



Newsletter

Spring 2025



Welcome to the second edition of St Margaret's Children and Family Care Society's newsletter.

Please contact us on:

0141 332 8371

or email info@stmargaretsadoption.org.uk



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Big Adoption Day

In January voluntary adoption agencies across the UK opened their doors to offer potential adoptive parents an opportunity to find out more about the positives of growing their families.

St Margaret's took part and ran very successful information sessions at our office and virtually. We were delighted to have welcomed a number of new prospective adopters from this process, and they have now started their adoption journey with us.

Crib Appeal

The annual crib appeal within our parishes over the Christmas period went exceptionally well and we are gratefully still receiving donations from churches. Everyone at St Margaret's extends our thanks to the priests for their help in organising the collections and also to the congregations for their generosity.

Adoption week

St Margaret's were very proud to take part in a range of events for Adoption Week Scotland in November. We held our own open day and invited prospective adopters to come and hear about our service.

We were also invited and attended The AFKA Conversation Café and more details of this can be found [here](#):

St Margaret's dinner dance at Celtic Park



In November we held our first fundraising dinner dance at Celtic Park. The event was a roaring success, and we were delighted to have raised a whopping £18,000.

Our compere Peter Martin kept the audience entertained and on their toes with his quick-witted humour. The night ended with our auction and thanks to the benevolence of our donors we had some valuable items up for grabs.

We will be making this **an** annual event so look out for details of this year's dance in the coming months ahead.

March, Open Day

We will be opening our doors again to anyone interested in adoption on Wednesday March 5. Our expert staff will be on hand to answer your questions and there will be an opportunity to hear from experienced adopters too.

Lunchtime and evening information sessions, both in person and online, will be available.

To book your session please e-mail info@stmargaretsadoption.org.uk

World Social Work Day

The annual celebration takes place on March 18 and St Margaret's will be using this day to celebrate the services we offer to families.

This year's theme is 'Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Wellbeing', which emphasises the importance of caring and respecting across generations to build strong societies, sustain the environment, and share wisdom for a better future.

St Margaret's will use the occasion to highlight the support we offer to the family networks and relatives of adopted children and will be holding an evening

session for families to come along and hear about our training in this area. More details will be released on our social media.



St Margaret's Playgroup



Headed by, Fiona White, our playgroup is part of our range of post adoptive support services for parents.

Over the past year the group **has** also been out enjoying lots of adventures in the community, including visiting Calderglen Country park, Heads of Ayr Farm,

Blairdrummond Safari Park and taking in the 'Lost Reindeer' show over the festive period.

Fiona says the boys and girls have grown so much and she is looking forward to our group getting even bigger as more families join the service.

She explained how the feedback from parents has been extremely positive and as well as being a lot of fun for the children it also offers them an opportunity to garner extra support from other mums and dads.



Speaking to Fiona, one said: "The kids love our trips to playgroup every week and this year has been another great year with a variety of places to visit as well as the fab sessions in the office. As a parent I love getting the chance to catch up with our friends and watch the kids all getting to know each other & play well together."

Another added: "Playgroup this year has been brilliant, we have been on lots of indoor and outdoor adventures and had so much fun! The best part about playgroup is the support we get from people at the same stage and situation as us, from chatting to other mums and dads and sharing the journey, to always having a listening ear from Fiona."

Staff Profiles

Andy Farr



I am one of the social workers at St Margaret's and have I've worked here for around nine years.

My job includes delivering preparation groups, assessing prospective adopters, family finding and post placement support. I enjoy helping children and parents

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find their families, building relationships with families over a long period and being part of a small team in a focussed area of work.

Outside St Margaret's I enjoy holidays, swimming, concerts and spending time with friends and family.

Liz Wishart



I have been a social worker at St Margaret's since 2023. Before this I worked in Children and Families with the local authority for 18 years

My job includes assessing prospective adopters, family finding and post placement support. I am also involved in delivering training. I really enjoy meeting prospective adopters and supporting them to become parents.

Outside of St Margarets I enjoy sport, including attending the gym, football and walking in the great outdoors. I also enjoy spending time with family and friends socialising and love going on holiday to the sunshine.

Kelly Brown

I am one of the social workers in the team and have been working at St Margaret's since January 2019.

My role involves assessing potential adopters whilst completing PARS assessments, supervising our adopters, family finding and supporting our families through their adoption journey to the post adoption stage.

I feel privileged to do this role and love seeing families come together, it's a really rewarding part of our job. I work part time, as I have two children, so my personal life involves being a chauffeur to various clubs and activities, but I wouldn't have it any other way.

Lynne Anderson

I am one of the social workers at St Margaret's and have worked here since 2012. I worked in an early intervention centre and in a child protection team before moving to St Margaret's.

I have learned lots in that time, particularly around the impact of trauma and the development of attachment. It is a real privilege to be part of a child's journey and one of the most rewarding things is when you can finally see them start to trust, to feel safe and just enjoy being a child.

On a personal basis my biggest achievement is being mum to Grace, with life at the moment revolving around facilitating her social life and looking after our boxer dog who brings just the right amount of craziness to our life!

Sophie O'Brien



I'm a student social worker in my final year placement at St Margaret's.

