



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2016 - 2020

Kilmarnock



Kilmaronock Community Action Plan 2016-2020

This Action Plan has been developed with support from Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Community Partnership and with input from a wide cross-section of the Kilmaronock community.

The plan revises and replaces our previous Action Plan 2008 -2011.

The Action Plan gives a snapshot of Kilmaronock and Gartocharn as it is now and identifies some of the things that need to be done to make our community even better.

The Plan summarises community views on

- **Kilmaronock and Gartocharn now**
- **the vision for its future**
- **the issues that matter most**
- **priorities for action**

The Plan makes a clear statement about the type of place Kilmaronock and Gartocharn aims to be – and what needs to be done to achieve this.



Since the last Action Plan a number of the priorities identified have been carried out.

- ➔ Home energy audits were offered throughout community and a loan scheme arranged for energy monitors. The potential for an income generating community energy scheme was also explored.
- ➔ A safe entrance to the Play Park was created and new equipment purchased and installed.
- ➔ A Housing Needs survey was undertaken to identify housing priorities and preferred locations.
- ➔ Co-ordinated community action to oppose the planning applications for house building on the field behind the Kilmaronock Millennium Hall was successful.
- ➔ Funding was raised to purchase and install a toposcope to provide information on the stunning view at the rear of the Kilmaronock Millennium Hall which the community sees as one of its main assets.
- ➔ Funding was also obtained to purchase a display cabinet for the Heritage Group.
- ➔ Paths around the village have been upgraded.
- ➔ Representations have been made about concerns over degradation of the Aber Path.



OUR COMMUNITY, OUR VOICE

All members of the community have had an opportunity to contribute through individual surveys sent to every household, by participating in an in depth interview with the Community Agent, Sue Williams, or attending the "Have Your Say Day" held at the Kilmarnock Millennium Hall. We would like to thank everyone for their contributions which form the basis of this Action Plan. Although the response to the postal household survey was low this was recognised early on and more face to face surveys were undertaken. The household survey was circulated several times at the Friday coffee morning and was also available at the Post Office (Lomond Stores) and France Farm.

Pupils at Gartocharn Primary School participated in the survey providing a clear insight into what actions they wanted to see in the future. The number of responses received from the school was 62 from children aged 5 – 11.

Particular thanks to members of the Steering Group and to Sue Williams the Community Agent, for all their hard work.

**INDEPTH
INTERVIEWS
WITH COMMUNITY
GROUP LEADERS
AND INDIVIDUALS**



**"HAVE
YOUR
SAY"
OPEN DAY**



**GROUPS WERE REPRESENTED AT
OUR COFFEE MORNING
SURVEYS & INTERVIEWS**



**HOUSEHOLD
SURVEYS**

Thanks to everyone who participated



Our Community Now

Location

The community is made up of Gartocharn village and the surrounding countryside within the Kilmarnock Community Council boundary. It is unique in being the only rural community in West Dunbartonshire and is bounded on the north by Loch Lomond, to the east by the River Endrick, with the Kilpatrick hills to the south and Balloch & Haldane to the west. It has one major road, the A811, running west to east through it with smaller roads (which in many cases are just single track) to both south and north.

Population

The population has remained steady with a slight increase to 766 indicated by the 2011 census. The age profile remains largely unchanged; the number of under 16s and 16 – 64 age group being slightly lower than the Scottish average; over 65s at 24% is slightly higher proportion than previously and greater than the Scottish average of 16%. Recent anecdotal evidence (i.e. the increase in numbers at the Parent and Toddler Group) indicates that the birth rate may be rising.

Housing

There has been little change since the previous Action Plan. Kilmarnock has a higher than average proportion of owner occupied housing and a correspondingly lower proportion of social rented houses. The desire to retain the 'village envelope' and character means that there have been few new houses built and the area is characterised by high prices and scarce supply. The Housing Needs Survey identified a small degree of unmet housing need and demand (around 9 housing units required for young families and single people).

Health and social care

There are no GP or dental services in the village and residents travel to Balloch, Alexandria, Killearn or Drymen for these. The latter has been severely affected by the policy to remove dispensaries from GP Practices. This has led to changes that have had a major impact on those residents registered at the Drymen practice. The aging population and distance from basic services highlights the challenge of providing good health and social care services in rural areas.

Roads and Transport

The A811 main road crosses the parish and runs through the middle of Gartocharn. This busy road has a major impact as speed limits are not always observed. The smaller back roads which at times take a high volume of diverted traffic are poorer quality and vulnerable to being washed away in storms.

There are bus services to Balloch, Drymen, Balmaha and Balfron. Buses also provide links to main shopping areas. The rail network from Balloch provides good access to Glasgow, however, the majority of journeys are made by car.

