

**COMMUNITY
LINKS**

INVOLVING COMMUNITIES

Annual Report 2022/23





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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

With great pleasure, we present to you our 2022/2023 review, a window into the strides we've taken within our local communities. This moment offers us a chance to express gratitude, acknowledging the valuable contributions that have paved the way for our success.

As an anchor community-led organisation, our journey – through the past year was made possible by the steadfast support of our local communities, volunteers, partners, and especially our funders. Their dedication, energy, innovative ideas, and collective experience have been the driving forces behind our accomplishments; for this we give sincere respect and gratitude. Our focus remains on identified areas of Hillhouse, Udston, Burnbank, and Strutherhill & Birkenshaw, where our Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Neighbourhood Plans continue to shape positive outcomes.

Though the past year had its challenges, we're pleased to share that our team is now back to full strength with new members who bring renewed vibrance. Looking ahead to 2024, our compass points towards Community Development – an essential aspect of working alongside communities to engage in the planning process, address local priorities, and foster participation in democratic processes. Our commitment to environmental awareness in response to climate change remains, influencing every aspect of our work with a clear sense of purpose.

Health and wellbeing, for our communities, as well as our team here at Community Links, continues to be at the forefront of our considerations, as you will no doubt see in the pages to follow.

In remembrance of Jack Ferguson, a founding Director of Community Links, we pause to honour his legacy and the void left by his passing. His dedication to community inclusion continues to inspire us, and he is sadly missed by our team and communities alike.

Our gratitude extends to our fellow Directors and the dedicated staff members who drive our mission. A special mention goes to Francesca Lynch, whose impactful contributions have found a new avenue with our partners, SCDC, following her secondment opportunity. Her time with us was invaluable, and we wish her success in her new role. Lucky SCDC!

Our final thanks and appreciation goes to you, as we warmly welcome you to delve into the pages of our 21st Annual Report.

Julie Dunn *Morag Pinion*



Julie Dunn
Chairperson



Jim Reid
Vice Chair



Anna Shanks
Director



Robert McKean
Director



Emma Horrell
Director



Chris Thompson
Director



Morag Pinion
Chief Executive Officer

**MEET
THE
TEAM**



Anne Marie Lyons Neil
Business Support Officer



Iain Macdonald
I.T. Officer



Liz Armour
Community Development Worker



Sally Pritchard
Community Development Worker



Kevin Magee
Digital Engagement Worker



Louise Haggarty
Project Worker

ABOUT US

Community Links is an independent Lanarkshire-based Community Anchor organisation, established in 2002, with a proven track record and passion for working with, encouraging, and supporting communities to co-produce sustainable and meaningful involvement, participation and community-owned change.

Community Links engages and empowers residents within South Lanarkshire to be positive contributors to local decision-making within their communities; to take part in learning and development opportunities - benefiting them, the wider community and building community spirit.

We are a value-based organisation, and this is reflected in how we deliver our services and interact with the communities we serve.

Our values are:

INCLUSION	COMMITMENT	RESPECT	INNOVATION	VIBRANCE
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With twenty one years' experience, we continue to carry out community development, consultation and engagement, activities for adults, young people and children in the local community- as well as services in marketing, environment, community safety, food poverty, IT equipment provision and employment support. We have particular emphasis on areas that fall into the 15% priority datazones as identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 2020. These involve:

Engaging with communities and involving them in decision-making processes, reinforcing the importance of local democracy

Increasing community capacity and involvement utilising Asset Based Community Development, Participatory Budgeting, and Co-Production

Facilitating community consultations and events, by promoting the Community Planning Partnership objectives to the communities using innovative methods of communication; supporting the creation of local group networks

Encouraging volunteering opportunities by recruiting, training, and supporting local volunteers to deliver services and opportunities for the benefit of their local community

Employability SELECT (Supporting Employment and Learning by Empowering Communities in Technology) by increasing digital access and providing guidance and support, enhancing ICT skills, supporting education / training and job opportunities

