



People in Place – Annual Update 2018: Methil, Fife

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.

Iyaah Warren has been working alongside community in Methil since July 2017. Iyaah 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

- ✿ A community consultation engaged 154 people and illuminated Methil's assets and aspirations, showing similarities with the Methil / Methilhill Community Action Plan 2016 – 2021: Encourage better and increased use of community facilities; More community activities for all ages and abilities; Promote local activities wider. Art and crafts were the most popular activities with 137 votes.

Engagement – Bringing people together

- ✿ Corra's neighbourhood focus continues to add value to Community Learning and Development and Health and Social Care partners work by supporting progression to active community involvement and community led initiatives.
- ✿ Information gathering and dissemination about community led activities via the *It's all about Methil* publication has been particularly well received.
- ✿ Results of the community consultation reported at talks & discussions with community groups and partners.
- ✿ Responding to the community consultation so far, four new classes/activities started and a project to establish community noticeboards is active. Key barriers to more classes/groups are shortage of tutors, child care and accessible meeting space.

Development of community Ideas Into Action

- ✿ Capacity building support with a wellbeing and craft group at Sailor's Rest Community Centre led to ongoing partnership work with Silverburn Park around designs for a sensory garden and sculpture for mental wellbeing.
- ✿ Partnership working with a heritage and community development action group, Methil Heritage Centre, CLEAR and Fife Council has resulted in costed plans for heritage interpretation and community information boards.
- ✿ Corra Foundation has supported initiatives by funding tutor costs, room hire and creche costs for Methil Creative Collective workshops, Creative Writing and Lipreading classes.
- ✿ The Workers Educational Association (WEA) has funded tutors and room hire for Creative Writing and Local History classes.

Brokering role – Provide the glue to stick everything together

- ✿ Encouraging / supporting isolated people to try something new e.g. Connect, Airlie Medical Practice Cancer Care Support Group, Carpet Bowls, Senior Dance Fitness.
- ✿ Levenmouth Academy pupils 13+yrs who have alternative programmes to suit their learning needs are participating in community organisations; 4 girls are volunteering each Friday at Connect group and 4 boys are learning snooker with two volunteers at Methil Community Centre.
- ✿ Capacity building support with key organisations such as Connect to become constituted and with Levenmouth Foodbank regarding funding, in partnership with Fife Voluntary Action's capacity building team.
- ✿ A small grant from Small Sparks enabled a church ladies group to launch a successful free Monday lunch cafe, to help people experiencing food poverty.

Key themes in Methil

- ☼ Communications: people feel uninformed about that is happening in their community; groups and services often find it difficult to engage people.
- ☼ Thriving communities: partners / services networks are strong and Methil has a healthy network of community initiatives. Communication between the two networks is limited and opportunities are missed.
- ☼ Public space: Methil is rich in meeting spaces but there are challenges around access such as cost, weekends, stairs, noise/sound, heating and a limited range of offers for some age groups /interests.
- ☼ Power: space and opportunity for community-led initiatives to flourish and community capacity to grow needs greater priority.

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 Iyaah's work in Methil.

Area in Numbers

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



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



**910 people engaged or
involved in activities**



**432 new people
reached**



**704 people engaged
through Facebook**

Connect Friends Group

The Connect group was an initiative of local area coordinators and local churches who wanted to do something practical to combat isolation, particularly of people with long term health conditions and older people.



Teams of volunteers on a rota provide tea, coffee and home baking, and an entertainments volunteer books guests, organises and advertises a programme. Funded initially by a £250 Small Sparks grant, the

group now has over £1,000 in the bank by gathering optional donations and a raffle each week. The group meets on Friday afternoons with a weekly attendance that increased during 2018 from 20 to over 30 per session.

The volunteer organisers and members have succeeded in creating a convivial environment where newcomers feel at home quickly. Connect has a simple structure, only has a break over Christmas and New Year and is a short time commitment running between 2 and 3:30pm on Fridays in Wellesley Parish Church Hall.

Active and well respected volunteers are key to group's success, as is good communications support. A key achievement this year has been members spreading the word amongst friends and neighbours:

"I came in as a total stranger at the lowest point in my life when I lost my husband. It's very welcoming and friendly, I got to know lots of people very quickly."

"It's makes you come out of yourself. I was always afraid to talk to people but there is always a friend to talk to here. And I've told neighbours to come along too."

"I've got more interests now from being invited to other things in Methil."

Through Corra's contact with staff at Nurture in the Annex at Levenmouth Academy, four young people volunteer each week, helping with the raffle, serving food and washing up. They now have their own volunteer team on the rota, baking cakes at school together and bringing them to the meeting. The other volunteer teams and members value their help enormously.



Challenges have included lack of a communications volunteer with ICT skills who is able to commit time regularly and so a local area coordinator has been covering communications while we continue to look for a local volunteer. This role is key to the organisation and reliability of the catering teams and in turn the 'feel good' factor at Connect.

Corra Foundation's role in Connect has included:

- Raising awareness of the opportunity locally
- Supporting people when they attend for the first time
- Subsequently moving through into volunteering roles
- Supporting volunteers when needed, often just by being present

- Working with a steering group of volunteers to draw up a constitution, hold an inaugural meeting and elect a committee.

Lessons for Corra from the success of Connect are;

- Keep it simple
- Let the community lead but be available to support when needed
- Tap into the volunteer organising capacity of local churches.

Look Ahead

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

- Continue the outreach and engagement work in Methil to raise awareness of Corra Foundations Working Alongside Communities mission, mapping assets and promoting community involvement.
- Develop further heritage and community information work, supporting a local group to deliver their first funded project.
- Continue to support the fledgling wellbeing and craft group as they reach out to other community groups and work in partnership with Silverburn Park.
- Continue to encourage and support new activities emerging from the community, particularly arts and crafts, in line with the community consultation results.
- Seek out new tutors and organisations who can bring exciting new opportunities to Methil.
- Support the introduction of Red Note Ensemble to bring an exciting three-year cultural opportunity to Methil.

Connections in Methil

[The Methil network map](#) represents the network of relationships between organisations and groups in Methil. As a first attempt, the mapping is from the perspective of Iyaah 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.

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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:

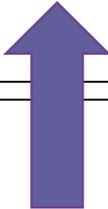
- 🌿 **Power**
- 🌿 **Poverty**
- 🌿 **Inequality**
- 🌿 **Social Isolation**

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:

🌿 Relationships	🌿 Independence
🌿 Bridging	🌿 Building local capacity
🌿 Brokering	🌿 Trust



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.