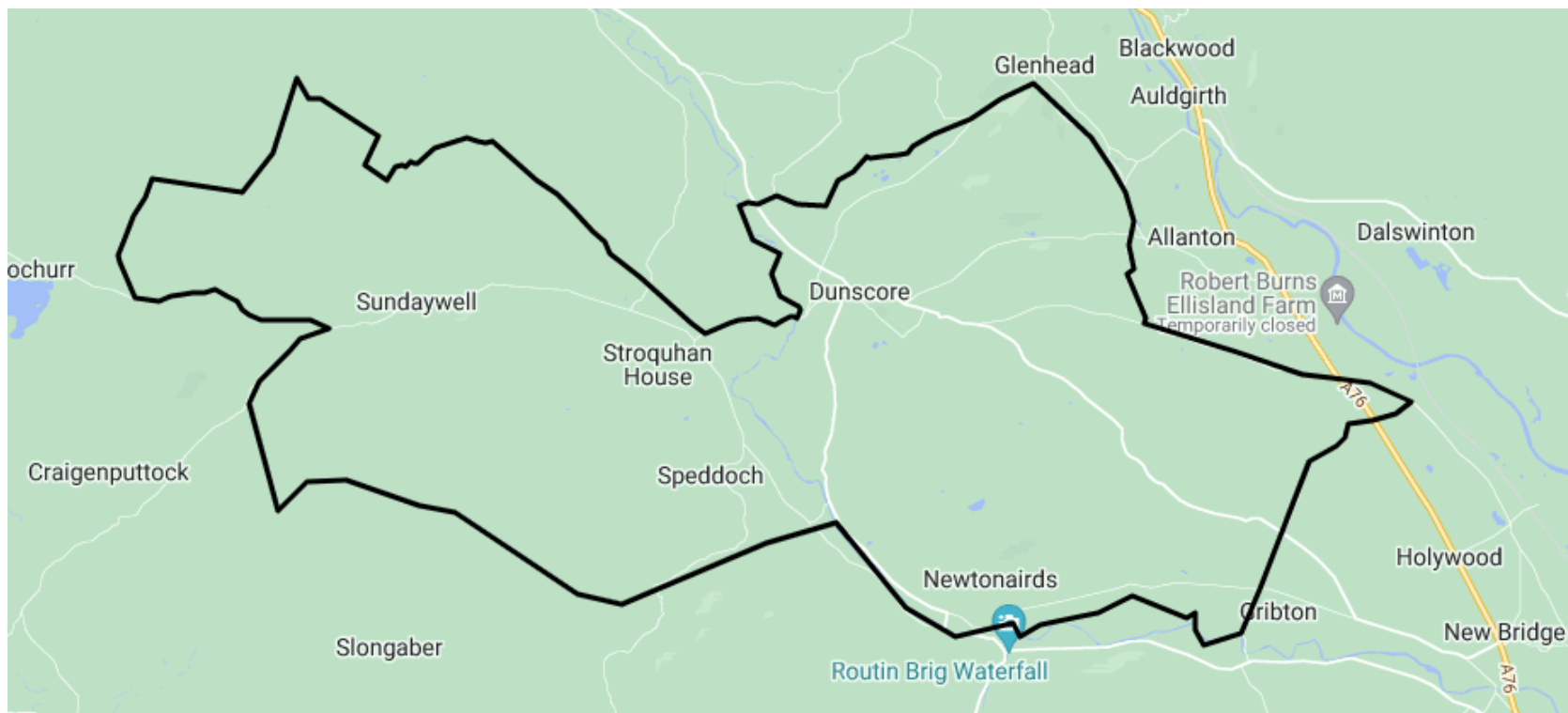




Dunscore Community Action Plan

Executive Summary and Action Plan
Dunscore Community Council

March 2023

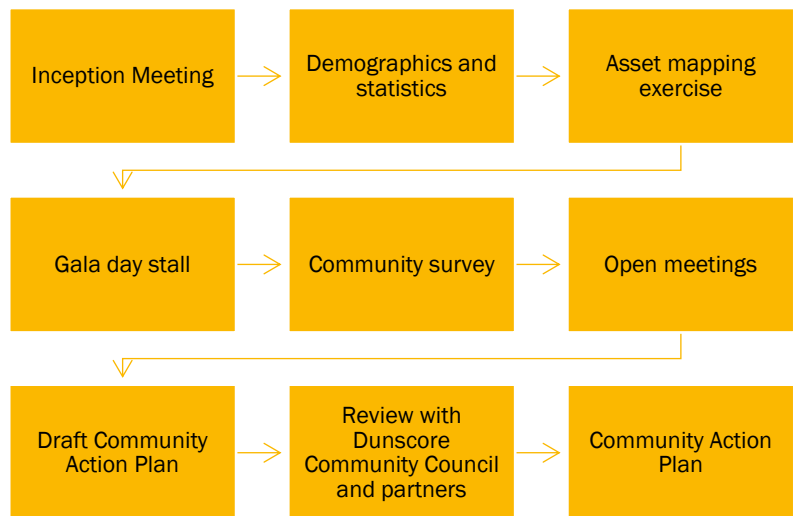


About the Community Action Plan

The Blackcraig Wind Farm Community Fund provides around £250,000 a year for local community initiatives. The fund strategy and priorities align closely with the [Glenkens Community Action Plan](#), which covers seven Community Council areas. Dunscore is one of three communities that are not covered by the Glenkens CAP, although they are eligible for the Blackcraig Community Fund. To extend investment from the Community Fund and guide spending according to local priorities, a focused period of local consultation was needed in Dunscore and the surrounding areas.

What We Did

Dunscore Community Council commissioned Community Enterprise to carry out research and prepare a Community Action Plan (CAP) for Dunscore. This took place between August and November 2022, as seen below:



What We Found Out

Some facts, figures and findings about Dunscore from the research and consultation are below and on the next page:



Population

765

28.6% aged 65+
57.8% working age
13.9% aged 0-15

Dunscore's population has declined by about 5% since 2001.



Housing

Housing in Dunscore is larger than average and concentrated in higher tax bands.

Only 7% of homes are rented from a housing association or local landlord.



Education

49

Children are on the Primary school roll.



Access

Dunscore is within the 10% most deprived communities in Scotland in terms of Access to Services (SIMD 2020).



Job density

23%

Number of jobs as a percentage of working-age population – compared to 75% in Dumfries & Galloway and across Scotland (Business Register and Employment Survey 2021).

What We Found Out (continued)

- Traffic, roads and getting around are key concerns in Dunscore. Problems include potholes which cause damage and risk of accidents as well as vehicles coming through the village at high speed and insufficient pavements. Limited public transport (for example, buses at times that suit workers and highschoolers coming back from Dumfries) means that people are particularly dependent on cars to get around.
