

YEARS

EAST AYRSHIRE  
**Vibrant**  
COMMUNITIES

**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 experience of local people and employees, to harness the enthusiasm, talent and 'can do' spirit that exists across East Ayrshire.**

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



# East Ayrshire Council's Vibrant Communities Service is celebrating its tenth anniversary! Ten years of supporting local residents and communities and making a huge impact on many people's lives and across several Council services.

Over the last ten years, we have told our story in 'The Story So Far'; 'The Next Chapter' and 'The Story Continues', and now we want to tell you about our latest achievements and good news stories as we continue to support a more caring, kind and connected approach across East Ayrshire.

The creation of Vibrant Communities was part of East Ayrshire Council's Transformation Strategy linked to the Christie Report on public sector reform. It focused on transforming our relationship with the communities we serve, with community learning and development at the heart of this.

Since our last publication, we have all been through the COVID-19 pandemic which saw communities coming together to support and help each other in so many different ways. From volunteers helping the most vulnerable members of our communities with shopping or collecting prescriptions, to sports clubs providing online sessions to children and young people to keep them engaged in physical activity, there were so many examples of how our services adapted to meet the most challenging of circumstances.

As we've moved on from the pandemic, we've taken some of what we learned from it and used this to make our services even stronger and more resilient.

The Vibrant Communities service continues to work across all Council and partner services to ensure a consistent approach to people-powered transformation and we are still sharing our experiences and successes with partners and external organisations both locally and nationally. We recognise that our staff and volunteers, and the residents and communities that we serve, lie at the very heart of all of this – it is every one of these people who are helping us work towards becoming a fairer, kinder and better connected East Ayrshire.



# 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

We organise large-scale events each year which showcase and celebrate the achievements and successes of communities as well as supporting a wide range of community-led activities. These include:

- **EA Playday**
  - **Annual junior and senior Youth Conferences** where issues are discussed which affect young people at school and in their community
  - **Biennial Youth Awards** evenings that recognise and celebrate young people's achievements
  - **Learning Disability Week**
  - **Celebration of Volunteers**
  - **Yearly East Ayrshire Sports Council & Talented Athlete Awards** evenings to celebrate our amazing volunteer club officials and talented athletes
  - **Celebration of Learning**
  - **Danger Detectives**
  - **CHATmas (Christmas) Party**
  - **Dumfries House tea dances**
  - **Queen's Baton Relay** which we welcomed to East Ayrshire on its journey around the Commonwealth nations and territories. Over 20,000 people engaged in the 10 community led events and two Council celebration events which took place in various localities. Along with our wonderful Baton Bearers, the event made 2014 a year to remember.
  - **Commonwealth Pre-Games Training Camps** were facilitated in East Ayrshire for nations competing in the 2014 Commonwealth Games, in partnership with our local sports clubs and East Ayrshire Leisure. Northwest Amateur Boxing Club hosted the Canadian Boxing Team, Kilmarnock Amateur Weightlifting Club hosted the Jamaican Weightlifting Team and the Team Scotland athletics squad trained at the Ayrshire Athletics Arena.
- Vibrant Communities also supports events organised by other Council services and external organisations such as:
- **East Ayrshire Tenants' and Residents' Conference**
  - **Roon the Toon 10k Road Race**
  - **Hillhouse Christmas Appeal**







# Our key highlights over the last decade

**29**

**COMMUNITY LED  
ACTION PLANS**

**65**

**COMMUNITY  
ASSET TRANSFERS  
SINCE 2013**

**27 ACTIVE  
COMMUNITY  
COUNCILS**



**14**

**COMMUNITY LARDERS  
ESTABLISHED SINCE 2020**



**74,000**

**ATTENDANCES AT  
PLAYDAY EVENTS**

**1688**

**EXTERNAL  
GRANT  
AWARDS**

**FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS**



**20,000**

**ATTENDANCES FOR SHOUT  
SWIMMING PROGRAMME**



**12,000+  
GUESTS**

**AT DUMFRIES HOUSE  
TEA DANCES SINCE 2013**

**895**

**FAMILIES  
ENGAGED IN  
FAMILY LITERACY  
PROGRAMMES**



**171**  
**ESOL LEARNERS**  
SUPPORTED

**896**

**YOUNG PEOPLE** AND  
THEIR **FAMILIES**  
SUPPORTED THROUGH  
**HOME LINK SERVICES**  
**SINCE 2017**



**301**

**iLUNCH**  
**FAMILY**  
**LEARNING**  
**SESSIONS**

DELIVERED IN  
THE COMMUNITY  
SINCE 2017



**1378 PRISONERS**  
SUPPORTED WITHIN  
HMP KILMARNOCK

.....  
**1782 CHILDREN**  
ENGAGED IN FAMILY  
EVENTS WITHIN HMP  
KILMARNOCK  
**SINCE 2017**



**5912 HOURS**  
OF **BEFRIENDING**  
**SUPPORT** FOR  
**CHILDREN AND**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE**

**987**

**EVENTS AND**  
**COMMUNITY GROUPS**



SUPPORTED  
THROUGH  
**FUN4HIRE**

**290**

**CARE EXPERIENCED**  
**YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**SUPPORTED REGULARLY**  
**WITHIN CHILDREN'S**  
**RESIDENTIAL HOUSES**  
**AND THE COMMUNITY**



CREATION OF THE  
COUNCIL'S FIRST CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S  
CABINET IN 2018

**375 YOUNG PEOPLE**  
PARTICIPATING IN THE  
**ACTIVE SCHOOLS**  
**LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME**

.....  
**1.5 MILLION+**  
**ATTENDANCES** OF  
CHILDREN AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE AT **SPORT AND**  
**DIVERSION ACTIVITIES**  
SINCE 2013

SUPPORTING

DEVELOPING

ENABLING

ENGAGING



# Clean, Green and Vibrant

**In 2020, as part of the wider Housing and Communities Service redesign, Vibrant Communities joined together with Outdoor Amenities and Waste Management to create a new Communities portfolio made up of Cleaner Communities, Greener Communities and Vibrant Communities.**

The aim was to support collaboration and flexibility across the three services, and to provide a more connected experience for our communities. This redesign allowed us to make a fresh start together, building on the strengths of each service with our employees firmly a part of that movement, as well as facilitating a place-based approach much more easily. The service prides itself on being supportive, collaborative and forward thinking, ensuring that communities are at the heart of everything we do.

## Cleaner Communities

Cleaner Communities is responsible for the collection of domestic and commercial waste and recycling, the processing of the recycling materials collection and the onward sales. It has over 150 employees and a fleet of more than 40 large HGVs and plants.

Cleaner Communities is committed to having a programme of waste management based on the principles of sustainability.

This approach includes:

- **minimising the generation of waste products**
- **seeking added value from wastes where we can**
- **promoting safe recovery of hazardous waste and reviewing safe disposal methods for non-hazardous waste**
- **championing initiatives around food waste and climate change**
- **encouraging individuals and businesses to reduce, reuse and recycle waste wherever possible**

## Greener Communities

Greener Communities provides essential services such as the maintenance of public parks, play parks and open spaces; bereavement services; garden maintenance scheme and allotments; and it also deals with fly-tipping, graffiti, littering and dog fouling.

