

Cumnock Annual Update 2024

About Cumnock

In the heart of East Ayrshire lies Cumnock, a town steeped in history and surrounded by rolling hills and lush countryside. Once a hub for coal mining, weaving, and pottery-making, Cumnock's industrial heritage is reflected in landmarks like Dumfries House. Cumnock's charm extends beyond its history. It's home to vibrant community groups and scenic spots like Woodroad Park and picturesque walks along Glaisnock Water. Cumnock offers a unique blend of tranquillity and cultural richness.



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Cumnocks's timeline

Corra's work alongside the community in Cumnock began in June 2015. You can delve into the detail in each annual update, but here's a taster of what the community has done since 2015. For more information on each year visit www.corra.scot/Cumnock

2015

The initial focus was on listening to local people, identifying local strengths and assets and encouraging community-led actions through inclusive engagement.

2016

Cumnock Action Plan became a fully constituted organisation following their inaugural meeting. Two successful planting days were held in November and a Christmas event was organised and delivered by the Community Action Plan group.

2017

Corra supported community engagement in Cumnock through activities such as a Funders Fayre, community litter picks, pop-up street sessions, and events like the Spring Fling and Big Lunch, while supporting new activity like the sewing and gardening groups.

2018

There was increased engagement through the delivery of pop-up conversations at local events, supported Cumnock Action Plan group to deliver a microgrant for local creative projects and brokered relationships between local groups to support the delivery of the history group's Armistice events.

2021

There was a strong focus on recovery through health and wellbeing activities like the Sunday Soothers, increasing community support for mental health and isolation. Cumnock & District Men's Shed (CMS) was established as a SCIO, providing inclusive creative spaces for men.

2020

Cumnock Action Plan continued outdoor projects like the developments at Woodroad Park and the memory garden. Support was given to the resilience group during lockdown in delivering over 3,000 food parcels, and adapted community events like the socially distanced afternoon tea for older residents.

2019

Cumnock Funder Fayre. Cumnock Action Plan mid-point review and refresh.

2022

CMS saw significant progress in securing an asset transfer of a local space and then securing funding for renovations, they also expanded to include women. The Nest SCIO was also founded and developed as a welcoming wellbeing hub, and there was increased participation with new community-led activities such as the walking football sessions and community choir.

2023

Work continued at The Shed with the renovations at Barrhill Road, creating a wind and watertight space and The Nest Wellbeing Group launched a community living room, securing funding for new staff and to expand their wellbeing programmes.

Cumnock's big ideas for positive change in 2024

Constructing New Community Space

In Cumnock, something special has been taking shape. Renovation works of the space at 39 Barrhill Road, a joint effort between Cumnock & District Men's Shed (CMS) and The Nest Wellbeing Group (TNWG), is more than just a construction project. It's creating a space where people can come together, learn from one another, and feel part of something bigger.

The project will celebrate local people in Cumnock and the surrounding area, encouraging a better sense of togetherness through creative wellbeing activity, promoting personal growth and wellbeing by supporting people to learn new things and share skills and knowledge with others.

This new space will play an important role locally, helping to build a sense of togetherness and community through 'hands on' creative activity.

The collaboration with TNWG ensures those who often feel on the side-lines of the community become active members. These people have greatly informed the project, and their voices will continue to play an important role in helping to develop future programmes of activity.

The journey hasn't been easy, but it's been rewarding. This year, volunteers continued to roll up their sleeves for the "Positive Destruction" phase, stripping out the old derelict building to make way for what's to come.



For many, it was more than just construction - it was community building in action. With each swing of the hammer, the volunteers created a space where everyone felt valued and connected.

Funding has been a big focus too. After months of effort, the team secured the final £289,000 needed to bring their vision to life. This included £85k from Place Based Investment Fund, £86k from Renewable Energy Fund, £78k from CARES (Renewable energy focussed) and £30k from Garfield Weston Foundation. The funds received for the renewables system will help create a sustainable space powered by clean energy - a point of pride for everyone involved.

