



Community Partnership

Supporting Communities in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2014-2019

Strachur & District

Strachur & District Community Action Plan 2014-2019

This Action Plan has been developed with support from Loch Lomond and Trossachs Community Partnership.

It outlines the views of the community on their main likes and dislikes about living in Strachur and District and about what potential projects could enhance life within the community.

Previous Action Plans have been used as evidence provided to potential funders that projects are worth backing and have the support of the community.

Some priorities identified in the previous Action Plan of 2008 have been carried on while some important new issues have been identified to reflect changes in the community over the last few years. We will be working together towards its implementation over the next five years.



Since the publication of Strachur's first Action Plan the following projects have been developed:

- ➔ A Sports Field and Pavilion which is largely used for shinty but also for other activities
- ➔ A Pontoon for both visiting boats and for local craft
- ➔ The development of a recreational area at Heron Park
- ➔ Signage at the garage and at the Bay by the Post Office
- ➔ Lobbying for and the installation of a sewage treatment facility at the Bay
- ➔ Installation of a biomass boiler at the Memorial Hall





OUR COMMUNITY OUR VOICE

This Community Action Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the people of Strachur and its outlying areas which took place between April and August 2014.

Every household in the area was given the opportunity to complete a household survey and in addition a number of interviews were carried out by Community Agent Ceci Alderton.

The village's children are viewed as an important part of the community's future and with this in mind the pupils from P6 and P7 at Strachur Primary School were also interviewed so they could add their thoughts.

Finally the community was given the chance to comment on these recommendations on a community open day held in the Memorial Hall. We would like to thank everyone for their contributions upon which this action plan has been developed. The community as a whole were encouraged to input to the process and the results which were achieved.



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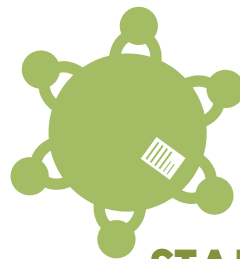
SURVEYS RETURNED
FROM OUR 367 HOUSEHOLDS

INTERVIEWS WITH
PRIMARY SCHOOL,
YOUTH CLUB &
LUNCH CLUB



29

PEOPLE VISITED
OUR STAND AT
THE QUEEN'S
BATON RELAY
COMMUNITY
GALA EVENT



18

STAKEHOLDER
MEETINGS

Thanks to everyone who participated



Our Community Now

The information below summarises the main facts and figures from the Community Profile.

LOCATION

The community is made up of the combined parishes of Strachur (including St Catherines and Glenbranter) and Strathlachlan (including Leachd, Newton and Leanach). It is situated in the north western part of the Cowal Peninsula in Argyll on the shores of Loch Fyne. It is 25 miles from Dunoon, and 90 minutes journey to Glasgow. Part of the area is in the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.

POPULATION

The population is estimated at around 770 and shows no significant change over the last five years. However 30.5% of the area's residents are now over 65 compared to the previous figure of 24% and the Scottish average figure of 16.8%. This shows a stable but rapidly ageing population which has significant implications for healthcare, the local labour pool and the viability of the primary school. It may also have employment opportunity benefits in such as garden maintenance and care services.

HOUSING

Over 77% of local housing is owner occupied and an estimated 20% are holiday homes. The number of people in social rented accommodation has fallen dramatically in the last 20 years as council houses were offered for sale to occupiers in line with government policy. This has been a national trend but it is noteworthy that rented accommodation is even more lacking in the District compared to the country as a whole. This makes the need for affordable housing here even greater.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Strachur has a diverse economy with employment in the building trade, fish farming, fish processing and a call centre in Dunoon. Tourism plays a large part with two hotels, four caravan parks, B&Bs and self catering accommodation. There is a shop, post office & filling station and two pubs. High seasonal population variations due to holiday/second homes have implications for the viability of local businesses. The district appears to provide an environment conducive to self employment which could be further developed.

HEALTH CARE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

The purpose built Health Centre provides a GP service, a dispensing pharmacy and a practice nurse. There is a sheltered housing development in Strachur. A retained fire service operates in the area, and a local Police Constable is based within the village. There are concerns that ambulances take some time to respond to emergencies in the district and that there may be a need for more local 24-hour medical care facilities for older people.



