

MEARNS KIRK HELPING HANDS

Newsletter | Summer 2026



Celebrating 10 Years of Community

Welcome to our special anniversary edition! For a decade, Mearns Kirk Helping Hands has been bringing people together, supporting our community, and making a real difference thanks to your hard work and dedication.

10

Years Serving
Our Community

140+

Dedicated
Volunteers

£25154

Grant Funding
Received So Far This
Year

13

Groups &
Activities

"Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our charity."

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Our History

On the 23rd of June 2016, Mearns Kirk Helping Hands officially came into existence. Mearns Kirk Church had been successfully running three groups for the local community. The Friendship Club, which has been running for 36 years now, the Eastwood Bereavement Group and the Lunch and Social Club for People Living with Dementia. These groups had been established to meet the needs of the local community but there was an acknowledgement that more needed to be done for the community to help reduce isolation and loneliness. Mearns Kirk Helping Hands was established as an independent charity, with the aim of helping to reduce isolation and loneliness and improve health and wellbeing for older people in the area. The charity took the three groups established by Mearns Kirk Church under its banner and, although independent from the church, it was set up to still have the same ethos of giving help and support to those who need it.

Our three original groups are still going strong today! The Friendship Club has around 80 members, we receive continuous enquiries about attending the Eastwood Bereavement Group and our Lunch and Social Club for People Living with Dementia usually has a waiting list to attend.

To meet the demands of our local community, we have continued to listen and respond to community need, which is the model we use when developing any new group or activity. For example, we started our Men's Breakfast Club in 2019. This was based on male volunteers telling us that, at the time, they had friends who had been bereaved or were experiencing feelings of loneliness but couldn't find a local group that they felt was suitable for attending. As such, we got a small pot of funding to trial a Men's Breakfast Club, with the original aims of encouraging healthy eating amongst older men.

Our History Cont.

We had around 10-15 males attending once the group was established and when we evaluated the group, we found that, while the gents enjoyed the breakfast, their primary reason for attending was the company. Our Men's Breakfast Club now has around 40 attendees, and we have established a second at GHA in Giffnock.

Mearns Kirk Helping Hands now runs thirteen different groups and activities, as well as a Befriending Project that supports both older people aged 70+ experiencing isolation and loneliness and people living with dementia, with a focus on people with young onset dementia.

We cannot do it without your help! The charity has grown from having around 60 volunteers to over 140 volunteers! We truly are "Community Helping Community" and we hope we can continue to deliver our work and expand and evolve to meet the continued and increasing needs of our community!

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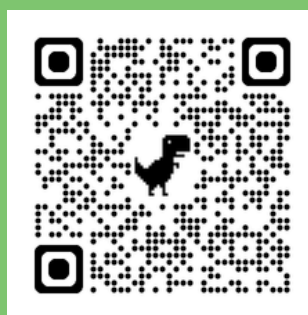
“10 for 10 Campaign”

To celebrate our important milestone, we have launched a campaign called “10 for 10”. The idea behind this is that, as it’s our 10th anniversary, we want to encourage our supporters, followers and local businesses to help us raise £10k in the next 12 months. This funding will help provide financial security for the charity, allowing us to develop to meet the needs of our community in the future. Throughout the campaign, you’ll see snippets of our history and some memories shared by our staff on our social media pages. If there’s any thoughts or memories of being with Mearns Kirk Helping Hands, that you would like to share, please get in touch.

To let people know about our “10 for 10” campaign, you can share the QR code in the image below or direct people to the website.

10 FOR 10

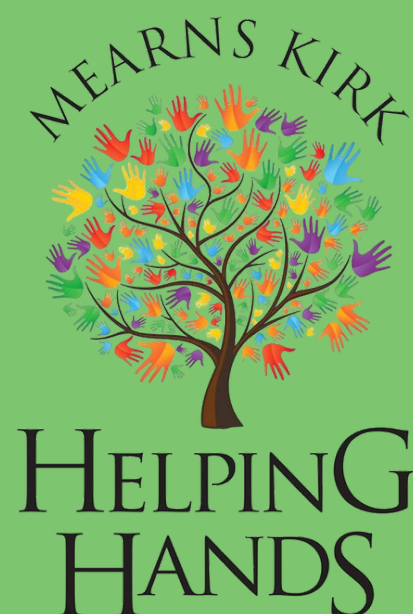
We're celebrating our 10th anniversary in 2026. Could you donate to help us reach our target of £10,000?



Scan for access to our 10 for 10 campaign.
Every penny goes towards our work improving
wellbeing and reducing loneliness and isolation
for older people and people living with
dementia in East Renfrewshire.
Thank you for your support.

