



## People in Place – Annual Update 2018: Blacklands, North Ayrshire

### Introduction

The People in Place programme works at communities' pace, focussing on inclusive engagement and sustainable investment. A dedicated Community Co-ordinator in each place, brings people together for conversations and helps them identify shared priorities.

Louise McCulloch has been working alongside the community in Blacklands since late November 2016. Louise works alongside and in partnership with local people to identify the strengths, talents and skills within the local community. The programme helps facilitate and enable capacity building within the community; widening community participation; seeking out voices that are seldom heard; and ultimately resulting in locally-led actions being taken.

#### What is People in Place aiming to achieve?

By working alongside communities and partners, the People in Place programme aims to support sustainable long-term change in each place and at a systemic level.

The aim is to appreciate the distinctiveness of each local area, understand the aspirations of local people and develop ways to help meet these so that communities can:

- Develop community influence and control
- Ensure assets and resources can be maintained into the future
- Build social connections and networks.

The ambition for each community that we work alongside is set by the people in that place.

Our commitment is to help create the conditions and connections for bold results to be achieved.

It is informed by the following key themes that have emerged from the work to date:

- Voice
- Space
- Participation
- Investment
- Learning & Development

## Snapshot of work during the past year

### Mapping and research

- ☼ In the wider Ayrshire area, Corra have been involved in a Community of Practice for people who are interested in this type of work – sharing learning, providing support for one another and providing workshops on specific aspects of engagement.

### Engagement – Bringing people together

- ☼ Working with the Health and Wellbeing Pupil Council in Blacklands Primary – a series of health and physical wellbeing topics were delivered with the Pupil Council who then shared their learning with others in the school.
- ☼ History Event in Blacklands – working in partnership with Blacklands Community Associations, North Ayrshire Council (NAC) and Kilwinning Heritage. Local families were provided with their own family history which was displayed at the event as well as other local history and memorabilia.
- ☼ Family Fun Night – family entertainment, food and refreshment provided for local families at the School's Out for Summer event. People from outside of Blacklands attended, and families connected and engaged in activities together.
- ☼ Pop up Sports/Games – free event one sunny day in July, in an area directly outside the library, played games and provided refreshments. Library staff offered to help at this event which was gratefully received.
- ☼ Picnic in the Park – this year instead of leading the event Louise supported the community group Kilwinning Community Events to lead the event. Louise's role was to encourage as many services and community groups to come along and provide free activities or information.
- ☼ Chair Based Exercise class - Louise used her expertise to provide these sessions and support a volunteer to lead the sessions. These sessions are shown to be reducing social isolation amongst participants and encouraging new people into the library, as well as the physical benefits of chair exercise. These sessions also include "social time" providing participants with tea/coffee and the opportunity to chat with others.
- ☼ Parent & Toddler Group – Louise has been supporting the group to continue and build the confidence of the newly elected committee, as well as brokering relationships with organisations to support the group to gain funding and build skills to submit successful funding applications in future.

### Development of community Ideas Into Action

- ☼ People had suggested that if local people knew the history of the area that they would have more respect for the area – this was the reason behind organising the history event. People who hadn't lived in the area for some time rekindled old connections, and others who had also not previously engaged attended, such as some people who live in the sheltered housing in Blacklands. These new relationships in turn lead to increased participation in the chair-based exercise group.

- ☼ School Uniform Clothing Project – second year with this project. The parent council from one of the schools has continued recycling school uniforms from the donations received from the first year of the project. Louise has been encouraging all of the schools who required donations to try to involve parent councils if the staff did not have the capacity within school to develop this.
- ☼ Sharing Learning – noticing change in other communities. During the school uniform clothing project, Louise mentioned this to her connection at local children’s Charity Cash for Kids. This Charity provides funding for children’s groups throughout Ayrshire. The charity felt other groups could benefit from a clothing project initiative and started to chat to some of their groups about this which led to at least two other groups using this model in their own area. Louise is also providing support to a community member from the wider North Ayrshire area who is in the process of starting a similar project.

**Brokering role – Provide the glue to stick everything together**

- ☼ Warrior Mum Project - supporting local woman Tracy Gilmour with her project, funding opportunities, brokering various relationships and providing help to explore ideas, give reassurance and encouragement.
- ☼ Picnic in the Park – invited local charities, community groups and organisations to come along. Louise’s role was to invite and work with local groups to provide activity and information to people attending the event.
- ☼ Chair Based Exercise class - targeting people with mobility limitations and older adults. The “social time” in these sessions are potential opportunities for other agencies to engage/provide information – invitations are issued based on the group’s interest and requests.

**Key themes in Blacklands**

- ☼ Relationships: a positive relationship with the local authority has helped the work to gain traction.
- ☼ Power: working to increase community involvement in ideas, action and decision making.
- ☼ Space: success in opening existing community facilities and developing outdoor spaces.
- ☼ Participation: increased range and involvement in local activities is encouraging.
- ☼ Voice: support for the local parent council, and participation in a local Democracy Matters conversation.

Although the specific circumstances are often very different, key themes are being identified across the communities that we are working alongside. The key themes have been incorporated into a Strategic Framework for the People in Place programme and will be used to inform the development of a local operational plan for Louise’s work in Blacklands.

