

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

vibrant
COMMUNITIES

THE
STORY
CONTINUES



**PEOPLE
ARE @ THE
HEART OF
EVERYTHING
WE DO ♥**

Vibrant Communities Service...the story so far

East Ayrshire Council's Vibrant Communities Service has been supporting local people, residents and communities since coming into existence in 2013. In this time the impact and reach of the services has transcended across Council Services and communities.

We have, twice before, captured our journey for you releasing our 'Story So Far' in 2015 and our 'Next Chapter' in 2017, we aim to continue this work in this current release 'The Story Continues...', to communicate our achievements, growth and voyage in supporting a fairer, kinder and better connected East Ayrshire.

Our unique service, which works to place people at the heart of everything we do, brings over 140 front facing, community focused employees together. Over these last two years since our 'Next Chapter' publication was released, we have welcomed two new teams to our vibrant family; a suite of Home Link Staff appointed using Scottish Attainment Challenge investments and new Housing Support staff to advocate and support Council tenants to maintain their tenancy.

The service, continues to be a key contributor and driver within the Council's transformational change programme.

Vibrant Communities works “with and for” local communities rather than “doing to” them. The aim is to balance the relationship between those who design and deliver services and the people who ultimately use them.

Vibrant Communities is changing culture and unlocking the knowledge, skills and experiences of local people and employees, to harness the enthusiasm, talent and “can do” spirit that exists across East Ayrshire.

The establishment of Vibrant Communities has driven the Council's transformation agenda and embedded our vision to put people at the heart of everything we do.

Whole council and partner approach

The Vibrant Communities service continues to work across all Council and partner services to ensure a consistent approach to people powered transformation. The team have shared our journey, experience, growth and ideology with partners and external organisations both locally and nationally. We have shared practice on asset based approaches, creativity, solution focused work, servant leadership, community led regeneration and sharing positive practice.

The team recognise that their strongest advocate of this approach is the staff and volunteers who work with us as well as the residents and communities that we serve.

“We are looking to mature our relationships with our communities, not just to celebrate the good times or commiserate the bad times - but to plan, work and dream together during the normal times, so that we are more resilient through the tough times.”

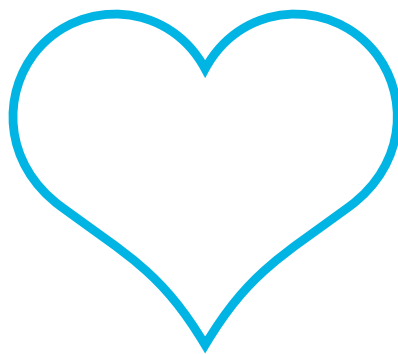
Katie Kelly

*Depute Chief Executive (Safer Communities)
East Ayrshire Council*

Within East Ayrshire we are increasingly seeing a people based approach to service delivery, with the approach taken by Vibrant Communities now being embedded across the Council. Early intervention and prevention models allow demand for services to be more appropriately managed, and offer potential to be developed and introduced at scale across other Council services.

Our ambition through transformation is to create a fairer, kinder and better connected East Ayrshire, we will focus on kindness, tackling poverty, reducing inequality and building connected communities. Vibrant Communities, alongside our residents and communities are pivotal in the realisation of this ambition.

The work of Vibrant Communities early intervention & preventative work is supporting the development and sustainability of Communities, working with residents and communities on the development of volunteering and place based approaches. Our work also supports our Community Planning priorities of tackling isolation and child poverty by working together with our communities and partners; placing people at the heart of everything we do.



What we do

Vibrant Communities works with all sectors of the community including children and young people, adults and older people and the wider community to develop sustainable communities and reduce inequalities through prevention and early intervention services.

Large-scale events

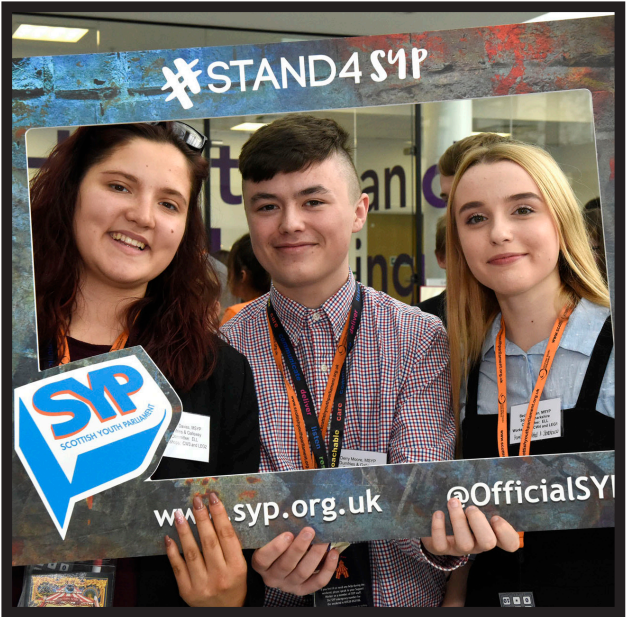
Vibrant Communities annually organises large-scale events which showcase and celebrate the achievements and successes of communities as well as supporting a wide range of community-led activities. The quantity and quality of events is testament that community spirit, participation, accomplishment and empowerment is strong within East Ayrshire.

- **Playday**
- **Youth Conference**
- **Celebrate East Ayrshire**
- **K-Fest**
- **Older People's "Full of Life" event**
- **East Ayrshire Learning Disability Awareness Week**
- **Celebration of Learner's Achievement's Award Ceremony**
- **Celebration of Volunteering**
- **Tour of Britain and Tour of Ayrshire cycling events**
- **Year of Young People 2018**
- **Communities Conference incorporating Community Led Action Plans and Community Councils**
- **Scottish Youth Parliament Sitting**
- **Family Information Networking Day**
- **East Ayrshire Sports Council Talented Athlete Awards**
- **Celebration of Befriending**

Vibrant Communities also support large scale events organised by other council services and external organisations:-

- **East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation Conference**
- **Private Landlord Conference**
- **Empty Homes Exhibition**
- **Roon the Toon 10K Road Race**
- **Newmilns Food Festival**
- **Celebrate Kilmarnock "Killieween"**
- **Doonfest**
- **KULOC Chinese New Year Dragons**





Our key highlights

Key highlights from Vibrant Communities include:





2,000+

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

PARTICIPATED IN SEASONAL EVENTS 2018/19

700

FAMILIES



939

EXERCISE CLASSES



13,100

ATTENDANCES 2018/19

167

COMMUNITY PROJECTS received

£7,681,984

EXTERNAL FUNDING
2017/18

**PARTICIPATORY
BUDGETING**

January 2018 - February 2019

117

PROJECTS SHARING FUNDING OF

£155,000



Our Business Support Team use their expertise to support **Vibrant** Communities and the people they serve using their creativity, knowledge and skills.

Marketing and Events Key Highlights

Clean, Green and Vibrant

East Ayrshire Council, in partnership with our communities and service providers, are committed to realising a shared vision – to make East Ayrshire a Clean, Green and Vibrant place to work, visit and live in.

A working group for Clean, Green and Vibrant was formed in April 2016 with key officers from across Housing and Communities, with the overall aim to bring vibrancy and enthusiasm to community activity and raise awareness and understanding of how best to deal with issues such as dog fouling, litter and the condition of gardens to name but a few. Here are some key highlights of the campaign.



