

Community Action Blackburn Annual Report 2017/2018



Alison Kerr receiving her Unsung Hero Award.



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Consultation is integral to the work of Community Action Blackburn (CAB). The people of Blackburn, both adults and young people, inform what we do and how we work.

The initiatives detailed in this report have all been developed as a result of consultation with different groups in the community and in partnership with other agencies and individuals, all of which, we value greatly. Our thanks to each and every one of you.

A Word From The Chair

Another year has flown past with the work delivered by Community Action Blackburn and the community increasing with every day that goes by. It has also been a year of change in the village with the completion of the long awaited Partnership Centre which now provides the community with a much improved facility that is fit for purpose.

Lisa Haggerty, our Community Development Worker responsible for the development of intergenerational working within the community, has been extremely busy in developing new groups, activities and programmes within the village. In March she was successful in securing full time employment with us to work in conjunction with West Lothian Council's Regeneration Officer. Lisa's role is to develop and deliver activities to fill service gaps identified through the consultation process undertaken with regard to bringing about improvements for the benefit of the community and which will be outlined in the document titled 'Blackburn's Future'. This work is an extension of what she has already been doing within the community with the benefits there for all to see. The Intensive Support Group have been busy developing a garden area for Blackburn Homeless Unit and also clearing and preparing the ground at Blackburn Primary School for the development of the outdoor classroom / garden.

This report will give you a flavour of the work that Community Action Blackburn has been involved in during 2017/18, which was another extremely busy and successful year for the project. We are a very small community owned and community led organisation and it is testament to the enthusiasm and commitment of those involved that so much has been achieved.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Board of Directors; members of the Steering Group; volunteers; Helen Davis and her staff at the Youth Action Project; West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service; all the staff at Blackburn Connected and the Community Centre (now both located within Blackburn Partnership Centre); Brendan Moohan, Senior Community Education Worker, CLD Youth Services; Blackburn Family Centre; the staff and pupils at Blackburn, Murrayfield, Our Lady of Lourdes, Pinewood, Connolly School Campus, St Kentigern's and Bathgate schools; and Michelle Kirkbright, West Lothian Council Community Regeneration Officer, who always keeps Community Action Blackburn well informed and works extremely hard on our behalf. I would also like to thank JP Mulheron, Pyramid Graphix for his support, advice and work over the years.

All of the above have assisted Community Action Blackburn, not only in the previous year, but from the start of the project and they continue to give their time to help the project succeed and achieve our goals.

2018/19 will present new challenges for us and we are looking forward to continuing to work alongside the community in identifying the main areas of concern and developing activities/ actions to address them which will ultimately feed into and inform 'Blackburn's Future'.

Alison Kerr - Chairperson

'Blackburn's New Story'



Blackburn Schools P6 & P7 School Conference

The 2018 school conference was held on Friday 27th April at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School. This was the culmination of the work the 164 young people had undertaken over the previous few months with the assistance and support of

Peer Educators, Youth Action Project (YAP), YAP Music and the Women's Social Service Club. They presented their findings to a large group of invited guests which included MPs, MSP's, Local Councillors as well as Heads of Service, Emergency Services, Representatives from the community and Partner Agencies as well as individuals who were involved in the conference.



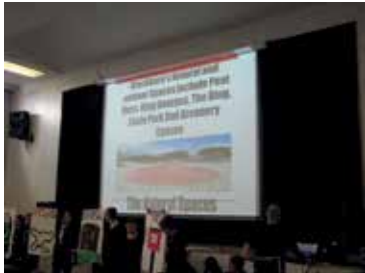
The work undertaken by the pupils was linked to the village's regeneration plan, known as 'Blackburn's Future' Plan and the young people were given all 16 Place Standard topics with each of the 5 schools deciding on the topic that meant most / related most to them and their peers. Working both with class teachers and Peer Educators from YAP the young people delivered their findings through different mediums such as film, replica models and PowerPoint presentations.