Education

Gartocharn Primary School has between 70 and 80 children on the roll at any time. As well as local children, there are also placements from outwith the area from parents who appreciate the small rural school atmosphere. On the same campus there is also an Early Years Centre providing full time care and education with places for 30 babies and children from 0–5. The associated secondary school is Vale of Leven Academy with some parents making requests for placement to Balfron or to independent schools.



Leisure and Recreation

The football pitch and the children's play park share the same field on the south side of the village. The area floods in wet weather making it unusable at certain times of the year.

There are two popular walks in the area; the Aber Path to the Loch and RSPB Reserve and the walk up Duncryne. The Kilmarnock Millennium Hall hosts a number of groups including, Yoga, Keep Fit, Art, Pilates and Tai Chi. There is also a small gym. The Garden Club, Women's Rural and Kilmarnock Heritage Group also meet there.

Gartocharn School Parent Council applied for funding for a multi purpose all weather sports pitch which was completed in late 2014.

Local Employment and Economy

Kilmarnock is still largely an agricultural area. However the nature of farming has changed and small farms are becoming increasingly unviable and some have been broken up and sold off. There are fewer dairy farms than there were and most cattle are now raised for beef.

There is a range of small businesses in the area that provide some local part time employment but there is a limited number of full time jobs locally and many people commute to work outside the area.

Community Organisations and Facilities

Kilmarnock has a strong community identity, and an active Community Council, Community Trust and village hall committee.

The Kilmarnock Millennium Hall is a great asset for the community. It is run almost entirely by volunteers and is self-sustaining. The Friday coffee morning and craft fair provide a point of social contact for the village as well as attracting people from a much wider area. The hall provides an attractive venue for weddings and parties and has recently been upgraded to improve the conference facilities.

The Community Newsletter – Gartorag – and the Gartocharn website www.gartocharn.org provides a wealth of local information.

Retail and Services

At the centre of the village are the Post Office, Village shop and petrol station. Opposite the shop is the House of Darrach comprising a restaurant and retail outlet. A local farm runs a market every Friday morning selling a wide variety of fruit, vegetables and farm produce. At Ballagan there is a builders merchants, a garden centre and animal feed supplier.

There are a number of B&Bs in the area and at Ross Priory there is a private members club and golf course.

Heritage

Kilmarnock is rich in heritage with several listed sites including; the site of an early chapel dedicated to St Kessog at Aber; the remains of Kilmarnock Castle, a 15TH or 16TH century tower house and Kilmarnock Parish Church on the site of an earlier 14TH century church. The landscape itself still reflects the ancient field patterns recorded in the 18TH century.

Kilmarnock Heritage Group is active in gathering and displaying heritage material from the area.



Community Views Survey Likes



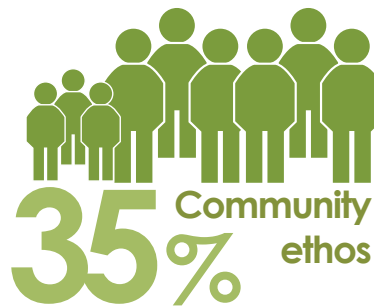
Scenery & beautiful rural environment



Recreation Opportunities



Community Opportunities



What we said about our top likes.

“ something for everybody”

“ village is only as it is because it is small – a great strength”

“ a great place to live with wonderful views and a good community spirit – there’s always someone to help you out”

“ we are in a time warp here...there is not much change and we hold on to that fiercely”

“ I love driving home and seeing the loch ahead of me and the village nestled under the Dumpling”



Community Views Survey

Dislikes



What we said about our dislikes.

“ Speeding traffic on the main road through the village and the narrow pavements makes it dangerous for children, prams and dogs.”

“ If you are bringing people to the village you need to provide the facilities like a public toilet”

“ The mess in the field in front of the Hall ”

“ No bus shelter”



Kilmaronock

Our vision for the future

The type of place we want Kilmaronock to be:

We will seek to protect and enhance the natural environment thereby ensuring that Gartocharn/Kilmaronock remains a great place to live, work and visit.

We will strive to improve local facilities and services for residents and visitors while maintaining the rural character of the village and area.

Our community will work towards increasing safety and efficiency regarding traffic management and other transport options.



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.

Roads, Traffic & Transport

Community Facilities & Local Economy

Community Spirit & Activities

Recreation & Tourism

Natural Environment

TOP PRIORITIES AS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY THROUGH CONSULTATION

- ➔ Better Transport Infrastructure
- ➔ Increased Road Safety
- ➔ Road Maintenance
- ➔ Support for farmers and local businesses
- ➔ Improved range of housing and community facilities
- ➔ Initiatives to raise funding for community activities
- ➔ Activities to engage the Community
- ➔ Activities and facilities for young people
- ➔ Improved communication internally & externally
- ➔ Landscape Management

Roads Traffic & Transport



The main A811 road through the village provides good access to the East and the West by private car and public transport. For those using public transport there can be an issue of connectivity between bus and rail or bus to bus timetables. The volume and nature of vehicles passing through the village, sometimes exceeding the speed limit of 30mph, also creates problems. This can make walking the pavements a dangerous occupation. Away from the main road the rest of the parish is served by small, often single track roads which are often in poor condition with conflicting priorities as cyclists and farm vehicles share the same narrow roads. The Sustrans Route 7 now also forms part of the John Muir Way, an East to West long distance footpath, which will increase the number of pedestrians on this road.