EDUCATION

Strachur Primary School has a current school roll of around 53 including some children from nearby Cairndow, St. Catherines and Strathlachlan. A Playgroup with currently 3-5 yr olds is also attached to the Primary School. A Youth Group is based in Strachur Memorial Hall. Around 80 secondary school children attend Dunoon Grammar School who travel daily on the service bus which in the past has caused problems during periods of high usage. Steps have been taken to resolve this however challenges persist.

HERITAGE

The Strachur & District Local History Society was formed in 2007 to record and preserve local heritage and has a regular programme of talks about the area. Other local assets include Iron Age Forts, Castle Lachlan and the recently upgraded Kilmorie Chapel with their Clan MacLachlan links, the churches and graveyards at Strathlachlan and Strachur, Strachur House with its links to Sir Fitzroy Maclean and Glenbranter and its links with Sir Harry Lauder. Strachur Smiddy Museum houses a number of historic artefacts and features demonstrations of blacksmithing on some summer weekends.

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, EVENTS AND FACILITIES

The well-appointed Strachur Memorial Hall and New Hall together host over 1000 bookings a year and are a great gathering point for the local community and for the wider Cowal area. There is also an outdoor tennis court, the community-owned Heron Park and a new Pavilion and Sports Field which caters for activities such as shinty. Strathlachlan also has a small community hall which runs a regular programme of events including carpet bowling, art classes and an annual Burns' Supper.

ENVIRONMENT

Strachur is in a beautiful scenic area with many fine views of Loch Fyne and the hills. The freshwater Loch Eck is only a few miles south. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the area (Ardchylene Woodland and Loch Eck) and local wildlife includes red squirrels, red and roe deer and raptors including golden eagles. Argyll Forest Park contains a good network of forest trails and the Cowal Way passes through the Strachur area.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Information on the Strachur Community Profile can be found on the community website www.strachur.org.uk.



Community Views Survey

Likes

54.9%

Scenery and beautiful rural environment



Local services
Shops & garage
Medical Practice

19.6%



37.3%

The Memorial Hall, Sports Field, Pavilion, and their range of activities



16.7%

Safety, low crime



39.2%

Community spirit

What we said about our top likes.

“ Perfectly located - not too far from Glasgow Central and Airport for links to the rest of the country.”

“ A very welcoming community, full of people who give their time to serve it, it’s amazing what has been achieved.”

“ We are lucky to have such good facilities in a small community.”

“ Excellent local tradesman who complete work to a high standard for a fair price - and you can leave them your keys!”

