

Nith Valley LEAF Trust

# Closeburn Community Plan



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## ACTION POINTS

- Retain care home
- Extended GP opening hours
- Expanding cottage hospital
- Chiropody service
- Growing the local shop
- More housing to rent
- More frequent local bus service
- Traffic slowing
- Better A76 contingency arrangements
- Better maintenance of hedges, trees and paths
- Admin facilities for small businesses
- More activities and clubs in Closeburn

## PROJECT OUTLINES

- Voluntary Befriending Service
- Installation of Emergency Medical Equipment
- More sheltered housing
- Internet Hub
- Availability of Broadband in Rural Areas
- Reintroduction of Thornhill Railway Station
- Walking/ Cycling Path to Thornhill
- Community Action Group
- Gardening Service for Elderly Residents
- Upgrade Closeburn Village Hall
- Upgrade Football Pitch
- Tourist Information Point (Inc. Walkers' map)

# CLOSEBURN COMMUNITY PLAN

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## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This community plan was commissioned by Nith Valley LEAF Trust with funding from Local Energy Scotland. After a competitive tender process the project was assigned to Community Links Scotland who have significant experience in producing community plans working with Trusts, Community Development Trusts, and community groups. Originally the brief was to develop a community plan for Thornhill and Closeburn together however as work progressed it became clear that there was a need and demand to produce two separate plans, one for each village. Thornhill, by virtue of its larger population and status as a regional service centre, could have overshadowed Closeburn in a joint plan and that is why the decision was made to produce two community plans, with common themes between the two. This duplication is particularly evident on issues relating to services and amenities which are used by residents of both communities. As a result of the need to redress the balance in favour of Closeburn the two communities have been provided with plans which not only address shared issues affecting them both, but also unique issues specific to each village as well. The two plans therefore have significant opportunity for joined up working between the two community council areas.

In total 12 action points and 12 project outlines have been developed designed to address to needs and demands identified by the residents of Closeburn throughout the consultation process. These 24 ideas for the future enhancement of Closeburn have been specifically designed to meet the needs identified through the research undertaken and to tie into the various regional and national policies and strategies for the area which aim to develop, support and build communities. The 12 action points which have been identified for the community plan are:

- Retain care home
- Extended GP opening hours
- Expanding cottage hospital
- Chiropody service
- Growing the local shop
- More housing to rent
- More frequent local bus service
- Traffic slowing
- Better A76 contingency arrangements
- Better maintenance of hedges, trees and paths
- Admin facilities for small businesses
- More activities and clubs in Closeburn

These action points are recommendations, not fully fledged project outlines, and they are designed to act as a first step in some of the potential work that could be undertaken by the community council and the wider community in the months and years going forward.

The project outlines came from the community's ideas which have the potential to be developed into more workable, longer- terms projects. The project outlines have aims, a brief proposal, and detail potential partners and funders. The 12 project outlines are:

- Voluntary Befriending Service: To provide isolated individuals with social contact and a link to the outside world and act as a gateway for other services and valuable support.
- Installation of Emergency Medical Equipment: To equip the local community with a portable defibrillator especially designed for people with little or no medical background.
- More sheltered housing: To ensure that there is sufficient long- term provision of sheltered housing in Closeburn to enable residents to remain in their community.
- Internet Hub: To build a new community internet hub in Closeburn, enabling local people to access high speed internet and IT facilities within their community.
- Availability of Broadband in Rural Areas: To ensure residents within the Thornhill and Closeburn Community Council Areas can access broadband in their homes
- Reintroduction of Thornhill Railway Station: To reintroduce Thornhill Railway Station.
- Walking/ Cycling Path to Thornhill: To create a safe walking and cycling route between Thornhill and Closeburn
- Community Action Group: To undertake a range of environmental projects and activities that will contribute to the enhancement of Closeburn and the surrounding area.
- Gardening Service for Elderly Residents: To ensure that all residents in Closeburn and the surrounding area have the means to maintain their gardens
- Upgrade Closeburn Village Hall: To upgrade the existing village hall in Closeburn in order to provide a better equipped, modern recreational space for a range of services and activities.
- Upgrade Football Pitch: To provide a high quality multi- use games area in Closeburn.
- Tourist Information Point (Inc. Walkers' map): To provide visitors and tourists to the area with a well equipped, informative first point of contact offering information on local attractions and activities.

The extensive consultation work which has been carried out as part of the development of this community plan has ensured that this finished product is comprehensive and useful and can be put straight into use. We were able to speak to a great number of residents who shared their aspirations and hopes for the future of Closeburn, not only

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have we been able to identify these aspirations, we have been able to work with the community to understand the underlying issues and develop realistic solutions. The work facilitated engagement with a wide range of community members and stakeholders and gleaned from them a great depth of valuable knowledge which has been analysed and synthesised to produce this community plan. This community plan contains within it a range of workable ideas and project outlines which could be taken forward by community groups and bodies, or by residents themselves, to ultimately enhance the quality of local life or address specific issues identified by community members. This document will support the development of Closeburn's community vision and provide the community council, Nith Valley LEAF Trust and the wider community with a tool to assist future planning and development in the short, medium and longer term.

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## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

As part of the consultation process for this community plan a range of engagement methods were used. The first consultation exercise undertaken was a survey of all households in the community council area; this amounted to just under 400 surveys being delivered in Closeburn Community Council area. Of these, 78 surveys were returned giving us a response rate of 20%. In addition to the survey being delivered, we also compiled an online version which was circulated by community members allowing more community members to submit their responses. We also carried out consultation work with S5 and S6 pupils at Wallace Hall Academy, asking them to complete the same household survey, as a means of redressing the age bias evident in the returned household surveys. In total 87 surveys were returned from school pupils, online completions and those that were delivered.

Supplementing the survey work undertaken, additional primary consultation work was carried out with community groups and local businesses from Closeburn and Thornhill. Face to face meetings and discussions were had with 15 local businesses and 33 tailored local business surveys were returned (some businesses had both a face to face meeting and returned a survey). From local community groups 16 tailored surveys were returned, and in addition to this a number of face to face discussions were had with members of some groups including Closeburn Village Hall committee, Rotary Club, Closeburn Youth Group, local arts groups and Thornhill Community Centre Committee.

The final piece of consultation work carried out was two drop- in events in Closeburn. At these events we asked community members a series of in- depth questions about their aspirations and hopes for the future of their community, building on residents' responses to the previous stage of the consultation. Between both of these consultation events held in December 2016 and January 2017 over 100 community members in total were spoken to, given the drop-in nature of the events it is difficult to determine the exact number of respondents. Analysis was carried out on the responses to all elements of the consultation at each stage and, along with the needs analysis and policy background which was developed throughout, used to inform the action points and project outlines contained within the community plan.

## 3.0 BACKGROUND TO COMMUNITY PLAN

### 3.1 Population and Location

Closeburn is a small village of around 270 people in Dumfries and Galloway, South West Scotland. The village is surrounded by agricultural land with a number of smaller settlements situated nearby, including Cample and Gatelawbridge to the north and Auldgirth to the south which lies just outside Closeburn's community council area. The Closeburn Community Council area is relatively large, extending as far north east as Gana Hill and is bounded by the Water of Ae to the east and the River Nith to the west. Closeburn lies on the main A76 road Dumfries to Kilmarnock and has a number of smaller minor roads leading off it providing excellent road access to both larger regional towns and nearby rural settlements. Around 2.5 miles north of Closeburn lies the larger village of Thornhill which offers a range of services and amenities for Closeburn residents. As such, Thornhill is often seen as a local hub in terms of drawing people across upper Nithsdale for work, leisure, healthcare and education. It is estimated that there are now approximately 115 houses in Closeburn with approximately a further 200 across the community council area. The proportion of owner occupied housing in and around Closeburn village is around 60%, slightly lower than the national level, estimated to be around 62%.



Figure 3.1.1: Closeburn Village

### 3.2 Business and Education

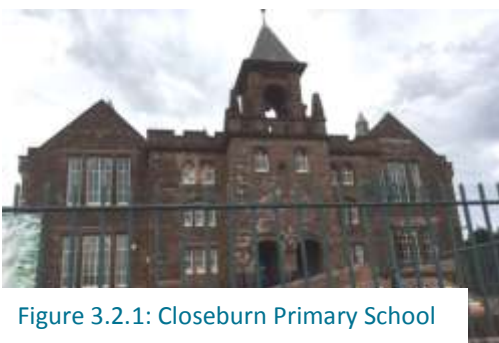


Figure 3.2.1: Closeburn Primary School

Closeburn village is home to a number of small and medium sized businesses, mainly located at Closeburn Industrial Estate, with a number of additional businesses located in the more rural parts of the community council area, particularly farms. Although there are a number of businesses in the area, many residents do commute to larger settlements like Dumfries and Thornhill for work.

Closeburn has its own primary school located about 1km to the east of the main village which is attended by children from across the community council area. Secondary school pupils must travel to nearby Wallace hall Academy in Thornhill which has a wide catchment area given the rural nature of the area.

### 3.3 Community

As mentioned above, Thornhill is home to the majority of the community facilities in the area given its larger size and relative proximity; however Closeburn does have a number of community amenities in its own right. The Closeburn Village Hall accommodates a variety of activities on a regular basis including dog training classes and hosts a number of annual events each year including the Gala Day, Christmas parties, and New Years' Lunch. Furthermore, there is Closeburn Parish Church, an attractive building located adjacent to the primary school, east of the main village which is a significant feature in the local community. Closeburn is also home to a few parks, playing fields and open spaces which can be used for sports and community events throughout the year. Such events include the annual Closeburn Gala Day which draws visitors from across the community council area and further afield. Thornhill is however a major draw in terms of recreation and community facilities with many Closeburn residents attending classes and clubs at the Thornhill Community Centre, making use of Thornhill Library and visiting the many cafes, shops, and pubs in the village.



Figure 3.3.1: Closeburn Village Hall

### 3.4 Environment



Figure 3.4.1: Closeburn Park

The community's rural setting ensures that there is an abundance of picturesque scenery surrounding the village which undoubtedly adds to its unique charm. There are a number of walking paths around Closeburn and further afield which enable residents and visitors to explore some of the more rural parts of the large community council including an area of the Southern Uplands to the east of the village. One such route takes walkers through parts of the Forest of Ae and up to Queensberry hill, one of the highest points in the region. The main park in the centre of the village is located between Firmuir Avenue and Castle Crescent and contains a range of children's play equipment. Furthermore there is a large playing field situated behind Closeburn Primary School which can be used for a variety of sports.

### 3.5 Health and Emergency Services

There are no health services in Closeburn; instead residents use the service available in Thornhill. The area is served by a health centre and a small community hospital- one of eight across Dumfries and Galloway, but the only one in the Dumfries and Upper

Nithsdale area. The cottage hospital offers a 13 bedded unit accessible by local GPs and consultants from Dumfries & Galloway Royal Infirmary. Furthermore the cottage hospital provides assessment of adults, rehabilitation and palliative care for patients. For patients in need of emergency or specialist treatment travel to Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary, which contains 337 staffed beds, and has a full range of specialties, is necessary. Thornhill Ambulance Station is also situated adjacent to the hospital enabling residents to access the Scottish Ambulance Service with an estimated response time under 8 minutes, one of the best response times in all of Dumfries and Galloway. There is also a voluntary Fire Service in Thornhill based on Kinnell Street, which has ten retained crew members based in the community. Recently Police Scotland have proposed closing the police station located in Thornhill, a decision which has proven controversial with local residents.



