Parent Led Training Group

This group has been set up to get the views of parents within our group who have children at nursery and/or school with additional support needs and diagnosed/undiagnosed autism.

It is a forum for discussion about the various issues parents and children encounter with the education authority and other agencies. A report will be produced which highlights the experiences of our parents, both positive and negative, and recommendations of ways in which the partnerships between parents and schools might be improved. We hope to raise awareness of the difficulties faced by families who are going through or just received a diagnosis of autism.

This group will start up again in January 2018.

VOLUNTEERS

We have opportunities for adults and young people with or without autism who may wish to gain some work experience or participate in a community group, with various roles available.

SPECIAL EVENTS

In June, we had a **DOG BITE PREVENTION WORKSHOP** organised for Friday 30th June at 6pm. This was a really useful workshop run by Doggone Safe who have a flagship programme called "**Be a Tree**". It was for adults and children and helped make you aware of dogs and their behaviour and how to act when around a familiar or strange dog. There were no real dogs at the session. The instructors used a soft toy dog and the emphasis was on fun and interaction. It is hoped to develop this programme within schools so if anyone is interested to learn more, please contact us.

Our **Day Trip to Scottish Deer Centre** for group members took place on Saturday 30th September. We travelled by bus and private car and spent a very enjoyable day meeting all the animals and watching Birds of Prey Demonstrations and Animal Feeding Sessions.

Our Kids Christmas Party will take place on SATURDAY 16th DECEMBER 2018 from 12noon-3pm. It will be held in CROSSGATES COMMUNITY LEISURE CENTRE. This will be free for members of APPAWS and £5 for non-members.

There will be a disco, christmas crafts, buffet, games, story telling and surprises. There will also be a visit to Santa's Grotto and a present for every child from Santa himself. Mrs Claus and some Elves will also be there to supervise all the fun and games.

PUBLICITY DISPLAYS/MARKETING

Our publicity team will be attending the following local events during 2018.

Dunfermline Fresh Air Festival in Public Park

KIDZ SCOTLAND Event at Royal Inghliston Centre, Edinburgh

Website and Facebook Page

We have a website which has been refreshed and updated and a Facebook Page which allows our members to get support and information and learn about what activities we are organising.

Attendance at Conferences/Membership of Groups/Training

Carol Chisholm and Linda Wilson attended the ENABLE Scotland National Conference in Glasgow on Sat 18/11/17. This was about The Next Steps on the Journey to Inclusion for Every Pupil who has a Learning Disability.

Linda Wilson attended an ENABLE Conference at Auchmuty High School in Glenrothes on Mon 13/11/17. This was about SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT – More than Just A Budget.

Both these conferences provided a lot of valuable information which will be shared with our members.

APPAWS ADVOCACY SERVICE

We have provided support to a number of families over the past few months. A lot of our cases have been referred from Scottish Autism and involve difficulties parents are having getting the correct support and placement for their child at school or support for families from health and social care services. Carol and Linda are our two advocacy workers who can help with a number of areas including:

Educational plans ie IEP, CSP, attend meetings with you, help with referrals and tribunals, Behaviour Support Plans. Assessments, DLA/PIP forms and support at tribunals. Help with applying for mobility car or blue badge scheme.

We can provide 1-1 home visits. First visit is free then should you require ongoing support either at home, with school or with healthcare then it is a yearly subscription of £60. 24/7 Support Service – Online/Face-to-Face/Text/Email.

TRAINING & WORKSHOPS

Autism Awareness
Sensory Processing
Help your Child manage their Anxiety
Siblings and Autism
PECS making and Social Stories
Toilet Training
Picky Eaters
Sleep Problems
BE A TREE Dog Bite Prevention Workshop
16+ Workshops – Career, Employment, Life Skills
Teenage Talk sessions

PROMOTING THE BENEFITS OF ANIMALS AS THERAPY FOR AUTISM

APPAWS will continue to promote the work of **STAND SURE CANINE TRAINING**, who are based in Perth, Scotland.

APPAWS will continue to promote our Therapy Dogs who can visit local organisations and/or individuals in their own home.

APPAWS AUTISM FRIENDLY AWARDS

This is a criteria and nomination based award for services, retailers and local authorities who are Autism Friendly. It will be a PAWS system, similar to star ratings indicators. ie
3 PAWS 2 PAWS 1 PAW

We will endeavour to encourage our local community to become more autism friendly, starting with Cowdenbeath. We will provide training, support and information sessions for services across the community to help them become eligible for the APPAWS AUTISM FRIENDLY AWARD scheme. This will help raise awareness of autism within the local area and hopefully improve the services available locally to the autism community

These awards will be promoted in the coming months.

The Appaws Team would like to thank all our members and people who have continued to support us over the past year, which has been turbulent to say the least.

Let's hope 2018 will bring some fresh and positive change and enable us to provide a strong and stable support group for those affected by autism in Fife and beyond.

Wishing everyone a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and peaceful NewYear.