

Strathblane Community Action Plan 2011

Our Community Profile

Bonnie Blane, unchanged forever! Blessings on thee, modest river!

So wrote the Victorian poet Thomas Thorpe. Yet the history of the community along the banks of the Blane Burn is as much about change as continuity. In the 19th Century the parish of Strathblane was changed out of all recognition by industrialisation and the Blanefield Calico Printworks, employing 500 men, women and children. In the mid-20th Century extensive housing development transformed the area again, as families were drawn from Glasgow by the prospect of a better life beyond the urban fringe.

What next?

Today the merged communities of Strathblane and Blanefield, strung out on either side of the A81, five miles north of Milngavie, against the dramatic backdrop of the Campsie Hills, boast a population of nearly 2,500, from newborn babies to sprightly nonagenarians. It is a popular place to live and the resultant house prices make it difficult to meet local housing needs.

More than 60% of residents are employed full or part-time or self-employed and approximately 16% are retired, a percentage that is likely to rise. Though many residents commute into Glasgow for work, our community is anything but a sleepy dormitory village. Nearly 30 active organisations are listed on the village website (strathblanefield.org.uk), ranging from the Fun Hut for toddlers to the Senior Citizens' Club, and including a thriving Gardening Club and a Heritage Society.

We value the good range of shops, including a chemist. There is also a bank and a Post Office, as well as a Primary School, Library and Doctors' surgery. We have Mugdock Country Park & a Conservation Area for the Carbeth Huts.

What changes will the 21st Century bring? Are there deficiencies that should be tackled? What opportunities do we have to make our community even more lively, harmonious, sustainable and prosperous for future generations?

Our Plan

The development of our Community Action Plan was managed by a partnership between Strathblane Community Council and Strathblanefield Community Development Trust, with guidance from Stirling Council.

This is an organic plan that will evolve and change over time. As a community, we all want to conserve and build upon, what we like best about life in our village.

The process of development and consultation lasted over a year, from summer 2009 until August 2011. During this period a considerable number of people gave their views through, focus groups, questionnaires, local events and commenting on specific proposals (in a like it/hate it manner).

The plan identifies some actions. Some of these will be practical and feasible to be implemented sooner than others. Some are only exploratory in nature, and will require further consultation and development if they are to proceed at all.

This plan has been developed at the same time as considerable consultation has taken place in parallel on the Main Issues Report for Stirling Council's Local Development Plan. These are two wholly different processes. Neither consultation has found any appetite for major changes or expansion of the villages.

The actions identified are modest in scale, and are set out on the middle pages, together with an indication of which bodies might lead the effort. They are grouped into six main areas for focus and possible future development:

1. The natural environment and green space
2. Sustainability
3. Built environment
4. Community involvement
5. Communication and information
6. Health care services

The partnership would like to encourage all groups or volunteers to work with these issues to develop them further in consultation with the wider community.

The Actions

The Community Council (SCC) and Strathblanefield Community Development Trust (SCDT), with advice from Stirling Council (SC), have carried out consultation to identify community priorities over six broad themes. The actions are listed below.

It is hoped that existing groups will take the lead on many of these, with support from SCC or SCDT as appropriate. We will regularly report to the community on progress.

1. Natural Environment

Find out more about the pros and cons for a regional park for the Campsies	SCC/New group
Preserve the natural environment and green belt through the planning system	SCC
Development of safe walking (pavements) and cycling routes around the village to connect to Loch Ardinning, Milngavie, Lennoxton, the West Highland Way and Killearn.	SCDT with Greenheart and Paths Group
Creation of village signage and interpretative map for walkers, visitors and tourists	SCDT

2. Sustainability

Promote and assist local shopping through developing car parking.	SC with SCDT/SCC
Improve public transport to Bearsden/Milngavie and Glasgow	SCC
Develop a car sharing pool	Interested individuals
Creation of an allotment or garden sharing initiative	SCDT Allotment Group
Assess the potential for the development of sustainable energy	SCDT Carbon Neutral Group

3. Built Environment

Prepare and consult on a master plan to influence the redevelopment of the primary school site. This may be an integrated community facility to include the school, meeting space, café, recreation space, library and health facilities	SCDT/SCC
Affordable housing for both young and older people who are downsizing, including sheltered housing.	SCC
A reduction of vehicle speed through the village on the A81 and A891 and improved crossings	SCC /Parent Council