Parking in the village has improved since the Kilmarnock Millennium Hall doubled the size of its car park. However, there is still a bottle neck at peak times as vehicles pull in by the Post Office and Garage.

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



ACTION POINT

Better Transport Infrastructure & Connectivity

- ➔ Explore coordination of bus & train times to improve connectivity
- ➔ Better defined and signposted parking within centre of village
- ➔ Construct new bus shelter on main street
- ➔ Explore the potential of installing an electric car charging point at Kilmarnock Millennium Hall

Community Champion

- KCT, KCC, WDC, KMHA

ACTION POINT

Increased Road Safety

- ➔ Extend '20's Plenty' speed limit to main road near school.
- ➔ Develop traffic calming plan for Gartocharn to improve pedestrian safety
- ➔ Promote safe routes to school for pedestrians and cyclists.
- ➔ Petition WDC for a school crossing patrol on main road.
- ➔ Warning signs regarding cyclists and pedestrians on Sustrans Route 7

Community Champion

- KCC, KCT, Gartocharn Primary School, WDC

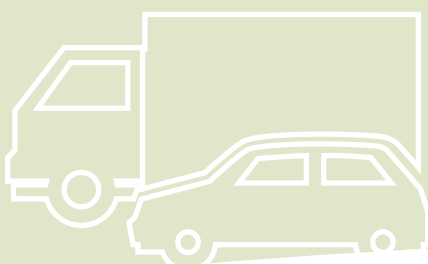
ACTION POINT

Improved Road and Path Infrastructure

- ➔ Better maintained pavements, paths and cycleways
- ➔ Better coordination of service (e.g. water) and road maintenance
- ➔ More drop kerbs and safe crossing points throughout community

Community Champion

- KCT, KCC



Local Economy and Community Facilities



The main areas of the local economy focus on retail and catering, tourism and farming. There are a number of venues that cater for parties and weddings which also support the thriving B&B and self catering sector. The great attraction of the area is the beauty of the natural environment with its stunning views which is easily accessible from a large conurbation.

The nature of farming has changed over the past decade with many farmers leaving the dairy industry to raise beef cattle. There have also been changes in land ownership with increased tenant grazing and in many areas it can be seen that the quality of land is being degraded which affects both the visual amenity and the productivity of the land. Subsidies have also been reduced for reed and vermin control which impact on the quality of the land and productivity of farms.

The census indicates an increasing number of older people in single occupancy of large houses. As social care needs arise, local housing needs to reflect this trend.



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



ACTION POINT

Support for Farmers and Local Businesses

- ➔ Lobby LL&TNPA and WDC to ensure land productivity remains high on the agenda and supports farmers to manage reeds and control vermin.
- ➔ Better interaction between LL&TNPA and WDC to support community and local economy.

Community Champion

- KCT, KCC

ACTION POINT

Improved range of Housing and Community Facilities

- ➔ Develop affordable housing appropriate for young and old
- ➔ Continue negotiations over ownership and management of football pitch for community use
- ➔ Lobby for self cleaning public toilet in Gartocharn
- ➔ Develop sheltered housing/supported living

Community Champion

- KCT, KCC, WDC, Dunbritton Housing Association

ACTION POINT

Initiatives to raise Funding for Community Activities

- ➔ Work with surrounding communities to appoint community development worker to deliver action plan aims and raise funds
- ➔ Investigate income generating projects such as renewable energy

Community Champion

- KCT

Community Spirit & Activities



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



ACTION POINT

Activities to engage the Community

- ➔ Community event such as: Gala Day or Community BBQ/Fun day
- ➔ Continue to support musical groups within the village and promote all age participation whilst also attracting external performances/films to the village
- ➔ Recruit more volunteers to help deliver priorities and support established groups and clubs
- ➔ Involve local young people in community activity through social networking and Twitter

Community Champion

- KCT, KCC youth rep, Young Farmers Club, KMHA, B Flats, Loch Lomond Ukulele Orchestra

ACTION POINT

Activities and facilities for young people

- ➔ Complete all weather pitch plans
- ➔ Continue to improve play facilities
- ➔ Improve drainage on football pitch & play park

Community Champion

- KCT, Gartocharn Primary School Parent Council, WDC, Gartocharn Football Club

ACTION POINT

Improved communication internally & externally

- ➔ Improve broadband coverage throughout the CC area.
- ➔ Improve mobile phone reception
- ➔ Use technology & social media to engage young residents in activities

Community Champion

- KCC, BT, Mobile phone providers, LL&TNPA, Gatorag, Young People



There is a very positive community spirit within the village with a wide range of groups and organisations that work together to support the community as a whole. There are a number of regular events that provide opportunities for participation.