Figure 3.5.1: Thornhill Hospital

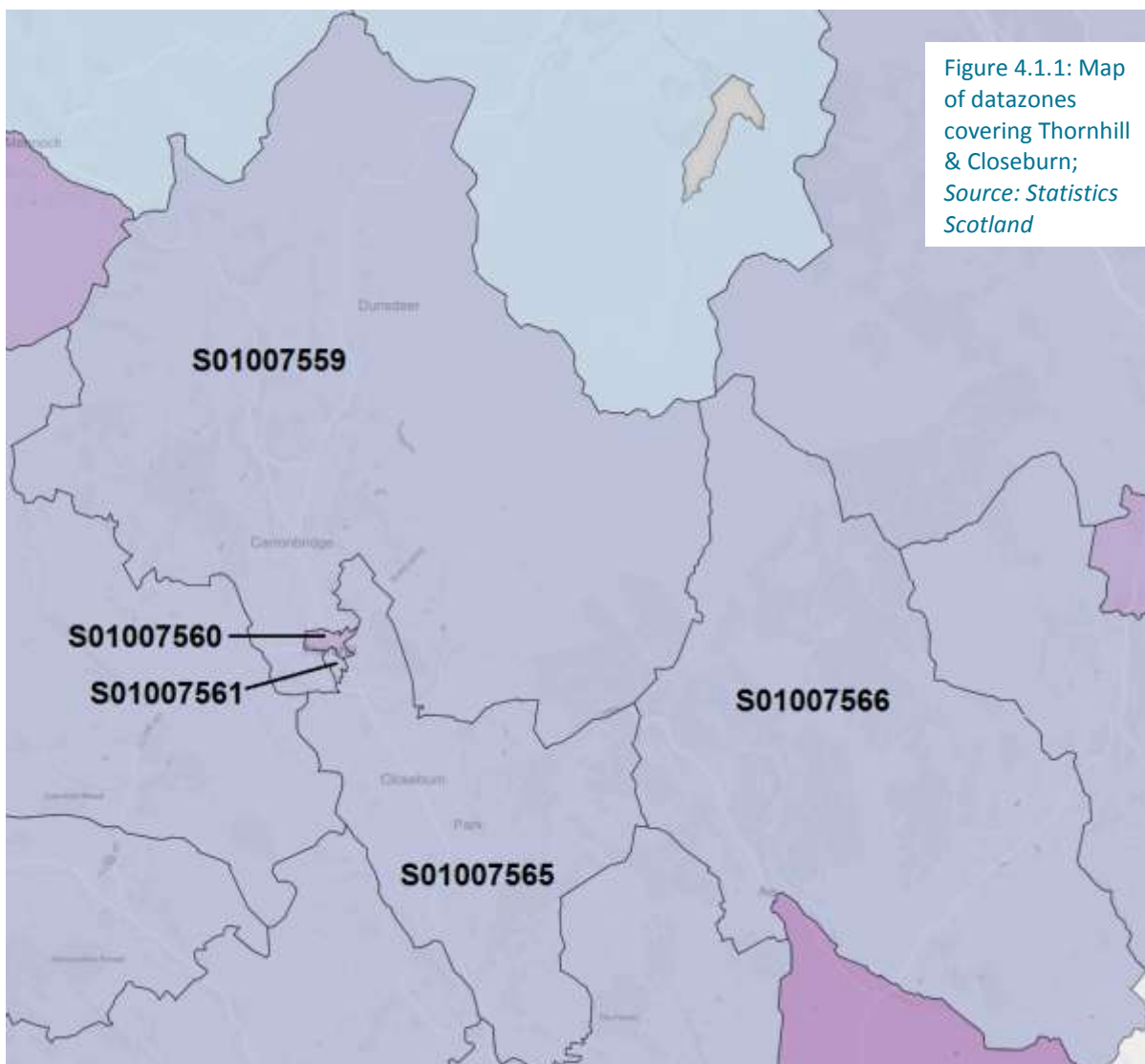
## 4.0 NEEDS ANALYSIS

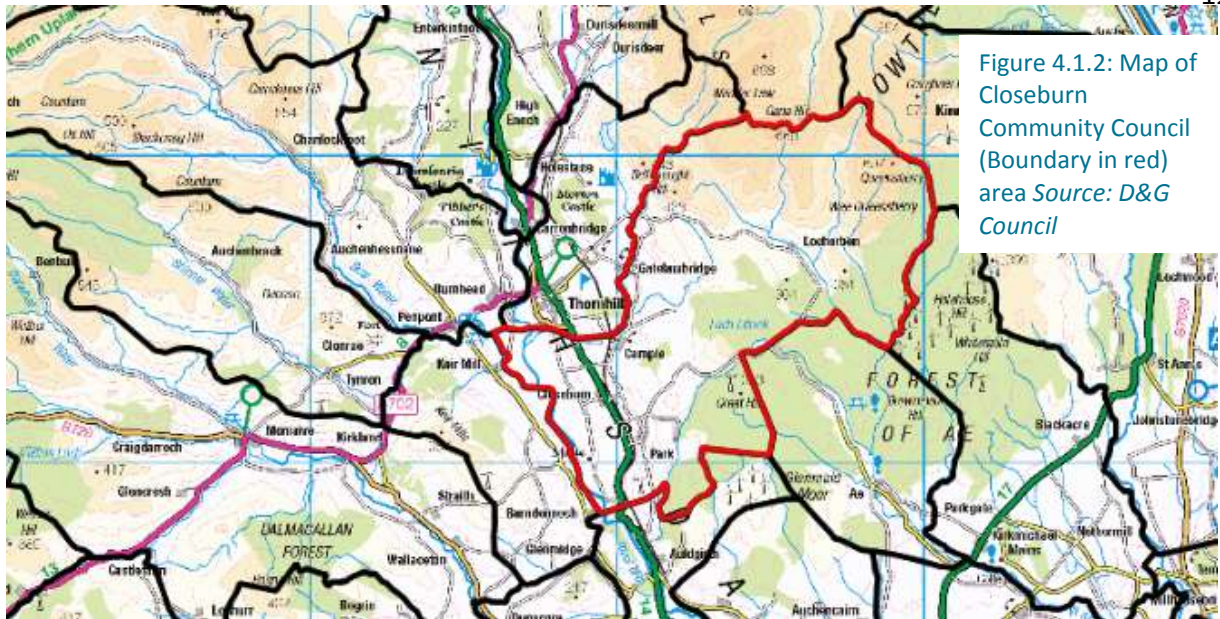
The following section provides baseline information on the demographics of the area. The statistics have been derived from the most appropriate or available scale sources of data:

- Small Area Population Estimates 2015 at Datazone level
- Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 at Datazone level
- Census Scotland 2011 at Locality and Output Area level

### 4.1 Defining Geographical Boundaries

The geographical boundaries relating to the statistics used in this report are illustrated in the maps below which highlights the five datazones that comprise the areas covered by Thornhill and Closeburn Community Councils and Closeburn Community Council area.





## 4.2 Population

Population estimates for 2015 are provided by the National Records of Scotland (NRS). The information is available at datazone level for the datazones which cover Closeburn. Population estimates are shown in Table 4.2.1 with local authority and national figures included for comparison.

Table 4.2.1: Population Estimates for Study Area Datazones: 30 June 2015 *Source: NRS*

Age	Closeburn		Dumfries and Galloway		Scotland 2015	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
0 - 4	68	<b>3.92%</b>	6,952	<b>4.65%</b>	291,174	<b>5.42%</b>
( 5-15 years)	209	<b>12.05%</b>	16,724	<b>11.17</b>	621,088	<b>11.56%</b>
Working Age ( 16 - 64)	1,081	<b>62.34%</b>	91,861	<b>61.38%</b>	3,539,508	<b>65.88%</b>
Pension Age ( 65+)	376	<b>21.68%</b>	34,125	<b>22.80%</b>	921,230	<b>17.15%</b>
All ages	<b>1,734</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>149,662</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>5,373,000</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

This table highlights that the total population of the area covered by datazones So1007959, So1007960 and So1007961 is 2,295. This figure however is not an accurate representation of Closeburn Community Council's population as datazone boundaries and community council boundaries do not match. This population figure is for the datazone areas which best match the community council boundary and is given to offer context to the following SIMD analysis which is given at datazone level.

The estimated population of the Closeburn Community Council area is 800. This figure is taken from the Dumfries and Galloway website and is correct at time of reporting.

This population profile should be considered when identifying and delivering services and activities locally.

## 4.3 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

### 4.3.1 What is the SIMD?

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation. It incorporates several different aspects of deprivation, combining them into a single index. It divides Scotland into 6,976 small areas, called datazones, each containing around 350 households. The Index provides a relative ranking for each datazone, from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived). The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 data was released on 30 August 2016.

In the SIMD context, deprivation is defined as the range of problems that arise due to lack of resources or opportunities, covering health, safety, education, employment, housing and access to services, as well as financial aspects. The SIMD uses data relating to multiple aspects of life in order to gain the fullest possible picture of deprivation across Scotland. Seven different aspects are identified - the seven SIMD domains - and data from these domains are combined to produce the index.

The SIMD is based on small areas known as datazones. Each datazone has on average 800 people living in it. Because they are population-based, datazones can vary hugely in size. For example, in towns and cities where people live close together, datazones can contain only a few streets, while in rural areas that are sparsely populated, they can cover many square miles. The physical datazone boundaries changed in 2016, and the type of people who live within each datazone has likely changed as well. The use of data for such small areas helps to identify 'pockets' (or concentrations) of deprivation that may be missed in analyses based on larger areas such as council wards or local authorities.

The seven domains in SIMD 2016, used to measure the multiple aspects of deprivation, are: Income; Employment; Health; Education, Skills, and Training; Housing; Geographic Access; and Crime. As well as providing an overall rank for each datazone (from 1, the most deprived, to 6,976, the least deprived); the SIMD also provides a rank for each datazone within each of the seven domains. It is therefore possible to look at individual aspects of deprivation for each area, as well as the overall level of deprivation. Each domain is made up of several indicators.

### 4.3.2 Closeburn Overall SIMD

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government's official tool for identifying those places in Scotland suffering from deprivation. It incorporates several different aspects of deprivation, combining them into a single index. It divides Scotland into 6,976 small areas, called datazones, each containing around 350 households. The Index provides a relative ranking for each datazone, from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived). The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016 data was released on 31st August 2016.

Datazone	Total Population (SAPE 2015)	Best-fit Working Age Population (men 16-64, women 16-60 SAPE 2015)	Overall SIMD 2016		Income domain 2016		Employment domain 2016		Health domain 2016		Education, Skills and Training domain 2016		Housing domain rank 2016		Access domain 2016		SIMD Crime 2016 rank	
			Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%	Rank	%
S01007559	716	446	<b>3,736</b>	53.6	<b>4,330</b>	62.1	<b>4,233</b>	60.7	<b>5,165</b>	74.0	<b>5,146</b>	73.8	<b>3,193</b>	45.8	<b>209</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>4,291</b>	61.5
S01007565	981	626	<b>3,131</b>	44.9	<b>3,598</b>	51.6	<b>3,713</b>	53.2	<b>3,879</b>	55.6	<b>4,567</b>	65.5	<b>3,650</b>	52.3	<b>575</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1,016</b>	<b>14.6</b>
S01007566	733	441	<b>3,628</b>	52.0	<b>4,359</b>	62.5	<b>5,348</b>	76.7	<b>4,493</b>	64.4	<b>3,692</b>	52.9	<b>2,693</b>	38.6	<b>104</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>6,446</b>	92.4

Table 4.3.1: Overall SIMD Rankings, Source; *Scottish Government*

This table highlights the low levels of multiple deprivation experienced within the Closeburn area. The overall ranking of the datazones place them within the least deprived 56% and 47% in Scotland. Consideration of the ranks for the individual domains illustrates that the areas generally score well; falling within the least deprived 8%- 48% of Scotland for all domains with the exception of Access for all three datazones, Housing for one, and Crime for another. All three datazones fall within the most deprived 10% nationally for access highlighting that the accessibility of services is a significant problem across the area. Datazone S01007566 falls within the most deprived 39% nationally for Housing indicating that while not exceptionally deprived there is a scope for improvement. Datazone S0100756 falls within the most deprived 15% nationally for crime indicating that the level of deprivation here is significant.

### 4.3.3 Closeburn Income Domain

The income domain identifies areas where there are concentrations of individuals and families living on low incomes by looking at the numbers of people, adults and children, who are receiving, or are dependent on, benefits related to income or tax credits.

Datazone	Total Population (SAPE 2015)	Income domain 2016		Income domain 2016 rate (%)	Number of Income Deprived People 2016
		rank	%		
S01007559	716	<b>4,330</b>	62.1	7	50
S01007565	981	<b>3,598</b>	51.6	10	95
S01007566	733	<b>4,359</b>	62.5	7	50

Table 4.3.2: Income SIMD domain; Source: Scottish Government

The table above, highlights the low level of income deprivation with the datazones falling between the least deprived 49% and 38% of all datazones nationally in that domain. The rate of income deprivation in the area is between 7%- 10%, meaning just under one tenth of the population is experiencing income deprivation. The total estimated number of income deprived people in the three datazones is as high as 195.

### 4.3.4 Closeburn Employment Domain

The employment domain identifies the proportion of people from the resident working age population who are unemployed or who are not in the labour market due to ill health or disability.

Datazone	Best-fit Working Age Population (men 16-64, women 16-60 SAPE 2015)	Employment domain 2016		Employment domain 2016 rate (%)	Number of Employment Deprived People 2016
		Rank	%		
S01007559	446	<b>4,233</b>	60.7	7	30
S01007565	626	<b>3,713</b>	53.2	8	50
S01007566	441	<b>5,348</b>	76.7	4	20

Table 4.3.3: Employment SIMD Domain; Source: Scottish Government

This table highlights the low level of employment deprivation in Closeburn, evidenced by the datazones ranking within the least deprived 47% to 24% nationally in that domain. The estimated number of employment deprived working age people in the area is 100 with the rate of employment deprivation between 4% and 8%.

### 4.3.5 Closeburn Health Domain

The health domain identifies areas with a higher than expected level of ill health or mortality for the age-sex profile of the population.

