



Festive Friends



2019



1473
PARTICIPANTS
+41%

36
EVENTS

OLDEST
PARTICIPANT
99

6 CLUBS
OPEN ON
CHRISTMAS DAY
+50%

It can be a magical time of year for some...

...for others it can be the opposite.

With few friends or family, Christmas can be the loneliest time of the year.

Festive Friends is a project created by the SPFL Trust to engage socially isolated people at Christmas and bring them together.

The SPFL Trust works with clubs to help them put on a very special day for members of their community which have been identified as being in need of some community support and festive cheer.

Each guest receives transport on behalf of the clubs, a traditional Christmas dinner

with turkey and all the trimmings, entertainment, wonderful Christmas gifts and most importantly great company.

All the Festive Friends events receive funding from the SPFL to put on their events. 36 Festive Friends took place in 2019, with a record six clubs opening their doors on Christmas day.

For the first time SPFL Trust also hosted their own event at Hampden Park in partnership with Sodexo Group.



Who are the SPFL Trust?

Trusted to support communities across Scotland.

The SPFL Trust is an independent, registered charity that works in partnership with all 42 SPFL clubs to develop community activities across Scotland.

Through the power of football we aim to make a difference, empowering our clubs to create opportunities at the heart of our communities that bring people together and change lives for the better.

How does Festive Friends work?



Identify

Clubs identify vulnerable or isolated groups, through existing programmes or partnerships.



Accessibility

Transport is organised for the participants to attend and return from the event.



Lunch

A full Christmas lunch is served for everyone.



Fun

Fun games and gifts are put on for all guests.



Listen

Staff take the time to listen to guests and talk with them.



AIRDRIE FC



Joe Clark, 62, is retired and now living in Chapellhall, Airdrie. Joe has been going to watch the Diamonds, starting at old Broomfield, since he was a young man.

He worked at a local hotel, but in recent years has had regular spells in hospital with ongoing health problems and he has recently moved to a care facility in nearby Laurel Gardens.

Having worked as a barman Joe was always used to regular chats with the locals, having good laughs with friends and engaging with the local community. The Festive Friends programme has given Joe the opportunity to get out and reminisce with old and new friends.

Smiling, Joe said: "The Festive Friends day was a Godsend to us, a chance to get out to a fantastic setting with an action packed few hours socialising with new faces, along with superb meal.



“ The club went that extra mile, meeting some of the older players and directors was a trip down memory lane. Everyone in our group loved it and hope we can do something similar again. ”

Joe Clark



ARBROATH FC

Visiting Gayfield takes Peggy Kyle back to her childhood.

The 82-year-old talks fondly of her local team at the Festive Friends lunch in Arbroath.

“We used to come down and help sell the programmes every match day and I think I can recall them costing roughly three old pennies. We used to love the busyness and excitement! Everyone loved their local team.”

Peggy and her two friends use the day to reconnect with the local community and get time out to socialise. The club have become a special part of Peggys' family, with her son now a volunteer and her grandson also a regular on matchday. Three generations of Kyle's supporting the Lichties.



“It shows how much we all love the club and today's event gives me a chance, even at my age, to come along, reminisce and enjoy this wee club that I love.”

Peggy Kyle

INVERNESS CALEDONIAN THISTLE FC

Walter Grant is an Inverness man, born and raised. At 72 years-old he has travelled the world but always ended up back in the Highlands. Walter worked in sales and was talking up his products to various different people across the globe on a daily basis.

Walter said: “I couldn't believe I was getting the chance to see the world and all through work, I loved chatting to people, it was great”

He has attended our Festive Friends with Caley since it started, a life-long fan of the club. Three years ago, Walter was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and he has struggled to interact in discussion in the same way as he used to, Walter added, “I know I've got Alzheimer's. It's something I have to live with, some days are tough and I don't like getting out and about because I've lost a bit of confidence but it is special being able to just chat football with friends.”



“Festive Friends is good because I can come to somewhere, I know well, chat with old friends from the club and surrounding area and get a nice bite to eat too.”

Walter Grant



December 2019

ABERDEEN FC

“ I loved getting to meet all the kids, it was lovely to see how genuinely interested they were in learning about all of us and even about football. I just loved being able to speak to different people, it can get so lonely at this time of year. The meal was superb, and the staff were really attentive. It was a lovely day. ”

HIBERNIAN FC

“ I know most of the guests from this afternoon and it was really good to see some familiar faces again. I am glad we had the chance to see Darren, Scott and John as well. It's nice that as a supporter we can meet the new staff and a cup final winning player. Everyone I spoke to thoroughly enjoyed themselves so well done - Keep up the good work on behalf of our club. ”

ELGIN CITY FC

“ I had a fantastic time down at the city club for the Festive Friends day. I think it's great that they support such an event. It can be a lonely time of year for so many people, giving them the chance to swap stories and spend time with other people is exactly what Christmas is about. I spoke to a few people I haven't seen since I retired and one who I hadn't seen for years. ”

QUEEN OF THE SOUTH FC

“ We were brought together right away for 'pass the parcel', socially it was great. For me, the best bits were the surprises! Terry the magician had us spellbound with his range of card and magic tricks and lastly, we all received a lovely Christmas plant to take home. Thank you SPFL and QP. ”



2nd

5th

10th

11th

13th

16th

17th

18th

19th

20th

21st

25th

27th



Fundraising Support in 2019

Over 2019, the SPFL Trust continued to raise funds with Co-op Causes for Festive Friends. If you are a Co-op member, you can select the SPFL Trust as your chosen charity, too, and 1% of what you spend on Co-op branded items will go towards helping us fund Festive Friends.



We also took part in Kilt Walk where we raised **£2065.20**, including a 40% top up from Sir Tom Farmer's foundation and an additional **£500** donation from SGN.

And finally, we had a fantastic group of volunteers that helped with Bucket Collections at both Betfred Cup Semi Finals. Raising a total of **£3585.28**.

Additional funding was provided by the SPFL in the form of a discretionary donation.

Join us for
KiltWalk 2020



Christmas 2020

Could you help?

With the continued support from clubs and a large increase in Festive Friends guests, our movement to support socially isolated elderly people at Christmas will continue.

If you believe your organisation could support our efforts, then please get in touch with the SPFL Trust via fonat@spfltrust.org.uk

This year's Festive Friends featured in BBC Sportsound, Sky Sports, STV News, The Sun, The Press and Journal.





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