

Sandford and Upper Avondale

Community Action Plan

2020



What is a Community Led Action Plan?

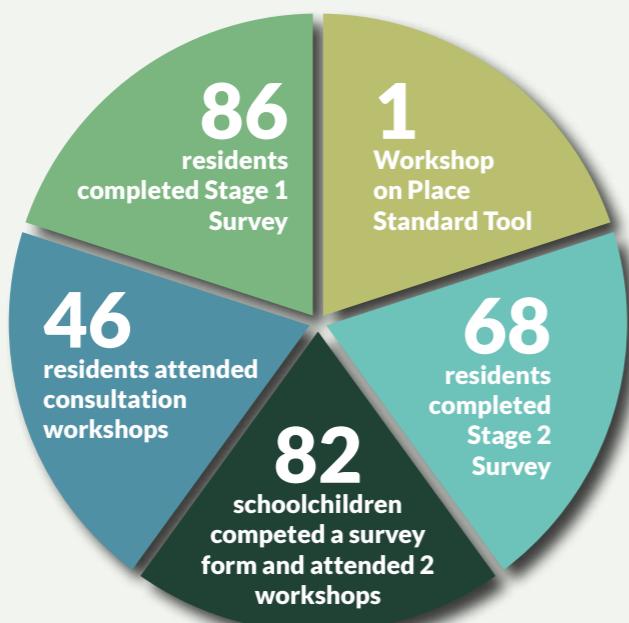
Community Led Action Plans give people a real opportunity to say what's important to them and what needs to happen to make sure that their communities are better places to live for everyone. This Plan sets out the priorities and aspirations of Sandford and Upper Avondale residents and identifies ways of making these things happen.

Why do a Community Led Action Plan?

- Local people are the best source of knowledge about their communities, which leads to better decision making
- The process of working together and achieving things together creates a sense of community
- Community involvement accords with people's right to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- Many grant-making organisations prefer, or even require, community involvement to have occurred before handing out financial assistance

How the Plan was completed

- Stage 1 community survey carried out by Banks Renewables
- Drop in events in Sandford and Gilmourton to confirm residents views
- Place Standard workshop with the Sandford & Upper Avondale Community Council (SUACC) to draw out priority themes and key issues
- Workshops and surveys were completed with pupils at Sandford Primary School and Gilmourton Primary School
- A Postal Stage 2 community survey of local residents was carried out to gather more detail from previous drop ins and surveys
- The Plan was then developed based on the consultation and research was undertaken in support of project ideas
- Local stakeholders consulted with upon completion of the community survey, including Local Authority representatives



Location

Sandford and Upper Avondale is located in South Lanarkshire with Sandford around 15 miles south east of Glasgow. The area is situated to the west of the A74, south of Strathaven. It is now primarily a rural farming area with a past that owes much to coal mining and heavy industry and a future based on wind farms and renewable energy.

History

The area is steeped in history. There are several historic monuments which emphasise the area's connection to the Covenanters. In 1679, during the battle of Drumclog, John Graham of Claverhouse, an arch persecutor of the Covenantors, was forced to retreat. During the battle, Claverhouse lost his horse and commandeered the Trumpeter's mount. The unfortunate trumpeter was caught, killed and his body thrown down a well.

At Auchengilloch there is a monument which was erected in 1830 to mark the site of various Conventicles. The site was chosen because of its remoteness ensuring the meetings were not disturbed. Drumclog Kirk, originally constructed in 1901 of corrugated iron, was replaced in 1912 by an attractive stone building. It was named Drumclog Memorial Kirk in remembrance of the Battle of Drumclog.

Sandford has always been a thriving community. In the early days, the Romans passed through en route from Carstairs to the seaport of Irvine, leaving caches of coins at Chapleton, Torfoot Farm, Drumclog. In 1860 Roman graves were discovered at Craig Farm, Sandford. In more recent times, the prosperity of the Village and surroundings was based on agriculture and the local mills. Tweedie Mill was used for oatmeal production and grain drying. The nearby Spectacle E'e Mill which was destroyed by fire in the 18th Century, was a corn mill and cloth processing mill. The long vanished mill on the river Kype across from the Spectacle E'e was a weaving mill and later a Calico printing works.

Banks Kype Muir Community Fund

Hamilton based Banks Renewables' second wind farm in South Lanarkshire, Kype Muir, is now fully operational and started supplying up to 88.4MW of electricity to the National Grid in spring 2019. The location of the wind farm is entirely situated in the area. Banks Renewables established the Kype Muir Community Partnership Fund (KMCPF) to provide financial assistance to community groups, voluntary organisations and the local and much wider area surrounding the Kype Muir Windfarm. The fund will be shared equally between community council areas of Sandford and Upper Avondale; Lesmahagow; Stonehouse; and Strathaven and Glassford.

This Plan establishes community priorities and explores a range of funding sources including KMCPF, which can be considered as an option for many of the proposals identified.



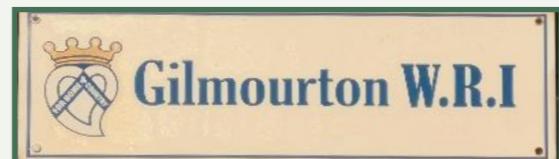
What's Happening In Sandford & Upper Avondale?

Through the development of this Plan, SUACC are seeking to bring the community together through an engaging and dynamic consultative process designed to identify the community's priorities for improving the area, and develop community-led action to realise those aspirations.

The priorities identified in this Plan will form the basis of projects that a potential new Trust will take forward, in partnership with local residents, local community/voluntary groups/ statutory agencies/the private sector/ Scottish Government and South Lanarkshire Council. There are already a wide range of groups providing services and activities locally, also those further afield, in particular in Strathaven.

Community Groups and Organisations Operating in Sandford

- Sandford Primary School PTA
- Gilmourton Primary School PTA
- Sandford and Upper Avondale Community Council
- LEAP Befriending and Handy Person support service for over 50's
- Sandford Cinema monthly screenings in Sandford Hall
- Maggie's Yoga Classes
- Avondale Young Farmers
- Sandford Community Ethos Group
- Sandford WRI
- Sandford Carpet Bowling Club
- Drumclog Carpet Bowling Club
- Gilmourton Thursday Club
- Drumclog Womens Guild
- Sandford Hall Committee
- Gilmourton Womens Rural Institute
- Drumclog Memorial Kirk
- Dungavel & Drumclog Under 5's



Other local organisations used by SUACC residents

Beavers, Cubs, Scouts	Strathaven
Brownies, Guides, Rainbows	Strathaven
Darvel, After School Club	Strathaven
Lego Club	Gilmourton
Boys Brigade	Strathaven
Tae Kwon Do	Strathaven
Highland Dancing, Ballet	Strathaven
Gymnastics Club	Strathaven

Population

- There are 1372 people living in the area
- 16% are under aged 16, compared to the Scottish average of 17.3
- Sandford has more families in the area with 29% of people being under 16
- 69% are aged 16 to 64, compared to the Scottish average of 66%
- 13% are aged 65 and over, compared with the Scottish average of 17%



Health

- 58% of people are in very good health, 9% are in fair health
- 51% of people have a long-term health condition
- 10% of people are unpaid carers, 60% of these are in employment
- Life expectancy is 80.7 for women and 76.8 for men, both comparable to the Scottish averages of 81.1 for women and 77 for men



Income & Employment

- 1.4% are unemployed, lower than the Scottish average of 4.8%
- 61% are economically active, compared to the Scottish average of 69%
- 12.5% are retired
- 7.65% of households have at least one working aged adult who's unemployed and not a fulltime student, long term sick or disabled



Housing

- 90% of housing is privately owned, compared to 62% across Scotland



Education

- 92% of 16 and 17 year olds are in fulltime education, compared to the Scottish average of 79%
- The Scottish Index for Multiple Deprivation shows a high ranking of education in the 6th and 7th decile in Scotland