National Spring Clean Week

The programme includes a deep clean in Kilmarnock and Cumnock and during the week, selected communities have teams in the areas to help carry out litter picking and do a general tidy up. These communities are rotated on an annual basis but all communities are encouraged to do their own litter pick with support and equipment provided. Mauchline requested extra resources and help to replace signage, move bins and deep clean paths for their Easter Hunt event and Outdoor Services happily obliged, much to the community's delight.

Partnership is very much the key to the week, with Health and Social Care, Community Payback Unpaid Work and external agencies such as Choice Places and Atrium Homes working with the Council.

I Clean my Space

This initiative asks local businesses to work with the Council to clean the front of their premises. The Council provides a brush, shovel and bags for the litter and the business leaves their bag outside the shop to be picked up by StreetScene Operatives. The business also receives a sticker which can be proudly displayed on the shop window / door, showing they have made the commitment to keep their space clean. 116 business have signed up to the initiative.

This Initiative has been very well received by companies throughout East Ayrshire, including pubs through the All Bar None scheme thanks to the Safer Communities Officer, with plans to expand the initiative as widely as possible.

Litter in Schools

Launched at Loudoun Academy, Litter in Schools is an initiative which is aimed at school children, particularly during lunch times when the amount of litter dramatically increases. Any pupil caught dropping litter has the choice to pay a fine or attend a litter pick in the community. If the pupil does neither then the school will impose a sanction as punishment.

Pupils are informed of the initiative during assembly by Brian Murphy from Corporate Enforcement and Councillor Sally Cogley. During this presentation, the pupils are educated about the detrimental effects of litter on the environment and the consequences of being caught. After only a few months of running the initiative, the amount of litter decreased significantly around the Academy and because of this, it is hoped that Litter in Schools will be rolled out throughout East Ayrshire.

The majority of Early Childhood Centres and Primary Schools do weekly litter picks around their schools which contributes to their Eco Friendly School status.

CCTV Van

2018 saw the introduction of the Council's CCTV van which is equipped with state of the art CCTV equipment which can be remotely accessed by RMC staff. The van is deployed on a regular basis to help combat environmental crime and keeps communities safe, clean and green.

Better Health Hub

Housing Asset Services and the NHS have implemented an initiative as part of the External Envelope Enhancement projects to help tenants and communities with a range of issues including:

- **Social isolation**
- **Energy efficiency**
- **Fuel poverty**
- **Healthy living**
- **Income maximisation**
- **Community involvement**

This person-centred approach has been recognised as excellent practice nationally and provides confidential help and support while placing communities at the centre of the improvement works.

Future initiatives

The Clean, Green and Vibrant Working Group are currently exploring the possibility of an "I Clean my Stadium" initiative, in partnership with Kilmarnock Football Club. This would see fans clean up after themselves at home games. The Group are also investigating the potential to reward people for good behaviour such as receiving Kilmarnock football tickets for picking up after their dog.

Fairer, Kinder and Connected

People @ the  of everything we do

is the message the Council promotes to the residents of East Ayrshire, as well as its workforce.

The Transformation Strategy 2017-22 will play a large part in enabling East Ayrshire to become fairer, kinder and connected as the Council faces a reduced budget over the next 3 years. Over this period, the Council will employ less people but will maintain a high standard of service by redesigning services, co-production and empowering communities.

Vibrant Communities will play a large part in driving forward this theme due to the nature of the services already being delivered and the connections already made within communities. There is an established trust and bond between local groups, organisations and individuals, and the staff based within Vibrant Communities.

Although the theme of Fairer, Kinder and Connected is not tangible in itself, Vibrant Communities offer physical services and activities which are at the forefront of driving forward this ideology.

Social Media

The use of social media is key to promote services and messages to the people of East Ayrshire and beyond, and is often used to promote services connected to partners and other organisations. The Service Support Co-ordinator sits on various external and internal working groups such as the East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action (EACHa) Working Group and Celebrate Kilmarnock, providing strong links to the Fairer, Kinder and Connected theme.

Facebook and Twitter are the main social media platforms used and have proven to be the most efficient and cost-effective way to promote services and events. Social marketing campaigns connecting Council services and external partners to the fairer, kinder and connected theme is crucial to raising awareness, encouraging participation and general promotion. The Service Support Co-ordinator oversees all social media campaigns, ensuring the Fairer, Kinder and Connected theme is connected to the right campaigns, and has a strong network within and out-with the Council, working across Housing and Communities.

Future social media campaigns featuring the Fairer, Kinder and Connected theme include:

- **Volunteering** – *promotion and capturing unofficial volunteering statistics such as people who cut their neighbours' grass, sports coaches, etc.*
- **EACHa** – *changing the perception and culture of how people view and think about homeless people and people with addictions*
- **Loneliness and isolation** – *help to tackle loneliness and isolation for any age group, e.g. older people and young people with their own tenancy*



Youth Voice

An important part of Vibrant Communities' work involves encouraging young people to participate in positive activities and divert them from anti-social behaviour. A Major success factor in doing this has been the combination of Youth Work, Sports Development and Active Schools within a single team which has enabled a fusion of skills and talents from across the workforces, blurring the roles and ultimately improving the outcomes for young people.

Youth Voice in East Ayrshire has never featured so highly within the Council as it has done in the last couple of years. As a result of some fantastic work which has been driven and supported by, and co-designed with our young people throughout the authority, the profile of Youth Voice is rapidly increasing. The Council recognises the important role that young people play, both in schools and their community, and as such they are invited to regular Community Planning Partnership meetings to co-Chair along with the Council's Chief Executive to discuss issues affecting their peers. This is just one example of many innovative and exciting pieces of work involving our young people.



Scottish Youth Parliament Sitting

As part of our Year of the Young Person celebrations, East Ayrshire proudly hosted the 67th Scottish Youth Parliament Sitting at Ayrshire College in Kilmarnock. Over 195 young people from all over Scotland attended the 2 day sitting with a packed agenda which included debates on member's motions, in-depth discussions about public transport and consultation workshops.

On the Saturday evening of the Sitting, Vibrant Communities turned our hand to what we do best by showcasing the talents of our staff and our renowned service provision. The evening celebrations consisted of a first class "carnival" experience for all the young people to take part in which included bouncy castles, carnival stalls with prizes, space hopper challenges, popcorn stands and the ever popular hook a duck.

The feedback that we received from both the young people attending and the Scottish Youth Parliament was exceptional. Young people stated that ***"this was the best sitting they had attended"*** and Scottish Youth Parliament commented that the event ***"far exceeded any expectations and were amazed at what was provided"***

Junior Sports Council

The East Ayrshire Junior Sports Council was established in March 2018 with a core group of young people aged 11-25. These young people are passionate about sport and physical activity and are keen to shape the future sporting activity landscape as well as be a voice for young people in East Ayrshire.

The Junior Sports Council now have representation on the East Ayrshire Sports Council's Executive Committee where they are able to make their voice heard and promote young people's rights. The work of the Junior Sports Council has also been highlighted as best practice nationally and have been asked to speak at the annual Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils (SALSC) conference to showcase their work and to encourage other local sports councils to adopt the same approach.

The Junior Sports Council hope to continue to grow over the coming months and years. Agreed plans are to increase the number of members on the group and influence the coach education calendar run by the East Ayrshire Sports Council to include more courses and content for children and young people starting on their sport and physical activity journey.

The East Ayrshire Junior Sports Council are confident in leading the way, ensuring young people in East Ayrshire who participate in sport either competitively or recreationally are able to do so in the best possible way.

