

Easterhouse Phoenix

Easterhouse Phoenix Development recognises their ability to utilise the power of sport and physical activity to positively change the lives of local people. Each activity facilitated by Easterhouse Phoenix aims to empower local people in decision making roles which promotes physical, mental, and social wellbeing opportunities for the community. Accessible and affordable provision of activity is deliberately designed to remove inequality barriers and in particular socio-economic constraints to activity access. Easterhouse Phoenix provide an inclusive environment in their repurposed Library which has been intentionally created to welcome residents, ensuring that local people view this space as theirs.

History and Background

In the past Easterhouse was known as one of the most notorious housing estates in Europe. It was built between the 1950s -70s initially as part of post-war inner city slum clearances which aimed to change the social and physical character of the city. Its notoriety came from the violent gang culture that develop over a number of years as the different areas were built resulting in territorialism. This led to a violent gang culture. Easterhouse was known as a battlefield. Poverty, poor infrastructure (no schools or shops were included in the planning), inadequately built and maintained housing and a lack of local investment and employment opportunities all contributed towards its decline.



Richard McShane Founder of Phoenix

Richard grew up in Easterhouse and has lived here for over 40 years. He has lived in Easterhouse at its worse and at its best. Realising that the community was struggling with a wide variety of problems, Richard wanted to help change it. Richard wanted ‘the people of Easterhouse to be listened to...not talked at and dictated to. For too long people parachuted into Easterhouse to tell its residents what they needed rather than listen to what they wanted. The people who are best

placed to make decisions about Easterhouse are the people who live here, who understand the problems that are faced on a daily basis and the challenges that this brings’.

2012 marked a landmark with Glasgow City Council when Richard acquired the key for the derelict library which was due for demolition suffering years of damage and neglect requiring considerable investment and resource.

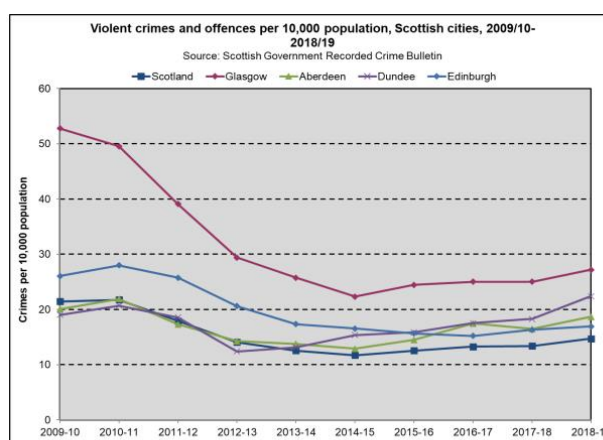


The Aim of Phoenix

The original aim was to open a centre that would focus on the vulnerable, deprived, excluded, marginalised and hardest to reach residents within Easterhouse. The primary objective of the Phoenix Centre would be to provide a facility with resources, services and activities that would assist in the wider regeneration of Easterhouse by enhancing the quality of people’s lives, increasing economic activity, reducing poverty and other forms of deprivation, improving resident’s health, reducing levels of crime and anti-social behaviour thereby addressing and changing the overall capacity of the community and its population.

An aspirational vision from the start was that “The Phoenix Community and Opportunity Centre would aim to combat gang/territorial violence, underage drinking, drug use and anti social behaviour among the youth in the area by providing a comprehensive range of diversionary activities which appeal to young people providing discreet links to enhancing life.”

To help work towards this aim Richard set up the first Community Council in the area which worked closely with local residents, councillors and the Police. During this 8 year period the police regularly reported that gang violence was reducing which is in line with the city wide data.



The level of acquisitive crime^{xxx} has decreased significantly in the last 12 years in Glasgow. Since a peak of 27,500 incidents in 2011/12, the number of recorded acquisitive crimes in Glasgow has fallen by 35%, to just below 18,000 incidents in 2018/19.

Easterhouse Today

Easterhouse Phoenix Development is a charity which successfully operates a community centre in one of the most deprived areas of Scotland. 80% of the people involved with the running of the centre and its activities are volunteers.

The aim is to create a culture of healthy bodies and healthy minds. These are interlinked and play a major part in our holistic approach to improving the lives of those who come through our doors. They aim to provide a community centre that is the focus for the community and plays a major role in the regeneration of the wide community by guiding, supporting and nurturing people of all ages, engendering a true sense of community.

The **impact** can be illustrated through the changed lives of participants. Example case studies links below highlight only a few of the thousands that have passes through the doors since it opened, showing the positive impact on people. ‘Everyone needs a purpose that Phoenix can give to make changes’.

What challenges do people in Easterhouse face in 2023?

The **Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)** looks at the extent to which an area is deprived across seven domains: **income, employment, education, health, access to services, crime and housing**. It is the Scottish Government's standard approach to identify areas of multiple deprivation in Scotland. It can help improve understanding about the outcomes and circumstances of people living in the most deprived areas in Scotland. It can also allow effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation.

