



Community Partnership

Supporting Communities in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2015 - 2020

Croftamie



Croftamie Community Action Plan 2015-2020

This Action Plan sets out the hopes and aspirations of those who live and work in the community of Croftamie.

Everyone who has a stake in Croftamie and its future has been asked to outline what they like best about living in this community, and what might help make it a better place to visit, and to live and work in.

Their responses were gathered via householder surveys, interviews with business and community leaders, and an open event.

The survey results reveal a community that values its sense of neighbourliness and its rural setting. However they also show widespread concern for the village's future development, and its connectivity with neighbouring villages and the wider world.

This third edition of the Croftamie Community Action Plan charts progress against objectives identified in earlier plans, and seeks to re-focus efforts to best meet the current ambitions of the community.



OUR COMMUNITY OUR VOICE

Consultation is at the very heart of this Community Action Plan. Every one of the community's 139 households, whether located inside or outwith the village itself, received a printed questionnaire and was offered the option to complete an online version if they preferred. Businesses were offered the chance to meet and discuss their views on Croftamie's strengths and the challenges it faces.

The survey and interview process resulted in a clear set of findings that threw the key issues facing the community into sharp focus. These findings were then presented at a well-attended community open day, held at Croftamie Nursery in June 2015, where there was a further opportunity for residents to comment on the findings and refine them still further.

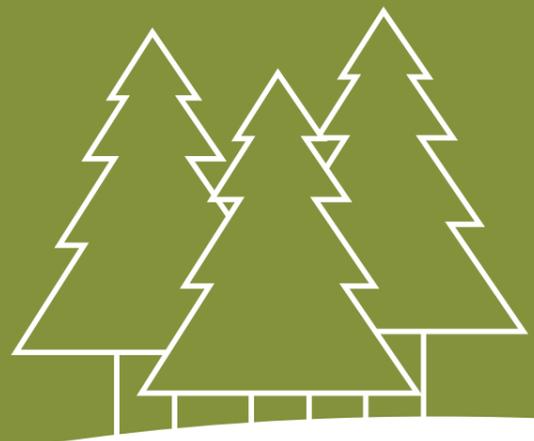
All of the information from the surveys, interviews and the open day was collated and analysed by Community Agent Chris Townsend. The themes and priorities which the community will focus on over the next five years are the ones identified in this process.

 **139**
DISTRIBUTED TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD

70 
PEOPLE VISITED OUR STAND AT THE COMMUNITY OPEN DAY

 **5** **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

Thanks to everyone who participated



Our Community Now

This is a snapshot of Croftamie Community in the first half of 2015.

Location

Croftamie is a small village located 3 miles south west of Drymen in the western rural area of Stirling Council; it is one of the southern gateways to the National Park. The Croftamie Community Council area covers an extensive rural landward area of around 25 km² and is bordered by Drymen Community Council (at the Endrick) to the north and east, by Killearn Community Council to the east and south and by West Dunbartonshire Council to the west. National cycle route 7 and the John Muir Way pass through the centre of the village and the West Highland Way is just outside.

Population

At the time of the 2011 census the population was 358. Compared to the National Park and Scotland there was a lower than average proportion of 5 to 15 year olds and young adults; there was a higher than local average proportion of 45 – 64 year olds and a higher than average retired population.

There are 153 houses of which a high proportion - 72% - are owner occupied. Only 8% of housing is socially rented. The desirability of the area for commuters and the resultant rise in house prices makes it difficult to cater for local housing needs.

Employment & the Local Economy

35% of the economically active population in Croftamie work full-time. It is estimated that a high proportion of this figure commute to Glasgow/Stirling and beyond. Local knowledge indicates that tourism is an important and growing sector in Croftamie. Croftamie has a higher number of self employed than the regional or national average. The availability of suitable space for small business within the area is limited.

Roads and Transport

At the time of the survey, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the bus service. Buses are too infrequent for commuting to Glasgow or Stirling and to access shopping even in the surrounding villages. The service is now to be replaced by a direct response transport system to connect with bus routes with better frequency. This should be an improvement.