Children and Young People's Cabinet

The establishment of the Children and Young People's Cabinet in 2018 has rejuvenated engagement by young people in civic and democratic decisions and provided a platform for their opinions to be heard by the Council and our Community Planning Partners at various joint meetings. The Youth Cabinet were also given the opportunity to meet the Scottish First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, during a visit by the Scottish Government's travelling Cabinet in East Ayrshire.

The members of the Cabinet were instrumental in the co-delivery of the wonderful Year of the Young People programme of events that ran throughout 2018. They assisted Vibrant Communities with devising a range of exciting events including a "colour run" to officially launch the Year of Young People, the Celebration Awards Evening and the burying of a themed time capsule at Dumfries House.

The Youth Cabinet will have a greater say in East Ayrshire's future planning by working with local Elected Members to support their portfolio delivery and continue to be a sounding board for decisions directly affecting young people in East Ayrshire. To help build on this, the Children and Young People's Cabinet will be the driving force behind the larger youth events within Vibrant Communities, helping to organise and deliver Youth Conferences and future events.

Community Sports Hubs

East Ayrshire currently has 7 Hubs (Auchinleck, Cumnock, Doon Valley, Grange, Loudoun, New Farm and Stewarton) within the authority bringing sports clubs, physical activity groups, non-sporting organisations and the local community together.

Community Sports Hubs are essentially a "home for sport", established across local facilities such as sports centres, community centres, local parks / green space and schools, bringing people together to work and develop sport locally.

Community Sport Hubs also provide information, support and advice on a wide range of sports and physical activities to make it easier for local people to get involved and engage in a more active and healthier lifestyle. The specifics of each Community Sport Hub and what it offers varies according to local need and resources, however all "hubs" work to the following five principles:

- 1 **Growth in participation**
- 2 **Engage the local community**
- 3 **Promote community leadership**
- 4 **Offer a range of sporting and physical activity opportunities**
- 5 **Bring all appropriate partners, groups and people together**

In 2017/18, the East Ayrshire Community Sports Hubs worked in partnership with 44 clubs, over 4,000 athletes and are supporting 1,294 volunteers to develop sustainable sports clubs and community opportunities.

Active Schools

The development of the Competitive School Sport Calendar (CSSC) has been commended by SportsScotland. A transformational approach was implemented two years ago which introduced a dedicated Active Schools Coordinator, who coordinated and delivered the CSSC, in partnership with National Governing Bodies and Ayrshire College, across all clusters. In 2017/18, the CSSC has had many highlights including:

- **1,141** individual females participated in Primary Competitive School Sport Festivals, totalling **1,358** attendances
- **1,039** individual males participated in Primary Competitive School Sport Festivals, totalling **1,201** attendances
- **41** primary schools participated in Education Group festivals
- **8** secondary schools participated in Education Group festivals
- **22.1%** of pupils who participated in School Sport Festivals live within SIMD areas 1 and 2

Year of Young People

2018's Year of Young People was an initiative from the Scottish Government to showcase the skills and talents of our young people. The bold step focused on co-delivery of activities for young people by young people. The year focused on 6 sub themes; Participation, Education, Health and Wellbeing, Equality and Discrimination, Enterprise and Regeneration, and Culture. In East Ayrshire, a programme of events that encouraged and inspired young people to participate and show that they are at the heart of everything we do and strive for within East Ayrshire was created.

The Children and Young People's Cabinet helped drive these events forward, helping to co-deliver several of the large events and help steer the direction of the full year.

Throughout the year,

- **East Ayrshire provided 14,300 free packed lunches for families during holiday provisions.**
- **Youth Conferences taught 230 young people about the United Nations Rights of the Child over 2 days.**
- **Educational Roadshows taught young people about Drugs and Alcohol, Mental Health and Knife Crime. From these roadshows 90% of young people said they would drink less as a direct result of the workshop.**
- **An Intergenerational Project Group on World War 1 concluded with a visit to France attending a memorial service of 100 years since the Great War at The Somme.**
- **The finale of the year was a Champion Showcase recognising the incredible achievements of Children and Young People across East Ayrshire in the stunning surroundings of Dumfries House**

Overall the year was a great success and highlighted that we need to continue to listen to future generations to give us new inspiring ideas. For this reason, it is essential we continue to celebrate the success of the year into 2019 and beyond, encouraging young people to continue to speak up and have their voices heard.

Volunteering opportunities for young people will be more readily available, Vibrant Communities will be introducing opportunities for under 16s to encourage the development of their skills and will work with Community Planning Partnership to increase the opportunities in the wider community.

Many of the projects and events from 2018 will continue to grow and improve the lives of young people in East Ayrshire. Free holiday lunches will be provided again during school holiday periods, Educational Roadshows, Youth Conferences and Peer Education groups will all be prominent in the future delivery with young people.

East Ayrshire's Young People are now firmly on the map and will continue to play a significant part in the development of East Ayrshire for many years to come.



Transforming Play & Early Intervention

The Play & Early Intervention Team adopts a person-centred approach to achieve results and transformational change in terms of improved learning and life outcomes, as well as increasing resilience in children, families and communities.

The Team carry out targeted and therapeutic sessions with vulnerable and kinship care families (in the community and directly within their own home), looked after and accommodated young people, isolated children and young people, families affected by parental imprisonment, and support for communities and groups through targeted training.

The Team believe that the transformative power of play and family support is evident in the delivery of their services. Positive parenting / carer support, opportunities to promote physical activity health, and nutrition, and the impact this has on children's social, physical and emotional wellbeing cannot be understated and if this is embraced by those who care for them, families flourish as a result.

“Enjoyed my first ever Christmas party with ‘Y’. I loved watching the other kids running around. I was a bit nervous about going. The food was great and ‘Y’ enjoyed seeing Santa for the first time.”

A collaborative approach to tackling the poverty related gap whilst creating positive childhood memories...

Recognising that the Christmas period can be a significantly challenging time for vulnerable families, particularly in terms of managing finances and accessing support services, a cross-team working group was established to establish a more innovative and co-ordinated approach to the programme of support that was to be offered.

In December 2018, over 100 Christmas food parcels were provided by the Park Hotel and were distributed to families identified to be the most in need by members of the Team, to lessen their financial difficulties whilst being provided with nutritional meals.

Three family Christmas parties were also held at community venues throughout East Ayrshire, with 48 families attending parties in Kilmarnock, Cumnock and Dalmellington; all of which were provided free of charge and supported by local organisations and charities. A two-course meal, Christmas crackers and juice were provided by local businesses, with gifts and Christmas Eve pyjamas donated by local charities for every child. The Team even managed to arrange a visit from Santa, making the parties complete.

Key highlights



25 FAMILIES

SUPPORTED BY

Play@Home initiative

319

Play@Home sessions

IN FAMILY HOMES



**109 PLAY
THERAPY
SESSIONS**

delivered to support the most
vulnerable young people



91

**PRISON BONDING
SESSIONS**

**DELIVERED AT
HMP KILMARNOCK**



71

**INDOOR + OUTDOOR
PLAY EVENTS
DELIVERED**



107

Fun4Hire

KITS / SESSIONS HIRED BY
COMMUNITY GROUPS



12,884

**PARTICIPANTS AT
PLAY AND EARLY
INTERVENTION EVENTS**

Bringing communities together and strengthening connections

The delivery of both indoor and outdoor play events to encourage communities to reclaim their local open spaces is a key feature of the Play and Early Intervention Service. A number of small and large scale events are held throughout the year including Playday, Grounds4Play, Have a Field Day, Picnics in the Park, the annual 2 week Danger Detectives event, and family learning events. Over 2,000 children and young people and 700 families participated in our seasonal events during 2018/19.