Datazone	Health domain 2016		Standardised mortality ratio (ISD, 2011- 14)	Comparative Illness Factor: standardised ratio (DWP, 2015)	Hospital stays related to alcohol misuse: standardised ratio (ISD, 2011- 2014)	Hospital stays related to drug misuse: standardised ratio (ISD, 2011- 2014)	Emergency stays in hospital: standardised ratio (ISD, 2011- 2015)	Proportion of population being prescribed drugs for anxiety, depression or psychosis (%) (ISD, 2014- 15)	Proportion of live singleton births of low birth weight (%) (ISD, 2011- 14)
	Rank	%							
S01007559	5,165	74.0	64	70	32	0	81	11	6
S01007565	3,879	55.6	64	85	100	35	83	17	0
S01007566	4,493	64.4	124	75	6	88	83	14	0

Table 4.3.4: Health SIMD Domain; Source: Scottish Government

The table above highlights the level of health deprivation in Closeburn area, with the datazones falling within the least deprived 44% and 35% in Scotland in this domain. Some key points to note from this data are:

- The rate of observed deaths is lower than expected in two datazones but 24% higher than expected in S01007566.
- The rate of observed recipients of health related benefits is between 15% and 30% lower than expected across the datazones.
- The rate of observed hospital stays related to alcohol misuse is as expected for S01007565 but 94% lower than expected in another.
- The rate of observed hospital stays related to drug misuse is zero in S01007559 and 65%- 12% lower than expected elsewhere.
- The rate of observed emergency stays in hospital is 17% lower than expected for two datazones and 19% lower in the other.
- Between 11%- 17% of the population are being prescribed drugs for anxiety, depression or psychosis.
- The level of live singleton births of low birth weight is 0% in two datazones and 6% in the other.

### 4.3.6 Closeburn Education, Skills & Training Domain

The education domain includes indicators that measure both causes of education deprivation (absenteeism and lack of progression to further and higher education) and outcomes of education deprivation (such adults with a lack of qualifications).

Datazone	Education, Skills and Training domain 2016 rank		Working age people with no qualifications Standardised Ratio (2011)	People aged 16-19 not in full time education, employment or training (%) (School Leavers 2012/13-2013/14, DWP 2013 and 2014)	17-21 year olds enrolling into higher education (%) (HESA 2012/13 - 2014/15 )	Attainment of School Leavers (SG, 2012-13- 2014-15)	School Pupil Attendance (%) (SG, 2012/13- 2014/15)
	Rank	%					
S01007995	<b>5,146</b>	73.8	59	18	15	5.8	89
S01007565	<b>4,567</b>	65.5	94	4	13	5.7	89
S01007566	<b>3,692</b>	52.9	90	5	4	5.5	90

Table 4.3.5: Education, Skills and Training SIMD Domain; Source: Scottish Government

The table above shows that the datazones are within the least deprived 26%- 47% in Scotland for Education. Across the datazones 27 16-19 year olds are not in education, employment or training. Between 4%- 18% of people aged 16-19 across the datazones are not in full- time education, employment or training, with between 4%- 15% of 17- 21 year olds enrolling into higher education across the datazones. Pupil attendance in the area sits at around 90%.

### 4.3.7 Closeburn Housing Domain

The SIMD housing domain is intended to focus on the suitability and physical condition of housing. It contains indicators that are based on the proportion of the household population that experience overcrowding or are without central heating.

Data Zone	Housing domain rank 2016		Number of people in households that are overcrowded	Percentage of people in households that are overcrowded	Number of people in households without central heating	Percentage of people in households without central heating
	Rank	%				
S01007995	<b>3,193</b>	45.8	64	9	21	4
S01007565	<b>3,650</b>	52.3	66	7	30	3
S01007566	<b>2,693</b>	38.6	67	9	28	4

Table 4.3.6: Housing SIMD Domain; Source: Scottish Government

The figures for the housing domain indicate that one datazone is within the most deprived 40% nationally with another falling within the most deprived 46%. The other datazone only just places in the least deprived half of datazones. It is very important to recognise that the data uses data from the Census 2011 meaning it is now nearly 6 years old and therefore may not reflect the current situation.

### 4.3.8 Closeburn Access to Services Domain

The geographic access domain is intended to capture the financial cost, time and inconvenience of having to travel to access basic services (e.g. post office, schools, GPs). It consists of two sub domains. One looks at the time it takes to drive to reach services and the other looks at the time it takes to reach services by public transport.

Data Zone	Geographic Access domain 2016		Drive time to GP 2016 (mins)	Drive time to Petrol Station 2016 (mins)	Drive time to Post Office 2016 (mins)	Drive time to Primary School 2016 (mins)	Drive time to Secondary School 2016 (mins)	Drive time to retail centre 2016 (mins)	Public transport travel time to GP 2016 (mins)	Public transport travel time to Post Office 2016 (mins)	Public transport travel time to retail centre 2016 (mins)
	Rank	%									
S01007559	<b>209</b>	3.0	9.2	8.2	7.5	7.9	8.4	8.1	28.0	20.3	21.7
S01007565	<b>575</b>	8.2	7.1	6.4	2.3	4.2	8.7	7.3	22.2	11.7	18.0
S01007566	<b>104</b>	1.5	11.0	12.8	10.7	2.9	17.9	16.8	19.9	23.7	34.1

Table 4.3.7: Geographic Access SIMD Domain; Source: Scottish Government

The table above shows that the datazones are considered extremely deprived in terms of access to services; with all three falling within the most deprived 10% nationally. Datazone S01007566 is particularly deprived ranking as the 104<sup>th</sup> most deprived datazone in the county and falling within the most 1.5% deprived. It is important to note that this domain only considers *geographic* access; it does not take into consideration any other possible barriers to access of key services. From the above information we can see that these rural datazone are not well placed to access GP surgeries, petrol stations, primary and secondary schools, and retail centres by both car and public transport.

### 4.3.9 Closeburn Crime Domain

The SIMD crime domain measures the rate of selected crime at small area level using 2014/15 recorded crime data. It is based on six indicators of broad crime types, chosen partly on the basis of the relevance of their impact on the local neighbourhood and partly on the availability of data. The six indicators are:

- Recorded crimes of violence
- Recorded sexual offences
- Recorded domestic housebreaking
- Recorded vandalism
- Recorded drugs offences
- Recorded common assault

Data Zone	SIMD Crime 2016		SIMD Crime 2016 count	SIMD Crimes per 10,000 total population
	Rank	%		
S01007559	<b>4,291</b>	61.5	11	154
S01007565	<b>1,016</b>	14.6	52	531
S01007566	<b>6,446</b>	92.4	3	41

Table 4.3.8: Crime SIMD Domain; Source: Scottish Government

This table shows that crime is a significant issue in one of the datazones covering Closeburn, given that it is ranked in the most deprived 15% of datazones in Scotland for this particular domain. On the other hand datazone S01007566 falls within the least deprived 7% nationally, highlighting a marked difference between the two neighbouring datazones. A total of 66 SIMD crimes were recorded across the datazones in the 2014/15 year.

## 4.4 Demographic Data

The data in this section is presented at Output area level for the Scottish Census 2011. Output areas are created by grouping together postcodes; with a single output area containing at least 50 people and 20 households but can contain more. The majority of Closeburn village is covered by one output area (see figure 4.4.1), that output area has been used to generate the report below which does not cover the more rural parts of Closeburn Community Council.

Household Composition	Closeburn	D&G	Scotland
Total number of households	67	67,980	2,372,777
% One person household aged 65+	17.9	15.7	13.1
% One person household aged <65	13.4	16.8	21.6
% One family only: Lone parent: With dependent children	7.5	5.7	7.2
% One family only: Lone parent: All children non-dependent	1.5	3.3	3.9
% One family only: Married or same-sex civil partnership: w. dependent children	13.4	13.3	13.6
% One family only: Married or same-sex civil partnership: No dependent children	16.4	21.5	18.4
% Cohabiting couple: with dependent children	6.0	4.2	3.7
% Cohabiting couple: No dependent children	3.0	5.1	5.5
% Other households: All aged 65+	11.9	10.9	7.8

Households	Closeburn	D&G	Scotland
% of households with too few rooms per resident	10.4	5.0	9.0
% households owned	55.2	64.2	62.0
% other social rented	28.4	19.6	11.1
Average age (Years)	40.7	43.6	40.3

Education	Closeburn	D&G	Scotland
% 16- 17 year olds in education	100.0	78.9	79.8
% with no qualifications	34.7	32.9	26.8
% Highest qualification attained: Level 1*	24.2	24.6	23.1
% Highest qualification attained: Level 2	14.5	13.3	14.3
% Highest qualification attained: Level 3	9.7	7.6	9.7
% Highest qualification attained: L 4+	16.9	21.5	26.1

Labour	Closeburn	D&G	Scotland
% households w. at least 1 person aged 16-74 who is unemployed (not full-time student) or long-term sick/disabled	11.9	12.8	14.6
% All persons 16 to 74: Employees- part- time	17.9	15.9	13.3

% All persons 16 to 74: Employees- full- time	32.1	34.5	39.6
% All persons 16 to 74: Self- employed	5.7	11.1	7.5
% All persons 16 to 74: Unemployed	3.8	4.2	4.8
% All persons 16 to 74: FT student- employed	3.8	1.6	2.9
% All persons 16 to 74: FT student- unemployed	0.9	0.4	0.8
% All persons 16 to 74: Retired	35.8	19.5	14.9
% All persons 16 to 74: Student	3.8	3.2	5.5
% All persons 16 to 74: Looking after home or family	7.5	3.3	3.6
% All persons 16 to 74: Long- term sick or disabled	3.8	4.7	5.1
% All persons 16 to 74: Other	3.8	1.6	1.9
% All persons aged 16 to 74 unemployed: aged 16- 24	25.0	33.9	30.2
% All persons aged 16 to 74 unemployed: aged 50- 74	25.0	18.3	18.4

Table 4.4.1: Census data for Closeburn; Source: Census Scotland

\*See appendix 10.5 for breakdown of qualification levels.

A few key points to note about Closeburn are:

- There is a higher proportion of socially rented accommodation in the area compared to regional and national rates- almost three times the national rate
- There is a higher proportion of people with no qualifications in the area than seen regionally and nationally.
- There is a higher proportion of people working part- time than seen regionally and nationally, with a lower proportion of people working full- time.
- Significantly lower proportion of people with the highest level qualification than regionally or nationally, almost ten percentage points lower.



Figure 4.4.1: Map of Closeburn Output Area: Source: Census Scotland

## 4.5 Nithsdale Local Area Profile

The Nithsdale Local Area Profile produced by The Crichton Institute highlights that the population of Dumfries and Galloway is projected to decline by 0.6% between the years 2010- 2020. This will be caused by a disproportionate level of out- migration of young people aged 16- 20, while simultaneously there is a net in- migration of those in the older age groups, this will likely be replicated in Nithsdale however reliable figures for smaller areas are not available. This will also exacerbate the gap in the number of births and deaths in Nithsdale, with far fewer births recorded than deaths.

The pattern of employment in Nithsdale is broadly similar to the regional average with health/ social work and wholesale/ retail accounting for the largest proportions of employment in the area, as they do across Dumfries and Galloway. The rate of unemployment across Nithsdale was slightly higher than the regional figure at 4.4% compared to 4.2%. These figures come from the number of people who are claiming Jobseekers allowance. In addition to those defined as unemployed 13,440 people in Nithsdale were economically inactive; 18% were economically inactive because they had retired, nearly 2,100 were inactive because they were sick or disabled.

Of all the enterprises in Nithsdale almost 99% of them were classed as either small or micro businesses, this is only slightly lower than the national proportions. The sector with the most enterprises in Nithsdale is Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing; however the share is slightly lower than what is seen at a regional level likely as a result of Nithsdale containing Dumfries and Galloway's largest urban area. The proportion of total employment in accommodation and food service activities, which is indicative of that in the tourism sector, was below the regional and national averages.

Within Nithsdale Thornhill Hospital is the only NHS hospital outside of Dumfries where Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary serves as the main acute services hospital for the region. A 2012/ 2013 survey carried out by NHS Dumfries and Galloway found that the greatest area of dissatisfaction across Nithsdale and Dumfries and Galloway more widely was in services for older people. According to the Dumfries and Galloway Joint Strategic Plan for Older People 2012- 2022 there are 12 care homes located in Nithsdale, with one located in Thornhill itself, all of which are owned either by the private or voluntary sectors. Across Nithsdale in the 2011/12 year 764 people were receiving care at home with around 42% of over 65's accessing Community Alarm and Telecare Services highlighting the need for these types of services in the area.

Public transport in the area is limited meaning that many people in Nithsdale rely on private transport to get to work. Within Nithsdale the lowest rates of private transport use for work are seen in Kirkconnel and Sanquhar which are both served by their own train stations.

## 5.0 POLICY ANALYSIS

### 5.1 National Policies

#### 5.1.1 *Scottish Government Purpose, Strategic Objectives and National Outcomes*

Launched in 2007, the overriding purpose to which all the work of the Scottish Government and its partners is aimed at, and which all projects should contribute towards the achievement of, is;

“To focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.”

