

# SOUTH LANARKSHIRE BRANCH NEWSLETTER



THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY  
SOUTH LANARKSHIRE BRANCH

NOVEMBER 2021



## WELCOME BACK!

As your local branch of the National Autistic Society, we wanted to take this opportunity to share the latest news on what we have been involved in during the current pandemic.

As you will be aware we are still unable to conduct face to face meeting until current government restrictions change. We do realise that being unable to do face to face meetings will be frustrating to some, but we need to follow the guidance giving from the Scottish Government to keep everyone safe.

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# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING SINCE WE LAST SPOKE?

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## MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK



As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, the branch had a guest speaker from SAMH to give a general overview of mental health and the impact that the challenges of the pandemic have had on autistic people. Being autistic itself is not a mental health condition but some autistic people can have poor mental health and others very good like the population in general. The National Autistic Society has produced a useful link with lots of information which can be found by visiting the following link:

[Mental Health](#)

An interesting and informative afternoon was had by all learning more about mental health conditions, coping strategies and the work of SAMH across the local area.

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## 2021 SCOTTISH PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

Back in May residents of South Lanarkshire, alongside the rest of Scotland, participated in the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary Election. At any election it is important that people with autism aren't left behind or forgotten about as part of the decisions that the 129 newly elected MSP's require to take during the next 5 years in parliament.

Representatives of the SNP, Green, Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrats met with our branch committee and members of the public with personal connections to autism over Zoom on Tuesday 27th April. There was constructive debate around many issues including public transport, employment, and education.

Branch members are also active on the "Our Voice, Our Rights" campaign through NAS HQ in Glasgow. This campaign brings together representatives from NAS, Scottish Autism and Enable to campaign for a commissioner to uphold the rights of people with autism and those with learning disabilities. You can find out more by visiting the [Our Voice Out Rights Website](#)

Over the next 5 years the branch will continue to remain in regular dialogue with the various MSP's that represent the South Lanarkshire Area. If you have any suggestions of issues you would like us to take forward with them, please get in touch.

## EMPLOYMENT WEBINAR

As part of World Autism Awareness Week the branch was joined by Catherine Leggit. Catherine works for NAS in their head office in London and runs the Enterprise and Employability team which aims to work with all autistic people and employers right across the UK to provide meaningful employment. Currently the employment rates for autistic people are amongst the lowest of any disability.

The webinar outlined more details of the Autism at work programme - further details can be found [here](#). The NAS also has recently developed free online training which can be accessed through our [Moodle Platform](#) on finding work. Next go to the Free modules and resources section and click finding employment. You will need to create a new account if you are accessing it for the first time. Email [enterprise.team@nas.org.uk](mailto:enterprise.team@nas.org.uk) if you need further assistance with the training.



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## LOCAL NEWS

### WIN FOR AUTISM

A Hamilton gym has recently held a charity work out with their members, all in the name of autism. Win Fitness, based in Barrack Street in Hamilton, managed to raise over £3000 for a local ASN Activity Group.

"These groups and events that the ASN Activity Group provide are a lifeline for both the kids and parents. For the kids who can often miss out on some amazing experiences due to being busy, loud, stressful or just generally a tough social setting. And for the parents, to be able to relax and watch their kids flourish surrounded by their peers without the added stress public spaces often bring is amazing".

'Win for Autism' is the gyms new foundation and they will be organising many more events to raise money for much needed groups.

We wish them well in the work they are doing and if you want to follow their story, please check out their Instagram - [Win Fitness](#) (@winfitnesshamilton)



# PARENT NETWORK SCOTLAND



Parent Network Scotland is an organisation led by parents for parents who offer time and space just for you to learn, share and practice new skills, and gain qualifications.

PNS believes in peer to peer support, and that parents themselves have the solutions to many of the challenges they face, with the support and encouragement of trained parent facilitators, and of other parents.

PNS have launched a Scottish Parent Academy which allows parents to join a community to build skills/confidence and gain qualifications that are accessible online and at times to suit families.

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## WELLBEING TOOLKIT COURSE

Parent Network Scotland (PNS) recommend parents wishing to take part in the Scottish Parent Academy to start their learning journey at the [Wellbeing Toolkit](#).

This course has been developed with inspiration from Parent Network Scotland Tools and techniques. The tools in this course complement Parent Network Scotland original tools by offering and encouraging parents to try new ways to promote wellbeing, health, nurture and respect in both themselves and their children. Using both heart and head this toolkit offers you new ways that will help you through the challenges of difficult emotions and to celebrate the joy of being a parent.

The PNS Wellbeing Toolkit is designed to be delivered over eight one hour sessions (or to suit families) online at this moment. Agendas for each session are given which include 'experiential learning' where tools are practiced, feedback is given and tools to try at home and feedback is encouraged each session by facilitators modelling.

The next Wellbeing Toolkit course is open to the whole of Scotland and will begin in November on a Tuesday or Thursday afternoon.