Playday, one of Scotland's best and largest free play events, is held in August each year and welcomes over 10,000 community participants to take part in free activities. These events provide opportunities for community engagement, community empowerment and developing community ownership.

Danger Detectives: Putting Community Resilience at the Heart of our Young People

Danger Detectives is an experiential learning multi-agency event aimed at P6 pupils across all schools to reduce accidents amongst young people whilst building community resilience. It achieves this by creating a safe environment where young people can become more aware of personal safety, learn how to react to dangerous situations, know the roles of the emergency services, and how to make a positive contribution towards reducing both crime and accidents in their local community. Over 1,300 P6 children participate in this event annually.

"It was lovely to hear that in the last year alone, our wonderful volunteers have spent over 2,000 hours supporting people of all ages across East Ayrshire. Their time is having a huge impact on others."

Katie Kelly

*Depute Chief Executive (Safer Communities)
East Ayrshire Council*



Combating Social Isolation and Loneliness of Children, Young People and Older Adults

The Befriending Service could not be delivered without the volunteers who give their time to support children, young people and older adults in our communities. Volunteer befrienders come from all walks of life, ranging from students, professionals and adults who want to give something back to their community. In the last year, the volunteer befrienders have given over 2,000 hours, supporting 55 children, young people and older adults within East Ayrshire.

Combatting the loneliness and isolation that affects children, young people and older adults across our communities is not only done through our 1:1 Befriending Service but within wider groups and events too. A weekly club is run for children and young people, giving them a sense of belonging and the support to build their confidence in managing group situations, enabling them to become more integrated in their communities. The support and confidence given to older adults also allows them to be more active in their communities and gives them the confidence to join local groups and take part in events.

“The young people I have supported all have different backgrounds, but I think a main consistency in the outcomes for those with a befriender is an increase in confidence and self-esteem. It is amazing to see how the children grow and develop throughout the match and how their confidence flourishes.”

Befriender

Family Engagement in Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap

2017 saw the addition of Home Link Workers to the Play & Early Intervention Team. Supported by a Parental Engagement Officer, the Home Link Workers are funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge with priority given to primary and secondary school pupils in SIMD 1 and 2 areas with a focus on closing the poverty related attainment gap. The Home Link Workers are uniquely embedded within the Team, adding value, capacity and support to work being undertaken with some of the most vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Key Highlights for the Home Link Team (2017-2019)

- 281 children and young people attended summer programme activities
- 110 parents / carers attended summer programme workshops
- 468 young people and their families supported by the Home Link Team
- 765 home visits have taken place
- 1400 1:1 support sessions have taken place
- 391 parents / carers attended parental engagement sessions
- 216 Parental Engagement sessions have taken place

Home Link Workers are flexible in their approach to meeting the needs and demands of children and their families, both within the school and community settings. Support includes 1:1 work with individual pupils, small group work programmes, project work, extra-curricular activities, leadership work, family support and supporting attendance.

Leanne's Journey

Leanne had not attended school since before the summer holidays and become socially isolated. She suffered from low moods and low self-esteem and was extremely anxious about returning to school. Leanne's Home Link Worker initially visited her at home to start building their relationship, which progressed to sitting the school car park to eventually getting Leanne to go into school for a "visit." Leanne was very emotional on her first visit back at school because she couldn't believe she was actually in the school building.

After a meeting with the PT of Inclusion who was well aware of the issues Leanne was facing, she started attending the PRZ base for an hour per week, progressing to an hour per day, to attending most days for 3 periods.

Thanks to the support of her Home Link Worker, Leanne managed to complete her Nat 4 English and now attends a Social Science course at Ayrshire College and has 100% attendance to date.

"The Home Link Service really helped me get back to school. The 1:1 work helped me find a confidant in someone when I felt nobody else would understand my situation. In the short time using the service I managed to complete a solo talk and essay, go for a job interview and get it first time, work with the public over the Christmas period and apply for three colleges. All of these things I thought would be unreachable. I can't believe how far I have come and can't thank you enough for believing in me. I couldn't have done it without your support."

Home Link Workers provide support for vulnerable pupils through key transitioning, whether that be early years to primary, primary to secondary, or post-secondary into positive destination. This support is continued throughout the school holiday periods providing an element of continuity to connect vulnerable children and families into community activities and opportunities that are available to them.

What's Next for the Play & Early Intervention Team?

Moving forward, the Play & Early Intervention Team will look to incorporate current local and national policy drivers around Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Childhood Obesity into service delivery, and seek to identify appropriate, accessible funding to support this.

2019 will see the launch of the Council's Parental Engagement Framework. Incorporating the Council's vision and feedback from parents and carers, the expectation is that this Framework will be embedded in practice, being the main driver for Parental Engagement across East Ayrshire.



Lifestyle Development and Community Wellbeing

Whatever your age, there's strong evidence that being physically active can help you lead a healthier and happy life.

The Lifestyle Development and Community Wellbeing Team aim to ensure there are local opportunities available which support individuals to make positive lifestyle choices and be more active more often.

Since 2001, the CHIP Van has offered a drop in service for anyone who would like to know more about their own health and the steps they could take to improve their current physical health or mental wellbeing. The CHIP Van regularly visits over 35 communities and was visited by over 1,456 individuals in 2018/19.

Keeping active

The Team continues to offer a range of exercise classes for those who are currently fit and healthy but also support those who have been diagnosed with a medical condition or have recently completed rehabilitation within the NHS. We offer classes for those who are at risk of falling, who have completed cardiac rehab, stroke rehab, have a cancer diagnosis or have pulmonary disease. The staff involved in the delivery of these classes have all undertaken advanced levels of training to ensure what is offered is safe and effective. The opportunity to attend yoga has increased during the past year with 4 classes now available across East Ayrshire. In 2018/19, 939 classes were held across East Ayrshire with over 12,309 attendances recorded.

Eddie's Story

"On retirement, I looked forward to dividing my time between family and pastimes but fate had other plans. Major health issues led to a serious operation in April 2015 and the prospect of a long battle to regain a measure of mobility. I learned of the local authority sponsored initiative Vibrant Communities, signed up and have never looked back. I progressed from the basic Invigor8 class, through Motiv8, working in a safe environment with likeminded people and under the watchful eye of the qualified specialist instructors who have seemingly limitless patience and good humour. The routines are targeted according to ability, the atmosphere is supportive and welcoming, and I have more recently been encouraged to participate in yoga. The benefits are more than just physical; strangers become friends and attendances at classes are eagerly anticipated as an enjoyable and integral part of the day. I would recommend this service without hesitation."

Working with colleagues in the NHS, the Team continues to ensure that opportunities exist for continuation of physical activity once rehab has been completed within a hospital setting. Through the Healthy Active Rehabilitation Programme (HARP), the Team offer exercise classes to those who have a complex mixture of conditions to allow them to also gain the benefits of being active. This can help with their recovery as well as reduce or prevent further complications.



Before attending many of the classes, individuals will have been referred to the Team by a medical professional. There are currently 242 professionals

registered with the Team who refer individuals for support through the Activity on Prescription initiative where people are supported to identify their goals and encouraged to take steps to achieve them. 762 referrals were received in 2018/19.

Walking is another form of activity which can add life to years, with no equipment or specialist clothing required and can be done at any time that suits each individual. For those who enjoy company, the Team offer a number of local walking groups across East Ayrshire. Following a training and accreditation process, the Team now offer both dementia friendly and MacMillan friendly walks to support individuals and their family who are affected by these conditions. In 2018/19, there were over 1,897 attendances at walking groups.



