



Federation of Local Housing Associations

Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire



# Community Engagement Activities Across FLAIR 2019

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**FLAIR** is The Federation of Local Housing Associations in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire. This partnership of six housing associations includes Barrhead, Bridgewater, Ferguslie Park, Linstone, Paisley & Williamsburgh and in 2019 celebrates **30 years of joint working.**

Since the FLAIR constitution was first drawn up in 1999, the objectives remain, to provide a context for joint working. FLAIR encourages collaboration, campaigning and lobbying, employment, training and learning opportunities, and, through the iFLAIR framework agreement, increased buying power across the Housing Associations for the benefit of tenants and residents.

This short report summarises some of the many innovative projects that have been developed in conjunction with the local community, demonstrating FLAIR's role as more than provision of safe and well maintained homes. As social landlords, working collaboratively we have the opportunity to support the aspirations and objectives of people in the local area, to maximise their wellbeing and satisfaction with the place in which they live.

If you would like to find out more about any of the activities featured, contact details for each Housing Association are on the back of this booklet.





## Creative Pathways

Creative pathways is a flag ship employability project for Barrhead Housing Association working in partnership with Impact Arts. Running for several years now, each year approximately 30 young people between 16-18 years old are given the opportunity to try new skills for a range of activities.

As well as improving their employability skills, the young people generate an impressive amount of work and learn an array of new

creative skills over the course of the programme, including writing exercises, woodworking, computer skills, storyboarding, script writing, filming and animation. Environmental skills included building animal habitats and planters, creating pinhole cameras and developing environmentally-friendly solutions using natural and recycled materials.

Scott McCorkell, 17, is one of the participants on the programme who created pieces for the Arthurlie Family



Centre: "It's been really fun getting to expand my skills, interact with new people and do something useful as well. It feels great doing something that people will like and that will actually be useful – it feels really fulfilling. I've learned how to prepare a CV, learned how to prepare myself for interviews and also just generally becoming more confident. It's been great."

## The Barrhead Housing Association Community Fund

The BHA Community Fund was a brand new initiative for Barrhead that used the ethos of Participatory Budgeting to empower local people to choose where and how the money available was to be spent, whilst ensuring that it supported positive community action and regeneration in their local area.

In two years £78,000 has been awarded to 26 Community projects in Barrhead Community, through 2 Community Voting Events, with over 1,000 community members voting on the projects they wished to see funded.

Janet from ERA, East Renfrewshire Additional Support Needs Parent Action Group thought the event was fantastic, but not just because of the funding on offer: "It gives you the chance to get out there and get our name out there and let people know that we exist. Because word of mouth works better than anything"

Rena McGuire hosted a stall for a Community Safety and Health Project. She agrees that there's more to the event than money alone: "I've lived in the area all my life, and involved in the community but I don't know that



most of these groups existed".

Incahootz Drama "Great event, bringing groups and the community together."



## DIY Dunterlie

Barrhead Housing Association's DIY Dunterlie is a tenancy sustainment project designed to help local residents develop new skills and interests which can impact positively on their lives. DIY Dunterlie offers a wide range of activities and opportunities which help bring the community together in local facilities including Green Gym, Employability, Money Advice, Digital Skills, Health Class, Parental Advice, Social Events and Pop Up Shops.

"I can't believe I'm getting a free membership, I'm on maternity leave and have just went to Zero pay, this will mean I can keep coming and don't need to worry about how I'll afford it"

**Member of Active8**

"It's my Birthday in April so the membership is going to help me get in shape" **Participants of P.H.A.T Class**

"I have told everyone how amazing you are and how well you take care of us"

"DIY Dunterlie has allowed me to access help to complete my son's DLA form. I didn't know which benefits I might be due before coming in. I am dyslexic so struggle to complete forms. Having the support near where I live has really taken the stress out of the application process"





## Health and Wellbeing

We believe that housing is of central importance to helping people live longer, happier lives in their community. Some of our previous rent consultations and other surveys have asked questions around health and resilience, through the results of these surveys we know that there are increasing health issues amongst our tenants and our elderly tenants in particular. We have helped to alleviate some of these issues by building two Extra Care Developments but we know that we need to do more. Our Sheltered Housing Support Service also goes some way to alleviate the health inequalities that we experience in Erskine and this is seen by the Care Inspectorate as an excellent service making a difference in people's lives.

## Bridgewater's Housing Support Service



The Care Inspectorate recently graded Bridgewater's Housing Support Service – Excellent, following an unannounced inspection in October 2017. This covers quality of care and support; staffing; and management and leadership.

