

CUMNOCK

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

Recovery - As restrictions eased, members of the community kick-started their recovery by building a sense of togetherness again by attending a range of health and wellbeing activities. These regular weekly activities, or full day experiences, offered a creative way to engage those in most need of support in the community.

Sunday Soothers - Providing a safe and nurturing environment in this way, encouraged community members to engage in activity that contributed positively to their health and wellbeing, moreover, offered a platform to offer support to those struggling with poor mental health, poverty, addiction, social isolation and loneliness. We catch up with Natalie Carmichael to discuss this in Case Study one.

Reflection - Cumnock Action Plan (CAP) offered a valuable insight into the journey of their first Action Plan 2016-2021. As well as celebrating achievements and the positive impact this activity has had locally, we also look at the challenges and valuable lessons learned throughout this process. (Film link)

Strengthening Voices - Two projects that built on the strengths and interests of the young people were delivered in partnership with Barony Campus. These were the CAP Youth Project and a Young People's Graphic 'Take-over' delivered by the National Galleries of Scotland.

Change - Feedback gathered from Corra's People in Place area overview carried early 2020 suggested that developing a group using the Men's Shed model, would help fill a void in Cumnock.

Cumnock & District Men's Shed (CMS) - CMS was created to better support men in Cumnock and around the surrounding area by offering them inclusive and accessible creative activity. The purpose of the shed is to help local men find new and purposeful ways to spend their spare time. Alan Thomas explains more in case study 2.

RECOVERY

Interview with Alan Thomas Cumnock & District Men's Shed (CMS)



A Men's Shed is a creative space where men, from all corners of the community meet to work on practical projects or simply

socialise and build friendships. This male focused environment offers support to those struggling with social isolation and loneliness and can help improve men's health and wellbeing.

The members of the original steering group / now the elected Management Committee and Trustees, include some key local figures, with many supporting the most vulnerable people in the town through the likes of: youthwork, social prescribing services, food provision, youth employment, leadership programmes, sports and recreation activities and health and well-being support.

The CMS Management Committee and Trustees have been at the forefront of developing the idea. Now a SCIO, CMS aims to better support men in Cumnock and around the surrounding area by offering them inclusive and accessible creative activity. The Men's Shed is a community project managed and led by those living in and around the town. The purpose of the shed is to help local men find new and purposeful ways to spend their spare time.



"The men in my family, over four generations – have attended these establishments for a variety of reasons – to get out the house, socialise, bond with family and peers, learn new skills....the list goes on. Now here I am, involved in setting up a new Men's Shed for Cumnock and passionate about ensuring the Movement is here for this generation and the next – my own son (Ayden 12) included."

It is thought that offering a broad flexible programme will ensure that CMS promotes an inclusive environment and will help address the historical barriers local men face engaging in activity. CMS is open to all men (18+) and the group endeavour to encourage engagement from all corners of the community, with a focus on reaching those who may face additional challenges and barriers. Activities in other Sheds vary greatly, but CMS envisage their central creative hub offering a mixture of woodworking, metalworking, model-making, repairing, and restoring.

CMS will continue to support and draw on priorities of members, resourcing and facilitating ideas for projects whilst championing a community-led approach. This is paramount to the success of the group, given the historical, deep-rooted barriers that some local men face and their unwillingness to engage.

"The most challenging thing we have faced is finding the right premises to accommodate the group. We have identified a building in Cumnock and are currently applying for a community asset transfer (CAT) from East Ayrshire Council. (the Former Bookcycle building at 39 Barrhill Road, Cumnock, KA18 1PG.) The outcome of this application will be decided in April 2022. We remain optimistic that this will be successful."

"Without the Corra Foundation's input in the formative stages of the group, we simply wouldn't be where we are at the just now. Fraser has been an essential part in the creation of the group, his approach, his skills and knowledge has enabled the group to develop their ideas. He has been a real driving force in this process."

BUILDING IDEA FOR CHANGE

We talked with Natalie Carmichael (Volunteer Champion) about the vital work she delivers locally. Click the music note or [click here](#) to go to the Corra site and hear all about it.



COLLABORATIVE WORKING - WHAT MATTERS TO YOU

INTERVIEW WITH FIONA BAIN - PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR



What Matters to You in Cumnock works to influence the way services are designed and delivered by modelling a way of being and doing in response to

what matters to families in their communities. They are funded and working alongside both BBC Children In Need and the Hunter Foundation.

What Matters to You is about harnessing potential within families and communities to influence positive change, alongside people as individuals and as a collective. Being curious and focusing on what is strong, spending time understanding and truly listening to what matters to people who live in local communities.