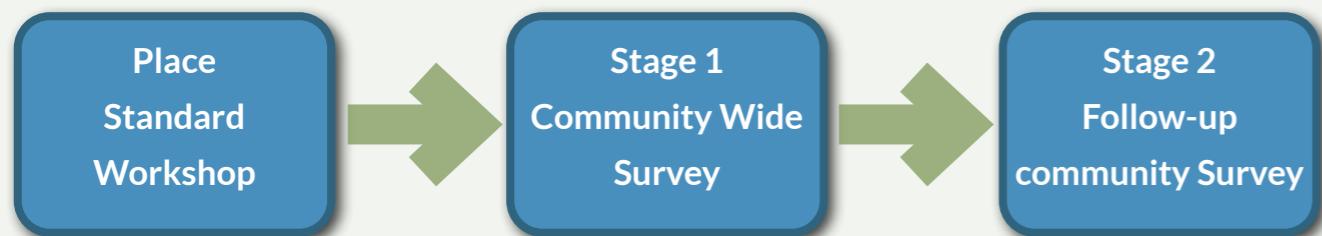
Access to Services

- The area ranks within the lowest 10-15% in Scotland for access to services
- Average time for public transport to a GP is 23 minutes or 9 minutes by car
- Average time to a retail centre is 24 minutes or 9 minutes by car



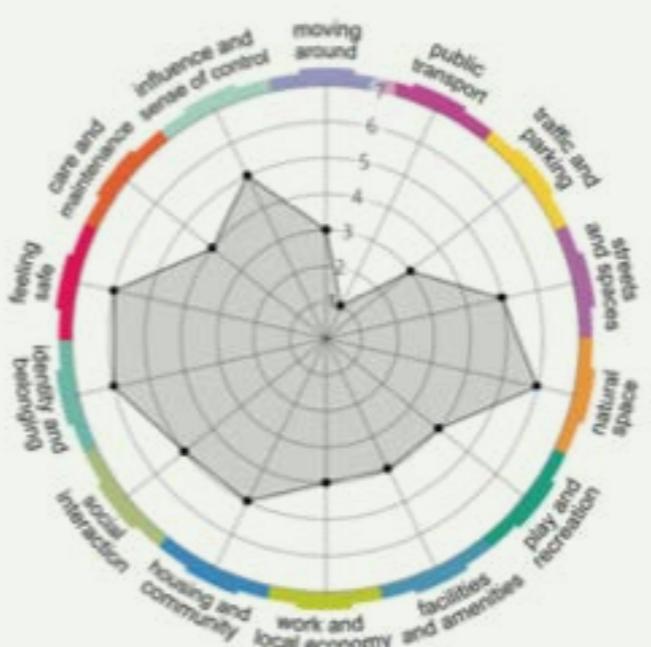
Community Consultation

The community consultation carried out in support of this plan used a three-stage approach. This allowed priority themes and issues to be drawn out, followed by more detailed follow up survey work.



A Place Standard workshop was delivered to Community Council members to assess the quality of the area and identify priorities for development. Discussions about each theme in the Place Standard tool took place, which identified key issues affecting the area and where priorities should most likely be focussed. The results can be seen on this page.

A Stage 1 survey, drop-in sessions and school workshops were coordinated by Banks Renewables which asked residents to identify potential projects. The survey was distributed by post to 400 households with 86 forms returned. 46 community members attended the two drop-in sessions which provided information on the Kype Muir Community Fund. Visitors to the drop-ins were invited to engage in informal discussions about potential projects with representatives of the Community Council. Two workshops and a survey of Primary School children at Sandford and Gilmourton were also carried out, involving 55 pupils. The Stage 1 survey raised the following five themes for projects: environment, transport and access, legacy and heritage, enterprise, and enhancing communities.



A Stage 2 survey and school workshops were coordinated by Community Links Scotland, which asked residents and pupils to provide further information on what had been identified in Stage 1. 68 responses were received to the survey through online survey monkey responses and postal surveys which were delivered to all households in the area. 82 pupils at Sandford and Gilmourton Primary Schools took part in the workshops.

Stage 1 Community Survey

The stage 1 postal survey was circulated to almost 400 households with 86 of them completed, a response rate of 22%. A further 46 residents attended drop in workshops held in Sandford and Gilmourton Hall. Those topics receiving most suggestions for potential future projects are highlighted below along with comments from the stage one drop ins.

Transport and Access

Introduction of a community bus or public bus	84%
Improved Footpaths	28%
Traffic management/road maintenance/parking	24%
<i>Electric community minibus charge at Sandford Hall to deal with school runs and shopping etc for older members of community.</i>	



Environment

Introduce new footpaths/cycle paths	52%
Community access to sustainable transport	33%
Use of Renewable Energy and energy efficiency	24%
River/drainage/riverbank improvements	14%
<i>Address litter problems, particularly as people drive through villages, improve drainage at Gilmourton park and football pitch, use of solar/wind power for village halls.</i>	



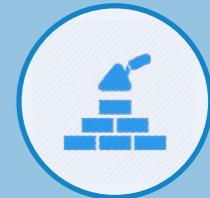
Legacy and Heritage

Conservation & interpretation work	24%
Establish new walks and trails	17%
Planting schemes and woodland management	13%
Ensuring young people have local understanding	13%
<i>Tree planting to replace old trees/hedges, heritage signs for rural roads explaining local name of road and historical information.</i>	



Enterprise

Improve broadband & mobile reception	48%
Small Business Support	27%
<i>Develop small scale hydro scheme on Kype river.</i>	



Enhancing Communities

Improve existing village halls	52%
New & improved play and recreation facilities	26%
More Local groups and activities	17%
<i>Purchase land to build a new hall in Sandford, purchase small field next to Sandford hall to create a larger car park</i>	



Comments from the community

"I would like to see a proper cycle/footpath upgraded between Sandford and Strathaven."

"Fix the field drain at the top of School Road leading to the park as it turns to solid ice in the winter."

"An electric car and electric bikes with charge points at Sandford village hall."

"The footpath at the bottom of the Spectacle e'e falls to the Avon is frequently flooded and the path is in a poor state, it needs to be improved."

"An electric community bus that could deal with getting children to Strathaven and back each school day and that could be used by others to regular locations such as the supermarket, health centre, post

"Solar panels for the Primary schools and village halls."

"Dredge local burn at Gilmourton Play area to stop ongoing flooding."

"Better parking at Sandford Hall, when something is on, cars are abandoned all over the place!"

"A footbridge over the Kype would greatly improve the safety of pedestrians and allow children to use the new park."

"Improve sign posting and have interpretation panels for heritage trails and monuments."

"Local activities in Sandford and Gilmourton for children and teenagers to avoid always having to drive to Strathaven to participate."

"Improved mobile reception and broadband which is terrible, especially when trying to operate a business from home."

"A side or rear extension to the Sandford Hall."

"A new village hall at Gilmourton."

"Improved mobile reception and broadband which is terrible, especially when trying to operate a business from home."

"Could we create a flexible extension to Sandford Hall that could act as a community shop/café/museum/pop up pub."

"The regeneration of the play park at Gilmourton is a necessity, while the football pitch is inaccessible/unusable for the majority of the year due to flooding, we need a multi use games area here and in Sandford."

"Before and afterschool clubs for the Sandford area would be a great help for working parents."

82 young people at Sandford and Gilmourton Primary Schools were engaged with as part of the community consultation. Pupils were asked how important they felt a number of proposed actions and improvements were to them based on the Stage 1 Survey.

Importance of improvements and actions	Sandford Primary			Gilmourton Primary		
	Very	Sort	Not	Very	Sort	Not
Improve the walking paths to school	51%	31%	18%	90%	10%	
Less cars at the school	65%	27%	8%	58%	39%	3%
Slow down traffic in the village	53%	35%	12%	84%	13%	3%
Start a youth club	39%	39%	22%	42%	42%	16%
More things for older people to do	55%	33%	12%	71%	29%	
More clubs and activities in the village halls	69%	23%	8%	71%	16%	12%
Better play parks	61%	25%	14%	87%	13%	
More bins around the village	65%	22%	13%	77%	23%	
Create a local nature walk/ park	78%	16%	6%	64%	35%	
Make a community garden	57%	37%	6%	74%	19%	7%
More cycle paths	82%	12%	6%	83%	17%	
Improve Sandford Hall/Gilmourton Hall	43%	31%	26%	74%	26%	
Establish village entrance features	56%	24%	20%	32%	58%	10%
More community events in Sandford and Gilmourton	67%	22%	12%	65%	35%	

Where the two primary schools agreed were the need for more cycle paths and more community events, and more clubs and activities in the village halls. Gilmourton thought improving the walking paths to school much more important than Sandford, along with slowing down traffic and better play parks, or even ones that don't flood!