For those with a cancer diagnosis the Team are now able to offer the Move More programme. This supports individuals

during and after cancer treatment to maintain or increase their physical activity levels. The programme

offers opportunities to get involved in gardening, gentle movement classes, walking groups or cancer rehab circuit classes. The programme is tailored to each individual in consultation with an experienced member of staff leading the initiative.

Being physically active can help to maintain a healthy weight which has additional health benefits and reduces the risk of developing further health conditions such as diabetes. In partnership with the NHS, the Team offer programmes to help individuals achieve and maintain a healthy weight including Weigh To Go, LEAN, and support the delivery of a lifestyle programme at Dumfries House.

Supporting positive mental health

At some point in our lives, many of us will experience poor mental health. Research shows that physical activity can also boost self-esteem, mood, sleep quality and energy, as well as reducing your risk of stress, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Delivered on either a 1:1 basis or as part of a group, the Team offers the Your Path to Better Health and Wellbeing programme to support individuals to identify triggers which impact on their mental health and find ways of coping better. In 2018/19, the Team received 112 referrals for individuals seeking support to improve their mental health.

The Team also offers a range of training to raise awareness around suicide prevention as well as introductory awareness raising through Safetalk and ASIST. Signs of suicide can be difficult to spot which is why the training encourages people to take all signs of distress seriously, even if it seems the person is living a normal life, and to simply ask people about what's troubling them which can have a huge impact.

Housing Support

2018 saw the Housing Support Team join the Older People and Wellbeing Team within Vibrant Communities, who offer a range of targeted supports to East Ayrshire residents. Comprising of 8 Housing Support Officers and a Family Support Officer, the Team are enthusiastic about supporting people in their own homes, and use a coaching approach to help people transform their own lives and outcomes.

The Housing Support Team encourages tenants to build confidence and social connections to be able to deal with a range of issues, including: rent arrears, benefit claims, anti-social behaviour, homelessness, tenancy sustainment, hoarding, mental health, and addictions.

“X moved into supported accommodation and has improved his life dramatically. He has engaged in meaningful activities and has a social network. This has added structure to his day which reduces his hoarding behaviour. It has also helped his self-esteem and mood when interacting and engaging in activities which he enjoys very much.”

Social Worker

Coaching

Our Housing support staff have all received Coaching training and are using this with tenants. They have found the benefits of coaching to be

- improvements in communication and interpersonal skills
- finding sustainable solutions to personal and work - related issues
- positive changes in attitudes and motivation
- increased personal confidence
- feeling more engaged, trusted, valued and supported

As staff have increased their skills they are much more effective when supporting people in the community. This also allows tenants to develop their own skills and confidence and to be more self managing in their lives.



Activities delivered in Supported Accommodation for Older Adults

April 18 – Jan 19



CHAIR BASED EXERCISE CLASSES

86 ACTIVITIES

647 ATTENDEES



LUNCH CLUB

446 ACTIVITIES

5,677 ATTENDEES



SOCIAL CLUB ACTIVITIES

514 ACTIVITIES

5,573 ATTENDEES



Improving connections for older people

The Team continues to deliver a full calendar of events for older adults in the 7 core supported accommodation units and the wider community including bingo, bowling, arts and crafts, movie afternoons, and chair based exercise. The Team also host Feet First, Dementia Cafes and Intergenerational Work, as well as regular trips including Tea Dances at Dumfries House. All activities are based around fun and wellbeing, enabling older people to come together, make connections and keep as active as possible.

All residents in supported accommodation and amenity housing receive a safety and wellbeing check every 5 weeks from a member of the Team. Alarms in every property are also checked, followed with a friendly chat and information about wellbeing.

Befriending

The Team has a dedicated Befriending Co-ordinator who supports volunteers in the community to befriend some of the most vulnerable older adults in East Ayrshire. Currently, the Team has 18 volunteers who support 23 people in their own homes, resulting in heart-warming relationships being developed which not only support the isolated individual in their own home, but also gives a sense of achievement and purpose for the dedicated volunteers.

Skills for life

The Lifeskills and Inclusion Team support local people who want to gain knowledge, skills and confidence that can help them to play an active and productive role in their personal, working, community and family lives. Using a range of formal and informal methods of learning and social development, people are enabled to identify individual and collective goals to create positive change.

Supporting people to achieve positive outcomes which develop their skills for life, learning and work is essential. This support is learner-centred and is built around their interests and motives, enabling and encouraging them to acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence necessary to play an active role, in both their personal and societal life.

Recognising and celebrating success

The Team has recognised and celebrated the success of learners at a variety of events throughout the year. Events such as Volunteering, Learning Disability, Celebration of Learning, Support to Resettled Refugees and Gaelic Learning, have enabled learners to share their skills, knowledge and experience with others; as well as engage in evaluation and review and celebrate their achievements. Furthermore, these events have provided a platform for the Team to listen to learners about the difference learning has made in their lives and the impact on their families, working lives, and communities. This, in turn, informs the development of future learning opportunities that can be tailored specifically to the individuals and groups the Team supports.

Volunteering

East Ayrshire Council remains fully committed to volunteering and recognises the vital contribution that volunteers make, both to our services and to community life in general. Volunteering helps people to share skills and talents, supports personal development and strengthens communities.

An Important part of the Council's Volunteer Framework is the Employer Supported Volunteering scheme. This entitles employees to one day's special leave per year, where they are released from their normal duties to volunteer with a community or voluntary organisation to deliver services within East Ayrshire. The Scheme gives employees a great opportunity to utilise and strengthen their knowledge, skills and experience, whilst making a positive difference to the local community.

The Team continues to work closely with partners, particularly the East Ayrshire Volunteer Centre and the East Ayrshire Council for Voluntary Organisations, to ensure an integrated approach to volunteer development that promotes joint working and the sharing of best practice.

Me2U project

Me2U is a unique and innovative partnership project, which is changing the lives of local unemployed people within East Ayrshire.

The project is very simple in its premise; Job Centre Plus (and more recently other partners, including East Ayrshire's Home Link Workers) identifies unemployed individuals who would benefit from participating in a project designed to improve their work readiness. Following a recruitment process, those selected complete an 8 week programme comprising of two days' per week within a community centre working towards four SCQF Level 4 & 5 modules delivered by Ayrshire College Community Tutors.

In terms of the volunteering element of the Project, participants are matched into a role which relates to the area of work that they would like to pursue. They are then supported and mentored in this role by a member of staff from within the school setting. Roles include classroom assistants, janitorial, cleaning and catering. The modules delivered by Ayrshire College tutors help participants to reflect on what they have learned within the school setting and to consider how this would be transferrable into the workplace.

Everyone involved in the Project is passionate about empowering people to change their lives and to work with them to help break down the barriers which are preventing them from gaining employment. Working together, the Me2U Team have helped to dispel the old adage: *"it's hard to get a job without experience and it's hard to get experience without a job"*.

As well as securing employment, participants have commented on how the Project has helped improve their confidence, self-esteem and general wellbeing. Many are now also enjoying being a more positive role model for their children.

Kerry's Story

Kerry had been unemployed for 17 years since leaving education before participating on Me2U. She had her first child aged 20 and went on to have two more children who she had been bringing up on her own for a number of years.

After completing an Introduction to Care course with Ayrshire College through Jobcentre Plus, Kerry was successful in gaining a place on Me2U. Having a purpose and something to do during the day was a big turning point for Kerry as "being at home all day and having little money to spend was soul destroying".

