

Guest blog: Police Scotland Youth Volunteers helping keep communities safe

✘ This festive season Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) in West Dunbartonshire have been working tirelessly to build strong, friendly relationships with their vulnerable neighbours, to help keep them safe and secure.

The PSYV programme aims to strengthen the relationship with the police and young people, breaking down barriers and promoting positive role models.

John from Police Scotland Youth Volunteers tells us more about the work they have been undertaking this year to help keep our communities safe.

The youth volunteers fully understand that in this modern age the elderly population are challenged on a daily basis with health, technology and modern living where they grew up in 'simpler' times with no internet, online banking or mobile phones.

The youth volunteers are fully aware that because our vulnerable neighbours struggle with a life of fake news, online fraud and telephone scams they are more likely to become a victim of such despicable crimes. As a result, the PSYV groups have commenced a program to support as many vulnerable residents as they can.

This program started a few months ago where a leaflet drop was coordinated by the police in order to raise the awareness surrounding bogus callers, while highlighting the latest tactics used to swindle cash from a potential victim.

Police find that these criminals tend to befriend the victim by stating that they are there to help with a problem that is not there in the first place. Once the deception has been committed and the criminal has their trust, it often ends up in heartache and misery which is difficult to overcome.

During this leaflet drop, our advice was simple. We informed residents to think before committing and to speak to a trusted friend before any decisions were made.

During the last couple of weeks, the youth volunteers had been on their travels where they spent some 'festive' time with local residents of independent living.

This was a valuable opportunity for the youths to provide positive community spirit given that loneliness and poor mental health can be a major factor for many, especially at this time of year.

"We wanted to provide some cheer, especially around this time of year," one of the volunteers observed, while another said "I know that some of the residents might be feeling lonely and I just wanted to come along and provide some company".

As a result, the volunteers came along in their numbers and sang carols with the residents, served tea and mince pies, listened to music and chatted about life in general whilst providing that all important safety message.

One of the residents stated that she "loved the visit and it was great to see so many energetic, enthusiastic and considerate youths come along and spend some time with them".

The next step on this journey for the PSYV youths in West Dunbartonshire is to provide a simple gardening service to vulnerable residents during the spring time.

The coordinator and his team know that this is a time when rogue traders tend to start plying their 'incredible offers' upon the unsuspecting public. We want to show the community that these offers tend to be a rip-off and that maintaining someone's lawn, needn't cost a great deal of money.

Read more about the PSYV, including information for anyone interested in becoming a Youth or Adult Volunteer, on the [Police Scotland website](#).

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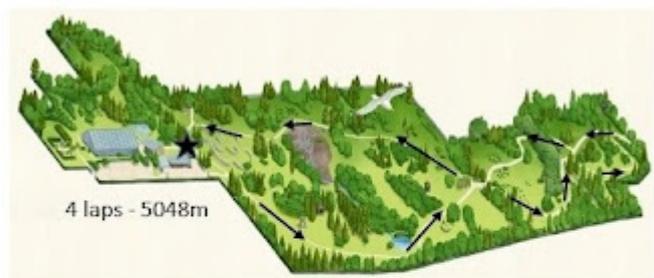
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[Prison Chaplain recognised in New Year Honours list](#)

A prison chaplain has paid tribute to his fellow clergy and prison community after being recognised for his work in the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

[New Year Fun Run 2020 #dundeewestend](#)



Forward into '20 Free event at Dundee Botanic Garden

On Thursday 2nd January at 11am and until 1pm, there will be a 5k fun run around the paths of the University of Dundee Botanic Garden to get yourself in shape for the New Year.

The event caters for all ages and ambitions, just walk or break the record!

Your reward, as well as a good time, will include seasonal refreshments in the education centre at the end of the run.

We recommend you register for free [here](#) to ensure catering is adequate on the day.

The event is weather dependent and up-to-the-minute guidance is available on the Friends of the University of Dundee Botanic Garden [blog](#).