What do you like about living in your area?

Sense of community, play parks (Sandford), friends living nearby, it's a quiet village, feeling safe, near the countryside, school, friendly people, Spectacle e'e waterfall, Cycling routes to High Kipe Road, Roman Road.



What do you not like about living in your area?

Not much equipment in Old School Road Park (Sandford), other park is the other side of the busy bridge. Football Pitch and play park in Gilmourton floods up to 6 feet and you can't play there for weeks. Roads can be busy with fast cars and can flood, stopping us cycling.

What do you think could be done to make your area a better place to live?

Would like more clubs in Sandford as everything is in Strathaven. A bus stop, church, café/shop, vet, petrol station, cycle track through the woods to Strathaven, skatepark, something for teenagers, afterschool club in Sandford.



A Stage 2 survey was carried out in November/December 2019 with surveys posted to every address in the area and completed online using Survey Monkey. In total, 68 residents completed the survey - more than 15% of the surveys sent out. Questions were based on issues raised in the Place Standard Workshop as well as further exploring the comments from the Stage 1 consultation. Respondents were approx 60% female and 40% male with the age groups with the highest responses being 35-49 years and 50-64 years. Based on postcodes provided, around 44% of respondents were from Sandford, 22% were from wider Sandford, 22% were from villages along the A71, and 14% were from elsewhere in rural Avondale.

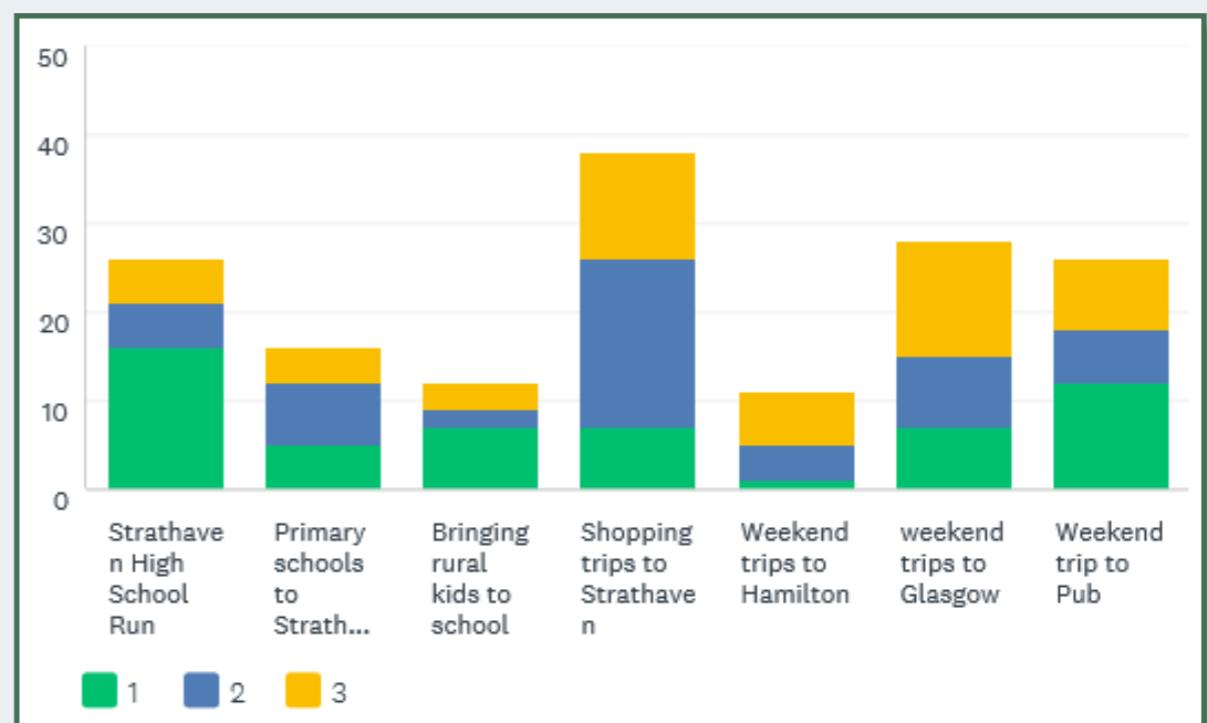
Q1. Improvements in our local open space?

- The most popular response was the resurfacing of paths with 57 votes of which 17 were first choice and 18 were second choice. This is likely to include the Sandford to Strathaven path and those paths that exist into the surrounding countryside.
- Improved play equipment had the second lowest weighted score which reflects the very poor play park at Gilmourton, and the older play area at Sandford.
- In second place in terms of number of votes was the idea of organising regular community clean ups with 47 votes overall with 11 as both first and second choices.

Additional comments were for:

- A safe pedestrian route between Drumclog and Gilmourton
- Improved car parking at Sandford Hall
- Circular paths to save returning the same way or walking on roads
- Measures to address speeding vehicles
- Grenification of the villages with tree planting etc

Q2. Using a Community Bus or Car?

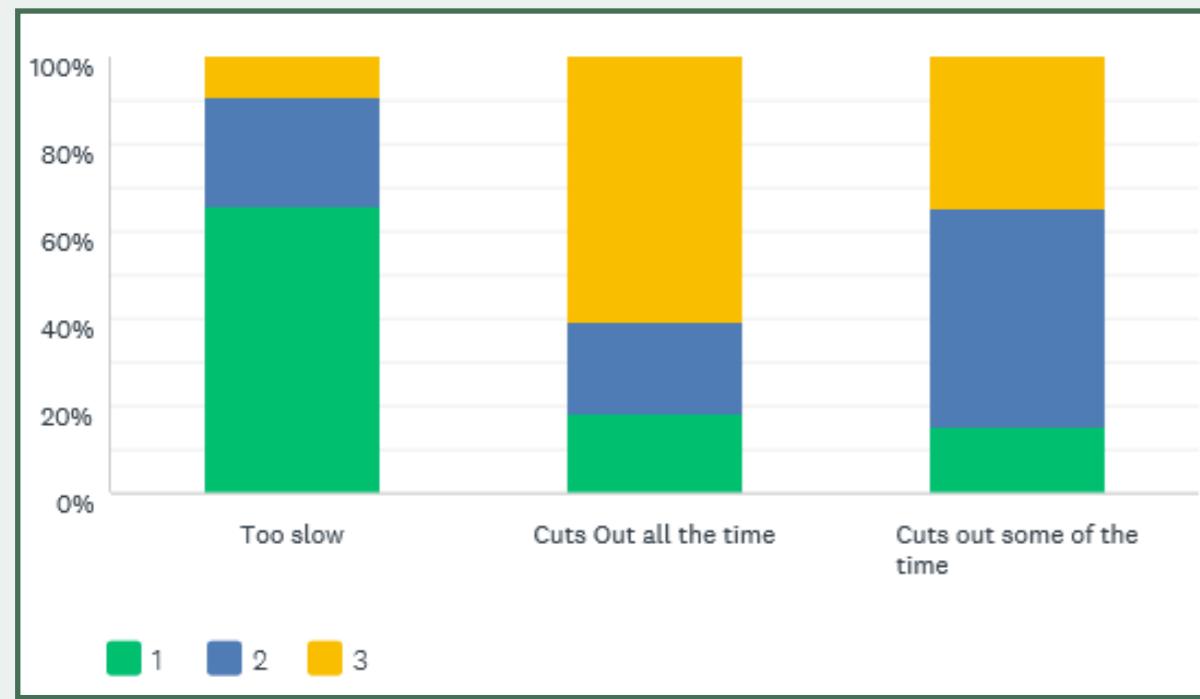


- o 16 first choice votes to establish a regular term time Strathaven High school run taking children to and from school had the most first choice votes.
- o The journey with second most first choice votes was accessing the pub in Strathaven at the weekend with 12 votes.
- o Weekday shopping trips to Strathaven received the most number of votes with 38 although the largest proportion of these were second choice votes.
- o Weekend trips to Glasgow were also popular.
- o While receiving less votes, the second lowest weighting for journey was bringing rural kids to school with 7 out of 12 votes a first choice.

