

# South Lanarkshire's Glencaple & Lowther

## Glencaple & Lowther Community Led Plan

### Local Community Led Plan



2010

Notes...Notes...Notes.

# Notes

## How it all came about...

The Big Lottery has invested in the Supporting Voluntary Action Programme, which aims to strengthen the support available to communities through the national network of support organisations such as Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS). An element of this programme is Change Champions - which takes successful good practice, and aims to replicate it in other areas of Scotland. ALVO has piloted a number of Local Community Led Plans in South Lanarkshire, and was awarded a Change Champion Project to undertake a new Plan for a community in South Lanarkshire, and to work with colleagues to produce plans for a community in the Borders -Walkerburn, and North Lanarkshire - Greenhead. Glencaple & Lowther was selected to take part in South Lanarkshire.

The plan and the research it has produced are tools through which the community of Glencaple & Lowther can enter into dialogue with providers of services, and examine how improvements might be made.

It identifies a range of actions which the community itself can undertake through co-ordinated voluntary action. At the heart of the process is an understanding that – in the light of public sector finances becoming ever more tightly focused – the communities which will flourish will have a clear and realistic idea of their future, a commitment to helping themselves, and a spirit of local responsibility. The local community led plan process has drawn out key issues common to all eight villages and has already encouraged greater communication and co-operation.

The plan has been separated into those actions which the community itself can act upon and those the community can influence.

Throughout the process and in particular during a Visioning Event, the community have *reality-proofed* the suggestions put forth to generate a realistic Plan, in the understanding that, there is no funding attached to the Plan as yet, and the co-operation, efforts and support of the community will be required to *make real* the vision the community shares for it's future.

The plan was facilitated by two members of the community, Liz Steele and Wendy Belk, and was supported and delivered with the assistance of A.L.V.O.

South Lanarkshire's Glencaple & Lowther is comprised of 400 square kilometres of lowland hills and farmland and encompasses the villages of Abington, Crawford, Crawfordjohn, Elvanfoot, Lamington, Leadhills, Roberton & Wiston. Situated at the southernmost tip of South Lanarkshire, the area is rurally isolated and has had to demonstrate resilience, self-sufficiency and a strong community spirit. Many of the residents were born and bred in the area, whilst others have chosen to move here. What they have in common is their appreciation of what the area offers to them. However, its geography, location and sparse population, mean that significant resources are not

**316 or 37% of all households completed the 107 question Survey**

**121 Children's & Youth surveys were returned**

**75 people attended the Open Discussion & Focus Group evenings**

**43 people attended the Visioning Day**



# Methodology

This plan was prepared following extensive collaboration with the community, which included:

- A community survey delivered by a team of volunteers to every household in the area
- A separate children’s & youth survey, issued to every primary and secondary school child in the area
- A series of 7 community meetings in each of the village halls, aimed to capture the views and priorities of all
- A focused discussion night at the Abington Hotel, which canvassed the opinions of children, youth, the over 50s, those out of work and local businesses
- A community “Visioning Day” at Wiston Lodge, where the findings from the surveys and the focus groups were presented, and the priorities for this Action Plan were finalised

The plan outlines clearly the developments Glencaple & Lowther residents would like to see – and what needs to be done to achieve this. It will be used to highlight the community’s needs and aspirations in discussion with public agencies and other partners, and as evidence of community support for priority projects. The plan is owned by the community and is available to any individual and organisation living and working within Glencaple & Lowther.

As an interim arrangement the Plan – and more detailed statistical analysis - are available

## What we like....

on the following website:

[www.ruraldevelopmenttrust.co.uk](http://www.ruraldevelopmenttrust.co.uk) just select the Glencaple and Lowther link on the top menu.

