

CASTLEHILL

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

St Michaels Primary school

Encouraging young people to become active members of their community by sharing their learning with family and friends.

Dumbarton West community events group

Planned and delivered three family events in the community, encouraging family activities at a low cost. Partnered with the Phoenix centre to provide free lunches for the family away day, and actively collected donations from local businesses.

Cooking on a budget, partnership with the West Dunbartonshire Foodshare

Preparing and cooking food. Sharing new ways to cook on a budget and bringing people together.

Walking group

The group continues to encourage exercise whilst offering a safe place to discuss issues that people face in the community. This tackles social isolation within families.

Partnership with the Phoenix Centre

The community co-ordinator is supporting advertisement and engagement with the centre, working alongside colleagues who are supporting the community to develop groups and events.

DUMBARTON WEST COMMUNITY EVENTS GROUP

The Group have taken on a natural leadership role, working together and supporting each other to take on a more proactive role in planning and delivering events in the community. This year the community co-ordinator has taken a step back and has been there for support 'just in case'.

This has boosted the confidence of the group and they have really grown over the past year with the delivery of three community events. Two 'Family Night' events held in the local community had around 280 people attending overall, and one event took 50 community members on a visit to Heads of Ayr Farm Park. This led the group to look at becoming constituted so that they can apply for funding to do more events/trips for the community at a low cost.

WOMEN'S GROUP

The Women's Group was identified as a need by the community, and the object of the group was to bring local women together in a safe space, so they can talk, learn and have space to grow as individuals and not in typical female roles. The group ran different activities each week but due to childcare and other commitments it sometimes meant the group could not fully reach their desired outcomes and came to a natural end.

A YEAR IN NUMBERS



2 Ideas into
Action



1,065 new
people
reached



30 people
attending
activities per
week



Average of 86
Engagements
on Facebook
per week

NEW PITCHES AND A CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH

Working alongside West Dunbartonshire delivery group, two areas in Castlehill were identified to build new multi-use games pitches. Funding from West Dunbartonshire Council supported brought these back to life. The opening of the pitches was celebrated with an open day. People from across Castlehill came together, as well as various agencies having stalls, and the pitches are now extremely well used.

After becoming more aware of the struggles for families and especially the impact of food poverty in the area, a local community member came up with the idea of a charity football match at the new multi-use park in Castlehill to raise money and donations for the West Dunbartonshire Foodshare.

Corra foundation supported with funding for the day, and was able to offer advice, support with the event application and provide funding to pay for public liability insurance to ensure the day went ahead. The day the raised over £1000 and over 30 bags worth of food donations.

ST MICHAEL'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Two community projects were designed by the Primary 7 classes in St Michaels Primary School. The aim of the projects was for the young people to look at their community and come up with ways to share what they see and how this can be shared to the wider community. The two classes designed projects to share their learning of the community and shared this with friends and family.



CLARE - GETTING INVOLVED IN CASTLEHILL

Clare came through the walking group and is now on the Dumbarton West events group, building relationships and connections. The following is a short conversation with Clare and her thoughts.

How do you feel the community has changed in the past year?

From the work we do and events we run there seems to be a baseline of camaraderie within the community. People speak about forthcoming events with us and each other in the school playground or when you bump into people on the street. Before the work of the group started, this may not always have happened. You would've maybe said hello or waved but that would be as far as it got. My daughter talks about new friends that she's made as a result of attending and enjoying events together. We're more connected. We're also more joined up and in touch with other organisations within the community and liaise more with workers from the church hall where we hold the events. I think they see us in a different way. We are not just a mum or a parishioner, we are part of the events organising team and I think it's good that people see there is more to us than meets the eye. It's good because we feel better about ourselves and what we can contribute.

What have been the key reasons for those changes?

Organising events and activities in the community gives us a reason to celebrate together, a reason to leave the house on a Friday and have a fun night. There's not much happening in our area, transport is awful so it's easy to get stuck in a rut. The events have made socialising and having fun as a family much more accessible and have brought grass roots change in the community. People recall what used to happen before cuts and withdrawal of services. It's good to see we're bringing a bit of that back.

Why did you want to get involved/lead on this area of work in the community?

I didn't even know I wanted to get involved, I just know that it feels good being supported and offering that support back to other people. You know what a difference it made to you, and can make to others. We saw services stripped back in our community and felt the harsh impact of endless and continuing council cuts and the impact on our community. A food bank opened to meet huge demands from people in Castlehill. We're constantly faced with negative change so it's good and important that we strive for change in a positive way. That's what keeps me going and I suppose that's why I do it.

How have you changed in relation to the work that you have been doing in the community?

I've become more confident in speaking to others and putting myself forward for different roles. I feel more involved, accepted and included within my community because people see me in a different light, and I suppose we see each other in a different light. We have a network of support not only through the events group that we are part of but also with other people in the community who help us with the events and attend events. It's also allowed me to reflect on how we do things and adapt so that we ensure we are doing the best for the community, meeting the needs of the people in the community, and not just deciding as a group what we think is wanted or needed. I feel much happier and useful and less lonely and isolated than I was before.

How would you like to see the work in the future?

I'd like us to keep going but get bigger and really start doing things that make our community flourish again. There are so many gaps in services, life challenges, and lack of opportunities in our area, which can make people feel down and feel rubbish about themselves and their life. I'd like to work on tackling things like that, for example; making sure that children are given experiences and activities through the summer holidays, providing inter-generational events for the whole community. I'd also like us to draw on the skills and lived experience of others in the community and work this into what we do, and I'd like us to continue having fun making connections and offering support to each other.



ENGAGEMENT

Consistent engagement and work alongside the community means that new partnerships and relationships strengthen networks of support over time. Engagement on people's own terms has resulted in long standing informal groups continuing to develop, and confidence and capacity are growing.

SPACE

As the next year comes, we will be able to; support the community to use the identified space more as it is not getting used to its full capacity, support the community with ideas and support them to reach opportunities or activities that are still not available in the community.

TIME

It is essential to make the time and space available to support groups to self organise and for leadership to emerge over longer periods. In many cases, slower development can be the best route to sustainable and resilient groups overall.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In 2019, David Taylor (maternity cover) worked alongside groups in Castlehill as well as supporting the summer events. In 2020 Janice O'Connor will be:

- Exploring opportunities for a new space in Leven Valley - to develop partnership working and Increase engagement through:
 - Social security Scotland – using space within Leven Valley
 - Housing officers – using space within Leven Valley
- Linking with and exploring what's working in other communities.
- Support the development of the local community centre
- Work with local primary
- Work with and support; local individuals, organisations, partners, and schools; to develop ideas and connect across the community.
- Support West Dunbartonshire events group to deliver more local events.



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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 Castlehill 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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