



Carstairs Junction

Local Community Led Plan

Carstairs Junction Community Led Plan



2005

Carstairs Junction Action Plan

Carstairs Junction is one of 4 Communities that have been selected to take part in the preparation of a Community Led Plan for the future of their village over the next two years. It is a new and exciting way for communities to become more involved in the Community Planning Process and to heighten awareness of the partners and processes of Community Planning.

The village was originally built to support an industry – The Railway Station and Junction – that industry no longer exists in the village and as a result the village has naturally declined. Without the support of local employment and thriving transport links the village has been unable to stand alone. This plan is one of the first steps in getting the village back on it's feet, finding new ways to support itself and gather the support of agencies who can help.

The community of Carstairs Junction has prepared its Community Led Plan with the assistance of ALVO and the financial support of Communities Scotland and Leader+.

The Plan summarises community views about:

- Carstairs Junction past and present;
- The community's vision for it's future;
- The issues that matter most to the community, and
- Priorities for action.

The Plan makes a clear statement about the type of place Carstairs Junction aims to be and what needs to be done.

The Plan will be used to highlight the community's needs and aspirations in discussions with public agencies and other partners, and as evidence of community support for priority projects.

Methodology

The plan was prepared following extensive consultation within the community.

Consultation included:

- a community survey that went to every household
- a series of Focus Groups
- a community Visioning Event in which the community was asked to further refine the priorities of the community.

The Plan was prepared by Audrey Simpson, Carstairs Junctions' Community Led Plan Facilitator. Sixteen members of the community agreed to form a local Co-ordination Group to take forward the priorities of the community as defined by the Plan.

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 the 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.

151 or 50% of all households completed the 106 question survey and 84 people attended the Focus Groups and Visioning Event



At every stage of the process it was emphasised that:

The Local Community Led Plan was.....

- An opportunity to participate and feed into a community focused Local Action Plan prepared by local residents
- An opportunity to understand, participate in, and influence Statutory Community Planning
- An opportunity to highlight the priorities for Carstairs Junction
- An opportunity to define what can be actioned by the community and what needs to be developed in partnership with other organisations
- An opportunity to organise and progress some local initiatives by the community itself.

The Local Community Led Plan was not.....

- A Local Authority Scheme
- A wish list of things that should but may never happen
- A promise of substantial additional funding coming into the area
- A temporary unsupported project with no future.

Our Community Now...

Community Views on Carstairs Junction

The summary below shows some of the main findings of the Community Survey. All of the findings will be available on theGuidLife on-line community (www.theguidlife.net) for anyone who should wish to view them.

What we like....

Countryside/Rural setting	53%
Neighbours & Friendly people	41%
Location (Glasgow/Edinburgh)	20%
School	17%
My Home	11%
Railway Station	9%
Family nearby	9%



"Peacefulness and view of Clyde"

"View of Tinto Hill"

"Very good school and church, a good bus service"

"Local to family and friends, my next door neighbours, good walks to go with the kids"

"Rural Life (countryside, fresh air), Scenic views, and woodland, Peaceful"

"Location—Glasgow-Edinburgh train service (could be improve), countryside round about, trees in the park"

"Fresh Country atmosphere, happy memories of past days living and working in Carstairs"



What we don't like....

Condition of Roads & Pavements	34%
Drug & Alcohol Abuse	29%
Undesirable Tenants	25%
Poorly maintained properties	22%
Rail Service (lack of)	22%
Nothing for kids/young people	18%
Lack of Facilities/Activities	18%
Litter/Vandalism	13%
Dog Fouling	12%
Cheeky Kids	11%
Lack of Community Spirit	9%



"The undesirables, the cheeky and destructive kids, the lack of pride people have about their community"

"Lack of community spirit/participation/things to do, Drug dealing/using, lack of local employment"

"Deplorable condition of roads and pavements, decline of rail services"

Community Profile

Background, Heritage & Environment

A village in South Lanarkshire, Carstairs Junction lies 1 mile (2 km) southeast of Carstairs. (close to the site of the Roman fort of Castledykes, chartered as a burgh of barony in 1765, its Tudor Gothic mansion, designed in 1821-24 by William Burn for Henry Monteith, became a nursing home in the 1970s). The village of Carstairs Junction was laid out in the 1840s for railway workers. The village developed in association with the Caledonian railway whose station here was opened in February 1848. It was one of the



most important junctions on the Scottish railway network being a major junction on the routes between Glasgow and Edinburgh and the location where trains split or coaches were attached/detached en-route to various destinations. Electrification of the line and the introduction of fast through trains removed the need for combining and splitting trains. In the 1920s a State Hospital for the criminally insane was built nearby.

