

CASTLEHILL

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

Throughout 2021 a key focus has been ensuring local people can stay connected with each other. Connecting digitally, via social media, has been key in sharing information, bringing people together and creating cohesion as everyone transitioned into recovery from the pandemic. Social media has proved crucial in promoting and highlighting opportunities for people to get involved in their community.

Family walking group: The group continues to encourage exercise whilst offering a safe place to discuss issues that people face in the community, helping to tackle the social isolation faced by many. Creating social space has been essential for some people in the community and will continue into the future.

Dumbarton West Community Action group: The group works to bring positive changes to the local area and have been planning ways to listen to and support community voices to be heard in planning processes with West Dunbartonshire Council and local community partners. Read more about their skip project on the next page.

Comic Relief: Through a co-produced participatory-grantmaking approach Corra supported a local group to distribute funding to local projects and activities - even encouraging more local activity.

SKIP PROJECT

Case study from The Dumbarton West Community Action Group on their skip project:

Background: During the height of the pandemic, when we were all living in lockdown, many of the council services were cut back or stopped completely. For West Dunbartonshire this meant there were no uplifts of bulky items, this meant that as we transitioned out of the pandemic and into recovery in 2021 there was a massive backlog of requests for uplifts and garden waste removal.

Many people took to using their gardens to store these items as they awaited uplift.

However, many people locally were struggling to cover the costs of these uplifts, leading to waste accumulating in people's gardens for long periods of time. Some members of the community had commented that the waste in their gardens was affecting their families ability to access and use the space and that it was affecting their wellbeing.

The Dumbarton West Community Action group decided to improve the local area by requesting a skip amnesty programme. The group sought support from West Dunbartonshire Council's Greenspace Team and were supported by Corra to complete the required paperwork and project planning to ensure the project was delivered safely.

Delivery: The skip project was delivered in June and supported over 80 families to remove waste from their garden areas, freeing up the space for better uses. The service was so in demand that it had to be extended to accommodate extra uplift requests locally.

The group managed to get support from community members who volunteered their time to help. West Dunbartonshire Council also supported the project by providing the skips in each of the communities, which were used as drop off points, and delivering the uplift service for those who needed help to move items to the skips.

Evaluation: Everyone that had their waste items uplifted or that accessed the skips themselves commented on how much they appreciated the service, with some community members providing refreshments for the volunteers.

Many people that benefitted from the service took to social media with lots of positive comments on the service and all the volunteers that got involved in the project. A few community members even commented that having the waste finally removed has provided a great relief and has already improved their wellbeing.



SKIP PROJECT

Learning: The skip project was a massive success but with any project the group faced challenges along the way.

Volunteers and community members have remarked on how much nicer the local communities look now that the gardens have been cleared of waste. The communities look and feel like happier places to be.

If the project is repeated in future the group have a better understanding of the time that is required to deliver the uplift service, as this required more time than had been factored in during the planning stages.



The uplift service was oversubscribed, highlighting a greater need than anticipated during planning for the project. This need for increased capacity will be factored into any future planning to repeat this project.

Though thanks to the relationships the group developed with West Dunbartonshire Council they were able to secure an agreement from them to complete the list of uplifts and help conclude the project.

COMIC RELIEF

Corra worked with a local group to co-produce a participatory grant-making approach, this involved designing an application processes for people to access the funds, promotion of the funding opportunities and bringing together a panel of community members to make decisions on which ideas received funding.

Through this participatory grantmaking approach 17 projects were funded between £400 and £2000. This saw 4 new projects come into the community and supported the development of ideas under a few different themes including:

- Development of community space,
- Supporting new groups and ideas, and
- Supporting partners



WEST END BUZZERS

West End Buzzers started as an idea by one community member with an interest in sewing, after posting about it on Facebook she connected with other people who were interested in starting up a group.

As a small informal group they were able to apply to the Corra supported Comic Relief participatory grantmaking process, that was being delivered in Castlehill at the time. They were successful and received £750, which gave the group the money they needed to secure the resources to get started with their sewing group activities.

"I think the best part of this grant procedure was being able to use the grant to "set up" without being constituted as we had never come together before and were not in a position to become . constituted or open bank account as a group."

- group member

The group has grown and developed over 2021, with 10 members meeting weekly in Leven Valley Enterprise Centre. The members all work and learn together, sharing skills and using donated items they work on a variety of projects. They have set up a Facebook page and use this to promote their group and update the community on their activities regularly.