Providing information / communication to ensure individuals and communities are aware of services and opportunities

Developing true and representative community engagement to help shape service delivery in communities to improve people's quality of life

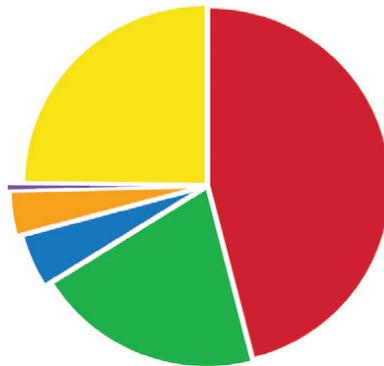
Improving our commitment to the environment and social responsibility in our communities and workplace through our environmental policy

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE



Community Links free reserves, i.e. those not tied up in fixed assets, nor relating to restricted funds, as of 31st March 2023, amounted to £142,560. These reserves are in line with the policy of maintaining a minimum of six months' running costs, including potential statutory redundancy payments.

A full copy of the certified accounts- prepared by our accountants, Kilbryde & Co. can be obtained on request from our office in Blantyre.



● SLC Community Engagement Team (Core)- £110,896

● Community Health and Wellbeing - £48,304

● SLC Community Choices - £11,400

● NHS Hamilton Health and Social Care Forum - £9,180

● Other - £1,231

● Income Generation - £59,937



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

OUR PLACE OUR PLAN / PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Thanks to contributions from the National Lottery and South Lanarkshire Council, £44,870 was allocated to the Hillhouse, Udston, and Burnbank area to empower the community through a Participatory Budgeting (PB) process that utilised a small grants approach to generate innovative ideas and proposals.

This initiative saw an impressive engagement of 1649 individuals who took part in the process, choosing to fund 10 proposals. This collaborative approach continues by involving the public in choosing local priority themes through ongoing public consultations.

Additionally, £24,389 was allocated to the Strutherhill and Birkenshaw Community Group for their own PB efforts. We listened closely during community consultations and learned that the community's passion lies in larger-scale projects. With a focus on initiatives like a bike program, enhancing open spaces, and improving local play areas, funds are going where they matter most, with resident feedback shaping these projects.

To dive deeper into Our Place Our Plan, including Neighbourhood Plans and Progress reports, please visit: www.southlanarkshirecommunityplanning.org

COMMUNITY HUBS

This year marked significant growth for our Community Hubs. Collaborating with Hillhouse Parish Church, the Hillhouse Community Hub has become a thriving centre. Similarly, the Burnbank Community Hub, managed by Gilmour and Whitehill Parish Church and supported by Community Links, is flourishing. Both hubs extend a warm welcome to all, offering food provision, SELECT digital support, and drop-in assistance from various third-sector organisations including NHS and South Lanarkshire Council's Money Matters.

Our efforts to enhance community wellbeing have seen exciting new initiatives. We secured funding for a Slow Cooker course, benefiting 11 participants who learned energy-efficient cooking techniques and healthy recipes. The hubs also introduced activities including a Community Shed, Health Improvement talks, a knitting group, and REHIS Food Hygiene certification, providing valuable opportunities for skill-building and connection.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL

Our collaborative efforts in the Blantyre / Hamilton Network yielded a heartwarming Back-to-School Event at the Hillhouse and Earnock Community Centre. This event equipped 189 parents and 317 children with essential items for the school year, including uniforms, PE kits, shoes, stationery, water bottles, accessories, and toiletries. Notably, 29 children also received complimentary haircuts on the day, making it a truly inclusive and supportive community endeavor.