Additional comments were for:

- Church/Trips to East Kilbride
- Accessing clubs/classes in Strathaven
- Midweek trips to Hamilton, East Kilbride and Glasgow
- Drop off at Larkhall train station

Q3. What are the major problems with Broadband?

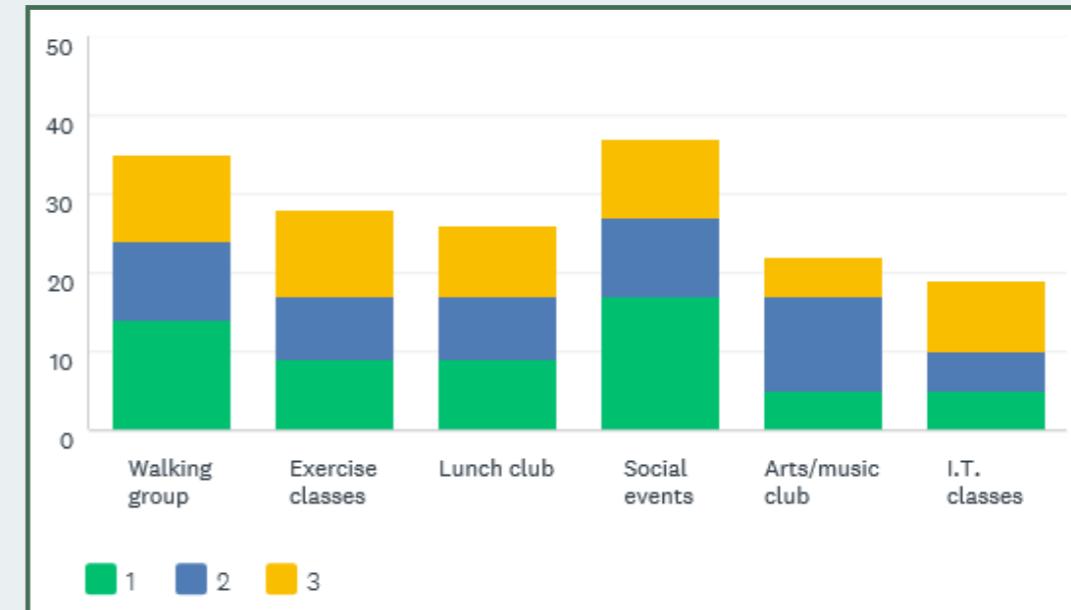


The Major problem was the slowness of the broadband cited by 66% of respondents followed by the issue that it cuts out some of the time and lastly that it cuts out all of the time. The table of existing Broadband providers by respondents shows that the majority are with BT followed by Sky, Plusnet and EE.

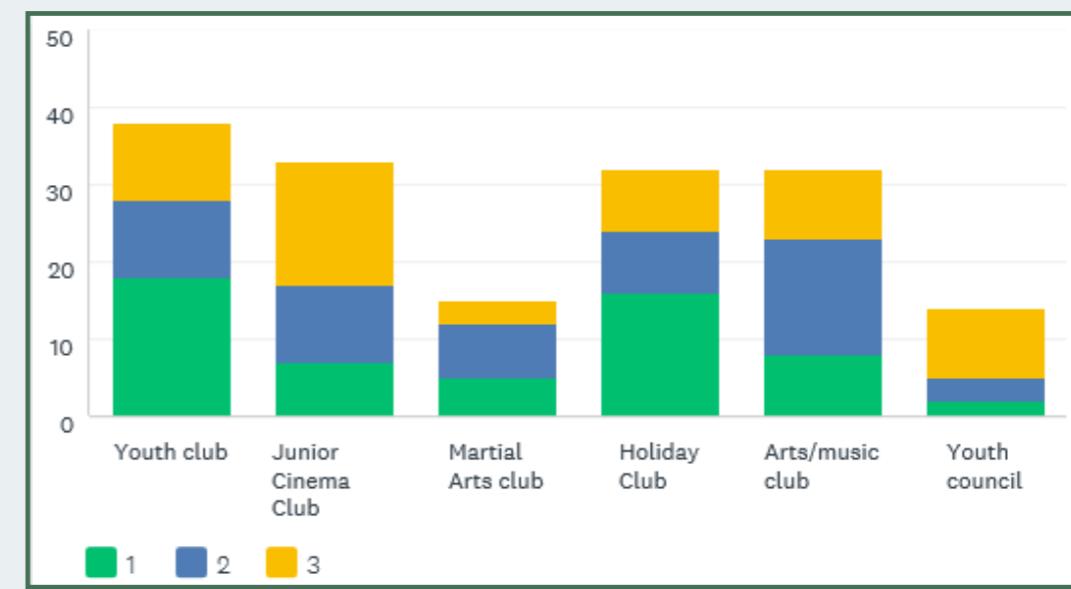
BT	Sky	Plusnet	EE	Talk Talk	Vodafone	Unicom	Bigblu	Virgin	John Lewis
25	8	5	5	4	3	1	1	1	1

Q4. What activities for older residents would you like in Sandford and Upper Avondale?

- o More social events for older residents was the top choice overall with 37 votes and top choice in first ranking votes with 17.
- o A walking group was in second place with 35 votes overall and 14 first choice ranking votes.
- o Exercise classes and a lunch club were fairly close in third and fourth place with both activities gaining 9 first and 8 second choice ranking votes.

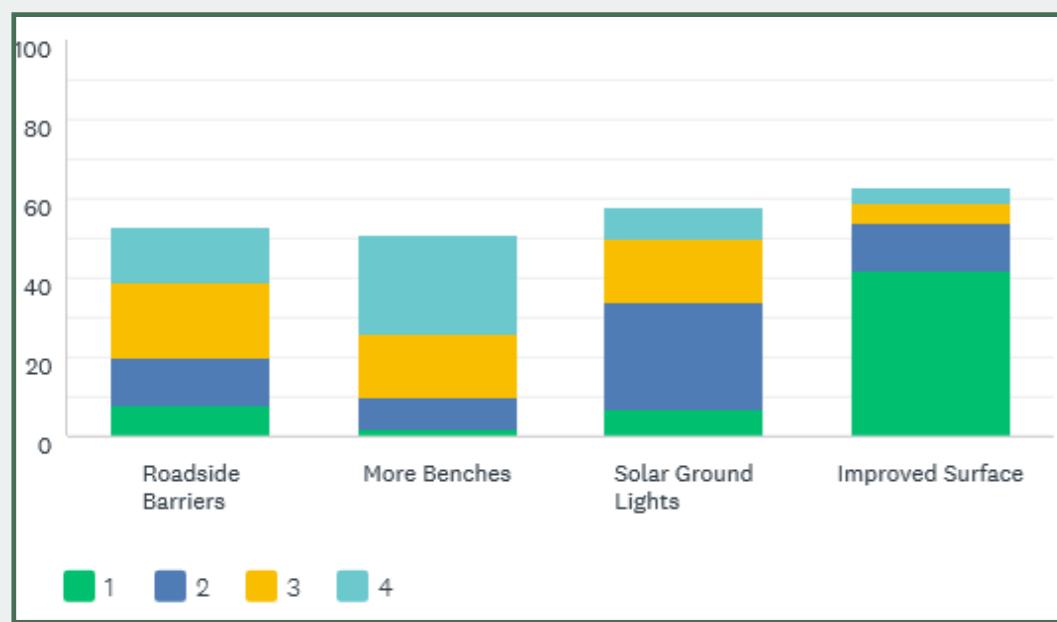


Q5. What activities for older residents would you like in Sandford and Upper Avondale?



- o A Youth club with 38 votes, 18 first choice votes was the most popular activity for young people with a variety of evening and weekend times suggested.
- o 16 first choice votes went towards a holiday club out of a total of 32 with the summer holidays identified in particular.
- o Although receiving 33 votes, the second highest, a large proportion of these votes were third choice votes for a Junior Cinema Club.

