

Report of community planning survey published

The village is a good place to live ... but there are loads of ideas to make it better

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The report of the community planning survey is now out. So we now have a clearer view of what the community wants the future of the village to look like. The report includes the results of the self-completion questionnaire, and a slightly abridged version of these is included with your copy of The Blane.

The origins of the research lie in an idea – promoted by Strathblanefield Community Development Trust, Strathblane Community Council and Stirling Council in partnership – for a local community development plan. Developing a community plan needs time, patience and good information. So the partnership commissioned a community planning research exercise. The job of the researchers was to carry out a questionnaire and a consultation process to make sense of its findings and the ideas, priorities and possible actions suggested by it.

The partnership has gone through the questionnaire results. We must say, there was so much information, some of it apparently confusing and contradictory, it wasn't easy to see the wood for the trees. But Lowland Market Research, the consultants who carried out the survey for us, reassured us that this is normal from a survey as wide as this one, and they patiently guided us through the analysis until we had a clear picture. So, out of the chaos we have the germs of a plan!

What did the survey say?

The vast majority (96%) of people who filled in the questionnaire are happy about living in the village.

There are a huge number of suggestions about how and what we can do to make it better.

You would like:

- a more identifiable village centre
- to keep our green space
- more community social events
- better access to the hills
- a 'greener', more sustainable village
- a range of housing
- a community where all ages mix, live and play
- and lots more!!! As you can read for yourself by looking at the survey report.

So what happens next?

- The survey report and an executive summary are published on the village website. A hard copy is available in the library, and a copy will be sent to all the voluntary groups in the village.
- The results of the questionnaire are included with this copy of The Blane.
- We will be consulting on the issues identified as possible actions for the community to establish which of them have support. This will inform the draft plan. You will have seen the consultation taking place at the open day at the school on the 29 May and at the School Fair on the 5 June.
- The Community Development Trust will hold an open public meeting in late August in the Village Club to further consult on the Trust's future direction.

- The Community Council will also discuss the issues at their regular open meetings.
- A draft Community Plan will be agreed by the partnership and made available for comment.
- The draft Community Plan will be presented to the Community Planning Forum (which includes all the main official agencies) to have it adopted as a Village Community Plan.
- Local organisations can then make plans for putting some of the ideas into practice.

Sifting through the evidence

The results of the survey came from a mixture of 289 completed questionnaires, several workshops and analysis.

Lowland's professional assessment is that 289 questionnaires are enough to give us a very accurate representation of the village's views. This gave Lowland Market Research the information to pull together the key priority issues and actions that are contained in their executive summary. In the process they consulted with the Community Council and the Community Development Trust. In addition, 102 people who filled in the questionnaire and said they'd like to take part in further consultation were invited to a vision workshop: 23 of them were able to come and give their views.

A word of caution. Not all of the community suggestions made it into the action lists. For instance:

- The poor condition of the roads was expressed as a big concern for many people. But in discussions this didn't come through as a priority for local action because people recognised it's up to the Council to deliver an improved service with the resources it has at its disposal. Rest assured the Community Council will keep the pressure on the Council to improve the state of our roads!
- Considerable interest was expressed in the idea of an enhanced handyman service, but it didn't come through in the discussions as a priority. The Community Development Trust may try and pick it up over time to see if we can support a business enterprise of some sort.

So none of the ideas and comments will get lost. But the process of consultation helped Lowland prioritise the issues that would make the biggest difference.

From plan to action

The partnership will be setting out their list of actions and plans within the draft Community Plan, which will be available for comment. Once the plan is agreed, it is vital that all organisations work together closely, encouraging voluntary action where possible and lobbying other agencies to take action where necessary.

As can be seen, prioritising issues isn't easy. If you spot issues that you feel strongly about and want to get involved in developing them, feel free to bring them forward, along with your ideas for getting them done. There is more to be done than we have resources for, so if you want to see any of this happen you may need to get involved!

We will look forward to reporting back on the draft plan.

Thanks!

Thanks to everyone who filled in a questionnaire, went to a scoping or vision workshop, or spent time on the partnership steering group. Also to the funders – the Big Lottery, the Community Council and Stirling Council's Community Planning Team – and to The Blane for distributing the questionnaires and publishing the results.

And last but not least to Lowland Market Research who carried out the survey for us and patiently guided us through the whole process.