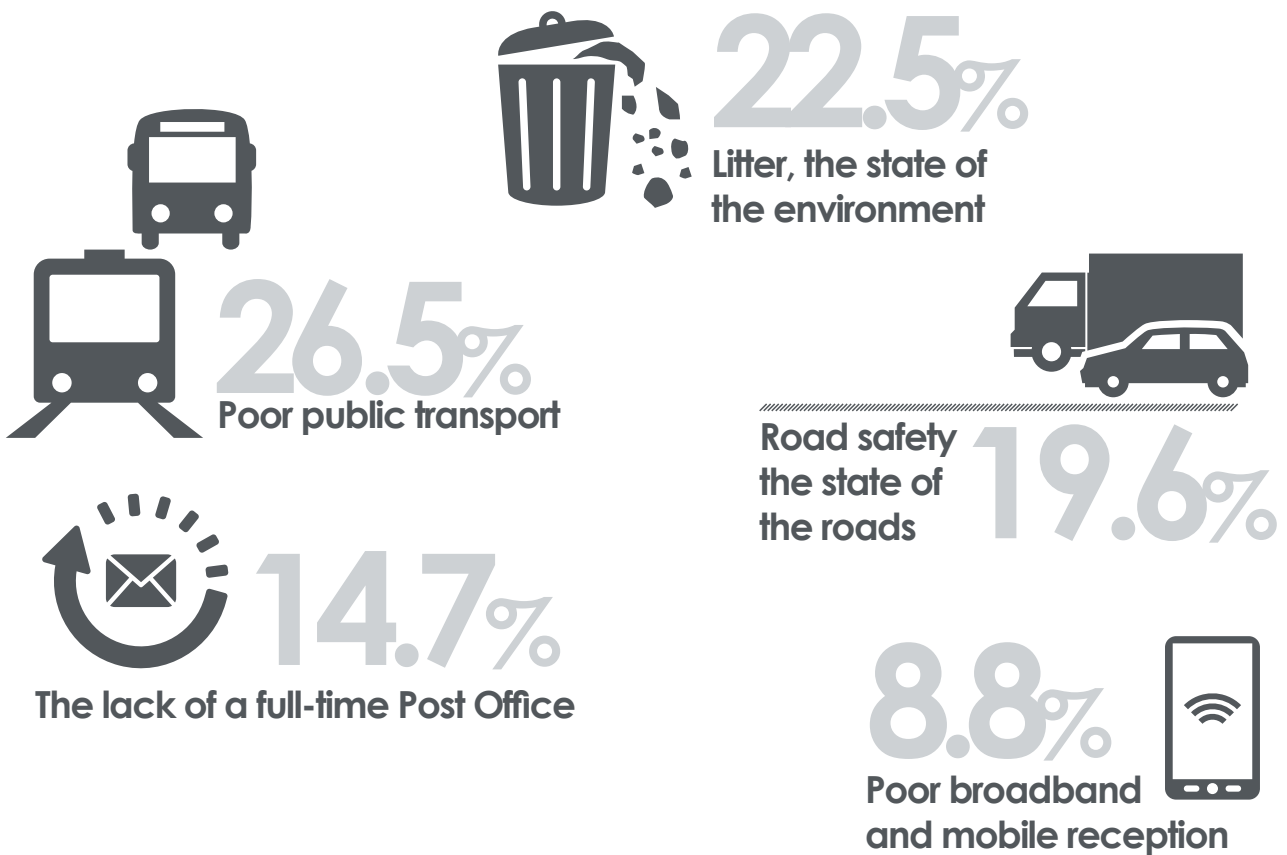
“ I find it hard to find anything to ‘greet’ about; whilst not Utopia we are lucky to live in Strachur.”

“ Good access to local doctors with same day appointments.”



Community Views Survey

Dislikes



What we said about our dislikes.

- “ The lack of affordable local housing to attract younger people. Strachur is becoming a retirement village.”
- “ The Public transport is appalling, we are held to ransom by the authorities.”
- “ The increased number of holiday homes is leading to a less friendly and neighbourly society.”
- “ We need notice of the closure of the Rest and be Thankful A83 route at the junction of the A815 and A886.”
- “ There is a lack of progress in making the Bay area more attractive to locals and visitors.”
- “ We need to find a way of returning to a full time post office!”



Strachur

Our vision for the future

The type of place we want Strachur to be:

We want our community to continue to be a welcoming one to people of all ages: balancing the needs of an increasingly ageing population with the aspirations of the young who wish to live and work here and raise families of their own. We want our community and environment to be sustainable with public services and local businesses to be maintained, supported and enhanced over the next years.

Our vision is of a community which:

- **continues to be a safe and welcoming place to live in**
- **involves members of the community in running the community**
- **encourages community spirit and participation**
- **values our excellent primary school**
- **supports local businesses and services**
- **supports and retains its young people in helping to find local employment and good quality low cost housing**
- **values and conserves its local cultural and natural heritage**
- **has a wide range of local employment opportunities**
- **supports local businesses and facilities**

Main Themes and Priorities

These are the main themes and priorities the community will focus on over the next five years, in partnership with public agencies and other supporters.