- Topics chosen were:**
- Social Interaction (Intergenerational Programme)
 - Open Spaces
 - Facilities & Amenities
 - Traffic & Parking
 - Feeling Safe

The young people also wrote a song with each school providing a verse relevant to the topic they were working on and this was put to the music of the song 'Riptide'. This was sung at the close of the conference by all the young people, ably accompanied on musical instrumentals by their teachers and staff of YAP Music.

Five actions were identified from the conference and they have been included in 'Blackburn's Future' plan. They are:-

- Provision of crossing facilities to afford safe and accessible passage to the Partnership Centre and the Mill Centre;
- To look at improving the maintenance of cycle paths especially in Easter Inch Moss (Peat Moss);
- To develop intergenerational working within the community;
- To explore and consult on the delivery of new activities and clubs within the new Partnership Centre; and
- Promote the benefits of utilising the natural & outdoor spaces available within the village.



The young people will work on these topics for the next year with the Aspiring West Lothian (AWL) Development Worker providing any assistance that may be required. The school conference was also a good opportunity for the Change In Blackburn Group (Youth Committee) to promote the work that they undertake in the village and recruit new members. The Change in Blackburn Group meets on a weekly basis, term time and is supported by the AWL Development Worker as well as CLD Youth Services and YAP.

Link to Place Standard: <https://placestandard.scot/>

Blackburn's Future Group (BFG)

The BFG, no not the Big Friendly Giant but equally big in action Blackburn's Future Group have had an extremely busy and productive year. Things have gone from strength to strength with an already strong partnership with Community Action Blackburn (CAB) becoming more cemented with excellent relationships between workers making it feel like it's held together with 'no more nails ultra-bond' (believe me that's strong).

Engagement with members of the community has taken place in many forms, ranging from parents evenings at the local schools, family events in plenty, standing in the local Mill Centre, walkabouts, and a visit to the local pub to name a few. The Scottish Government's Place Standard engagement tool was also carried out with local established groups providing BFG with an expanse of valuable information to help determine how local people want to see Blackburn improved.

All this rich data was clubbed together with statistics from Scottish Public Health Observatory (ScotPHO) and Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) along with local professional knowledge to help the BFG form keys themes that matter to the people of Blackburn. These themes are:

- **Poverty, Health and Wellbeing**
- **Care and Maintenance**
- **Health Facilities**
- **Recreation and Youth Provision**

With themes identified, the task to put in place actions to address these has begun. This has involved setting up sub-groups made up of members of the community along with officers from a range of different organisations best placed to support delivery of specific projects. The Change In Blackburn (CIB) group are playing an instrumental part in these sub-groups, with them organising walkabouts and events. One of the events that they are planning for mid-2019 is a Mental Health event linking into the poverty, health and wellbeing theme. The Recreation and Youth Provision sub-group is being supported heavily by an up and coming local community activist who is proving an inspiration with her energy and passion in making Blackburn a better place for children of all ages. Her enthusiasm and drive to reinstate a play park at Redhouse Place has resulted in additional funding being sought to add further equipment for youngsters to benefit from.

'Blackburn's Future' Plan is a living document and will adapt and evolve with the community it benefits, covering a ten year span. It best describes how to work better locally, and the importance of partnership working in order to meet the needs of the community it represents along with summarising the consultation taken pace. The plan will also link with other areas of work which we know affect or will have an impact on the area, including the Anti-Poverty Strategy for West Lothian, the Bathgate Learning Community Plan and the West Health Locality Plan.

'Blackburn's Future' Plan will be available at the link below:

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/communityregeneration>

Community Development Work

Lisa Haggerty, Community Development Worker, has continued to deliver a number of projects, initiatives and events in the last year and, reflecting on last year's report, she has managed to achieve the majority of aspirations set out therein. Here is a snap shot of some the work that has been undertaken in the last 12 months.

Intergenerational Work

Following on from the foundations built last year, we continued to develop the relationship with P6 & P7 pupils from Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School and the Women's Social Service Club. We enjoyed a range of sessions both within the Community Centre as well as visiting the children in their school. Friendships and bonds developed, so much so that Our Lady of Lourdes chose 'Housing, Community & Social Contact' as their Place Standard for the School Conference, with the emphasis being on the Elderly and Intergenerational contact.



