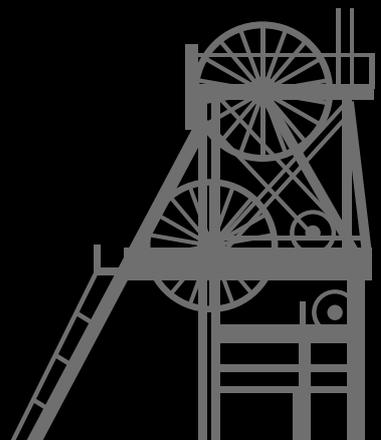
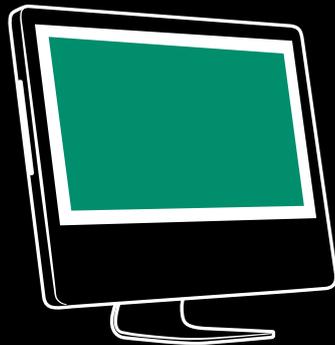




COMMUNITY ACTION
BLACKBURN

ANNUAL
REPORT

2013-14





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BLACKBURN



A WORD FROM THE CHAIR

This report gives a flavour of the work CAB has undertaken in the past twelve months. Given that CAB is a very small project, 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, in particular Linda Graham for the dedication in her role as CAB's Treasurer and Editor of our Blackburn News; members of the Steering Group; the local schools; Helen Davis & her Streetwork Team at West Lothian Youth Action Project and Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Officer, West Lothian Council who always keeps CAB well informed and works hard on our behalf.

All of these people have assisted CAB, not only in the last year, but from the start of the project and they continue to give their time to help CAB succeed and achieve their goals

Alison Kerr - Chairperson

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 you all.



New Image

When the people of Blackburn were asked if they had heard of CAB, few had. They did, however, know about the work CAB had undertaken. To raise our profile, we decided to re-brand with a stronger image and identity. The strong new identity encompasses the history of Blackburn with images that people associate with the village. Promotional materials have also been developed including pens, keyrings and teeshirts. Thanks to Steve Kirkpatrick at Weesleekit Design for all his imaginative designs.

Blackburn's New Skateboard Park

Without doubt, the highlight of the past year has been the construction of the Skate Park at Ash Grove after consultation with Blackburn young people about what would improve the village. CAB, with the assistance of West Lothian Council Community Regeneration Officer, Scott McKillop, applied to the Big Lottery for funding to build a Wheeled Sport Facility. The bid was successful with CAB being awarded £237,180 to develop the project. This was later increased to £249,999. Young people were involved at every step of the development – choosing the design, appointing the contractor and the artwork on the park itself. Building commenced in February and the official opening took place on Saturday 5th July, with competitions and demonstrations for the young people who came along with their bikes and scooters. Phase 2 of the project will offer training programmes provided by experienced skaters and youth workers building the young people's confidence and team building skills. Our sincere thanks to Scott McKillop (West Lothian Council); Helen Davis and the Streetwork Team from West Lothian Youth Action Project; AHR (formerly Aedas); Wheelscape (contractors); Chris Young (freelance artist) and most important of all, the young people who were involved.



Newsletter

CAB's newsletter was revamped and delivered to all households in Blackburn. Highlighting CAB's latest initiatives, the newsletter will also feature regular information and articles about alcohol and its impact on family and community life.

INITIATIVES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Annual Poster Competition

327 young people from Blackburn Primary Schools entered CAB's annual poster competition. Originally set up by Blackburn Community Council the competition is now run jointly with CAB. Plaques are presented to the schools by the Community Council and CAB present vouchers to the winners.

The winning posters are then made into a calendar which is distributed to every school pupil and business in the village. Extra copies are available at Blackburn Connected.

