

## People in Place – Annual Update 2017: Cumnock, East Ayrshire

### Introduction

This brief update highlights the work being undertaken by Corra Foundation (previously called Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland) in Cumnock, East Ayrshire, including the learning gathered so far through the People in Place programme.

#### ➤ **Initial community selection process**

We first met with Katie Kelly on the 7 October 2014. This meeting enabled Corra Foundation to understand and explore the new and progressive way in which East Ayrshire Council was working with communities and to see if our approach would complement theirs.

It was an opportunity for Corra Foundation to take learning from being involved in a process of community engagement linked to the development of a Community Action Plan.

This meeting was followed up by further local research into areas of interest and agreement as to how the two programmes would co-exist.

A subsequent community walkabout took place and as a result of the combined research and community walkabout it was agreed that Cumnock had all the ‘ingredients’ for the People in Place work. These included:

- ✿ A willing appetite from the local team to support our work.
- ✿ A central venue for the worker.
- ✿ The area is a self-defined community.
- ✿ The area had different community spaces.

Shaun Lowrie was recruited and began working in Cumnock in June 2015. This brief report contains a snapshot of the work he has been undertaking.

➤ **Snapshot of work during the past year**

Phase	Activity
<p><b>Mapping and Research</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Range of desk based research incorporating previous community consultations and stakeholder meetings.</li> <li>➤ Community walkabouts.</li> <li>➤ Introduction meetings and conversations with community groups.</li> <li>➤ Carrying out a skills and network audit amongst Action Plan members.</li> <li>➤ Introductory meetings with key stakeholders with public, private and voluntary sectors.</li> <li>➤ Meetings with Cumnock Youth Council.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Engagement</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p><b>MAGNET bringing people together</b></p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Introductory meetings with key stakeholders with public, private and voluntary sectors.</li> <li>➤ Specific activities from March 2017 – March 2018 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued support and development of Cumnock Action Plan.</li> <li>• Continued support to specific themes of Outdoor Activities &amp; Open Spaces, Better Town Appearance and Tourism, History &amp; Heritage.</li> <li>• 2 x Funder’s Fayres.</li> <li>• 4 x Community litter picks.</li> <li>• Planning and delivery of the Spring Fling.</li> <li>• Planning and delivery of The Big Lunch.</li> <li>• The Big Walk with Eden Project.</li> <li>• Popup street engagement sessions.</li> <li>• Stakeholder update session.</li> <li>• Meetings with Cumnock Youth Council.</li> <li>• Planning and delivery of the Family Festival.</li> <li>• Presentation to Youth Forum.</li> <li>• Development of a Pan Ayrshire forum to share learning.</li> <li>• Development and launch of the Wee Sewing Bee.</li> <li>• Development and launch of Cumnock Garden Group.</li> <li>• Cumnock Christmas Festival planning and project management support.</li> <li>• Bulb planting activity with volunteers and several community groups.</li> <li>• Delivery of Digital Skills training.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Establishment of a local microgrant to encourage groups to become involved with Get Creative.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Development of ideas into action</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Supported setup of The Wee Sewing Bee – the idea of a local resident to harness textile related skills and talents and then share them with the wider community. Made connections to local curtain and textile factory for regular donations.</li> <li>➤ Supported setup of the Gardening Group – another idea of a local resident to bring together people with an interest in gardening, to share skills, knowledge and to build an outdoor practical space in partnership with other community groups.</li> </ul>

<p><b>TO FIND SOLUTIONS that are appropriate and work</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Supported asset transfer of two ‘stalled spaces’. One site will be used to develop a dementia friendly community garden / social space and the other will be brought back to a condition more pleasing to the community’s eye than in its current condition.</li> <li>➤ Supported individuals to organise the first Eden inspired Big Lunch following the return of three volunteers from Eden project in Cornwall.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Brokering role</b></p>  <p><b>PROVIDE THE GLUE to stick everything together<sup>1</sup></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Three members of Cumnock Action Plan have been to Eden Project in Cornwall.</li> <li>➤ Attended Stalled Spaces event in Paisley with members of CAP and then used information from the event to carry out some research locally.</li> <li>➤ Introduction of Cycling Scotland, Sustrans and Central Scotland Green Network Trust to groups in Cumnock to progress with ideas and activities. One successful funding application was made to Cycling Scotland by CJCE.</li> </ul>