In collaboration with our communities, it runs various campaigns throughout the year such as spring clean-ups and Pick a Park clean-ups where volunteers have helped to tidy up many of our open spaces.







## Young People, Sport and Diversion

An important part of Vibrant Communities' work involves encouraging young people to take part in positive activities and diverting them from antisocial behaviour. Having Youth Work and Sport Development within the same team has been instrumental in improving outcomes for young people and ensuring that their voices are heard.

Our Young People, Sport and Diversion team has continued to listen to and engage with young people through interactive, educational conferences, and in 2018 the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Cabinet was formed. The Cabinet members work with East Ayrshire Council and feel empowered to question elected members, officers and community partners on topics that directly affect children and young people.

Biennial Youth Awards celebrate the successes and achievements of our young people in areas such as diversity and inclusion; volunteering; sport and physical activity, and caring for family members. In January 2023, the Children and Young People's Cabinet also received a special recognition award for the work they do to campaign on issues of importance to young people in East Ayrshire.

## Highlights over last ten years

**Creation of the East Ayrshire Children and Young People's Cabinet in 2018**



**Biennial Youth Awards evenings that recognise and celebrate young people's achievements**



**18 Youth Conferences held where children and young people from across all secondary schools meet to discuss topics that directly affect them**



**Celebrating Year of Young People in 2018, with events such as Colour Runs and a World War 1 centenary visit to France, all co-designed and delivered by young people**



**Supported over 200 local athletes with more than £100k funding to help them achieve their sporting potential**



**In partnership with Kilmarnock Harriers and East Ayrshire Leisure, we created the Athletics Partnership to co-deliver Sportshall Athletics, Cross Country and Roon the Toon events**

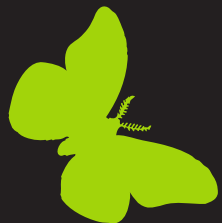


## Paige's story

*"From joining the Children and Young People's Cabinet back in 2018, I have grown in confidence and had so many incredible experiences that only the Cabinet could have provided."*

*"I was elected as Vice Chair of the Cabinet in 2021, and this role allowed me to reach my full potential. I was able to fulfil my duties through taking the lead on events and even chairing many meetings. This position pushed me to develop leadership skills and let me gradually develop my confidence to speak in meetings. I enjoyed being in this leadership role so much that it led me to being elected as an MSYP and I can now speak both nationally and locally for young people."*

*"The Children and Young People's Cabinet is a place where young people can express their views and opinions and it's a great place for personal growth and creating change."*



## Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs

**Active Schools Coordinators have been working within East Ayrshire Council since 2005 offering children and young people the opportunities and motivation to adopt active, healthy lifestyles, now and into adulthood.**

Active Schools work involves important early intervention and prevention work within both education and community settings. There is also an Active Schools Leadership programme which is designed to support young people to develop their skills and experience through sports coaching and enhance their skills for life and work.

The success of Active Schools in East Ayrshire has been recognised by sportscotland at a national level. At a time when sportscotland are reviewing their local authority investment, the excellent work in East Ayrshire has been commended, with a mutual desire to continue the work that their investment has driven.

The continuation of the Active Schools programme will see enhanced opportunities for children and families, with greater emphasis on participation rates of care experienced children and young people; girls and young females; and children and young people with additional support needs. Future plans also include offering Active Schools for pre-5 establishments as part of the transition to primary school; further developing school to club links; and developing the participation of schools within School Sports Awards.

Through the current sportscotland investment, the Council has also supported eight Community Sport Hubs, which bring together sport clubs and key local partners who want to develop the sports offered in the community. The Council is also in the process of establishing a further Community Sports Hub at the Galleon Leisure Centre.



## Highlights over last ten years

- increasing the physical activity levels of young females to 45% of overall attendances at Active Schools activities such as Active Girls Day, which is level with the national average
- hosted the inaugural Shankly Football Tournament in partnership with Spirit of Shankly from Liverpool with over 150 young footballers participating
- the co-ordination of Easter and summer holiday programmes which include a free healthy lunch at every session
- supported Education Hubs during the COVID-19 lockdown by providing over 3000 sessions to the children of key workers with, on average, 411 attendances per day
- extremely high attendance levels by young people at structured sport and physical activity sessions
- hosted the Scottish Schools Badminton Championships in 2023, the first time ever hosted outwith Perth
- supported local sports clubs to apply for over £750k in funding to develop their organisation
- two former Young Ambassadors are now full time Active Schools Coordinators – an amazing journey for two former pupils supported by the Coordinator

## Active Schools – our young leaders' journeys

A core function of Active Schools is to develop young leaders and support them to begin their leadership journey by providing volunteering opportunities, upskilling them with continuous professional development and accredited awards and equipping them with skills for life, further education and future employment. The Young People, Sport & Diversion Team now have two full time Active Schools Coordinators who started their journey as young leaders within the team.

### Courtney's story

*"I like to describe my journey as unique; going from disengaged young person, being recruited as Young Ambassador, going through the volunteer pathway with Active Schools, doing the opening speech of the Young Ambassador Conference, becoming part of the sessional staff for Active Schools, and then progressing into full time employment. I am thankful for the opportunities that have been provided to me through East Ayrshire Council Active Schools."*

.....

### Nikki's story

*"Active Schools has been a presence in my journey all the way through volunteering, sessional coaching roles and now in full time employment as an Active Schools Coordinator. Without the guidance, commitment, passion and motivation of the Active Schools network, my journey would have not as been enjoyable, motivating, and inspiring."*

## Mentoring in East Ayrshire

**In 2015, the Sports Mentors posts were created to motivate and encourage aspiring athletes to develop in their chosen sport.**

Two local Talented Athletes who were supported by East Ayrshire Council were appointed to these posts: Kieran McMaster from North West Amateur Boxing Club and Sophie Smyth from Kilmarnock Amateur Weightlifting Club who is also a Team Scotland Commonwealth Games Athlete. Kieran and Sophie used their national champion status to become role models for local athletes and to inspire local clubs to implement development plans to assist their athletes.

Eight years on, Kieran continues to play a key role in supporting young people as a Sports Mentor however this is now done in a completely different way. Kieran works closely with a large number of local primary schools supporting young people referred from Education and Social Work who require some support with attainment, anger management and integration at their school.

Kieran has supported over 200 young people to improve their attendance and participation in the classroom environment, and notable differences in behaviours have been observed in school, at home and in their communities.

Vibrant Communities, in partnership with Education and the Scottish Attainment Challenge (latterly Scottish Equity Fund) funding, have provided a Mentoring Service for young people since 2017. This service provided targeted young people with additional wellbeing support and helped to build their confidence and resilience through a youth work approach. The main aim was to provide supportive relationships with a youth worker tackling issue-based topics and helping young people gain accredited youth awards in order to reduce the poverty related attainment gap.



Since 2017, the project has evolved and now supports care experienced young people within education using the same mentoring support. The service has provided over 745 young people with support over the last six years, with outcomes such as:

- **97% felt more confident following the intervention**
- **96% felt more involved in their community or school**
- **96% felt that they were more responsible citizens**

One young person who was supported by the Vibrant Communities Mentoring Development Officers is now a Youth Work Modern Apprentice within the service and provides young people with the same support she received.

