

# STRATHERRICK & FOYERS NEWSLETTER

April 2021 Issue Number: 21

## COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

It's great to be asked to give an update on the Community Action Plan - because we're at a very exciting stage.

The first reason I'm excited is because of the great response to the community survey - check out the results summary in the centre pages of this magazine. It's a fascinating snapshot of what you like as a community, your challenges and your aspirations.

Thanks to lots of hard work by many local folk, over 30% of the adults and children living in our area responded. That's far more than the usual 5-10% associated with these types of surveys. It gives a really solid foundation for developing practical solutions to form the basis of the Community Action Plan.

The second reason I'm excited is that we're now about to start working with the whole community to turn your aspirations into practical solutions. Involving everyone is always a challenge, even without lock down, so we're offering three options:

**Community Assembly** - on Thursday 15 April at 7:30pm, open to all. Most of the evening will be in small groups exploring practical solutions to the aspirations expressed in the survey. We won't finish that on Thursday night, but we'll get off to a good start.

**Ideas Bank** - the brand new Ideas Bank is a quick and easy way for folk to shape their future and see what others are suggesting. Every idea will feed into the working groups.

**Working groups** - after the first Assembly, we'll set up working groups (open to all) to continue fleshing out practical solutions to the five main aspirations from the community survey. Each group will meet a couple of times before reporting back to a second Community Assembly on Thursday 27th May. That's where we'll agree what should be in the Community Action Plan.

*What are those five main aspirations coming out of the survey results?*

**Community Life** - local facilities, services, things to do, community events

**Better Connections** - getting around, transport, broadband

**Outdoors and Nature** - nature, wildness and the great outdoors

**Our Homes** - affordable housing, care at home, zero-carbon

**Organising Ourselves** - decision making, communications, community ownership

*As a Trust member, what can you do?*

Reserve your online seat at the Assembly next week. Help a family member, friend or neighbour add to the online Ideas Bank. Message your friends or share posts from the Community Trust's Facebook page.

Thank you - see you on Thursday 15th April!

Nick Wright,  
Community Action Plan Lead Facilitator



## COVID-19 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

All the initiatives developed by The Brolly Group to ease the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown are now in place. Financial payments to people who have seen their income severely reduced by the pandemic began last week. This completes the third element of the financial support package that also includes support for people who are finding it extremely difficult to meet their household expenses and an extension to the Knockie Trust hardship fund. If anyone wants help with completing

the forms then please email [admin@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:admin@sfctrust.org.uk) for the financial assistance scheme and [fionahbateman@icloud.com](mailto:fionahbateman@icloud.com) for household expenses and financial hardship. Meanwhile, the Trust at its April board meeting, agreed to keep the schemes open. Please click on this link:

<https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/userfiles/file/News/Brolly%20Group%20Leaflet%20Update%2025th%20March.pdf> to access a leaflet that describes all the support currently available.



Gareth Jones,  
Director SFCT

## BOARD MEETING

The Directors of the Trust meet monthly and the last meeting was on the 7th April.

Prior to any meeting there is a flurry of activity as reports are written up by volunteer Directors on their projects, proposals are finalised for discussion / agreement / rejection and staff support said activity with agendas and minutes.

It's a finely oiled machine as you would expect from members of the community who take their responsibilities quite seriously. Of course there is a slight pause in proceedings as we wait for the results of the Community Action Plan and with our eye on the Council's Local Development Plan consultation process (and even the Scottish Parliament Elections and the impacts of that).

Life doesn't stop though, particularly during Covid, and amongst all this the support being given during the pandemic is taking centre stage in the here and now. At the same time opportunities present themselves that haven't had months and years of thought put into them like the purchase of new equipment, requests of help from local groups or even an opportunity to buy a camping and caravan park!

It's a balancing act to respond to everything, particularly as we know the aspirations of the community to do many great projects will require additional match funding alongside the funds provided by swirling turbines on our doorstep. This takes time, resources and understanding the implications and limitations of the place we live in. However behind it all there is a will and that is a victory in itself.

