

# People in Place

## Getting Alongside Communities

### Annual Insights and Learning from 2019

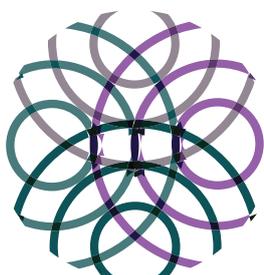
Corra Foundation's People in Place programme is currently working alongside nine communities in Scotland, supporting local people to connect, collaborate on ideas, and take action to create positive change.

The community is at the heart of everything we do. Our dedicated Community Co-ordinators listen, bring people together for conversations and identify shared priorities. We aim to increase community participation, seek out voices that are seldom heard; and ultimately support locally-led actions and ideas to flourish.

Local activity and learning from each area helps people shape future plans for their community and the 'People in Place' programme. So far, some common themes have emerged including the importance of participation, space, voice, investment, and learning and development.

Every community is unique and inspiring and our work alongside them reflects this. In some places the focus is on listening, building trust, relationships and participation. In others, communities are increasingly engaging with local decision making and democratic structures.

Looking ahead, Corra hopes to support communities to connect with each other and to use their voice and power to influence wider change.



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# People in Place – Weekly Logs

The weekly logs capture the observations from the People in Place Community Co-ordinators and the insights that have been shared with them by community members. The weekly logs are analysed and discussed regularly, highlighting the key achievements across the communities as well as reflecting on what may support and hinder community action. This short paper gives an overview of the 2019 weekly log analysis. The key themes from 2019 were:



## Supporting communities

Building understanding on how to work alongside local bodies. For example, council, schools and churches. At times it can be difficult to understand and navigate how different local services operate. Working with communities we can help them to negotiate access to local space, offering advice on how to shape conversations with council staff on local issues, and to explore the risks and opportunities in taking on a community asset.



## Supporting governance

As activities happen more regularly in communities there is an increase in the number of groups that are available to community members. Conversations with groups are ongoing and include how to best meet their aspirations, who makes decisions, how to manage funding, and what would it mean if they want to become a constituted group or charity.



## Supporting sustainability

There is a real desire for communities to find ways that help keep the momentum behind activities and groups. Trying to get money, premises or other help is difficult and sometimes it can often fall on one or two people. A key focus has been to help communities to find ways that encourage other community members to become involved, develop skills that will help secure funds as well as other support.



# Achievements

In 2019, a lot was delivered across all nine communities. A total of 40 ideas were developed and over 7,000 new people reached.

## Community Events

One-off and recurring community events were a valuable opportunity to bring people together. Across the communities there were examples of informal meetings with neighbours, family fun days and Christmas parties.

The Dumbarton West Events group in Castlehill is led by local people organising accessible family events in the community. In 2019 the group organised two family nights which were attended by 280 people overall.



## Participation through consistent and regular groups

Participation has helped create friendships, support networks and encourages people to openly share skills and experiences. Ongoing groups have supported people to have a sense of belonging in the community, helping reduce isolation and loneliness.

There are examples of groups bringing people together across the communities, including the Chair Based Exercise sessions in Kilwinning Library in Blacklands and the Methil Creative Collective that have co-led family events and raised money for Macmillan Cancer Care.

## Confidence

People have felt more confident, with community members feeling more able to identify ideas and actively pursue these, recognising the skills they have and building their confidence.



In Buckhaven, a community drama group formed in early 2019 called the Buckhind Players. The group aimed to be accessible to everyone in the community and was a huge success. They went on to perform the first pantomime in Buckhaven in over 15 years performing to 800 people over three nights.

## Funding and opportunities

Community Co-ordinators have supported local communities to identify and secure funding and resources. This has included access to other independent funders, sponsorship and in-kind gifts.

The Community Kitty groups in Fernhill and Blacklands involved community members participating and sharing their expertise on how funding should support local groups.

Dunterlie Foodshare and the Fernhill Community have been selected to participate in Scottish Community Development Centre's (SCDC) Knowledge is Power programme. Supported by SCDC and Corra Foundation, local groups will undertake community-led action research projects.



## Getting alongside communities

Community Co-ordinators have offered ongoing support that enables groups to continue to flourish and manage the ups and downs of relationships.

In Langlees, the Community Co-ordinator worked alongside people from the Bainsford Community Group that came together when the Bainsford Community Hall was at risk of closure. The Community Co-ordinator has supported the group to form a SCIO and deliver consultations that share ideas on how the space can best serve the needs of local people.

Corra would like to say a huge thank you to all the community members working hard to create positive change in their local areas.

The achievements highlighted in this paper are just some of the many examples of communities coming together, leading with their ideas and insights to support the change that matters to them.

You can find out more about each of the communities Corra works alongside and their progress in 2019 by visiting the Getting Alongside Communities, [click here](#) to read more.

## Patterns

► Ownership and planning of events have increasingly been identified and led by community members, with a decreasing level of input and support from Community Co-ordinators.

► In some of the communities there are a few people who are enthusiastic and committed to driving forward activities and ideas, however there is a risk of becoming over-reliant on these one or two people. It will

be important to continue to work with people on creating the opportunities for a wide range of community members to get involved with local action and ideas.

► Working alongside other institutions and organisations can at times be difficult. Communities can find it challenging when people in power are unable to adapt to meet their aspirations or ideas.

► There have been continued challenges of institutions (for example schools, local authorities, elected members, churches) that hold power and at times have been unable to adapt to meet community aspirations or ideas.

► There has been a strong willingness from communities to take on community ownership or social enterprise.

Corra Foundation exists to make a difference to the lives of people and communities. It works with others to encourage positive change, opportunity, fairness and growth of aspirations which improve quality of life. Corra wants to see a society in which people create positive change and enjoy fulfilling lives.

In 2020 Corra launched a ten-year strategy. It is long term because making a difference on the big challenges will take time. At its heart is the strong belief that when people find their voice, they unlock the power to make change happen.

Corra Foundation  
Riverside House  
502 Gorgie Road  
Edinburgh EH11 3AF

e: [hello@corra.scot](mailto:hello@corra.scot)  
t: **0131 444 4020**  
w: [www.corra.scot](http://www.corra.scot)



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

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