# Play and Early Intervention

The Play and Early Intervention team (PEI) offers many different opportunities for children, families and communities to feel supported and to play indoors and outdoors. It aims to improve learning and life outcomes for children through a person-centred approach and firmly believes in the transformative power of play and family support.

## Highlights over last ten years

- 149 indoor and outdoor play events delivered or supported in the community such as Grounds4Play, Playtimes events for children in early years, and National Playday events offering opportunities for community connections and empowerment
- 28 partnership events delivered with participation and support from East Ayrshire Community Play Forum, HMP Kilmarnock, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Health and Social Care Partnership, Dumfries House, Heart, third sector organisations and community groups
- in excess of 114,000 children and young people have participated in the events overall resulting in improved health and wellbeing and increased physical activity levels
- over 400 creative arts packs distributed to families during COVID pandemic to support home learning and combat social isolation and loneliness
- regular play packs specifically gifted to Crosshouse Hospital Children's Ward from the former East Ayrshire Community Play Forum

## Bringing communities together

A number of large and smaller-scale events have been held regularly throughout the years including Playday, Grounds4Play, Have a Field Day, Summer of Play and other family learning events. Playday has been a particular success since it started running in 2008 to celebrate the child's right to play. Over the past 12 years, approximately 74,000 children, young people and adults have attended this free and fun event.







## Danger Detectives

**Danger Detectives is an experiential learning programme aimed at P6 pupils to help reduce accidents and crime amongst young people while building community resilience.**

This is achieved by creating a safe environment where young people can actively become aware of their personal safety both indoors and outside, learn how to react to dangerous situations, know what roles the emergency services play, and learn about how they can protect and support the most vulnerable individuals within their communities.

Vibrant Communities has led on this initiative since 2017 with over 4000 pupils taking part, and an additional virtual learning programme for all primary schools and special schools during the pandemic saw over 1000 pupils participating.

## Play in Prison

Through Big Lottery Community funding, the PEI team delivers family-based initiatives within the local prison to allow prisoners (including dads, uncles and grandads) to spend quality play and bonding time with their family.

Weekly play and bonding visits; a family bookshare programme; a Dad's group and seasonal events all help to increase interaction and improve relationships between prisoners and their families.

The weekly bonding visits have involved 1378 prisoners and support has been provided to their families attending the session including 1782 children.

In 2016, Play in Prison won the 'Chair's Award' from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) for the innovation, enthusiasm and motivation of the project group, and in 2017, it was successful in winning two silver awards at the Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (IESE) Awards.

*"The visits have really helped me bond with my son. The help you get from the staff is top class and I was happy with their support."*  
Participant

*"It's nice to do things with your children especially writing a letter to Santa and recording a story to read to the children."*  
Participant



**Play@home** Play@home is delivered in the family home or school setting over 12 sessions and is mainly aimed at children aged 0-8, however older siblings are included in the sessions too. Referrals can come from a range of agencies promoting joint working.

Families are provided with opportunities to increase their confidence and understanding of strong, positive and meaningful relationships through spending quality time together. Parents/carers are also encouraged to attend community events to further support health and wellbeing and social skills. From 2018-2022, 66 families were supported through Play@home.

**SHOUT** The SHOUT card is designed as a show and go discount card to help improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people across East Ayrshire by ensuring that they all have the opportunity to access a wide range of activities whilst ensuring that cost is not a barrier. Numerous SHOUT partners offer incentives and the card can be used as a library card across all EA Library Services. Almost 11,000 cards have been issued in the last decade.

The SHOUT scheme offers either discounted or free swimming across East Ayrshire during every seasonal period. Over the last ten years there have been just under 20,000 attendances for SHOUT swimming which equates to a saving to members of the public of over £56,000.

**Fun4Hire** The Fun4Hire service is a play equipment hire service through which the public, schools and community/statutory groups can hire equipment and resources such as circus kits and giant games.

The service encourages people to engage in fun play activities with a variety of different equipment, and it provides training to community groups so that they can deliver activities themselves at local gala days and events.

Over the past ten years, Fun4Hire has supported over 967 internal and external hires.

## Befriending

The Children and Young People's Befriending Service has been delivered by Vibrant Communities since 2015, and is now co-ordinated by two Family Support Workers who support young people affected by drugs or alcohol or who are isolated/lonely and in need of support.

Befriending can take place on a one-to-one, family or group basis, and support to a child or young person focuses on building trusting relationships, confidence and supporting any concerns or challenges faced by the child or young person.

248 children and young people have been supported through the service over the last ten years. Our volunteer befrienders have dedicated 5912 hours of their time to support children and young people and during this period, 2956 activity outings have taken place.

*"Befriending has been a valuable service to us as a family. It has really made a difference to our son in terms of building relationships."* Parent

*"I think the befriending service is amazing! It is just so rewarding to see the children you support flourish and go on to achieve wonderful outcomes. The staff make you feel so valued and are very supportive."* Befriender

## Highlights over last ten years

- awarded Quality in Befriending Award in 2022
- held ten intergenerational events where children and young people visit older adults in sheltered accommodation units to enjoy games and arts and crafts
- participated in a joint Tea Dance at Dumfries House in 2022 with around 200 people attending to encourage and promote intergenerational activities which is now an annual event





## Home Link Workers

Home Link Workers support care experienced young people and their families, as well as working with young people through their transition from primary to secondary.

They help to establish positive connections between education and the family home, in addition to delivering activity sessions throughout holiday periods.

### Highlights (2021 - 2023)

- 468 families supported through Home Link Workers
- 1667 phone calls made to families and young people
- 1939 calls to other agencies including Social Work and Education
- 475 garden visits (due to pandemic)
- 76 events delivered and supported

## Supporting a Syrian family

One of our Home Link Workers has been supporting a Syrian family with four children since October 2021. The school referred the family due to issues the family were having with their eldest son who was in P7. With the help of the Bilingual Resettlement team who provided a translator, supports were put in place to implement family routines and structures for all the children. The Home Link Worker also helped the family to set up parental controls on the laptop so that their son would no longer be able to play games that weren't age appropriate.

Despite there being some language barriers between the family and their Home Link Worker, there has been a positive change with the eldest son's behaviour at home and the family are continuing with the structure and routines for the children.





# Home Link and Parental Engagement

Funded through the Scottish Attainment Challenge and uniquely embedded within the Vibrant Communities team, our Home Link Workers focus on early interventions for children, young people and their families both within school and community settings. This bespoke support includes individual and group work approaches, such as:

- **Enhanced Transition Programme**

188 pupils attended Enhanced Transition sessions in 2022 to help with the move to secondary school across all six Education Groups. 124 sessions took place involving 166 hours of input from the Home Link Team.

- **iLunch Family Learning Programme**

The Home Link Team co-ordinates and delivers iLunch indoor and outdoor sessions across 26 primary schools over school holiday periods. The programme engages, supports and encourages family learning. Since 2018 the team has delivered 301 sessions supported by 1324 family learning packs.

- **Parental Empowerment Programme**

In order to make the Parental Empowerment provision sustainable, the team has worked in partnership with Columba 1400, parents and staff to co-produce a bespoke East Ayrshire values-based programme. Programmes are currently under way in a number of schools across East Ayrshire.