189
PARENTS AND
317 CHILDREN
EQUIPPED AT
BACK-TO-SCHOOL
EVENT



5505
PEOPLE
ATTENDED
HILLHOUSE AND
BURNBANK
COMMUNITY
HUBS



10 VOLUNTEERS
COMPLETED REHIS
FOOD HYGIENE
CERTIFICATION



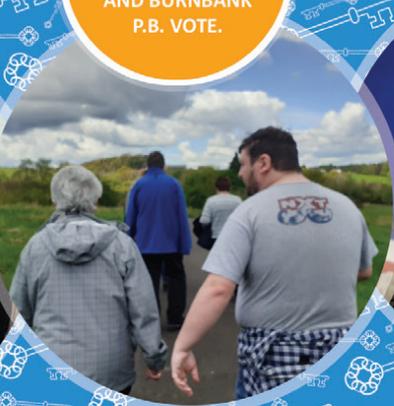
11 CLIENTS
TOOK PART IN
SLOW-COOKING
PILOT



A RECORD 1649
PEOPLE VOTED IN
HILLHOUSE, UDSTON
AND BURNBANK
P.B. VOTE.



PROJECT PROPOSALS
APPROVED BY LOCAL
PEOPLE RECEIVED
£69,259



DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

SELECT PROJECT

Our SELECT Project (Supporting Employment and Learning by Empowering Communities in Technology) continues its commitment to aiding our community members in harnessing the Internet's potential. It's a dynamic tool that bolsters both employability and financial prowess, while also broadening the scope of online-only opportunities. Our accessible SELECT Digital Hubs, conveniently stationed in Blantyre, Hillhouse, and Burnbank, are completely open to all on a drop-in basis.

Within these hubs, a personalised experience awaits our clients. Our dedicated team- along with the help of trained volunteers- provides one-on-one assistance tailored to individual needs. Be it crafting a compelling CV, embarking on a job search, navigating the intricacies of job applications, mastering email essentials, unravelling the complexities of Universal Credit, or refining journal entries, we're here to ensure each step is successful.



RE:CONNECT- ICT BUDDY PROJECT

Re:connect enriches lives by providing refurbished ICT equipment to individuals and organisations referred through partners. It aligns with digital engagement and the circular economy, both pivotal pillars of our work.

Nominations from 8 partners and 5 schools drove impact. With a significant donation from South Lanarkshire Council's Youth Employability Service, 55 devices reached 121 beneficiaries.

Our in-house Digital Champions ensure not only device delivery but also repairs, maintenance, and personalised training. Re:Connect symbolises community through technology, embodying sustainability and digital empowerment.

SOCIAL MARKETING

HAMILTON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FORUM

We are proud to announce the continuation of our Service Level Agreement in collaboration with NHS Lanarkshire's Hamilton Health and Social Care Forum, marking its fifteenth year.

The Forum's attendance has increased, with those actively involved in Health and Social Care issues that affect our local communities. We continue to promote the use of Positive Pathways for Mental Health and Wellbeing, distributing over 1,500 booklets, with electronic copies also available, since the launch in May 2020. The positive response to this resource has led to interest from other NHS regions, as they adopt our template and approach to extend its reach.

This year's notable achievement was the collaborative effort with Healthy and Active to reinstate the East Kilbride Forum. The re-established forum is now operational and garnering positive feedback from local residents and community organisations alike.

For more information on the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Locality Forums, please visit: www.slhscp.org.uk/info/10/get_involved



POSITIVE SMOKE-FREE ROLE MODELS

In January, we welcomed a new addition to our team, infusing fresh perspectives into this remarkable project as it enters its final year. As we advance, our focus remains on recruiting Positive Smoke Free Organisations and Champions to address the unique needs of our communities. The insights brought by our new team members play a crucial role in delivering vital messages about second-hand smoke and reducing the visibility of smoking.

Our project is now a wellspring of knowledge, offering a comprehensive range of resources. We're providing both online and in-person training sessions, empowering individuals to make informed and positive choices. Additionally, we are working diligently to equip parents and community members with the tools to support the decisions of young people navigating challenging choices.

Since January, our efforts have resulted in meaningful engagement with a diverse range of individuals. We've successfully garnered sign-ups from Positive Smoke Free Role models and have provided training for peer mentors within youth clubs across South Lanarkshire.

THANK YOU!

