

CASTLEHILL

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



This year has been a different year for everyone, the pandemic has changed the way we work and how we engage the community. Here is a snapshot of what's been happening in our community in 2020.

Family 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. Although the group have not met as much this year they have continued walking as part of their routine.

Community Events Group - The group have looked at new ways to engage the community this year. They used money from the Supporting Communities Fund to create and deliver 100 care packages to people who are shielding or self isolating in the community. They also ran a socially distanced Halloween scavenger / pumpkin trail around the community, which was free for families to take part in.

Dumbarton West Community Action Group - This is a new group set up to bring the community together, to work on tackling issues that are important to people, and look at new ways to engage and bring people and ideas together.

Social media engagement - Social media has been an incredibly important resource, meeting the communities need to engage, share ideas on family activities, connect people, and keep people informed throughout the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic there was some information overload over social media, when posts from friends and family and other media sources led to people in the community sometimes being unsure of where to turn for the most up to date information. As clarity emerged in the restrictions, this reduced, and platforms became a vital space to chat, find information, and seek support.

My lockdown by Farah Sweeney

I had my 9th birthday in March, I had invited some friends over for a birthday tea party. Even though I was excited I was a little worried about coronavirus, we had a lovely time and I am so glad we went ahead with the celebrations because that was the last time I got to spend time with my friends.

In my house it's just me and my mum, she works in Glasgow so before all this happened we used to get up in the morning I would go to my papas before school he would make my breakfast and let me chill and watch TV then drop me off at school, I would go to afterschool care and mummy would pick me up after work. When we were told school was off I felt really worried about not being able to see my friends but I was also really excited because I'd get to spend time with mum because she was working from home. The first day of lockdown we got up early, did Joe Wicks and went on a big walk. It was so strange not seeing many cars on the road and seeing all the shops shut!

We went to visit my papa at his patio doors, we brought him in shopping and dinners, we didn't want to go in because we wanted to keep him safe. I felt sad for my papa because it wasn't the same. I knew he missed me too and I just wanted to give him a hug. Home schooling was good but at the start we didn't really get to talk to my friends, I did some school work but mummy decided to teach me how to cook, and how to do things round the house. I can cook some dinners and bake some biscuits and cakes now. I can also turn on the washing machine and work the Hoover. We went on long walks every day, I found snails and kept some as pets. We explored lots of new places near us that I hadn't been to before. I got chalk and started to write nice messages near my friends homes so they could see them.

Lockdown was actually quite fun. It has taught me that I am tough, I can cook, I can do more things for myself. I now know that even if you are the President or Prime Minister it doesn't mean you know best. I have learned things about people too, you might think your grandparents are boring and stuff but you should hold them close and be good to them the same way they are good to you because you never know what will happen.

Halloween Hunt

Dumbarton West Community Events Group are used to planning events for families in our community but when lockdown happened they had to look at different ways to reach people. Aware that the community were struggling, especially people who were isolating or shielding, the group wanted to try and help them but were not sure how to do this.

They found out about the Supporting Communities Fund and asked for money to make 100 care packages which they would give out to the community. They wanted to try and get items that could be used for individuals and families such as hot water bottles, mugs, playing cards and puzzle books. West Dunbartonshire Foodshare heard what the group was doing and donated tea & coffee, milk, biscuits and a small gift to add to the bag as they were aware that there were people that wouldn't access their service but wanted to contribute in some way.

The group usually hold two or three events per year, and due to restrictions they weren't able to host the usual family events so they wanted to hold a Halloween event that would be safe under the restrictions and could include the whole family. They held a scavenger hunt and pumpkin carving competition that they could host, plan and deliver without risking others health.



They managed to get 70 pumpkins donated to give out to families in the community and local businesses donated family vouchers for the event. The group placed 20 pumpkins around the community for families to find along with a clue to some spooky words.

Due to weather on the day the group decided to do an online version for families that couldn't go out. Pictures were posted and families had to guess where they were placed in the community. To finish the night, the group had arranged a storyteller to tell ghost stories. This was shared on Facebook for all to see and enjoy. It might not have been the year they usually have, but they felt that doing something was better than doing nothing. Liam (5) commented "mum, I don't care if it's raining I'm doing the hunt."