The service delivers support to just over 100 older people across three sheltered housing developments in Erskine. The Inspector commented that the Association's sheltered tenants "receive excellent, flexible support. It was evident that staff had developed effective, trusting working relationships with people being supported."

## Challenging Poverty

Challenging poverty remains at the top of our agenda and why we brought in-house and expanded the Benefit Advice Service which we previously purchased from Linstone, so that we can help more people access the benefits that they are entitled to. We also have plans to develop a community fund which will go some way to alleviate some of the unexpected expenses which our tenants and residents face during the year.



## Care and Repair Renfrewshire

In 2019 the Association was awarded the Inverclyde contract to provide Care & Repair services to the residents of Inverclyde for the next 3 years.

Our Care and Repair service provides vital assistance to home owners, private and social renters aged 65 and over (or 60 and over with a disability or long term illness) with a

free small repairs and handyperson service. It also covers help with carrying out adaptations from agreeing specifications to applying for local authority grants and project management of works. This vital service helps older people and those with disabilities to live independently within the community.

The service employs 10 people and



spends around £1m per year on vital works.





## Ferguslie Park Housing Association

### The Ferguslie Group

Ferguslie Park Housing Association (FPHA) and its charitable subsidiary, the Tannahill Centre, together form the Ferguslie Group and we work together to realise our shared core purpose to regenerate Ferguslie Park and to work with partners to channel ideas, action and investment into Ferguslie Park.

Over the past two years FPHA and the Tannahill Centre have been working hard to re-engage local people and improve the social impact of its work as part of a broader improvement plan made up of around 130 actions.

### Welfare Rights

Based within FPHA, the Welfare Rights Officer and Welfare Rights Assistant provide support to tenants and residents of the association to access the statutory benefits they are entitled to over the past two years the team have managed just under 1,000 cases enabling local people secure £391,804 of entitlements they were due.

### The Tannahill Centre



FPHA's subsidiary charity – the Tannahill Centre – manage and operate a community hub with seven commercial leaseholders that provide essential services to the community. Income from these leaseholders allows us to provide access to a range of community spaces at a heavily subsidised rate. In response to a community consultation carried out in December 2016 we have:

- Raised £388,223 for investment in our building and services delivered by the Tannahill Centre and its partners
- Increased the number of organisations and agencies using the Tannahill Centre from two to 44
- Seen 2,102 hours of services delivered from the Tannahill Centre to adults within Ferguslie Park
- Seen 1,408 hours of services delivered from the Tannahill Centre for children and young people within Ferguslie Park
- Received 871 responses to a number of community engagement activities.



## Self Reliant Groups

Inspired by the work of WEvolution, the Tannahill Centre have been supporting local people explore self-employment through Self Reliant Groups. People come together to support one another, save together, learn a skill together and use this skill to generate an income for them and their families. So far:



- 83 people have attended a group or training
- 11 businesses have been established in Ferguslie
- 15 people have found employment and a further 5 have participated in training
- 41 people have improved their financial knowledge, enterprise skills and confidence as a result of participating in self reliant groups.

## Arts and Culture

Inspired by Paisley's bid to become the 2021 City of Culture there has been an explosion of arts and cultural activity for the whole community taking place within the Tannahill Centre. As well as a number of events open to the whole community, we have supported a number of groups and businesses establish themselves ranging from needlework and soft furnishing, upcycling, craft and sports projects.



## Participatory Budgeting

We held our first ever Participatory Budgeting project in March 2019, where the local community came together to decide how £25,000 of public funds should be spent in their local community. 12 groups requesting a total of £46,574 applied, with 501 votes being cast. Seven groups were successful and the remaining five groups who were not have been offered support to source other funding opportunities. As a result of the event:



- 76% of those who attended said they increased their knowledge of participatory budgeting
- 84% of those who attended felt more able to influence decisions affecting Ferguslie
- 86% of those who attended thought that Participatory Budgeting was a good way of allocating public funds.

## Community Events

Over the past two years the Tannahill Centre has held 35 community events, mostly in partnership with a wide range of organisations including Active Communities, Invest in Renfrewshire, Pals of the Privies, Renfrewshire Council and Renfrewshire Leisure.





# LINSTONE HOUSING

## Car Club Expansion in Linwood and Johnstone



More funding was recently secured to expand Linstone's Car Club pilot scheme to a second location in Linwood and into Sandyflats in Johnstone. More money will mean two fully electric cars will add to the current fleet, which can be hired on an hourly basis, freeing tenants and residents from the costs of car ownership and responsibility while retaining the benefit of having a car right there when needed.