- The natural environment is one of the things that people most value about living in Dunscore, evidenced in this consultation and by the strength of local environmental projects. Some future projects that people suggested support efforts to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions, which is already part of the funding strategy for Blackcraig Windfarm. These include projects focused on active travel, waste reduction and, in the long term, energy generation. Other environmental projects focus on protecting the area's biodiversity and the Cairn Water. Making the most of nature through sustainable tourism could also be an opportunity for economic development.
- Dunscore's sense of community is another thing that most people rate highly. This is a positive reflection on the efforts of the volunteer groups that keep the Halls and Community Pub open. People are well aware of the importance of these assets and want to make sure that they are well used, cared for and financially sustainable given rising running costs. There is interest in a shop and café - somewhere to stock up on essentials and meet informally during the day. However, the emphasis is on options that would strengthen Glenriddell Hall and/or the Flying Pig Community Pub.
- The school and pre-school are well regarded and valued but people are concerned about their future given a declining population and low number of children and young people in the village.
- Most homes in Dunscore are either owner-occupied or privately rented, and there is little accommodation available from the Council or social landlords. Following the Right to Buy Scheme, there are now only 11 social housing properties in the village. Availability and affordability of housing is a major challenge – if families can't move in or can't stay, services like the school and pre-school which are key to a vibrant and sustainable future for Dunscore are at risk.
- Jobs and local economy were the aspects of the community that residents rated worst. Industries in the surrounding area, such as farming, forestry and wind power, tend to employ few people and well-paid, stable employment is hard to find locally. Across all of the actions identified, local employment and training should be prioritised wherever possible.
- The pattern of land ownership around the village has made it hard to promote new business or develop affordable housing and renewable energy generation. To make new projects possible, the community will need to enter into discussion with the major landowner to identify underused land and buildings and explore various routes to community ownership.