But it's not just about bricks and mortar. The partnership between CMS and TNWG has grown stronger through this process. Through workshops facilitated by Columba 1400, they've explored shared values and strengthened their leadership teams. Overcoming challenges, like misinformation from other organisations, has only made them more determined.

Although the renovation works aren't finished yet, there's a clear plan in place to see it through. For those involved, this new space is more than a construction project, it's a symbol of what's possible when people come together with a shared purpose.





Important to us

What we need

How we'll know it is working...

How we'll work together...

Health & Wellbeing

- Improving mental health & wellbeing
- Offering inclusive, accessible and meaningful activity
- Improving pathways to services
- Reducing inequalities, access to dignified food provision/support through Homemaker project

Learning & Development

- Offering inclusive and accessible training
- Offering more opportunities and experiences
- Encouraging positive pathways
- Sharing skills and knowledge with others

Recovery & Resilience

community-wide

- Improving pathways for change
- Encouraging greater understanding / support
- Creating a connected / safer community
- Delivering community-wide crises support
- Reducing Stigma - Promoting "we are all in recovery from something"

Spaces & Places

- Improving spaces (buildings/land)
- Creating safe, inclusive and accessible space
- Ensuring space is community-led
- Securing community owned spaces
- Ensuring our spaces are sustainable and promote 'Green Thinking'

- Multi-year funding
- Staff

- Volunteers
- A strong network of invested partners

- Long-term sustainable planning

- Opportunities to amplify community voice

- Our community are at the forefront of change
- We feel more connected, included and are celebrated for who we are
- Our priorities are endorsed, gain investment and are being delivered
- The spaces that we create, are community-led / owned
- We help build a sense of togetherness and hope for local people
- We work with others on projects for change
- We build better pathways to services to encourage offering the right support at the right time
- Services value our approach and support/invest in our community-led initiatives

- We ensure any change that is created has community wellbeing at the heart
- We will encourage partnerships that share our core values:
Compassion, hope, togetherness, integrity and love
- We help build strong and trusting relationships
- We create opportunities for shared learning and continued growth

Together we have...

- Developed two local Charities
- Secured in the region of £1 million pounds of project investment
- Purchased a community van
- Employed three fulltime staff
- Developed and are delivering programmes based on priorities
- Created a Camerados Community Living room
- Helped establish better pathways to services

Partners

- East Ayrshire Council
 - Housing
 - Employability
 - Community Health
- East Ayrshire Community Hospital
- Alcohol & Drug and Health & Social Care Partnerships
- Local & 3rd sector groups & orgs
- Police Scotland

Local Spaces



The Nest

A home from home, built around the strengths, interests and aspirations of local people.
A safe and inclusive environment where people are encouraged to embrace their true self.

The Shed

Through collaborative working with others, we are developing a new creative wellbeing space based around the community shed model. (Community Asset Transfer)

Homemaker Project: Building foundations of belonging

For many, the concept of home extends beyond walls and a roof. It is a space where life can be rebuilt, relationships nurtured, and futures reimagined. The Homemaker Project, designed and delivered by The Nest Wellbeing Group (TNWG), embodies this belief. It offers a lifeline to individuals in recovery as they embark on the journey of reclaiming their lives.

At its heart, the Homemaker Project is about transformation. This transformation is not just of physical spaces, but of lives. The project provides participants with the tools and support to create homes that reflect safety, stability, and dignity. Through thoughtful guidance and a community-driven approach, TNWG helps individuals rediscover the pride and empowerment that comes with creating a space to call their own.



This approach is not about handouts. It is about helping people build resilience and self-worth. By connecting people with resources to furnish their homes, access essential items, and establish routines of care, the Homemaker Project helps participants take meaningful steps towards independence. It recognises that a well-tended home can be the foundation for rebuilding relationships, especially with loved ones.

The impact of the Homemaker Project ripples far beyond individual households. It challenges stigma by showing what is possible when compassion meets action. For those who engage with the project, it is not just about furniture or necessities. It is about being seen, valued, and supported in their journey towards a brighter future.