Transport and access to services

Environmental Improvements

Creating and Maintaining a Sustainable Community

Community Facilities and Activities

Tourism and Heritage

TOP PRIORITIES AS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY:

- ➔ Improve public transport service and community transport links
- ➔ Hold an annual community event/Gala
- ➔ Campaign for affordable housing
- ➔ Lobby for an enhanced crossing near the School
- ➔ Improvements at Heron Park and at the Bay
- ➔ Path maintenance, improvement and signage
- ➔ Support local enterprise through providing workshop space for local small businesses and organising Producers Markets.
- ➔ Improve facilities and infrastructure for visitors through providing public toilets
- ➔ Enhance the environment through measures to control litter, dog mess, invasive species and overfishing in Loch Fyne
- ➔ Monitor the development and eventual enforcement of the Marine Protected Area

Transport and access to services



There are many deficiencies in the current bus service which need to be addressed in order to enable local people – particularly the young - to travel to education, employment and social activities out with the village. Improved public transport would also encourage visitors to come and visit Strachur. The busy A815 runs through Strachur and the speed of some vehicles causes concern particularly close to the primary school.

A guide to the first steps to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond...



ACTION POINT

Better Public Transport

- ➔ Campaign for a later service back from Dunoon
- ➔ Campaign for a Sunday Service
- ➔ Campaign for a bus service to link Strachur to Glendaruel, Colintraive and Bute
- ➔ Lobby for better connections with the West Coast Motors service to Glasgow

Community Champion

- Community Council
- ColGlen CC

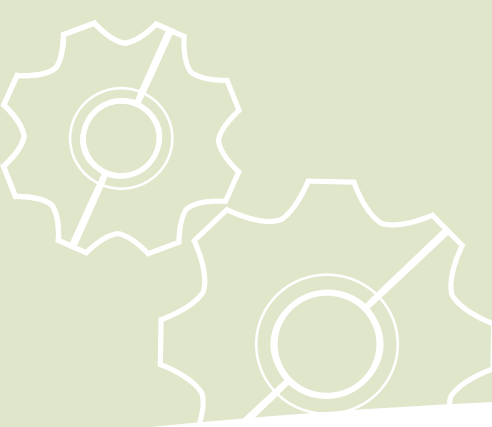
ACTION POINT

Road Safety

- ➔ Get an enhanced crossing on the School route cross roads to enable children to cross to sports facilities safely
- ➔ Enforce the 40mph speed limit through the village. Including the installation of speed indicators.
- ➔ Improve visibility at road junctions and on narrow roads through the clearing of shrubs and generally improve visibility at road junctions
- ➔ Look in to the opportunities of developing a Community Bus or Car for hire share the members of the community.
- ➔ Lobby for an improved patient transport system.

Community Champions

- Argyll and Bute Council,
- Community Council,
- Local volunteers
- Development Company
- Community Partnership
- Strachur Primary PTA
- Police



Environmental Improvements



Strachur is set in a stunning lochside situation but there are concerns that parts of the village look uncared for. In particular the areas at the Bay and Heron Park and our local path network require an ongoing programme of maintenance and improvement including measures to control litter, dog mess, invasive species and the cutting back of trees and shrubs that inhibit sightlines and impede access.



A guide to the first steps to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond...



ACTION POINT

Improve Community Spaces

- ➔ Maintenance and improvement of the Bay area
- ➔ Maintenance, improvement and development of Heron Park
- ➔ Create and support Community Allotments

Community Champions

- Community Council
- Development Company
- Heron Park Action Group

ACTION POINT

Paths

- ➔ Re-establish Paths group – to Improve Path maintenance throughout community
- ➔ Create new paths
- ➔ Create a Paths leaflet with maps showing what is available
- ➔ Create and install signage on paths

Community Champions

- New paths group and Volunteers
- Local landowners
- LLTNPA Volunteer Projects
- Local Paths Group
- Local artists/craftspeople

ACTION POINT

Improve the quality of the environment

- ➔ Tackle Dog waste issues throughout the community
- ➔ Coordinate litter action program to improve local area
- ➔ Invasive Species Control
- ➔ Support and monitor implementation of Marine Protection Area

Community Champions

- Invasive Species group
- Police
- Argyll & Bute Council
- Community Council

Creating and Maintaining a Sustainable Community



A guide to the first steps to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond...



