

# COMMUNITY SPACE PROGRESS REPORT: OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2019

An Operational Information Update on Early Stage Facilitation of The Community Space facility

**Report From:** Cornerstone House Centre

**Report To:** Antonine Shopping Centre

**Date:** December 2019

**Purpose:** To provide an update on usage and progress of The Community Space facility at Unit 14 of Antonine Shopping Centre during the period October-November 2019

## 1 0 LATEST COMMUNITY SPACE DEVELOPMENTS AND ACTIVITY

As specified in the August-September 2019 report, Cornerstone House Centre has undertaken facilitation of a dedicated Community Space facility within Antonine Shopping Centre since Thursday 1 August 2019. A report on the initial two months of operation highlighted successful statistics and information in terms of early stage facility usage, feedback and impact.

Further progression, development and expansion of the services provided from The Community Space have taken place during October-November 2019, led by Cornerstone House Centre with the support of partner agencies and the wider community. The following key Community Space activities and developments can be documented for the reporting period:

### Extended Opening Hours and Increased Volunteer Involvement ↻

As previously highlighted, Cornerstone House Centre designed a model which involves The Community Space opening hours in the main being covered by trained volunteers, supported by a member of staff. The team of six Volunteer Community Space Assistants has now been increased to eight Volunteer Community Space Assistants, with the new volunteers recruited and trained during the period October-November 2019.

Following an initial three-day per week (9 hour) operational schedule during August-September 2019, opening hours were extended in October 2019 and are now designated as every **Monday from 12noon-4.00pm, Thursday from 12noon-6.00pm, Friday from 12noon-4.00pm** and **Saturday from 10.00am-1.00pm** (17 hours per week in total). The additional and new hours were implemented upon feedback from service users and a desire to make the space available at more times in which children and families are likely to be free and visiting the Antonine Shopping Centre.

In particular, opening on a Saturday has enabled the facility to become available to a new cohort of service users, with excellent feedback received from families and individuals visiting at the weekend.

### Additional Partnership and Service Provision from Community-Focussed Organisations ⇨

One significant development during the reporting period has been a notable increase in the utilisation of The Community Space by relevant external community service providers. Charitable organisations such as North Lanarkshire Disability Forum and Cancer Research UK, who initially took up information stall space within the facility in August 2019, increased their presence and time spent promoting valuable services from The Community Space during October and November 2019.

One excellent addition has been the introduction of social enterprise charity Tool Library Cumbernauld to The Community Space. The organisation has an overarching aim of reducing the waste that is sent to landfill by encouraging people to borrow items that are infrequently used, providing low and zero waste products locally and raising awareness of waste issues and solutions.

As part of their activity, Tool Library Cumbernauld has from The Community Space been able to provide quality tools and equipment for a range of purposes, including DIY, gardening, crafts, sports and kitchen usage, with local citizens able to join the Tool Library for an annual fee and borrow equipment throughout the year. Low and zero waste household products, such as refills of washing-up liquid and hand soap, have also been available to buy through visiting The Community Space as a result.

Furthermore, a successful large Superhero Fair weekend was also coordinated from The Community Space on 9-10 November 2019. This involved several trading individuals and organisations selling merchandise related to Marvel Comics, with this event attracting many new visitors and local citizens to the premises.

### Core Activities and Community Space Provision ⇨

The primary and most popular feature of The Community Space continues to be a dedicated 'Ping Pong Parlour', an innovation providing four table tennis tables and relevant equipment, enabling anyone to drop in and play table tennis for free. Since the previous reporting period, some new table-top games, including air hockey, have also been added. The Space also continues to successfully incorporate a 'Light Bites Station' where visitors can have a seat and buy tea, coffee, refreshments and snacks at affordable prices

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## FACILITY USAGE AND STATISTICS FOR OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2019

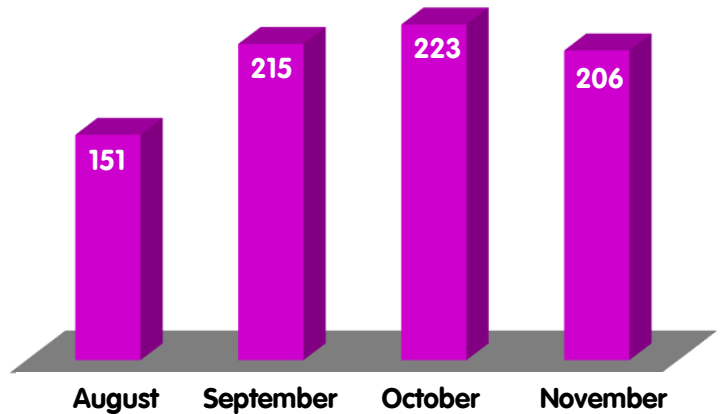
Between Tuesday 1 October 2019 and Saturday 30 November 2019, The Community Space facility was open a total of **35 days** (four days per week), servicing **149 hours** in total. On some of the opening days, hours were extended to enable service users to enjoy usage of the facility for additional time. Volunteers are trained to ensure that flexibility and fairness of opening hours is administered, so that children and families in particular receive the maximum benefit and an optimum experience when visiting.

