



Carluke Churches
Youth Project
"Investing in young people"

Youth and family centre:
37 Stewart Street
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Opening hours:
10am – 9pm Mon-Fri
10am – 4pm Sat

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*Street Level is an
ecumenical project
established and supported
by the Carluke churches:*

St Athanasius' RC Church
Forest Kirk
Kirkton Church
Kirkstyle Baptist Church
United Reformed Church

*Street Level is supported
by funding from Choices,
the churches community
shop, Hamilton Street,
Carluke*

Charity No: SC022006
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THE NEWS ON THE STREET

Newsletter

Advent 2025

Award Winning Project at Street Level!

Laura's work with our young people in the community gardens has received the Royal Horticultural Society Keep Scotland Beautiful award for Gardening with Young People.

Our Grafters Gardening project aims to engage local young people in meaningful outdoor and community-based activities by working across various green spaces and community gardens within the town.



The project targets pupils who struggle to engage in traditional classroom settings due to factors such as mental health challenges, trauma, learning difficulties, or differences. It recognises the therapeutic value of outdoor activity, providing a supportive, flexible environment that encourages participation and achievement without the constraints of conventional learning. Activities are designed with sensory and therapeutic benefits in mind, promoting mental well-being, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, while also developing practical skills in horticulture, garden maintenance, and food preparation.

Participants have been able to gain confidence and self-worth by contributing to their community, mentoring others, and taking part in fundraising efforts. The project runs at the group's own pace, allowing pupils to explore personal challenges and discover positive coping mechanisms through structured yet adaptable activities. Many sessions involve physical tasks and teamwork, including basic training in the use and care of hand tools. The groups' efforts will contribute towards earning a John Muir Award, celebrated in a ceremony attended by participants' families. Overall, the project seeks to improve participants' mental health, emotional resilience, and behaviour while reducing anti-social tendencies and improving school attendance and attainment. It provides a calm, supportive alternative to the classroom, encouraging reflection on social issues and reinforcing that young people are valuable contributors to their communities. By promoting positive engagement, respect for nature, and community pride, the initiative will help to create healthier, happier, and safer communities.

In addition to these regular groups there have also been taster garden sessions and exciting activities during school holidays, encouraging young people to spend time outdoors, explore, connect with nature, and develop new skills.

Choices gets King's Award

Choices charity shop has supported Street Level for over 30 Years with regular donations totaling over £600,000.

The shop is run entirely by volunteers who give up their time to help their community. Opened by the town's churches in 1993, it has had sales of over £1.2 million.

This November, a press release from Buckingham Palace said Choices shop in Carluke has been honoured with the Kings Award for voluntary service. This is the highest recognition a local voluntary organisation can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an MBE.

The Street Level Management Team, the staff and all our young people who over the years have benefited from the generosity of Choices would like to say a massive thank you to all of the volunteers and those who have made this shop such a long-term success.

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*The sun sets over the High Mill
with our Grafters hard at work*

'Evolve' Girls Become Co-Researchers in PhD Photovoice Project about Sexual Consent

I am a PhD candidate at the University of Strathclyde and a Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice at UWS. I reached out to Joanna as I wanted young people from Street Level to be involved in my project about sexual consent education and was delighted that she and a group of young leaders were enthusiastic about being a part of this.

People have a lot of things to say about sexual consent and sex education. We can see this in the news and conversations with parents. On one hand we can see a growing concern around gender-based violence and content we are exposed to online, but equally a panic around what schools are teaching and whether it exposes them to education about sex too young. My research highlights that sex education safeguards our young people, empowering them with knowledge and skills to navigate an ever more complex world with increasing levels of peer pressure to do things they don't want to do.

Lost in this panic and debate are the voices of young people themselves. This is what my project aimed to address. I wanted to give an opportunity to discuss how people their age understand and navigate this in their everyday lives, and what they really think about sex education in schools.

'Nicola', 'Lyla', 'Lucy' and 'Rachel' (pseudo-anonymised) were given a role of co-researcher rather than participants. Rather than just being observed or interviewed, they played an active role in shaping this project and making decisions about its direction. We used photography and creative methods to explore the topic, which captured questions they created as relevant to this issue. I was so impressed with their dedication and insight.

Although early in our analysis, some key findings and themes are emerging. Notably, young people want more, and more depth of discussion around sex and consent.



"Definitely looks like somewhere they definitely try and rape someone"
Nicola

We are now organising the final stage of the project where we will showcase our photos and findings to an audience. This audience will include more young people, as well as hopefully some teachers, local MSPs and advocacy workers. We hope that those of you working at Street Level will join us on Thursday 29th January 4.30pm-6pm to find out more!

Thank you again to my co-researchers. It has genuinely been a pleasure to work with you on this project!

Suzanne Gallacher - Graham

Thoughts from the year

Fiona writes ...

I've been involved with Street Level for almost two years now. Moving from volunteering to a staff role has allowed me to take a more active part in supporting the centre. I feel more confident contributing ideas and taking on additional responsibilities, for example covering other groups when needed. It's been rewarding to be trusted with more responsibility and to feel part of a team that makes a difference in the lives of the young people we support. I'm constantly motivated by the resilience, creativity, and positivity that the young people show, even when faced with challenges. Seeing them progress and grow in confidence makes working with Street Level incredibly rewarding.

I've had many highlights over the past year - it would be difficult to choose just one. However, the most notable highlight from this year has to be the P7 Sponsored Stay Awake earlier this year. The young people were incredible; they raised an amazing amount of money, took on challenges and games with great enthusiasm, and kept the energy high all night (while the staff relied heavily on caffeine!). It was a memorable event, and the funds raised went back into creating more fun experiences and trips for them.

Additionally, getting to know the new P7s who join us at the Drop-In is always a highlight. It's great to see them settle in, make new friends, take part in activities and trips, and grow in confidence throughout the year. Watching their development and later their preparation and transition to high school is one of the most rewarding parts of this role.



Joanna reflects ...

This year has been an exciting one for us at Street Level, marked by growth and positive change. Thanks to some unexpected additional funding, we were able to continue valuable work that might otherwise have come to an end. One of the new projects made possible through this support is the Grafters Gardening Groups reported elsewhere.

The impact of the additional funding is already clear. We're seeing stronger engagement from young people, new partnerships forming, and a wider range of opportunities emerging. It's been inspiring to watch participants grow in confidence, get more involved, and make the most of what's on offer.

We also welcomed new staff members, bringing fresh energy, creativity, and enthusiasm to the team. As always, new projects and faces come with a learning curve, but everyone has shown great adaptability, teamwork, and commitment. In addition, one of our volunteers, Sophie, successfully completed her student placement with us. After achieving her HNC in Social Services, she's taking a short break from volunteering but hopes to return in the future—well done, Sophie!

After speaking with some of the young people about their highlights from the last year, a few of them mentioned outings in the Summer programme, especially the day trip to Blackpool, which was possible thanks to the unexpected donation from NFU Mutual. A lot of them also said that Street Level is just a great place to come with friends and get to know new people and feel safe. It's been a very busy but rewarding year, and while there's always more to learn, we can be proud of the progress we've made.