The Peace & Quiet 37%      Freedom of Rural Setting 32%  
 The Friendly People & their Community Spirit 26%

*“Proud of its historical links, walks and places to visit.”*  
*“close to M74 and city”*

*“Fantastic local school, wonderful surroundings for children, safe environment.”*

*“My mates, & there is a shop”*

## What we don’t like....

*“Virtually crime free, beautiful countryside, good friends”*

Roads & Pavements (safety & conditions) 25%  
 Lack of Amenities 22%      Poor Public Transport 21%  
 Lack of leisure facilities for children and young people 58%

*“Play park equipment condemned and council refuse to fund replacements”*

*“Reduction in people prepared to initiate and participate in community events”*

*“Lack of childcare facilities for working mums”*

## Community Profile

### Population, Housing and Employment

The 2001 Census shows South Lanarkshire's Glencaple and Lowther as having a population of 1751. The way that statistics are prepared between censuses makes it difficult to give definitive totals for Glencaple & Lowther as a whole. However, South Lanarkshire Council statistics shows that there has been an increase of population in the area from 2003 to 2008, which is similar to the pattern across all of South Lanarkshire. The same source shows that in 2008 unemployment in the area was lower than the average for South Lanarkshire.

From the household survey undertaken during the preparation of this plan - of the 316 households taking part - 75% of homes are privately owned, with 10% rented from the local authority or housing association. 16% of the respondents are self employed, and most people in employment travel out of the area for work.

### Heritage

The 8 villages that make up Glencaple & Lowther lie on the southern border of South Lanarkshire. There is a rich history and a strong sense of community that make it a special place to live. The area has many archaeological sites from the Mesolithic, Bronze Age and Roman times. All of the 8 villages have their own story to tell. The following gives a brief glimpse of the areas past, and the important role it has played as a gateway to Scotland for over 2,000 years.

The area around Crawford Castle dates back to the Romans in 80AD, with the Castle having a lively history including William Wallace, who stormed it and took it from the English in 1297. In 1157 Robertson is noted for being one of the earliest and largest Flemish settlements in the Biggar area.

Leadhills boasts the oldest and highest subscription library in Britain dating back to 1741. It is Scotland's 2<sup>nd</sup> highest village and has Scotland's highest adhesion railway and golf course. Lead was mined in the area from the 13<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 1950s. With the arrival of the railway in 1848 the village of Elvanfoot grew around a rail junction serving the mining areas of Leadhills and Wanlockhead.

Abington was founded in 1898 by the Colebrook family, the same year that the foundation stone was laid for Glencaple Parish Church. The Church is an important centre in today's community, drawing in members from all the 8 villages.

Crawfordjohn's Kirk dates back to the 1400's and is now open to the public as the Crawfordjohn Heritage Museum. The Holy Trinity Chapel, which was built in Lamington in 1857 is open to visitors by appointment. Wiston boasts a former Victorian Hunting Lodge, built in the 1850's, which is set in a 55-acre estate in the centre of the village. Now known as Wiston Lodge, it is a centre for outdoor activities, training & development.

Today the M74 motorway links the area with the north and south. All of the villages are surrounded by farms and farmland making it a very peaceful place to live.



# Time for Action

The 22 priorities raised through the planning process have been separated into three areas which are:

- **WITHIN THE COMMUNITY'S CONTROL** - The community can organise and drive forward new initiatives
- **IN SHARED CONTROL** - The community can share responsibility for tackling key issues, alongside key agencies
- **OUTWITH THE COMMUNITY'S CONTROL** - The community can influence on these issues, but cannot be said to hold any responsibility for providing solutions. The Community will lobby others to bring about positive changes.

