

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul Linlithgow Conference Newsletter April 2021

"Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveller who has been attacked.
But it is justice's role to prevent the attacks." (Blessed Frédéric Ozanam)



Saint Vincent de Paul

Our annual newsletter comes after a year that has challenged everyone in society as we have learned to cope with the global pandemic the impact of which no one could have predicted. We hope and pray that the worst of this is now behind us and that we can start to slowly return to normality during 2021.

The newsletter coincides with the financial year end reporting for all 300 SSVP conferences in Scotland. This provides the opportunity to share with the parish our activities this year, our finances and to feature our work with the West Lothian Foodbank.

COVID-19

As with every individual and organisation the global pandemic has had a major impact on our conference as we have had to adapt to operate within the necessary and strict restrictions imposed on us all.

Some of our regular activities have simply not been possible - volunteering at Soup Kitchens, providing transport to mass, arranging caravan holidays and hosting the annual fish-tea.

In other areas we have adapted, for example, our conference meetings are now held over Zoom, communication between members is via WhatsApp and visits, when possible, are in gardens or by telephone.

The uplifting news is that due to the quite remarkable and continued financial support from the parish we have still been able to make a difference in supporting the poorer members of our community.

Activity and Financial Summary

The table below summarises our activities this year:

Visits	Shopping	Furniture	Foodbank	Transport
589	14	6	16	5

The Furniture count relates to work helping the SSVP Furniture Project clearing houses, collecting items etc.

This financial year donations have amounted to £5203 and expenditure has been £5497 which has allowed us to support a number of entities including:

- > St. Joseph's Care Home - Little Sisters of the Poor
- > Missionaries of Charity
- > Furniture Project
- Donations to the above organisations we regularly support
- > Helping Hands Project
- Christmas Gifts for deprived children
- > School Projects / Donations
- Our Lady of Lourdes; St. Modens; Breaktime Snack boxes
- > St. Michael's Hospital, Linlithgow

West Lothian Foodbank

In the month of January 2021 the West Lothian Foodbank created and gave out over 1000, 7 day, food packs to individuals and families. This figure represents a 64% demand increase over the corresponding period last year and includes over 200 children. Individuals undergo rigorous means testing by either Citizens Advice or The Advice

Shop in Bathgate before being passed to the Foodbank. In short these are people in crisis.

As a parish, parishioners kindly continue to donate items to the collection box in the porch which we deliver to the Foodbank's Livingston depot.

As a conference, we supplement these direct donations from parishioners by purchasing crates of food and household items from various retailers including Grow Wild Organic Farm Shop, B&M. In total this year our contributions have amounted to £2000 which has been most gratefully received.

SSVP History

In 1883 the society was formed in Paris when Frédéric Ozanam and a group of friends were challenged to put their faith into action and serve the poor.

The society of St Vincent de Paul was established as this group began to work with the desperately poor in their city. Developing a simple system, they went in teams to help the poor in their homes, on the streets, in hospitals and asylums. Saint Vincent de Paul was a 16th century cleric renowned for his work with the poor and inspired Frédéric and his friends to dedicate their new group in his name.

Internationally the Society is now active in over 150 countries, there are some 45,000 conferences and over 800,000 volunteers. In Scotland the Society was established in 1845 and we are one of 300 conferences that operate within our respective parishes and local communities resolved to work and follow the example set by Blessed Frédéric Ozanam.

Message Of Thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for the continued support and extraordinary generosity extended to our conference by the parishioners of St. Michael's.

Without question this has been a challenging year for everyone and despite there being no weekly collections at mass - our primary source of funds - you have kept the donations coming in which has been truly humbling and allowed us continue to help those in most need within our community.

A MASSIVE THANK-YOU TO EVERYONE!

Linlithgow Conference Members

Haydn Carr-Pollock, Jerry O'Dwyer, Kathleen Love, Douglas Robertson, Teresa McHardie, Mark Geraghty, Paudric Osborne, David Mora n

If you know someone who might benefit from our help, you want to know more about the SSVP or perhaps you are interested in joining us then please speak to one of the members or phone 07596 225937. We can also be contacted via email: ssvplgow@gmail.com

More information on the national organisation is available at the following website www.ssvpscotland.com There is also an active young Vincentians group who are available on the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter (@YouthSSVP)



Blessed Frédéric Ozanam