The Community Action Plan will help provide evidence of need so we can focus our resources into the priorities of the community. This is the first step in finding match funding and, indeed, justifying the projects the substantial funds we have should be directed towards.

This is the challenge volunteer Directors face when together at a monthly meeting and individually as leads on their respective projects. It's quite a daunting prospect while juggling busy jobs and family life.

Finding workable solutions helps – and if you attend the Community Assembly's you might be exactly the right person to help identify and implement that solution. You don't have to be a Director. You don't have to be part of a community group. You might just be the person whose skills and abilities can make it happen and a willingness on your part to do so.

Don't be a stranger.

Tony  
Manager, SFCT

Over the next few weeks check out the website for more details of the 7th April Directors meeting.

My first boss told me it doesn't matter how much money you have, you always want more!

That dawned on everyone as we talked through potential projects, how financial forecasting and budget discussions are going, how to attract required match funding, evidencing need and the cost of preparing robust business plans and funding applications to ensure the best success for everything we get involved with.

When we say 'we' we don't just mean the Trust but other groups and how we can use our team to provide specialist advice to help community groups deliver their projects.

A few decisions were made from employing additional staff to help manage the timetable of legacy projects in particular, ensuring identified risks are avoided as best we can and easing the pressure on volunteer time to chase up suppliers involved in each project.

Directors also talked about making interim areas and seating available outside Wildside and Riverside for the

summer and creating spaces to engage the local community on further activity around those areas.

Broadband too was discussed, which has involved hours of discussion already. All in all it was a mammoth meeting and everything on the agenda was not discussed as we all finally took a breath and admitted defeat at 10.45pm at night!

Next morning everyone is up bright and bushy tailed actioning decisions and putting this newsletter together so we can keep you informed as best we can. Keep checking the website for more 'live' updates.

## EVENTS THIS MONTH

Wednesday 7th April	Monthly Trust Board Meeting
Thursday 8th April	Errogie Church Steering Group Meeting
Monday 12th April	Deadline for Strath News Articles
Wednesday 14th April	Riverside Virtual Tea Break 11am and 7:30pm
Saturday 24th April	Stratherrick & Foyers Market
Tuesday 27th April	Community Council Meeting
Thursday 29th April	SSE Catch up Meeting



# OUR COMMUNITY OUR FUTURE

ERROGIE - FOYERS - GORTHLECK - INVERFARIGAIG - TORNESS - W/HITEBRIDGE

## ONLINE COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY

**THURSDAY 15TH  
APRIL, 7:30PM**

**OPEN TO EVERYONE!**

Reserve your seat online at  
[www.communityfuture.net](http://www.communityfuture.net)  
now!

## WHAT ARE **OUR** ASPIRATIONS...?

The community survey results are in! 264 local folk shared their aspirations for the local community in February and March 2021. They are a fascinating insight into what we think of ourselves. What do we like about our community? What challenges do we face? What are our aspirations for the future?

The aspirations from the survey are a great foundation for the Community Assembly - the next stage in producing the Community Action Plan.

This assembly is an opportunity for all of us to shape our future. We'll use it to explore what needs to happen to take forward the big aspirations coming out of the community survey, shown in the table below. The rest of this brochure contains a full summary of the survey results.

**ONLINE  
COMMUNITY  
ASSEMBLY**

**THURSDAY 15TH  
APRIL, 7:30PM**

**OPEN TO EVERYONE!**  
**Reserve your seat online at  
[www.communityfuture.net](http://www.communityfuture.net)  
now!**

<b>Community Life:</b>	local facilities, services, things to do
<b>Better Connections:</b>	getting around, transport, broadband
<b>Outdoors and Nature:</b>	nature, wildness and the great outdoors
<b>Our Homes:</b>	affordable housing, care at home, zero-carbon
<b>Organising Ourselves:</b>	decision making, communications, community ownership

**Everybody is welcome, whether you want to suggest ideas or simply listen to what's going on.**

Find out more on the revamped website **[www.communityfuture.net](http://www.communityfuture.net)**, where you can add ideas to the new **Ideas Bank**, see other folk's suggestions and sign up for updates.

