

BUCKHAVEN

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

- Buckhynd Bakers gave a demonstration at Bowhouse Food Weekend on bread making. The group also attended the Corra Parliamentary reception and provided bread and scones, as well as hosting Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary, for a visit to Buckhaven.
- Buckhind Players formed in 2019, they hosted a fundraising showcase event, and went on to put on the first pantomime in Buckhaven for 15 years, selling a phenomenal 870 tickets over 3 nights. The group have been supported by Corra Foundation financially, and also developmentally to move on to the next phase of their aspirations.
- Buckhaven Baptist Church successfully applied for a £67,000 grant to upgrade the kitchen and toilets. This will provide extensive new opportunities for training and skills development in the community and enhance the current provision on offer through the weekly community café.
- Buckhaven Primary School successfully applied for funding to; develop a secure poultry housing area in the school playground, bring hens to the school, set up a parent led group to look after the hens, and start new gardening/outdoor education learning opportunities.
- The cooperative 'It's Your Choice' have been getting support from 'Menu for Change'.
- Buckhaven Brass Beginnings (junior section) were financed through an Idea into Action, to widen participation amongst the local community. They ran a recruitment programme in the local primary schools over the summer, resulting in 8 new members and a concert in the community.
- CLIMB Community Led Improvements in Methil and Buckhaven, ran a Participatory Budgeting process .

BUCKHAVEN BAPTIST CHURCH BUILDING RENOVATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

In 2019, the Buckhynd Bakery, in partnership with the Church, hosted a Big Lunch in the church hall which was attended by over 60 people (the first such event in Buckhaven) and this was followed in September by a Macmillan Fundraising Coffee Morning which again was very well supported by the community and raised over £280.

For the past 2 years the Church has been planning and working towards upgrading the existing kitchen and toilet facilities. The kitchen renovations will also enable more community groups and partners to deliver and provide essential training and skills-based development opportunities. The hall, adjoining the kitchen, is a spacious area suitable for use by groups and individuals, so when the kitchen is upgraded further use of this space is envisaged. A small fundraising sub committee was formed from the Church leadership team, supported by Corra, and in the autumn of 2019 sufficient capacity had been developed to submit 2 funding applications. Both were successful, and £67,000 was secured for the renovation, which is due to start in March 2020 and be completed 8 weeks later.

This project has been very well supported so far by the wider Buckhaven community. The Church sits geographically at the heart of Buckhaven, next door to the school and nursery and on a bus route so it is accessible to people. The community café, which has seen increasing attendance throughout 2019, has built up a reputation of being a friendly welcoming place offering nutritious hot food and drinks, on a donation basis. A number of different agencies attend the café regularly and are therefore able to offer on the spot advice and support to café users when required.



BUCKHAVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND GROUP

Working alongside the Buckhaven Parent Teacher Council (PTC) for the past two years has resulted in a strong working relationship with this brilliant group. Some of the mums who are very active on the PTC, having spoken to other school parents and children, identified that they would like to improve the playground experience for the children. Funding was secured from Coalfields Regeneration Trust and the local Participatory Budgeting (CLIMB) project to convert the existing and unused bike sheds into suitable secure poultry housing. Work was completed to upgrade the existing wooden planters, and four hens were donated by local businesses in April of 2019.

A group of volunteer parents and children took responsibility for the care and upkeep of the hens and the eggs were offered in return for a donation in the playground to other families at the end of the school day. An enthusiastic group of children and parents joined to renovate the planters and sow vegetables. Unfortunately, the vegetables were vandalised during the summer holidays, and the group were understandably very upset.

However, this has not put them off their ambition to have a successful playground growing space which can be used by the wider school community, and the group are now in the process of raising funds to secure the space with further fencing, gates and wire which will prevent any further vandalism.



BUCKHIND PLAYERS – Written by Rachel Morrison

Buckhind Players are a community drama ensemble based in the centre of Buckhaven, Fife, currently working out of Buckhaven Community Centre. The Buckhind Players were formed as an offering to the community to fulfil the need for theatrical opportunities within the Levenmouth area. The groups goal is to be accessible to all, it is a group for anyone who has an interest in theatre, regardless of experience, to come together to create joy, not only for themselves but for the wider community. The group offers a space where the participants can join in and forget about the big stresses of the world but also individual stresses; such as school, illnesses, work and potentially home life, to create theatre and have somewhere to call theirs.