The Community Action Plan

The Community Action Plan is based on findings from this research and consultation, and on the project ideas put forward by Dunscore residents.

Theme 1: A Connected Community		
Timescale	Action Areas	Options for Implementation
Short term	1a. Assess demand to reinstate the walking group and set up a cycling club.	With interested members of the community.
	1b. Input into database of assets and services across the wider area.	Submit relevant local events, groups and businesses to glenkens.scot using the 'update us' form.
	1c. Support young parents to set up volunteer-led activities, such as parent and toddler groups.	
Medium term	1d. Continue to develop and promote dunscore.org.uk for information sharing and local news.	With all community groups and organisations.
	1e. Improve signage and information displays at Glenriddell Hall and inside and outside the Flying Pig.	In line with findings from 2a., review of community buildings.
Long term	1f. Participation in cross-area networking involving community councils, organisations and groups.	Join efforts to coordinate a network of community council chairs across Glenkens area.
	1g. Periodic updates on CAP.	Community Council to have this as a standing agenda item.

Theme 2: Well-used and maintained community assets

Link to Glenkens plan: An Asset Rich Community

Timescale	Action Areas	Options for Implementation
Short term	2a. Sustainability plan for current community buildings (Flying Pig, Glenriddel and Speddoch Halls) to explore potential for shared resourcing, joint promotion, maintenance and energy efficiency and new activities.	With the Flying Pig committee and Hall committees. Engage with Local Energy Scotland on energy efficiency of community buildings – funding available until March 2025.
	2b. Assess potential for the bar at the Flying Pig to be shut away to allow more multi-functional use such as a daytime shop/café, with outdoor seating.	Work with the Flying Pig committee and volunteers.
	2c. Support ongoing improvements to the park and explore potential future additions such as exercise equipment.	Work with Dunscore Playpark Project.
Medium term	2e. Make minor alterations to Glenriddel Hall to enable safe use for family and children’s activities.	Promote use of local labour and link in with community DIY approach being promoted via Glenkens CAP –links to training and apprenticeships.
	2f. Potential participation in Glenkens Housing Needs Analysis.	With Glenkens Trust.
Long term	2h. Develop affordable housing for young people and families, working with partner organisations to develop properties that suit local needs while minimising the environmental impact and maximising the social benefits of new homes.	Properties could combine a mix of private and shared spaces to live, work and grow to enable sustainable lifestyles, similar to the ‘Smart Clachan’ being trialled elsewhere. Work with local socially registered landlords and/or South of Scotland Community Housing. Under D&G Council’s 10-year development plan, there is a site earmarked for 23 houses, but the council does not intend to develop it. Aside from this, the Glebe land has previously been investigated, and the Moss-side Steading (suggested in consultation) is for sale with planning permission to convert into four residential units.
	2i. Create sports facilities such as a MUGA in the village to cater to multiple age groups.	Potential site alongside the Play Park.