ACTION POINT

Improve Employment Opportunities

- ➔ Create business workshops/offices
- ➔ Start a Village Traders Association
- ➔ Hold Producers Markets

Community Champions

- Appoint working group
- Development Company

ACTION POINT

Affordable Housing

- ➔ Campaign for more low-cost new-builds
- ➔ Make house plots available for self-builds

Community Champions

- Development Company
- Land owners



Strachur and District is an attractive place to retire to but there are concerns that the area is becoming a retirement village with little to offer the younger members of the community or those on a low income who wish to settle and work here. Creating affordable housing and employment opportunities for locals is therefore a priority.

ACTION POINT

Renewables & recycling

- ➔ Better recycling area/collection scheme
- ➔ Renewable energy schemes with benefits going to the community

Community Champion

- Development Company
- Heron Park Action Group



Community Facilities and Activities



A guide to the first steps to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond...



ACTION POINT

Hold an annual community event/Gala

➔ Develop an annual community gala

Community Champion

- Baton Relay Gala Team
- Hall Committee
- Community Council
- Development Company

ACTION POINT

Improve the range of outdoor recreational activities

➔ Open a Bowling Green/Club

➔ Develop a range of Bike Trails in and around the area

➔ Integrating facilities to reduce maintenance costs.

Community Champion

- Development Company
- Local Authority
- Form cycle group



Strachur is fortunate in that it has a first-rate village hall and a sports field and pavilion which are used by a large variety of community groups. However it is felt that there are some gaps in what the village currently provides in that there isn't enough to do for older children or places for the older members of the community to meet and socialise.



Tourism and Heritage



A guide to the first steps to be taken over the next 12 months and beyond... 

ACTION POINT

Better infrastructure for tourists

- ➔ Develop publicly available toilets
- ➔ More facilities at the new pontoon

Community Champions

- Moorings association
- Community Council
- Development Company
- Landowners

ACTION POINT

Local heritage

- ➔ Create a heritage trail
- ➔ Annual heritage/history Gala

Community Champions

- Clan McLachlan Society
- Local History Society
- Smiddy Museum
- Local artists
- National Park Rangers



Strachur is in an ideal location to attract visitors and we have a wealth of natural and cultural heritage to offer. But we don't make the most of it or shout about what we have. The area should be an attractive place to visit but lacks the facilities to encourage visitors to either stop or stay.

Investment in this area would help to create local employment for those working in local service industries as well as providing customers for our many talented local artists and crafts people.

ACTION POINT

Marketing and Publicity

- ➔ Raise awareness of what the village has to offer to locals and tourists

Community Champions

- Local History Society
- Smiddy Museum
- local businesses and hotels
- Cowalfest



Making It Happen

Strachur District Community Council and the Strachur & District Community Development Company will continue to play key roles in implementing the Action Plan but support from people in the community is critical to its successful delivery. Existing groups such as the Hall Committees, the Youth Club and Strachur & District Local History Society are always looking for new volunteers to help out with their projects and welcome any enquiries about their work.

If you would like to get involved with any of these initiatives or for further information please contact the lead organisations for each theme as shown below:

The Community Council will take overall responsibility for co-ordinating the Action Plan and will also take the lead on:

- ➔ Lobbying for improved road safety measures
- ➔ Liaising with landowners and housing associations
- ➔ Pressing for improvements to public transport
- ➔ Progressing weed and invasive species control along with Argyll & Bute.

By bringing the new "action groups" under the umbrella of the Development Company, we will also be able to progress other priority projects. We will support and create "Action Groups" to focus on the priorities for:

- ➔ Supporting local businesses
- ➔ Organising an annual Community Gala
- ➔ Developing the Bay and Heron Park
- ➔ Environmental Improvements

The Action Plan will be reviewed in 2019.

If you would like to be part of making this Action Plan a reality, contact:

Name: Les Earle
E-mail: lesearle125@gmail.com
Telephone: 01369 860516

Acknowledgements

Strachur Community Action Plan Steering Group have prepared this community document. A special thanks to all Steering Group members for their time and dedication.

We are grateful to the following organisations for funding and assistance:



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
Community Partnership
www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk
Tel: 01389 727762



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
National Park Authority
www.lochlomond-trossachs.org
Tel: 01389 722600

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