A number of interactions took place including Burns Celebration with traditional dancing and a session discussing childhood experiences to name a few. Now that the links have been made, we endeavour to keep these links open and build upon them.

Women's Social Service Club (WSSC)

We continue to support the WSSC, who keep Lisa on her toes on a weekly basis, and we continue to develop and offer a diverse syllabus on a Wednesday afternoon, which includes guest speakers: WLC Waste Services who gave a very informative talk about recycling; Brendan Moohan WLC Youth Services who gave an interesting talk about the history of Youth Work; Cllr Sullivan came along and spoke about her journey in politics to where she is now, to name a few. In addition we also



had a quiz afternoon, a beetle drive, a bring and buy sale and a wee trip to Mackinnon Mills. We are also looking to incorporate Intergenerational Work into the syllabus to keep the links with the schools and the ladies.

Community Centre



Change in Blackburn (CIB)

We have had another eventful busy year with Change In Blackburn who continue to work towards their mission statement and aims at their Wednesday early evening meetings, which are during term time and last for 75 minutes. Leading on from last year's annual report they planned, prepared and delivered a session at the P6/7 conference to promote the work that they do as well as a recruitment drive for new members. The process was similar to a job application with the potential members having to fill in an application form, be interviewed by current CIB members, with the successful candidates receiving a formal letter offering them a place within the group.

Shortly after the summer break Michelle Kirkbright came along to the group to ask their views on Blackburn using the 'Place Standard' model, which results in a spiders web like diagram and once completed they could visually see the categories that they really liked as well as the categories that could do with some work / regeneration. The main theme they chose to focus on was Feeling Safe which resulted in them arranging a walkabout in the village, with Michelle, to look at lighting, litter bins, paths and walkways. The findings were used to organise an Environmental Visual Audit with councillors, council officials and the police. This provided them the opportunity to show their concerns directly to the people with the power to act on them.

"CIB is an opportunity for me to get involved and make a difference in my Community"

As well as the Place Standard work, they have also been actively engaged in the community delivering a presentation at the CAB AGM and also volunteering at the CAB Fun Day. It is not always about the serious business - as part of the work with new recruits they have done team building exercises and even took a trip to the Escape Rooms in Livingston as a way to do problem solving and team building, had a Come Dine With Me session and a Christmas Fun Night.

Wheeled Sports Park

JP Skate School has become an integral part of the monthly CAB Calendar, providing FREE skateboard sessions on the 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, delivering 2 sessions each visit. The 11.00am - 12.30pm session is aimed specifically at younger children and beginners with the older more experienced 'shredders' having their own session from 1pm - 2.30pm. Due to Skateboarding being weather dependent we are appreciative of Blackburn Community Education Association allowing us to use the Community Centre/ Partnership Centre when weather does not permit outdoor skating. We continue to have a core group of young people attending on a regular basis and a number of children and young people who dip in and out of the sessions.



Friday Club

The Friday Club continues to attract a core group of 7 - 11 year olds on a weekly basis with local young people volunteering to support the group. The children are an integral part of the planning sessions which allows the programme to be tailored to suit the needs of the young people attending.

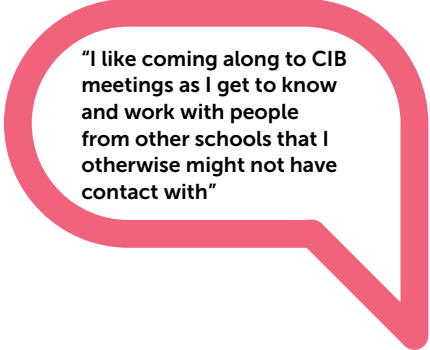
This year we have had New Age Kurling, team building, arts, crafts & sport activities as well as having visitors delivering a basic First Aid Course. One of the highlights for the whole group was a very interesting and informative visit from Armadale & District War Memorial Association who brought along an array of memorabilia that the children had fun discussing and also trying on the items.