*Closeburn Community Plan will contribute towards National Outcomes by developing a comprehensive strategy for regeneration of the village by planning and co-ordinating development of a range of projects. This Plan is comprehensive in its remit covering social, economic and environmental regeneration and thematic projects covering housing, environment, open space, infrastructure, services, transport, employment, and health.*

#### 5.1.2 *Scottish Government Regeneration Strategy: Achieving a Sustainable Future*

This strategy was launched in December 2011 and is the Scottish Government’s ‘vision of a Scotland where our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote well-being’.

*Closeburn Community Plan will provide a means through which the local community are able to contribute to the regeneration of the wider area. The broad remit of the Community Plan means that it has the potential to contribute towards local regeneration in myriad ways from supporting people to access better services; to improving existing communal spaces; to the development of recreational areas; and ensuring people feel safe and included in their communities.*

#### 5.1.3 *Community Learning and Development Strategy*

This Strategy establishes that Community Learning and Development capacity should be targeted towards activities aimed at closing the opportunity gap, achieving social justice and encouraging community regeneration.

*Community regeneration is at the heart of the Closeburn Community Plan given the overt focus on delivering improvements in provision of infrastructure, facilities and services. A participative approach should be taken to implementation of Community Plan, enabling local people to be more directly involved in local decision making and to increase confidence and skills, and ensure the community- led regeneration of the area.*

#### **5.1.4 Scotland's Economic Strategy**

The purpose is 'to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth'. This updated Strategy focuses on two mutually supportive goals of increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality.

*Closeburn Community Plan will empower the local community to participate more in the development of activities and services in the area, encouraging them to participate in society and empowering them to access opportunities for their own development. The participative approach to the project means that the Community Plan has been shaped by and for the community, and the projects contained within offer opportunities for the economic development of the area.*

#### **5.1.5 All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population**

Launched in 2007 this remains the lynch pin of Scottish Governments strategy to enable the effective planning for the needs of an ageing population.

*The older residents of Closeburn have been heavily involved with the Community Plan throughout the consultation process, reflecting the current older demographic make-up of the area. This community plan offers opportunities for the development of projects which benefit older residents in particular, contributing to their integration in the wider community and ensuring their needs are met across all aspects of community life.*

## 5.2 Local Policies

### 5.2.1 Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan

The Local Development Plan (LDP) covers all of Dumfries and Galloway; it guides the future use and development of land in towns, villages and the rural area. It also indicates where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not.

*The Closeburn Community Plan offers opportunities for the sustainable regeneration of the community and aligns with development work across the whole region by developing opportunities for environmental improvement, recreation and social development in Closeburn.*

### 5.2.2 Dumfries and Galloway Single Outcome Agreement 2013-16

The Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) sets out a strategic ten year vision for Dumfries and Galloway. The SOA wants to see work at pace, identifying and making service improvements and achieving a significant shift towards preventing problems arising rather than tackling them after they have happened.

*This plan will contribute towards many priority outcomes; to provide better facilities for recreation, education, employment and learning; to provide services and opportunities to benefit all ages and to promote inclusion. Improvement of Closeburn, and the development of its services and amenities, will encourage local residents to increase their participation in community life.*

### 5.2.3 Dumfries and Galloway Regional Economic Strategy 2014- 2020

The Vision for the Dumfries and Galloway regional Economic strategy is:

*'By 2020, Dumfries and Galloway will have a more diverse and resilient economy. One which is capable of taking advantage of opportunities by combining an appropriately skilled workforce and connected infrastructure to support more prosperous and inclusive communities where every member of every community has equality of access to that prosperity.'*

*Closeburn Community Plan will contribute towards the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Economic Strategy primarily by empowering the community to take steps to diversify the local economy through provision of new and enhanced services, amenities and activities.*

### 5.2.4 Dumfries and Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy 2016- 2020

The Vision for the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy is that by 2020 Dumfries and Galloway will be the destination of choice for quality, value and memorable experiences delivered by skilled and passionate hosts.

*Closeburn Community Plan can contribute particularly to the 'Building our Capabilities' theme by growing the capacity of Closeburn and its community. The Community Plan offers options for projects which could enhance appeal of the area for tourists and visitors.*

#### **5.2.5 Dumfries and Galloway Joint Strategic Plan for Older People 2012- 2022**

The Strategic Plan celebrates the fact that many older people are living longer and staying healthy for longer, while acknowledging that projections show that over the next twenty years, there will be a steady increase in the number of frail older people, people living with multiple long-term conditions and people with dementia. Most of these people are likely to require some level of care and support.

*Closeburn Community Plan has the potential to contribute significantly to this Strategic Plan given the focus afforded to projects and actions benefitting older residents in particular. This Community Plan promotes the integration of older people in community life by developing opportunities to address the needs of that demographic. .*

#### **5.2.6 Dumfries and Galloway Draft Open Space Strategy 2014**

The overall outcome of the Open Space Strategy is to maintain (or increase where possible) reasonable quantity, accessibility and quality of publicly useable open space- especially in relation to wider connectivity and multi- functionality.

*Closeburn Community Plan will link with Dumfries and Galloway's Open Space Strategy given the Plan's environmental themes. Open space around Closeburn is a key asset, providing important opportunities for recreation and physical activity. The Community Plan offers options for positively contributing to the enhancement and improvement of these valuable community resources.*

#### **5.2.7 Nithsdale Health and Social Care Locality Plan 2016- 2019**

This plan is about how Health and Social care in Nithsdale will be integrated as part of a new Dumfries and Galloway Integration Authority. It sets out specific information, where this is available, and identifies what is working well but also some of the main challenges which need to be tackled.

*This Health and Social Care Locality plan is of particular relevance to the Closeburn Community Plan given the significant focus afforded to health and wellbeing focussed projects and actions; an exceptionally important issue for the community.*

## 6.0 CLOSEBURN DEMAND ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Household Survey Results

This report summarises residents' responses to the consultation carried out by Nith Valley LEAF Trust in Closeburn and the surrounding area. The information provided by residents will be used to identify priorities within the community and will subsequently inform Closeburn's Community Plan. All percentages in the following section are representative of the total number of returned questionnaires; therefore total percentages may not always equal 100% depending on how many people chose to complete particular questions.

#### 6.1.1 Demographics

	Male	Female	Total	SAPE 2015
Under 16	1%	1%	2%	15%
16- 21	7%	1%	8%	7%
22- 29	1%	0%	2%	7%
30- 39	1%	5%	6%	9%
40- 49	2%	6%	8%	11%
50- 59	9%	15%	24%	21%
60- 69	14%	14%	28%	16%
70- 79	12%	3%	16%	8%
80- 89	2%	3%	6%	4%
90+	0%	0%	0%	1%
Total	49%	48%	100%*	100%

\*Some respondents did not disclose their sex therefore are not included in sex breakdown but are included in the total.

The demographic breakdown of the responses from household surveys largely reflect the demographic makeup of the village according to Small Area Population Estimates for the year 2015 with some discrepancies. The most marked difference between the respondent and population breakdowns is in the over representation of 60- 79 year olds. While it is not possible to determine the exact reason for this, it is perhaps a result of more free time among older residents allowing them to engage more fully in the consultation process.

The overrepresentation of older residents in the survey, particularly between the ages of 60- 79, has led to a slight underrepresentation of younger people particularly under 16s and those between the ages of 22- 49. Despite the demographic differences, we have tried where possible to present a balanced result with the views and opinions of all age groups represented.

The most numerous age group who participated in the consultation were 60- 69 year olds who made up just over a quarter of participants at 28%, followed by 70- 79 at 16%.

This reflects the village demographics as these are the most populous age groups. The smallest age groups were under 16s and 22-29 with 2% each, this does not reflect the demographic makeup of the village despite carrying out additional consultations with Wallace Hall senior pupils. There were slightly more men participated in the consultation than women with 49% and 48% of the total number of respondents respectively, a number of respondents did not disclose their sex hence the percentages do not add up to 100%.

### 6.1.2 Transport

	Essential	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Reintroduction of Closeburn Train Station	30%	40%	15%	10%
Improved school bus service	15%	45%	18%	8%
Reducing traffic speed in village	31%	31%	22%	9%
Reintroduction of Thornhill Train Station	26%	34%	25%	10%
Improved road verge maintenance	33%	34%	21%	5%
Improved contingency arrangements when A76 closed	34%	39%	15%	8%

Transport issues scored well among respondents with improved contingency arrangements for A76 closure and reintroduction of Closeburn Station being rated as 'essential' or 'important' by over 70% of respondents. Given that the A76 runs through the centre of Closeburn and is the main route in and out of the village, it is no surprise that its closure can have a massive effect on residents and their travel arrangements and is a priority for the community going forward.

Closeburn is a very rural community and an overall improvement in public transport would connect residents to key services in other nearby towns and villages, this is particularly important given that Closeburn has minimal services itself. The importance of an improvement in public transport would likely be a key priority for residents who did not have access to a car and needed to travel further afield for key services such as healthcare and shopping.

### 6.1.3 Environment

	Essential	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Creation of community allotments/ gardens	1%	30%	47%	15%
More litter bins and recycling points	18%	55%	18%	5%
Additional local paths for walking and cycling	26%	49%	17%	3%
Improve appearance of village generally	21%	53%	16%	6%
Acquisition/ development of Community owned Woodland	8%	30%	39%	17%
Garden services for elderly and disabled	24%	54%	15%	5%

The environment was one of the more pressing areas of action for the community with four of the six actions receiving high levels of support from over 70% of respondents. This indicated that there is a good level of support in maintaining the natural environment of this rural community to a high standard. The support was particularly high for gardening services for the elderly and disabled, this is perhaps a reflection of the older bias in the demographic makeup of respondents but nonetheless represent real concerns among the community that will need to be addressed.

Two areas that were less supported by the community were creation of community allotments and development of community owned woodland which were the only two actions in the whole survey to receive 'less important' or 'not important' ratings from over 55% the community, in light of this it may be that these two options are ones to be considered after addressing more pressing community priorities.

#### 6.1.4 Infrastructure

	Essential	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Affordable housing for sale/rent	31%	49%	14%	3%
Improvement of Village Hall	29%	45%	20%	2%
Retaining Shop/Post Office	54%	40%	1%	1%
Development of a new community Hub Centre	9%	39%	40%	6%
New small business units	14%	46%	28%	7%
Improved Internet Access	64%	22%	6%	2%

Opinions on the importance of infrastructural issues were quite varied with levels of support ranging from 48% to 94%. The highest priority in this section was retaining the post office which received the highest proportion of 'essential' and 'important' ratings across the whole survey at 94%. Retaining the post office and shop for the community is clearly a key priority for Closeburn and the Community Plan will look at ways of ensuring it stays in the community and continues to meet the needs and demands of the people who use it.

Improved internet access was another high scoring action at 86% support, likely due to a number of more rural residents not having access to broadband currently and internet access being unreliable all over the community council area. Improving the village hall, building more houses and access to new small business units are all important infrastructure projects for the community which residents are supportive of and would contribute to the overall development of Closeburn in future.

### 6.1.5 Tourism

	Essential	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Tourism/Walkers Information Point	8%	46%	36%	5%
Tourist Accommodation/Attractions	9%	46%	34%	5%
Walkers map of local areas	15%	53%	24%	3%
Village Leaflet/website	16%	41%	33%	3%
Better signage to local viewpoints, buildings, etc.	15%	53%	23%	3%
More regular community events throughout the year	16%	54%	23%	2%

Tourism was the overall lowest scoring section of the survey however levels of support were support were still relatively high. The two highest scoring options in this section were a walkers' map and better signage to local viewpoints suggesting that residents are keen to make the most of the natural beauty that surrounds Closeburn. Improvements such of these have been considered as part of the community plan and would raise the village's profile as a destination for tourists, bringing in visitors and money to the area. Development of Closeburn as a destination for tourists to the area could reap long term benefits for the community in terms of job creation and income generation; these activities could then lead in the longer term to funding for other community development projects. Improvements in provision for tourists will be a crucial point to consider going forward.

### 6.1.6 Health & Welfare

	Essential	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Befriending service for everyone	18%	53%	18%	3%
Expansion of Thornhill cottage hospital	45%	38%	9%	3%
Chiropodist	23%	38%	24%	7%
Support services for elderly and disabled	51%	37%	8%	1%
Extended/consistent GP opening hours in Thornhill	46%	39%	11%	1%
Local access to emergency medical equipment	48%	46%	1%	1%

Health and welfare was the most well received section of the survey with all six actions receiving 'essential' or 'important' ratings from over 60% of respondents, and four of those receiving support from over 80%. Access to healthcare is vital for any community and is likely particularly prevalent in the mind of the community given the remoteness of the village and the older population. These concerns are perhaps exemplified by the exceptionally high level of support for access to emergency medical equipment at 94%,

clearly this is a priority for the community and should be considered in the community plan.

