

# Freespace Board Members 2011



Freespace is governed by a voluntary Board of Directors. The Directors explain why they joined the Freespace Board and what it means to them.

## **Katrina Sweeney**

I was a tenant at St Leonards back in the beginning (21 years ago!) for about 6 or 7 years. I was on the Board whilst at St Leonards and was asked by Jane Ballantine to come back as I had experience of how it worked. I have always had great respect for what Freespace does and stands for and believe it is a valuable option for disabled people. I work at Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living as an Independent Living Officer, and feel that some of what I learn through my work has relevance to the work of Freespace. I like to see that it is still here after all these



years and to be involved in keeping it here and watch it develop over the years. I feel that as I have an understanding of how it works from my own personal experience and that I can help towards maintaining its good name.

I would like to see it continue to develop the services it provides whilst keeping hold of its unique approaches, i.e. being both user led and including users in all aspects of its decision making and running. I am conscious that as I chose to move away from Freespace support, this could be seen as me not enjoying or liking it but I still firmly believe that it is a valuable service which supports people in their everyday life, and/or prepares folks to move on, if that's what they want to do. I aim to be on the Board for the foreseeable future and to give my input when it's appropriate when I have the time and energy to do so.

## Ian Brookes - Co Convenor

I became a Board member after Jane Ballantine came along looking for a volunteer and I decided it was about time I did something. (1999). This will be my eighth year as Co Convenor. I like getting my opinions across and as a Board member I am in the best position to do that. As Co Convenor, I chair meetings, make sure we stick to the agenda and stick to the times. I am also involved in the Finance Sub Committee and the Tenant Participation Group. My passion is to support the company to do what it needs to do to meet its aims. I have no plans to leave the Board for the time being.



My interests are action and thriller movies, like the Bourne Identity. I like reading history and watching TV about history, in particular Scottish history. I like reading international newspapers on the internet (like the Jerusalem Post).

## Sandra Mackenzie

My friend Ian Brookes asked me if I would be interested in being on the Board. I've known of Freespace since it started and was impressed by their originating ethos and service. I have 21 years experience of working in Social Work and Social Care within the disability field. I thought that social care is going through interesting and challenging times and I wanted to see if I could be involved and help in any way to assist Freespace to continue as an ethical and good provider. I'm a Board member with no office bearing responsibilities. I'd like to contribute my knowledge, experience and skills when they might be useful to the Board and the organization. I'm passionate about freedom of opportunity and it's this that motivates me as a Freespace Board member.



My main personal interests are the outdoors and hill walking, the environment, music and spending time with friends.



## Willie Grieve

I became involved in Freespace's Board through someone who's done work with Freespace and thought I might be interested in joining the Board. My background is in psychology, management and leadership and I've worked in the voluntary sector for a long time – my last full-time job was as Chief Executive of Aberlour Child Care Trust. I admire the principles behind Freespace;

trying to give people as much control over their lives as possible, rather than just delivering a service. I've got to know Freespace a lot better by carrying out a survey about staff engagement, which has given me the chance to talk to a lot of staff about current issues. I respect the dedication amongst staff, and the way Freespace has adapted to a very difficult and challenging environment in terms of funding. As a Board member, I'm always happy to be approached, and to listen. I like Freespace and what it stands for.

## Alistair Barton - Co Convenor

I first got involved with Freespace carrying out work on policies and procedures for the former director, Jane Ballantine and was invited to join the Board. I believe in the aims, objectives and overall philosophy of Freespace and being on the Board allows me to meet others who share the same aims and most importantly, to share in making decisions with service users who are also on the Board. I bring experience in chairing and leading meetings plus experience in writing policies, procedures and business plans.



I help make sure Board members have all the information and training they need to make good decisions and to contribute to helping Board members function effectively together. I believe in justice for all, in a fair society that provides for and supports those with disadvantages – to give them the same opportunities to live as independently as they can, as everyone else has. In the future I would like to see a stable, adequate, regular service of funding to meet all needs and allow Freespace to take on more service users and to support them also. Outside Freespace my interests/hobbies are music, walking and my family – especially my 4 grandsons.



## Elaine Boyd

I have been a board member of Freespace twice. The first time I was a newbie. Jane Ballantine asked me and I think I was on the board for 3—4 years. And now I'm back!

I joined the board again because Freespace has given me a lot of support in the past 15 years and I wanted to put the skills I have back into it. I like knowing what's happening and getting constant updates. I don't have a particular role yet.

I'm passionate about animals, working at Edinburgh zoo, art and speedway. I like

to live life to the full and to take every opportunity that it throws at you.

I recently completed the HEC in person centered approaches and Freespace supported me to do this. I graduated in July 2011. Staff at Roseburn and St Leonards were very supportive, open and honest when I was doing my workplace assignments. I gained knowledge that everyone is different and has a life and a point of view.

I would like to see Freespace free from financial worries in the future. And to take it down under. Freespace in Australia! We could do swaps in the summer and winter.

In relation to the Board I would like to see Freespace keeping the philosophy that got me into it and for everyone else. I will take it as it comes.

## Susan Napier

After offering to help, I became a Board member through Jane Ballantine. I like Freespace as it seems to be unique in providing services which people want so they can control their own lives. I work for Dunedin Canmore, which I enjoy, building houses and providing services. I am a chartered surveyor and have 31 years experience in housing.

I would like to see Freespace expand services to more people and to be more financially stable and less dependant on grants. I will continue to work and support the Freespace Board and staff and I really hope we can continue the success of Freespace.



# Patrick Layden

I came into contact with Freespace because our son's social worker told us that they had a vacancy at the Western Harbour project, and wondered if we would be interested. We got in touch, and were very impressed by the way they approached the whole business, which was very traumatic for us.

In the course of the many discussions we had with Freespace people, I (foolishly) let slip that I was a lawyer, and Rebecca indicated that they could do with some legal expertise on the Board.

I am on the Board because it enables me to contribute something to the organization which supports my son in as independent a way of life as will be possible for him. I like it because it seems to me to be an efficient, forward-looking organization, ready to accept and adopt change as required, but with continuing firm values. I try to contribute positively on the basis of my previous experience of other charitable organizations.



I am a lawyer, so there is not much that I am passionate about, but I do feel strongly about the importance of helping people with disabilities to live as normal a life as possible. I have been a member of a number of different charities in the past. Professionally, I am a public lawyer, with a fair knowledge of how Government works, both here and in London. I would like Freespace to continue to deliver the services it does for as many people as possible, taking account of the changing economic circumstances.

I want to continue to make a contribution to the future planning and present administration of the charity, so that it continues to be able to look after the people who live in its various projects.

## Bryan Rankin—Co Treasurer

I was contacted by the Institute of Chartered Accountants and asked if I wanted to get involved with Freespace. I met with Rebecca and Alistair and was fascinated by the fact Freespace was founded and 50% run by its client group. I agreed to join Board as it seemed to be a very worthwhile organization and I felt I could contribute. With 36 years of experience of charities, I bring experience of financial management, corporate governance, accountancy and legal matters. I have had an interest in charities and the way they are run since the birth of my Down syndrome son.

I am co treasurer whose job it is to keep an eye on the finances and ensure we budget properly and husband our finances to the best advantage. I would like to see greater financial stability in future years. The current goal is to try to get an increase in the hourly rate to ensure we at least break even and stop the erosion of funds and to encourage others from the client group to join the Board and to contribute to the running and development of Freespace.

I enjoy cooking, eating and wine, having taken classes to learn more. I enjoy holidays during the year but have not managed skiing this year.



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Registered Scottish Charity No: SC010825