At the Visioning Day **twenty nine** participants expressed a willingness to help put the

## A) In Our Control

### Priority 1:      **Take Community Led Plan Forward**

A new group, representing the 8 villages, will match local people with those priorities of particular interest to them to take the Community Led Plan forward. At the community meetings it was suggested that it is a priority to have paid support worker/s in place to help activate and implement action priorities.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Match the skills and passions of local people interested in implementing the plan to specific priorities
- Seek resources for a combination of paid and voluntary workers to take forward the Community Led Plan
- Form strong links with the 3 local Community Councils, and the Statutory and Voluntary Sectors

### Priority 2:      **Improve Communication**

**“not knowing what was going on”** was cited as the main reason for a local lack of involvement. The most widely used methods of communication for Glencaple & Lowther are word of mouth, posters and leaflets. However, the majority of local people felt that they would like to see a community newsletter. There was also a large appetite for setting up an online presence and communications hub for Glencaple & Lowther.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Establish a community newsletter
- Investigate the best way of sharing local information via the web
- Ensure all the villages have a community notice board
- Develop & publish a directory of local skills & talents, to include businesses, trades people & those who are self-employed

## A) In Our Control

### Priority 3:      **Paid Development Worker/s**

A recurring theme from the process was the need for a paid support worker/s to help take forward the priorities of the Community Led Plan.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Seek resources for a paid position for implementation of a community newsletter and website
- Community to apply for funding for support worker/s to assist the implementation group in actioning the Plan
- The support worker/s role/s clearly defined as working with the local community to source funding, coordinate ideas, realise opportunities, and liaise with

### Priority 4:      **Improve Advice & Welfare Services**

Reflecting general information needs most people think they do not get adequate information on local support services, which have to be accessed mostly out of the area.

Local carers feel that *“more money and better advice and information”* would make life easier for them.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Liaise with advice and welfare services for better local support
- Establish local meeting point/s (community hub/s) - utilising existing facilities - where information, services and support groups can be

### Priority 5:      **Leisure Facilities for All**

A lack of useable local amenities, and the cost and time of travel to access the nearest amenities, are preventing local people from become more active. A number of amenities do exist within the eight villages which are not in a fit state for use.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Better advertising of the limited existing opportunities
- Develop use of Community Buses/vehicles to enable people to access these existing opportunities
- Encourage better use of village halls
- Repair/Upgrade existing facilities, e.g. tennis courts, sports pitches, bowling greens etc.

# Action..Action

## A) In Our Control

### Priority 6: Community Transport

Transport as an issue was the single most recurring theme emerging from all methods of engagement. Most people believe that transport provision in, around and out of Glencaple and Lowther is inadequate. Lack of public and community transport is seen as a major problem especially for young people.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Publicise the existing free community bus provision
- Community making better use of the buses currently available in order to demonstrate need
- Secure community bus facilities for the future



### Priority 7: Under-Use of Village Halls

Most of the 7 village halls are underused with the prohibitive factors being the lack of volunteers able to offer a regular commitment, limited programmes of events, and the costs of hiring the halls.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- The need for a paid support worker was again seen as a requirement to help facilitate a programme of events and activities
- Fundraising events to pay for hiring halls, events and activities
- Any new programme of activities to include services provided by South Lanarkshire voluntary and statutory bodies not currently available to Glencaple & Lowther

## A) In Our Control

### Priority 8: Community Hub

A staged development leading to a One stop shop for all the 8 villages.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS:

- Initially develop existing village halls and stimulate demand for further development
- Explore and implement sustainable income-generation for Glencaple & Lowther area to support:
  - A drop in centre for information, communication, support and training
  - A meeting place for groups, such as youth, the elderly, intergenerational, carers' support etc
  - Facilities might include a cafe, sports facilities, an I.T. suite a function hall for concerts, theatre, social events etc
  - A focal point for local regeneration

## B) In Shared Control

### Priority 1: Youth & Children's Leisure Activities & Facilities

The lack of facilities for youth and children was another recurring theme. From the survey, 51% felt that having better facilities would most improve the quality of life in their area, with 58% stating that they don't think there are enough appropriate activities for young people. From the youth and children's survey 40% of young people and children said that they would like better transport provision, with 62% stating that they would like better outdoor facilities. "Exemplified by one young person who stated - *Facilities for young people and sports are appalling. Young people get blamed for all the bad stuff that goes on but it's because we have nothing to do, plus the general health of the country is deteriorating and we need local fitness clubs to improve this.*"