Thornhill is the closest point of access for health services for Closeburn residents and they are therefore keen to see these developed and improved in the future. It is interesting to note that all but one of the actions received 'not important' ratings from less than 5% of the community suggesting that when it comes to health support is generally very high.

### 6.1.7 Community & Recreation

	Essential	Important	Less Important	Not Important
Clubs for older residents	23%	59%	14%	0%
Adult leisure classes	20%	53%	18%	2%
All weather sports pitch in park	17%	41%	31%	6.9%
Adult education classes	10%	48%	32%	3%
Joint projects & events for all age groups	9%	61%	21%	3%
A wider range of local interest groups and clubs	14%	53%	28%	1%

Community and recreation was another section with a range of levels of support from the community with combined 'essential' and 'important' ratings ranging from 59% to 82%. The most well received action in the section was clubs for older residents, which may again be a result of an older bias in the demographics of the survey population. Providing activities for older residents in the area is important; given that they do make up a significant proportion of the total population, provision of services should match that demand.

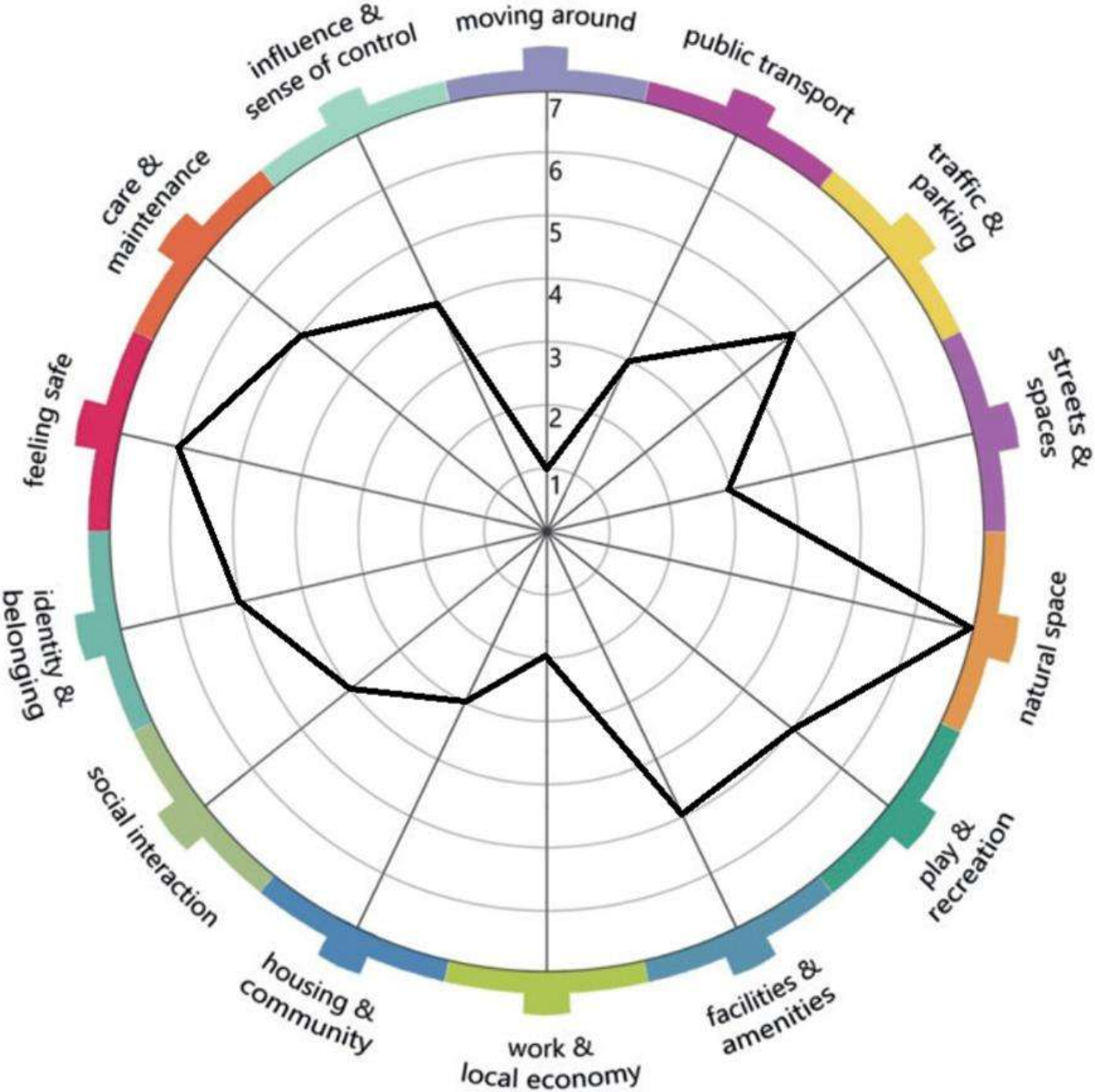
Generally this section of the survey indicated that there is significant demand in Closeburn for anything which contributes to community life and provides things for local people to do. At present there are a limited number of community activities, in light of this, and the results of the household survey it will be crucial to ensure that residents have access to opportunities which enhance their lives and make Closeburn a good place to live.

### 6.1.8 Place Standard Tool

We asked residents how they rated the standard of Closeburn using the Scottish Government's Place Standard Tool. The Place Standard Tool provides a means of assessing places and allows respondents to consider all the elements of place in a methodical way. The diagram below provides a visual representation of how the community rated the quality of a range of aspects of their area. Each area is rated from 1 to 7 where 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 means there is very little room for improvement. The community's scores were averaged for the purposes of this report.

Responses from the community were very varied for this section of the survey ranging from 1 to 7. Closeburn was rated exceptionally poorly for moving around indicating that at present the community find it very difficult to do this; this may be in terms of the streetscape and availability of paths and cycle routes. In light of this it will be essential for Closeburn to find ways of improving this aspect of the village and make it an easier place for residents to get about. This is closely linked to another two lower scoring sections of the survey- public transport and streets and spaces; these issues will be considered in the community plan in order for Closeburn to better meet the needs of the community.

The standard of work and local economy was also very low suggesting that there is a real need in the area to develop new opportunities for local people to grow the economy. These are issues which will be considered in the community plan. Closeburn scores very well across a number of issues as well and it will be essential in future for the community to maintain this level of satisfaction, the standard of natural space and feelings of safety are very high and are likely closely linked to the fact that Closeburn is a rural community. The challenge in future will be in retaining the rural elements of the community while simultaneously building and improving the aspects which are currently not meeting the expectations of the community.



### 6.1.9 Internet Access

When looking at internet access patterns among respondents it is important to consider that people's online behaviour is often a choice and not all people who don't access the internet do in fact want to.

	Yes	No
Do you have access to the internet?	91.95%	5.75%
Do you have a PC/laptop/tablet?	91.95%	4.60%
Do you have a smart phone?	58.62%	36.78%
Do you regularly use email?	80.46%	16.09%
Do you use social media?	55.17%	40.23%

At present the vast majority of respondents do have access to the internet with less than 6% reporting no access, while this may be out of choice it may also be due to the rural nature of the area and a lack of broadband connectivity. Again in terms of computer access the vast majority of people do have a computer or a tablet with only around 5% not having access to one. For the other three questions, responses were more varied with 37% of respondents not having a smart phone, 16% not regularly using email and 40% not using social media.

Improving the connectivity of the community will likely be essential if it is to flourish, particularly in the more remote areas of the community council. Getting more people online will ensure that all residents have increased access to a range of opportunities which contribute to the overall development of the community; from accessing information about local services and activities, to job searches.

This information will be important to consider going forward as it will affect how residents will be able to engage with information pertaining to projects arising from the community plan. While the internet is an exceptionally useful tool for sharing information not everyone is able to make use of it and it is therefore essential to find ways of reaching the community that do not rely on their access to the internet.

Improving the accessibility of high speed internet access was an important issue for the community as can be seen from the demand analysis, as such it has been afforded appropriate focus in section eight of this report.

## 6.2 Community Group Responses

As part of the community consultation we contacted a number of community groups operating within the two community council areas covering Thornhill and Closeburn. These groups included the local Guides and Brownies, Closeburn dog training class, Thornhill Art Club, and B&Q Caledonia Pipe Band who all offered their unique views on the priorities for the area and what could be done in future to develop the community.

The vast majority of the groups (69%) primarily used Thornhill Community Centre, but some also made use of Thornhill Fire Station, The Friendship Club, the library and Closeburn Village Hall. The rest of this section summarises the findings from the community group surveying exercise and discussions had with certain community groups. The same survey was used for both Thornhill and Closeburn groups to ensure continuity between the two and as residents from each community may attend groups located in the next village.

The community centre is well used however there is a need to upgrade and renovate it, as well as other community facilities given that 57% of respondents rated them as 'okay' in the community group survey, as opposed to 'very good' or 'good'. There is perhaps potential in promoting use of other community spaces in and around Thornhill and Closeburn as none of them are used half as well as the Community Centre based on responses to the community group survey; this may however be as a result of a better response rate from Community Centre users and more discussions with groups primarily based there. In terms of suggested improvements for the Community Centre there is a strong desire among local groups to see the toilet facilities upgraded, offering improved accessibility for disabled users and provision of more storage space.



Figure 6.2.1: Closeburn Village Hall & car park

Community groups were then asked to indicate, choosing from a list of options, which infrastructural improvements their group would most benefit from and like to see in their community, the list of options was based on initial observations made by the consultants. Community groups were also at this stage encouraged to add in any additional comments they had on potential improvements which were missing from the list. As the survey covered Thornhill and Closeburn the results reflect the needs evident in both of those communities, therefore popular options highlight a demand for that type of improvement across the two areas.

Overall, the most popular option for future priorities for community facilities in the area was having a large hall for activities which over three quarters (77%) of respondents highlighted as one of their top five priorities. Community groups want to see provision of a large hall either in Closeburn or Thornhill to increase their capacity to organise and deliver a wider range of activities and services locally. This was followed by lockable storage (62%), sports equipment (46%) and better heating (38%). Better heating was an issue of particular importance in Closeburn where the Village Hall was highlighted as in need of significant heating improvements, both in terms of the type of heating used and the insulation of the premises. Two options which were not included in the original list of options on the survey but proved popular in the 'Other' category among community groups were improving toilet facilities at Thornhill Community Centre and upgrading the facilities at the play parks in both Thornhill and Closeburn.



Figure 6.2.2: Thornhill Community Centre

In order to help existing community groups access the facilities they need, an important first step could be to make them better aware of the range of venues available in the area for their activities to be held. This could help to better match existing groups with existing community facilities. Promoting the use of the large hall available at Closeburn Village Hall would be one option which may be of interest to community groups based in Thornhill who are looking for larger premises. This may not be on a permanent basis, but could instead be on an ad hoc basis as and when larger premises are needed. Another option for the community to consider would be undertaking significant community asset improvements both in Thornhill and Closeburn; this may include renovating existing facilities or perhaps building an extension on the existing Community Centre in Thornhill. Thornhill Community Centre and Closeburn Village Hall are both well used and in need of an upgrade in the eyes of the community. They are relatively old buildings which would benefit from funding to address some of the signs of wear and tear which have been identified by the community groups that use them.

Responses from community groups also highlighted a need to offer a wider range of activities in the community, particularly for teenagers who do not have many activities which specifically cater to them. Most of the available activities are targeted at younger children or older residents, indicating a dearth of youth oriented activities and classes in the area, in fact none of the community groups surveyed indicated that their service is mainly used by 13- 24 year olds. Providing a better range of services and activities for the whole community has been a key theme throughout the community consultation and it will be important for Thornhill and Closeburn to find ways of supporting the introduction of new activities across a diverse range of interests and themes. Developing what is on offer currently will be an important first step in meeting the community demand for new activities for all age groups and interests.

### 6.3 Local Business Response

The business survey was carried out with businesses across the two community council areas with the majority of responses coming from business within Thornhill. As a result of this the responses for this section are biased towards Thornhill however a number of the recommendations can be applied to the ongoing development of Closeburn.

The community consultation engaged with local businesses to look at what their priorities for the continuing development of Thornhill and Closeburn were. The most important support issue for businesses across the whole area proved to be 'Information on potential grant funding sources for development initiatives' with 60% of businesses rating it as one of their top priorities. This was followed by 'Access to shared small business services' with 47% of businesses rating it as a top priority, then 'Sustainability advice' with 27%. Discussions with a number of local businesses in Thornhill highlighted a strong desire to fill up the available business lots on the main shopping streets, however it was also raised that rents were in part financially prohibitive. Filling up empty premises would bring more customers into the area, likely increasing footfall for other local businesses across the two community council areas. It was well recognised by local businesses that having more shops in the villages and fewer vacant premises would benefit everyone and they were supportive of any initiative which aims to attract new small businesses to the area- something they identified as a priority.



