



Dyslexia Scotland

North East

AGM – Chairs' Report – 22th Feb 2018

Dyslexia Scotland North East branch has continued to support and empower families, professionals and students through organised events and the power of social media. The dedication and diligence of a twelve strong committee has allowed the flexibility, ingenuity and amazing teamwork to cover all aspects of dyslexia and increase the knowledge and understanding of this complex learning difference to a broad spectrum of the general public. Moreover, working in partnership with Aberdeenshire council, a plethora of presentations and workshops has reached over 750 teachers and parents, encouraging and educating in the importance of collaborative working.

The committee has remained steadfast this year and we have welcomed John as a general committee member who supports in every way he can (whenever he is not globe-trotting!) and also Alex as Youth group assistant, whose musical knowledge and ability has proven a great asset to our younger members. At time of writing we are looking forward to meeting two potential new treasurers to support both the branch finances as well as Xdyslex and therefore say goodbye to Gordon who has supported us almost a year after he resigned! Thank you, we are so grateful for all your hard work and we hope to let you go very soon!

A change in routine in the last year has seen less events organised due to the workload and personal commitments of our committee members, however, we have continued to support our community through phone calls, emails and Facebook. Meeting for only 8 times a year, events are now alternated between either a focus on Xdyslex or an Adult event, allowing committee members to be involved in all aspects of the group. We have noticed a drop in numbers due to this change however we are hopeful through improved advertising that numbers will increase again and we hope to draw in some new faces.

The Committee

Every committee member deserves a personal thank you for the time and effort they so willingly give and the original ideas they all bring. A special thank you goes to Susan who has devoted over 11 years to supporting Dyslexia Scotland and continues grow and nurture Xdyslex into a new and exciting venture. Her latest project includes an online magazine, created by and for the younger generation, hoping to reach and support hundreds of other dyslexic youths; characteristically a truly ambitious and innovative idea. Big thanks also go to Shirley who has tirelessly waded through our paperwork and got us back on track as well as regularly acting as my right hand man along with Lorna, Bob and Mandy at many public presentations, supporting me and calming the nerves!

I am grateful for all the dedication and support that everyone has shown.

Of course we are always looking for more volunteers but as we are growing exponentially in our numbers and to keep our standards high we are currently looking for a ew Youth Group Leader to allow Susan to concentrate on other roles, a Media expert, Events organiser and dedicated fundraiser amongst other roles. If you are interested please email chair@dyslexiascotlandnortheast.org.uk

Committee roles

Chair – Sharon Hall

Vice Chair – Mandy Roy

Youth Group Leader – Susan Strachan

Youth Group Assistant – Alex

Treasurer- Gordon Aitken TBR

Event Organiser – Shirley Laing TBR

Fundraiser – Vacant

Branch Secretary – Shirley

Youth group Secretary – Shirley

Facebook and committee member – Bob

Committee member – Mhairi Player

Committee member – Lorna Hawthorn

Committee member – Lynn

Committee member – John

Facebook

Our Facebook page has continued to be a main and influential source of communication and information sharing. Numbers in excess of 2000 are being reached each week offering essential guidance and information, and many use this as a tool for queries. Bob continues to be our main administrator and his dream of reaching 1000 "likes" was reached by Christmas 2017 and the numbers continue to rise. Thank you Bob for your enthusiasm and dedication you put in to making this such a huge success. Please like our Dyslexia Scotland North East Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dyslexia-Scotland-North-East/943672735666416?fref=ts>

Resources

This year we have dedicated some money towards books for adults and children which form our now completed pop up library. Future resources plans include updating resources for the youth group. Please let us know if there is any resources, software, games or books that you would like us to purchase for the library. Please email any ideas or suggestions to: info@dyslexiascotlandnortheast.org.uk

Events/ National events

Thanks go to John, Alex, Mandy and Lorna who have represented us at some of the following:

Cross Party Parliamentary Group for Dyslexia at the Scottish Parliament

Adult Network Meetings Stirling

National Education Conference

Tutor Seminars

Assessor Seminars

Branch Training Weekend

Speakers and Events

The past fourteen months brought a great variety of professional speakers and we thank them all for giving up invaluable time to share their knowledge. Our Open Meetings took on a new format where knowledge and information sharing was the key in a more relaxed and positive setting as well as encouraging parents to get involved with Xdyslex.

