

Carbrain

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



SNAPSHOT

Corra's work to support community priorities in Cabrain has included:

- Helping to establish Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub as a charity. Supporting their development of new services, partnerships, and funding sources.
- Supporting the Sharing Time Initiative which brings together local community organisations collaborating on services around cost of living, food insecurity, warm spaces, and funding for local people.
- Development of Carbrain Community Events group which formed from work with Parent Councils of St Margaret's and Carbrain Primary Schools.
- Corra Community Co-ordinator, Shazia, has supported Craigieburn Community Gardens' plans for community food growing in Carbrain and the development of Stonylee Square as an educational resource for local children.
- Resourcing Cumbernauld FM to deliver radio skills classes in both primary schools and community organisations. Enabling diverse voices and perspectives from Carbrain to be heard and given a mainstream media platform.

Keep reading to find out more about what's been happening in Carbrain in 2023.

Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub

2023 has seen our communities continue to experience difficulties throughout the cost-of-living crisis. Once again, despite the challenges, we have come to appreciate the strength and resilience of our local community organisations as they continue to find flexible ways to support people.



The newly formed Cumbernauld and Carbrain Community Hub, which grew organically from community action in Carbrain, moved to the town centre and expanded the holistic support it provides to local communities. Services include a community food pantry catering to a diverse range of diets including vegan and halal, community fridge, clothes swap shop, mental health groups, family support, breakfast groups, IT support, community gardening and much more.

The Hub champions local voices by embedding them in every aspect of its operation. From trustees and volunteers to ongoing community engagement, The Hub prioritises developing a space that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of local people. This year Shazia supported The Hub to develop and secure funding for three paid staff roles to ensure the development and delivery of services over the next 3 years.



Sharing Time Initiative

The Sharing Time Initiative is a meeting of local organisations working in Carbrain and Cumbernauld that was brought together by Stuart MacDonald MSP, Corra and Sanctuary Housing with a particular focus on the cost-of-living crisis. The initiative is about partnership working and supporting the community in ways that work for the community. It is a networking forum of organisations and individuals working to better coordinate and cooperate so that services can be more accessible. This has included community mapping and publicising cost of living support services across Cumbernauld. This has supported service providers and communities to find what they need locally.

Sharing Time is also supporting New Scots who have recently arrived in the area. They are working on a project looking at sharing food and culture from these diverse communities in a welcoming way through international food cafes.

Carbrain Community Events

Carbrain Community Events is a grassroots voluntary organisation providing free events & activities for children and families living in Carbrain. The group was founded a year ago by Steven Murray and Paula Ferns from the two local Parent Councils. The group aims to ensure that children and their families have opportunities to enjoy food and socialise with others at the community events they plan.



With Shazia's support in 2023 this new group has hosted four community discos providing top quality children's entertainment, a buffet, face painting and much more. The group works closely with the schools to ensure they connect with families that would really benefit from events, including families from different ethnic backgrounds. They had a lot of fun providing the following events last year – Valentines, Summer and Glow in The Dark themed discos as well as a Christmas Party (in partnership with Carbrain & Hillcrest Community Council).

During the summer holidays they hosted activities in Carbrain including fun activities in the park, walk to the library day to support summer reading challenges and an Arts & Crafts day making dream catchers (with support from the Cumbernauld and Carbrain Hub). They also hosted consultation meetings with the children to ensure their views inform future events and activities in Carbrain.

Carbrain Community Events are looking to become a charity in 2024 with independent governance. The children, parents and volunteers are very proud of the development of this group and are looking forward to celebrating their first anniversary in February 2024.



Craigieburn Community Gardens

Craigieburn Community Gardens are located close to the town centre and are comprised of Stonylee Square and Craigieburn communal garden space. They are connected by several footpaths in Carbrain. Kate Fromings and a dedicated group of volunteers came together over their shared passion for gardening, horticulture and above all their sense of community to develop the green areas around Craigieburn.

Corra provided funding support which was used towards equipment and installing raised vegetable beds in the growing spaces. The remainder is



Craigieburn Community Gardens contd.

specifically for Stonylee Square to develop a native nature hub and install informative signage. Eventually, the group aims to have both local primary schools take trips to the native nature hub to learn about mini beasts, Scottish wildlife and find out that even in an urban setting nature is on your doorstep to appreciate.

There are now three new accessible raised beds for people with mobility issues to use and the group have increased their harvest to benefit 15 families in Carbrain. This has allowed the development of flower beds and planters within the square and slightly beyond due to the support of volunteers. There is also a park bench – the ‘buddy bench’- where anyone can sit down, and if they are alone someone will come over to speak to them. [Read Kate’s blog on the Corra site to learn more.](#)

In 2022 and 2023 the group took part in Keep Scotland Beautiful and It's Your Neighbourhood competitions, scoring highly in both and assisting Cumbernauld to win 'best small city' two years running. Although 2023 didn't have the best weather, the group still ensured that children and families had access to clean green spaces through litter picking and monitoring dog fouling with the support of Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council and Cumbernauld and Carbrain Hub. Even during the wettest weeks, local children were out in the 'tunnel room' areas playing with chalk or making jewellery and once a week volunteers Paula and Anne-Marie ran a mini group called 'Wee Read Together' where children bring out their own books and read to each other as well as a visit to the library.

