



FERNHILL

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

Corra's work to support community priorities in 2021 included:

Community Space

- Continued conversations with local authority around access to space and developing community-led space within Fernhill.
- Assisting the community to gain access to land in Fernhill for community use.

Funding

- Supporting local groups to access funding and help the community to move through, and towards recovery from, the pandemic.

Community Activities

- Advising, signposting, and helping to plan and deliver community activities.

Keep reading to find out more about what's been happening in Fernhill...

"Why is it so difficult to play games way weans in their ain community?"

Reflections and questions on community space from
Cath, Community Co-ordinator



Access to outdoor space continued to be an issue which was frustrating given that meeting outdoors provided important opportunities for people to connect and look after their wellbeing.

I was asked, in the run up to the summer, "why is it so hard to play games way weans in their ain community?" and my initial answer was, "I have no idea". Though, this

didn't sit comfortably with me because both I and the person asking the question did know why – even if we didn't necessarily know how to articulate it.

All too often the systems and processes around access to community space, including for children to play and families to come together, don't work. They don't work for local communities and from what I can see they don't work for the public bodies either. So why do they exist? Why are we not changing and adapting them to make them fit for purpose?

Access to space within a community is vital to creating a sense of community and a say over what are assets within a community as well as a voice in how these are designed and used is something already enshrined in law in Scotland. I don't feel people have a full enough understanding of these rights in order to hold public bodies to account when these rights are impinged upon. I also feel public bodies could go further in recognising these rights, educating people on them and respecting the rights an individual holds whether they have an awareness of them or not.

Funding Opportunities

Over the course of 2021 daily lives slowly began to resemble pre-pandemic life for most people. As the vaccine drive continued across the country though, it created limited opportunities for community groups to get back to business as usual. However, Fernhill Community Centre was able to provide some space for community use and a return to regular group activities.

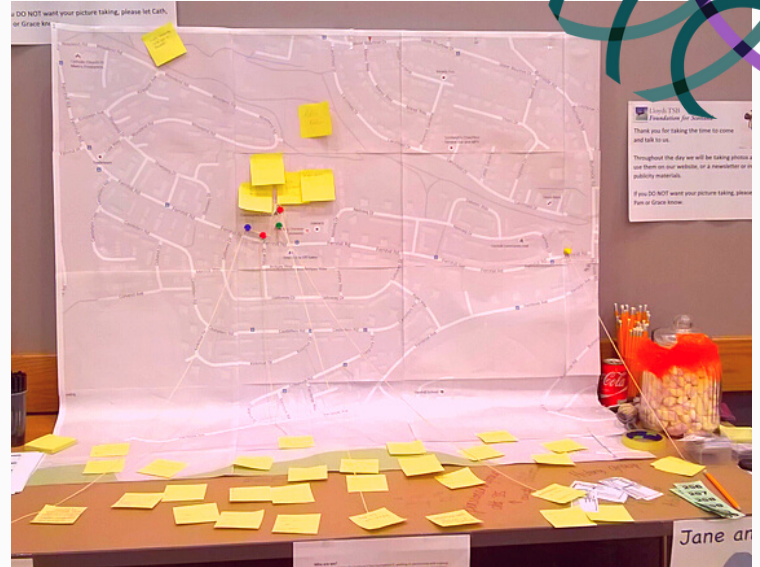
Many local groups continued to focus on supporting the community to deal with the ongoing and changing impacts of the pandemic.

Corra was able to support the following community groups in Fernhill to access funding and progress local priorities, through the Ideas into Action budget for Fernhill and other funding programmes:

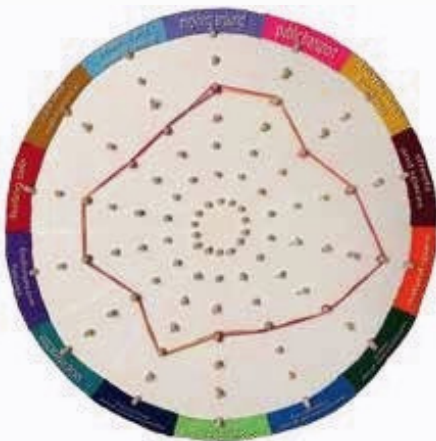
- Communities Together - £2,500
- Fernhill Playscheme - £1,000
- Fernhill Senior Citizens - £2,000
- Fernhill Soccer School - £5,000
- Gents Bowlers - £1,000
- The Ohana Club - £12,640

Since 2016...

Corra has been working on the ground with the community of Fernhill. Cath, Community Coordinator, started in post in June 2016, and quickly began making connections and building relationships. The West of Scotland residents group invited Corra to host a stall at their community Gala Day at the end of July. Cath took this opportunity to speak to local people about what was important to them and how they felt about their local community.



In late 2017/early 2018 Corra worked with staff from South Lanarkshire Council to help gather the views of Fernhill residents about the upcoming developments to the land at the top of the community, formerly the site for Blairbeth Golf Club. This space would go on to become Fernbrae Meadows. Across 2018 Cath ran a series of pop-up community café events around the central area of Fernhill, these were used as a way of engaging with the community and as a way of finding out how local people felt about their community and what they would like to see within the area.