## Area in Numbers

As part of our learning and evaluation framework we have developed systematic ways to keep track of how we are working alongside the community, using both qualitative and quantitative data. Below is a snapshot of engagement in Blacklands from January to December 2018.



**297 hours of support  
provided by community  
members**



**9105 people engaged  
or involved in activities**



**725 new people  
reached**



**1469 people engaged  
through Facebook**

## Case study

### Family Fun Night - Nethermains Community Centre



The Family Fun Night was organised in response to feedback from an online community survey, as well as an appetite for an event where adults and children can do activities together, to encourage family play and where families could connect with one another and across the wider community.

The event was also planned to be used as an opportunity to consult with community members about future events/activities as well as a platform to increase interest in volunteering.

A local parent, who also has started a local social enterprise 'The Warrior Mum Project' assisted in organising the event to provide her with the experience and increased confidence to allow her to organise her own community events in the future.

The Nethermains Community Centre was chosen for: its capacity and facilities, to involve volunteers from the community association, to further build on relationships with the Community Association, and to encourage people from outwith Blacklands to come to the area and find what else is happening in the hall. The event was promoted throughout Blacklands and the wider area, utilising social media and local networks tickets were on sale for £1. All seven local primary schools in Kilwinning were visited and leaflets handed out. Louise also spoke with Blacklands parents at the school to encourage them to come along. Tickets were given to the Family Learning Worker based in the school and the Senior Practitioner for Early Years, these were given to families they felt would like to attend but had financial constraints which may prevent them attending.

## What was achieved?

The Family Fun Night was delivered in partnership with: Nethermains Community Centre, the Community Association, local volunteers, Corra Foundation staff, and businesses including Morrisons, Sainsburys, Domino's Pizza and B & M who gave donations for the buffet.

A family entertainer was booked for the evening of the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, the last day of term for North Ayrshire school children. The entertainer engaged with all the children and encouraged adult participation which was well received.

The majority of the 46 people who attended the event were from Blacklands, there were two families from Whitehurst Park who wouldn't have ordinarily used Nethermains Community Centre and one family from Irvine. Parents became involved in games and helped the entertainer with some of the games.

Two parents offered their help for any future events. One mum told Louise "this is great, if you need a hand doing anything else, I will help". Another mum told Louise how she had organised a charity event the previous year. It had been the first time she had organised anything but she had really enjoyed being so involved in the community and would really like to get take part in other events.



Two parents on the night streamed live on Facebook with posts such as "Huge well done, the family fun night was amazing and all for a cost of £1". Other comments on social media included "Had a great time thank you so much would love to see this more often". Other parents had also expressed apologies on Facebook that they had missed this event due to various reasons but would definitely want to come along to the next event.

## Challenges and learning for the future

Although the original plan was to celebrate the school term finishing, in hindsight this may not have been the best date. Many parents had breaks away planned for this time, whether going to relatives or to holiday parks where it was more affordable to go before English schools stopped. This resulted in several families who may have come along missing out on the event.

Local businesses had already donated to several other local fundraisers and events recently which could have been a factor in generating support for the event.

Several dads attended the event, this is really the first event where Louise has noticed a strong male presence. Possible reasons for more dads attending are: the fact that it was a weekday evening and so not conflicting with work or weekend events, and the type of entertainer meaning that people felt more comfortable to get involved.



## Look Ahead

Over the next few months Corra Foundation's People in Place Community Co-ordinator will:

- ☼ Continue to support Blacklands Parent & Toddler group, in particular to recruit a new committee for the new term in August 2019
- ☼ Continue to support other local groups
- ☼ Develop and support ideas from the local community
- ☼ Build on established relationships
- ☼ Develop the Chair Based Exercise session to be volunteer/community led
- ☼ Focus on community issues relating to people experiencing poverty
- ☼ Work in partnership with North Ayrshire Council and other agencies
- ☼ Listening to individuals' experiences and capturing evidence
- ☼ Brokering relationships to assist community involvement

## Connections in Blacklands

[The Blacklands network map](#) represents the network of relationships between organisations and groups in Blacklands. As a first attempt, the mapping is from the perspective of Louise the local Community Co-ordinator. The software used to create the map, 'Kumu', can be used to highlight key influencers, find the most efficient paths for information to flow through the network, and describe the assets and attributes that each organisation or group has. In future versions, the intention is to seek multiple perspectives from across the community in order to create robust maps that show the development of networks and relationships over time.

## Co-ordinator Contact Details

**Name:** Louise Shaw

**Address:**

Kilwinning Library

St Winnings Lane

Kilwinning

**Email:** [louise@corra.scot](mailto:louise@corra.scot)

**Phone:** 07809 216 572

**Website:** [www.corra.scot](http://www.corra.scot)

## Summary of the People in Place programme so far

Corra Foundation understands that the challenges facing communities are complex and dynamic, and that traditional grant making alone will not support communities to address these issues. In response to this, and following an extensive period of research and development, the People in Place programme was launched in 2014.

