

Strathblanefield Community Action Plan 2011 discussion with CPP

Context: We are commuter villages with rich heritage in a rural setting within wonderful countryside to be cherished. There is a mixed community with a huge range of incomes. We have an enormous challenge to limit and channel change and cater for the needs of the community for future generations but keep our villages within our current envelope and retain the character of our villages.

Plan development and consultation led by SCDT supported by CC

Several elements fed into the development of our plan

Opinion Survey Dec/Jan 2009/10

287 responses but nevertheless provided a sense of what people wanted in our valley, focus group from survey participants developed proposals. These put to residents in like/ it hate it manner at MIR open day and summer fair. Results presented to public meeting August 2010. Plan published January 2011 and comments requested. On advice from Stirling officials we consulted the community again in August 2011 and received 102 responses.

The villages have a good record of volunteering and need help to take forward our plan. Basically we need reassurance that there are strategies and policies in place to assist the villages in taking elements of this plan forward over time so that we don't come up against " we don't have a policy for that".

1. Natural Environment

- Find out about pros and cons of a 'regional park for the Campsies'

Consultation has recently been carried out what are your views on a regional park?

- Preserve the natural environment and Green Belt through the planning system

The Draft Proposed Local development plan is critical here due to the proximity to Glasgow.

- Develop safe walking (pavements) and cycling routes around the village to connect to Loch Ardinning, Milngavie, Lennoxton, the West Highland Way and Killearn.

This is one of our main priority areas that will have a spin off for the health and well being of our community and for our businesses if we can attract more visitors. There are pavements along the A81 but they are not maintained and are overgrown. Is it possible to develop a SAFE community project to do this work with the council weed killing first and continued support by the Council, potentially including insurance; equipment and potential training?

We have a network of footpaths but they don't join up! The railway track which is used by many people needs considerable work to make it possible to walk/cycle

between our villages without going near a road. We have a group (Greenheart) looking at this can you support this group, by providing a point of contact for and advise on funding opportunities? The draft open space strategy and core paths programme appears to be supportive of our aim.

- Creation of interpretative map and village signage for walkers, visitors and tourists.

We are receiving help with this from Richard Barron. What policies and resources do you have to assist local groups?

2. Sustainability

- Promote and assist local shopping through developing car parking.

Our local shops struggle to survive and although many local residents walk there is a lot of passing trade which is lost if cars cannot park close by. Are we able to influence your parking strategy? In some cases better signage would help with the consent of landowners.

- Improve public transport to Milngavie/Bearsden and Glasgow.

We know that you are reviewing subsidised public transport. We want vibrant public transport!

- Develop a car sharing pool.

Can this be promoted on the council's website?

- Creation of an allotment or garden sharing initiative.

Our allotment group has been successful in obtaining £80k to develop allotments; site identification has been contentious in the community. A planning application has recently been submitted.

- Assess the potential for the development of sustainable energy.

This is another contentious issue. Our Carbon Neutral Group received grant funding through the CDT for a feasibility study into local opportunities which has just been published. What plans do you have to generate energy on publically owned buildings? E.g. PV panels on the primary school roof?

3. Built Environment

- Prepare and consult on a plan to influence the redevelopment of the Primary school site. In due course this may be an integrated community facility to include the school, meeting space, café, recreation space, and library and health facilities.

What are your plans for the primary school? Our parent council is becoming increasingly concerned at the state of disrepair of the building and the use of buckets when it rains. We would like to be involved in developing plans for the future. It is important to plan the land use of the area around the school to help us preserve our green space with clear boundaries. For example if the library became part of the school this would give a great site for the Council to build older peoples bungalows.

- Affordable housing for young people, and for older people who are downsizing, including sheltered housing.

The draft proposed local development plan is helpful here. 50% of any new housing must be affordable. We have established a group to establish our local needs through the housing needs strategy. What support have you given other areas to help make this happen?

- A reduction in vehicle speed through the village on the A81 and A891 and for improved crossings.