Figure 6.3.1: Closeburn shop and Post Office

In terms of transport issues for local businesses 'Village centre parking' was the most important issue in the area with 79% of responding businesses rating it as a priority for them; many cited the layout and availability as particular problems. Furthermore the requirement to reverse onto the road was highlighted as an issue for many business

owners as unsafe. The issues brought up with regards to parking reflect some of the findings of the wider community survey in which a great number of residents highlighted this as a significant concern of theirs. This issue however is primarily relevant to businesses in Thornhill as opposed to Closeburn, and while interesting may not be as pressing a matter for Closeburn residents. As well as parking 'Public transport' was highlighted by 74% of businesses as an area which needed developed particularly in terms of connecting the retail centre of Thornhill with other nearby small towns and villages, an issue of particular relevance to Closeburn as many residents make use of the amenities in the neighbouring village. Providing better transport connections between rural villages such as Closeburn and Thornhill could lead to an increase in custom for all businesses in the area by enabling easier access. There was also interest raised in creating 'Good walking and cycling links to the village' from a number of respondents which could, again, increase footfall for many businesses.

Discussion with businesses in Closeburn revealed that passing trade accounts for a significant amount of local business as people travel through the village on the A76, and as such it is vital for the area to continue to attract such trade. By working with local businesses the community could address a number of local aspirations which could help sustain the level levels of passing trade. As a first step the village could be developed into an attractive stopping place for tourists and commuters as a means of increasing the amount of passing trade brought to the area. The easiest way of achieving this is likely through carrying out some general environmental enhancements locally.

Environmental issues were quite important for a number of local businesses across the two community council areas with the upkeep of 'Appearance of local village generally' being by far the most important issue in the environment section, with 82% rating it as a priority. The reason cited for this was that in keeping the villages looking attractive, more people and customers will be attracted to the area. Additionally, there is an element of community pride with many people working locally also living nearby and naturally wanting their community to be kept at a high standard. As well as keeping the villages looking good, it was also highlighted that the villages need to be safe as well in terms of even pavements and cleanliness. This was an opinion voiced by a number of businesses and particularly in terms of older residents' interests, as it was stated there had been a number of incidents involving people falling on the uneven pavements in Thornhill centre. Issues like this may put some people off visiting the main shopping area and spending money, to the detriment of the local economy.

One local person also suggested developing a local gardening group to take responsibility for installing and maintaining plants and flowers around the villages to keep them looking appealing as has been done in nearby Sanquhar with 'Brighten Up Sanquhar'. Such a group could work with individuals, businesses and community groups to enhance the community and keep it looking attractive. 'Development of local

walking and cycling routes' was also rated as a priority by 65% local businesses; again this may be in terms of attracting tourists to the area to visit businesses or generally making businesses more accessible. Overall, there is an interest in maintaining the village's quiet, rural feel as it is felt this is why tourists and visitors come to Thornhill and Closeburn, and maintaining this will sustain peoples' interest in visiting.

Other issues which were raised by local businesses but were not covered in the survey included difficulties in some shop's delivery routine as it sometimes blocked the main road in Thornhill. This may suggest a need for roadside bays where delivery vans are able to unload without blocking the main traffic route through the village. The wide roads in Thornhill could offer appropriate space for developing such a layout at certain times of day in the village without loss of parking availability. The transfer to and reduction of council services in Thornhill library (Figure 6.4.2) (originally provided at the council one-stop- shop in Thornhill Police Station) was highlighted as a challenge for some businesses in Thornhill during the consultations it means certain services, such as collection of refuse bags, that they need are not accessible and impact upon their day to day operating, suggesting a local need for extended or more suitable council service availability. This could tie in with projects aiming to retain key services in the community by taking certain buildings into community ownership.

There is also significant interest among local businesses in reintroducing Thornhill train station as this will help bring business into the area. The reopening of Closeburn Station was also brought up, particularly from businesses in Closeburn, however at this point that option looks unlikely given SWestrans funding intentions. This was an opinion voiced by four separate respondents when asked if there was any single facility not yet available that they thought would help local businesses. Reintroducing the train station would certainly increase the accessibility of Thornhill, Closeburn, and the surrounding area, making it easier for people to get here and visit the shops, services, and amenities on offer.



Figure 6.3.2: Closeburn Industrial Estate

## 6.4 Drop- In Consultation Responses

The second stage of the community consultation process involved discussing the priorities identified in the first stage of the consultation with the community in more detail in order to determine the specific needs and demands of residents. To achieve this, a series of interactive boards were put together designed to ask questions which expand and build upon the initial prioritisation exercise of the first stage consultation. The questions put to the community were framed so as to provide a more holistic picture of the needs of the community, not just the identification of an issue. For example, where the first stage of consultation revealed that the community thought an improved bus service was needed, this second stage aimed to determine where residents wanted that improved bus service to travel to and when this improved service was needed.

The second stage consultation was held as two drop- in sessions; first at village children's Christmas party on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> of December, followed by the Closeburn seniors' lunch on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January. It was felt that by having a presence at these two well attended community events we would be able to reach a broad cross section of the community. We estimate that we were able to engage with over 80 residents over the course of the two sessions with the vast majority being from within Closeburn Community Council area, with some additional responses from residents of nearby areas such as Thornhill and Auldgirth. Input from people living outside of Closeburn but who use Closeburn's amenities, such as the village hall, was welcomed to help build a significant evidence base for future actions. The results from the drop in events are summarised in this section with full results available in the appendices of this community plan.

### 6.4.1 Health & Welfare

During the first stage of the consultation the community highlighted their desire to have emergency medical equipment available in the village. Research has suggested that the most appropriate type of provision would be a defibrillator for the community, alongside a well stocked first aid kit. As part of the second stage consultation the community were asked where they would like to see such equipment installed, with the most popular response being at a shop or business located in the village centre. 38% of respondents selected this as their first choice of location; this would place the equipment in a central village location, accessible to the greatest number of people within a short space of time. The community were also very interested in ensuring home visits were available for older residents, offering a level of support for people wishing to remain in their home but may need or want some assistance to do so. Respondents were equally supportive of a befriending offering companionship and a

link to the outside world for individuals who are experiencing isolation or loneliness. Both of these options were the top priority for 34% of respondents to this question.

The community highlighted a need for extended/ consistent GP opening hours in the household survey, as did Thornhill residents, and as such this was an area which was developed in the second stage of the consultation. Generally, there was an interest in having better availability of GP appointments throughout the week as many residents have stated that they often find it difficult to get an appointment and are often not able to be seen until at least a week later. The most popular times of day to have better availability of appointments were before 9am and between 6pm- 8pm, indicating that the community are in favour of extended opening hours beyond what is available at present.

There was also significant interest in having availability of appointments at the weekend, further evidencing the community's desire for extended opening hours at Thornhill Health Centre. Further discussion with respondents made it clear that this was so as to allow residents who work through the week to be able to get an appointment without having to take time off work which many can find difficult. Residents also indicated at the drop-in that they would like to see better communication between the health centre and the local pharmacy, and a better GP call-out service throughout the week for residents who experience difficulty accessing the health centre.

#### 6.4.2 Infrastructure

One of the most important issues for the community identified in the household survey was retention of the shop and Post Office in Closeburn; therefore it was important to look at ways of how this could be achieved with the community at the drop- in. The community were asked how often they used the community shop with 21% of people saying they used it daily, 21% using it on a weekly basis, 45% saying they only used it occasionally, and 12% saying they never used the shop. Overall it was clear that the shop is well used by the community with 78% of people saying the opening times suited them, with some residents adding they would like to see it open earlier and close later.

Finally, the community were asked what they wanted to see available in future at the shop; the two most popular options were an ATM and online shopping collection point at 34% and 25% support respectively. In addition to these choices, the community also voiced a level of interest in having more local produce available for purchase in the shop and generally having a greater variety of goods available for purchase. It will be important for the community to engage with local shop owners to discuss these ideas in future to try and address some of the identified needs, ensuring that the shop is well used and remains open.

When asked what type of housing people thought was needed locally, the most important priority for the community was having three bedroom houses available for rent in the village. This was the most popular housing choice among residents with 44% identifying this as their top choice, this distinction is even more marked by the fact that the next most popular choice, one bed houses was chosen by 15% of respondents. Residents were also asked to elaborate a little further on the internet access issues identified in the household survey at this point. While the majority of respondents said that they did not have difficulty accessing the internet at home, a significant number who that internet access was limited in more rural areas. Most markedly, this lack of internet access was identified south east of Closeburn in settlements such as Park. It will be important going forward to find ways of ensuring better internet access for all residents living in and around Closeburn to help connect them to key online services.

### 6.4.3 Transport

The need for an improved bus service was a clear priority for the community during the household survey and during the drop- in sessions the community were able to elaborate on where they would like to have an improved bus service and at what times they would to have it. In terms of a more local bus service to places like Thornhill and Dumfries working age residents identified a need in morning before 9am and in the evening after 7pm, with after 7pm being the clear priority, enabling them to commute to work.. Older residents were keener on seeing an improved service between 9 and 12. Clearly the community are interested in a general increase in the number of buses serving close burn throughout the day.

One thing the community agreed on was the need for a better bus service to these destinations throughout the day on Saturdays. In terms of travelling to larger cities like Glasgow and Edinburgh the priority times were less identifiable with interest spread throughout the week. The community were slightly more interested in a more regular bus service after 4pm on a Friday and Saturday, they indicated that having a more regular service at this time would allow residents to spend a full day in the city before travelling home. Increasing bus times in the manner the community are looking for would enable them to make better use of the wider range of services and amenities which are on offer in larger towns and cities.

The reopening of both Closeburn and Thornhill Train Stations were important issues for the community highlighted in the household survey which were explored further at the drop in sessions. At this stage the prospect of reopening Closeburn station does not look probable given that Dumfries and Galloway Council and SWestrans have decided not to progress Closeburn Station beyond STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) pre- appraisal stage. In light of this, reopening Thornhill Station is the most realistic option and the one that residents were asked about.

78% of residents said that they would primarily use the station for leisure as opposed to work and most people said they would be most likely to use the station either on a weekly basis (37%), or occasionally (48%). At the drop-in sessions nine individuals indicated that they would be interested in joining an action group whose campaign for the reopening of Thornhill Station, the interest in forming one of these suggests that it would be an action for the community to take forward in future. One final thing that community members were asked at the drop-in was where they would be most likely to travel to if Thornhill Station was reopened, the most popular choices among respondents were Glasgow (28%), Dumfries (27%), and Carlisle (23%).

Speeding is an issue which is particularly important for the community based on responses to the household survey. In light of this it was put to the community how they would like to see traffic calmed with 41% of them wanting to see speed cameras installed and 37% wanting to see better signage in Closeburn to inform drivers and help enforce the speed limit. Residents were particularly keen to have Smiley SIDs installed in Closeburn to discourage drivers from speeding.

There were two roads in particular that the community were very keen to highlight as problem areas in need of traffic calming measures and these were on the main A76 road which goes through the centre of Closeburn and on the road from Closeburn to the primary school. These two roads are well used by the community, the road to the primary school is particularly well used by the vast majority of children in the village on a daily basis, and as such there is a need to ensure residents' safety.

Many residents were also in favour of reducing the speed limit through the village to 30mph instead of 40mph as it is at present. It is felt that this is a sensible option given that the church, school, and village hall are all on the other side of the A76 away from the majority of housing; therefore residents do regularly need to cross the road. Residents would also like to see better contingency arrangements for when the A76 is closed, including better warning for motorists when the road is closed, matrix signs and more thought put into the divert routes cars need to take.



Figure 6.4.1: Residents at Closeburn Community Plan drop- in event

#### 6.4.4 Environment

There was significant interest from the community in a broad range of environmental improvements for the area. Of the suggested environmental improvements at the drop- in session, the two most popular among respondents were better tree/ path/ hedge maintenance and community street clean up with 59% and 56% of respondents being in support of each of these options respectively. The road to the primary school was one road which the community were in particular favour of maintaining better as it was felt that it was often overgrown by the bushes on either side and that the pavement being covered in moss and decomposing leaves made it very slippery, 80% of respondents were in favour of targeting this road for improved maintenance.

Other popular environmental improvements included more walking/ cycling paths and more colourful flowers around the village each at 48% and more bins at 41%. The level of interest in all of these improvements suggests that the community are behind any type of work which aims to upgrade the local environment and make it a more attractive place to live.

The unused land at Castle Crescent was the most popular area for residents when asked which outdoor space they wanted to see upgraded first with 42% selecting this area as the priority. One suggestion for this space from residents was building another community facility, one which could be used to offer an internet hub for the community. Another popular choice for upgrading was Closeburn Park at 27%, suggestions for improving the park included having an Astroturf area for people to play sports on, a skate park and more climbing frames.