Kerry's Me2U placement was a Classroom Assistant in the Art Department at Cumnock Academy. Kerry has dyslexia and the staff were very supportive with her written work. Kerry's children were proud of their mum and gave her their full support by taking more responsibility for chores at home. Kerry made new friends on the programme and felt so much more positive about finding a job.

After Me2U, Kerry received support from East Ayrshire Council's Essential Skills Service for her dyslexia. She was also referred to the Skills Development and Employability Service who were able to pay for a PVG to enable her to complete an 8 week placement at Bute House in Cumnock where she gained experience of home care for the residents. At the end of her placement she was offered a job and through her work was able to embark on her SVQ Level 2 in Care.

Scottish Attainment Challenge: Youth and Family Literacies

The Lifeskills and Inclusion Team were successful in gaining funding through the Scottish Attainment Challenge to provide support to young people and families from SIMD 1 and 2 areas to raise literacy and numeracy levels, reduce the poverty related attainment gap and provide positive learning experiences for young people and their families.

Youth Literacies

Youth Literacies engages young people aged 14+ in literacy and numeracy, learning in a fun and informative way. Youth Literacies provision supports young people to improve their reading, writing, numbers, communication and confidence levels. This is done through an early intervention and preventative approach so that young people build positive paths within their academic learning journey, ensuring effective support networks are created and positive destinations are encouraged when leaving school.

The Service is based on a social practice model of lifelong learning which seeks to build on the strengths, assets and aspirations of each young person in order for them to reach their full potential.

A number of vibrant, innovative and age appropriate programmes have been developed as a way to engage young people back into learning. Ranging from literacy and numeracy to social media and the arts, the programmes are used as a hook to encourage young people to take ownership of their own learning journey and become self-aware of the areas they want to improve.

Family Literacies

Family Literacies works with families within East Ayrshire primary schools, providing family literacy learning and parental engagement sessions. Family Literacies supports parents and families to engage in their child's learning through innovative, fun and informal family based numeracy and literacy activities. These programmes show families that learning is fun and can be done through every day activities.

Family Literacies aims for parents to feel more confident as individuals to learn with their child and feel they have effectively contributed to their child's learning, as well as raised their awareness of their own literacy and numeracy abilities.

Support to Resettled Refugees with English as a Second or Other Language

The Lifeskills and Inclusion Team currently supports 23 refugee adults within a community setting to develop their English language learning. Using a social practice approach, support is based on the learning needs of the individual and is built around their personal, family, working and community life. ESOL Learning is crucial to supporting adults from whom English is not their first language as it equips individuals with the necessary communication skills to contribute and integrate economically, culturally and socially.

In the Last Year...



527 adults

have been helped to improve their literacy and numeracy skills



150 adults

with learning disabilities have been assisted to live fulfilling and independent lives



160 families

have participated in family literacy learning



170 young people

have participated in Youth Literacy Programmes



389 people

have attended community based adult learning provision for digital access and employability support



41 adults

have participated in the Me2U programme



11,050.75

volunteer hours (April-Dec 18)



67 people

have participated in Community Based Gaelic classes





8 women
attend ESOL for
HEALTH course



7 adults
supported with
ESOL for driving theory

12 adults
progressed to
Level 2 or beyond in English



Our adults received certificates for their efforts in learning English at the Celebration of Adult Learning In December 2018, and a number of families attended the Burns / Resettled Refugee Celebration in January. Some of the children recited Scottish poems and songs and the adults took part in some ceilidh dancing. Our Provost, Jim Todd and Chief Executive, Fiona Lees enjoyed the Syrian and Scottish food, and Vibrant Communities staff participated in some Syrian dancing; a real sharing of cultures.

A bright future



We have new families arriving in East Ayrshire and we will continue to support them to feel safe and enjoy Scottish life over the coming months. 9 of our learners have recently registered for the first session of the ESOL for Digital Course which will assist them to use the English they are learning to be able to send and receive emails and assist them in jobsearch, supporting 21st century living. 10 of our learners are interested in completing a food hygiene course. In consultation with men, the Team hope to provide a men's health class to assist them with the necessary language skills needed for doctor and hospital visits. The refugees are also keen to become a constituted group, which will assist their autonomy and ability to support their needs and aspirations providing them with a good quality of life and a bright future in East Ayrshire.

"We feel more confident and we can understand more and speak more. Now we know more vocabulary and we feel good. It has given us a great start. We are happy that we can understand and answer people. We feel good because we thought we couldn't learn another language. Now we know we can. Now we have goals, not just stay at home with the children."

Our communities

The Communities team within Vibrant Communities has been at the forefront of working with and supporting local communities to plan, prioritise and progress community-led regeneration in their area through the development of community led action plans, which have played a significant role in transforming the council's relationship with the communities it serves.

The development of a community led action plan follows a robust process and participation by the local community is entirely voluntary. Vibrant Communities is committed to working with all communities within East Ayrshire that wants to develop a plan and guarantee support from community workers who will work with them and use an asset based approach to:

- **Identify local assets and bring together local groups, associations and communities of interest**
- **Prioritise actions through local surveys and consultation**
- **Develop a five year Community Led Action Plan**

To date twenty Community Led Action Plans have been launched, as well as one thematic action plan. These plans are proving to be a catalyst for change within communities. With a target of 40% return from community surveys and events, it can evidence a mandate from their local community to progress the actions contained within the plans.

A number of plans are now approaching the end of their first five year plan. Community groups have held and are planning for events to celebrate these and to feedback progress to the local community. These events will also provide an opportunity to encourage the local community to be involved in the preparations for their second five year plan.

Highlights from the previous year include:

- The Newmilns Regeneration Association were awarded the queens award for voluntary service, this was an incredible achievement for the community. The Newmilns Food festival was a great success and for the first time increased to two days encompassing an arts and crafts event.
- Groups have been working on improving opportunities for communities to enjoy their open spaces, such as the upgrade to Hannahston Woods Project carried out by Drongan, Rankinston & Stair Regeneration Group & the Hilltop path Project in Mauchline.
- Community resilience groups being established such as the Ochiltree Gritting Gang and the New Cumnock Resilience Group
- A range of community clean ups have taken place such as the ones carried out by Catrine Steering Group who have also have tidied the church steps, War Memorial and Mill Square. There are plans for further clean-up projects throughout the next year.
- A range of community events are being planned such as Make Catrine Sparkle & Light Up Fenwick. New Cumnock Steering Group organise monthly Afternoon Teas as part of the wider social isolation work in East Ayrshire. They regularly see over 30 people attend New Cumnock Town Hall for sandwiches, cakes and entertainment.

- Mauchline Action Group officially opened their community growing garden and this has become a real asset to the community
- The Netherthird Community Centre, run by Netherthird Initiative for Community Empowerment (N.I.C.E.) is going from strength to strength. Their most recent venture has been their Community Charity Shop, opened in June 2018. This in addition to their Community Café – N Café and Community Gym – N Fit offers an abundance of volunteering and training opportunities to local people and provides invaluable services and facilities for the local community
- Celebrate Kilmarnock now have a shop within Town Centre to engage with the local community and are involved in a number of community events.

Although the focus to date has been on developing geographic Community Led Action Plans, an opportunity arose for Vibrant Communities to develop a thematic action plan with East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action (Eacha) and the Kilmarnock Town Centre Partnership to coproduce 'plan within a plan' linking it to the action plan for the Town Centre. Engaging with people who are experiencing homelessness, many of whom lead chaotic lifestyles, staff from Vibrant Communities and volunteers from Eacha have supported them to identify their priorities, hopes and aspirations for the future. This plan was launched in May 2018.