A study was carried out in 2004, the Atkins report. We want your commitment to continue to implement these improvements and for the police to target speeding motorists, including lorries and mobile phone use. We are keen to explore community use of a speed camera with the appropriate training but this has been rejected so far by Central Scotland Police. We have had such a successful campaign to replace the zebra crossing with a Puffin Crossing that this would really demonstrate that we will not tolerate speeding through our villages.

4. Community Communication, Involvement & Participation

How do you support local groups and how do you know if it works? We have mixed experiences of consultation on issues that affect us; some has been real consultation some has been passing on information to tick a consultation box. How do you intend to proactively consult us?

- Develop and publish a village communication strategy that builds on what we have and is inclusive of age groups are included.

We know the council is redeveloping its website are you considering having links to local websites? Would it be possible for our community website to be included under Your Area of Central Scotland Police Website?

Please will you remind your communication departments that the majority of us don't read the Stirling Observer; please use the Bearsden and Milngavie Herald.

- Develop and support community events such as a gala day, walk along the water track, folk/pop festival, food festival or craft fairs.

Please continue to support the ability of our community groups to seek funding from your funding streams (e.g. community grants) yearly, although it may appear to be a recurring cost, these events represent exceptional value for money in helping to raise funds, supporting a plethora of community groups; health and well-being and importantly community spirit & potentially community cohesion.

- Re-establish the village community association and create a network of influential individuals who could assist local groups develop projects.

5. Employment and Training

- Develop an online local business directory and encourage the development of a business network.

We want to help our local businesses so we are developing this through our local website can this be linked to other sites to give wider exposure? Is there a volunteering strategy for professional services from businesses in Stirling to assist local businesses? How do schools link with businesses to develop entrepreneurial skills and skills' needs for local employers; for example Duke of Edinburgh, Young Enterprise?

- Investigate the prospect of developing business space.

We now that you have been carrying out research into the requirements of rural business. The draft proposed Local Development Plan identifies the Killlearn hospital site for our area though there will be substantial costs to develop this. It also appears to protect losing any current sites to housing.

- Investigate the prospect of developing homecare employment opportunities.

We have an increasing ageing population and a demand for services some of which is hidden due to the help of families and neighbours (common in rural communities). We feel that services could be improved if local people are employed by the public bodies and private care providers. What help can you give us even to get adverts in the right local paper. . Are you promoting these potential employment opportunities within our local high school and could there be opportunity for continued adult learning to help reduce barriers for local people who may wish to move to this employment

- Investigate the feasibility of a music/ recording studio for young people

We are exploring developing facilities for our young people possibly in cooperation with neighbouring villages. We will be exploring funding for a feasibility study. Do you have knowledge of this being done in other parts of Stirling and if so how successful have they been?

6. Healthcare and Services

- Influence the NHS to continue to improve local services at suitable times to include dental services and physiotherapy; and improve communication about improved / enhanced services.

Can you assure us that we can still obtain services from Glasgow hospitals if we choose to do so, including advice and guidance given to our residents when contacting NHS24? We have an excellent local surgery and would like services to continue to expand but patient numbers need to increase. Can you think of ways that patients who moved to other practices when services were not so good could be encouraged to return to their local practice?

- Seek improved homecare services.

This is partly covered above re employment. We have a vibrant lunch club and meals on wheels service. We are in discussion to expand our meals on wheels to 5 days a week and develop a different service to the currently proposed frozen meal service. We need help and support to do this. We also need assistance to develop a volunteer and maintain a volunteer befriending service, including insurance and support to volunteers, including access to localised training.

- Development of whole life housing to enable people to remain in their own homes/community for longer.

This links to item 3 but also planning guidelines in terms of space standards for new homes. What steps are you taking to promote homes for life and adaptations including telecare which may be available to help residents remain in their homes?

- Develop opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle

Does Forth Valley Health board prescribe exercise opportunities rather than medication? Are the schools used to communicate activities like walks organised by public bodies to parents? Are green gyms being developed in the Stirling area? If so how could we be helped to progress this if we are able to generate interest.