

CARBRAIN

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

The arrival of the national lockdown at the end of March 2020 saw the mobilisation of the local Carbrain community which was incredibly positive. They proved to be very agile and flexible in setting up services to meet the needs of their community. For example, Carbrain Community Council's food initiative and the distribution of clothing and furniture from their swap shop to people in need, was a real testament to the strength, character and resilience of the local community. Partnership working and support from local organisations such as Cumbernauld Action for Care of the Elderly (CACE), Cumbernauld Resilience and Cumbernauld Coronavirus Group meant that hot meals and food parcels could be delivered regularly to those most in need throughout the year.

Shift the Power - Comic Relief Carbrain is a community-led grantmaking project that aims to put the power to decide where funding should be targeted, directly into the hands of a community. It is a way to shift power from grant-making organisations to people and communities who will benefit from the funding. [Listen to this podcast](#), to hear members of Carbrain Community Council speak about their experience.

The pandemic also changed the way we relate and communicate with others. Corra supported digital inclusion, for example funding a Zoom line for Greenrigg and Millcroft flats Residents Association to enable residents to raise ongoing issues of concern with the local council and others. On an individual level we supported the [TedX Cumbernauld Women](#) on-line event this year organised by local Carbrain resident Maureen Hascoet. The event hosted fearless speakers who presented powerful talks on domestic and sexual violence, bulimia, overcoming negative self talk and lifting the stigma around mental health challenges. They also addressed representation with growing up with a difference in Glasgow, how it's never too late to start living the life you've always dreamt about - delivered by a very feisty 78 year old speaker from Carbrain and Hillcrest!

Food Initiative

The current lockdown may have disrupted daily life, but it did not stop communities mobilising and coming together in times of need. In response to the coronavirus crisis, Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council launched a community food initiative to support local people at risk of food insecurity during the pandemic. With funding from the Scottish Government's Supporting Communities Fund, the initiative was delivering over 300 homemade meals per week to people within and out with Carbrain.

To meet the increasing need, the Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council were working collaboratively with grassroots organisations and local partners including, CACE, Cumbernauld Resilience, Cumbernauld Coronavirus Group, Sanctuary Housing, Tesco, and Food Share which provided surplus food from its local supermarkets. Referrals were also made by a range of partners including SAMH, Central Health Clinic and Cumbernauld Poverty Action. The Craighalbert Centre kindly gave access to their school kitchen to allow meals to be prepared in a safe and clean environment. The work was also supported by local volunteers rallying together to deliver food packages and hot food, shop for their neighbours and collect prescriptions.

"I like to think we are not just providing food, but a link to many other services that are out there at this time to enable people to feel safe in their own homes. It's about maintaining a sense of togetherness, and letting people know they are not alone." Frances Park, Chef for Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council. At the heart of this, is compassion. Food is prepared for vulnerable people and families, taking into consideration their circumstances and their health and dietary requirements.

Shift the Power

The community in Carbrain formed a steering group made up of local people and key organisations. They designed a funding process that was more accessible involving a short application form and easier process as well as supporting individuals and unconstituted groups, who had ideas that would benefit Carbrain, to access funding. Local people designing the grant making process and deciding which groups and activities they wanted to fund, has shifted the power back into the hands of the Carbrain community.

Shift the Power Comic Relief community led grant making meant that local people directed £20k funding according to their local priorities. The application, assessment and priorities were produced by the group leading to the submission of 15 applications totalling £37,478 which were reviewed by a panel of local partners and Councillors. The process was straightforward, with the application form easy to complete and jargon free, and supported the steering group's aspirations to make the funding as accessible to as many people as possible. In addition to this, Comic Relief supported the needs that were raised by local people regarding the issue of unconstituted groups and individuals' access to funding. It was agreed that individuals and unconstituted groups could apply for up to £750 in funding with safeguarding and capacity building training being offered to support them going forward.

The learning through the community-led grant making programme of Comic Relief Shift the Power Carbrain has also shown that local communities engage positively when they are able to direct grant making to meet their needs at a grass roots level. Unfortunately, the onset of the pandemic lockdowns has understandably hampered the rollout of the successful projects in Carbrain.