During October-November 2019, each visitor to The Community Space was asked to complete a bespoke Community Space Visitor Information Form, as highlighted in the August-September 2019 update report. This enabled Cornerstone House Centre to be able to monitor visitor information and footfall within The Community Space, as well as gathering useful contact information with a view to increasing communication channels between the organisation and service users for community purposes.

**Chart 2.1** outlines that the number of visitors to The Community Space has been positive and consistent during October-November 2019, with a total of **429 recorded visitors** during this period. Higher numbers in October 2019 can be attributed to the mid-term school holiday week.

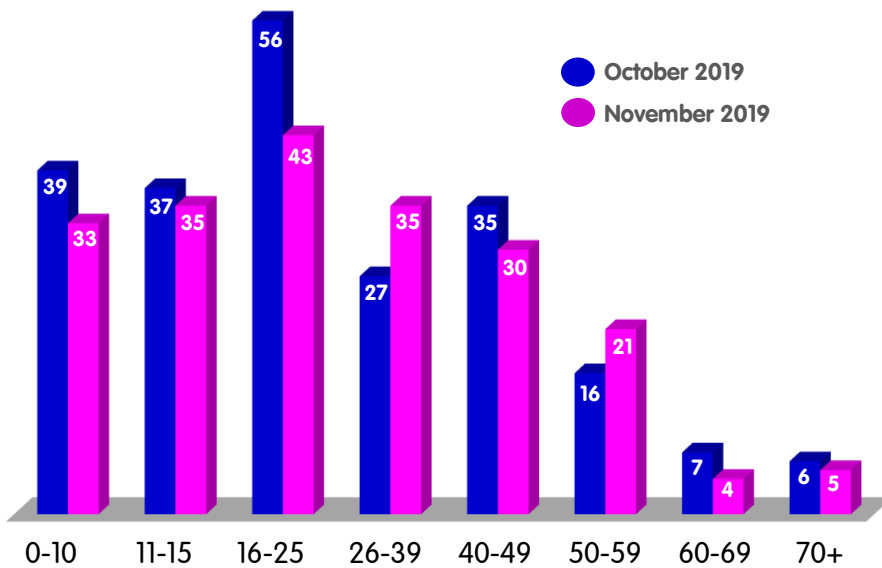
As before, since this information did not always include the details of younger children, it can be estimated that at least 100 more people accessed the facility without completing a Visitor Information Form during the reporting period. As such, it can reasonably be estimated that an average of **15 service users** visited, utilised or accessed the facility each opening day, with the busiest days in general being on a Monday and Saturday.

**2.1. Number of Visitors to Community Space (2019)**



The age breakdown of those visiting The Community Space during October-November 2019 is illustrated in **Chart 2.2**. Significantly, the highest proportion of service users came from the 16-25 years age bracket, with

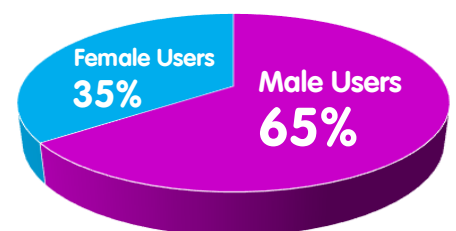
**2.2. Age Breakdown of Community Space Users Oct-Nov 2019**



this group accounting for 23% of all visitors. Overall, there was a very healthy spread and balance of visitors across all age categories under the age of 60, indicating that the facility is achieving real success in appealing to citizens across the age spectrum. Additionally, it was noticeable that there was a more even distribution of usage by adults alone relative to adults with children and children or young people alone than there had been during August-September 2019.