Clifftop Projects bringing art and dance into our community

W: www.clifftopprojects.co.uk

F: www.facebook.com/clifftopprojectscic

I: www.instagram.com/clifftopprojects

In April 2020 Westcliff resident Lottie Barker formed Clifftop Projects – a social enterprise that aims to make the arts accessible for all. Lottie collaborates with members of the community, and believes that the arts can be used as a tool to teach people about themselves and others, making them more empathetic.

The Art Hub started in summer 2020 after Lottie left a box of spare art supplies outside her house for the community to take for free, and asked residents to create pictures of their houses. From this she formed an online gallery entitled: "Our Westcliff". She was keen to develop the idea of providing supplies and tasks for local people and so with funding from National Lottery and a partnership with The Phoenix, Art Hub was born!

Every Wednesday afternoon from August to December Lottie was based with a bookcase of art supplies outside The Phoenix in Castlehill and each week a different challenge or task was presented to the young people. This ranged from creating tissue paper landscapes, to 3D Halloween monsters, to clay self-portraits! When Tier four made physically meeting impossible, Lottie delivered Art Hub packs to families in the community to keep young people creative whilst at home. In 2020, Clifftop Projects Art Hub engaged with 60 local young people and is fully funded to continue for 2021.



Clifftop Projects continued ...

It has been a busy first year for Clifftop Projects as they've also run successful online dance sessions with the National Autistic Society, Alzheimer's Scotland, Carers West Dunbartonshire, Bellsmyre Digital Community, The Phoenix, Neighbourhood Networks and more community groups! They are passionate about being inclusive to all participants at sessions and showcasing that the arts are for everyone.

In 2021 they are starting an intergenerational dance company for all ages to create work for performance, and making a short film entitled 'Together We Dance/Together West Dunbartonshire' where participants will create movement and spoken word that will be filmed around the local district.

Castlehill Roots conversations



We were approached by the David Hume Institute to take part in discussions that would look at bringing partners and community members together to look at place and what is important in our place.

The session was led by Ruth Ibegbuna, who developed a programme call Roots. We invited a range of partners from across West Dunbartonshire who work in or with people from Castlehill and Dumbarton West. This ranged from community members, local authority colleagues, schools, third sector and health.

During the session we looked at a wide range of issues by having open and honest discussion about our community. We did this session on a Zoom call which was both exciting and scary as some people from the community had never used this resource before and were a bit nervous about how it would work. Once the initial barrier of getting people comfortable was overcome, people were able to relax and open up. The discussions started to bring out the importance of identity of the community and being able to create opportunities in the community.

The group looked at their community from a visual aspect of what they see and how others see things. This highlighted the protective feeling and the spirit that people feel towards their place and community. We were able to bring some of the conversation from the session into the new Community Action Group to help shape some of the ideas and discussions within the group.

The next step is to bring these conversations to life in the community. The image above will be used to further generate dialogues, and bring partners and community members together to explore and understand the successes and challenges that shape the community of Castlehill and Dumbarton West.

What have we learned together?

Community is everything. It is the people and the place. This past year, we have seen this with the strong community spirit that Castlehill has shown, from people supporting each other, sharing their experiences on social media, and checking in and helping vulnerable people.

Partners and organisations have changed the way they work during the pandemic; from West Dunbartonshire Council setting up crisis support for residents of West Dunbartonshire, and their staff supporting this by helping with picking up prescriptions, shopping and befriending people in the community. Local foodbanks delivered food parcels to families across West Dunbartonshire, and local community centre, the Phoenix, created a fund to help with the cost of fuel for low income families, provided art packs for families, and helped the community celebrate Christmas with a drive along Santa.

Groups and organisations have worked together to create new and inventive ways to keep services and support running. Although the community have seen amazing things happen in the local and surrounding area, a number of things have been highlighted and at times have made this pandemic difficult for individuals and families. Mental health has been at the forefront with members of the community struggling with money, fuel, digital access, food, and social isolation.

The local Co-ordinator is looking at ways to support people with these issues by; bringing people together to share knowledge and information, linking people with organisations, and helping people to share their stories so that they can support one another.



What happens next?

- Work with West Dunbartonshire Council to develop the community space at Leven Valley Enterprise Centre to support the development of partnership working and increase engagement.
- Link in with and explore what's working in other communities.
- Support the development of the local Community Centre.
- Work with the community to develop community-led grant making.
- 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.
- Support Dumbarton West Community Action Group to develop and tackle issues within the community.
- Support the new Knowetop project.



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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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