Theme 3: An economically flourishing community

Timescale	Action Areas	Options for Implementation
Short term	3a. Identify opportunities for sustainable, eco- and heritage tourism in the area.	<p>Link with Tourism Strategy for Glenkens to be developed following the Glenkens CAP.</p> <p>Strengths identified during CAP consultation include rural crafts (dry stone dyking, spinning, hedge laying) nature studies/bird watching/aquatic life; painting; natural dyeing; eco-living, upcycling, whittling; responsible foraging; Scottish country dancing weekends/holidays,</p>
	3b. Assess need for after-school care or club.	See Feasibility Study into childcare in Glenkens for information on challenges and potential solutions
	3c. Approach the estate to identify any empty and underused buildings and potential sites for energy generation (see action 4k). Scope out opportunities for the community to take ownership.	<p>If the community wishes to own land and/or buildings, a suitable legal structure will be needed. HIE's Ten Steps to Community Ownership toolkit has useful information and templates (mostly relevant to anywhere in Scotland).</p> <p>Support in approaching landowners for negotiated sale may be available from Community Land Scotland.</p>
Medium term	3d. Identify potential sites and assess demand for small business and light industry workshop units.	Approach to South of Scotland Enterprise for possible funding and support.
	3e. Compile and promote a booklet of walks and cycle routes around Dunscore, taking in natural and built heritage sites as possible.	<p>Walking group (if this is restored),</p> <p>Link in with Dumfries & Galloway Council, Visit Scotland / Visit South West Scotland.</p>
Long term	3f. Build identity of Dunscore and Cairn Valley as a destination for sustainable tourism.	Possible branding and joint promotion with Moniaive and other Cairn Valley communities.

Theme 4: Protecting the environment

Link to Glenkens Plan: A Carbon Neutral Community

Timescale	Action Areas	Options for Implementation
Short term	4a. Liaise with council about traffic safety measures in the village which affect people's ability to use active travel. Issues identified through CAP consultation include road resurfacing, reduction of speed limit between Throughgate and Dunscore, 20mph limit in village centre, traffic calming measures and speed limit signage in village, and a path along the B729 through Dunscore.	With Dumfries & Galloway Council.
	4b. Commission feasibility study into new walking and cycling routes: old Cairn Valley railway line from Dumfries to Moniaive and Cairn Valley off-road route from Irongray Church to Moniaive.	Link in with Glenkens & District Trust, Galloway Glens and Loch Ken Trust. Investment in cycle tracks and pathways is a medium-term action in the Glenkens CAP. Contact Sustrans and Paths for All regarding additional funding and support.
	4c. Identify sites for provision of bike racks and repair equipment.	Could be part of 4b.
	4d. Identify small pockets of biodiversity around the village to be protected.	With Eco-School and Eco-Church groups.
	4e. Investigate setting up a school uniform exchange.	With Primary School, particularly Eco-School group.
	4f. Identify suitable charging points to support sustainable transport.	EV charging points, E-bike hire and community bike library are short-term actions in the Glenkens CAP. Dumfries & Galloway Council has installed EV charging points in some villages.

Medium term	4g. Develop a project to celebrate and protect biodiversity of the River Cairn and protect against flooding.	With Dumfries & Galloway Council and SEPA.
	4h. Promote car sharing.	Link in with Glenkens & District Trust, Galloway Glens and Loch Ken Trust. Sustainable social transport such as car sharing, community car hire or electric community vehicles is a medium-term action in the Glenkens CAP.
	4i. Potential small fund for community-led environmental and conservation work. Could also be used to promote early-stage eco-tourism projects based on findings from 3a.	With Glenkens & District Trust.
	4j. Explore potential for community garden or allotment site and continue improving village planters.	With Eco-School and Eco-Church groups. Investigate potential for sponsorship of planters by local businesses.
Long term	4k. Explore potential for community energy generation in Dunscore.	Old Dalgonar Mill has been identified as a potential site. Liaise with Local Energy Scotland on funding and support, and with other communities who have undertaken similar projects, such as Kier, Penpont and Tynron. Land ownership has been a previous obstacle so outcome of 3c will be key.
	4l. Development of a nature reserve, building on findings from 4d and 4g.	