- **One-to-one and family support**

Home Link Workers provide support for children and young people through key transitioning periods at school. To date the team has supported 943 young people and their families, and engaged with 792 families no longer requiring Home Link support.

# Spotlight on 2022

Throughout 2022, the Home Link Team provided support for children, young people and their families via bespoke sessions in order to support them, at the earliest opportunity, to overcome barriers that prevent them from achieving their potential. The team's core focus is on equity and continuously supporting and developing practice to address the impacts of poverty.

**Provided tailored support where it's needed most to 248 children, young people and their families on a weekly basis**



**Made 4998 supportive coaching conversation telephone calls**



**Sent 8250 text messages to parents and carers**



**Made 1620 home visits, garden visits and 'walk and talks'**



**Been involved in 188 Team Around the Child meetings and 442 requests from parents/carers for further general wellbeing support**



**Maintained strong partnership working with the Education service, with 2767 calls and communications taking place with colleagues, further bridging the gap between school and home**





# Lifestyle Development and Community Wellbeing

**The Community Health Activity Team aims to ensure that there are local opportunities available which support people of any age to make positive lifestyle choices and be more active.**

## Community Health Checks

In 2001 the CHIP van was introduced to communities across East Ayrshire. Funded by The Big Lottery, this mobile healthy living centre visited over 30 communities offering health checks, lifestyle advice and signposting to local services.

As the years passed, and Vibrant Communities developed a more place-based approach to supporting communities, the team began to link more with community facilities and local groups. This new approach sees a member of the team responsible for a particular geographical area where they can develop deeper links with communities. Coming soon to enhance the health check offered is an atrial fibrillation check – a quick and easy way to detect any anomalies in the heartbeat which could indicate underlying, more serious health concerns.

## HealthWorks - workplace health checks

Alongside community health checks, the team also offers workplace health checks across the Council. Campaigns targeting men regularly take place as it's recognised that they are less likely to seek help and advice about their health at an early stage.

Support is also provided to teams across the Council during training weeks to raise awareness about looking after your health, and commercial health checks are available to local businesses who can book the team to visit their premises to carry out similar health checks and offer advice on positive lifestyle changes.

## Activity on Prescription

The Activity on Prescription (AOP) initiative supports people to identify their goals and encourages them to take steps to achieve them. Partnerships have been formed with local providers of exercise including the Galleon Centre, Visions, East Ayrshire Leisure and centres run by community groups such as Darvel Community Trust.

Previously, the scheme allowed GPs and other health professionals to refer suitable patients to receive lifestyle advice. But now that the importance of social prescribing is recognised, non-health professionals such as Community Connectors and Housing Support Officers can refer to AOP using guidelines that identify appropriate people for referral.



# Jock and Susie

Jock had an industrial accident which caused back, neck and shoulder injuries and he was unable to continue with his job. His life totally changed and he found this very difficult.

But two years ago Jock was referred to Activity on Prescription by his GP and his life changed once more. He found the staff to be friendly and approachable and they listened to the difficulties he had while they carried out a health check and discussed various options for improving his health.

At 58 years old, Jock had never been to a gym but he went along and found that there were plenty of people just like him. Now both Jock and his wife regularly attend the gym and they've also made lots of new friends. Jock now has the energy and ability to run after his grandchildren and he is very thankful to the team for the positive difference they have helped him make to his health and lifestyle.



## HARP (Health and Rehabilitation Programme)

**Linking closely to the Activity on Prescription scheme is a programme of community-based exercise classes.**

These have developed over the last ten years to now include specific classes for those who have coronary heart disease, have had a stroke, are at risk of falls or have wider neurological conditions. There are also classes for people who have complex multi-morbidities where they can work at their pace depending on their ability level.

Members of the Community Health Activity Team have completed many advanced level training courses to ensure they are suitably qualified to provide safe and effective classes for all those who are referred. The partnerships developed with colleagues across the NHS ensures that any concerns the team have about individuals can be reviewed and further advice given prior to any individual attending a class.

In addition to the core programme of classes, the team has also been successful in securing additional funding to offer specific supports for smaller groups of individuals, such as:

- **MacMillan funding for Move More**  
Provided opportunities for those living with and beyond cancer to take part in physical activity sessions. Over 130 people were referred to Move More for support with over 50% still taking part after 12 months. Over 80% became more active, over 70% felt their health had improved and 84% reported that their levels of fatigue had reduced.
- **Paths For All funding for Reconnect**  
Supports people whose health and activity levels declined during the pandemic and encourages them to start walking and interacting again in their local area.

- **Versus Arthritis funding for musculoskeletal and pain management**

Supports people with arthritis to understand, manage and increase activity as part of a jointly delivered programme with the MSK Physiotherapy Team at Crosshouse Hospital.

## Walking programme

**Since exercise classes aren't for everyone, the team also offers a number of community walks which have continued to grow since 2013.**

Health walks for all abilities and ages take place in Cumnock and Doon, the Kilmarnock area and the Irvine Valley, and the team recently took part in the inaugural Ayrshire Walking Festival as well as running their own Jim Dunlop Walking Festival.

In 2019 the team was awarded Dementia Friendly Accreditation by Paths For All to support people with dementia who may be keen to walk often but have low confidence in doing so on their own.

## Isolation, Solitude, Solidarity, Surety

*"Following a significant traumatic event in my life, I returned to walking which I knew could provide me with the peace that I needed to heal. Although I like walking alone, I initially joined the walking group as a camouflage so that I could view my isolation as solitude. I could choose to quietly walk beside people or socially engage with them. No judgements or pressures were ever made, giving me the time to recover at my own pace.*

*"But it's not so much what I get out of it that's important. The group becomes an outlet to share experiences and support each other. It gives not only the physical benefits of being fitter but the mental benefits of being stronger.*

*"Over time I found that I had a natural empathy for the other participants which led to me becoming a volunteer. In all, my life required a new direction and the Health Walk was the first signpost to the new path."*





## Suicide prevention

Suicide remains a major issue in Scotland and the UK as the statistics below show:

- 753 suicides were registered in Scotland in 2021
- males remain almost three times as likely to die by suicide than females, but the female suicide rate has increased since 2017
- people living in Scotland's most deprived areas remain over three times more likely to die by suicide than those living in the least deprived areas

A pan-Ayrshire approach to the co-ordination of training has developed over the last few years and trained members of the team have been fully supportive of delivering a number of sessions. A range of local mental health training from safeTALK and ASIST to bespoke sessions for communities, workplaces and other groups have been provided to raise awareness and reduce the stigma that surrounds suicide. Training gives people the confidence to ask someone if they are having thoughts of suicide by recognising the signs.

*"It really helped that the training taught us that asking someone about suicide won't put the idea in their head."*

*Training participant*

*"I had been worried about a friend and after the training I had the confidence to ask her if she was thinking about suicide and when she said she was, I connected her with someone who could help. I would never have had the confidence to do that without the training."*

*Training participant*

Suicide Prevention Week is promoted every September through social media, and the team distributes campaign materials in local communities, junior football clubs and workplaces.

All of this work links to the national strategy for suicide prevention, Creating Hope Together.