## The Creative Ageing Volunteer Programme and the FLAIR Craft Cafés

The Creative Ageing Volunteer Programme and the FLAIR Craft Cafés have continued to host creative groups and activities for older people since 2014. Recently evolving to include volunteers from the local area to provide creative workshops across a wide range of activities. The project aims to reduce social isolation, improve physical and mental health and build confidence and self-esteem with local tenants and residents over 60.



## Linstone's Work Experience & Employability Programme

The work experience programme coordinated by Linstone in 2018 employed 32 local people who had been struggling to get into the job market. Since the programme completed, some of the participants are now working full time for Linstone; others have secured employment with other partners and local employers. Linstone gained considerably from the opportunity to work with these young people and long term unemployed, and intend to

use the programme experience to develop a social enterprise to establish a training academy to continue to support those in the local community experiencing difficulty securing meaningful long term employment.



"There's a group of us, we all get on well, it's helped me get back into work, because of my age I've been unemployed for years so just getting back into the rhythm again of working has helped me immensely. I just don't want to stop now, I want to get out there and work."

Participant

"The whole team has been amazing - Linstone have really understood my situation and helped me with the support I've needed. I really feel now I have people I can go to if I need help, life has got a bit easier since I joined Linstone."

Participant



## A Community Garden in the heart of Linwood

Plans for 'The Village Garden' are progressing. Tesco have agreed to lease the site of the derelict five



aside football pitch behind the petrol station to Linstone. Community consultation is well underway to identify priorities for what to include in the garden space. The users of the revitalised space will be people of all ages, the majority living within walking distance. This includes, for example, elderly residents in the nearby high flats, the local Toddle Tots group and a nearby centre which provides services for adults with learning disabilities.



The local community coming together to raise awareness of the plans to create 'The Village Garden' in the centre of Linwood and celebrate £3,000 of funding recently secured from Scottish Government's Community Growing Fund towards this goal.

## Community Hubs and Community Engagement

Funding from the Social Economic Growth fund has allowed Linstone, through its 20/20 project to focus on the need for more community cohesion, allowing us to provide welcoming hub spaces in Johnstone Castle, Sandyflats

and Linwood, supported by a team of community engagers, including a youth worker. We run a weekly timetable of activities across all of the Hubs, as well as one-off events and smaller pilot projects.



A centenary tea dance was well attended by the Linwood community, 50 free tickets were snapped up in less than 24hrs.



We have been able to deliver accredited First Aid training to families in our communities, as well as bespoke Emergency First Aid in the home and Emergency First Aid for children – MJ had a great time learning CPR!



## Paisley West End Project

Paisley's West End project delivers meaningful enhancements to residents' back courts in Victorian tenement properties in the West End of Paisley while offering training and development opportunities to four trainees, volunteers and local residents. Residents have been placed at the centre of developing the improvement plans with a co-production approach adopted. From workshops, consultations and door to door surveys, clear ideas have been developed with a working group. Meetings were held with the Landscape Architect to deliver on residents' aspirations for their back close.

We have worked with students from the Scottish Rural Agricultural College to develop plans for nearby unused green spaces. The first phase saw the team working with residents at our partner, the Blue Triangle Housing Association. Residents attended a woodworking workshop building two picnic tables, decided on which plants they wished in the garden and planted them in their new garden. As at April 19, seven volunteers have benefitted from the project learning new skills and over 30 residents have been involved in developing the Landscape Plans. The project runs to the end of 2019 and will improve the back closes of over 200 homes in the West End.



Residents and the Landscaping apprentices learning basic wood workings skills as they build a picnic table in the enhanced back court in the West End of Paisley.



The project has breathed new life into the Secret Garden next to UWS where residents can now enjoy a revamped landscaped area.



## BEE FRIENDLY

A garden of their own has been a priority for our residents at Oliphant Court in Foxbar. PHA invested £31,500 on top of a Scottish Procurement Alliance community benefit grant of £10,000 to respond to feedback from residents' 'wish list' and turn a large unusable space into a community garden for the 56 flats to enjoy. Allotment boxes were also provided for those residents who wished them. The garden has been made into an accessible social space by incorporating a walk way around the interior of the garden and putting benches in different 'zones'. Nature aids have been incorporated, as has a picnic area. A 'mound' provides some shelter, bamboo provides some privacy and we have enclosed the area. Planting has been designed to encourage bee diversity. Resident feedback has been positive; example comments include "Really nice", "Lovely-great improvement" "Glad of the space, fantastic".



From this unloved space .....



To this ....