The following events took place:

- CALL Scotland
- “My Brilliant Brain”, Laura Hubbard Ed, Psych.
- Sparks – coping with anxiety in children
- Dyscalculia presentation
- Transition to Secondary
- Dyslexia Scotland Roadshow
- Dyslexia awareness week – Cults Academy presentations (Sharon and Shirley)
/Sensationall raising awareness (Susan) /St Margarate’s school raising awareness (Lorna)

Speakers Still to come this year

- “My Brilliant Brain”, Laura Hubbard Ed, Psych. (Workshop for Xdyslex)
- Parent Masterclass – Sharon Hall
- Sparks (Workshop for Xdyslex)



Youth club

The Youth Club continues to be a great success and usually runs simultaneously with the branch meetings. It has been on the go since just before 2008 when Susan started to be involved. We now have over 30 youths (even split of boys & girls) who attend regularly, aged from 8 -17 years, with an additional (20 year old) ex-member who occasionally helps out. At least two of our youths informally have co-existing additional support needs.

We have had 6 new starts over the last year and every month usually sees some kind of new query about the youth club attendance. We have never yet turned a youth away yet but manage our numbers and membership with limiting monthly spaces via a booking system. The move to Westhill and utilisation of SensationALL's facility continues to be successful with the sharing of resources an added bonus.

Due to various logistical issues (bad weather and limited volunteer availability), the group have unfortunately been involved in less activities than previous years, casualties include our summer trip, Halloween & Xmas parties. The group have participated in; map reading, baking & bake sale, Wii games, sugar igloo building challenge, model making and lots of indoor & outdoor games. We had visits from local dyslexic DJ Reborn (aka Peter McLeod), also talks from dyslexic adults Daniel and youth volunteers John & Alex.

Xdyslex participated in the first DS Youth Conference in Glasgow (25th March) – with two Dyslexia Young Ambassadors (Emma & Eilidh) attending & Adam playing a short gig here and at the Unwrapping Dyslexia event Edinburgh (9th November).

After initial magazine discussions back in February, there's been 3 subsequent meetings with 12 teenage youths contributing to the content and format of the magazine. We managed to secure funding for key IT equipment from both Dyslexia Scotland & Cash for Kids. We have been asked to present/launch the magazine at next DS Youth Conference (24th March '18). More dates are planned to get the project launch ready!

We have lost a couple of our regular **volunteers** for the group and we could do with finding a few adults willing to regularly lend an extra pair of hands. We also desperately need a new Youth Leader as Susan's (SensationALL) charity work and commitment to developing the teenage online magazine project are huge obligations in addition to XdysleX. PVG checks would be part of this process and payment in the future might be possible. If anyone is interested in being involved, has any suggestions or queries, contact a committee member or email info@dyslexiascotlandnortheast.org.uk or susan@dyslexiascotlandnortheast.org.uk

Susan Strachan - XdysleX Youth Leader

Dyslexia Scotland team at HQ Stirling

A very personal thank you goes as always to Lena Gillies our Dyslexia Scotland Development Officer. Her support is constant and invaluable and her encouragement very welcome! I would also like to thank Sharon Duncan for her continued support behind the scenes in assisting with the countless questions and queries that we regularly receive.

Local Tutors

Celia Richardson at Dyslexia Scotland has a list of local tutors. If you are a qualified teacher with a relevant background or a dyslexia specialist and are interested in becoming a tutor, please contact Celia Richardson Celia@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Future Plans

- 1. Resources** – we will continue to update our resources, initially concentrating on Xdyslex
- 2. Guest Speakers** – ideas for future guest speakers listed separately
- 3. Parent workshops**
- 4. On line magazine**
- 5. Youth talent show**

Future Workshops and Speakers – suggested list

- Access to Work
- SQA - return
- Steve Chinn - Maths
- Addressing Dyslexia Toolkit - Fran Rinaldi
- Co-existing ASN conditions
- Parent workshops
- Study skills