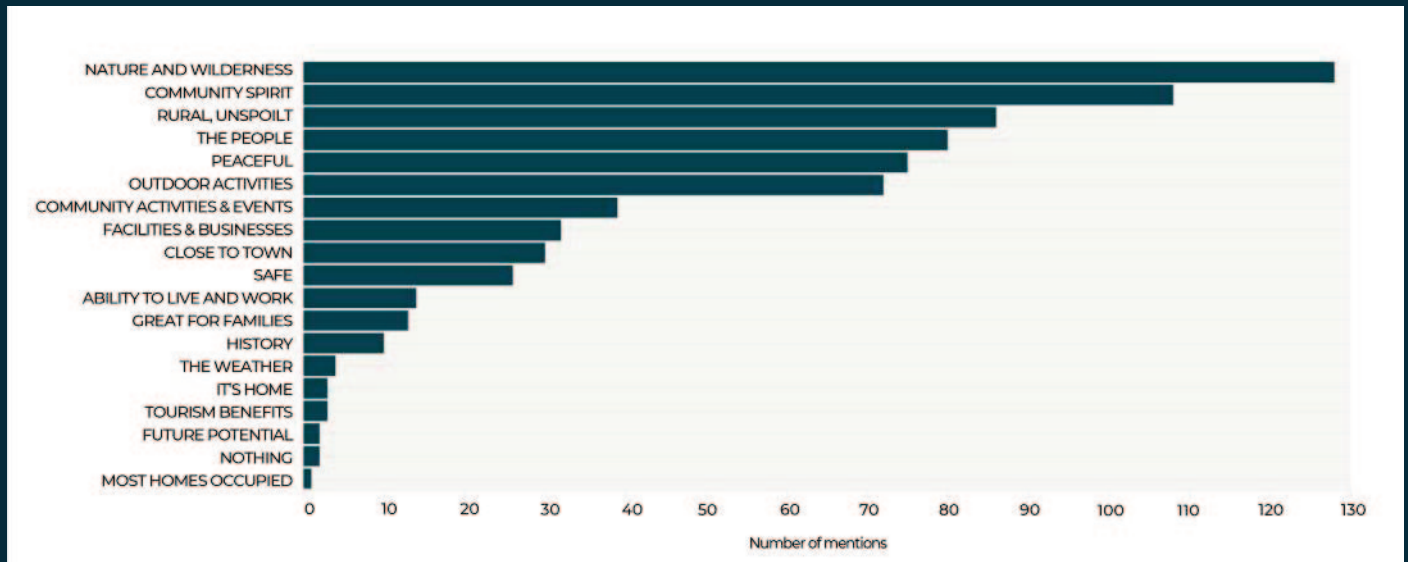
Date for your diary: the second Community Assembly will take place online on Thursday 27 May at 7:30pm. Come along to agree priorities for action.

Coronavirus restrictions means most of our consultation has to be online. We know this isn't ideal for everybody. If you want a good old-fashioned chat, please contact Nick Wright on **07900 334110**.

This summary has been prepared by the independent Community Action Planning team led by Nick Wright Planning.

**Question 1: “What do you like about our community? For example, what’s good about living or working here? What do you love about the area? What needs to be protected for the future?”**

The graph below shows how many times each topic was mentioned.

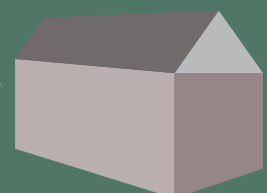
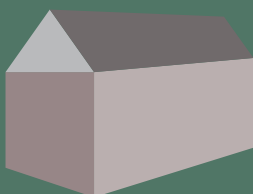


View interactive infographic on [www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults](http://www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults)