### 6.4.5 Community & Recreation

There was significant interest in the household survey for a range or improved community and recreation opportunities in and around Closeburn. In terms of the amenities people wanted to see in Closeburn, the most popular choice at the drop- in sessions was more affordable sports facilities which 86% of residents highlighted as one of their top priorities, followed by walkers map and an internet hub which 52% of respondents indicated was a top priority for them each. Among younger respondents improving play parks was a very popular option with 46% of respondents at the first drop- in highlighting it as a priority. There was much less interest in having a directory of services and function spaces available for hire.

In terms of services and activities available in the area the most popular choice was activities for older people, likely a result of the age bias in the respondent demographic, with 69% of respondents selecting it as one of their priorities. This was followed by more evening classes which 50% of people selected as one of their top priorities, and day- time clubs at 41%, then activities for younger people at 34%. In this section of the drop- in there was a lot of interest in many of the options put forward, suggesting that community members are in favour of any kind of improvement in Closeburn in terms of offering a wider range of services and activities for local people. Discussions with the community highlighted that as present there isn't much for residents to do and as such any new provision is welcomed. One community member discussed the particular need for things for people of working to do given that what is on offer currently either aimed at younger or older residents.

Discussions with the community highlighted that there is a lot of interest in improving the well- used village hall. The most popular option for possible improvements was better heating in the hall which 66% of people were in favour of, followed by 44% in favour of upgrading outside space and 34% in favour of upgrading the toilet facilities. The village hall is a popular village asset but in the eyes of the community, is in need of renovation which many thought will be necessary if it is to continue offering the range of activities and services it currently does.

The village hall is the primary venue for clubs and groups in Closeburn so to lose it would impact significantly on the capacity of the village to offer recreational activities. In terms of other opportunities for local people, respondents were very much in favour of finding ways of providing more local jobs with 96% of people indicating that this was a priority for them. This was followed by the provision of more training courses and apprenticeships in the area, both of which 32% of respondents were in favour of. These types of improvements would be a boost to the local economy and would ensure that more people would ultimately be in a position to access employment.

## 7.0 ACTION POINTS

This section offers some recommendations which local groups, individuals and businesses may wish to consider taking forward. These recommendations have been put together using the vast amount of information collected from the Closeburn Community Council area over the course of the consultation, supplemented with additional information collected at the research stage by the consultants. While the recommendations made here are not fully fledged project outlines, they could form a first step in some of the work undertaken by the community council, local development trust and the wider community in the months and years after presentation of this community plan. The recommendations cover a range of priorities which were outlined by the community as being of great importance during the consultation; these action points are thus the product of all preceding content analysis.

### 7.1 Health & Welfare

#### Retain care home

Providing support services for the elderly and disabled was a key issue for the community with 88% of respondents to the household survey rating it as essential or important. Ensuring residents have the option of continuing to live in their own community was clearly important for respondents as the most popular types of support selected at the drop-in sessions focussed on enabling older residents to continue living comfortably and locally. An initial first action for the community in addressing this clear demand would be liaising directly with the existing care home in the area, Briery Park, to discuss current demands and pressures on their service and to look at potential for expanding current provision.

At this stage it will be important to consider the long term viability of existing levels of provision given the ageing demographic trends locally. It would also be prudent to work alongside Dumfries and Galloway Council, enabling stakeholders to look at ways of increasing the availability of care home spaces in Thornhill and the surrounding area. Stakeholders must also look at options for making the case for and, attracting investment in, care homes locally. Should need or demand arise in future it may be necessary to look at options for having a care home within Closeburn, however at this stage, given Thornhill's larger size and existing provision there is more scope for an increase in provision here, rather than in Closeburn.

#### Extended GP opening hours

Extended GP opening hours was a key priority for the community identified at all stages of the community consultation. Responses to the household survey showed that 85% of respondents in Closeburn were in favour of having extended/ consistent GP

opening hours. Further investigation at the drop-in sessions found that people wanted to see extended opening hours one evening during the week and/ or on Saturday mornings. Discussion with community members found that this was to enable people to see their GP without taking time off work. This is a very significant mandate from the community for Nith Valley LEAF Trust and the community council to contact NHS Dumfries and Galloway and work with them to look at ways of ensuring that all local residents can access suitable appointments by extending the opening hours of Thornhill Health Centre. There is precedent from other health centres across Scotland that have extended opening hours in order to better meet the needs of the whole community, particularly those who are unable to arrange appointments during normal working hours.



SURGERY OPENING HOURS	
MONDAY	8.00am – 8pm
TUESDAY	8.00am – 8pm
WEDNESDAY	8.00am – 8pm
THURSDAY	8.00am – 8pm
FRIDAY	8.00am – 8pm
SATURDAY	8.00am – 8pm
SUNDAY	8.00am – 8pm

Figure 7.1.1

### Expanding cottage hospital

Residents from both Thornhill and Closeburn community council areas were very supportive of an expansion of the cottage hospital facility in Thornhill. In Closeburn 83% of respondents to the household survey indicated that they felt expanding the cottage hospital was essential or important. To achieve this will involve significant consultation with NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway Council and Scottish Government, furthermore it will also be crucial to involve all surrounding community council areas that use Thornhill Cottage Hospital in discussions regarding its future.

The Scottish Government acknowledges that with growing demographic pressure it is likely that the role of community hospitals in providing care for older people will increase. The Community Hospitals Strategy Refresh highlights that NHS Boards will need to consider the implications of this for community hospitals and community based services to effectively manage this expanding group of patients, many of whom will have multiple long term conditions, including in many cases dementia. Beyond NHS funding it may be difficult to source capital funding for the expansion of the hospital, one option may be for the community to undertake fundraising efforts locally.

### Chiropody service

During the consultation residents in Closeburn were very keen to see a chiropody service available locally with 61% of respondents to the household survey indicating that it was either essential or important for them. This would clearly be a popular action for residents in the area and sourcing some type of chiropody service for Closeburn

would satisfy that demand. In order to look at scope for bringing chiropody services to the area it will be essential for the community to engage with NHSDG who may be in a position to offer such a service, however this may not be the case as often NHS services are only if conditions are affecting health or mobility. Another option for the community to consider may be to attract a private practitioner to the area on a regular basis to offer services which residents pay for. This service could be run from Closeburn Village Hall, bringing in an additional source of revenue for the hall.

## 7.2 Infrastructure

### Growing the local shop

Retaining the village shop and Post Office in Closeburn was one of the most popular actions in the household survey with 94% of respondents rating it as essential or important. Given its importance to the community, this action was explored further at the drop in sessions; looking at how often residents used the shop and their hopes for its future. Almost half of all respondents at the drop in sessions said that they only use the shop and/ or Post Office occasionally, with many indicating that they would be more likely to make use of it if there was more on offer within.

When asked what they would like to see available or on offer in the shop and Post Office in future residents seemed to be highly responsive to any type of development. The two most popular options for the shop were installing an ATM which 34% of people said was their main priority for the shop, and opening an online shopping collection point which 25% chose as their top priority. Both of these improvements would reduce residents' need to travel outside Closeburn for key services. Funding is available for these types of development from Post Office Community Branch Fund which offers investment for sub- postmasters to support the growth of their Post Office business and help to underpin their long term viability. It can be used for a wide range of improvements such as changing the branch format to open plan, new signage, or gearing up for new services such as Click & Collect.



Figure 7.2.1: Closeburn Shop and PO

### More housing to rent

The community could work alongside local housing providers such as Dumfries and Galloway Housing Partnership and Loreburn Housing Association to look at ways of increasing the availability of rented housing stock in the area. Another important contact for this type of development would be Buccleuch and Queensberry Estates who are significant regional land owners. Conversation with and between these groups could open up potential pathways to the provision of more rented housing. An issue of particular importance to the local community, with 80% of respondents being in favour, better availability of more rented housing will enable more people to remain in their community.

Secondary consultation work highlighted that the community are in favour of a range of housing options, from one bedroom retirement flats to 3+ bedroom houses for families. Consideration of all housing options will ensure that any developments in this vein will benefit a broad range of housing needs. One other option for the provision of rented housing in the area could be through continued work with Nith Valley LEAF Trust who have already undertaken significant similar work locally and given their experience are well placed to undertake more work in the area to increase the amount of rented accommodation in Closeburn. At the time of writing this report the Trust were exploring options for increasing their stock of rented accommodation.

## 7.4 Transport

### More frequent local bus service

Throughout the secondary consultation, respondents were keen to discuss options for increasing the bus service in Closeburn, both in terms of local routes and further afield to places such as Glasgow and Edinburgh. Furthermore, the Place Standard tool showed that the community rated public transport as the joint third poorest aspect of Closeburn, scoring only three of a possible seven. Consultation with local business in Thornhill and Closeburn highlighted that improving public transport in the area was also an important issue for them, with 74% indicating that improvement was a priority. In order to better evidence the need for an improved bus service, at the drop in sessions respondents were asked to go into more detail about how the existing service could be improved.

In terms of local routes to places such as Sanquhar and Dumfries the community identified that there is a need for a more frequent service before 9am and after 7pm on weekdays, enabling residents to more easily commute to work in nearby towns. Services to Glasgow and Edinburgh should also be increased in the mornings and evenings on weekdays, again to enable residents to commute to work in these cities. Additionally, a more frequent city bus service to larger cities is desirable throughout the

day on weekends to enable residents to travel to the city and spend a full day there before returning. One additional point raised by residents regarding bus services to cities was the need for a direct bus service to Glasgow, as the existing lengthy routes require passengers to change at Kilmarnock, Dumfries or Abington, the quickest of which is still a journey time of over two hours. A more frequent and quicker bus service between Closeburn and Glasgow would enable residents to make better use of the wide range of amenities available in the city, and could also open up more job opportunities by shortening residents' commute.

In order to achieve any of these desired changes it will be essential to enter discussions with local bus operators including James Robertson, Houston's Coaches and Stagecoach, and SWestrans, the Regional Transport Partnership for the area. Opening up discussions will enable all parties to explore options for an increased service, perhaps initially on a trial basis to assess the viability of the venture. It may also be prudent to explore any funding opportunities available for rural bus services.

One other option for residents to consider may be the expansion of the existing community bus service, enabling more journeys to be made by the bus on a regular basis, e.g. a scheduled bus to Glasgow every Saturday organised by the community. Funding for community transport projects is available through a number of funders including Trusthouse and Postcode Community Trust. It will likely be essential however that any funding for community buses will stipulate that it must be for the benefit of the whole community, particularly disadvantaged groups.



Figure 7.4.1: Bus stop in Closeburn on A76

### Traffic slowing

Traffic slowing was an issue of great importance to the community with many respondents discussing their personal experiences and opinions on traffic passing through Closeburn throughout the consultation. The household survey indicated that 62% of residents thought that reducing traffic speeds was either essential or important. Further consultation work in Closeburn showed that this was a significant problem locally with many residents discussing their countless experiences with speeding cars and lorries passing through the village on the A76 and on the minor road to Closeburn Primary School. In order to achieve an effective traffic calming solution it will once again be essential to liaise extensively with Dumfries and Galloway Council who are responsible for these types of infrastructure works.

Discussions with the community at the drop in events highlighted that the most popular options were to install speed cameras, or similar, on the main A76 road through Closeburn and have better signage on the roads as well. Not only would this ensure that traffic was slowed through the village, it could also allow pedestrians to more safely cross the road. Residents were also very keen on installing speed indicator devices on the main road and the road leading to Closeburn Primary School as a means of reducing drivers' speed while travelling through the village. Extensive and sustained consultation with the council will be essential to achieve this.

### Improved contingency arrangements when A76 closed

This was an issue of particular significance during the first stage of the consultation with 73% of respondents highlighting it as either important or essential. At present when the main A76 road which runs through Closeburn is closed the contingency arrangements are poor leading to lengthy delays, not only for local residents but for those passing through the village as well. The existing arrangements require cars to use the minor road to Cample which is narrow and does not easily allow for two cars to pass each other. Closeburn Community Council, along with neighbouring community councils who are affected by disruption on the A76, must engage with Dumfries & Galloway Council and, crucially, Transport Scotland to look at ways to address this issue.

Discussions with residents at the drop-in sessions revealed that local people would like to see improvements to the minor roads which branch off of the A76 around Closeburn. These improvements could include better designated passing places on these minor roads, particularly for



Figure 7.4.2: Electronic road sign

large lorries who frequently use the main A-class road. Furthermore, residents would like to see better warning signs installed along the road giving road users earlier warning of issues further along, giving them ample opportunity to use alternate routes avoiding Closeburn. These warning signs could be updated electronically allowing maximum forewarning.

## 7.4 Environment

### Better maintenance of hedges, trees and paths

The community highlighted during the drop in sessions that this was an issue of significant importance to them, particularly residents from Closeburn village, and it was one of the most popular options among residents when they were asked what environmental improvements they would like to see. Improved maintenance of hedges, trees and paths will require the community to work with the council to look at ways improving current levels of maintenance, which once again will require sustained discussion between the community and the council. It would likely be in the community's interest to identify some key areas where they would like to see improvements made to begin with as a way of focussing attention and maximising potential for positive outcomes.