Holiday Provision

Following on from the success of last year's Holiday Club, this year we continued to deliver a programme during the School Holidays in partnership with WLC Youth Services and Blackburn Community Education Association. The provision is well attended and children are actively encouraged to contribute their own ideas to their programme. Delivering a partnership Holiday Provision allows each of the partners to promote term time sessions delivered in the village.

Community Summer Trips

Through positive experiences in another community, Lisa asked the Blackburn Community Education Association Management Committee if they would support Community Summer Trips which would allow families to have a day away together at an affordable cost. The trips, planned for July / August, were promoted mid-May which allowed families to pay weekly installments for around 8 weeks to reduce any financial pressure. Children 2 years and under were free of charge.



"I like coming along to CIB meetings as I get to know and work with people from other schools that I otherwise might not have contact with"

A total of four trips were on offer with varying prices: Aberdour Beach / Blair Drummond / Transport Museum and East Links Family Park.

The trips were well received and hopefully we can continue to work with the Management Committee to deliver Community Summer Trips on an annual basis.

We are now in the new Blackburn Partnership Centre and are looking forward to 2018/2019, using our key location to develop links and projects led by the community for the community, these include:

- Continue to work in partnership with Blackburn Community Centre Management Committee and WLC Community Youth Services and Sports Unit to deliver joint holiday programmes for primary school aged children;
- Providing guidance to Change In Blackburn Group to formalise their committee and supporting them with their short, medium and long term goals;
- Continue to utilise partnership working with local schools;
- Continuing Free Skate Board lessons in either the Skate Park or in the new Partnership Centre; and
- Identifying and addressing any gaps in provision within the village.

Annual Schools Poster Competition 2017

Community Action Blackburn in partnership with Blackburn Community Council held their 11th annual Schools Poster Competition with 369 entries being received from Blackburn, Murrayfield, Our Lady of Lourdes and Pinewood Schools. Judging was an extremely hard task and generated a great deal of debate for Shona Haggart, WLC Housing Officer, Klayre Hurnn, Tenants Assoc., PC Carol-Ann Wilson & PC Stuart McInnes, Police Scotland, due to the hard work, effort and detail that had went into each and every one of the pictures.

The focus for the posters was based on the work done for 2017's School Conference, 'Inspirational Blackburn', allowing the children to show what inspires them, whether that is something in the community, an individual or an event.

The presentation of prizes was held in Blackburn Connected on Friday 27th October where Robert Meechan, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, presented the winners with a voucher from Community Action Blackburn and the schools were each given a plaque from the Community Council. The winning posters were used to produce the Blackburn Schools 2018 Calendar with every Primary and Nursery child receiving a copy.



Congratulations to the 2017 winners:

Class 6, *Pinewood*.

Hollie Dickson, Ellie Reid, Mack Fernandez, & Hopefield Nursery, *Blackburn Primary*.

Keira Gibb, Hali Scott, Adam Smith, Freya Stewart, Rachael Mighton & The Nursery Class, *Murrayfield Primary*.

Jamie Dorward, River McLachlan & Phoenix Millar, *Our Lady of Lourdes Primary*.



Blackburn's Unsung Hero

Alison Kerr was announced the winner of the 'Unsung Hero' category of the 2018 Herald Society Awards at the awards ceremony in the Marriot Hotel, Glasgow on 1st November.

Alison has been an active volunteer working tirelessly in Blackburn for over 25 years. She became involved through being a parent helper at her children's school and, as her confidence grew and knowledge increased, she used her experiences to help others, initially within the village but now she sits on committees which have decision making powers across the county.

Alison is involved in numerous organisations, not only within Blackburn but also West Lothian and Scotland wide that can influence change and challenge the decision makers in the process. Alison played an integral part in having a new Partnership Centre built in the village, which was 'just a dream' when first discussed over 20 years ago.

All involved with Community Action Blackburn thank Alison for her commitment and determination to address the issues that have a detrimental effect on Blackburn and for helping making the village one that everyone can be proud of.

There is no person better or more deserving than Alison to receive this award.

Congratulations Alison, you are and always have been

Blackburn's 'Unsung Hero'.