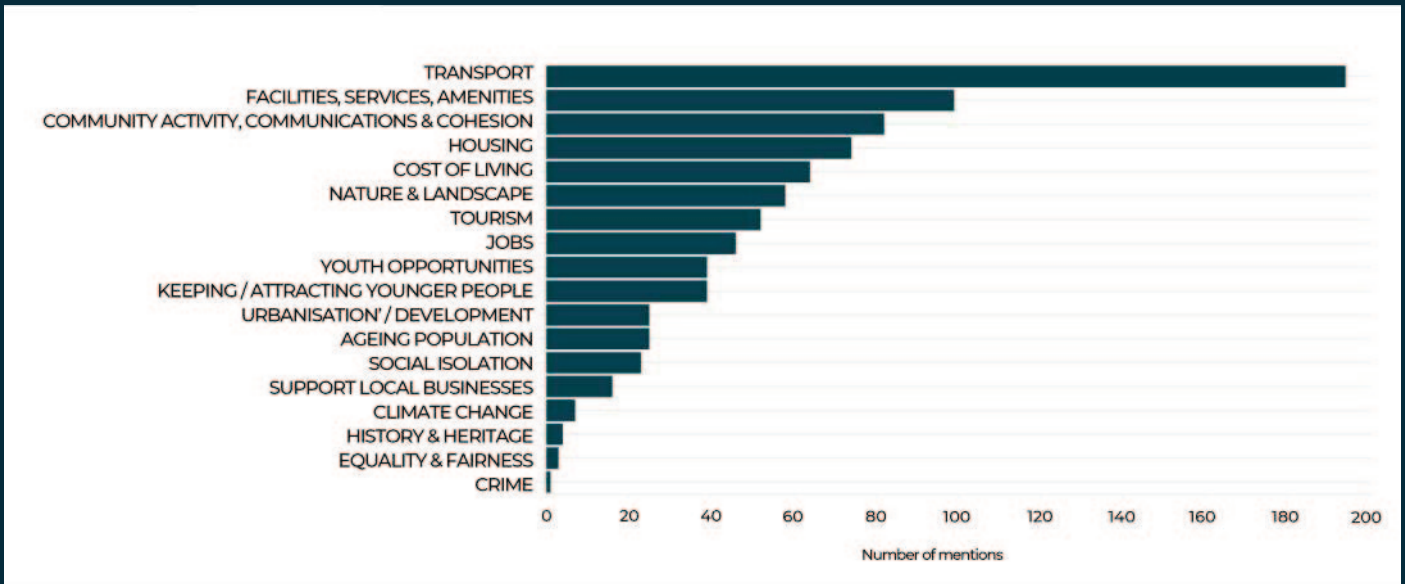
The things people most liked about the community all relate to nature, community spirit, people and quiet unspoilt countryside. Each of those was mentioned by over 70 people, and they are summed up by these two quotes:

**“Of course the landscape, fresh air, natural habitat - but especially the people. This is a caring community - we can’t always get on with every single person, but the vast majority of folk in our area are kind, generous”**

**“It still feels like a ‘rural’ community due to the number of people still working in land-based industries and working collaboratively”**



**Question 2: “Other than COVID-19, what are the big challenges facing our community? What’s difficult about living or working here? These could be issues you face personally, or problems that apply to others or indeed the whole community.”**



View interactive infographic on [www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults](http://www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults)

By far the biggest challenge was transport, mentioned by 194 people (75% of respondents). The main specific concerns were potholes and winter gritting, followed by public transport and the amount and speed of traffic.

The quotes below show that people were concerned about getting around the local area, and also getting to Inverness and Fort Augustus.

## Transport

194 mentions

“Awful state of the roads”

“Transport issues - particularly for young people and the elderly. No connectivity between Gorthleck and Foyers for example”

“No bus links to Fort Augustus from Whitebridge, or busses from Inverness after 7pm, NO service on a Sunday”

“You could cover the pot holes but it wouldn’t make the journey any quicker”

