

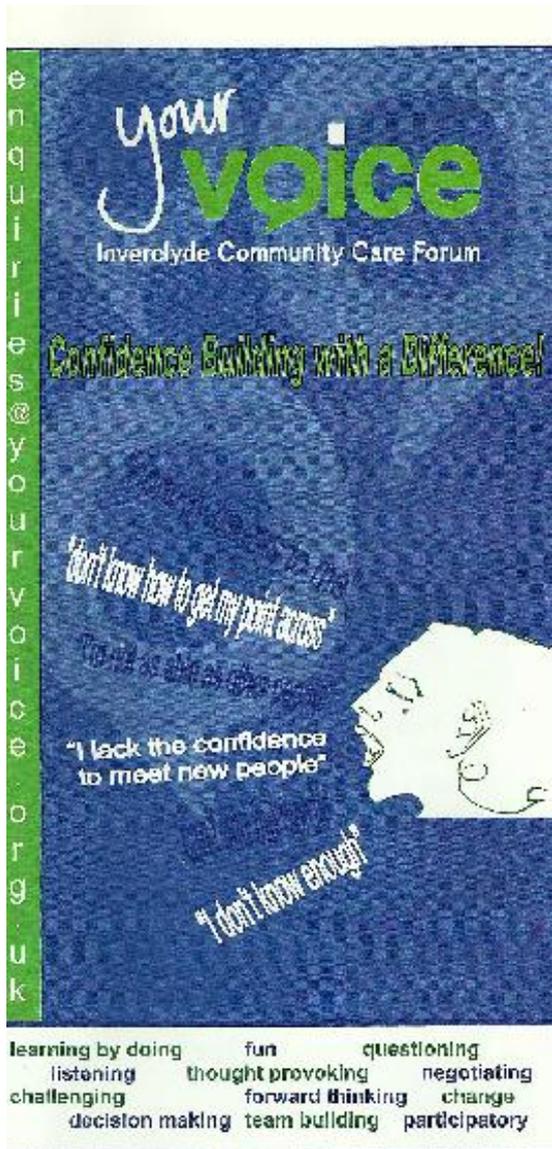
29<sup>th</sup> May 2012

“Your Voice”

Inverclyde Community Care Forum



Buddy Beat were back on the road once more and this time it was a travel down to Greenock to hold a musical workshop for the Your Voice Inverclyde Community Care Forum which is situated in Greenock's Clyde Square.



“Your Voice Inverclyde Community Care Forum (ICCF) is a not-for-profit organisation set up in 1992. At that time its main aim was to bring together all the voluntary / community groups to create a collective voice in relation to community care and enable the voice of service users and carers to be heard in the planning and provision of community care services in Inverclyde.

However over the past 18 years we have grown, evolved and developed the Your Voice Network to ensure that the widest range of local people have the opportunity to be involved in community engagement / consultation processes.

Building capacity and the empowerment of local people to influence and inform the planning, development and provision of local services, with a specific focus on individuals and under-represented groups who face discrimination and social exclusion, is fundamental to our work.” Source- [www.yourvoice.org.uk](http://www.yourvoice.org.uk)

Your Voice hosts many Peer Groups- Amongst them there is a Men's Group, a Bipolar Support Group, a Book Group, a Parkinsons Support Group, a Writer's Group, The Bright Ideas Women's Group and of course a Music Group. Each group offers peer support to people with a general emphasis on mental health & wellbeing.



Clyde Square in  
Greenock

Where it all happened.....



Now, as has often happened with Buddy Beat, things are connected. So bear with me here- in October 2011 Buddy Beat was asked to come down to Greenock to launch the Inverclyde Mental Health Arts & Film Festival and it was a memorable event. That day ended with a drumming workshop that was probably the biggest and best workshop that we have ever held. One lady became fixed in our minds during this- 91 year old Sarah Halbert who took to the drums like the proverbial duck to water! Here is Sarah on the day- on the left beside our Noreen and Anne.



Sarah is one of the members of the Music Group and has taken her drumming energy into that group and was the main protagonist that saw the group purchase four djembe drums and a collection of percussion instruments. The Music Group meets once a month and they recently watched our film "Keep the Beat...Our Journey in Rhythm". After that viewing, Sarah suggested that perhaps Buddy Beat would come along to the Music Group one day. This is where we were approached by Your Voice Development Worker Isobel Kerr. And this is where we came in, and with the Music Group having recently purchased instruments, there was the chance for Buddy Beat to show them a few things to enable them to take their group into the future.

A small, but perfectly formed Buddy Beat, were-

- Jane Bentley
- Allan Borland
- Hazel Borland
- Tom Chalmers
- Frances Nisbet

Half of the Music Group was in attendance, but such is the way of things when the weather is good. They were-

- Sarah
- Margaret
- Mary
- Andy
- Ian
- Phil
- Erin, Development Worker
- Isobel, Development Worker

Jane kicked things off with everyone around the circle introducing themselves. A couple of the Music Group said that they didn't feel musical, something that Hazel and Jane both said they had felt like before they started playing and learning the drums. With no Eileen to do the ABC of drumming, Hazel ably delivered and the group followed her example and tested the different tones on the middle and outside edge of the drums. From there Jane asked Allan to speak about Buddy Beat and he told the group what we are all about and how it benefits us all. Tom added that Buddy Beat now has 25+ members and that if they all get together it's not just busy but very noisy at times!