Annual Family Fun Day

This year saw a change of venue with the event taking place in and around the new Blackburn Partnership Centre. This year saw a footfall of approximately 800 adults and children attend the event which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone, all made better with the weather holding up. Everyone made good use of all the facilities, activities and events that were laid on for the day and a big thank you goes to the Youth Action Project staff and volunteers for providing the BBQ and the music stage. We would like to thank all the volunteers who came along on the day to help and the Partnership Centre staff for without everyones help and support we would be unable to provide this event for the community. Some of the comments posted about the Fun day on Facebook are:-



"Brilliant day as always, well done to everyone involved. The kids loved it!"

"Brill day, well done"

"Kids thoroughly enjoyed it. Thanks again for a great summer x"



Youth Action Project

The Youth Action Project (YAP) undertake a wide variety of work in conjunction with Community Action Blackburn (CAB) and other partner agencies, providing assistance and support for a number of activities such as the annual Schools Conference, Change in Blackburn Group, Family Fun Day and they also provide a number of services, outlined in more detail below, that are financed by CAB. Their activity in Blackburn is greatly appreciated by everyone and without which CAB would be unable to deliver on a number of aspects of their youth provision activities.





Tooled Up Intensive Project

During 2017/18 a group of 7 young people, selected from Bathgate and St. Kentigern's Academies, worked together with YAP staff on an intensive programme. The Programme, which was financed through the support of CAB and delivered by YAP's Tooled Up Project, offered young people with an interest the opportunity to learn practical skills, teamwork, basic landscaping and horticultural techniques, gaining joinery skills and an accredited SVQ Vocational Skills module. Many of the young people referred for the group struggled with attendance or engagement at school and required the opportunity to learn within a different environment. The intensive programme also included sessions on the risks associated with drug and alcohol use, with group members all receiving Alcohol Brief Interventions (ABI's) and Cannabis assessments. Support is provided to any of the individuals involved in risky substance use and all are provided with accurate information and health advice. Many of the group members were also advised and supported on issues associated with poor education attendance, involvement in anti-social behaviour and behavioural issues. The group contributed to the development of a garden area at Blackburn Homeless Unit and the preparation of the area at Blackburn Primary which is being developed into an outdoor classroom / garden. They also assisted in other environmental projects within West Lothian.

This year the schools asked that the course be shorter running during terms 1 and 3 with the young people undertaking a course with another organisation during term 2. As a result of this some of the young people disengaged from school completely. The effect this had was that four of the seven who began the course completed it, each gaining a SVQ Vocational Skills Course module in Working with Wood, Garden Furniture & Accessories.

Streetwork

CAB continues to support YAP to carry out a Streetwork service in the Blackburn area. This equates to one session per week throughout the year, carried out in the area at varied times, generally between Thursday to Saturday evenings, however, at specific peak times for anti-social behaviour, such as around Bonfire night, sessions may be held on other days of the week and more frequently.

This work is in addition to the core funded Streetwork provision provided throughout West Lothian. This support allows the street work team to engage with young people in a targeted way, allowing positive relationships to be developed with young people who may not engage with other youth services and clubs. It also allows workers to build up knowledge of the trends and issues for the wider community.

Outcomes

- Increased knowledge of the area/ trends etc.;
- A reduction in anti-social behaviour and providing assistance to Police on community safety matters - For example during the construction of the Partnership Centre/ Bonfire night and period around that time;
- An ability to respond quickly to problems involving young people in Blackburn - including individual home visits to young people and parents;
- Increased uptake of service attendance at the weekly drop-in / youth clubs, encouragement to be more involved in their communities etc.

Statistics

- 89 sessions carried out - 55 funded through CAB and 34 through YAP's core project funding, specifically addressing issues highlighted by Police and Community Safety Unit;
- Total number of engagements - 305 (192 male /113 female). Although the number of contacts have reduced since the previous year, YAP staff report longer and more worthwhile contact periods with young people;
- Age range engaged was 8 to 21 years with almost 60% of young people contacted being male. There has been improved engagement with young women and girls in the community, however this has still not been reflected in female attendance at the weekly drop-in. This remains a very male dominated facility.