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Youth network across the villages with volunteers & a paid youth worker to coordinate activities
  - Local Youth Clubs
    - Regular youth events/outings/mobile cinema/information sessions etc
    - More advertising of existing opportunities
    - Better link up of existing activities/events
    - Community Bus drivers recruited & trained/paid.
    - Liaise with Youth Learning Services with regard to youth work support

## B) In Shared Control

### Priority 2:      **Childcare Provision**

Current childcare provision is not seen as satisfactory. Parents stated that the lack of registered childcare was clearly linked to the issue of employment and subsequently to that of sustainable communities.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Explore the potential for before and after school clubs locally
- Explore the potential for Summer Play Schemes locally
- Liaise with existing nursery to make them aware of survey findings
- Explore the potential for a new, private or community-owned local nursery, providing full-time, wrap around care

### Priority 3:      **Littering & Dumping**

The level of littering and dumping is a problem in the area. Some of this would appear to be caused by HGV drivers parking overnight in undesignated areas, and by visitors littering local picnic areas and roadways.

Not all residents are issued with council bins which creates a problem of wildlife regularly scattering their contents.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- More signage and enforcement of HGV overnight parking restrictions
- Alert people to free refuse uplift
- Information distributed about reporting illegal dumping /fly tipping
- More Litter Picking
- Refuse/Recycling bins for all

### Priority 4:      **Football Pitches & Swing Parks**

Parents feel the parks don't meet their children's needs and are poorly maintained. A significant number do not feel that the swing parks in the area are safe.

General responses to this issue centred on a need for new & better equipment for all ages, social areas for young people, more community seating and improved sporting facilities.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Play Park Development Groups established to consult, plan, secure funding and implement improvements on behalf of communities
- Support and guidance for new Play Park Development groups

# Action..Action

## B) In Shared Control

### Priority 5: Dog & Other Fouling

Dog fouling was identified as an ongoing problem, both on public walkways and in park areas. Human fouling is also a major health and safety issue in several villages where there are no public toilet facilities, and where there is undesignated overnight parking and camping.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Regular liaison with Council dog warden for advice and help
- Local Safety Campaign
- Fining enforced for repeat offenders
- Play areas fenced off to prevent access by dogs
- Enforcement of no overnight camping/parking
- Council awareness of the human fouling problem
- Reopening of closed public toilets
- Designated lorry park areas

### Priority 6: More Local Employment Opportunities

There are limited employment opportunities within the Glencaple and Lowther area. Those that do exist are predominantly low-paid, short-term or part-time. Poor public transport makes it difficult to commute out of the area, which often forces people without access to cars (particularly young adults) to leave the area.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Information regularly disseminated on existing and new employment & training opportunities
- Suitable properties made available/developed for self-employed to base themselves locally
- Improved local Childcare Provision
- Job Creation through a Self-Sustaining Community Project (Community



## B) In Shared Control

### Priority 7: Mountain Biking/Cycle Paths/Local Footpaths/Networks

Lack of footpaths and cycle paths to give safe access in their area were reported by young people as a particular concern. Adults focused more on the limited accessibility to local footpaths and rights of way. There is enthusiasm to make use of local forestry areas to create mountain biking facilities, encouraging tourism and stimulating the local economy.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Link villages via pathways/ cycleway
- Use of disused grounds
- Ensure ancient rights of way are maintained for public access
- Link with Council's Core Path Initiative
- Village/area walks
- Liaise with other cycling organisations, including Sustrans
- Local signage, leaflets, maps



## C) Out of Our Control

### Priority 1: Improve Road Safety

Throughout the area road safety is seen as a major priority, this was consistently voiced through all methods of engagement. 56% of respondents are concerned with speeding, 61% think there are major danger spots on their roads. 57% think that current traffic calming measures are ineffective.

#### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Meeting with Roads Department/Traffic Police to discuss road safety
- More traffic calming/additional speed limitations in villages
- Crash Barriers for steep drops
- Local anti-speeding campaign/regular police presence

# Action..Action

## C) Out of Our Control

### Priority 2:      **Public Transport**

The bus service is seen as an essential service to the community. The sparse timetable of services is a particular problem for people who need public transport to access work and education opportunities. Some villages are wholly reliant on a dial a bus service, which has its own limitations.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Liaise with transport providers to revise the current timetable
- Make better use of the free community buses
- Publish list of current services and make available through a community newsletter/website
- Car sharing initiative
- Promote existing lobby group working to reopen local rail stations

### Priority 3:      **Broadband/Mobile Phone Reception**

The survey did not include questions about access to technology, but through the community meetings and Visioning Event, it emerged that many in Glencaple and Lowther have a poor, ineffective service, The issue was linked by locals to successful local employment opportunities, and business development, and it was noted that in some countries, access to broadband is now a legal right.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Ensure implementation of Scottish Government objectives for all communities to be broadband enabled

### Priority 4:      **Road Conditions**

Many of the roads, paths and pavements in the area are in a poor state of repair. In some areas these are considered as a danger to users. Ungritted paths and pavements were seen as a safety issue for everyone.

#### **PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

- Liaise with Council Roads department to highlight main areas of concern
- Liaise with Estate managers in relevant areas to help improve current conditions
- More provision of grit bins, and arrangement for access of use for residents

# Action..Action

## C) Out of Our Control

### Priority 5: Access to Public Toilets

People are unhappy with the lack of local amenities and feel that they “*need public toilets for passing motorists, buses, cyclists, and children using the play parks*”.

It was felt important to be able to provide this service for visitors to the area, and the local population.

### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Reopen Abington/Crawford public toilets
- Open Leadhills toilets on public holidays

### Priority 6: Community Policing

Although 96% feel their area is a safe place to live, most people ‘*hardly ever*’ see the police and don’t know how to access their services. Many would like to have a designated person or team for our area.

### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- Contacts for community police advertised more widely
- Special Constable for Glencaple & Lowther
- Introduction of a Neighbourhood watch scheme

### Priority 7: Paths & Pavements

As significant number of adults, and a surprising number of children are unhappy with the lack of suitable pavements in the area, and the state of the existing pavements. It was highlighted that this is not just an issue of convenience, but one of public safety.

### PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

- More access paths, e.g. Path from Abington to Welcome Break
- More safe routes, e.g. A continuous path through Crawford
- More gritting of pavements in the winter
- The frequency of cutting verges & overgrown vegetation



# Next Steps...

## Establish a "Glencaple & Lowther Development Group"

Establish a Glencaple & Lowther Development Group which is representative of the whole community. The main purpose of the Group will be to achieve improvements for the area by acting on the proposed solutions identified in the Community Led Plan. Funding will be sought for the Plan implementation stage.



### Action

The Group will work closely with the three local Community Councils, elected government representatives, existing Voluntary and Statutory organisations and South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership. A.L.V.O. (Association for Local Voluntary Organisations) will continue to support the initiative.

### Contacts

If you would like further information on the Community Led Plan or the Glencaple and Lowther Development Group, then please contact:

Liz Steele: 01864 502748 [drakelawpottery@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:drakelawpottery@yahoo.co.uk)  
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Or go to [www.ruraldevelopmenttrust.co.uk](http://www.ruraldevelopmenttrust.co.uk) and select the Glencaple and Lowther link on the top menu.

Few of these actions can be achieved without the strong support and involvement of local people and collaborative working with local organisations. If you are interested in assisting with any of these priority proposals, please contact us.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to:

- Our dedicated volunteers who delivered and collected surveys in one of our harshest winters
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