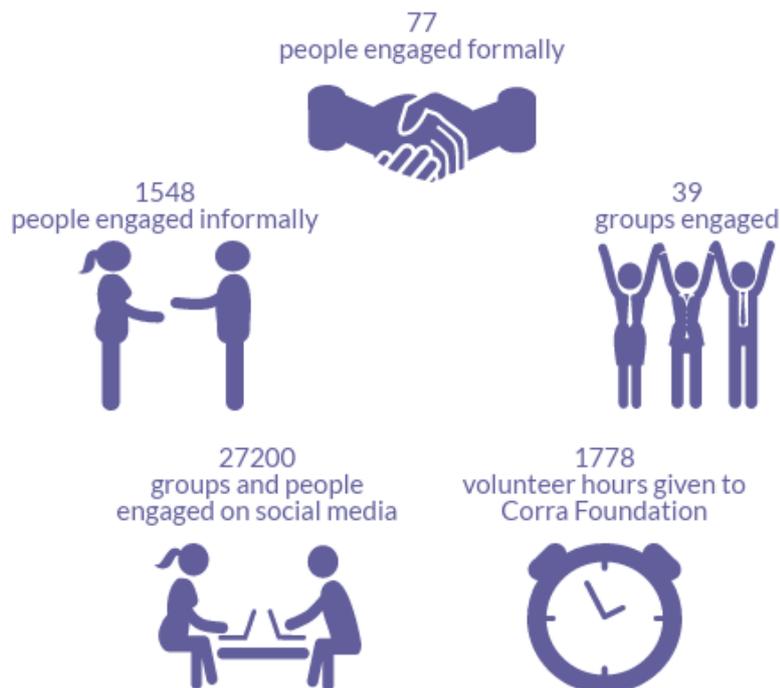


All designed to:  the community to achieve their ambitions.

## Area in Numbers

### ➤ Engagement numbers

As part of our learning and evaluation framework we have developed systematic ways in which to keep track of how we are working in the community using both qualitative and quantitative data. Below is a snapshot of engagement the Cumnock community co-ordinator has done over the year.



<sup>1</sup> A snapshot of some of the connections being made can be found in the ‘Connections Mapping’ section of this report

➤ Brief case study

**Cumnock Gardening Group.**

Nestled within Cumnock Action Plan is the theme of outdoor activities, open spaces and better town appearance. This theme is being led by a small team of volunteers, all of whom who have an interest, skills and a wealth of knowledge in gardening and horticulture. One member of the subgroup recognised that there was a multitude of talent and skills in the wider community and that he knew several keen gardeners who had mentioned they would love to see a community group being established.

We set the wheels in motion and worked with one individual to put their idea into action. We supported the initial promotion by designing posters and fliers for the group and negotiated with a local organisation to use some space free of charge. This was agreed and the initial group meeting was promoted.

Ten people came to the first initial meeting and the energy and passion in the room to see this group continue to grow was unbelievable. The group have continued to meet on a fortnightly basis, and funding has been secured to cover hall lets until end of May.

The group applied to the micro grant fund a part of Get Creative week where they were successful with an application of £100. This was used to build some outdoor growing spaces from old tyres and pallets at a local community centre. 25 people attended the event on the day, chipping in their ideas and knowledge to the project on the day and at future events.

The group are now in talks with the local hospital to develop some garden space they have, sourcing all plants and tools locally and also working in partnership with the home link worker in Cumnock Academy to engage some young people who are disengaged from school. This could result in a great project.