Then in 2019 Cath worked with the Community Kitty group, made up of local residents, community volunteers, staff from South Lanarkshire Council and local elected members. This group held a series of consultation events, and using the Place Standard Tool, gathered the views and opinions of local people on Fernhill. In each of these research activities issues and ideas were highlighted repeatedly by the local community, these have been listed below along with any work Corra has supported to happen within the community:

Physical Space Improvements

- Local residents would like to see development, increased use of and access to vacant and derelict spaces across the community, including the space adjacent to Fernhill playpark, the land behind Fernhill Community Centre, Fernbrae Meadows and the land at the top of Ryan Way and on Fernbrae Ave
 - Fernbrae Meadows has been completely redeveloped, in the time Corra has been present in Fernhill, by South Lanarkshire Council and in the early stages Corra supported the involvement of Fernhill residents in the design and use of the space
 - In 2021 Corra supported a local charity, The Ohana Club, to deliver a programme of family activities that were delivered on many of the highlighted spaces across the community



BUILD YOUR OWN PLAYGROUND with The Ohana Club and City of Play (July 2021)

Since 2016...



Spaces for Community

- Local residents would like to see more community-led and focused activities taking place in the Community Centre, including more activities for children and young people and a community cafe where people can meet and come together
 - The pop-up cafe delivered across 2018 and 2019 which attracted visitors of all ages from across Fernhill and beyond was hugely successful, everyone that attended said they would like to see a cafe as a permanent feature in the community.
 - Two local residents highlighted a desire to take on and run a community-focused cafe within Fernhill, stating that access to space is the only limiting factor to them taking forward their idea together

Connectivity

- Research showed that Fernhill was below the national average for broadband uptake within it's homes. It was a surprise to learn that the Community Centre did not provide a public Wi-Fi, especially because of the patchy phone service in and around the building.
 - Corra worked with staff from the Financial Inclusion Network at South Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture to secure funding for iPads and laptops as well as the installation of a free public Wi-Fi service. Pre-pandemic, and hopefully again in the future, local residents can drop into the Community Centre and use one of the devices (or their own device) to access the internet for free.
 - Corra also took this opportunity to work with Community Learning and Development staff from the council to deliver free IT lessons which were accessed by a few local people.

Funding and Support

- In connecting with local community groups access to funding, to deliver community based activity, was an ongoing issue
 - Corra has worked with community groups in Fernhill to connect them with staff in local businesses who have gone on to support local activity. For example Morrisons supermarket provided free fruit on a weekly basis to Fernhill Soccer School for a period of time.
 - Corra, with match funding from South Lanarkshire Council, supported a local group to design and deliver a Participatory Budgeting process that made £10,000 available for community activity, e.g. Fernhill Playscheme received £3000 to fund a community trip to Blackpool.
 - Throughout 2020 and 2021 Corra supported local groups to access funding to help support their community through the pandemic.
 - Through the Ideas into Action budget for Fernhill Corra has distributed over £17,000 to support ideas from local people that benefit Fernhill.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED TOGETHER?

Space is vital for community activity, without access to space people can't come together and when people can't come together they can't build and strengthen their bonds. A community without strong relationships and bonds within its population ceases to be a community and becomes more of a geographic residential area.

When people are given the time and space to come together the possibilities are endless, in 2021 one local group used a derelict space within Fernhill to create a build your own playground area for local families over several days, brought in play sand to create an inland beach and ran a variety of other activities across the community, including survival skills and a special visit from lots of creepy crawling animals. Not only did this provide social opportunities it created a space for parents to discuss their thoughts and dreams for their local community.

If community groups can be supported to access, use and operate local assets they have identified there is a very good chance that involvement and participation in Fernhill would increase significantly. Anchor Institutions, such as local authorities, have a key role to play in providing such opportunities and will gain significantly from doing so because "any institution that is generous with its space and enables community organisations to use their wonderful spaces and make it theirs, are hardwiring confidence, hope and a new security and resilience into the place." Dame Julia Unwin

PEOPLE IN PLACE - MOVING FORWARDS

From March 2022, Corra's work in Fernhill will begin drawing to a close. This decision follows a period of deep reflection and deliberation over several months.

Since 2016 Corra has worked alongside local people and partners in Fernhill to support the delivery of community ideas and aspirations.

This has taken place alongside efforts to progress key local issues such as access to community space, and to services, as well as building trusting relationships. Corra has learned that these are among the key conditions for our work alongside communities to succeed, and most importantly for communities' aspirations to be realised. This has been challenging at times, and progress in Fernhill continues to be slower than anyone would have hoped.

Considering these circumstances, and the limitations of Corra's resources and influence, we have reluctantly decided to draw our work in Fernhill to a close.

To support that process, and draw learning from work to date, an independent evaluation will be commissioned. We will also make a legacy investment in Fernhill to support local groups to build their capacity and develop new community activities.

We recognise this decision may be disappointing for many. If you'd like to discuss any aspect of Corra's work in Fernhill, have ideas to share, or suggestions for steps that might support its positive conclusion, please do get in touch.



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