

COMMUNITY ACTION BLACKBURN ANNUAL REPORT

2023/24


EVERYONE IS WELCOME!




STAY INFORMED AND GET INVOLVED!



 <https://blackburnwestlothian.co.uk>

 charlieblackburn.cab@gmail.com

 Lisa: 07986 847781

Chairpersons Address – AGM 18th December 2024

In the last year Community Action Blackburn continued to focus on the issues that were identified by the community of Blackburn and delivered a thoughtful program in keeping with the Blackburn Futures Plan.

The after effects of the pandemic have continued to impact on financial hardship, relationship issues, isolation, increased substance misuse and has led many to suffer from poor mental wellbeing. Continued quality group work, reaching out to those suffering the most, supporting local initiatives and recognising what is now needed and what has worked previously both through CAB and in partnership allowed many of the community to benefit from the following positive outcomes in the last financial year:

- Provided support and assistance in delivering the BFP for the benefit and wellbeing of the community;
- Improved access to food and knowledge in delivering affordable meals for the family;
- Older people have an improved quality of life and MH&W through attendance at clubs and events provided;
- Children and Young People are better equipped with knowledge and skills through their involvement in Community activities and work;
- Young people's support has been increased through the availability of sessions and sign posting by youth workers;
- People's quality of life, knowledge and skills are improved through volunteering to assist and participate in community activities
- The environment has been improved through developing and delivering actions to address climate change;

Tonight we will provide you with some snap shots of the excellent work that is being delivered within the community, which CAB are heavily involved in.

Although it is becoming harder each year to source funding to provide the services that are required for the community with the commitment of the staff and volunteers we aim to maintain our service delivery for the foreseeable future. We are also looking for more volunteers to assist us in our work and ask anyone who would be willing to assist to contact a member of staff or one of the Trustees.



Snap Shot of 2023/24



Waste Not Want Not – Community Shop

We marked the 1st Birthday for the Community Shop in November 2023 where staff and volunteers had cake to celebrate. This continues to be a lifeline for some families particularly for people who are working who can come along early evening for their shop. We have had a few logistical problems regarding deliveries but are working on a solution and appreciate the volunteers support on a weekly basis.

Community Fun and Consultation Day

The Community Day was well received by the residents and once again the Community Spirit was evident throughout the day. As well as having a number of activities on offer a number of local organisations were able to engage with individuals and either offer support or sign post to a relevant service. Feedback on the whole was very positive.



Summer of Play

After a successful application to West Lothian Council we were able to provide a 3 day, 4 week summer programme. During Weeks 1 - 3, staff and volunteers explored a different topic each week and the programme ended with a drama week allowing the children to develop new skills, engage with both old and new friends and provide them with memorable experiences throughout the summer.

Intergenerational Work

The relationship between the Womens Social Service Club and the P6 & P7 pupils from the schools continues to grow with both groups looking forward to their joint session. Sessions this year have included making Bird Boxes, Scottish Book Week and our annual Christmas Party with songs, games as well as a Christmas Quiz they had made.



Snap Shot of 2023/24

Senior Social Events

Three years after the initial funding via Community Choices, the Senior Social Events continue to grow from strength to strength with support from both Community Action Blackburn and the Gala Day Committee. It is debatable who has the most fun during the sessions which are supported, monetary by the Management Committee.



Blackburn Gala Day

After dipping our toes in the Gala Day water as part of 2022 Jubilee Celebrations we were more than willing to participate this year and this became an Intergenerational project, planning and preparing with participants ranging from 4 years old to *cough cough!* The time and effort paid off winning 1st prize for best costumes and decorated vehicle.



Climate Action Town (CAT)

2023/24 was the final year of the 3 year project delivered in partnership with Architecture & Design Scotland and a cross section of the Community came together to discuss potential issues which are currently affected or could be in the near future. There was a lot of time and effort put in by all during the three years and this was recognised when the project was shortlisted for a COSLA award. Unfortunately we did not win.



Change In Blackburn Youth Committee

Once again the committee have worked tirelessly throughout the year trying to 'evoke positive change' in the village. They were an integral part of CAT and the only young people invited along to the conclusion of all 7 projects and feature frequently in the report as well as being on the front and back cover. The P6/7 Mental Health Conference started as a pipe dream in 2019 and eventually took place this year and was a huge success. They have also been involved in a few County wide Big Discussions which aims to establish a collective voice with young people representing themselves and peers. In addition a cohort of the group attended animation sessions where they designed their own Awareness Raising animations which were shown as part of the education delivered to both primary and secondary schools in the County.



Ongoing Pieces of Work

CAB have and will continue to deliver many projects and activities for the benefit of the community whether this be on their own or through the strong partnership working that exists in Blackburn. These include:

- Blackburn's Future Group
- Climate Action Town
- Friday Club
- Summer of Play
- Women's Social Service Club
- Change in Blackburn Youth Forum
- Drop in sessions
- Consultation & Family Day
- 'Waste Not Want Not' Community Pantry
- Mental Health & Wellbeing Events



Moving Forward

As we move forward . . .

We have once again linked in with our schools to develop and deliver more ideas and projects to continue the great work done by previous Primary 6 and 7 pupils to make Blackburn a better place.

Through the Climate Action Town work, we are in the process of

- developing Blackburn's Local Place Plan for submission to West Lothian Council;
- sourcing funding to improve accessibility for all within the community by upgrading the path at the east end of the Partnership Centre;
- making the Heritage Walk more accessible and linking it to the footpath from Livingston through Seafield to Blackburn;

We are also working alongside other partner agencies to scope out the possibility of providing an Education & Skills Training Hub for the benefit of all residents of Blackburn.

Work is also ongoing regarding the development of a Blackburn History Museum and the provision of a tutoring programme for S5 pupils.

THANK YOU . . .

We would like to thank Michelle Murray, Blackburn's Community Regeneration Officer and Helen Davis of the Youth Action Project for the all the hard work they deliver for CAB and the community.

Our partner agencies who, without their assistance and support we would be unable to deliver all the services that we do and West Lothian Council for their continued funding of the project.

Blackburn is extremely fortunate to have a wide range of skilled and knowledgeable partner agencies and groups to assist in the delivery of the actions required to address the issues and concerns of the community and our funders West Lothian Council for their continued funding of the project, Scottish Land Fund, Scottish Children's Lottery Trust and West Lothian Development Trust.

- Community Volunteers;
- Summer of Play Volunteers;
- Change in Blackburn (CIB) youth group;
- West Lothian Youth Action Project;
- West Lothian Council;
- Blackburn Partnership Centre;
- Blackburn Education Centre Management Committee;
- Blackburn Community Council;
- Community Shop Volunteers;
- Architecture & Design Scotland Climate Action Towns;
- West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service;
- West Lothian Food Network;
- Blackburn Primary;
- Murrayfield Primary;
- Pinewood School;
- Our Lady of Lourdes Primary;
- Connolly School Campus;
- St Kentigern's Academy;
- Bathgate Academy;
- Blackburn Gala Day Committee;
- The Larder;
- Blackburn Homeless Unit;



We would also like to take the opportunity to thank our staff and volunteers for the all the hard work they continue to do in developing and taking the project forward and last but no means least the Blackburn Community for supporting, directing and guiding us to making a positive difference.