Q6. How should the cycle/footpath between Sandford and Strathaven be improved?



- o Improving the surface of the path received 42 first choice votes, the most in the entire survey, it also received 63 votes overall, also the highest throughout the survey.
- o In second place was the introduction of solar ground lights with 58 votes overall and 27 second place votes.
- o In third place was the construction of a roadside barrier followed by more benches in fourth.

Q7. Interest in a future Community Development Trust

As part of taking the Community Plan forward, the community are likely to consider establishing a new Community Development Trust that could access funding, take projects forward, buy in services, work with partners, employ staff and own land and building etc. A Community Council is legally unable to take forward a number of these actions.

When asked if this was something that a local resident may be interested in finding out more about and possibly joining, 16 respondents left their email or mobile to be contacted further. A further 23 local residents left e-mails indicating that they would wish to be sent the survey results, further information, future activities etc.

Based on the feedback from the Place Standard Workshop, the Stage 1 and 2 surveys, and workshops with schoolchildren, the following table of potential projects and timescales has been prepared.

Potential Project	Timescale		
	0-2 years	3-4 years	5-6 years
Establish a new Community Development Trust			
Support local clubs and activities			
Improved foot/cycle path from Sandford to Strathaven			
Supporting community transport service			
Traffic calming measures			
Organise community volunteer days			
Provision of electric community vehicle			
Additional car parking/signage at Sandford Hall			
New and improved play facilities			
Maintain and improve existing village Hall in Sandford			
Heritage project to improve signage and interpretation			
Improved Broadband connectivity			
Establish new cycle and footpaths			
New Village Hall for Gilmourton			

Project Development

The following section of the Plan provide details and action points on the projects outlined above, for the community to take forward. They have been designed to address the demands and aspirations of local people identified during the various stages of community consultation.

The projects outlined in the proceeding pages have been designed to meet some of the demands identified by the local community. The onus should be on local people to take these ideas forward as a community; identifying suitable leader groups and organisations, as well as local volunteers who can to help make activities happen. Any community members who want to take these projects forward or to start new community groups should feel encouraged to do so, and can use this plan as a starting point.

Establish a new Community Development Trust

Aim

To establish a new, not for profit, charitable Trust with a membership open to all residents of Sandford and Upper Avondale, to carry out a variety of activities and services for the area, including the potential development of projects outlined in this plan.

Summary

This project would be to set up a community development trust for Sandford and Upper Avondale with open membership to all people living and working in the area. The purpose would be to achieve a broad range of community renewal objectives for the area. As a charitable, independent legal organisation, the Trust would be managed by a local voluntary management committee drawn from this membership. The Community Led Action Plan would inform the Trust of the main priorities for area regeneration. The Trust would have powers to raise funds, acquire land and employ staff in order to achieve community renewal goals. Initial advice and support could be provided by Community Action Lanarkshire and the Development Trust Association Scotland who provide free staff and advice during the information and establishing phase.

Potential Partners

- SUACC
- Existing Community/Voluntary Groups in SUACC area
- SUACC Residents
- SUACC Primary Schools/Churches
- Rural Development Trust
- VASLAN



Existing Provision

There is no community development trust for Sandford and Upper Avondale with the nearest one being in Strathaven. While there is an active Community Council, they cannot employ staff or acquire assets amongst other things, like a Trust would be able to do.

Supporting Evidence

16 local residents responding to the stage 2 survey, indicated that establishing a Community Development Trust was something they would be interested in finding out more about and possibly joining.

Funding Options

- National Lottery Awards for All
- Scottish Government Investing in Communities Fund
- Land Fill Tax Funds
- Development Trust Association Scotland

Aim

To support existing organisations/facilities/services used by residents, and facilitate the introduction of new clubs/activities for local residents in the local area where appropriate.

Summary

The community would look to continue to support organisations providing activities, events and services both very locally in Sandford, Gilmourton and Drumclog, but also continue to support those organisations who provide activities in Strathaven, Stonehouse and further afield. Improved transport that was reliable, convenient and cost effective would at a minimum ensure that these groups continue to operate on current numbers, but they would be likely to increase their numbers if a minibus was available to take new potential members who do not have access to a car. Currently, numerous car journeys are made to the same venue/activity, where residents' time and carbon dioxide emissions could be reduced, while simultaneously increasing the local residents' able to participate. In addition to interest/ad hoc activities, a new transport solution for Sandford and Upper Avondale would also help secure the future of the afterschool and summer club hosted in Strathaven, but used by residents in the area.



Existing Provision

While some activities, such as Sandford Cinema and Gilmourton WRI, are held locally, residents use a large number of activities that are in particular based in Strathaven, including Beavers, Cubs, Scouts, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides; Strathaven Dynamos Football Club, Boys Brigade, Partners Seniors Together and Tae Kwon Do.

Supporting Evidence

In the Stage 2 survey, social events, exercise classes and a walking group were identified as popular activities for older residents, while youth club, arts and music club and holiday club were identified for young residents. In the young people's workshop they identified more than 15 groups they currently attended in Strathaven or Stonehouse.

Funding Options

- Youth Scotland Rural Action Fund
- Variety - Youth Club Grants
- Chance to Succeed
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Investing in Communities Fund

Potential Partners

- South Lanarkshire Community Learning and Development
- Local schools
- Local sports teams
- New Community Transport Scheme
- Avondale Community Transport
- Services Together

Improved foot/cycle path from Sandford to Strathaven

Aim

To provide a well surfaced, well lit, safe path that can be used by pedestrians and cyclists linking Sandford and Strathaven.

Summary

The existing 1.9mile path from Sandford to Strathaven is badly in need of improvements which would see it used more often, increase the links between the two settlements and make up for the shortfall in public transport, particularly for children traveling daily to and from secondary school. In addition, the path is not a designated cycle path or shared use path – it is too narrow. Vegetation around the path is currently cut back by South Lanarkshire Council who have within the last three years carried out some resurfacing of the path from Strathaven. The entire stretch requires brought up to a standard suitable for cycling, this could include built in solar panels, road barriers and benches as the path itself has two steep hills. The project would work with South Lanarkshire Council to initially carry out a Feasibility Study into the specification and cost of work required. This would be followed by accessing funding from a variety of funders who are keen to have paths to schools, improved cycle ways etc Upgrading the path has the potential to increase exercise, increase access to Strathaven on foot or cycle to the High School or other activities, particularly in the absence of any public transport.

There is potential to link in with the SLC led Sustrans bid for an Active Travel Study in Sandford and Upper Avondale in 2020. This study will establish the community's actual and perceived barriers to cycling and wellbeing for every day journeys. From this study, recommendations and priorities will be established. Consultation with community groups will form part of the study.

Potential Partners

- Sustrans
- South Lanarkshire Council Transport & Streets



Existing Provision

The existing cycle/foot path from Sandford to Strathaven is in poor condition. Cyclists currently use back roads in the area, and from Sandford, can access the on road Strathaven – East Kilbride signed route, as well as the NCR 74 at Stonehouse. A new cycleway is needed for getting to school and accessing facilities and services in Strathaven, with adequate lighting for nights and winter months.

Supporting Evidence

The path was raised throughout the consultation, in the Place Standard Workshop, the stage 1 survey and the stage 2 survey. In terms of the stage 2 survey, improving this footpath surface was the first choice of 62% of respondents, with 93% of respondents voting for resurfacing in total. Next popular was Solar Ground Lights with 58 votes overall, followed by a roadside barrier and the addition of benches.

Funding Options

- Sustrans Places for Everyone Fund
- South Lanarkshire Council Transport & Streets
- Safe Routes to School

Supporting community transport service

Aim

To provide greater access to the existing Avondale Community Transport Service and to introduce and support additional services if required.

Summary

The project would advertise and support the volunteer led Avondale Community Transport Service, offering a more accessible and responsive transport option to local residents that would help them to stay independent, participate in their communities and access vital public services and employment.