Since 2015 this pioneering programme has been underpinned by a Funder Collaborative that brings together five partners with a shared commitment to learning and financial investment totaling £1.5M to June 2019.

This combined knowledge and investment has supported Community Co-ordinators to begin working alongside nine communities across eight Scottish local authority areas. Through the delivery of the programme 'on the ground' we have gained rich learning about the challenges and opportunities for specific communities - and broader systemic issues that resonate at national and policy level.

Strong foundations have now been laid for the [Getting Alongside Communities](#) programme and communities to create positive change at an increased pace. This Annual Update provides an illustration of the work in individual communities and draws out key high-level learning points which have been incorporated into the Strategic Framework for People in Place from 2019 onwards.

As People in Place has evolved, additional and integrated areas of work have been developed using investment from Corra Foundation and other sources. These are:

**Appetite for Change:** we are committed to working collaboratively to support the development of new place-based approaches at the scale of a Scottish town or city.

**Place-based Learning & Sharing:** The focus for this work in 2018 was the Place-based Working Project (PBWP). Convened by Corra Foundation, this research project has explored best practice in place-based work along with the policy and legislative frameworks that support (or hinder) its application in Scotland. The project culminated in Scotland's Place Leadership Summit which brought together cross-sector leaders - from communities, third sector, public, private and national government - and launched the [Place Principle](#).

The evidence base and momentum created by the project provides a platform for People in Place to increase collaboration at a range of levels. On the strength of the work to date, **Corra Foundation trustees have confirmed a minimum 10-year commitment to People in Place.**



**Our overall ambition is to support sustainable long-term change in each place and at a systemic level by:**

- 🌿 **Developing community influence and control**
- 🌿 **Ensuring assets and resources can be maintained into the future**
- 🌿 **Building social connections and networks**

**Our work responds to wider societal factors including:**

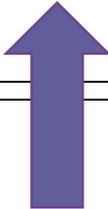
- 🌿 **Power**
- 🌿 **Poverty**
- 🌿 **Inequality**
- 🌿 **Social Isolation**

**Key Themes**

- 🌿 **Voice**  
Seldom heard voices  
Storytelling (individual, community, Corra)  
Citizen Journalism
- 🌿 **Space**  
Supporting use of available space  
Making new spaces available  
Exploring asset transfer and community ownership
- 🌿 **Participation**  
In community/community activities  
In Local Democracy includes ‘active community planning’  
Participatory Scotland  
Participatory Budgeting/grant making
- 🌿 **Investment**  
Helping communities to access funding  
Collective investment (from funders) into places  
Collective investment (across sectors)  
Kinder procurement  
Inclusive Growth/Community Wealth Building
- 🌿 **Learning & Development**  
Sharing what we learn to shape practice [ours & others]  
Sharing what we learn to shift policy  
Linking team and programme development  
Connecting with national and international networks  
Using our learning to support system change

**Our approach is built on some key underpinning principles:**

🌿 <b>Relationships</b>	🌿 <b>Independence</b>
🌿 <b>Bridging</b>	🌿 <b>Building local capacity</b>
🌿 <b>Brokering</b>	🌿 <b>Trust</b>



## Where we are going

Corra Foundation's independence, reputation and commitment to collaboration mean that we are well placed to act as a *catalytic agent* that can support positive change in local communities, nationally, and at a systemic level. Through People in Place:

*We work on system change – bringing together the voices and resources of all those in communities to bring about fundamental change.*

*We convene – as an independent foundation we use our knowledge to facilitate collective work and create the spaces for conversation in places.*

*We listen – because we cannot convene without knowing about a place from the people involved with it.*

*We are curious and adaptive – because where we begin is not the destination and shifting course requires awareness of what is changing with the collective and place.*

Corra Foundation's current 10-year commitment to People in Place extends to 2026. By working alongside communities and partners, **People in Place aims to support sustainable long-term change in each place and at a systemic level.**

**The ambition for each community that we work alongside will be set by the people in that place.** Our commitment to them is to create the conditions, and connections, for bold results to be achieved. We will continually learn, share and adapt our approach across the following programme elements:

**Getting Alongside Communities:** Our existing commitment to working alongside ten communities will continue. Over the next three years our relationship with these communities will evolve as local aspirations, agency and influence grow. The role of Community Co-ordinators will continue to progress from hands-on involvement, to a facilitative role, to the provision of ad hoc support – in turn, this progression will create capacity to support work in new communities.

There is an interest from local authorities we are currently working with in developing 'clusters' of communities and potential to develop Getting Alongside Communities outwith the local authorities that were originally identified.

**Appetite for Change:** In collaboration with Participatory City Foundation and with high interest from the Scottish Government we intend to take forward Participatory Scotland by adapting the place-based model from Barking and Dagenham to a Scottish context. In addition, we are actively exploring other collaborations to design and deliver new place-based approaches at the scale of a Scottish town or city and in coastal and rural settings.

**Place-based Learning & Sharing:** Building on the learning from the 'delivery strands' of the People in Place programme, and the cross-sector collaboration of the PBWP, we will continue to convene broad conversations and focused collective action in specific places to support place-based working as a catalyst for broader system change.