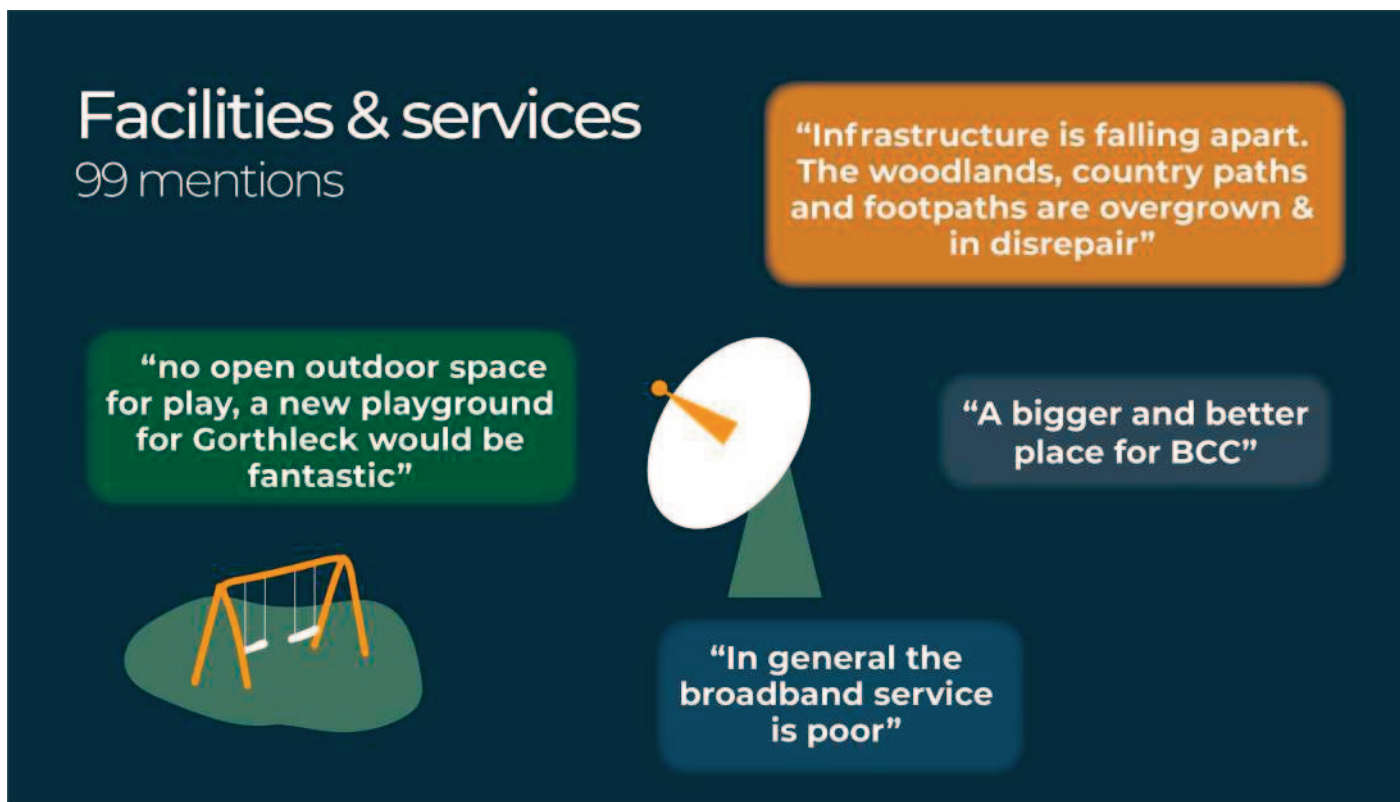
“Increasing traffic speeding through Foyers”



Facilities and services was the second biggest challenge, mentioned by 99 people (40%). This included broadband and phone access, maintenance (including paths, bins and woodlands), playparks, sports facilities and so on. The quotes below give a flavour.


## Facilities & services

99 mentions




**"Infrastructure is falling apart. The woodlands, country paths and footpaths are overgrown & in disrepair"**

**"no open outdoor space for play, a new playground for Gorthleck would be fantastic"**



**"A bigger and better place for BCC"**



**"In general the broadband service is poor"**

The quotes below illustrate some of the other challenges.

