

# Cumnock

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - WHAT WE'VE LEARNED



### SNAPSHOT

- **Community Asset Transfer:** After a successful Community Asset Transfer of 39 Barrhill Road and securing the necessary funding to support the initial renovation works, 2023 saw Cumnock & District Men's Shed (CMS) embark on an ambitious capital project.
- **Camerados Community Living Room:** The Nest Wellbeing Group (TNWG) celebrated the opening of their Camerados Community Living Room in the Barrhill Centre.
- **New Staff:** Building on years of development by dedicated volunteers, TNWG secured £300k over a 3-year period towards new staff positions to support the development and delivery of their programmes.
- **Collaboration:** When things go wrong, amongst the celebration, local people faced real heartbreak when the key partnership around the Old Bakehouse (12 Kilnholm Place) became unworkable. As a result, the community's vision for change 'The Nest' could not be realised there.

# Community Asset Transfer



After a successful Community Asset Transfer of 39 Barrhill Road and securing funding to support the initial renovation works, 2023 saw Cumnock & District Men's Shed (CMS) embark on an ambitious capital project.

During the preliminary works The Nest Wellbeing Group (TNWG) teamed up with CMS and helped strip out the space through 'Positive Destruction' sessions. The sessions offered a real stressbusting activity and, in turn, helped local people better connect with the space, creating a greater sense of ownership over the development.



The main renovation works have been divided into manageable stages. Stage 1a, which

was completed in 2023, focused on ensuring the building was both wind and watertight. The main funding support for this stage came from Place Based Investment Funding and the Renewable Energy Fund. The group agreed to commit up to £150,000 to support this work, which saw the building being stripped back to the timber frame, strengthened, and fitted with a new Glass Reinforced Plastic roof. A range of double-glazed windows and doors were then

installed, and composite cladding finished the look of the building nicely. The group are delighted that this first stage came in under budget and within the allocated timeframe, with work taking place between July - November.

Corra played a key role in project managing this stage and helped to develop the team who successfully carried out this work.



Fraser explores the importance of employing lateral thinking to ensure the approach best supports the parameters of the project. Listen to this interview on [the Corra site](#).

## Camerado Community Living Room

The Nest Wellbeing Group celebrated the opening of their Camerados Community Living Room in the Barrhill Centre. This project was supported by Comic Relief Shift the Power funding and What Matters to You 'Make it Happen' fund (supported through The Lens programme.)

# Camerado Community Living Room



This one-year pilot has proved very successful in enabling the group to create an environment that best supports community needs. As well as addressing the challenges and barriers community members faced, this space is now encouraging services to meet people in a community-led space.

The group have held pop-up style living rooms in various places, including the town centre, the local health centre, several local events and even the beach. This allowed the group to connect and check in with the wider community.



Nat (TNWG) explores the important role this space has played locally and the impact this has had within the community. Listen to this interview on [the Corra site](#).

## New Staff

### Building on years of development by dedicated volunteers

The Nest Wellbeing Group have recently secured £300k that will support two full-time and one part-time members of staff for a 3-year period. They also employ a freelance funding officer as part of their team.

Staff include:

- Wellbeing Development Manager (Community Fund, The National Lottery),
- Wellbeing & Resilience Coordinator (Robertson Trust)
- Recovery Coordinator (Local Support Fund, Corra).

The new staff have provided a huge amount of support to community members over the year, delivering this work through key delivery strands that include Health & Wellbeing, Learning & Development and Recovery.



The group also has a strong pool of volunteers that helped at various events including a Community Burn's Supper and Christmas Lunch. Their weekly breakfast club now has 40 – 50 regular attendees.



Nat talks about new staff within the organisation and the shift from a charity relying solely on volunteers to employing its first staff. Listen to this interview on [the Corra site](#).



# Collaboration

## When things go wrong



In amongst the celebration, local people faced real heartbreak when the key partnership around The Nest (12 Kilnholm Place) became unworkable and, as a result, could not support the group's vision for change.