Existing Provision

There is no public transport service between Sandford and Strathaven, and the Stage 1 and 2 surveys both highlighted a shortfall in existing Community Transport options. There are a number of local community transport providers, most locally, Avondale Community Transport (ACT). ACT is a charity formed of volunteer drivers, operating a community minibus providing a flexible bus service for groups in the area, from Strathaven. There is no committed timetable for residents in Sandford and Upper Avondale, and the service depends on the availability of volunteers. Passenger Assistant Training and Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme could potentially be purchased for new volunteers. Book the bus, or find out more by contacting Phil Brittin on 01357 520472 or philipbrittin123@btinternet.com.

SPT MyBus Three Valleys Service 900 is a bookable bus service offering door-to-door transport in the area, covering Sandford and Upper Avondale, connecting with Strathaven, Hairmyres Hospital, Hamilton, Eddlewood Toll, Larkhall, Wishaw, Braidwood, Lanark, Carstairs and Carnwath. MyBus can be used for shopping, GP appointments, visiting friends, attending local clubs, and more. It operates Monday - Saturday 7am - 10:30pm and Sundays 9am - 10:30pm. Journeys can be booked up to a week in advance. Register to use the service by signing up at: <http://www.spt.co.uk/bus/mybus/> or by calling 0345 128 4024.

Getting Better Together Shotts also offer a free Volunteer Driving Service to get over 65s to health appointments, who have difficulty accessing transport but are not eligible for the ambulance service. Available throughout North and South Lanarkshire, the service operates on a first come, first served basis, and requires a minimum of 2 weeks notice. Telephone 01501 825 800 or email jamesgbtshotts@btconnect.com / paulgbtshotts@btconnect.com to book.

Supporting Evidence

The highest response throughout the Stage 1 survey with 84%, was the introduction of a community bus service. This was backed up by the Stage 2 survey which confirmed the demand to take high school pupils to and from Strathaven High School, shopping trips to Strathaven, weekend shopping trips to Glasgow and weekend trips to the pub in Strathaven.

Funding Options

- South Lanarkshire Council Micro Grants
- Green Economy Fund/Scottish Power Energy Networks

Potential Partners

- SUACC
- Avondale Community Transport



Traffic calming measures

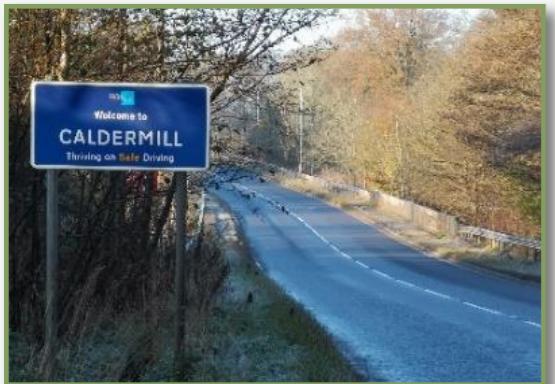
Aim

To provide a range of traffic calming measures, particularly through Gilmourton and Sandford, in addition to the villages truncated by the A71.

Summary

Liaise with South Lanarkshire Council Roads and Transportation Department to raise the profile of existing speed limits and extend these if necessary. 'Thriving on Safe Driving' is the South Lanarkshire strapline but this does not seem to be working, particularly around the two primary schools where the 20s Plenty initiative is in place.

In addition to the reduction of speed limits and potential traffic calming measures on the ground, the ongoing dangers could be highlighted by liaising with the local primary schools to create large posters highlighting dangers and concerns, tying into national and local authority campaigns. SLC can arrange for speed surveys to be undertaken for areas where communities consider there to be an issue. This can be arranged by return of the specific locations which are considered to be an issue relating to the speed of traffic, to the Roads and Transportation Department. SUACC have also initiated the use of a volunteer speed gun at identified areas.



Existing Provision

The current situation is 40mph along the A71, with 30mph through the villages of Sandford and Gilmourton. There are currently no rumble strips, buildouts or other traffic slowing down mechanisms either on the road or in the form of additional signage. The SLC School Travel Plan (STP) co-ordinator will continue to work with both Primary Schools, with a view to developing / implementing STP's for them both and continuing to promote road safety education to pupils and encouraging active travel. The schools both participate in a number of road safety initiatives including 'Park Smart' Junior Road Safety Officer (JRSO), Road Safety Calendar Competition and also delivers Bikeability.

Supporting Evidence

Traffic speed and parking was a major issue identified through the Place Standard Workshop, it was raised in the Stage 1 survey with almost a quarter of respondents unhappy with traffic management and parking provision. 84% of school children surveyed at Gilmourton Primary School thought it was very important that traffic was slowed down in the village, while 65% of children at Sandford Primary School thought there should be less traffic at the school.

Funding Options

- South Lanarkshire Council Roads and Transportation Department

Potential Partners

- South Lanarkshire Council
- Sandford Primary School
- Gilmourton Primary School

Organise community volunteer days

Aim

To take care of and enhance the natural areas in and surrounding the Sandford and Upper Avondale villages and bring about improvements to the appearance of the villages where needed, through the use of volunteers.

Summary

A Community Environment Action Group could take on small environmental and infrastructure projects within Sandford and Upper Avondale that could help to enhance the community for those living there. These types of groups often get involved in activities such as community clean ups and flower planting. By setting up a separate constituted group, they would be able to access other pots of funding unavailable to community councils. The group would be able to take forward a number of activities, working in partnership to provide more attractive volunteering options for people who perhaps do not want the responsibility of joining the Community Council or new Development Trust, but would be interested in being involved on a more ad hoc basis. This project would help to stimulate the community to set up volunteer initiatives to enhance the environment and streetscape of Sandford and Upper Avondale and to engage local people so residents and groups can take pride in their community and their environment.



Existing Provision

SUACC, in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council, currently undertake an annual community clean up in Sandford. The setting up of a new Community Environment Action Group could help to fill the gap left by council cuts to maintenance by engendering a greater sense of community ownership and responsibility, as well as increasing the capacity of local people to take up active roles within their community in terms of caretaking and maintenance.

Supporting Evidence

In the community survey, issues such as introducing new footpaths, riverbank improvements, conservation and interpretation, were raised as issues. Young people were keen on a community garden and more bins in the villages. In the stage 2 survey, a community clean up was second in terms of open space improvements.

Funding Options

South Lanarkshire Community Grants
Awards for All
Volunteering Matters - Action Earth Awards
EB Scotland

Potential Partners

- Keep Scotland Beautiful
- VASLAN
- The Conservation Volunteers (TCV)
- South Lanarkshire Council Bins, Recycling & Uplifts

Provision of electric community vehicle

Aim

To establish an electric vehicle that would be used as part of Sandford and Upper Avondale's community transport strategy to improve future connections between the Sandford and Upper Avondale area, and the rest of South Lanarkshire and central belt.

Summary

Access funding to purchase a new electric minibus that could be stored in a new garage potentially within the car park next to Sandford Hall. The minibus could be situated in an extension to the hall or freestanding, and electricity to charge the minibus could come in part from solar panels which could be installed on the hall and or garage roof. This new bus could be part of the Avondale Community Transport or it may be a stand alone project.

The bus could be driven by local volunteers who had an appropriate driving licence and training, or if funding was available, could be supported by part time members of staff. MiDAS (Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme) training could be considered and offered to potential volunteer drivers, funded through the Community Council Microgrants. Full details of training can be accessed at: <https://www.midas-training.org.uk/>

An initial study would be required to establish charging levels from new solar panels, hydro generation from the Kype etc as well as the most appropriate cost effective vehicle, running, maintenance costs etc.



Existing Provision

There is no existing provision for electric community vehicles in the Sandford and upper Avondale area.

Supporting Evidence

Obviously the lack of public transport in Sandford, and the limited service elsewhere in the area resulted in this being the biggest priority in the Place Standard exercise. Within the Stage 1 survey, 84% of those surveyed wanted a community bus while 24% wanted greater use of Renewable energy, and 33% wanted community access to sustainable transport.