## FLAIR ACADEMY



To encourage new members into FLAIR Committees, Sub Committees and Subsidiaries FLAIR started the FLAIR Academy. These are a series of training sessions which provide an insight into the main areas within housing. Training is held locally over a 9 week period. The trainers are staff members from each of the Associations so the cost of running the Academy is minimal and shared. It has proved to be a hugely successful model, attracting 14 new members with different backgrounds, skills and professions.

## DIGITAL PROJECT

The PHA Digital Inclusion project, which reached out to over 20 residents with complex needs, who were assisted to develop their digital skills, ran to March 2019. This involved providing residents with a tablet and the means to access the internet and supporting them to make the best use of these resources. The project was well received by the participants and provided them with the skills, capacity and the means to get online and the wealth of opportunities the internet affords.

## POSITIVE START

Moving into a new home and sustaining a tenancy can be a worrying and anxious time, especially so for those with experience of homelessness. Recognising this, PHA worked with the Lintel Trust to support eight new residents into sustainable tenancies with a wide range of support including providing household necessities such as carpets. Eight former homeless residents were helped in this way over 2018/19.

## WELFARE RIGHTS

With a dedicated Welfare Officer in place, PHA has provided help to over 300 residents with help and assistance being provided in Universal Credit claims, Housing Benefits, DWP Benefits and Grants with a total estimated value of over £1.3m and a success rate of 87% in 2018-19.



# Williamsburgh

## Housing Association Limited

### Radio Clyde Cash for Kids

During the festive periods, WHA supported 179 local children by successfully applying for £4,475 from the Radio Clyde, Cash for Kids, Mission Christmas Fund. Through the funding, we supplied each of the children with a £25 voucher for Smyth's Toys. We are sure this brought some additional Christmas cheer to the families who struggled with the financial strain that comes with Christmas.



### Work/Life

Our European Social Funded project Work;LIFE has been improving the lives of our tenants.

The Work/LIFE project generated a lot of activity at our new Community Flat at 0/2, 10 Lang Street. This has included 121 people accessing:

- Assistance with job search, CV building, application forms and IT skills
- Support with IT Skills
- Confidence building, motivation and team work activities
- Help with Universal Credit applications
- Weekly social groups
- Healthy eating classes
- Six weekly courses to develop your confidence and improve your mental health
- Information about other community groups and activities.

Mary who attended Digital Drop in said: **"It's been a great help to me, as I was not computer literate and was dreading learning because I knew I would feel embarrassed and stupid, but the staff have never made me feel I was either. I have enjoyed my time on the computer doing CVs, looking for jobs and logging on to Google and Facebook. The staff have been patient, kind, supportive and calm, especially when I have made many mistakes and still do. They have also shown me how to correct spelling mistakes I haven't noticed. I am pleased with what I have learned so far."**

## SUGaR: Seedhill Urban Growing and Regeneration

During the last two years, our Climate Challenge funded project has helped to reduce the amount of clothes and furniture going to landfill and to increase production and consumption of locally grown food. Project activities have included a programme of upcycling, recycling and food waste workshops, textile swap shops and the creation of food growing space within the grounds of Paisley Grammar School and Violet Street.

One of our regular attendees of cooking club said; **"I would avoid yellow labels, because I thought the food wasn't any good, but now I've started buying it. I managed to make a massive beef stew and freeze it the other night using yellow label food for 2 quid."**







Flair = community regeneration • community work • partnership • employability



60-70 Main Street,  
Barrhead G78 1SB  
0141 881 0638  
enquiries@barrheadha.org  
www.barrheadha.org



@barrheadhousing

Charity No: SC036265



LINSTONE  
HOUSING

17 Bridge Street, Linwood,  
Renfrewshire PA3 3DB  
01505 382 383  
general@linstone.co.uk  
www.linstone.co.uk



@linstonehousing

Charity No: SC027454



1st Floor,  
Bridgewater Shopping Centre,  
Erskine, PA8 7AA  
0141 812 2237  
admin@bridgewaterha.org.uk  
www.bridgewaterha.org.uk

Charity No: SC035819



64 Espedair Street,  
Paisley PA2 2RW  
0141 889 7105  
www.paisleyha.org.uk  
admin@paisleyha.org.uk



@paisleyha  
@paisleyhawestendproject

Charity No: SC035589



Tannahill Centre,  
76 Blackstoun Road,  
Paisley PA3 1NT  
0141 887 4053  
admin@fpha.org.uk  
www.fpha.org.uk

Charity No: SC034893



Ralston House, Cyril Street,  
Paisley PA1 1RW  
admin@williamsburghha.co.uk  
www.williamsburghha.co.uk



0141 887 8613 - Office  
0141 847 6370 - Direct Dial

Charity No: SC035350