## Look Ahead

### ➤ Over the next few months Corra Foundation's People in Place team will:

- ❁ Continue to support community engagement in relation to the look and feel of the Tower Street site and support asset transfer and site development.
- ❁ Continue to support the development of the Memory Garden and engaging wider stakeholders and undertaking consultation with local resident.
- ❁ Continue to work in partnership with the community to deliver a community 'Big Lunch'.
- ❁ Continue to support the theme of History & Heritage to deliver on a WW1 project that involves many local voluntary organisations, schools and local residents.
- ❁ Continue to support the development of Cumnock Garden Club and identification of sustainable funding sources.
- ❁ Continue to support the planning of Cumnock Christmas Festival 2018.
- ❁ Increase engagement with seldom heard groups and foster connections between community groups and identify ways in which we can bring groups together.

## Co-ordinator Contact Details

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## Summary of the People in Place Programme

Corra Foundation (previously Lloyds TSB Foundation for Scotland) launched the place-based programme “People in Place” in 2014 after a strategic review which highlighted that traditional grantmaking was not reaching many of Scotland’s communities, and yet these communities are among those facing the greatest daily challenges. Corra Foundation believes that by supporting communities and increasing participation, individuals and therefore communities will become more confident, more able to challenge the structural barriers that impact on everyday life and in this way the programme will achieve systems change.

People in Place has an overarching theory of change for this work. The key indicators of this are:

- ❁ To reach places in Scotland where Corra Foundation and other grant-makers struggle to reach.
- ❁ To work in partnership with the community to identify assets and encourage participation, engagement and action.
- ❁ To create a network of connections that help to increase resilience and facilitate access to sustainable resourcing for the long term.
- ❁ To increase awareness of the importance of place and how this affects life chances and opportunities, through learning and sharing.

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### Culminating in creating long term social change.

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In 2014 we set out to establish a programme, working alongside communities in nine local authority areas that were in receipt of proportionately less independent grant funding. We are now working alongside eight communities in seven of the original nine local authority areas with the remaining two due to begin in 2018.

## Sharing Lessons and Learning at Programme Level

### ➤ Emerging programme level learning

- ❁ Early insight shows us that by focussing on engaging and listening in small communities we are reaching people who are often seldom heard, working to provide a platform for them to be heard.
- ❁ There is an increased understanding as to why communities do not access independent grant funding. Reasons include:
  - The formal process of having to be a registered charity or fully constituted group.
  - The skills and capacity needed to complete the process.
  - The fear and time it takes to complete applications.
  - The fact that groups need to alter their idea to fit criteria.
  - Worry about what will happen if the funding runs out and the impact this could have.
  - For many groups, the idea is short lived or a one off so the formal process of accessing funding is too daunting.

- There is still a big reliance on the council doing things and a belief it is their job. This, coupled with the lack of belief within the communities where the programme is working, means that the great ideas people have never come to fruition as there is a perception that there are too many barriers and they are unsurmountable.
- ❁ Early indicators are that to really foster resilience in place, different financing models need to be developed to fit with the communities' ambitions; this will be a focus for the coming year as the programme grows.
- ❁ Effective engagement takes time, developing trusting relationships to allow participation to increase organically.
- ❁ Community, agenda-free space is vital to foster relationships.

### ➤ Support groups

- ❁ The People in Place programme continues to benefit from strong commitment from the co-investors who provide ongoing support as well as investment, members of the Place-based Advisory Group (P-bAG), who meet three times a year to challenge and support on the operational aspects of the delivery, and the Observers group, who meet twice a year to focus on the macro impact emerging from working across multiple areas.

### ➤ Development of the learning framework

- ❁ People in Place has developed a framework through which to capture learning both as individuals and as a team.
- ❁ This framework involves weekly capture of reflections on what is happening in each community using qualitative and quantitative data, and bi-monthly meetings to discuss the learning coming out of these weekly reflections.
- ❁ The evolving evidence base is capturing what works and what doesn't for engaging with people in different communities, and particularly with the people who are identified as being seldom heard in those communities.

### ➤ Looking forward

- ❁ In the longer term, it is envisaged that this framework will help us to better understand what enables positive change.
- ❁ Support will continue to be given to develop community co-ordinators in their ability to gather evidence and listen to the stories, experiences and aspirations of the people they are working alongside.
- ❁ Our work has led to the Scottish Government funding Corra Foundation to undertake a short-term project to convene a cross-sector group to explore what makes place-based approaches effective and make recommendations for change.