Funding Options

- Green Economy Fund
- EB Scotland
- The Levenseat Trust
- Climate Challenge Fund

Potential Partners

- Avondale Community Bus Group
- Scottish Government

Additional car parking/signage at Sandford Hall

Aim

To redesign and expand the existing Sandford Hall car park to enable more vehicles to park there, both for Hall events and for visitors using the car park to the Spectacle E'e Falls.

Summary

The car park currently limits parking, as the layout and variety of surfaces does not make best use of the space. The car park has the potential, following discussions with the landowner, of being extended to the main road with the inclusion of a corner of a small field. This would allow for many more cars to be parked here when the hall has a big event on, rather than being parked on the surrounding roads and causing a nuisance. If treated sympathetically, the car park should be a welcoming feature at the entrance to the village rather than simply a tarmacked open space.

Not only has the car park to be more effective for hall users, it may also be the location of a new electric powered minibus which would be located at the end of the existing hall – see page 21. The car park not only provides for locals, but is also the designated car park for the Spectacle E'e Falls. There is currently no tourist information as to any background to the Falls, or potential routes to the falls and other attractions. A new information point meeting these needs should also be incorporated with any car park remodelling. A Feasibility Study is required by a civil engineer/landscape architect to identify a revised layout and prepare cost estimates for funding.



Existing Provision

Parking at Sandford Hall is currently limited to around six spaces in front of the hall with additional bay style parking areas to the side of the hall. The latter carpark has wooden marked bays filled with a sand/gravel mixture with this area surrounded by grass.

Supporting Evidence

Traffic and parking was the second top priority within the Place Standard Workshop and there were a number of comments regarding the parking at the hall in the Stage 1 and 2 community surveys.

Funding Options

- Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund
- Scottish Land Fund
- Keep Scotland Beautiful

Potential Partners

- Sandford Village Hall Committee
- SUACC
- South Lanarkshire Council Transport & Streets

New and improved play facilities

Aim

To improve and create better access to play facilities in Sandford and Gilmourton.

Summary

For both children and parents, the current quality of play facilities in the two villages is something that can be improved upon. SUACC are already in discussions with South Lanarkshire Council in an effort to access significant funding to address not only the condition of the play equipment in Gilmourton, but also the ongoing problem of severe flooding which makes the park inaccessible for weeks at a time. SUACC or the new Trust could apply for additional funding to help improve the specification and scale of the current project, if South Lanarkshire Council continued to take responsibility for the maintenance and insurance of the facility in Gilmourton. The play area at School Road at the top of Sandford is very popular with local children as it also adjoins some open woodland space while still being close to their homes. Investment is required both in the play area and open space, which are currently owned by 50 residents and managed by a private factor.



Existing Provision

There is a park next to the school at Gilmourton which also contains a grass football pitch. The current equipment is in poor condition largely as a result of continual water damage. The adjacent burn floods on a regular basis and the water trapped by the levees, road, and surrounding land, cannot drain away and the play area can be out of use for several weeks at a time. Previously, there was a pump to help the situation. The play area regularly floods to the top of the chute and just below the football crossbar. In Sandford there are two play areas. The older, well equipped play area is located at the entrance to the village which causes access issues as children have to cross the road bridge which has no pavement. The equipment is in good condition and there have been plans in the past for a second phase project. The second play area is located at the top of the village and was built in conjunction with the new housing and is managed by a private factor. The equipment here is more basic and is in need of improvement given its proximity to new family housing.

Supporting Evidence

New and improved play and recreation facilities was important for 26% of respondents in the Stage 1 survey, and by 87% of the surveyed children from Gilmourton Primary and 61% from Sandford Primary. In the Stage 2 survey, improved play areas came second highest in improvements to our local open spaces.

Funding Options

- Scottish Landfill Communities Funds (FCC, Suez, Levenseat etc.)
- Awards For All

Potential Partners

- South Lanarkshire Council Community & Recreation
- SUACC
- Morison Walker, Property Management Ltd



Maintain and improve existing village hall in Sandford

Aim

To ensure that the existing Sandford Community Hall continues to be well maintained and that future improvements meet the needs of the community.

Summary

The existing Sandford Village Hall Committee should be supported by SUACC, any potential new Trust and the wider community, to ensure that the current hall receives the necessary investment required to ensure that it maintains its status as a key part of village life. The Committee have recently instructed an asbestos survey, which, along with other Energy Audits, can be accessed at no cost if pursued. In addition to making safe, and ensuring a wind and watertight building, the Hall Committee could also consider the use of thermal insulation and the use of solar panels/ground source heat pump/hydro scheme, all of which will reduce ongoing energy costs and make the building warmer.

There is the potential for building a garage on the end of the hall to house a new electric powered minibus see page 21. The hall itself could also be extended slightly to provide a meeting room rather than use the whole hall for a small meeting. In each of these situations, the issue regarding the redevelopment of the hall car park would also have to be considered.



Existing Provision

Sandford Hall is situated at the entrance to Sandford and consists of a main hall with kitchen, toilets and storage area. The building is well used by local groups and is the only hall other than Gilmourton and the two local primary schools.

Supporting Evidence

52% of those respondents in the stage 1 survey thought that improvements should take place to the existing village halls. This was the highest response within the enhancing communities category.

Funding Options

- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Clothworkers Foundation
- The Robertson Trust
- Trusthouse Community Centers & Village Halls
- Various Scottish Landfill Communities Funders
- Climate Challenge Fund
- Scottish Land Fund

Potential Partners

- SUACC
- Sandford Village Hall Committee

Heritage project to improve signage and interpretation

Aim

To establish a heritage project that will address the lack, or poor quality, of signage and interpretation of the historic and natural environment of the Sandford and Upper Avondale area.

Summary

A Heritage Group could be established which could take responsibility for researching, promoting and publicising information on the historic past, wind farm future, and underlying geography/history which has formed the landscape today. Sandford carpark could become a focus for information on the Falls of Spectacle E'e and Sandford itself, with further information en route to the falls see p22. The Sandford and Upper Avondale area played a prominent role in the Covenanters struggles and the existing Covenanters Trail, could be enhanced and added to with further information and links. The Heritage Group could work with the two Primary Schools to create topic themed factsheets which could be posted on relevant web sites or made available as hard copies.



Existing Provision

There are various signage and interpretation panels across the Sandford and Upper Avondale area ranging from those linked to the Covenanters Trail, those highlighting the Spectacle E'e Falls, and those highlighting Sandford's Conservation Area status. However, there are no regular interpretation panels giving visitors and locals useful information or directions.

Supporting Evidence

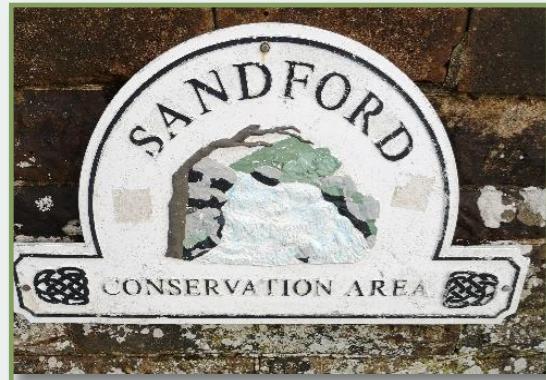
The Stage 1 survey highlighted conservation and interpretation work as the top Legacy and Heritage response.

Funding Options

- Rural Tourist Infrastructure Fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Clothworkers Foundation
- SNH Coasts and Water Fund

Potential Partners

- Rural Tourist Infrastructure Fund
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Clothworkers Foundation
- SNH Coasts and Water Fund



Improve broadband connectivity

Aim

To improve Broadband speed and connectivity across the Sandford and Upper Avondale area.

Summary

This project proposes the establishment of a Community Internet Action Group, which will campaign for better internet access throughout the area. This will ensure that the drive to access improved internet will be coordinated, organised and effective in its approach to ensuring online access. The Action Group should liaise with elected members, service providers and the community, ensuring that the community's voice is heard by those who are best positioned to affect change.

One course of action for the group would be to press providers to improve infrastructure enabling the Sandford and Upper Avondale area to access faster and more reliable internet. It may also be in the community's interest to focus on one settlement in particular, to act as a pilot project from which success can be evidenced, making the case for further development clearer.

