

# Scottish Older People's Assembly Newsletter



The Scottish Older People's Assembly is a voice for older people across Scotland

- ***Welcome to the SOPA newsletter, please feel free to pass on to others!***

## May 2023

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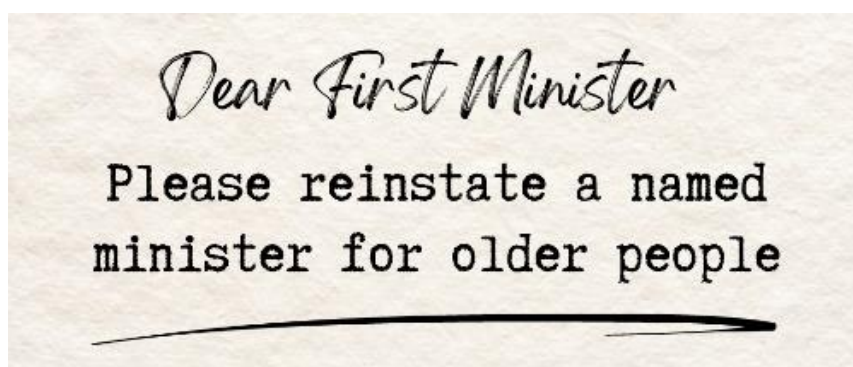
#### Other News

- Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry launches its listening project, Let's Be Heard - Inquiry invites people to share their experiences of the pandemic and lessons they believe should be learned so we are better prepared in future

## SOPA News

### Call for Older People's Minister to be Re-Instated

SOPA together with other organizations wrote a joint letter to the First Minister calling for the title of Older People's Minister to be re-instated. The joint letter was also published in the Sunday Post. SOPA will keep you up to date on how this campaign develops.



### Members' Day March 2023 Update

SOPA held a members' day via Zoom at the end of March 2023. We were delighted to see so many members attending and will send out the date for the next meeting shortly.

## Members News

Please send [hetty@scotopa.org.uk](mailto:hetty@scotopa.org.uk) any members news for the next newsletter.

### Borders Older People's Forum Event on 31st May 2023

The Borders Older People's Forum are holding an information sharing event for older people on Wednesday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 from 10.30am until 2.30pm in St Boswells Village Hall, Scottish Borders. We will have stands from a wide range of organisations such as Citizens Advice, Age Scotland and Alzheimer Scotland. Teas, coffees and light refreshments will be served. All welcome!

### Call for participants – Health Ageing and Climate Change.

Research being led by Professor Ryan Woolrych at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh is looking at the impacts of climate change and severe weather events on healthy ageing and building climate resilient age-friendly cities and communities. As part of the work, we are asking anybody aged over 60 to share their experience of climate change and how severe weather may impact themselves and the communities they live in, both now and in the future. People can share their experiences in different ways including typed comments, photographs, videos and other creative formats. For more details on the project and how to take part please visit the project website at: <https://www.ageandclimate.com/take-part>.

### African and Caribbean Elders in Scotland Celebrating Diversity Award Winner at Creative Lives Awards 2022



[Pictured L to R: David Bryan, Creative Lives; Kay Solaja, ACES; Esther Solaja, ACES; Harriette Campbell, ACES; Nick Ahad, BBC Radio Leeds]

Founded in 2019, African and Caribbean Elders Scotland (ACES) is an organisation for African and Caribbean over-60s living in Scotland. Members from around the country meet regularly online, providing mutual support, companionship and fun.

During 2022, ACES planned and facilitated three free, public oral history events online to mark Doors Open Days, Black History Month and International Men's Day.

During the events, speakers reflected on a variety of topics ranging from love, education and parenting to immigration, the impact of the Black Lives Matter movement and fighting injustice. Sharing their experiences and knowledge with new listeners reinforced a sense of community while recording this important part of Scottish history, heritage and culture for future generations.

Attendees at these events hailed from home and abroad - Kenya, Barbados, Coventry, the Gambia, Dumfries & Galloway, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. The youngest storyteller was six and the oldest was 95. As well as personal reminiscences, short stories and poems inspired by their lives have also been shared, covering topics such as displacement, racism and ancient African history.