**We are looking to run a course exclusively for parents in South Lanarkshire in the New Year. If you are interested in this free course, please contact us using the details at the end of the newsletter, or scan the QR code to fill out a 'Interest Form'**



# ONLINE GROUPS

Like most organisations, we've faced challenges brought about by lockdown - from reduced funding to delivering previous face-to-face services. Lockdown has also brought its opportunities. As a branch covering the whole of South Lanarkshire (we go all the way from the outskirts of Glasgow to less than 40 miles to Carlisle) moving services online has allowed us to support people in the area without a lengthy trip on the M74.



## ADULT GROUP



The Adult Group is a safe place to meet new friends, have some fun and provide support for one another. The group is supervised by our volunteers and is completely free of charge.

This group runs every 3rd Monday of the month at 12pm. To book your place, please email [southlanarkshire.branch@nas.org.uk](mailto:southlanarkshire.branch@nas.org.uk)

## ARTS AND CRAFT GROUP

We continue to hold our Arts and Craft group every 2nd Saturday of the month at 10:30am. The group is aimed at all ages and is a fun family friendly activity you can be part of from the comfort of your own home.

The Arts and Crafts group is a great way to meet new people and express yourself.

To book your place, please email [southlanarkshire.branch@nas.org.uk](mailto:southlanarkshire.branch@nas.org.uk)



# MEET OUR NEW VOLUNTEERS!

We have been working hard to put together a team of volunteers that can take our branch forward during this difficult time. Let us introduce our newest members....

## Grant Kelly (and Islay) - Communications Volunteer



**Why did you volunteer for the National Autistic Society South Lanarkshire?** I have been a keen fundraiser for charities, so when presented with the chance to volunteer for a charity in my area, I jumped at it!

**How long have you been involved with the branch?** I am a newbie and have only been with the branch since the end of August.

**What is your role at the branch?** I am the Branch Communications.

**What do you find the most rewarding parts of the role?** I love being able to spread the amazing work we do and hopefully generate more awareness throughout our local community.

**What would you say to others about getting involved?** If you have the time to spare, I would implore you to get involved! You will be part of a brilliant team and be able to help a lot of people in the area.

## Kwabena Amo-Afful - Treasurer



**Why did you volunteer for the National Autistic Society South Lanarkshire?** Having worked for a charity before, I felt the need to volunteer my time and skills towards the development and advancement of the day-to-day running of the branch.

**How long have you been involved with the branch?** 6 months and counting

**What is your role at the branch?** I am the Branch Treasurer.

**What do you find the most rewarding parts of the role?** Contributing positively to the branch's set goals and seeing results. I have gotten the chance to work with members in the branch and I can say it's rewarding to see the skills they all exhibit.

**What would you say to others about getting involved?** The best thing to ever do for humanity is to contribute or volunteer for the common weal so I plead with persons that have spare time to consider volunteering and also persons that are looking to build their experience to also consider it as an option.



# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

After reading about our new volunteers, we thought you might want to hear about opportunities to get involved in the brilliant work we do!

We are currently looking to fill two roles to make our wee team complete.

To apply for any volunteer roles, please see the contact details at the end of the newsletter, or click on the website link in each advert.



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## FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEER



The Fundraising officer role is important to the running of the branch as they help organise fundraising events for the South Lanarkshire branch. Due to pandemic our face-to-face fundraising events have been put on hold so we are looking for someone who has innovative ideas for online events. The role will require around 2/3 hours of work per week, or more if you can commit. When regulations allow us to resume normal fundraising service there will be more jobs for the ideal candidate. For further information and to apply for the role, please see our South Lanarkshire volunteer section of the National Autistic Society [website](#).

**Closing date: 31st January 2022**

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## BRANCH SECRETARY

The Branch Secretary role is important to the running of the South Lanarkshire branch, as they act as a coordinator and communicator for the branch. The Branch Secretary takes on many tasks such as taking notes at committee meetings, booking speakers for meetings, booking meeting rooms, and many more. The role will require around 2/3 hours of work per week, or more if you can commit. For further information and to apply for the role, please see our South Lanarkshire volunteer section of the National Autistic Society [website](#).



**Closing date: 3rd December**

# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

With many COVID-19 restrictions easing, we are hoping to be taking part in more fundraising events and face-to-face groups.

Below are fundraising events which will be happening very soon, so keep an eye out on our social media for more information.

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## FUNDRAISING EVENTS:

### Virtual Duck Race

We are going to hold a virtual duck race on Tuesday 25th January. As this is Burns Night we are making it a Scottish theme, therefore get your thinking cap on and come up with some Scottish names for your duck.

Each duck will be £1 and we can name up to 100, don't be shy!

More details to follow on our social media

### Singer/Party Night

We will be holding a singer/party night in the New Year. Details are still being finalized, however we will keep all our social media up to date with further information!

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Is there anything that you want to see your local branch take part in?  
Do you have any fundraising events that you want to pitch to the team?  
Is there anything specific you want our groups to focus on?

No matter how small the request or question is, we want to know.



## CONTACT US

If anyone would like further information or to get involved, please contact us on the details below:

**Email:** [southlanarkshire.branch@nas.org.uk](mailto:southlanarkshire.branch@nas.org.uk)

**Phone:** 07483012438

**Facebook:** @NASSouthLanarkshire

**Twitter:** @NASSouthlanarks

**Instagram:** @nassouthlan