### The Challenge

Unfortunately, the pace of development and the partnership with the Council of Voluntary

Organisations, East Ayrshire (CVOEA) around 'The Nest' building faced significant challenges. Despite efforts to keep the capital project and partnership on track – including discussions facilitated by East Ayrshire Council – we collectively interpreted the partnership as unworkable.

Following a request to transfer ownership to The Nest Wellbeing Group, CVOEA have indicated their intention to retain the building. As such The Nest Wellbeing Group, with support from Corra and What Matters to You, had to pursue the development of their ideas and vision for 'The Nest' in other local spaces.



Collaboration – Thinking outside the box to overcome challenges.

Given the stage of the capital project, coupled with the collaborative working already taking place between the organisations, both TNWG and CMS have agreed 'in principle' to share 39 Barrhill Road. This will be home to both The Shed & The Nest and will offer a creative wellbeing space as a way of celebrating and amplifying community voices and community-led ideas for change.



Nat talks about the impact locally of when things go wrong, the challenging steps taken and finding solutions in order to support visions for change. Listen to this interview on [the Corra site](#).

## What have we learned?



The ambitious capital project at 39 Barrhill Road (The Shed & The Nest) will offer a fitting long-term home for both Cumnock & District Men's Shed and The Nest Wellbeing Group.

This collaborative approach will help ensure the sustainability of this new community-led space and offer a fitting platform to continue developing ideas for change which are informed by local people.

The organisations hope to complement each other by offering a safe, supportive, and positive environment that focuses on personal growth and wellbeing in a creative setting where people learn new things and can share skills and knowledge with others.

The Nest Wellbeing Group have focussed on delivering programmes built around people's strengths, interests, needs and aspirations. The projects featured throughout this update have helped celebrate local people and encouraged a better sense of togetherness.

The new staff employed by the organisation have been able to offer greater support to those facing a range of complex challenges and barriers. They have helped create pathways to services and offered opportunities for staff from external services to meet people in a community run space.

The Nest Wellbeing Group have also played a valuable part in helping to inform the support needs of the community through the cost-of-living crisis and the legacy of the Covid pandemic. They continue to highlight the significant level of need through this work. It has been rewarding to work alongside them and inspiring to witness their work on the ground.

The route to change is often challenging with, what seems like, endless waves trying to knock you off course. Remaining flexible in the approach, whilst looking ahead to better understand the complexity of the systems at play and pre-empt challenges is important. Hindsight of course is a wonderful thing and



**"I attended a Leadership Embodiment course in May and part of this course helped explore the body's natural responses to challenges. I learned the importance of adopting a centered and balanced approach, with one exercise encouraging you to visualise 'a team' of people behind you. I always smile when I think about 'the team' in Cumnock, I mean, what a team!"**

## What have we learned? cont.

capturing learning to inform future projects is a valuable step, moreover, this provides a great opportunity for valuable shared learning.

Challenges and frustrations can be used to further fuel change, serving to offer the reassurance and stimulate greater confidence we are on the right track and that 'the change' is needed in the first place.

## What happens next?

We will continue to build on the identified key priority of creating new community spaces. This work will focus on the ambitious renovation of 39 Barrhill Rd and the significant task of securing the £270k to complete the project.



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The Shed & The Nest will play a key role in providing a sense of home and belonging for those who often feel on the side-line of the community. These are the people that have been the catalyst for this project and their voices will continue to play an important role in informing the direction the programmes delivered, which endeavour to better their lives. These voices have already played an invaluable role in identifying other priorities which now make up the TNWG delivery strands. These include a Health & Wellbeing programmes, Learning & Development opportunities and experiences and the recovery focused programme MUMO.

In addition to this, there will be efforts made to ensure the right partnerships are in place to complement the community-led ideas for change Corra supports.

## Partnership Funding

This year funding from East Ayrshire Council helped to support Corra's work alongside Cumnock community. This is a welcome contribution to our long-term partnership and important step in resourcing communities.

# 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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