The nearest railway stations are at Balloch and Milngavie. Pavements (where they exist) are rough and dangerous and street lighting is very poor, especially where school children wait for their bus. The A809 which runs through the village is 'the most dangerous road in Scotland'.

Community Organisations and Facilities

There are no shops in the village – the nearest facilities are in Drymen. At the present time the nursery building is designated as a dual use facility, for community use alongside its educational role. It is poorly suited for this and there are no other community facilities in the village, other than the village pub/restaurant.

Croftamie has a long-running SWRI; there are currently 40 members – demonstrating Croftamie's willingness and desire for community activity. There is a shortage of clubs and activities for all age groups in the village; the majority of leisure activities are dependent upon journeys to recreational facilities either by public or private transport. In order to alleviate feelings of isolation and permit access to facilities the Community Trust has organised a weekly minibuss service to Milngavie.

Education

Croftamie Nursery has a wide catchment area covering Croftamie, Drymen, Milton of Buchanan, Rowardennan, Balmaha, Killearn and Balfron. Croftamie Nursery is an Integrated Service (Stand Alone Nursery), open 8.30am to 5.30pm, 50 weeks of the year. The nursery provides a flexible service for children and families, catering for 24 children aged 3-5 years in the morning and afternoon, and an additional 5 afternoon places for children under 3. Currently 2 children from the village attend.

Local children normally attend schools in Drymen, Buchanan or Killearn. Balfron High is the catchment secondary school.

Health and Care Services

The nearest services are GPs in Drymen, Killearn and Balfron. Nearest general hospitals are in Larbert and Glasgow with limited provision in Stirling; dentists in Drymen, Alexandria and Balfron. The nearest dispensing pharmacies are in Drymen, Killearn and Balfron.

Leisure and Recreation

The lack of a community facility is perceived as the largest single factor inhibiting the development of community activities in Croftamie. There are long distance walks and cycle tracks running through the village but the lack of a safe path to Drymen which would encourage more usage is an issue.

Environment and Heritage

The River Endrick is the principal environmental asset in the area and flows west to enter Loch Lomond. The river is the major inflow into the Loch and forms the main spawning ground for the Loch's salmon. The area is noted for its low levels of pollution, the habitat supports a wide range of species. The Endrick area to the north of Croftamie is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), primarily because of its unique lamprey population. The other principal site of interest in the area is at Aucheneck on the Carnock Burn (a designated SSSI due to its well-preserved examples of various glacial landforms, a key site for interpreting the Ice Age of the Loch Lomond area).

Some of the features that make Croftamie special:

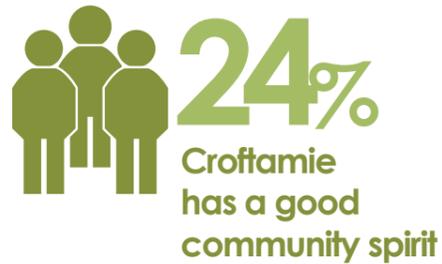
- The drove roads - from the north of Scotland to Glasgow over the Stockie Muir and from Argyll and the west to the Falkirk Tryst
- The railway – opened in the 1850s and closed a century later
- The ruined castle at Mains of Kilmarnock.
- The well of St Dieldrin, reputed to contain a cure for leprosy!
- The ruins at Spittal, thought to be a Templar site
- The former stone quarry and timber mill.



Community Views Survey Likes



Recreational opportunities for walking, cycling and horse-riding were also identified as assets.



What we said about our top likes.

"Quiet, safe feel to the village, and still handy for Glasgow"

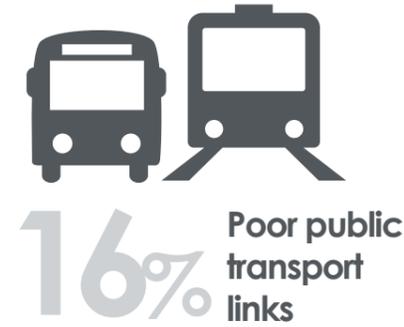
"Friendly village pub"

"It is a country community and has retained country values"

"It is rural, quiet and friendly"

"The Thursday minibus to Tesco"

Community Views Survey Dislikes



What we said about our dislikes.