Congratulations to the 2013 winners:

Aidan McKee and Robbie Dickon, Blackburn Primary; Nivyn Robson, Casey Lumsden, Abbie Heaney and David Charker, Murrayfield Primary; Scott Reynolds, Adrian Rzonca, Owen Smillie, Abbie Mann, and Sarah-Jan Barkhouse, Our Lady of Lourdes; and Jennifer Leggat, Pinewood.

P6/7 Inter-schools Conference "Celebrating Blackburn"

Each year the P6/7 classes in all four primary schools in Blackburn; Our Lady of Lourdes, Murrayfield, Blackburn and Pinewood come together for the conference. The theme of this year's event was "**Celebrating Blackburn**" and focussed on the good things about living in the village as well as celebrating all that has been achieved since the conferences started. CAB heard the young people's views on what they would like to see improved in their community. Pupil representatives, with the help of Alison Kerr, the CAB Chairperson, organised the day and each school gave their own presentation. Pinewood students delivered an enthusiastic music and drama performance facilitated by West Lothian Youth Action Project and Firefly Theatre Group. Blackburn Primary chose to work with community artist Scott Gilbert on a mural depicting the good things about the village and a video of the project was screened. Our Lady of Lourdes opted for the medium of dance to express their thoughts on the positive aspects with a lively routine to the song "**Happy**".





Murrayfield Primary produced a film on Blackburn Past, Present and Future, taking the audience through a journey of the wonderful cultural history of the village with pupils portraying significant characters of the time.

The organising group gave examples of how the views of pupils at previous conferences had resulted in successful action and learning with initiatives such as the skate park proposal, drama and swimming sessions and addressing underage purchase of alcohol. Once again pupils were consulted on what could still be improved in the village and there was no shortage of ideas.

Some of these suggestions will form part of the CAB work schedule in the coming months. Thanks to Head Teachers, staff and team reps from all the primary schools, West Lothian Youth Action Project, Firefly Theatre Group, Chris Wraight and his team from the Community Film Unit who all worked hard to make the conference a great success.

Pinewood School

CAB supported the Youth Action Music Project to work with some students at Pinewood School this year. This was a great learning experience for the children and staff alike. The workshops allowed

the young people, with a variety of disabilities, the opportunity to express themselves through playing music and singing. The culmination of this work resulted in a core group of children performing at the P6/7 conference and their performance of Bob Marley's "**Three Little Birds**" brought a tear to many an eye. The children were also able to record a CD. It was a very humbling experience for the project workers and it has inspired them as part of their own professional development to further enhance their skills in teaching young people with additional support needs.

"Music for our pupils is something which they can all engage in and provides opportunities for them to shine, which they most definitely did! They were provided with and embraced opportunities which without Lorna, Stevie and Gordon we could not have provided e.g. playing a wide range of instruments and recording a CD in a real studio. Their musical abilities were also first class where they were able to listen to, match pupil's interests, motivate and engage them further by playing the pupils favourite songs....From the first session they listened, interacted and genuinely valued all of our pupils' contributions. They worked with and interacted with our pupils in a way that completely exceeded our expectations."

Pam Greig, *Head Teacher, Pinewood School*





Street work, Drop in and Intensive Support Groups

CAB provided funding for a specifically targeted Streetwork session one night per week throughout the year in the Blackburn area. This allowed the Streetwork Team to build up a good and trusting relationship with many young people in the village and also with several adults who have taken an interest in speaking to the workers about youth issues or just seeking general information about community life.

The Streetwork provision generally took place on a Thursday, Friday or Saturday evening. Occasionally times varied if there were more immediate issues highlighted by Police Scotland, CAB or Community Centre staff. The Team engaged with young people and discussed many topics such as school, employment & unemployment, money or the lack of it, boredom, alcohol and drugs, the risks associated with their use, the involvement and impact of anti-social behaviour, how their behaviour impacts on their relationship with adults at home and in the wider community. They were also encouraged to look at how they spend their leisure time, what services and opportunities are available to them and how they can have a say in what they need and want.

