
Kirkmichael: A Community and Multi-Agency Partnership Approach

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** Following coverage of anti-social behaviour in the Kirkmichael area in the local newspaper, and disruption of the local Gala Day in August 2015 by a group of young people, a number of CPP partners met on 10 September to discuss joint working opportunities to support the Kirkmichael community.
- 1.2** A small group of Kirkmichael residents have been working with the Council, Dunbritton Housing Association and members of Helensburgh Baptist Church to form a new constituted community group, Kirkmichael Community Development Group.
- 1.3** Postcode areas in East Helensburgh were identified in the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2012 report as being in the top 5% of most overall deprived areas in Scotland, and the most overall deprived in Argyll & Bute. Many of the postcodes are in the Kirkmichael area. The seven factors affecting SIMD classification are income, employment, health, education, housing, access to services and crime. Postcodes in Helensburgh East rank at number 170 in Scotland (out of a total number of rankings of approximately 7,000).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** Area Community Planning Group members are asked to note report and the progress that is being made by the community, Helensburgh Baptist Church and a range of statutory and third sector partners.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1** Kirkmichael Tenants and Residents Association (KTRA) dissolved in early 2014 and Kirkmichael Sports and Recreation Association (KSRA), which managed the all-weather pitch in the area, folded some years earlier. As a result, the community has lacked a focus for engagement and organising events, activities and development initiatives.

- 3.2** In 2014 the Baptist Church and the Council's Community Development Officer organised a Commonwealth Games themed gala day in partnership with a range of third sector and statutory organisations. In spite of poor weather, 175-200 people attended the event and 51 people completed, or partially completed, a survey asking participants to rate the event, make suggestions on how it could be improved and indicate if they would be willing to help start a local social/development group for Kirkmichael. The feedback indicated there was a strong desire in the community for more events and activities, particularly aimed at young people and older people.
- 3.3** Following the 2014 Gala Day, a series of community meetings were organised by the Community Development Officer and the Baptist Church, which has continued to offer a children's after-school club (The Lighthouse Club) in the Kirkmichael Learning Centre, with the aim of establishing a constituted community organisation for Kirkmichael and to plan for a second gala day in 2015.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1** A small, committed group of community representatives from Kirkmichael have been meeting on a regular basis with support from the Baptist Church, Council, Dunbritton Housing Association and representatives from other statutory and third sector organisations, and have formed the Kirkmichael Community Development Group (KCDG).
- 4.2** KCDG became a fully constituted community organisation in October of this year and plans to apply to open a bank account. The Group has nominated a chair, vice chair and secretary, and a small number of additional members attend committee meetings. The Group has already raised funds via the 2015 Gala Day and a series of prize bingo nights. The position of treasurer is currently vacant. However, the chair is keeping the accounts and provides updates on the funds raised at committee meetings.

The Group hopes to organise a Gala Day in 2016 and is seeking support from partner organisations to try to ensure the event is enjoyed by the community. The next meeting of the Group is scheduled for Tuesday 24 November at the Learning Centre.

- 4.3** Following on from the disrupted 2015 Gala Day, the community development officer organised a multi-agency meeting On 10 September. 14 representatives from ACHA, Dunbritton HA, Police Scotland, Argyll & Bute Council (representing Social Work, Community Development, Governance and Adult Learning), Community Justice, NHS Highland and Argyll & the Isles Coast & Countryside Trust met to discuss partnership working opportunities

to support the community. The meeting was chaired by Morven Short, Director of Dunbritton HA. A number of positive suggestions from the meeting are currently being taken forward.

The multi-agency group met again on 8 October and the next meeting, which will be chaired by Robert Cowper, the Council's Anti-social Behaviour Officer, is scheduled for 10 December. A significant agenda item, which has been raised by Police Scotland, will focus on information regarding designated Public Reassurance Areas.

4.4 As a direct result of Kirkmichael community and multi-agency partnership working:

- Community Payback teams have been working in the area to cut back overgrown hedges;
- police patrols have been stepped up at times the community has indicated a greater police presence is needed;
- KCDG is submitting a funding application to Police Scotland for goal posts;
- plans are being developed to publish a Kirkmichael newsletter to be distributed with the Community Advertiser early next year; and
- partner agencies third sector organisations are attending KCDG meetings.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Kirkmichael community, working in partnership with statutory and third sector organisations, has made significant progress over the last four months since the disruption of the 2015 Gala Day. New partnerships are being established and KCDG is putting in place the necessary governance arrangements which should strengthen the organisation and help office bearers to attract more Kirkmichael residents to join the Group.

The Kirkmichael Multi-agency group has initiated a number of initiatives which are already making a positive contribution to the community and more are planned in the New Year.

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