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator
www.oscr.org.uk

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SCIO
SC046646



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Catch-Ups at Crookfur

Given the popularity of our Lunch and Social Club for People Living with Dementia and our Monday Meet-Ups dementia friendly café, in March this year we launched “Catch-Ups at Crookfur”. This is another dementia friendly café that takes place every Tuesday afternoon from 2pm to 3.30pm and is delivered in the Hugh Fraser Estate. The model is very similar to our Monday Meet-Ups, where members meet for the first half to enjoy a cuppa and cake, and the second half is an activity tailored to what members enjoy.

New: Men's Breakfast Club @GHA

We've also started a new Men's Breakfast Club at GHA in Giffnock, following the success of our current Men's Breakfast Club in the Mearns Kirk Halls. This started in May this year and we're already getting lots of gents through the door.

If you know anyone that would benefit from attending either of these new groups, do just get in touch and let us know.

New: Befriending for People Living with Dementia

We have extended our Befriending Project in order to provide 1:1 befriending to people living with dementia. Although anyone living with dementia is eligible, we are focusing on people with young onset dementia. The idea is to give the person companionship for a hour or so once a week, while offering short respite for unpaid carers.

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Fundraising Updates

The Kiltwalk

At the end of April, the Kiltwalk came to Glasgow! Mearns Kirk Helping Hands had 11 walkers, including three of our own fabulous volunteers and a team from our corporate partners, Kelly Residential. Varying lengths of walks were completed and thankfully all the training, blisters and sore legs were worth it as they raised a combined total of nearly £8000!! Well done to our walkers on achieving such an amazing sum for MKHH!! We're on the lookout for walkers for 2027, so if it's something you fancy doing to raise funds for us, it's never too early to get practising!

Charity Golf Day

Following the success of last years Golf Day, in partnership with Mearns Castle Golf Club, we're doing it again! The event is kindly being sponsored by Kelly Residential and will take place on 7th August 2026, from 1pm to 6pm. Four Ball Team tickets are available to buy now for £160. We're sure it's going to be a great day for golfers, all while helping to raise funds for us!

We're always on the lookout for raffle prizes for our events. If you have any nice items like a gift set or know someone who could donate a voucher, please get in touch and let us know!

More fundraising events to follow later in the year!

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Minibus Update

You'll hopefully have all received the email earlier this year about the sale of our minibus. It served us well since it was donated to us via the ASDA Foundation but sadly, constant repairs to the side-step, without any real resolution, coupled with it being quite difficult to get into helped our Trustees to make the decision to sell it on.

Our plan, going forward will be to apply to other funders, to contribute towards the money already raised from the sale, to allow us to buy a new minibus. We will be looking for one that has easier access on and off and one that any volunteer can drive on a regular licence.

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Staffing Update

You'll hopefully have all had the chance to meet the newest of our staff team, Shaun Leinster, who started as Befriending Coordinator in October 2025. Shaun has been busy getting to know all the current matches and is helping to support development of new matches, as well as establishment of our dementia befriending service.

You may also have noticed that, relatively recently, both Vicky and Lauras' job titles have changed. Vicky have moved from being 'Project Manager' to 'Operations Manager' and Laura has moved from 'Volunteer Coordinator' to 'Deputy Operations Manager'. This change was made to better reflect the jobs that they do. Vicky will still manage the charity day to day and help support with grant funding, while Laura can provide management in Vicky's absence and will still have oversight of volunteer recruitment, induction and support.

Venus continues her role as Project Worker, providing vital, practical support to the delivery of our groups and activities.

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Upcoming Training Sessions

We know it's ages away, but it'll be here before we know it! We've organised Moving and Assisting Training and First Aid Training on the following dates. You only need to attend one session of each, I've just organised it on different dates to give a bit of choice in case of holidays, appointments etc. To book any of the training below, just get in touch with Laura.

Tuesday 1st September

First Aid

9.30am to 12.30pm

Tuesday 1st September

Moving and Assisting Training

1.30pm to 3.30pm

Tuesday 6th October

Moving and Assisting Training

9.30am to 11.30am

Tuesday 6th October

First Aid

1pm to 4pm

Online

We have general induction training you can access online, to refresh your knowledge on topics like safeguarding and good communication.

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AGM Save the Date!!

Our 10th Anniversary AGM will be held in the morning of Thursday 3rd September in the Sullivan Hall at Mearns Kirk Halls. The times have still to be finalised but please mark this date in your calendar, should you be interested in attending and finding out what's been happening in the charity for the past year.

Invites will go out later in the summer.