'Community' includes information and decision-making about how community benefit money is spent (mentioned by 40 people, 15%), and general community spirit and strain on volunteers (mentioned by 30 people, 10%). 'Housing' focussed mainly on the lack of affordable housing (mentioned by 53 people, 20%)

## Community

82 mentions

**"Lack of communication, and misunderstandings causing bad feeling. (Often exacerbated by social media)"**

## Housing

74 mentions

**"The vast sums coming in are having a negative effect on our community and causing frictions"**

**"heating bill is through the roof due to storage heating"**

## Cost of living

64 mentions

## Nature

58 mentions

**"appreciate needing tourism but do like the quietness too"**

**"Keeping our young people here by offering local employment and local houses that are affordable"**

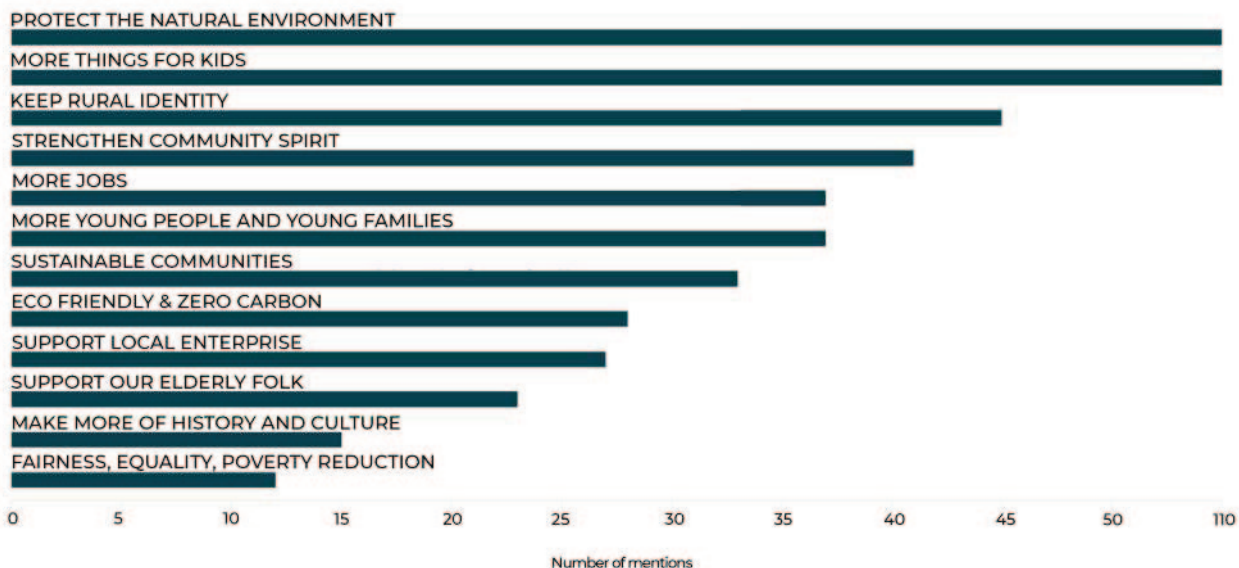
## Tourism

52 mentions

### Question 3: "What are your aspirations for our community in the future? If you had a magic wand, how would you like the community to be in say 2040?"

We analysed the responses to Question 3 in two ways.

Firstly, we picked out common themes. The answer below from a pupil at Stratherrick Primary School contains two popular themes: poor roads (making it unsafe for people to walk or cycle along roads) and lack of facilities (in this case a playpark and shop in Gorthleck)



View interactive infographic on [www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults](http://www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults)



The second way we analysed the responses to question 3 was by recording specific ideas and how often they were mentioned.

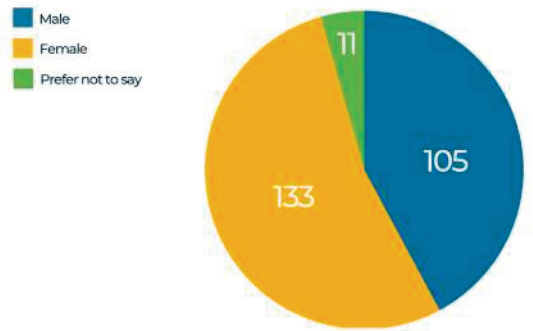
The diagram below summarises people’s ideas, grouped into categories. The size of the circle relates to how often they were mentioned.