## Recovery

Supporting individuals in recovery from addictions has been incorporated into the team programme for some time now. A number of options are available for individuals, including:

- access to Activity on Prescription including a free induction at a local gym followed by 12 months of free access to local gyms
- health checks at the Recovery Hub in Kilmarnock on a regular basis
- weekly yoga at the Recovery Hub specifically developed to support those in recovery
- addressing stigma – new initiative funded by the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP)

## Challenging stigma

Through the allocation of specific funding, the team aims to improve the public's knowledge and understanding of drug and alcohol dependency and recovery in order to reduce levels of fear and blame. This is done through information roadshows, training and media campaigns.

Successful roadshows have recently been held with a family-orientated approach to challenge stigma and promote positivity and hope. Family is seen as an important theme as the whole family can be impacted by one family member's addiction, therefore access to support is important for all.

## Partnership working

No one can tackle health improvement alone; it takes joint working and positive relationships to ensure that people who require support receive it at a time and place that suits them. The relationships that the team builds with colleagues across all sectors locally and nationally ensure the best possible support for individuals living and working in East Ayrshire, and we thank all of our partners for the incredible work that they do with us.



# Housing Support

As part of our Housing Support service which is registered with the Care Inspectorate, we are able to make a significant impact on individuals and families in need by:

- **helping people to get started in their new tenancy, making it a home that they are proud of and want to live in**
- **linking them with community supports and ensuring they have the support they need from health professionals, community groups and voluntary services**

Making a difference to people's lives is key and staff are committed and passionate about empowering people to be comfortable in their community and being valuable members of, and contributors to, that community.

Linking people with education, employment and volunteering opportunities is vital to helping them take responsibility for their own lives and improving their physical and mental wellbeing. This also has a positive impact on our local economy and promotes social stability within our communities.

Housing Support Officers link with all community ladders and support groups and offer drop-in sessions for advice on housing issues for people in the community.

In 2022 we received 514 referrals for Housing Support, 197 people engaged with support and from these, 570 outcomes were achieved.

Outcomes are what people say they want to achieve when they have housing support. This can include setting up utilities; organising rent, debt and benefits; directing people to approach supports to furnish and carpet their homes; linking people with supports in their community that can help them; or ensuring they have medical and health registration. All of these outcomes allow people to live comfortably in their home and their community.

*"My workers were very helpful and understanding and have the patience of saints. I would highly recommend the help if it's required."*

*"I feel great, and am happy with the home and support given."*

## Improving connections for older people

Our Supported Accommodation units are vibrant places where people live and have the opportunity to come together for social activities. Engaging in regular activity can offer numerous benefits such as maintaining physical health, improving cognitive function, enhancing mood and emotional wellbeing, promoting social interaction, and potentially reducing the risk of chronic diseases. Staying active and connected helps to maintain independence, manage stress, and improve overall quality of life.

We produce our Young at Heart newsletter every three months to promote our activities and showcase the great fun that our older adults have. This is for tenants in Supported Accommodation and in the wider community.





## Befriending

Befriending takes place when a volunteer is introduced to an elderly person with the purpose of building a friendly relationship. It involves getting to know each other, sharing experiences and building a sense of trust and fun. Sometimes people are in their own home and cannot get out and about. They may not see anyone from week to week as their family lives far away, and this can result in isolation and, for many people, feelings of loneliness. This can be very distressing and lead to many physical and mental health conditions. Linking people together in communities where someone can receive a regular visit weekly or fortnightly can help to break this isolation and build relationships that are meaningful, interesting and life changing.

One lady had not been out of her home for seven years, but she met a befriender who helped to build her confidence and trust. With the assistance of her befriender, she was eventually able to go out for a coffee to a local coffee shop and then a trip to the Dumfries House tea dance. She met a lady at the tea dance that she had not seen since school (64 years previously) and they reconnected and arranged to keep in touch.

Our befrienders are incredible and make a huge difference to the people they visit.



MENTORING  
CONTRIBUTING  
HELPING  
VOLUNTEERING  
REWARDING



# SKILLS FOR LIFE

The Lifeskills and Inclusion team supports people to acquire the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to play an active and productive role in their personal, community, family and working lives. The team takes an asset-based approach to learning which recognises people's unique personal experiences and builds on their strengths, talents and aspirations.

## Essential Skills Service

**Help is available through the Essential Skills Service for anyone over the age of 16 who needs support with reading, writing, spelling or numeracy.**

The ESOL programme supports people with little or no English to develop the language skills they need to participate in everyday life. The team has recently been working extensively with learners from Syria, Afghanistan and Ukraine, helping not only to improve their English language, but also their digital, employability and social skills.

Having started with only one tutor, the ESOL team has grown to include five core tutors who are supported by bank staff and volunteers. In January 2022, the team settled into its new base at CentreStage in Kilmarnock where daily classes are held. ESOL classes are also delivered in place-based areas and online.

Despite the challenges of the last few years, learners have made great strides towards their goals. In March 2022, 18 service users achieved certificates in Emergency First Aid At Work and Food Hygiene. And since January 2022, learners have attended regular outdoor sessions with The Conservation Volunteers which have been fantastic in supporting them to connect with their local environment. Within the project, 13 learners are currently working towards achieving their John Muir Award, which involves working alongside the Council's Greener Communities team to maintain flower beds at Burns Monument Centre in Kay Park, Kilmarnock.

Two Afghan learners at National 2 level also began work experience with Greener Communities after this was piloted successfully with a Syrian learner in 2021 who is now completing an adult apprenticeship with the Council.

## Mohammad's story

**Mohammad came to Scotland from Syria in 2019. A motivated and conscientious learner, Mohammad progressed quickly through each level within our ESOL provision and now attends ESOL classes at Ayrshire College.**

**When Mohammad arrived in Scotland, he did not speak any English. Despite the challenges of getting used to the sounds of English which are different from his native language of Arabic, he persevered and worked diligently to improve his writing, study outwith the class and seek extra resources online to help his comprehension.**

**Mohammad now helps friends and family with interpretation and also volunteers with East Ayrshire Council as a joiner two days each week which he enjoys as it draws on his previous work experience as a carpenter in Syria.**

## Family and Youth Literacy

Funding through the Scottish Attainment Challenge allowed the Lifeskills and Inclusion team to provide Family and Youth Literacies provisions across East Ayrshire, including:

- working in partnership with primary schools to provide fun, informal and engaging family literacies sessions
- working in partnership with secondary schools to provide an alternative approach to literacy and numeracy learning by using an early intervention approach - this involves fun and learner-centred activities to help sustain engagement in learning and support pupils to achieve their own learning goals
- developing a Summer of STEM programme in 2022 in partnership with East Ayrshire Libraries for families and young people with ideas on how to engage in family learning at home as well as enabling them to sign up to online reading facilities

## Highlights over last six years

### Family Literacies

- **895 families have engaged in Family Literacy learning programmes**
- **1015 pupils have enjoyed fun family learning sessions either in school or at home via online programmes**
- **10 Family Literacy programmes developed**

### Youth Literacies

- **665 pupils have engaged in innovative Youth Literacy learning programmes either in person or online**
- **249 P7 pupils took part in transition programmes**
- **10 Youth Literacy programmes developed**

## Multiply

New for 2023 is Vibrant Communities' Lifeskills and Inclusion Multiply team which is funded through the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund. It provides numeracy learning opportunities for parents, families and adults aged 19+ who live in East Ayrshire.