"African and Caribbean Elders in Scotland has never recorded lived experience stories before," says Harriette Campbell of the group, "nor have we hosted online events, and we would like to do this again in the future. As one speaker, Chief, remarked, 'when we listen, we find solutions to challenges'."

## **African and Caribbean Elders in Scotland Africa Day Celebration – Saturday 27th May 2023**



The poster is for an Africa Day celebration. At the top, there are logos for ACES (African & Caribbean Elders in Scotland) and ACWA (African & Caribbean Women's Association), flanked by stylized fireworks. Below the logos is a black banner with the text "ACES & ACWA CELEBRATING AFRICA DAY". Underneath that is the theme "THEME: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION" in red. The main title "AFRICA DAY" is in large white letters, followed by the date "Saturday, 27th May 2023". On the left side, there is a photograph of Chief Amu Logotse, a man in traditional white and red attire, sitting and playing a drum. To the right of the photo, it says "Guest speaker: Chief Amu Logotse". At the bottom right, there is a Zoom icon and the text "Zoom Details", "Meeting ID: 814 8020 5141", "Passcode: 561817", and "Time: 6pm".

**ACES & ACWA CELEBRATING AFRICA DAY**

**THEME: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION**

**AFRICA DAY**

**Saturday, 27th May 2023**

**Guest speaker:**  
**Chief Amu Logotse**

**Zoom Details**  
Meeting ID: 814 8020 5141  
Passcode: 561817

**Time: 6pm**

## Voice of Experience Forum - Chatterbox Digital Inclusion Project

Voice of Experience Forum (VoEF) are delighted to announce the completion of our Chatterbox Digital Confidence programme.

The idea was borne from the need to increase and maintain the network of family and community connections available to older people across North Lanarkshire, and provide older people with training and access to constantly changing online information following the onset of the pandemic.

We quickly sought and secured funding from North Lanarkshire Council Flexible CVS Fund to purchase equipment based upon the responses from members regarding what would be required to gain access to digital services.

We then began to arrange sessions across the North Lanarkshire local authority. Sessions were held in Coatbridge, Motherwell, Cumbernauld and Shotts.

VoEF are passionate about the need to provide digital training to people. Since securing funding for the equipment we have distributed items at each of the session locations in North Lanarkshire. Staff fully recognised that the provision of equipment was only one part of the solution to encouraging digital inclusion for older people. The Trustees and staff appreciated the need to support members, and other older people, in North Lanarkshire through providing the training and skills to allow them to engage and participate more fully in day-to-day life in this digital age. Now, more than ever, access to information has moved more online because of covid and to allow the older community to participate and engage in decision being made on their behalf, digital inclusion is essential.

VoEF delivered the “Digital Confidence” sessions to 49 older adults in total over the course of 12 months, and the positive experience is reflected in the comments of those attendees, below.

### ***What worked well?***

People explaining and working with me

Able to complete forms

Help to connect phone

Learn My Way easy to follow on screen

The pace of the training

Taking on board and learning how to apply knowledge passed on by the champions

This has been good learning and giving confidence, so I can be more in tune with digital tech

Going to use more apps I feel more secure

Safety and security advice online

VoEF staff have increased their learning throughout the project and have adapted sessions and set up's to better meet the needs of the participants through continuous evaluation of the feedback to Chatterbox. By encouraging participation of older people, we have successfully increased the possibility of engaging this generation more in community discussions and being involved locally. I think it is safe to say we have all learned a lot. Voice of Experience Forum would like to thank SKY and the Scottish Tech Army for their involvement in these events.

We hope to continue to work with SKY in providing these sessions across North Lanarkshire going forward. The demand for digital confidence training is definitely there and we would like to continue providing this in areas in North Lanarkshire which we have not been able to service during this part of the project subject to securing further funding.

Denis O'Keefe, Development Worker, Voice of Experience Forum

## Gift of Age

Faith in Older People has recently published a report 'The Gift of Age'. Older people, faith communities, and volunteering which was funded by the TOR Christian Foundation.



The overall aim of the research was to identify and better understand the contribution made by older people in faith communities to volunteering, community well-being and citizenship, highlighting in particular the voluntary 'ministry' which lies at the heart of Christian faith, and is also echoed in all other faiths.

