



Helensburgh Community Hub vision: "Helensburgh is a strong, compassionate and inclusive community"

Update from Helensburgh Community Hub to the Helensburgh and Lomond Community Planning Group – November 2022

- **Promoting Reading for Pleasure**

*Reading for Pleasure is a more powerful factor in life achievement than socio-economic background.
(The Reading Agency)*

As home to Helensburgh's second-hand community bookshop, a logical priority for the Hub is to promote reading for pleasure - something that supports our physical and mental wellbeing, increases self-esteem, reduces symptoms of stress and depression, develops skills including empathy and problem solving, brings us knowledge and increases our communication skills.

We are therefore developing two major collaborations to promote reading for pleasure:

- (1) Dolly Parton Imagination Library

We are excited to have the first public launch of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in Argyll and Bute on **Friday 2 December**.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book gifting programme devoted to inspiring a love of reading in the hearts of children everywhere. Each month, enrolled children from birth to age five, receive a high quality, age appropriate book in the post, free of charge. (from the Dolly Parton Imagination library website)

Helensburgh Community Hub recently became an affiliate of the Imagination Library to offer the programme in our core area of Helensburgh Central and East in 2023, expanding to Helensburgh North and West in 2024.

As an affiliate we will fund the wholesale price of the books, which is £25 per child, per year and promote the scheme in our area and support registration. The Dolly Parton Imagination Library does the rest. Initially we are using a percentage of Book Nook income and we will be fundraising throughout 2023 as uptake increases and to widen the coverage area.

We are also working with the LiveArgyll community learning team and Helensburgh library to offer parent/child storytime sessions to encourage families to read together and to support adult literacy and digital literacy.

The key to the success of this project will be making eligible families aware of it so the Hub would like to work with all statutory, third sector and commercial organisations to increase awareness of the Imagination Library.

For more information about the Imagination Library go to: <https://imaginationlibrary.com/uk/>

If you are interested in working with the Hub to support the Imagination Library locally please contact Gill Simpson, Development Manager at manager@helensburghcommunityhub.org.uk

(2) Spring book event in collaboration between Hub, Jean's Bothy and H&L Carers

We are working with Jean's Bothy and Helensburgh and Lomond Carers on a shared project to support reading for pleasure, particularly around reading supporting good mental health.

As well as connecting our book groups to share resources and connect with each other, we are working on an exciting book event for next year around World Book Day (March 2). This event is still in the early stages of planning so more information will be available for the next CPG meeting.

- **Supporting volunteering across H&L**

Volunteering was an important factor in the initial discussions to set up Helensburgh Community Hub, and is part of the Hub's vision, which includes offering volunteering opportunities and support for volunteering in the wider community.

A recent Volunteer Scotland report has highlighted how aspects of the cost of living situation will potentially increase the need for volunteering but also impact on volunteers in terms of numbers and on their health and wellbeing (relevant to both formal and informal volunteering) -

https://www.volunteerscotland.net/media/1794252/cost_of_living_report_-_volunteer_scotland.pdf

From many conversations with volunteers and volunteer organisations we have identified need for more localised and face2face support including ongoing recognition of the vital contribution made by volunteering to the Helensburgh and Lomond community

Work is ongoing involving Visiting Friends and photographer Kath Polley to put in place an exciting and creative long-term project during 2023 that will address these needs. Meanwhile on the back of a hugely successful Volunteer Fair in June we are planning another similar event in the New Year.

For more information please contact Gill Simpson, Development Manager at manager@helensburghcommunityhub.org.uk

- **Welcoming people in over the winter months**

Working in partnership with the Drumfork Centre, Centre 81 and Jean's Bothy we are looking at how to address the potential need to provide welcoming spaces over the winter months to allow people to connect and socialise.

We have started to put together a timetable of venues across Helensburgh and Lomond that are open to all and without any mandatory costs or requirement to access a particular service. We would like to make this as complete and wide as possible, so we welcome input from any organisation.

For more information please contact Gill Simpson, Development Manager at manager@helensburghcommunityhub.org.uk

- **Engaging with our community**

We recently held a very successful Open Day on October 12 to highlight the services and organisations now based within Helensburgh Community Hub.

A&B Citizens Advice have recently joined Key Housing, A&B Rape Crisis, Red Cross mobility aids service and H&L Foodbank in having their Helensburgh base in the Hub.

Following requests from other community organisations to highlight their services we are now planning a community open day in the New Year that will be open to organisations outwith the Hub.

If you would like to participate in this event please contact Gill Simpson, Development Manager at manager@helensburghcommunityhub.org.uk