"Terrible standard of paths or pavement to connecting villages; many no longer safe to walk"

"Slow broadband"

"It would be great to have a shop, even if it only opened for a few hours a week"

"The speed of the traffic through the village could be reduced"

"No bus service"

"Lack of a social centre as a focus for activities, especially for the elderly"



Croftamie

Our vision for the future

We want our community to be a safe and peaceful place where people of all ages can live, work and thrive, making the most of the natural resources which surround us.

At the heart of our vision is our sense of connectedness and our desire to enhance it:

- ➔ Towards each other, by developing an appropriate community meeting space
- ➔ Towards neighbouring villages, by developing and maintaining safe footpaths
- ➔ Towards the wider world, by seeking improved public transport and internet services.
- ➔ Towards our rural surroundings, by cherishing and safeguarding our natural environment.

Main Themes and Priorities

These are the main themes and priorities the community will focus on over the next 5 years, in partnership with public agencies and other supporters.

THEME 1: Traffic, roads and paths

THEME 2: Community Services

THEME 3: Community Facilities

THEME 4: Village Development

TOP TEN PRIORITIES AS IDENTIFIED BY THE COMMUNITY THROUGH CONSULTATION

- ➔ Develop safe, high-quality footpaths connecting Croftamie to other villages
- ➔ Campaign for stable, fast broadband internet connectivity
- ➔ Campaign for useful improvements to public transport
- ➔ Improve the community meeting facilities
- ➔ Campaign to stabilise GP service provision at neighbouring Drymen Surgery
- ➔ Seek to encourage the opening of a village shop
- ➔ Encourage more flexible approaches to village planning and development
- ➔ Work to keep the village looking neat and tidy
- ➔ Improve road maintenance
- ➔ Improve car parking

Theme 1: Traffic, Roads and Paths



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

PRIORITY 1:

Speeding traffic

- ➔ Install and maintain traffic-calming measures on the A809 as it passes through the village
 - Review further traffic calming measures
 - Maintain and improve the existing signage
 - Maintain speed cameras in the village

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council
- Croftamie Community Council
- Police Scotland



PRIORITY 2:

Footpath maintenance

- ➔ Repair and maintain footpaths
 - The footpath between Croftamie and Drymen needs major upgrading works
 - Install safe crossing points over the A809 and A811
 - Repair of pavements within the village

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council
- Croftamie Community Council

PRIORITY 3:

Road repairs

Lobby for better maintenance of the minor roads that pass through and around the community, which are in a variable and often poor state.

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council

PRIORITY 4:

Car parking

The village has limited car parking. Space could be identified where further availability could be made.

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council
- Croftamie Community Council

The movement of vehicles and pedestrians in and out of Croftamie village continue to be the issues of over-riding concern to the community. There is a persistent problem with speeding traffic, and many footpaths, especially those that run outside the village, are in a poor condition. Villagers want to be able to enjoy their public spaces in safety; they also want to be able to make local trips to neighbouring communities on foot. Effective traffic management, and footpath maintenance, are therefore critical.



Theme 2: Community Services



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

PRIORITY 1:

Fast broadband for Croftamie

- ➔ Although the village centre has now been connected to super-fast fibre, the outlying addresses still suffer poor speeds, which need to be improved.
 - Establish exactly when the whole community will be connected to fibre broadband
 - Campaign to ensure all addresses in the community, including those outside the village centre, are equally well-served by any future fibre broadband deployment

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council
- Croftamie Community Council
- Digital Scotland

PRIORITY 2:

Better bus services

- ➔ Explore options for increasing access to public transport in the community
 - Monitor working of demand-responsive transport (DRT) system to ensure it provides suitable connections for the community.
 - Explore ways in which the Thursday minibus run to Milngavie might be extended

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council
- Croftamie Community Council
- Croftamie Community Trust
- Community Transport Association

PRIORITY 3:

Keep Croftamie tidy

- ➔ The visual impact of the village can affect the way how residents feel about it, the likelihood that visitors will stop, and even the possibility of inward investment. Keeping all aspects of the village neat and tidy is important.
 - The straw bale planters get mixed reviews from residents - close attention to their tidiness is therefore important
 - The community noticeboard to be regularly audited and out of date content removed
 - Stirling Council to be lobbied to conduct litter picking on the A809 and A811 verges