Despite the challenging weather, lack of professional gardening experience, and the diverse needs of our residents, the Craigieburn Community Garden thrives. Here, friendships blossom, and environmental skills flourish through events like Citizen Science Surveying. This vibrant garden serves as a powerful testament to the potential for growth, even with the smallest of opportunities.



Community Journalism

Community journalism - Shazia continued to provide support to the development of a broad range of Ideas into Action from local people and groups. Ideas included out of school summer

Community Journalism contd.

activities, Christmas Fayres, anti-racism training for staff at the Carbrain Hub and radio skills training within the primary schools and local community.

The radio skills training idea came from Cumbernauld FM radio presenters. They wanted to deliver radio skills in both Carbrain primary schools to support the school curriculum and increase the confidence and media skills of young people and organisations locally.

The radio equipment funded through Corra will enable children and young people to have a voice through citizen journalism. They will be able to collect, report and disseminate news and views that are important to them and their communities. The stories produced by young people will be broadcast on Cumbernauld FM. These interviewing, presenting and radio skills will continue to be utilised by young people as we are hoping to stage the Carbrain Got Talent in the summer of 2024. So, lots of opportunities for our budding radio presenters!



What have we learned?

While the cost-of-living crisis has continued to bring significant challenges for communities this year, it has also shown their remarkable resilience and flexibility. Communities and organisations have adapted to changing circumstances, actively seeking support and networking opportunities to overcome obstacles.

Partnership working has been critical to the development of the Hub and many of the projects listed above. For example, Cumbernauld and Kilsyth Care who share the town centre space and resources with the Community Hub; Sharing Time Initiative groups that span statutory and voluntary organisations working together to ensure that local people can access appropriate support when needed. Cumbernauld Community Hub, Carbrain and Hillcrest Community Council, Carbrain Community Events and Craigieburn Community Gardens are all working to support a wide range of food, green, social, and environmental activities that have been recognised and appreciated by the communities in Carbrain. Well done to all those who participated and make our local area a great place to live!

What have we learned? contd.

Going forward partnership working is increasingly important given the difficult economic environment for our community. The development of long-term trusting relationships and networking support provided by Shazia to people, groups and organisations locally has been vital in developing and delivering many of these projects and in supporting community aspirations in 2023.

Space is important for communities to come together where ideas can be exchanged and realised giving confidence to the community and ensuring that community voices are heard. The community identify that a neighbourhood community space where people's aspirations and social needs can be realised is a priority.

It is inspiring to see the development of the Hub - moving to become a charity with a board of trustees and now with funding secured for 3 members of staff. However, with the redevelopment of the town centre, the Hub's need for a larger community space will be addressed in the coming year. The importance of having a physical space to launch ideas and services cannot be underestimated.

What happens next?

- Continue to support the development of a community space in Carbrain where local community aspirations can be realised.
- Support the delivery of radio skills classes by Cumbernauld FM in Carbrain.
- Support Carbrain Community Events plans to become a charity and deliver Carbrain's Got Talent.
- Support the development of Stonylee Square as a native nature hub and resource for the people of Carbrain.
- Support Sharing Time Initiatives such as the international café where New Scots from Carbrain can showcase their culture and cuisine and feel a part of the local community.



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There will be a continued focus on equipping local groups with the necessary networking, funding, and capacity building tools to ensure the long-term sustainability of their projects and organisations. Supporting residents, Parent Councils, community cafes and organisations to make positive changes in Carbrain through connecting, collaborating and capacity building on ideas going forward.

Moving Forward

Since 2015, the Getting Alongside Communities programme has been helping to create the conditions for communities to deliver powerful, long-lasting change.

In the early years of the programme, there was a strong focus on listening, capacity building, widening community participation, and supporting ideas into action. This long-term, relational approach has established deep knowledge, trust and connections with local people and partners – and resulted in increased community leadership, voice, ambition and action.

The final delivery phase of the programme is focussed on supporting communities to establish clear priorities, plans and partnerships that can drive and sustain community-led change – beyond an ‘on the ground’ presence from Corra which will end by March 2026.

Each community is currently working to agree their priorities and the format of a community owned plan by March 2024, and to identify the partners required to achieve it. There will be an event in September 2024 to ‘launch’ each plan followed by an agreed timeline to transition to community leadership in each place.

To help each community share learning and connect with community members across the Getting Alongside Communities programme, a community network has been established. Plans are also in place to develop a Community Leadership Collective to accelerate learning, leadership and positive change within and across communities.

The end of Corra’s work on the ground will mark the start of a new relationship between Corra and communities. This legacy phase will be co-created by communities and Corra and include a focus on: celebration and connection; community leadership and infrastructure; financial resources; knowledge & skills; learning & evaluation. Necessary conditions for success include:

- Community owned plan being delivered by local people and partners.
- Local community leadership – with connections to local and national networks.
- Community infrastructure (spaces and organisational structures).
- Long-term resourcing in place (funding, learning, relationships).



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