The peaceful open countryside is the one of the main appeals of Carstairs Junction to the local residents. It also boast a well established, though poorly maintained wood, scenic views of Tinto Hill and a gentle meandering section of The Clyde where many still sunbathe and paddle in the summer. Though situated in beautiful rural setting Carstairs Junction is located almost exactly between the Cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh and has a direct rail link to both with limited services. The village itself however looks run down in appearance with empty and boarded up houses and messy gardens in many streets. The roads and pavements are in some disrepair and some residents refer to it as "The forgotten Land" as it has been declining for some time now with no sign of recovery.

Community Profile

Social and Community

Transport links are poor and the village suffers from lack of amenities and facilities. There is a great local primary school and pre-school nursery, a church and a community hall. Social Work (Child and Family Services and Criminal Justice) are engaged in casework concentrated in the Council rented areas of the village. Drug abuse is considered to be a significant problem with an increase in referrals to the NHS Clydesdale Rural Outreach Project. There are a few local groups who organise dominoes, bowling and local events such as the Gala Day.



Population

Carstairs Junction has a declining population with 792 residents in 2001 as opposed to 860 in 1991. A high percentage - 31%



of the population are single compared to 28% for all South Lanarkshire.

Significantly the under 16 age group is 22.85% of the total population, compared with 19.73% for all of South Lanarkshire. 19% of the population are over 60 years old., slightly higher than the South Lanarkshire average of 17.8%



Employment

Unemployment in 2001 was significantly higher than the South Lanarkshire average, 10.90% compared with 5.89%. Local employment opportunities have declined sharply over the past decade or so. The changes to the services and uses of Carstairs Junction Railway Station significantly reduced local employment in the village.



Carstairs State Hospital provides employment for a number of local people. When Monteith Nursing Home first opened it created many jobs in the area with mini-buses running regularly to take staff to work. These mini bus services are much reduced now and there appears to be fewer local people employed than there once were. The village also has two pubs, a shop, and a hairdresser that provide employment on a small scale.



Housing

Of the 350 available properties in Carstairs Junction there are currently 228 council rented properties (54%). There is an oversupply of four-in-a-block flats which are more difficult to let than the other house types. It is expected that selective demolition of some of this stock will be required within the next 3 years to address problems of low demand.



Time for Action

The community identified several issues that they have distinguished as being within their own control as a community and out with their control but within their influence. The newly formed Carstairs Junction Coordination Group will take forward the issues in this plan, encouraging the community to become involved in those projects we as a community can initiate for ourselves and also generate strong communication links between the community and the necessary agencies dealing with those aspects of the plan out with our control, requesting their assistance and cooperation.

In Our Control — High Priority

Priority 1 Establish a Youth Club

Youth Club – Activities and somewhere to go for Youths in the area. Currently they have little to do and are enthusiastic to become more involved and active.

Priority 2 Issue a regular newsletter

Community produced newsletter to better communicate information amongst the community itself and between the community and the various agencies, building a better relationship and understanding.

Priority 3 Community Drop-in Centre

Community Drop-in Centre – Somewhere residents of all ages can go to relax, pick up information, participate in social interaction, have coffee and tea, and access computers.

Priority 4 Improve the Physical Appearance of the Village

Improve Physical Appearance of the Village – Taking better care of properties and tidying gardens - Encouraging tenants to take better care of their gardens by rewarding good maintenance and offering affordable assistance – perhaps supported by the council workers who maintain gardens for pensioners. The community could also organise an annual clean-up of the village to improve the over-all appearance.

Priority 5 More Local Activities

More local activities – organising social, arts and crafts, health and fitness, and environmental activities the community can participate in.

Priority 6 Better Use of Community Flat

Better use of community flat – encouraging the community to make better use of the flat, - longer opening hours would also be desirable.

Priority 7 Dog-fouling Campaign

Dog Fouling Campaign – Campaign against and publicise the menace of Dog Fouling, make it unacceptable in and around our village and encourage dog owners to clean up after their dog. Suggestions from the community included Dog Poop Wardens!

In Our Control — Lower Priority

Priority 1 Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch – many of the attendees of the focus groups agreed that a village-wide Neighbourhood Watch scheme would create a greater sense of safety and community spirit within the village and said they would like to become involved.