Community Champion:

- Croftamie Community Council
- Croftamie Community Trust
- Stirling Council
- LLTNP



This theme most clearly illustrates the community's desire for improved connectivity. Quality internet service is no longer a luxury. It is critical to both residential and business users, and has the potential to affect long-term change in rural communities, connecting them to essential services and the wider world, and allowing local businesses to thrive against urban competitors. At the same time, there is always a need for good transport links, and there is much room for improvement in the public transport provision in Croftamie.



Theme 3: Community Facilities



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



PRIORITY 1:

Develop the community meeting space

➔ Pursue the improvements Croftamie Nursery needs if it is adequately to meet its designation as a community resource.

- Re-examine past plans to develop the nursery outbuildings or to build a new structure behind the nursery field. Establish why these proposals failed and how they might be modified and taken forwards.
- Campaign for improvement of adult toilet facilities
- Audit the community equipment to ensure there are sufficient resources (tables, chairs, presentation materials, kitchen equipment) to support a wide range of community activities

Community Champion:

- Stirling Council
- Croftamie Community Council
- Croftamie Community Trust
- Croftamie nursery management
- Croftamie WRI

PRIORITY 2:

A village shop

➔ Bringing a convenience store to Croftamie will require the identification of likely premises, someone to own/operate it, and work to address any development control issues

- Identify suitable premises, and their likely availability for purchase
- Identify an individual or group that would be willing to own/operate a village shop
- Work with LLTNP planning department and Stirling council on any planning or highways access issues

Community Champion:

- Croftamie Community Council
- LLTNP planning department
- Stirling Council

PRIORITY 3:

Stable GP provision

➔ Maintain pressure on Forth Valley Health Board to ensure a permanent GP remains at Drymen Health Centre.

Community Champion:

- Croftamie Community Council
- Stirling Constituency and Central Scotland region MSPs
- Stirling Council



Since the publication of the last Community Action Plan, a village shop has opened and then closed again. This has served to highlight the lack of facilities in the village and may also have contributed to heightened frustration over the lack of bus services and adequate footpaths, addressed in Themes 1 and 2. The inadequacy of the village nursery as a general-purpose community space continues to feature as a general concern, which requires action for improvement.



Theme 4: Village Development



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



PRIORITY 1:

Build new homes and apartments

➔ Property that has already been identified as suitable for redevelopment, should be used to provide more accommodation in Croftamie.

- Support identified areas of development.
- Work with the planning authority to ensure its rules and conditions do not deter development

Community Champion:

- Croftamie Community Council
- Stirling Council
- LLTNP planning department

PRIORITY 2:

Promote the village

➔ Croftamie is well-situated for the John Muir Way, National Cycle Route 7 and the West Highland Way. Its location near this "crossroads" should be celebrated and used to attract visitors to the community's accommodation providers and the village pub.

- Promote Croftamie's services in relevant tourist literature, and with signage in the village

Community Champion:

- Croftamie Community Council
- Croftamie Community Trust
- Stirling Council
- LLTNP, West Highland Way officer



The community recognises that developing the village and growing the population, within sensible limits, is a means by which other desirable developments might be achieved. Various previous attempts to develop land for housing or to convert the former nursing home are in the pipeline. As the economy improves, some express the hope that development plans might be progressed.

Making It Happen

Croftamie Community Partnership will continue to play key roles in implementing the Action Plan but support from people in the community is critical to its successful delivery.

If you would like to get involved with any of these initiatives or for further information please contact the lead organisations shown below:

If you would like to be part of making this Action Plan a reality, contact:

Croftamie Community Council:

Chair: Margaret Firth

Email: mfirth.croftamiecc@gmail.com

Tel: 07932 739346

Croftamie Community Trust Ltd:

Chair: Anne Ewing

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Tel: 07837 720772



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Community Partnership
www.thecommunitypartnership.org.uk
Tel: 01389 727762



Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
National Park Authority
www.lochlomond-trossachs.org
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