The Multiply team helps adults build their confidence with numeracy lifeskills, handling and budgeting money, as well as providing supports for parents to help their children with numeracy learning. It also provides progression routes onto qualifications specific to money lifeskills.

## Dyslexia support

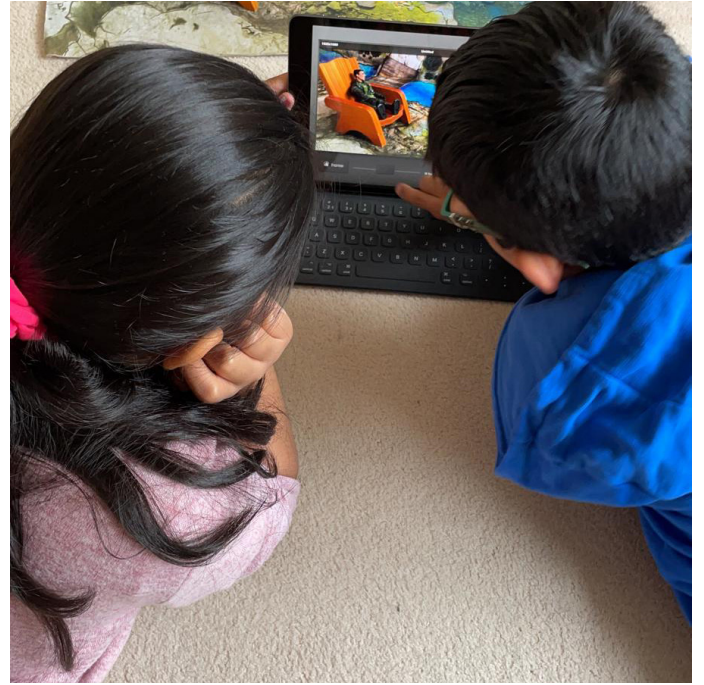
Over the past ten years, the team has continued to support the work of Dyslexia Scotland and Education Scotland by annually promoting Dyslexia Awareness Week Scotland and delivering Dyslexia Awareness sessions to staff, partner agencies and residents. Dyslexia roadshows have allowed both parents and children to come along and receive lots of help, support and information about dyslexia.

## Employability, Community Based Adult Learning and Digital Literacies

Community Based Adult Learning opportunities enable people to take the first step back into employment or education.

Help is available for adults who require support with digital literacies including access to digital learning in communities and Digital and Employability Hubs. 125 learners supported by the team received a Connecting Scotland device and continue to receive ongoing digital support.





## ME2U Project

**ME2U, a project delivered in partnership between Vibrant Communities, the DWP, Ayrshire College and local schools, is continuing to change the lives of unemployed people within East Ayrshire.**

Since it began in 2015, the project has been helping unemployed people to improve their readiness for work through an eight-week programme comprising of two days' volunteering per week within an educational establishment and two days per week within a community centre. This helps them work towards four SCQF Level 4 and 5 modules delivered by Ayrshire College Community Tutors.

Everyone involved in ME2U is passionate about empowering people to change their lives and working with them to help break down the barriers which are preventing them from gaining employment. As well as helping them to secure employment, participants have commented on how the project has improved their confidence, self-esteem, general wellbeing and feelings of loneliness and isolation. Many are now also enjoying being a more positive role model for their children.

ME2U has received local and national recognition for its success:

- **2016: DWP Excellence Award (Social Justice Category)**
- **2017: SQA Awards – Highly Commended for Innovation**
- **2017: East Ayrshire Council Employee Excellence Award (Economy & Skills Category)**
- **2019: Scotland's Learning Partnership 'Talk to Me Award' Winner**

## Local Area Coordinators

**Local Area Coordinators support people with a learning disability who do not have formal services to enable them to live a full and active life within their community.**

They work alongside individuals, families and carers to promote social inclusion and to empower them to make choices that create independence. They can help with a range of issues including benefit forms, health issues and building confidence, as well as signposting to other services.

In addition to providing one-to-one support, the Local Area Coordinators have a number of social groups running on a weekly basis which provide a safe and supportive environment for people with a learning disability to have fun and develop positive relationships.

## Volunteering

**East Ayrshire Council's Volunteer Framework was introduced in 2014. It sets out our commitment to involving and supporting volunteers across a range of services, as well as encouraging the involvement of employees in volunteering activities.**

Known as Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV), employees may be granted one day's leave per year where they can be released from their normal duties to volunteer with a community or voluntary organisation based within East Ayrshire, or a national organisation delivering services within East Ayrshire.

Vibrant Communities would not be able to deliver the range and quality of services that it does without its amazing volunteers who work in a variety of different roles including literacies, befriending, Active Schools, youth work, play, supported accommodation and community health.



# THINGS TAE DAE SOCIAL HUB

In Cumnock, the Things Tae Dae Social Hub has gone from strength to strength over the last ten years. The group works in partnership with Cumnock Juniors Social Club and Community Enterprise.

A big 'wow' moment for the hub was when it worked in partnership with Dumfries House in the Pierburg garden. The members met HRH The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay who accepted a beautiful picture from one of the hub's artists who was over the moon.

Things Tae Dae also works in partnership with Police Scotland and the Adult Protection team around hate crime. They subsequently received funding from Participatory Budgeting to act out their own production of 'The Greatest Showman' which also launched the 'Keep Safe' initiative and helped to spread the message that hate crime should not be tolerated in any form.

The COVID pandemic hit the group hard but members still met online and everyone kept their spirits up. As restrictions lessened, the hub started to go litter picking and gratefully received jackets, boots and litter picking equipment from East Ayrshire Council. While out litter picking one day, the group was approached by a production team from BBC Scotland about a programme being filmed called 'My Kind of Town'. Some of the members were interviewed and were delighted to see themselves in the final programme. The most recent highlight for the group was its anniversary prom which celebrated ten years of Things Tae Dae. All of the guests thoroughly enjoyed their red carpet experience and are now looking forward to another ten years of success.



# Volunteering during COVID-19

**COVID-19 had a huge impact on our communities, but what shone through during the pandemic was the extent to which people reached out and made contact to see how they could help others. The kindness and compassion shown by volunteers made an enormous difference in helping to protect and care for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities.**

Vibrant Communities' response to the COVID pandemic utilised the skills and talents of all staff, community members and volunteers alike, crossing traditional professional boundaries to respond to the emerging needs of communities across East Ayrshire.

The creation of the Caring Kind Connected process ensured that those vulnerable individuals in our communities received the support they required. Over 3500 individuals in East Ayrshire were supported by the Council and the many valuable volunteer groups, which meant that they received much needed support during a time of crisis.