Shared Control

Priority 1 Reduce Drug & Alcohol misuse

Addressing Drug and Alcohol misuse – the community agreed it is necessary to be more proactive in reporting criminal and anti-social activity, that sterner law enforcement against drug dealing is required, and that rehabilitation services should be available in the village to help address the current drug and alcohol misuse in the village.

Priority 2 Encourage Enterprise

Encourage enterprise in the area – help, advice and support for local people to start their own enterprises in the area. Encouragement for businesses and organisations to build and develop employment opportunities in the village.

Priority 3 Training Courses

Courses – Vocation courses to help local people gain qualifications for work and a Careers service locally would benefit those not in work and also the youth who are considering their futures.

Priority 4 Affordable Full-time Childcare

Affordable Full-Time Childcare – working parents would benefit from affordable full-time day care for their children. Before and after school clubs would also be a great benefit – a breakfast club in particular would help ensure all children and youths get access to a healthy breakfast.

Priority 5 More & Better Houses & Shops

More and better Houses and shops - More and better houses. Encourage building of new homes in the area, low-cost start-up homes and private houses to encourage new people to join the community.

Outwith Our Control — High Priority

Priority 1 Resurface Roads and Pavements

Resurface Roads and Pavements – the poor condition of the roads and pavements are seen as a very high priority, causing accidents and injuries due to their uneven nature.

Priority 2 Indoor Sports Facility

Indoor Sports Facility – currently there is a lack of facilities in the village - a great benefit would come from the provision of a sports hall where various sports could be safely played year round. It has been suggested that facilities at Monteith Park be re-instated such as Tennis Courts and the Putting green – helping to generate an income to maintain the park. The park is also subject to problems with flooding which is seen as a priority within the village.

Priority 3 House Letting Policy

House Letting Policy - The community would like to have more influence over housing policy, encouraging the kind of tenants we would like to see in the village.

Priority 4 Street Lighting

Street Lighting – improved street lighting, particularly around the parks, lanes and main streets would allow more community participation, making areas of the village feel more safe and accessible.

Priority 5 Improved Rail Service

Improved Rail Service – more trains stopping at Carstairs Junction would open up employment opportunities between here and Edinburgh and also between here and Glasgow, it would also open up social and leisure opportunities for the people of the village.

Priority 6 More Bins

More bins – littering has a negative impact on the image of the village and the community recognises it as a high priority, suggesting more bins particularly on the main school routes and walk ways as a possible solution.

Priority 7 More Equipment for Play Areas

More Equipment for kids play areas – many of the respondents to the questionnaire mentioned that the play equipment in the park is limited and a wider range would benefit the various age groups of children in the village, perhaps also the creation of another play park in the village ensuring that play facilities are available to all the children within a safe distance to their homes.

Outwith Our Control — Lower Priority

Priority 1 Gas Mains to Carstairs

Gas Mains to Carstairs – it was noted that there has been a gas mains pipe running through Ravenstruther for many years that has never yet been connected to the village despite various rumours over the years, the community feel this is a possible long-term priority as it would be a great improvement to be able to get gas central heating in the village which currently only has the option of Solid Fuel, Electric or Oil central heating. This may encourage more people into the village as council tenants too.

The Next Steps....

Carrying Out These Actions

The formation of a Co-ordination Group for the village, so far endorsed by sixteen members of the community is the first step. The remit of the Co-ordination Group will be to take forward this plan, developing strong communication channels between the community and agency partners and encouraging community support and involvement in the work that will follow.

Supporting These Actions

We welcome and invite the involvement of local people in supporting this programme of action. There are various ways you can get involved. If there are particular areas of interest to you, such as environmental issues, youth work or landscaping you may be able to participate in or head up a group that will address these areas of concern specifically. Support is on hand to any enterprising new groups in the area endeavouring to improve village life.



The newly formed Carstairs Junction Co-ordination Group

Reviewing The Action Plan

We will from time to time review our progress in implementing this plan, inviting all groups in the community to attend a meeting and assess the progress we are making in carrying out the actions set out in the Plan. A review meeting will be held 12 months after the launch of the Plan to take stock of our achievements and set goals for the year ahead.

Main Contacts

Audrey Simpson	Community Plan Facilitator	07957 303375
Frank Burns	ALVO	01555 661233



Thanks are extended to all who took part in helping to prepare this Local Community Led Plan, to Communities Scotland, South Lanarkshire Rural Partnership Leader+ and ALVO