The Communities team have been working very closely with colleagues from Housing over the past few years with planning & delivering PB events to ensure that EAC tenants have the opportunity to decide how they would like to allocate the Housing Environmental Budget. Five of these events have been held to date with lots of opportunities provided for local

people to have their say on their local green space & environmental projects. Thirteen conversation cafes have also been organised in partnership with Housing colleagues to engage local residents & provide an opportunity to talk about housing matters that are important to them.

Community Workers are also working in partnership with the Regeneration Officer to ensure that Placemaking is delivered in tandem with the development of Community Action Plans. Placemaking Plans are adopted as statutory guidance to the Local Development Plan and thereby become a material consideration in the determination of planning applications for future development proposals. They also provide information on community priorities for public sector and private investment as well as evidence of collaboration between communities and the council for funding applications.





Capacity Building

The Communities team work alongside their local communities to help build capacity in the local areas. Community Capacity Building (CCB) involves working with communities to build their skills and experience & increase opportunities for development. It is a way of working with people to develop their ability to positively influence what happens in their individual community in the future. CCB is based on core activities that involve:

- Supporting people to decide how and why they want to build community capacity
- Identifying Training Opportunities
- Developing new and existing skills
- Building individual confidence and personal development and
- Supporting people to become involved in their community and wider society.

Over the course of the year, community representatives have been given the opportunity to attend thirty training opportunities across East Ayrshire. This programme has included First Aid, Food Hygiene, Data Protection, Social Media and Governance training.

“This Group has opened so many door and created opportunities for our children and young people. Barriers have been broken down that we would have previously faced on our own. Being able to take part in activities and have our voices heard has helped us grow in confidence and feel valued. The team have encouraged and supported us to take steps towards contributing to our community, knowing that we are valued and can appreciate the differences we have helped make.”

Lisalanna

Action for Children

Case Study - Cumnock

Cumnock Action Plan, launched in 2015, has grown from strength to strength ever since. Although focussed on available local skills, talents and assets, the Group registered as a SCIO in May 2017 in order to ensure sustainability and access to grant funding for some of the larger priorities that require financial resource.

The Organisation is driven by 10 trustees, with over 40 local volunteers keen to step in and support with community activities and larger scale events. Strong connections now exist between community groups and the local business sector, all of whom contribute to the success of Cumnock Action Plan. A strong partnership of support is also delivered by Corra Foundation and Vibrant Communities.

Litter picks, river clean-ups, bulb planting and action planning on derelict land are some of the activities that have been held over the past few years to name but a few.

Cumnock Christmas Festival was given a new lease of life when it was taken over by the community, becoming an annual festival which is well supported by the wider community of Cumnock and the outlying neighbouring towns and villages. The 2018 festival showcased over 50 local businesses as well as musical talent and encouraged a late night shopping experience in Cumnock town centre.

The Big Lunch has also anchored itself to Woodroad Park, attracting over 60 families to last year's event. This is an opportunity for neighbours and friends to come together to share lunch, play games and is also a space where ideas can grow. The Big Lunch has led to new members joining community groups and also the establishment of a new community group, Cumnock Gardening Club.

Over the past year, the Group have actively engaged with some harder to reach groups in the community including Lisalanna, Things Tae Dae Social Hub and other groups who support people with mental health issues.

"This Group has opened so many doors and created opportunities for our children and young people. Barriers have been broken down that we would have previously faced on our own. Being able to take part in activities and have our voices heard has helped us grow in confidence and feel valued. The team have encouraged and supported us to take steps towards contributing to our community, knowing that we are valued and can appreciate the differences we have helped make." (Lisalanna, Action for Children)

The future of the Group is to continue to grow the capacity of local people, engage with the seldom heard sections of the community, focus on the action plan priorities and to evaluate the difference they are making to their community, using the findings to influence decisions at a local and national level.



Community conference

The Annual Communities Conference and the Community Action Plan Forum meetings have become an important fixture in the calendar as they provide the opportunity for community representatives to come together to connect, share practice and make new connections. For the first time this year, Community Councils and Community Action Plan groups joined together to organise a joint conference, which was attended by over 100 people. Workshops were chosen which would suit both groups including topics such as event planning; roads, traffic and parking; GDPR and online safety.

“All the workshops I have attended today have been informative and have given me lots of ideas to take back to my community”

“Inspiring to hear and see the changes that are possible for the community I live in.”

“It has been very informative and it was great meeting other member communities. ”

Conference participants

Community Councils

East Ayrshire is divided into 35 Community Council areas; there are currently 29 active Community Councils that currently have over 300 volunteers involved. They act as the voice of their community by keeping their community informed and ensuring that Community Planning Partners and others are aware of the Community's opinion on key issues.

As well as taking part in the planning and licensing processes, many have been involved in campaigns for their local area and been actively involved in the development of Community Action Plans, fundraising or support projects such as providing hanging baskets or Christmas lights for the community, organising gala days and holiday events or litter picks.

Community Councillors also benefit from support from Vibrant Communities which includes organising annual seminars and working with them to plan a range of training and development sessions. Over the past year this has included

- An Introduction to the planning system
- A development session for treasurers
- Community engagement techniques
- Social media training
- Working with statistics to improve submissions
- Working more effectively as a Community Council
- Improving working relationships with other groups

Some comments on these sessions include:

- **Very useful. Gained a lot of information.**
- **Communicating with the Community is the key to go forward in trying to engage the community**

Community Councils and Community Led Action Plans are also integral to Community Planning in East Ayrshire, and there are clear links with our community planning arrangements ensuring that local people have a real voice and can influence the decisions which impact on their communities. The Action Plans also underpin the Community Planning Partnerships approach to locality based planning, in line with the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. There are currently four Community representatives sitting on the Community Planning Partnership Board; two Community Councillors and two from the Community Action Plan Forum.

Initially appointed for a two year period this was extended to three. Community representatives agreed that it may be a little daunting to join this group and felt that the additional year was helpful as they felt they were really getting into their stride during the second year and they will have even more to contribute in year 3. A 6 month shadowing period means that new representatives will have time to find their feet without the responsibility of contributing immediately. Regular updates are sent to Community Councils and the Forum and all of these groups have the option to ask questions or raise concerns via their representatives.

Darvel and District Community Council Lottery

Darvel and District Community Council have created a lottery for their community which provides a sustainable source of funding. Monies raised is split between the prize fund and a community fund which supports local projects. Members have the opportunity to vote online for their preferred projects. Shortly after the launch the Community Council had attracted 400 members.

The Community Council also launched an online magazine in March 2019 to further improve communication with their community. This will raise the profile of the Community Council and ensure that more residents are aware of the work they do.

“These initiatives are a way to engage with our community, encourage them to become more involved and support their empowerment by involving them in decision-making.”

Secretary

Darvel and District Community Council



Community Investment

The Community Investment Team helps a wide range of community groups, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and charities to think about their funding approach and consider alternative finance and investment models to support their work.

The Team offers a range of information for these groups including regular updates on grant funding, meetings with groups to discuss funding options for their projects, and advice on new routes to community investment.

During 2017/18, 167 community projects received £7,681,984 of external funding from a variety of sources including the National Community Lottery Fund, Renewable Energy Fund, the Scottish Government, and a wide range of charitable trusts and foundations. The Community Investment Team specifically supported 53 of these projects to obtain £2,854,072 of funding.