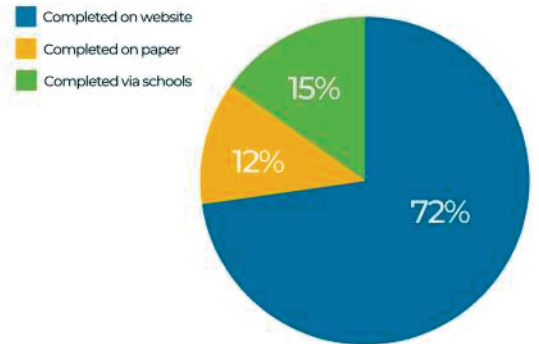
The community survey took place in February and March 2021. Paper copies were distributed to every household in the area and the survey was made available online. It was promoted via community networks.

264 responses were received from a local population of around 820. That represents 32% of the local population. Response rates for similar community surveys elsewhere in Scotland are typically between 5% and 20%.

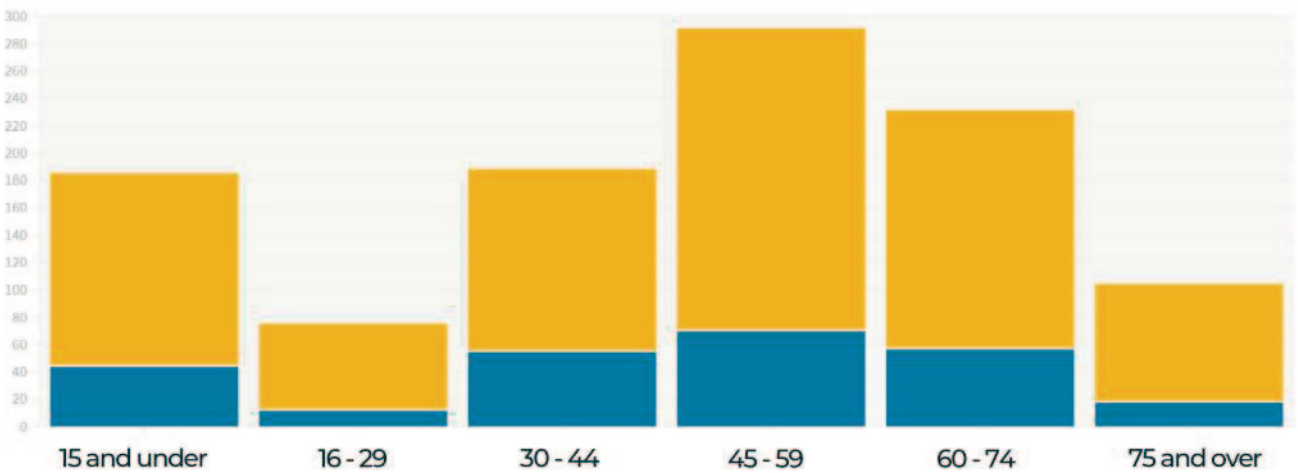
Respondent's gender



Responses by medium used



Number of responses 264  
Population 818 (Census 2011)



## CHAIR'S MONTHLY BULLETIN

It has been another busy month! The Community Action Plan survey is now closed, and we have been absolutely delighted at the number of people who have taken the time to complete the form; thank you. Nick Wright has shared the results with the Trust and the CAP Steering Group, highlighting what you said you like and dislike about living here. You can have a look at the results in more detail here: <http://www.communityfuture.net/surveyresults>.

Nick is now pulling together a 'Community Assembly' of people who want to put the ideas into action! This is another opportunity for you to get involved as part of a working group to discuss solutions around the 'themes' you are most interested in. The Assembly is open to everyone and we hope to get as many people along as possible in order that we have the manpower to make things happen.

The weather is getting better, the nights longer and it looks hopeful that restrictions will soon be lifted and we can begin to socialise again outdoors. With this in mind, the Wildside Centre Project Team met with those of you in the

community who wanted to be involved in the landscaping of the centre. It was decided to turn two areas into lawns and purchase a variety of accessible picnic tables and benches in order to provide outdoor areas where people can meet safely. Once you are able to enjoy the grounds, we hope that it will inspire more ideas for our landscaping team to incorporate into their long term plan. In the summer there will be, Covid-19 restrictions allowing, events that will help to bring everybody back together again. I know you will have lots of great ideas, so please share them with us!