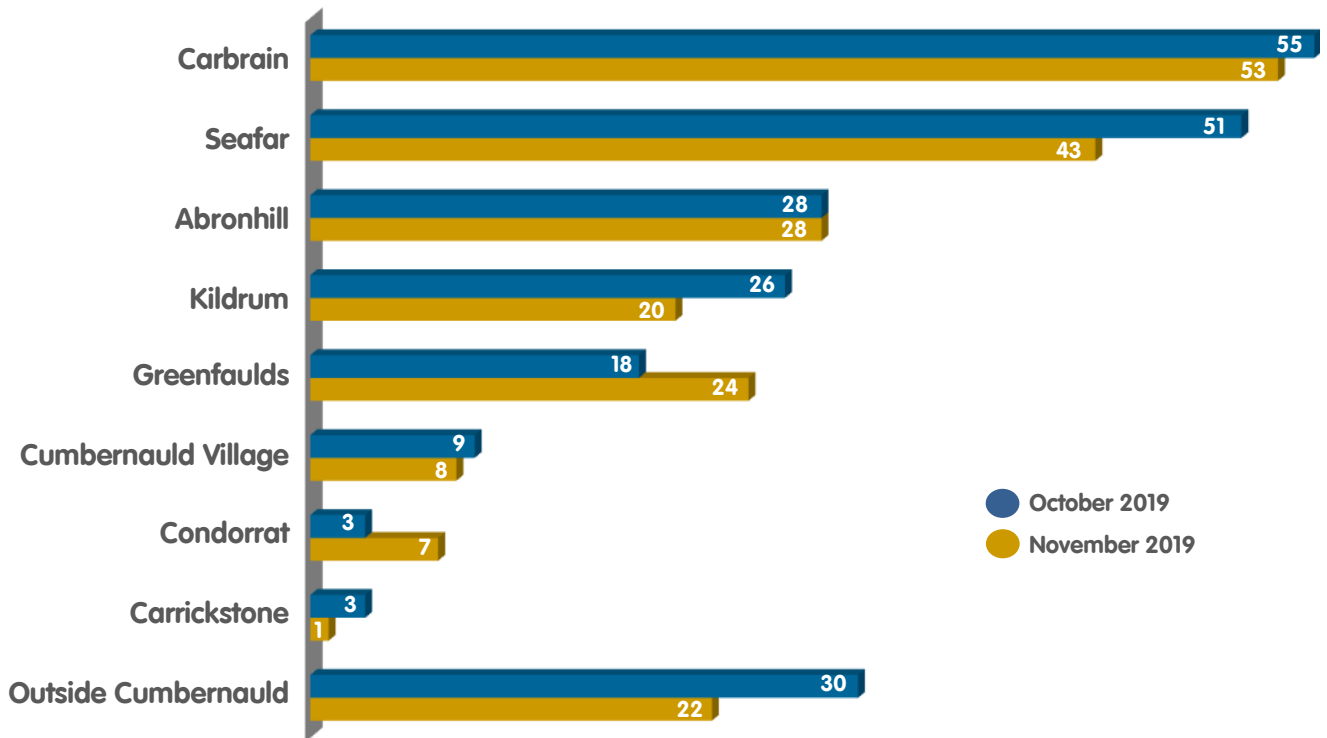
Consistent and in alignment with the statistics presented for August-September 2019, **Chart 2.3** illustrates that almost two-thirds of service users were male (65%). It is difficult at face value to pinpoint one primary reason for higher usage by males than females, although the table tennis and table top games element could arguably be more popular in attracting males than females. Over the coming period, as part of its monitoring and improvement activity, Cornerstone House Centre intends to consult with male and female users with a view to ascertaining their central reason for visitation.

**2.3. Gender Breakdown of Community Space Users October-November 2019**



A breakdown of statistics in relation to the areas in which visitors to The Community Space lived is presented in **Chart 2.4** below. Within the Cumbernauld area, neighbourhoods with the most visitors to the facility during October-November 2019 were **Carbrain, Seafar** and **Abronhill**, as has been the case since August 2019.

**2.4. Community Space Users by Locality Area During October-November 2019**



It remains evident that The Community Space is being accessed the most by people living in areas which experience higher levels of deprivation, with less visitors recorded from more affluent outskirts areas of the town. In particular, many who have visited from Carbrain and Seafar have commented that having such a facility available free of charge and centrally in Cumbernauld has enhanced the health and wellbeing of their family. Indeed, a number of service users have remarked that they are unable to afford the prices of other local activities and opportunities, such as those provided from The Tryst Sports Centre.

There continues to be a strong proportion of people from outside the Cumbernauld area accessing The Community Space, with the highest proportion of these visiting during school holidays or at the weekend.

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**SUMMARY OF PROGRESS AND FUTURE PLANS**

While much of the logistics of setting up and launching consumed some of the first two months of delivery, it is apparent that The Community Space has made real strides forward in establishing itself as a recognisable, highly respected and impactful community facility during the months of October-November 2019. This owes a great deal to focussed and increased networking, promotion, opening hours and commitment from volunteers.

In the space of just four months, Cornerstone House Centre and Antonine Shopping Centre have worked together to transform a large vacant town centre unit from a dormant site into a vibrant hive of community activity. Indeed, approximately 80 people per week are now engaging in fitness, socialising, volunteering, enterprise, promotion, activity groups and much more within the facility. Month on month, organisations which hire space and facilities within Cornerstone House Centre's main operational base (at 1 Esk Walk) are expressing increasing interest in being involved in and providing services from The Community Space, a testimony to the growing profile of facility.

Cornerstone House Centre facilitated a recent positive meeting with key officers from NHS Lanarkshire with a view to Health and Social Care North Lanarkshire coordinating a regular operational presence from The Community Space as of January 2020. This is likely to involve key health campaigns being promoted, dedicated breastfeeding space being made available and more health-focussed charities providing opportunities and information from The Community Space. Further information in relation to this will be provided in the next monitoring report submitted.

With an infrastructure and operational framework now tested and firmly in place, it is anticipated that even greater benefits and community impact of The Community Space can be reaped in 2020 as the initiative continues to grow and develop. As such, and with a range of mutual benefits and future opportunities easily identifiable, Cornerstone House Centre is keen to extend its partnership agreement with Antonine Shopping Centre into the coming calendar year.

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