Blackburn Drop In

YAP also provide an informal drop-in session held in the Community Centre/Partnership Centre on Wednesday evenings which provides young people with the opportunity to talk to staff, in a safe environment, about many topics. During the year there were 43 sessions with a combined attendance figure of 464. The young people who attend and are registered vary in age from 7 to 21 years, 56 being male and 10 female. In addition, previous users of the drop in service continue to use the facility on an ad hoc occasional basis when they are 18+ to check in and ask advice, or simply to catch up with the staff team, informing them how they are and what they are doing as young adults. The relationships formed between staff and young people have been very positive over the years, it is always good to see the old faces return.

The staff team support the young people through many things. It is not always easy, but by working together with the local community police, community centre, education staff and parents, even difficult issues can be addressed and resolved successfully. CAB continues to provide funding for this very valuable and worthwhile project. The close partnership work between YAP and CAB ensure services run effectively, producing positive outcomes.

Some comments from the young people using the service are:-

"The drop-in gives us somewhere to go together as a group; there is nothing else in Blackburn for our age group. We can play pool, computer games, get something to eat and staff helps us with more serious things like job applications and looking for work."

"I have come to the drop in for several years now, staff have helped me a lot, recently they helped me with practising my online course that I had to take for my work. I have always been supported well here."

"Through the drop-in we have had opportunities to get involved in other things such as the Tooled Up workshop programme, activities and a great residential to Skye - I loved that. It is really good that CAB support the drop-in, we don't want it to close, in fact it would be great if we could get it open twice per week again, the Sunday sessions used to be good."

"I got some personal advice on how to deal better with my family life and parents. If we get stressed and wound up about things we get advice from staff, there are people to talk to, help us work out problems."

"We talk about all sorts of things, problems, what to do when we have got ourselves in a bit of trouble and general things around our futures. We have a laugh as well and gives us chance to meet new people".

Partners

The work carried out by Community Action Blackburn could not be achieved without the help and support of our partner agencies. We would like to thank them all for their hard work and support during the previous year. Our partners are West Lothian Council; Youth Action Project; West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service (WLDAS); Blackburn Primary; Murrayfield Primary; Our Lady of Lourdes Primary; Pinewood School; Connolly School Campus; St Kentigern's Academy; Bathgate Academy; Blackburn Community Council; Blackburn Connected; Blackburn Community Centre; Blackburn Community Education Association Management Committee, CLD Youth Services; WESLO Housing; Blackburn Family Centre; Blackburn Homeless Unit; Pyramid Graphix; Blackburn United Community Football Club; Police Scotland; Scottish Fire & Rescue and **most importantly, the Community of Blackburn.**

Work Streams for 2018/19

Community Action Blackburn will continue to provide the work streams that were delivered in 2017/18 namely:

Streetwork; Drop In Sessions; Intensive Support Groups; Schools Conference; School Poster Competition; Friday Afternoon Activities; School Holiday Programmes for 8 to 11 year olds; Family Day; Environmental Improvement Project; Training Programme at Skatepark; Change in Blackburn Forum; the various aspects to the Intergenerational work; Completion of the outdoor learning/garden area in Blackburn Primary and the work linked with the development and delivery of 'Blackburn's Future' Plan.

In addition various pieces of new work have been identified amongst which are:

Develop the vacant Redhouse Play Park and surrounding land; Provide Early Stage Dementia Awareness training; Train trainers to provide courses on Positive Mental Health and Emotional Well-being for parents and carers of children in the early years/ primary age range and for staff working with that age group; Environmental improvements to identified areas within the village.

Trustees

Alison Kerr

Helen Davis

Brian Pringle

Lynne Wishart

Diane Hardie

Nicholas Killane

Project Manager

Charlie Bryceland

Community Development

Worker

Lisa Haggerty

Chairperson

Alison Kerr

Vice Chairperson

Brian Pringle (Resigned 19/2/18)

Lynne Wishart (Appointed 19/2/18)

Company Secretary

Charlie Bryceland

Charity Number

SCO42167

Company Number

SC394788