Some of the main volunteering work carried out included:

- Over 100 local resilience groups set up to provide dignified food provision and support with prescription collections, gardening, dog walking and bin pull-outs. Many of these groups have now established Community Larders which are run by volunteers and are another source of dignified food provision.
- When training sessions and competitive sport were not possible, many sports clubs decided to help others by carrying out food deliveries, prescription collections, and taking people to hospital appointments and wellbeing checks. Many clubs also provided online sessions to keep children and young people engaged in sport and physical activity during the pandemic.
- Over 600 people from East Ayrshire signed up via the Scottish Government's Scotland Cares campaign to volunteer to help charities and community groups in their local area.
- All care homes in East Ayrshire were contacted with an offer of assistance from volunteers to take on tasks such as shopping for residents' personal items, pharmacy collections and distribution of PPE.
- A new process was developed to help people affected by COVID-19 to apply for emergency meals and volunteers were essential to this, assisting with the preparation and delivery of food parcels to those most in need.
- Funding from Connecting Scotland enabled some of the most vulnerable and socially isolated to receive devices to enable them to get online. Volunteer digital champions provided regular support to ensure that people were able to access the internet safely, confidently and effectively.
- Volunteer befrienders were able to adapt and come up with different ways of keeping in touch with their befriendees, such as phone and video calls, garden visits and, for some of the children and young people, communication over the Xbox.





- Winter resilience groups were established across East Ayrshire through which groups received training, full PPE, shovels, buckets and footway spreaders to help keep local areas safer during the winter months.
- East Ayrshire Council staff took on alternative roles in areas such as education hubs, food provision, refuse collection, test and protect and vaccination centres.
- And of course, some of the most important volunteering took place informally involving mutual help and co-operation between individuals.







# 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.**

The team works alongside local communities to help build capacity in their local areas. Community Capacity Building (CCB) involves working with communities to build their skills and experience and increase opportunities for development. It's a way of working with people to develop their ability to positively influence what happens in their community in the future.

## Highlights over last ten years

- **29 Community Action Plans created**
- **65 Community Asset Transfers completed**
- **27 active Community Councils working for their communities**
- **1688 external grant awards**
- **358 projects funded through Participatory Budgeting**
- **14 larders established**
- **174 other community groups supported**



## Community Action Plans

Community Action Plans are 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 affect their communities.

The strength of locally-led Community Action Plans lie in the fact that they uniquely belong to the community and are informed by extensive community engagement prior to them being published. A plan is not active until at least 40% of households respond, certifying a community-wide mandate.

There have been 29 Action Plans launched across East Ayrshire, with at least two new plans being developed each year. Work has also started on supporting communities to develop their second generation of plans.

# NEW CUMNOCK

In 2013, local residents in New Cumnock recognised the potential of developing a locally-led Community Action Plan to bring about economic and social change. Partnering with the Community Action Plan Steering Group and Afton Water Leisure, and spearheaded by Georgette Fulton OBE, Dumfries House Trust has heavily invested in the local community with renovation works on the Town Hall and outdoor pool, creating employment and training opportunities across both sites.

Some key achievements of the plan include:

- the establishment of a Town Centre Masterplan
- improvements to public buildings and houses
- renovation of the outdoor swimming pool
- saving the Town Hall
- improved signage and positive marketing of the village
- more activities for older people living in the area

Although many of the priorities and actions identified in the Community Action Plan have been met, some are still being progressed and there are plans for:

- further research into town square development supported by Dumfries House Trust and New Cumnock Development Trust
- exploration into community sports facilities with Glenafton Athletic
- working towards actions within the Regeneration Masterplan, led by New Cumnock Development Trust



# Communities Conference

**The annual Communities Conference and the quarterly Community Action Plan Forum meetings have become important fixtures in the calendar.**

The Communities Conference now includes representatives from Community Action Plan groups, Community Councils, Development Trusts, Community Associations and other community organisations. It offers a chance for community representatives to network and share good practice with each other, as well as take part in training and development and meet with wider stakeholders, including Community Planning partners.

The Community Action Plan Forum brings together representatives from each locally-led Community Action Plan and allows them to connect, share practice and discuss joint projects and issues that are important to our local communities.

***"The conference is a great opportunity to bring together community groups from across East Ayrshire. It's excellent to hear about the wonderful work that is happening."***

*Conference Participant 2022*

***"The conference was full of excellent speeches, with a real sense of community."***

*Conference Participant 2022*

## Placemaking

In preparation for the introduction of Local Place Plans as set out in the Planning (Scotland) Act, work has been under way with local communities, Planning and Economic Development and Vibrant Communities about how best to support communities to take part in spatial placemaking activity across East Ayrshire.

Placemaking is already integrated into the Community Action Plan process and acts as supplementary guidance to the Local Development Plan in East Ayrshire. The first Placemaking Plan was adopted in April 2019 and there are now currently five active plans.

## Community Asset Transfers

**The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) process sits within the Communities team and involves the transfer of the responsibility of an asset from the Council to a community group or voluntary organisation.**

The process presents local groups and communities with unique opportunities to get involved in running facilities and delivering services; empowering them to help themselves and create a more sustainable future.

Following adoption of the Community Asset Transfer policy in 2012, 65 CAT applications have been approved including community facilities and areas of green space as well as sports facilities for football, boxing and karate. This approach has attracted much interest from other local councils in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

As Vibrant Communities celebrates its tenth birthday, it's interesting to consider the impact of Community Asset Transfer on communities. CAT has changed the complexion of East Ayrshire as a whole and there are so many great examples of organisations doing amazing work under the radar. Whether it's beautiful community gardens, increased wellbeing services or community-led regeneration, organisations are using the community empowerment agenda to transform East Ayrshire into the place in which they want to bring up their families. Vibrant Communities is proud of the role it has played in this, but also in awe of the drive and determination of the communities who are making the best outcomes possible from the opportunities they're given.



# CENTRESTAGE

CentreStage in Kilmarnock is Scotland's biggest CAT. In 2016, with the new William McIlvanney campus being planned to open in 2019, the former Kilmarnock Academy building was identified as surplus to requirements. CentreStage identified this space as being the perfect home for its 'village' concept which would bring all the different CentreStage aspects together in a single site, with arts at the very heart of it.

In April 2017, the lease was agreed with East Ayrshire Council, and since then, with over £4.6m of external investment, CentreStage has created a multi-use and innovative space to be enjoyed by all who visit.



## Community Councils

East Ayrshire is divided into 35 Community Council areas, and there are currently 27 active Community Councils with over 300 volunteers. They act as the voice of their community by ensuring that Community Planning Partners and others are aware of the community's opinions on key issues.

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

Community Councillors also benefit from Vibrant Communities' support which includes the organisation of seminars to share good practice, in addition to working with them to plan a range of training and development sessions. These have recently included new Community Councillor inductions, how to improve working relationships with other groups and community engagement techniques.



**Darvel**  
**Lottery**  
small change makes a big difference

## Darvel Community Council

**Darvel Community Council (CC) has led the way for community focused lottery funds in East Ayrshire. The local lottery is set up to help engage the community in funding local projects for the town, as well as being split into a prize winner pot.**

**Darvel CC feels that its lottery project not only benefits the community but also creates a new atmosphere of self-help, support and neighbourliness. The fund brings in over £30,000 per year from over 2500 participants. And these participants don't just come from Darvel; they're spread across the world including Spain, China and Australia.**

**The fund is split between private winnings and community funds for local projects. Projects that have been funded through the lottery include support for COVID-19 resilience and Darvel Sports Hall, as well as local groups being helped with their grassroots programmes.**

## Community Investment

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

Community Investment 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.