In every carefully placed chair or freshly cleaned room lies a message: you are worthy of comfort, stability, and belonging. Through the Homemaker Project, TNWG continues its mission to create spaces where people can thrive - one home at a time.



The Nest: Finding our home

In the Gaelic language there is a word that is used to describe a deep-rooted feeling of belonging to a place, 'Cianalas' (Kee-ah-null-iss) is more than just a word though, it is a strong emotion that carries no melancholy but rather a connection to and understanding of what is really important. This profound sense of connection is exactly what The Nest Wellbeing Group (TNWG) has created in the heart of Cumnock.

From the moment you cross the threshold of The Nest, you are enveloped in an atmosphere carefully crafted to make you feel at home. The space itself is intentionally designed to evoke the comfort of home rather than the formality of traditional service provision. Natural lighting bathes comfortable seating arrangements, creating an environment where conversations flow freely and connections form organically.

At The Nest, the emphasis is on community-led approaches to wellbeing. Their projects and activities are designed to support holistic recovery, recognising that healing happens in the spaces between people, where shared experiences and mutual support create the conditions for profound personal growth. Support groups, open door policies, mindfulness sessions, and creative

activities like art workshops are all part of a comprehensive approach that addresses the diverse needs of participants.

The Nest's philosophy is rooted in the belief that everyone has inherent value and something unique to offer. By integrating activities that promote physical activity, creative expression and emotional support, The Nest creates a rich tapestry of experiences that help people rebuild their lives. The impact of The Nest ripples far beyond its walls. It has shown what's possible when kindness, understanding, and connection are placed at the heart of a community. For those who step into this space, whether for support or simply out of curiosity, it's clear that The Nest is something truly special.

The Nest offers something precious: a community that understands without judgement. Here, people uncover strengths they didn't know they had and find acceptance they may have been seeking for years. The environment communicates what words sometimes cannot – you matter here, you are safe here, you belong here. It's this environment in which people discover that feeling, a knowledge that they've found somewhere that resonates with their soul.



Where are the opportunities to make positive change?

Scotland's communities need funders, including the public sector, to provide support and resource in ways that work for them. In Cumnock, events like the Burn's Supper highlight the importance of funding for community activity and how such gatherings are vital for developing a sense of belonging. Efforts to secure funding for projects like The Shed renovations demonstrate how collaborative investment addresses local need.

Positive change happens when we listen to communities – the people who call Scotland's neighbourhoods home. In Cumnock, listening to and including the community has led to meaningful change, through the development of programmes by The Nest Wellbeing Group and collaborative planning efforts. Through the Positive Destruction sessions, tailored support has nurtured connection and a sense of pride among community members.

Place-based working centres the knowledge of residents to drive positive changes in their communities. The Homemaker Project centres the knowledge of Cumnock residents and community groups in driving positive change, recognition from local housing providers that this project fills a gap they are not able to fill and providing direct support to those who need it most.

Neighbourhoods, in all parts of Scotland, should be thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of the people who call them home. In Cumnock, thoughtful planning is clear from the design and accessibility of spaces that are being developed locally. The Nest's transformation provides the community with a space they have connected with, instilling a sense of belonging and community pride. The planning and delivery of community spaces in Cumnock showcases how communities can be designed to serve the people that call it home.



What next?

From March 2026, our relationship with communities will change. We are supporting community leaders to establish their priorities, plans, and partnerships to sustain community-led change. We will walk alongside community leaders through the Community Leadership Collective ensuring that communities have the skills, connections, and support to take their ideas into action. We will work to ensure that Scotland's communities are supported and resourced in ways that work for them. Throughout 2025, we will support the Cumnock community to realise their plan, with specific actions including:

- Support the delivery of Cumnock's Plan on a Page.
- Support community leaders to develop skills and build networks through Corra's Community Leadership Collective.
- Support new and existing groups to establish and keep going and develop their ideas.



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