To achieve this, we had the following objectives:

- Understand the extent to which older people sustain faith communities through voluntary service.
- Learn about the impact from the experience of the current 'lockdown' on older people undertaking voluntary service.
- 'Map' the needs, contribution, and potential of older volunteers in faith communities
- Identify examples of innovative and challenging practice, particularly ones which have developed in response to the pandemic, exploring how sustainable they are in practice.

The full report can be found on the FiOP website: [The-gift-of-age.pdf](https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk/The-gift-of-age.pdf)  
([faithinolderpeople.org.uk](https://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk))

## **One Step-at-a-Time**

This is an interactive learning resource for faith communities to help them support individuals in the congregation experiencing dementia and those who care for them. The resource builds on consultations undertaken and discussions with people experiencing dementia, carers, clergy and pastoral care. We are indebted to Alzheimer's Scotland; Scottish Dementia Working Group, National Carers Action Group and others for their contribution to this resource which will be published on the FiOP website at the beginning of May.

[One Step at a Time \(faithinolderpeople.org.uk\)](http://faithinolderpeople.org.uk)

Our newsletters, events and information about our work can be found on [www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk](http://www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk)

## **The Learning in Later Life Students' Association (3Ls) at Strathclyde University's Centre for Lifelong Learning**

The Learning in Later Life Students' Association (3Ls) at Strathclyde University's Centre for Lifelong Learning is enjoying a year of coming together again and sharing learning and new experiences. Our 14 clubs are flourishing, we have resumed social outings (Traquair House and Rosslyn Chapel among others), our fundraising events have raised a substantial sum for our current chosen charity, The Courtyard Pantry, and our Walking Group continues to explore new routes. We haven't abandoned Zoom altogether and our online series of Lunchtime Talks has been well received, covering such diverse topics as Logan Botanic Garden and Belgian Refugees in Scotland. To learn more about our membership benefits please visit our website [3ls.website](http://3ls.website) or contact [LLAssoc@strath.ac.uk](mailto:LLAssoc@strath.ac.uk). If you have ever taken a class with the Centre for Lifelong Learning, you are eligible to join our Association.

## **News**

### **Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry launches its listening project, Let's Be Heard**

**Inquiry invites people to share their experiences of the pandemic and lessons they believe should be learned so we are better prepared in future**



The independent Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry today launched on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 its listening project, *Let's Be Heard: Sharing Scotland's COVID Experience*.

*Let's Be Heard* is the main channel for people to share their experiences of the pandemic and any lessons they believe should be learned from the response to the pandemic in Scotland.

Experiences shared with *Let's Be Heard* will help guide the Inquiry's investigations and inform its reports. This will include identifying any disproportionate or unequal impacts on particular groups or communities.

The Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry is investigating the devolved strategic response to the pandemic in Scotland between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2022. It will establish the facts, identify any lessons that need to be learned and make recommendations to Scottish Ministers, so the country is better prepared in future.

*Let's Be Heard* is seeking answers to three key questions:

1. What were your experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What impact did these experiences have on you or people you know?
3. What lessons do you think should be learned from your experiences?

People can share their experiences on the *Let's Be Heard* website ([lbh.covid19inquiry.scot](https://lbh.covid19inquiry.scot)). In addition, printed submission forms will be available in GP practices, care homes, community pharmacies, public libraries, and community centres throughout Scotland. Forms will also be available on request by emailing [LetsBeHeard@covid19inquiry.scot](mailto:LetsBeHeard@covid19inquiry.scot) or writing to Freepost SCOTTISH COVID-19 INQUIRY.



Completed forms can also be returned free of charge to the Freepost address. The *Let's Be Heard* team will also work with organisations across Scotland to facilitate participation. More details, including additional ways to participate in the listening project, are available on the *Let's Be Heard* website.

Dr Alexandra Anderson, Head of *Let's Be Heard*, said: "Everyone in Scotland has been affected by the pandemic. Thousands of people have lost their lives, and many continue to be deeply impacted. Lessons people believe should be drawn from their experiences, both positive and negative, will be at the heart of the Inquiry's investigations.

"Our internal research team will analyse the experiences people share with us and produce a series of reports to help shape the Inquiry's investigations and inform its reporting and recommendations to Scottish Ministers."