Assistance is provided to facilitate community benefits for capital housing builds and council house improvements through agreements with Housing Services and Housing Asset Services. Community benefits are allocated by contractors on certain projects to help local activity near the capital or improvement project.

## Highlights

- £47.412m of external grant awards since establishment of Vibrant Communities
- 226 funding alerts issued since 2017

## Logan External Envelope Enhancement programme

The External Envelope Enhancement (EEE) programme for Logan involved external improvement works to 180 properties between June 2020 and October 2021. These works involved cavity wall extraction and refill, external rendering, loft insulation top-up and re-roofing where required. The aim of the programme was to improve the energy efficiency of the homes and to enhance the wider area of Logan as a result of the project. Nine community groups shared the £10,000 Community Benefit funding attached to this programme.

Council staff and community representatives went on walkabouts to ensure that all work was completed on time and garden clean-ups were carried out as well. The community representatives also organised a 'Bag a Burger Day' where members of the community enjoyed a fun day while collecting litter around the area.









# Participatory budgeting

**Participatory budgeting (PB) is a form of local decision making which invites communities to have a direct say in how public money is spent.**

Participatory grant making is one form of PB that has been piloted and rolled out across organisations in Scotland. It's an approach to funding decisions that aims to shift power from officers and committees to local communities who are most impacted. Around 30 grant making PB events have been held in East Ayrshire since 2016. Some of these have been for specific settlements and others have covered the Health and Social Care Partnership localities. All of the events so far have required voters to attend and vote in person and have either been in the form of presentations or marketplaces.

To date, a total of £426,531 has been awarded through grant making participatory budgeting in East Ayrshire. Funding has come from a number of internal and external sources such as Scottish Government; East Ayrshire Council; East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership; National Lottery Community Fund; Renewable Energy Fund and others.

Mainstream PB enables the direct participation of citizens in local budget decisions, resource allocation and service design. This moves beyond allocating individual budgets, or grant making, or identifying separate budgets for community engagement and consultation, towards mainstreaming PB within decisions on the allocation of existing resources across all Council services.

Key principles of mainstream PB include:

- engaging local communities in deciding how public money is spent
- being inclusive to eliminate participation gaps via open and inclusive processes
- employing decision making methods which are focused on dialogue and deliberation to deliver shared and individual outcomes
- ensuring that outcomes are meaningful for people and local communities in meeting their needs

The Council and its partners are currently exploring how best to roll out mainstream PB across East Ayrshire.

## Highlights over last seven years

- **Grant making PB: £426,531 since 2016**
- **Mainstream PB: £742,300 since 2017**
- **Number of people who have voted through mainstream and grant making PB: 6188**

## Muirkirk

**In 2018, the Grants Committee agreed to allocate Galawhistle Renewable Energy Fund monies through PB with officers from Vibrant Communities and Democratic Services facilitating the PB event and process. Since then £101,531 has been allocated in Muirkirk through PB with more planned for the future.**

**The most recent PB event was held in October 2022 following a three year pause due to the pandemic. A total of £50,000 was available: £10,000 for revenue projects and £40,000 for capital projects. The event brought the communities of Muirkirk and Glenbuck together with a record number of 244 people casting their votes, awarding funds to five capital and six revenue projects.**

## Larders and resilience

**Community larders have provided a resilient and grassroots approach for communities assisting those who require food and support.**

There are currently 14 larder resilience groups in East Ayrshire and each larder operates differently, based on the demand and level of support required. They are a dignified food provision as an alternative to other foodbanks, and aim to support anyone in need for an affordable membership fee.

Larders have been instrumental in supporting families to get back on their feet following the effects of the pandemic, as well as helping vulnerable people who were shielding or those who were furloughed. The cost of living crisis has been a further strain on communities and at a point where larders were considering withdrawing services, they are now continuing to ensure that every person who needs support can receive it.



## Food and Essentials for All Community Larder

The Food and Essentials for All (FEFA) Community Larder was formally established in 2019. Since then it has operated on a weekly basis in the NWKLEUS Community Centre in north-west Kilmarnock providing a choice of frozen, fresh and tinned foods as well as hygiene and cleaning products.

The larder's operation was significantly affected by the pandemic and the related restrictions, but it continued and expanded its operation to meet the needs of the local community during that time. This included delivering over 6000 bags of food to local households through a team of volunteer drivers over the course of the pandemic.

The FEFA Community Larder is having a significant impact on the lives of those who use it. As well as reducing poverty and stress around household bills and improving diets, it has built a community of people who support each other and created the kind of solidarity required to make real change in an area of multiple deprivation.



WHAT'S  
NEXT FOR

**VIBRANT**

**COMMUNITIES**



# What's next?

**Over the past ten years, Vibrant Communities has continued to grow, evolve and strengthen its commitment to supporting our communities to be the very best they can be.**

As our second decade begins, we will continue to adapt the way we deliver services in new and creative ways, and will ensure that we always keep people at the heart of everything we do. Building on the strength of Vibrant Communities as an approach and a service, the focus during the next decade of Vibrant Communities will be on:

- **showcasing the reach and impact of Vibrant Communities over the last decade and celebrating the successes of our children and young people, adults, older adults, families and communities**
- **continuing to be an engaged, empowered and flexible service that is solution-focused and designed around place, ensuring that the Vibrant Voices of our communities continue to shape the future priorities and strategic direction of our Council and its partners**
- **further strengthening our relationship with communities through the Community Power Agenda and the proposed place partnership developments to ensure that communities are much more involved in the decision making of services delivered in their place**
- **continuing to support people to develop their skills and experience through targeted programmes and volunteering opportunities whilst further embedding and sharing the vibrant approach across the workforce and in our communities**
- **harnessing further opportunities that will be presented through the revised Community Empowerment Legislation coming later in 2023**
- **further strengthening the relationship with Health and Social Care Partnership colleagues around early intervention and prevention in order to access resources and reduce demand and costs to wider Council services**
- **the continued development of partnership working to ensure a systematic approach to planning and evaluation; understanding priorities, roles and responsibilities; avoiding duplication whilst ensuring smooth referral pathways between teams, services and partner agencies**
- **improving our collation and use of performance management information that further supports the planning and development of Service Delivery to meet the needs of our communities**



- developing and implementing our approach to Urban Community Action Plans
- further developing Community Based Employability opportunities working closely with the Local Employability partnership to offer a more joined up and streamlined approach to community based employability supports
- developing the provision of ESOL course delivery to maximise its reach - working with resettled ESOL learners in conjunction with the Home Office and EAC resettlement team to ensure the supports for ESOL learners locating within East Ayrshire are fully embedded
- promoting, developing and improving volunteering opportunities which include raising awareness of the opportunities available, promoting the benefits of volunteering and encouraging people to get involved including East Ayrshire employees.
- embedding the work of The Promise into the work of Vibrant Communities
- embedding the work of the UNCRC into our practice and delivery of services for children and young people
- developing our youth work provision across East Ayrshire
- increasing the number of volunteers and leaders who will be equipped to assist with service delivery with the potential to become our young workforce
- ensuring that work around Equality, Diversity and Inclusion across the teams remains high on our own agenda as well as meeting local and national objectives





East Ayrshire Council  
Comhairle Siorrachd Àir an Ear

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# EAST AYRSHIRE **Vibrant** COMMUNITIES

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