Through the use of donated items the group have been raising awareness of upcycling and the environmental benefits of recycling old textiles. They group secured further funding from Corra to bring in a tutor so they could learn new skills and make better use of the donated items they were receiving.

The group have also found that coming together has helped tackle social isolation and members have reported that the social aspect of the group has had a positive impact on their wellbeing. One group member said, **"We love the wee group meetings and all the learning and community spirit attached to it."**



"In the lessons we have learned how to make a teddy bear, a butterfly and a door stop from things we had lying around."

- group member

"We as a group have definitely seen enormous benefits to being able to meet weekly and are lucky that we have a meeting place with storage for resources provided free of charge. Everyone in the group looks forward to Thursday evenings – the grant and support from Janice from Corra has definitely helped promote community spirit" - group member

DEVELOPING COMMUNITY SPACE



There have been massive developments in the community, from the Phoenix community centre opening back up to new organisations and projects coming into the community. With the support of West Dunbartonshire Council we are able to offer a free space in the community at Leven Valley Enterprise Centre to support the community to take the next step with their ideas.

The purpose of the space is to support people to vocalise and develop their ideas in a welcoming and accessible space. It also provides the opportunity for connections to be made between local people, ongoing activity in the community and local services that can support their ideas.

Having access to this larger space has allowed the support and resource that Corra is able to provide to increase. There are now four local groups accessing the space on a regular basis as a base for a variety of activities including walking groups, sewing and crafting activities and a local women's group. It also provides the opportunity to give local services and groups a space to work from on a hotdesking basis, this will allow for services to be based locally and be more accessible to the community.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TOGETHER?

As we try and come out of the pandemic there is a rawness and an appreciation of people and our community. People are supporting each other and sharing their experiences of how they are feeling and what changes they would like to see after being confined to our homes and communities.

We have to try and find the beauty and create spaces that feel safe, whether that is in physical form such as parks, gardens, our homes or online. Having these spaces create a sense of safety, positivity and an appetite for change.

As the year has gone on we have seen our partner organisations thrive by working together and creating new opportunities for the community. Working to meet the needs of the community together and provide space that is open to all aspects of the community, from creative and physical activities to wellbeing and practical support.

Issues with poor mental health and wellbeing, poverty and fuel insecurity, food and digital access continue to affect people, working with our partners in the community Corra and supporting groups like the Dumbarton West Action Group to highlight these issues, create the space to support people and ensure we are listening to what people need and responding in the most effective and sensitive way.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Over the next year work in Castlehill will focus on developing the space within Leven Valley Enterprise Centre, supporting partners and community groups to increase participation locally and working with the community to develop new ideas.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Corra will also be working with the community to explore more participatory grantmaking opportunities. Ongoing support will also be provided by Janice to the development of the West Dunbartonshire Events Group, the Walk and Talk Group, Dumbarton West Action Group, a local women's group.



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PEOPLE IN PLACE - MOVING FORWARDS

People in Place continue to work alongside 8 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 to influence policy.

2021 was another challenging year, with communities continuing to be impacted by Coronavirus. Community groups, voluntary organisations and local authorities worked together to support individuals to transition through – and move towards recovery from the pandemic. Corra has listened to communities to understand the challenges and provide support as best we can. Across each community the themes of participation, support, money, relationships, and space are most evident with specific challenges relating to food insecurity, access to community space, mental health and wellbeing, and financial concerns.

As communities strive to recover from the impact of Coronavirus and look towards healing, support for health is of particular importance. Corra is currently working with local Health and Social Care Partnerships to identify how best to help community members access the support they need locally, while focusing on preventative approaches. Corra is also working alongside Healthcare Improvement Scotland to test and develop community-led approaches to improving health outcomes.

In 2022, Corra will continue to help communities and partners collectively understand, identify opportunities to influence and to change local systems to better support community aspirations and need. People in Place is focused on supporting and developing the enabling factors that will allow communities to grow and build forward better, such as, accessing and developing space, community-led grant making, building capacity, and sharing learning. This will involve balancing time and space for collective reflection with supporting momentum behind community ideas as we all continue to transition from the pandemic'. To reinforce this, an Idea into Action accelerator approach has been designed to direct funding and resources to what is needed in each of the communities with additional resource allocated to capacity building support and the development of space.



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