The group started in early 2019 and met as a full company in April of 2019. Since then the group has successfully engaged more than eleven members who joined to be on the stage, and more than five who joined to work behind the scenes or to support the groups day to day running. The Players were successful in producing and performing a cabaret night “A night at the Movies” to raise funds towards their big production of Aladdin in December 2019, a family favourite adventure from Buckhind to old Peking!” Further funding of £2000 was secured through an Idea into Action working alongside the Corra Foundation.

The Players were determined to create a high-quality production that people would remember for the visuals as well as the talent. Knowing the area and the culture of the area, it was important we gave the audience something they felt had value as this would be the first time that many would have seen a pantomime and it would be counted as a treat or part of their Christmas. With the money raised the Players were able to construct and design the set, hire equipment, create and fix costumes, and pay for props, front of house and of course, marketing.

The Buckhind Players, with massive success, went on to create and perform the first pantomime in Buckhaven in over fifteen years, to huge acclaim, positive feedback and going on to create a joyful, positive, family friendly experience for over 800 people.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TOGETHER?

The key learning this year has been the importance of supporting bold and brave community led initiatives. The Buckhind Players are a perfect example of this but there are also others. The Buckhaven PTC have been ambitious in what they set out to achieve with the playground. Through their hard work, ability to draw in the community to work alongside them, and determination to offer their community something better, they have achieved some of their goals and will continue to build on their success.

Corra can support community initiatives by taking on some of the financial risk so that groups can try, fail, and learn, without facing negative consequences to individuals’ finances, stress levels, or mental health that can drain the motivation for action. This opportunity to fail and learn, is a key part of supporting community members, groups and organisations, to increase their resilience when responding to the challenges and barriers which they face. Another key component, apart from the financial, is supporting strong relationships to be brokered and strengthened. These two components of support, working alongside communities, ultimately leads to stronger community led initiatives, and wider networks to draw upon.

Groups and organisations are experiencing challenges in applying for funding and feel they are being treated unfairly by funders. Programmes which are set up with external partners, sometimes lack the essential community development work at the outset. When support from partners is phased out this can result in groups lacking sufficient capacity to continue. There is a fine line between too much support, which leads to dependence, and not enough support which leads to groups struggling to continue.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Partnership working that has been increased and strengthened this year has laid the foundations for future plans in a number of different areas. The Buckhynd Bakers have established numerous connections now in the community and are in the early stages of a collaboration with medical students from St Andrews University who are coming to the bakery in order to learn skills from the bakers and build relationships with them. This is of mutual benefit as it will build capacity and confidence in the bakers to move the bakery on and be able to teach new participants the skills which they themselves have acquired over the past year. There is also a focus on catering for events, again building on what we have already done on a number of occasions over the past year. Further partnership events are planned with CLD, through Easter holiday activities focused on the bakery, and repeating some of the fundraising events from last year.

The Buckhind Players have plans to offer young people in the community youth theatre and to stage another community led pantomime at Christmas. The project to support people with mental health issues through creative writing, which has been funded by CF Buckhaven is set to continue with additional funding from another partner, and the group will showcase their work at a public performance taking place in Lochgelly Arts Centre during Mental Health Awareness Week in March 2020.

These are just a couple of examples of many activities which are taking place across Buckhaven by drawing on connections made, both new and old, and working alongside the community to support their determination to bring about a brighter, happier place with new opportunities for them to enjoy.



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A YEAR IN NUMBERS



5 Ideas into
Action



5 7 new
people
reached



37 people
attending
activities per
week



Average of 12
Engagements
on Facebook
per week

PEOPLE IN PLACE - MOVING FORWARDS

People in Place is currently working alongside nine communities in Scotland, supporting local people to connect, collaborate on ideas, and take action to create positive change.

The local activity and learning from Buckhaven helps shape the future plans of the community and the wider programme. So far, some common themes have emerged across the programme including the importance of Participation, Space, Voice, Investment, and Learning & Development.

However, due to the unique conditions in each place, the work is at a different stage in each community. In some places the focus is on listening, building trust, relationships and participation. In others, communities are using increased participation and voice as a platform to engage with local decision making structures.

Looking ahead, Corra hopes to support communities to connect with each other and to use their voice and power to influence wider system change.



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