The community may also be interested in a community design, build and operate model. This involves a community organisation, together with volunteer effort being supported to design their broadband network. Once designed, volunteers build the network themselves. Often, this approach is the most cost-effective way of setting up a community broadband project owing to its use of low-cost infrastructure (e.g. attaching relay dishes to scaffolding towers and the use of volunteer labour). There are several types of these networks in Scotland which operate on a small scale. The community involved usually takes a very 'hands-on' approach to the management, maintenance and billing for the project.

A project to make fibre optic broadband available throughout the Avondale and Stonehouse ward is due to be completed in 2020, provided by Borderlink in association with L.S. Smellie & Sons, Strathaven. It's hoped that 50MB per second will be available to customers through this project and will be available to residents who take out a contact with Borderlink.



Existing Provision

BT provide broadband to almost half the survey respondents, followed by Sky, Plusnet and a variety of mobile phone operators.

Supporting Evidence

The Stage 1 survey indicated that 48% (the top answer in the Enterprise category) of respondents wanted improvements in broadband and mobile reception. The Stage 2 survey identified the problems in order as, broadband too slow, cuts out some of the time, cuts out all of the time.

Funding Options

- The Start Up Fund

Establish new cycle and footpaths

Aim

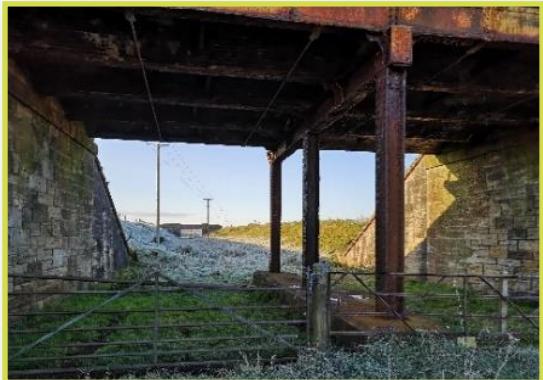
To establish new safe cycling and footpath routes that improve connectivity between villages, services and points of interest.

Summary

This infrastructure project would involve the community engaging with the relevant bodies and organisations in the area to develop a plan. This would include identifying key stakeholders, commissioning professional planning drawings and sourcing funding for development.

Utilising the outputs from the community plan, works could be undertaken to begin construction of a variety of walking and cycling routes which will ultimately enable safe and easy access for local residents. Not only will this offer a functional route for moving around the area, it will make it safer for local people to undertake leisure activities in the area such as running, dog walking and cycling. This will have a resultant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents.

Respondents in the surveys identified the re - use of the old railway line as a cycle way, the creation of a path from Sandford to the wind turbines, and a path away from the A71 from Drumclog to Gilmourton. The line from Strathaven to East Ayrshire boundary has been identified by South Lanarkshire Council as an aspirational core path, so there is an opportunity to work with the Local Authority on this.



Existing Provision

There is currently limited provision for foot and cycle paths, with the path from Strathaven to Sandford in need of repair and improvement - see p17.

Supporting Evidence

The problems of moving around the area were highlighted in the Place Standard Workshop. The top response in the Stage 1 study in the environment category with 52%, was the introduction of new footpaths and cycle paths, alongside improving existing footpaths and establishing new walks and trails. 90% of Gilmourton Primary school respondents wanted improved foot paths to school, while 82% and 83% from both schools wanted more cycle paths.

Funding Options

- Paths for All
- Sustrans Places for Everyone
- Land Fill Tax Fund Organisations

Potential Partners

- Paths For All
- South Lanarkshire Council Countryside & Greenspace
- Sustrans

New Village Hall for Gilmourton

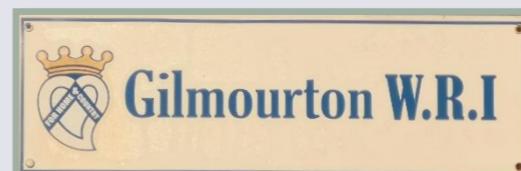
Aim

To establish a new community village hall serving Gilmourton and the surrounding area.

Summary

The existing hall at Gilmourton is approaching the end of its useful life after serving the community well for many years. The proposal would be to build a new hall, close to the existing building, if planned new housing takes place on the current site. A Feasibility Study/Business Plan will be required to identify the new hall size, facilities, specification and outline costs. Funding will require to be identified to ensure the proposed new building is both cost effective to build and operate. The Feasibility Study should also identify any potential partnership working that could be available with the developer of any new houses constructed.

A Village Hall Steering Group should be established who would have the role of preparing a brief for an architecture led Design Team, going through a tender process and accessing funding for work to start on designs that would reflect the needs and demands of the community which would be consulted with both the existing hall users and the wider community.



Existing Provision

There is an existing hall in Gilmourton but it is in need of much improvement and it is likely that a new hall would be much more cost effective.

Supporting Evidence

Improving village halls was the top answer by 52% of respondents from the Stage 1 survey, with Gilmourton Hall in particular highlighted in comments.

Funding Options

Clothworkers Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
Trusthouse Village Halls
The Robertson Trust

Potential Partners

- WRVS
- SUACC
- House Developer

Who?

The Community Led Action Plan belongs to everyone in Sandford and Upper Avondale. It is for use by the whole community, who can be involved in taking the Plan forward and making the area an even better place to live, work and play.

Many thanks to all of the groups involved in the creation of the Plan:

SUACC, Residents of Sandford and Upper Avondale area, Sandford Primary School, Gilmourton Primary School, South Lanarkshire Council and Banks Renewables.

Community Development Trust

Setting up a community development trust would offer an excellent means of delivering the various actions and projects detailed within this plan, as it could provide support to SUACC and other local groups to carry out certain tasks which these organisations would not be able to, such as employing staff and owning assets. The development trust would combine community-led action with an enterprising approach to address and tackle local needs and issues. The aim of the development trust would be to create social, economic and environmental renewal within the Sandford and Upper Avondale area, attracting new investment within that area and keeping it there.



How?

Alongside the funding options outlined in each of the project pages, p15-28, the Kype Muir Wind Farm Community Partnership Fund should be considered, as outlined below:

Kype Muir Community Partnership (KMCP)

Groups operating in each of the four Community Council areas within 10km of the Banks Renewables' Kype Muir Wind Farm, are eligible to apply for around £25,000 each year, for 25 years, starting in 2020. The Kype Muir Wind Farm Community Partnership Fund is administered by the Banks Community Fund in consultation and agreement with the Kype Muir Community Partnership (KMCP), made up of representatives from the four local Community Councils and Local Authority.

Applications for the fund can be made to the KMCP by schools, playgroups, youth clubs, Scouts, Guides, senior citizens clubs and activities, village halls, church halls, Community Council projects, Residents Associations, local charities and environmental projects. Other communities that have received community benefit money from windfarm developments have used money to fund projects including staff costs for development trusts, community farms and community swap shops, amongst other things. Find out more at www.banksgroup.co.uk.

Updating the Plan

A dynamic plan is essential for the ongoing development of the local community. This plan can and should be regularly updated by the community to ensure it continues to be representative of their wishes.

A yearly review and update of the plan should be undertaken by the Community Plan Steering group, potentially tying into the AGM of the Community Council. This review and update should involve as many key stakeholders as possible, particularly those who have been involved in the delivery of any actioned activities or projects, or who would be involved in any proposed new activities or projects.

The community should also continue to be involved so that they can fully play a role in the decision making process. Ongoing involvement of the wider community will help people to see how their demands and aspirations are being addressed and reflected through ongoing work both in terms of delivering actions, and in reviewing the content of the plan.

Getting Involved

The Sandford and Upper Avondale groups and organisations involved in developing this plan look forward to the suggestion by residents of more local volunteering opportunities being made available, and are keen to welcome volunteers from the area to help continue the work they do. If you want to get involved in helping to progress or deliver any of the ideas and projects in this Plan, or if you have any other ideas for the future of the area, then please get in contact with Sandford and Upper Avondale Community Council.

Find out more about the plan and what's happening in the Sandford and Upper Avondale area at www.suacc.com. Connect with the Community Council on Facebook: Sandford and Upper Avondale Community Council.