The Swap Shop

The Swap Shop was an idea that was developed from the Women's Health and Wellbeing Group that ran regularly in the community room in Carbrain Primary School. Items like clothing, furniture, DVD's and books were traded or affordably sold according to need. The lack of community space again has hindered the development of this project as has lockdown, however interest from local groups, partners and funding has given impetus to this idea.

We will be looking to secure a town centre premises for the Swap Shop where the community are looking to expand their activities to include upcycling workshops, cookery and art and craft classes, health and wellbeing sessions as well using it for meeting space for local groups to access. Volunteers, support and enthusiasm has come from our Women's Group, local groups and Carbrain Community Council who are looking forward to progressing this initiative once restrictions are lifted.

What have we learned together?

During the pandemic people more readily came together for mutual and community support, barriers were overcome more easily as a common goal was to meet the needs of vulnerable local people. People in Carbrain are resourceful, energetic and have addressed the challenges of the pandemic by coming together and developing partnerships to ensure that members of the community were provided with food packs and hot meals as well as clothes and access to support services. We found that neighbours and local people connected more and informal and formal groups were organised, like the Coronavirus group and Cumbernauld Resilience, which alongside Carbrain Community Council supported one another with volunteers and premises. In addition, partnership with CACE meant that there were drivers and minibuses supporting the delivery of food parcels and hot food throughout the Cumbernauld area.

As there are no community centres in Carbrain, space is a central issue for the community and has significantly impacted on social isolation, loneliness and mental ill-health within our area. This has continued to be a problem during the pandemic as it has restricted activity and the setting up of groups; for example, the food initiative had to be based outwith Carbrain, and Comic Relief funded projects were affected by the lack of affordable space.

The focus will continue to be the development of community assets in Carbrain. The Free Church and the Red Cross building have the potential to support community aspirations for a hub in the longer term as well as, for example, a community breakfast club in the short term. Hopefully, this will also help to break down some of the geographical barriers in Carbrain by encouraging people from all over Carbrain to participate. In addition to this, members of the community have been looking at the possibility of taking over a shop unit in the town centre in partnership with other groups during the recovery phase which will include a swap shop, cooking workshops and computer classes to support community aspirations going forward.

What happens next?

Corra will be looking to support the successful implementation of the projects funded by Shift the Power Comic Relief Carbrain which have been delayed due to the pandemic restrictions throughout the year.

These projects support the aspirations and needs identified by the local community, and we will develop capacity building and training to enable their development and success going forward. Community spaces will also be a focus in Carbrain with the aspiration of creating a community hub which is accessible and open for diverse groups to come together and flourish.



The Community Council are hoping to establish a presence in the town centre and take on the management of a shop unit, which will deliver services and support for the local community, through partnerships with local organisations. Income generated will be ploughed back into the enterprise to continue supporting the local community.

Services such as the food initiative have ensured that the elderly, families and young children had healthy cooked meals during the pandemic. There will be further support for this, with services such as online cooking classes, which will give families the skills to feed themselves well and cheaply.

There are aspirations to offer group support to give people a place to 'come along' and have a chat with others in similar situations, which is why the town centre is so important as it will create a space to undertake workshops and classes where residents can learn digitally as well as on-site when restrictions are lifted.

Future plans also include the continuation of supporting individual projects going forward, such as a film school, local gardening projects, supporting parent councils and community cafes in Carbrain.



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People in Place - moving forwards

People in Place continue to work 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 each community help shape plans for the place, the wider programme and policy.

Coronavirus has brought additional challenges to communities and amplified existing inequalities. Across each community the themes of participation, voice and space continue to be evident. Similar challenges were observed across the communities because of coronavirus, including food insecurity, digital access, and financial concerns.

Within each community, individuals, groups, and organisations responded quickly, coordinating support to those that required it, through local knowledge, connections, and access to resources. The pandemic has evidenced the importance and value of communities coming together, having a say in decisions and control over resources, and opened new relationships with local government. Community Co-ordinators were able to support local responses by helping to connect community members together with groups and partner organisations through the relationships established prior to the pandemic. Adaptability in approach was also key as well as providing support with accessing available funding.

Corra will continue to support communities to connect, share learning, and use their voice to influence systems and processes. This will require creative approaches that bring communities and partners together in spaces, whether physical or digital, without barriers to participation so that everyone, including those furthest from power, can contribute towards building forward better.

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