The Gartocharn website www.gartocharn.org provides information on activities.

Recreation & Tourism



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



ACTION POINT

Improve Existing Recreational Infrastructure around Community

- ➔ Bring back the Aber Path to its former state from main road to the nature reserve. Put in place signage from main road
- ➔ Consult on upgrading the loch-side path between Ross Priory and the nature reserve
- ➔ Continue to improve the path on Duncryne

Community Champion

- LL&TNPA, SNH, RSPB, KCT



ACTION POINT

Develop additional recreational links

Activity:

(What could be done)

- ➔ Develop off road walking and cycling connection between Gartocharn, Balloch & Drymen
- ➔ Path link between War Memorial and village
- ➔ Improve community and visitor access to Ross Priory for walks etc

Community Champion

- WDC, KCC, War Memorial Group, Strathclyde University



Within the area there are opportunities for outdoor recreational activities. Maintaining paths and open access is valued. Consultation needs to be undertaken when changes which affect the intrinsic scenic landscape are proposed. Many self-supporting recreational groups are already operational.

Tourism relies upon access to amenities, accommodation and good transport links.

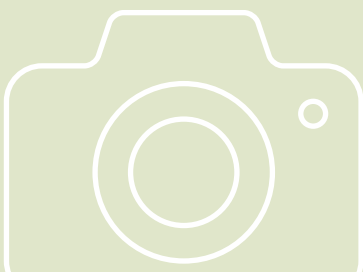
ACTION POINT

Increase Tourism Opportunities

- ➔ Work with RSPB to develop path links to their land and draw in visitors
- ➔ Work with LLTNPA to develop tourism opportunities
- ➔ Identify infrastructure requirements needed to support any increase in visitors

Community Champion

- RSPB, KCT, KCC, LL&TNPA



Built & Natural Environment



The community values both the built and natural environment. Keeping up the appearance of the area is important. The landscape and natural environment around Kilmarnock is varied and rich with woodlands, wetlands, grassland and agricultural land that stretches from the lowest shores of the loch to the highest reach of Duncryne (known locally as 'The Dumpling'), not forgetting the picturesque islands of Creinch, Torrinch, Clarinch and Aber Isle.

Much of the land around Kilmarnock has been recognised for its importance as a place for nature, geology and important species through designations including SSSI, SPA, SAC and NNR. There are many characteristic natural features associated with the area including geese, otters and wild flowers.

Kilmarnock contains the last remaining fragment of wildflower meadow in West Dunbartonshire, known as Twenty Acres.

Many organisations work with the local community to protect this heritage including LL&TNP, SNH, RSPB, Forestry Commission, Woodland Trust and University of Glasgow.

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



ACTION POINT

Maintain a Clean Community

- ➔ Organise a community litter pick
- ➔ Work with WDC to install more litter bins throughout community and identify a site for a bottle bank
- ➔ Develop and maintain gardens at KMH

Community Champion

- All, WDC, KCC, Garden Club

ACTION POINT

Landscape Management

- ➔ Work with community, WDC and LL&TNPA to remove pigs from field at Kilmarnock Millennium Hall
- ➔ Right to buy in relation to Community Purchase of field at Kilmarnock Millennium Hall
- ➔ Establish ownership of access road

Community Champion

- SEPA, LL&TNPA, SRSPCA, KCT, GT, KMHA

ACTION POINT

Maintenance and community

- ➔ Maintain war memorial and improve access
- ➔ Build on success of community energy survey and look for a community energy saving scheme

Community Champion

- WDC, Gartocharn Primary School Parents Council, War Memorial Group, KCT



Next steps

This draft Community Action Plan was presented at the AGM of the Kilmarnock Community Trust in February 2015. Further consultation will then take place with all agencies and organisations involved to consider the actions and draw up a delivery plan

The delivery plan will contain further details on how the actions will be taken forward, who by and with timescales. Half yearly monitoring will take place and an identified lead organisation will collate the responses .

An annual Delivery plan will be developed and will be used to guide the delivery and assist the monitoring of a number of priorities each year. Copies of the current delivery plan are available from: Chairperson Kilmarnock Community Trust.

If you would like to get involved with any of these initiatives or for further information please contact

email: k_c_t@btinternet.com

or visit www.gartocharn.org

Acknowledgements

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www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk
Tel: 01389 727762



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