Starting off with an exploratory jam, we played for a few minutes and it sounded really good. The Music Group seemed to be enjoying themselves. As we coasted along Hazel counted us out in four and then back in again and Jane then gave the signal and we all managed to stop on the same beat and Jane said "See, we sound like a band already!" which put everyone at ease.



*Andy, Margaret and Sarah getting into the groove!*

Allan then suggested that we tried one of Buddy Beat's regular games, "Bop Around." Allan explained the rules and off we went with a single beat passing round the circle. If someone wants to change the direction, then that is signalled by two quick beats. It's a good exercise in listening and concentrating and it can produce a laugh or two, particularly if someone gets trapped between two drummers who keep reversing the direction! We played this for a few moments and it went down well. Allan then added in another level where by rhumbling you can send the beat to anyone in the circle, who then must decide which direction the beat is going to. It sure keeps you on your toes!

Jane then explained how "Copy Cat" works and very quickly rattled off four or five short rhythms which the group lapped up. Jane said that no-one should worry about creating something complex, just something simple and easily repeated. Or to quote the good Dr Bentley "*A beat you can repeat.*" And we took it around the circle to let everyone have a chance to create their own beats and it worked very well.



Allan, Hazel and Mary

For the next exercise, Tom suggested building up the rhythm around the circle and then dropping out one by one to finish. Jane started a beat, and Phil added in, then Tom, then Mary and so on until everyone was playing. The trick here is not to fill up the space with tons of beats, just listen to the music as it develops and then find your own beat or rhythm to add in. What we created sounded excellent and it appeared to have struck a chord with the group. As we dropped out one by one, there were smiles of achievement on their faces and it ended with our Frances bringing matters to a satisfactory close. Jane was clearly pleased with our sound and said that this was another good exercise in listening. Jane added that in a set piece if someone loses their place then they can get flustered, but in this exercise each person is basically repeating their own beat over and over, and that if you do get into trouble, it is no big deal as there are many different beats going on around the circle and you can just take a pause and find your place again. Jane wanted to do it all again and Tom started things off and this time it was a totally different sound as everyone joined in and it wound down with Phil on a neat finish. Isobel seemed to enjoy this and it was decided we would have a third go and she herself kicked us off and once again, we created yet another sound.

### *The Beatmeister*

Frances then had the floor and standing in the centre of the circle, she showed how to “conduct” the music. Frances set us off on a jam and then had us playing soft and then loud, intimating each by raising and lowering her hands. Then Frances took it one stage further and split us into two, instructing one half to play soft while the other got the chance to ramp it up and vice versa. The group seemed to enjoy this exercise.

A conversation about the Music Group people having recently sung in their town hall saw an unplanned singing/drumming session. We battered through three sing-along tunes; the best perhaps “Pack up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag.”



That was quite a bit of drumming, so Jane decided to change the tempo and brought out the Music Group's percussion instruments. Jane asked if they had used them much and Jan had us laughing when he replied "Well we have used them but whether it was a percussion sound or just a noise is open to debate!" Everyone selected either a shaker, or musical frog or alligator. There was a tambourine too and Allan and Tom remained on the drums. Allan explained that by having someone provide a steady beat, it helps the percussion along enabling everyone to keep together. Jane started us off and before long had the women playing only, followed by the chaps, then it was just the shakers & tambourine before the drums got a solo. Then we had the chance to change instruments before setting off once more.

To round things off Jane brought out a set of chimes. Jane explained that if everyone hit the chimes randomly then it was all just sound a bit of a rammy and that the best way to play was for us all to pick a number between one and eight and as Jane counted 1-8 we would hit our chimes once on our selected number, every time it came around. The group mastered this well enough and soon the air was tinkling along. It's a very calming sound, something that was accentuated when Jane produced her little glockenspiel and she and Phil both had a go, and that took the sound to yet another level. Great stuff!



So in about the space of 75 minutes we had a pretty packed programme. Add in a lot of lovely chat and some Greenock banter and the fun of passers-by peering in the window wondering where all the music was coming from and you get a very good workshop. It was good fun for Buddy Beat to take part and the Music Group enjoyed themselves. Both Margaret and Mary said that it had been “Great”. Phil said that it had been very enjoyable. Sarah used the word “marvellous”, which was well, quite marvellous, and she added that she had read a stress article recently where a doctor said that the best way to beat stress is to punch a cushion, but Sarah said that this was wrong for the best way to de-stress was to play the drums! We couldn’t have said it better ourselves.

The Music Group have a plan to start off their own drumming group/ workshops in the Inverclyde area, so we hope that they not only enjoyed themselves but that they will also take some of the tips and exercises/games forward. Buddy Beat will return to the same venue on June 20<sup>th</sup> to hold a workshop as part of Scottish National Depression Week.



*Frances told Jane that “Wild horses couldn’t have stopped me coming along today!”*

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