Since I started in October, I have had opportunities to shadow social workers undertaking assessments with prospective adopters, worked with St Margaret's playgroup and various other tasks within the service. I have been involved with initial enquiry calls and have enjoyed speaking to people who are beginning their journey and learning about their lives and what has brought them to consider adoption.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the team at St Margaret's who give their all in everything they do. Despite being a busy team, they have supported my learning and helped me to grow into a social worker ready to qualify.

In my spare time I enjoy walks with my dog and spending time with my friends and family.

Heather Robertson.



I am one of the social workers here at St. Margaret's and joined the team in August 2023. I work part-time Wednesday to Friday.

My main role within St. Margaret's is working with the "return referrals" which are families and their children who have previously been adopted through St. Margaret's. The main themes that we support adoptive parents with is life story work, teenager behaviours and school concerns.

I also share responsibility for the CONNECT group. This meets every month and supports young people who have been adopted. We run sessions on things such as mindfulness, online safety and enjoy an occasional movie night.

In my spare time I compete competitively in Olympic weightlifting. I also enjoy attending concerts and going on holiday.

Siobhan Doherty



I am one of the social workers at St Margaret's and have worked here since September 2023.

My role involves assessing prospective **adopters**, supporting families through their adoption journey to the post adoption stage and supporting families and young people who return to St Margaret's with challenges.

I am also involved in delivering training to prospective **adopters** and in facilitating the *CONNECT* group, which brings together young people who have been adopted through St Margaret's.

Outside of work I enjoy spending time with family and friends, taking my dog to the beach and exploring new places!

St Margaret's Keeping the Promise

St Margaret's are very proud to be connected to the Promise Scotland and delivering a trauma informed and adoption competent service.

We are working in partnership with them on a range of service improvements alongside our promise development worker and have recently hosted the Infant Community of Practice in our office at Charing Cross.

St Margaret's **is** also a committed member of the Scottish Adoption Task Force and are invested in ensuring our service delivers the best experiences for all children and families so they may grow up feeling loved, safe and respected.

We have also integrated The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) within our daily practice and are developing areas of our service to improve meaningful participation with those with lived experiences in our strategic planning and change work.

St Margaret's **is** also an active member of Stand Up for Siblings, a nation-wide partnership aimed at improving and changing legislation, policy, and practice. We are also working on our own sibling and family connections project.

Our management team **has** taken part in the Scottish Government trauma training programme and one of our goals is also to ensure the services we provide, and our staff and volunteers, are fully trauma informed based around their wellbeing and needs.

St Margaret's are also a learning hub for practice teachers and student social workers and are delighted to have supported both first and final year students over the last year, ensuring that an understanding of The Promise is embedded within their learning.

We have also held a number of staff development and learning events for all those who deliver services for St Margaret's to ensure we are thinking and acting together on delivering the key learning from The Promise.

The Promise recognises that adoption is a lifespan experience. St Margaret's **has** always been dedicated to ensuring that support is available for those **who** have experienced adoption at whatever stage they need this.

Being an adoption competent service, we believe means, having the specific knowledge, skills and values required to meet the complex, unique needs of adopted children and their families.

This is an exciting time for our service as we connect with so many like-minded services locally and nationally to ensure we are sharing learning and practice wisdom.

As a faith-based organisation, we are also very proud to see the alignment of our Catholic values with the work The Promise are undertaking.

St Margaret's will Keep the Promise to children and families and thank those of you who already support us in doing so too.

By Janine Fraser

Obituary



Sadly, St Margaret's lost a valued Adoption and Fostering Panel member in early December 2024. Tony Gillespie died suddenly one morning while attending a part-time language course at university - one of his great loves of continuing to educate himself in his retirement! This devastated Tony's wife, Shirley, his 4 sons and extended family along with all who knew him.

Those of you involved with Tony at St Margaret's would know him as an erudite, compassionate and warm man who was dedicated throughout his life to working for the betterment of children and young people. He brought a wealth of knowledge to St Margaret's Adoption and Fostering panel, for which we are grateful. However, I knew Tony in some of his many other "personas" and was privileged to call him my friend.

Tony had passions for his family; helping children and young people; music; literature; politics; and many other things. He also had a passion for football (he played 5 a side every Saturday morning) and his love of Celtic was an extremely important part of his life. However, being the man he was, one of the last times I was due to catch up with Tony was a week before he died, at the Celtic v Brugge Champions League game at Celtic Park, but he gave his ticket away to one of our other friends because he had a panel to attend that night! Despite it being such an important game, for Tony, attending the Panel that night was the most important and valuable thing he could do that night. As I say, that was the mark of the man.

I could spend many, many words describing Tony, but I think I can sum it up by saying he was one of the kindest, gentlest and most articulate men I have ever met, and he touched the life of everyone he met in a very individual way. St Margaret's Adoption and Fostering Panel has been diminished by losing Tony. I miss him along with our mutual friends; as a friendship group we often talk about Tony and how we miss his contributions on football, world events and some of the endless debates we have. Some people are quiet and unassuming but contribute greatly; just how greatly, we don't realise until they can no longer contribute.

Tony was such a man, and we miss him. God Bless you Tony, and rest in peace.

By Frank Sheeran

Lenten Prayer

Almighty and ever-loving God, you invite us deeper into your world, your people, your Lent.

May this time be one of outward focus, especially on the needs of children; seeking you in those who wish to adopt and foster.

Help us live a Lent focused on freedom, generosity, and encounter; serving these people.

Give us hearts hungry to serve you and those who need what we have to give.

Amen.