We are on a mission to set up steering groups for each of the legacy projects in order that the community develops a real sense of ownership of these major initiatives. My fellow director, Catriona Fraser is now leading the Riverside Field project and is keen to welcome onboard anyone who would like to be involved. Please pop along to our first Virtual Tea Break meeting on Wednesday 14th April at 11am or at 7:30pm when we will update everyone on progress and get your thoughts on the project. We hope to see many faces there and in particular extend our invite to any residents at Lower Foyers who would like to come along. It will be a Zoom meeting and you will find joining details on page 11.

Kirsty Balfour  
Chair, SFCT

## RIVERSIDE VIRTUAL TEA BREAK

Please come along and join our informal Riverside Virtual Tea Break on Wednesday 14th April. Everyone is welcome and it is a great chance to receive the latest updates and next steps for the Riverside Field!

11 a.m. link - Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Riverside Tea Break 1

Time: Apr 14, 2021 11:00 AM London

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83605486962?pwd=TVdYaEoySS82d2M4OUp1OUhEN1FHdz09>

Meeting ID: 836 0548 6962

Passcode: 934385

7.30 p.m. link - Stratherrick and Foyers Community Trust is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Riverside Tea Break 2

Time: Apr 14, 2021 07:30 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83903832888?pwd=dHFCTXVXSm1WUWZTRTNqNzVFbnE3Zz09>

Meeting ID: 839 0383 2888

Passcode: 606071

Catriona Fraser  
Director, SFCT

## Q&As

### What is happening with Broadband in the area?

After the mast at Dumglass is erected, we will be able to reach Errogie, North Gorthleck, Torness, Ault na Goir and Dumglass and some other remote areas. This will support an additional 50+ homes in those areas alongside the homes and businesses who we have already provided broadband for.

When the project was first announced decent Broadband seemed quite far away from the area but now roll out and opportunities for other Broadband services are becoming increasingly available. We will have a better sense of what is expected from them in August and the Trust Directors agreed at the 7th April meeting they will let you know what the options are so you can make an informed choice.

More information will appear on the website and in the Trust Magazine, due out in May.

Jillian Barclay  
Director, SFCT



## SOUP TO GO! SUCCESS

The team that runs the 'Broth and Blether' activity have started an incredibly successful 'Soup to Go' service every Monday. Soup (plus bread and cake!) is available from The Wildside Centre between 12 noon and 1.30pm and must be ordered before 6pm on the Sunday evening. More than 60 people are enjoying this culinary delight, prepared by a network of 18 soup makers.

Please call Pam Simpson on 01456 486364 or Lyn Woods on 01456 486786 to order yours!

They will try to accommodate all dietary requirements and strict Covid rules will be in place. If you cannot collect your soup, there are volunteer drivers that will bring it to your door. Keep an eye out for the delicious varieties of soup they have to offer on our website or on Facebook.

This service is available to anyone in our Community and is free of charge with thanks to funding from Highlands and Islands Enterprise.

Lyn Woods

Soup to Go . . .



## JOIN THE TRUST

If you would like to become a member of the Trust, please click on this link.

<https://www.stratherrickcommunity.org.uk/membership>

## STOP PRESS - FOYERS BAY

Calling everyone who would like to guide the development of the Foyers Bay boating facility. The inaugural steering group meeting will be held on Wed 28th April at 7.00pm. If you would like to attend please email Russell Bain at [russell-dir@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:russell-dir@sfctrust.org.uk) and Lorraine Lewis at [lorraine-dir@sfctrust.org.uk](mailto:lorraine-dir@sfctrust.org.uk)

## MANY THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS... AND PHOTOGRAPHER

This newsletter is made possible by community benefit funding from SSE Renewables, Greencoat and Green Highland Allt Luaidhe (228) Limited.