SIMD decile 1 is denoted in dark red, decile 2 in orange, deciles 7+8 are blue (these are St Benedicts, The Platform/Library, Police Station, Swimming Baths, Kelvin College and The Circle)



A study in 2017 stated that lone parent households account for 17% of households in Easterhouse, compared with 9% of households across the city. In addition, there are slightly less older people, with 11% of local people aged 65 years or older, compared with 14% city-wide. Life expectancy is also much lower in Easterhouse than other areas of Glasgow and significantly different from most of the rest of Scotland. On average men in Easterhouse can expect to live to around 64 – 68 years old while the women's average is 67 – 72. This is 10% lower than the national average. Research from 2021 showed that premature mortality in Glasgow is 30% higher than in other UK cities with comparable socioeconomic status.

What Easterhouse Phoenix Community Centre currently Offers.

Badminton, Body Pump, Boxing, Chair Yoga, Cycling, Fencing, Fishing, Karate, Men@Phoenix, Over 60's Club, Pickleball, Table Tennis, Weight Training, Women's Support Group, Walking, Yoga

Cycling

At Easterhouse Phoenix volunteers find out what people like/want and then try and provide access to the sport or activity at minimal cost and where possible for free. Providing up to 3 led cycle rides a week, 1:1 lessons and classes for 3-7's teaching them to cycle. They have over 30 adult bikes and around 15 that are suitable for children/teens, helmets and waterproofs. They try to ensure that there are no barriers to participation. This means that everyone has the opportunity to take part in

some form of physical activity. Cycling is one of the many routes to fitness on offer positively contributing to good mental health, reducing anxiety, helping combat depression and increasing social interaction.

Read how Eric, a devoted volunteer, found the Phoenix Centre which changed his life. Living with constant depression, pain, and unable to find medication which works; Eric in his worst moments considered taking his own life.

<https://sportfirst.sportscotland.org.uk/articles/the-gift-of-life/>

Boxing



Boxing has traditionally been a sport that is linked with low-income, working-class areas, so it is unsurprising that the boxing club flourishes at Phoenix. By getting some young people off the streets and actively engaged in boxing they help reduce anti-social behaviour. Currently attracting over 650 members (male and female) some participate for strength building, high intensity cardio work but some have succeeded to become amateur boxers.

‘In addition to the physical benefits, boxing is a great way to reduce stress levels and improve overall mental health. It can also boost confidence and self-esteem. Studies show that boxing also helps decrease anxiety and depression – all very real problems in Easterhouse’.

Men@Phoenix

The Easterhouse Phoenix Men’s Club aims to overcome social barriers within the community, by using activity to reduce loneliness, isolation and promote positive mental wellbeing. Weekly sessions incorporate refreshments and a range of low-impact activities such as Table Tennis, Carpet Bowls, and much more.

Sessions are sustained by attendees providing a donation, rather than a fixed cost. This has been developed on purpose to ensure that sessions are affordable and enables everybody to participate regardless of socio-economic constraints.

‘These sessions have provided an escape for many participants from the daily grind on the estate, the activities and social element support members to feel better about themselves, meet new people and experience new opportunities’.

To read more about the Men’s Club and its impact, click on the link below.

<https://sportfirst.sportscotland.org.uk/articles/phoenix-nights/>



Attendances

| | Youth Male | | Youth Female | | Adult Male | | Adult Female | |
|-----------------|------------|------|--------------|------|------------|------|--------------|------|
| | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 | 2022 | 2023 |
| Boxing | 267 | | 26 | 35 | 175 | 352 | 41 | 65 |
| Table Tennis | 5 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 15 | 21 | 3 | 5 |
| Cycling | 5 | 24 | 1 | 8 | 25 | 45 | 10 | 25 |
| Weight Training | 0 | 4 | 0 | 6 | | 31 | | 6 |
| Yoga | 0 | 12 | 0 | 15 | | 14 | | 42 |
| Men's Club | 0 | | 0 | | | 73 | | 0 |
| Chair Yoga | | | | | | 62 | | 210 |

Funding Support

To support this development over the years Easterhouse Phoenix have received a range of substantial investments to improve their home and services. Highlighted key investments include:

- **sportscotland** – Facility Fund
 - £42,000 (contribution)
 - Supporting the renovation and upgrade to facility.
 - Sourced additional £21,000 to match fund **sportscotland** which installed heating.
- Glasgow City Council 'Communities Fund'
 - 2020-2023
 - £160,000
 - Supporting utilities, salaries, and core costs.
 - 2023-2026
 - £197,604
 - Supporting utilities, salaries, and core costs.
- Glasgow Life
 - Sport and Physical Activity Fund
 - Various awards between £500 - £2,000
- Easterhouse Community Sport Hub
 - Supporting projects and training under the following themes: health and wellbeing, inclusion, community, and creating a stronger Community Sport Hub
 - Easterhouse Community Sport Hub funds range between £1,000 - £5,000 per annum. Easterhouse Phoenix are entitled to a share of funding to support activity.
 - National Lottery – Awards for All allocated share of £2,670
- Cycling Scotland
 - £19,000 to purchase disability bikes.
 - £7,360 to purchase safety equipment and bikes.

Partners

Easterhouse Phoenix are privileged to work with a number of partners, these include:

- Glasgow Life
- Scottish Cycling
- Easterhouse Community Sports Hub
- Badminton Scotland
- Pickleball Scotland
- Table Tennis Scotland
- Cycling Scotland
- Cycling UK
- Glasgow Kelvin College
- Sported
- Alliance Scotland Ltd
- Seven Lochs
- Basketball Scotland
- YoGlasgow
- Scottish Fencing
- Boxing Scotland
- Glasgow Golden Generation
- Local Schools
- Street Football