4. Community Communication, Involvement & Participation

Develop and publish a village communication strategy that builds on what we have and is inclusive for all ages.	SCC + new group & interested groups
Develop & support community events such as the gala day, a walk along the water track, folk/pop festival, food festival or craft fairs.	SCDT and local groups
Re-establish the village community association and create a network of influential individuals who could assist local groups develop projects	SCC

5. Employment and Training

Develop an online local business directory and encourage the development of a business network	SCDT
Investigate the prospect of developing small scale business space	SCDT
Investigate the prospect of developing homecare employment opportunities	SCDT
Investigate the feasibility of a music/recording studio for young people	SCDT



6. Healthcare and Services

Influence the health service to continue to improve local services at suitable times to include dental services and physiotherapy. Improve communication about improved/enhanced services.	SCC/GPs
Improved homecare services	SC
Development of whole life housing to enable people to remain in their own homes/community for longer	SCC
Develop opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle	SCDT/Parent Council

Consultations & Findings

The partners commissioned a survey and a report to seek the opinions of our community. The report is available in full on the village website (CDT pages), along with other information. See

<http://www.strathblanefield.org.uk>

The report established that the vast majority of respondents like living in the area (96%).

The key priorities identified from the 287 survey responses were:-

- **Improvement of public transport**
 - 89% of respondents indicated that this was either very or fairly important.
- **Improved health services**
 - Local health care facilities and services 75%
- **More facilities for young people**
 - Children's play areas 44%,
 - Facilities for young people 42%
- **Specific improved walking and cycling facilities**
 - The old railway line for walkers and cyclists 72%
 - Paths for walking, cycling, horse riding 63%
- **More social events**
 - Annual summer gala 89%
 - Picnic Barbecue 76%
 - Group walks 67%
- **Reducing speeding traffic/improving safety**
 - Speeding/dangerous traffic 55%
- **A village square or centre/hubs**
 - 70% positive for a square

Action List for Stirling Council

- Address the issue of poor public transport to both Glasgow and Stirling.
 - At least one bus per hour both ways between Strathblane and Glasgow and a direct bus to Stirling
 - Integrated timetabling to avoid long waits for buses at Milngavie
 - through ticketing between Strathblane and Glasgow centre using the train
- Address the issue of speeding traffic through the village
 - Giving priority to pedestrians
 - Provide more safe footways including maintenance of all pavement entrances to the village
- Enable & support development of cycling & walkways
 - from Strathblane to Killearn via the old railway line
 - from Strathblane to Milngavie railway station
 - develop car parking facilities to support local businesses and encourage tourists
- Develop support activities for young people in the village
- Support the village to develop a communication strategy to meet local needs.

Action for Central Scotland Police

- Address the issue of speeding traffic through the village
- Continued High presence of community police
- Work in partnership with SC roads to create safer road designs

Action for the Health Service and Social work (community planning service)

- Develop/Reinstate more local services based on the GP service including
 - Dental
 - Physiotherapy
- Develop more local based home care services
 - Support more older/vulnerable people to stay in their home and receive services at reasonable times
 - Improved homecare services.

We would encourage the Community Planning Partnership to engage in more consultation about services and potentially invite interested residents to discuss the above in more detail.

Actions to be led by the community through various local organisations

While SCC and SCDT are shown as lead organisations to take forward issues while consultation takes place, the most practical step for most actions will be to identify where the initiative can be taken by dedicated community groups and individuals. These groups may be existing groups, who may already have some part of the actions under way. For other actions, new groups & volunteers may come together for the purpose.

- Work with Stirling Council to upgrade walking/cycling and cycling routes including
 - The old railway line
 - Loch Ardinning
 - Milngavie
- Develop more social events in the village for all age groups
- Develop options for more activities for children and young people

There are many more ideas contained in the published documents and in the plan.

Without the will and cooperation of a wide range of volunteers many of the actions proposed may not be completed. The community needs your help!



*Strathblane Community Council
Strathblanefield Community Development Trust
with advice from Stirling Council*

Get in touch – get involved

Would you or your organisation be willing to help with any of the listed actions? Please in the first instance either email the community council (cc@strathblanefield.org.uk) or SCDT (cdt@strathblanefield.org.uk). If you do not have access to email, please pass a message through the Library or any SCC member.