Collaborative working is key within this way of working and shared value and ambitions between the Community Co-ordinator and Programme co-ordinator within What Matters to You, creates spaces for people to feel welcome and heard.

By doing this, we move away from processes and become more human, interacting in a way that people have a sense of hope and that change is possible.

"We have been supported in our work by Corra Foundation's local co-ordinator, Fraser Stone, who has played a pivotal part in supporting the voice of those least often heard within their own community."

Understanding communities and what matters and supporting people to see their own potential moves us from a space of being "done to" to a natural space of people themselves recognising that they can drive change in a community and be that change.

The voice of families is important in the conversation around local action if we are to truly meet the needs of those people who often do not feel heard. What Matters to You reaches into communities and relies heavily on the strength within communities to activate change.

"Fraser has identified that the voice of families is often not always heard, and his work has been a catalyst for change within the community, ensuring both parents and carer's and children and young people are truly at the centre of designing what matters within their own community"

True collaborative working is working to your own strengths, recognising the gifts that people bring to the space and maximising these. Shared values bring ideas into action. Change is possible, we need to be brave enough to be the change.

"Both our own team and Corra Foundation continue to support local community activity and have a good solid working relationship, underpinned by similar values. We are supporting families to constitute their group and exploring together what scaffolding may be needed around them to be actively included and heard within their community."

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TOGETHER?

REFLECTIONS FROM FRASER, COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATOR



Establishing good partnership working is key to supporting ideas for change. The Sunday Soothers sessions have been a fantastic example of this, with local volunteers, practitioners, community workers, businesses and organisations in the area joining forces to support and deliver these sessions.

Good partnership working has also been demonstrated with several organisations involved in setting up CMS, who joined forces in an effort to provide support for local men. Our work with Shire Housing, a local anchor organisation, has proved to be an important relationship. As well as being able to establish opportunities for collaborative working, we have supported several projects both 'hands-on' and financially by combining the small community budgets we both have. This has led to an increased partnership working and support for projects in Cumnock.



Many members of the community are still in crisis or have seen what were challenges pre-covid, exacerbated by the pandemic. As restrictions eased, positive steps have been taken locally to support those suffering or at risk of social isolation. Building a sense of togetherness is just one step of many in a long road to recovery.



Some members of the community are on a different recovery journey - Perth Recovery Walk have been working with MUMO, a local group that support people struggling with addiction. This group meets weekly and helps some of the most vulnerable people in the community. The group have been using music-making activities as a way to strengthen relations and heal both mentally and physically. Many members play instruments already and, through peer-to-peer sharing sessions, are helping others develop skills.

There are often barriers to gaining vital support, given services mainly operate out of Kilmarnock. A dedicated satellite hub would offer more tailored support to those in significant crises, but a lack of space locally have made plans for this challenging.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TOGETHER?

REFLECTIONS FROM FRASER, COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATOR



Space - Like many communities the lack of available space is an ongoing problem and only frustrates ideas for change. The demand to better utilise the many old buildings or disused shops locally has never been greater. There needs to be considerable effort made to release disused premises for use and ensure the process for obtaining spaces are accessible and encouraged.

Reflection - Reflecting and celebrating achievements, impact and change is an incredibly important step for any group or organisation to be mindful of. Highlighting challenges and sharing lessons learned is an effective way to support future delivery and inspire others to engage and lead on ideas. Praising those volunteers who go the extra mile for a community they love, and who often put other people's welfare above of their own, should not go unchecked.



WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Ideas for Change - Building on ideas for change can be a lengthy but really rewarding process. Meaningful change is best created when those who are most likely to be affected by the change are firmly in the driving seat. By working collaboratively, I will continue to facilitate ideas for change driven by strengths and interests of local people and built round their needs and aspirations.

CMS - Come April 2022, the group hope to find out the result of their CAT application. If successful, significant work on securing the right funding package will begin, enabling the much-needed renovation work to be carried out.

Health & Wellbeing - Will continue to be delivered weekly with a further two Sunday Soother days scheduled in the first 3 months of the year. Depending on demand we will look to run more of these throughout the year. Feedback has also indicated that forming a community choir, delivering yoga, drumming, cooking and more mindfulness and craft classes are also in demand.

National Galleries of Scotland - Young artists will establish a studio and shop as part of their build-up to taking over the town for a week in May 2022. They will prove that creativity can help transform their environment via vibrant posters, flags, costumes and banners.

Cumnock Action Plan - Will look to re-group after the delivery of a mammoth 5-year plan. CAP say a big thanks to Janice Hendry(Chair) and Neil Given(Vice Chair) for their incredible dedication during the first plan. Some outdoor projects are still ongoing but the group hope to encourage new faces to help develop ideas moving forwards.



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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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