Investment Pathways

Over the past few years, new investment platforms have emerged which can benefit our communities who are interested in raising funding for a wide variety of small to medium local projects, or for larger strategic acquisitions of land and buildings.

These include:

- Crowdfund campaigns
- Village / town lotteries
- Community shares

For further information please contact the Community Investment Team at:

ExternalFunding@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Darvel Improvement Group – “Rose” Garden Project

The Darvel Improvement Group (DIG) wanted to restore and improve a much loved community space adjacent to the main entrance of Morton Park called the “Rose” Garden.

Once a ten year lease had been obtained, the Community Investment Team assisted the Group with applications to the Renewable Energy Fund and Tesco Bags of Help. They also organised and promoted a Crowdfund campaign through Just Giving. Over £50,000 was secured and this important public space has now been completely transformed.

Maureen Ross, who led the DIG’s project assisted by an enthusiastic band of volunteer gardeners, expressed her appreciation of the help provided by the Community Investment Team: *“Their assistance, and in particular the support of Neil McKenna, Community Investment Officer and Lynn Young from Democratic Services was invaluable in negotiations with the Council. Fundraising for the garden through Tesco’s Bags of Help and Crowdfunding would have achieved a little, but the huge contribution from the Renewable Energy Fund and Bessie Roxburgh Bequest allowed realisation of a garden greatly appreciated by the wider community.”*



East Ayrshire 4 Community

As part of our commitment to community and voluntary groups, charities and social enterprises in search of external funding opportunities, the Team operates a free to use resource called "East Ayrshire 4 Community". This provides a cohesive and streamlined approach to external funding and enables registered groups to identify the best range of funders for their particular projects.

Register for FREE at
<http://www.idoxopen4community.co.uk/eastayrshire/>

Participatory Budgeting

Participatory Budgeting (PB) gives local people the opportunity to decide how public money is spent in their communities.

The Community Investment Team pioneered this approach in 2016 and since then, PB has gone from strength to strength.

Following on from the success of the initial events, Vibrant Communities has worked with communities the length and breadth of East Ayrshire offering the opportunity to experience PB, with funding coming through the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund, East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, East Ayrshire Council, and The Big Lottery Fund.

In 2017/18, the Team's focus of PB moved from single communities to working more closely with the Health and Social Care Partnership Locality Groups.

A total of £120,000 was available to support community projects but as 2018 was the Year of the Young Person, it was decided to set aside half of this for youth PB events.

Funding from The Big Lottery allowed 3 more communities with newly produced action plans to undertake PB to help address the priorities identified in their plans.

Since January 2018, we have had:



10
**COMMUNITY
EVENTS**



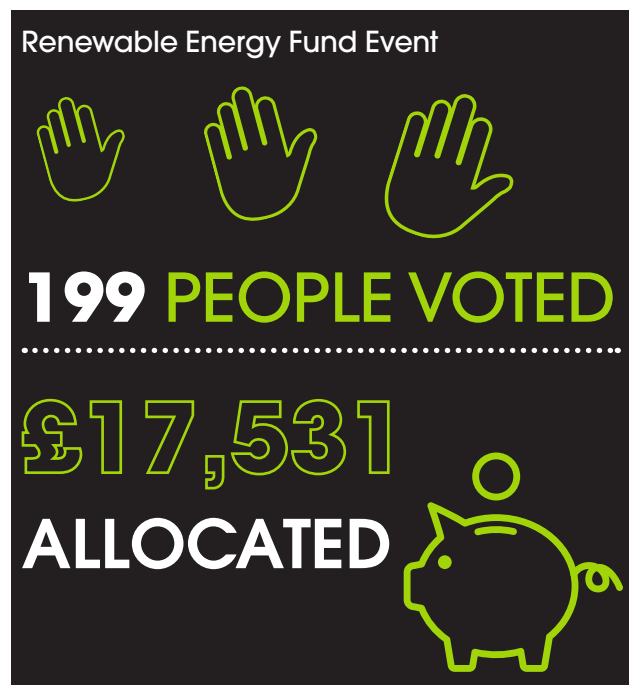
2,584

PEOPLE VOTING

**117 PROJECTS
SHARING
£155,000
FUNDING**



In another first, in 2018, East Ayrshire Council's Grants Committee decided to release Renewable Energy Fund monies for Muirkirk and Glenbuck to be allocated through a PB process. This process was undertaken by a steering group made up of local people, supported by Vibrant Communities and Democratic Services.



Reflecting the success of this pilot, the Committee decided to release this fund to the community again in 2019.

A number of communities, including Dalmellington, New Cumnock, Kilmarnock Town Centre, Auchinleck and Shortlees, have also accessed a range of funding, such as Community Choices, Coalfield Regeneration Trust and Housing Asset Services, to run PB events either with support from Vibrant Communities or on their own.

National Agenda

In 2018, COSLA and the Scottish Government agreed a framework to have at least 1% of Council budgets subject to PB by 2021. This means that local people will be encouraged to take part in deciding how services are run in their communities.

To develop this, the Community Investment Team have worked with colleagues in Vibrant Communities and Housing Services, and are working with Outdoor Services to develop PB processes.

So far, the Team has supported a Youth PB event at the Youth Conference in 2016 and 6 Housing Environmental events. As part of the Housing Environmental processes, the first postal ballot has been utilised.

A total of £124,300 has been decided so far, with (FIGURE MISSING?) projects undertaken and 315 people voting.

“A great way of interesting one community in local democratic processes and allowing children as young as 8 to vote is a great way of getting them involved in their local area.”

“Really inspiring to hear all the great community initiatives - many of which we don't know about and keen to support!”

What's next...

Over the past 6 years Vibrant Communities has had an amazing journey continuing to evolve, reshape and mature. Recognising the passion and pride that people in East Ayrshire have for their communities, we are committed in our approach to working with young people, adults, community groups and partners to identify and address local priorities in a creative and solution focussed way.

Vibrant Communities has championed transformation working with communities and other services across the Council, ensuring that the core values of "working with and for" local communities rather than "doing to" remains central to our approach.

As our story continues, we know that we will continue to go through change, adapting as we change the way services will be delivered with our communities and reflecting the tightening of public sector resources. However this provides us with really exciting opportunities to be creative and explore new ways of working with our communities, always ensuring that we keep people at the heart of everything we do.

Our focus as we go forward will be to

Continue to champion a whole council and partner approach to transformation

Ensure the vibrant voices of our community continue to shape future priorities and transformation

Embed FACE (flexible, approachable, caring and empowered) into our daily practice/everything we do

Strengthen community empowerment through new and second generation community led action plans

Build on the success of the Year of People creating a lasting legacy

Continue to ensure our employees and volunteers develop and enhance their skills and talents through workforce development and the new opportunities that transformation brings

Continue to support people to develop their skills and experience through targeted programmes and volunteering

Build upon our work in creating a kind, caring and connected East Ayrshire; tackling social isolation and ensuring our most vulnerable are supported when they need it the most

Maximise financial and people investment with our communities

Remaining open to new approaches and ways of working, taking risks and learning from others

For more information about
Vibrant Communities contact...

Acting Head of Housing & Communities

Bob McCulloch *Robert.McCulloch@east-ayrshire.gov.uk*

Early Intervention & Prevention Service Manager

Kevin Wells *Kevin.Wells@east-ayrshire.gov.uk*

Sustainable Communities Service Manager

Dot Grieve *dot.grieve@east-ayrshire.gov.uk*

.....

**The journey to people
powered transformation
continues....**





THE STORY CONTINUES...