The Streetwork Team engaged in direct work with 138 young people aged 9-20 years and held 50 sessions. They had contact with many more young people, but these numbers reflect the young people who engaged in meaningful dialogue or

subsequently worked with the project in other settings such as the youth drop ins, the skate park or intensive support groups.

The development of the skate park has now become a focal point for this work.

CAB funded the Youth Action Project to deliver support, advice and activities for young people in Blackburn through drop-in sessions held at Blackburn Community Centre on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons from April until June 2014. These groups had been running successfully in previous years and this financial support was provided due to a delay with a funding application to West Lothian Council to continue the sessions.

The three month funding period provided 24 sessions, with 64 different individuals attending and 282 attendances. The groups historically get quieter towards the summer holiday period.

Young people have used the services provided for recreation, computer use, music and art projects and as a source of information on many topics such as education, employment, health, relationships, legal matters and drug and alcohol use, both their own and that of family members.

The relationships formed with the young people and the staff operating the drop-ins is very positive and we hope to re-open these sessions in coming months.



Other Work with Young People

During the consultation with young people, some asked for swimming and drama sessions. After a few taster sessions, CAB arranged swimming sessions at Deans Community High School swimming pool and 10-12 young people attended. Our thanks to John and Jean Thomas, the volunteers who so ably looked after the kids. Drama workshops ran in Our Lady of Lourdes on Tuesdays with 15-20 young people attending regularly. Thanks to Brianne Haddow, who facilitated the drama sessions.

Annual Fun Day

CAB sponsored its 4th Annual Fun Day in August, providing children, families and young people with an opportunity to enjoy the event for only £1.00. This year's attractions included bouncy castles, other inflatables, climbing wall water walk and much more. Information stalls, nail and hair art, graffiti boards, a magician and demonstrations from local street dance crew Pulsationz were also provided.



Improvements to Bathgate Road

Community Action Blackburn applied to West Lothian Council's Village Improvement Fund for money to improve the verges along the Bathgate Road and has been awarded £35,000. This area was chosen as priority because of its poor and overgrown condition and to compliment the improvements that have already been made to the houses in the area. CAB consulted with the residents who live adjacent to the verges who expressed a desire for more trees, some low maintenance but colourful shrubs and landscaped or grassed areas, with some seating.

A new group, Blackburn Environmental Group, has been established to develop a plan to improve un-utilised areas of land for community benefit and will oversee the project. The project will be in two phases. Phase 1 will see the clearing of the area of all the overgrown bushes, a landscape design and planting of shrubs. Phase 2 will develop the larger site beside the flats and will be more of a community initiative involving young people and volunteers in gardening projects that improve learning, health and wellbeing.

Early Years

CAB are also a member of the Early Years Working Group who work with families with very young children in Blackburn. CAB manned a stall at their Fabulous Fun Friday event in April.

Board of Directors

Alison Kerr (Chair)
Linda Graham (Treasurer)
Helen Davis
Brian Pringle
Jimmy Graham
Rab Sneddon

The Steering Group

This group of people work in partnership with CAB to achieve its objectives and make suggestions about new areas of work:

Jim Dickson, Mary Dickson, Barry Robertson,
George Paul (Elected Members West Lothian
Council)

Scott McKillop, Community Regeneration Officer;
Gary Stoddart, Housing Manager &
Daniel McComisky, NETs and Land Services,
West Lothian Council

Catriona Macrae, Head Teacher & Abi Waugh,
Assistant Head, Murrayfield Primary School;
Tricia Paterson, Headteacher, Our Lady of Lourdes,
Janet Clarkson, Headteacher, Blackburn Primary
School

Police Scotland, NHS, Council Information Services,
Diane Hardie, Gala Day Committee and
John Hardie, Blackburn website

Development Workers

Charlie Bryceland
Margot Ferguson (Interim)

Accountants

Brian Maloney



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