We want to express a huge "THANK YOU" to the wonderful individuals, organisations, and generous supporters who have been by our side as partners. Your ongoing support, contributions, and dedication mean the world to us, and it's because of you that we can make such a positive impact on our communities.

OUR FUNDERS



OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

South Lanarkshire Council | Community Engagement Team
Money Matters | South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture | SCVO
VASLan | Third Sector Chief Officer's Group
NHS Lanarkshire | Scottish Fire and Rescue
Police Scotland | Hamilton Health and Social Care Forum
Remploy | Hamilton C.A.B. | Hamilton District Foodbank
Dunns Food and Drinks | Buchanan McPherson Colour Printers
ASDA Hamilton and Blantyre Community Champions | ASDA Foundation
Kilbryde and Co. | Tesco Hillhouse | FareShare | Warburtons
Barry Douglas Home Bakery | G Buchanan & Sons Butchers
Gilmour and Whitehill Parish Church | Hillhouse Parish Church
The Harvest Church, Hamilton | Church at the Cross, Larkhall
The Volunteers of Burnbank Community Hub
The Volunteers of Hillhouse Community Hub
The Volunteers of Larkhall Community Network
Larkhall Lighthouse | Larkhall Community Growers | LDVG | The Haven

YOUR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

A heartfelt shout-out to all the incredible individuals who have dedicated their time to volunteer in their communities. Your immeasurable contributions never cease to amaze us. Your dedication, passion, boundless energy, and empathy serve as a true inspiration to all of us at Community Links. We aim to mirror your commitment, and we can't thank you enough.



I AM A VOLUNTEER
TEAM COMM LINKS



facebook.com/CommunityLinksSL



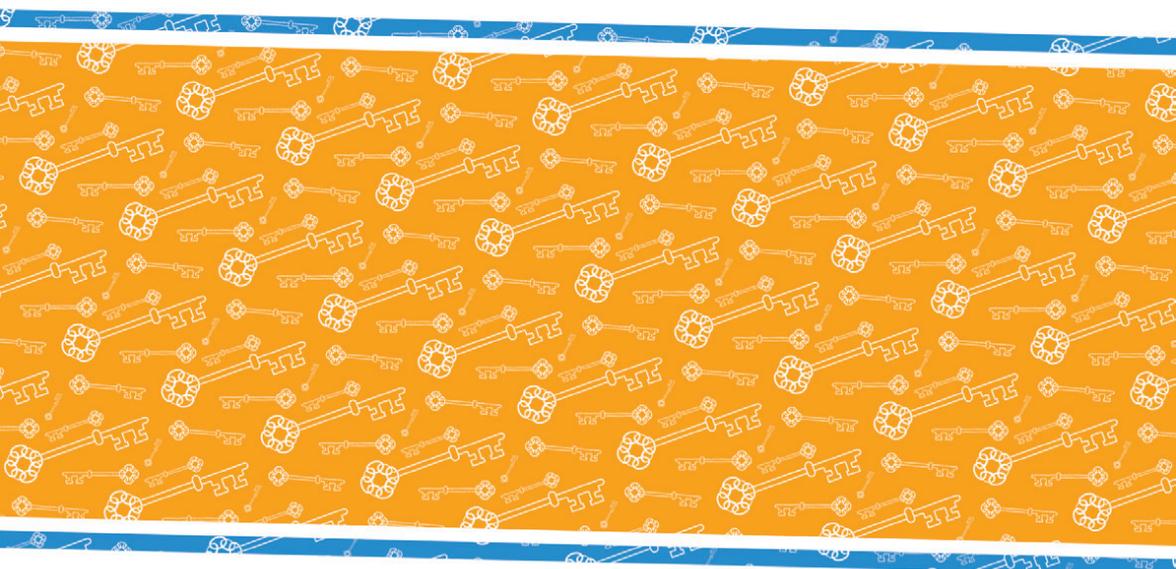
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instagram.com/CommunityLinksSL



youtube.com/CommunityLinksSL



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Regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).