Another option for the community to explore with relevant stakeholders, such as local and regional volunteer and conservation groups, could be the potential for developing a voluntary environmental project in the area. It is feasible that this type of project would be able to attract funding to enable residents themselves to undertake improvement and maintenance works in their own community. By empowering the community to address the identified need for improvements could help build community cohesion and allow individuals to learn new and develop existing skills. One other option could be for the community to explore options with Dumfries and Galloway Council Community Service Coordinators for community service to be undertaken locally to address the maintenance issues identified in and around Thornhill and Closeburn.



Figure 7.4.1: Road between Closeburn and primary school

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## 7.5 Community & Recreation

### Admin facilities for small businesses

A first step in achieving this community aspiration would be the establishment of, or engagement with an existing, association of local businesses. This association could then work towards securing premises from which administrative facilities could be offered, B&Q Estates would likely be the most appropriate contact to discuss this with given that they are the largest land and property owner in the area. Providing admin facilities for local businesses was an important action for the community based on consultation responses from both businesses and the wider community. Responses from local business showed that 47% of those responding highlighted access to shared small business services as a top priority.

Furthermore around a quarter of respondents at the drop in sessions selected admin/office facilities for small businesses as one of the most important opportunities they would like to see available in the area in future. Any business or association of businesses who chooses to take this action forward could look to access funding from Dumfries and Galloway LEADER fund which aims to increase support to local rural community and business networks to build knowledge and skills, and encourage innovation and cooperation in order to tackle local development objectives. This type of project could engender growth in the local economy and help provide more opportunities for local jobs, contributing to the wider economic development of the area.

### More activities and clubs in Closeburn

Consultation with the community revealed that there is significant appetite for expanding the range of classes, activities and clubs on offer in the area. The first stage of the consultation revealed that 67% wanted to see a wider range of local interest groups and clubs and 73% wanted to see a wider range of adult leisure classes. The second round of consultation found that the community would like to see more evening classes for adults, sports clubs and activities for younger residents. In order to achieve this, the community could form a working group to expand the range of services and activities on offer in the area. Through this it would be possible to identify individuals from the area who are in a position to form new interest groups and offer classes and support them to realise this by helping them access funding opportunities, identify premises and advertise their group.

This work will ensure that Closeburn and the surrounding area has an increased range of activities which local people are able to participate in, leading to improved health and social outcomes. There are a number of small funding sources available to community groups and clubs offering financial support to set up and purchase

equipment including Dumfries and Galloway Council Sports Grants, Aldi Scottish Sport Fund, and Sported Scotland. This funding could also be used to support existing community groups who during the consultation process identified that they would be interested in looking at ways of accessing support enabling them to access more equipment and better facilities. One option looked at further in the project outlines section of this report is the possibility of developing the recreation space behind Closeburn Primary School.



Figure 7.5.1: Recreation space in Closeburn

## 8.0 PROJECT OUTLINES

The following projects were developed in light of the priorities highlighted by the Closeburn community over the course of the community consultation. They reflect the input of residents, community groups and local businesses and have been designed to meet the needs and demands of the whole population. These project outlines are a product of all preceding content and analysis in this community plan

### Health & Welfare

- Voluntary Befriending Service
- Installation of Emergency Medical Equipment
- More sheltered housing

### Infrastructure

- Internet Hub
- Availability of Broadband in Rural Areas

### Transport

- Reintroduction of Thornhill Railway Station
- Walking/ Cycling Path to Thornhill

### Environment

- Community Action Group
- Gardening Service for Elderly Residents

### Community & Recreation

- Upgrade Football Pitch
- Upgrade Closeburn Village Hall
- Thornhill Tourist Information Point (Inc. Walkers' map)

In order to develop the following project outlines some additional research was carried out into the top issues and priorities identified by the community, building on the elemental responses to the preceding consultation work. It is intended that these project outlines could be used by Nith Valley LEAF Trust and Closeburn Community Council to identify future areas of activity.

The following project outlines are suggestions only and could be used as a basis for developing projects in very different ways depending on further, more detailed stakeholder and partner consultations and research. Each outline summarises the aim of the project, the potential outputs (main activities involved) and outcomes (impacts the project hopes to have). This is followed by a summary of the evidenced local need and demand and some suggestions as to how the project might be shaped, together with potential key funders and partners.

## 8.1 Voluntary Befriending Service



- Aim** To provide isolated individuals with social contact and a link to the outside world and act as a gateway for other services and valuable support.
- Outputs**
- Individuals are identified for becoming volunteer befrienders and suitable training provided
  - Volunteers are matched with isolated individuals in the community
  - Isolated individuals are provided with tailored support designed to reduce isolation and increase their confidence and self-esteem
- Outcomes**
- Isolated individuals living in and around Closeburn will have increased social contact
  - They are put in contact with other relevant service and support providers
  - Individuals are experiencing improved mental health outcomes particularly in terms of tackling loneliness
- Underlying Need and demand** During the community consultation 71% of respondents highlighted the need for a befriending service as either 'essential' or 'important'. Social isolation is an issue which disproportionately affects older people which makes it particularly relevant for Closeburn given that over 65s are overrepresented in the demographic makeup of the community compared to national figures. Discussions with community members during the drop-in events found that 34% of respondents in Closeburn thought that a befriending service was their top priority in terms of support services for older residents.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area** Research suggests that there is no formal befriending service operating in Thornhill but it is highly likely that there is significant 'befriending' taking place within the community through friends and family. This project will seek to address the inevitable gap in support for individuals who are unable to access regular contact with friends and relatives. There is regional provision of befriending services through Food Train Friends and D&G Befriending Project however these may not be suitable for the particular needs of Closeburn residents. Furthermore it may be that local people are more interested in keeping the service 'local' engendering a sense of community within Closeburn.
- Project Proposal** A voluntary befriending service in the area would ensure that residents at risk of isolation and loneliness were able to access support which ensures contact with other residents and their continued involvement in community life. The befriending service

in Closeburn will either work collaboratively with an existing local or regional provider to extend their service into Thornhill or will set up a new one for the local community. This will depend on interest and community wishes as the project moves forward.

What this project will do is ensure that isolated and marginalised individuals in the community are able to access support and social contact on a regular basis. This may be in the form of a cup of tea and a chat, shopping trips, or accompanying individuals to appointments and meetings should they desire. The effect of this will be that individuals feel increasingly part of their community and no longer feel isolated. Depending on the success and popularity of the befriending service it may be that project volunteers decide to organise group excursions or social events for community members who are participating in the project.

### Potential Funding

**Awards for All-** A Lottery grants programme that funds small, community-based projects across the UK up to £10,000

**D&G Area Committee Discretionary Grant-** funding available for activities and services which help older or vulnerable people live healthy and independent lives and ensure older or vulnerable people receive the care and support they need.

**Provident- Good Neighbour Community Programme-** financially supports community organisations which best demonstrate a 'good neighbour' approach to their local community.

**SSE Clyde Dumfries and Galloway Community Fund-** Provides funding each year to community and charitable projects which: enhance quality of life for local residents; contribute to vibrant, healthy, successful and sustainable communities; and promote community spirit and encourage community activity.

### Potential Partners

**Food Train-** Is a D&G based charity, voluntary organisation and social enterprise providing vital support services to enable older people to live independently at home for as long as possible. One of the services they offer is Food Train Friends is a befriending service providing trips out, home visits and telephone calls.

**Dumfries & Galloway Befriending Project-** recruit, train and match reliable adult volunteers with vulnerable young people as a means of making a positive difference in the young person's life.

**Takeaway Creative-** is an Argyll & Bute based service offering a range of activities to enjoy at home for a wide variety of reasons such as mobility, caring responsibilities or access to hobbies via a more tailored, personal and flexible approach.

## 8.2 Installation of Emergency Medical Equipment



**Aim** To equip the local community with a portable defibrillator especially designed for people with little or no medical background.

**Outputs**

- Installation of suitable emergency medical equipment in an agreed central location in Closeburn
- Community training sessions are provided to ensure residents know how to properly use the equipment

**Outcomes**

- Residents are have access to emergency life saving medical equipment in their community
- Residents are suitably trained in how to use emergency equipment

**Underlying Need and demand** During the community consultation this was a particularly popular option in both Thornhill and Closeburn with significant support from 89% and 94% of community members respectively. The rural nature of the communities was likely a key determinant in the community's need for access to emergency medical equipment. Access to a defibrillator can impact upon the chance of a patient surviving after a heart attack, with chances of saving the life decreasing by 23% per minute in the absence of emergency care. With Closeburn's significant elderly population (22% over 65), access to a defibrillator could likely benefit a number of residents over its lifetime. During the second stage of the consultation the issue of access to emergency medical equipment was particularly popular, being one of the most answered questions in the exercise. The consensus was that the most appropriate location for the equipment was in a central village location such as a shop or local business and that training on use would need to be provided for the whole community.

**Current provision in Closeburn Area** Thornhill currently has a Cottage Hospital and Health Centre; however there is a lack of emergency medical equipment available in the area, particularly outside of Thornhill, with the nearest A&E department located in Dumfries at Dumfries & Galloway Royal Infirmary. The Cottage Hospital does have a defibrillator available within it; however this is not for general community use meaning that if a member of the public were to go into Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA) in Closeburn there is no defibrillator readily available. There is a minor injuries unit located in Moffat however

this is only equipped to deal with small cuts, bruises and sprains.

### Project Proposal

This project will provide a defibrillator for community use in Closeburn located at a central point in the village, ensuring ease of access to vital medical equipment for residents. Consultation with the community indicated that the consensus among residents was that the most appropriate location for the equipment was in a central village location such as a shop or business as think will be easily and quickly accessible for the most number of people. It will be necessary to discuss with local businesses where the equipment could be positioned and what the conditions may be for using particular locations. It may be that after discussion the most appropriate location is on an external wall in the village centre, these specifics, along with the type of equipment to install, will be determined through extensive consultation.

In addition to the provision of the physical equipment there will also be extensive training carried out with the community to ensure that residents are able to correctly use the defibrillator and maximise its benefit. There are a number of providers who offer such training so examining the different courses and their suitability for the community will be necessary. Ensuring that the maximum number of community members attend training will be essential in ensuring that the equipment is used correctly should the need arise.

### Potential Funding

**British Heart Foundation-** Part-funding is available to community organisations such as sports clubs, village halls and community centres through the Community Package.

**The Pumping Marvellous Foundation-** Offers part funding and training for communities contributing themselves and matching the Foundation's aims.

**The Sandpiper Trust-** The aim of the Sandpiper Trust is to help save lives in Scotland by improving immediate care especially in the remote and rural areas. Sandpiper has sponsored a number of defibrillators to be positioned in strategic locations throughout Scotland.

### Potential Partners

**Community Heartbeat Trust-** provides support to groups and individuals looking to provide a defibrillator for their community, helping them to implement the project, bring it to completion and ensure it is fully supported and continues to function correctly for years to come.

**Scottish Ambulance Service-** Training is then provided to community members or venue staff/users about how to use the equipment.

**British Heart Foundation-** provides support, advice, and training on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and proper use of defibrillators.

## 8.3 More Sheltered Housing



- Aim** To ensure that there is sufficient long- term provision of sheltered housing near Closeburn to enable residents to remain in their community.
- Outputs**
- Engagement with local housing providers to explore options for collaborative working.
  - Explore options for delivery of more sheltered housing in Thornhill or Closeburn
  - Construction of additional sheltered housing stock in Thornhill or Closeburn
- Outcomes**
- Community members are able to remain in, or close to, Closeburn after retirement.
  - Residents are able to access an appropriate level of support in their communities enabling them to live independently.
- Underlying Need and demand** Closeburn has an increasingly elderly population as evidenced by population trends for the area. At present the proportion of over 65s is estimated to be around 5% higher than what is seen at a national level and it is likely that this trend is going to continue. As such it will be essential in future to have sufficient availability of sheltered housing for older residents, enabling them to remain in the community they live in currently. In addition to this demographic evidence, responses from the community throughout the consultation showed that more sheltered housing was an issue of great importance for local people. In the household survey 88% of respondents indicated that having more support services for older people was either essential or important, furthermore 'more sheltered housing' was a popular option at the drop in event with almost a quarter% of respondents selecting it as a priority.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area** While Closeburn does not have any sheltered housing within it, Thornhill has a number of sheltered housing properties located at Drumlanrig View; these properties are owned by Trust Housing Association. Drumlanrig View contains 25 cottages of 1 and 3 bedroom sizes with Lounge, laundry, guest facilities, and garden. In addition to Drumlanrig View there is Tynron View located in nearby Penpont which contains ten 1 bedroom properties.
- Project Proposal** This project will work towards establishing additional sheltered housing properties in Closeburn or Thornhill in order to ensure that older residents are able to remain in their communities as long as possible. Given the size of Closeburn compared to Thornhill, and Thornhill's proximity to key services, it is more likely that a sheltered housing complex would be located in the larger village. That is not so say however that a

smaller complex couldn't be established in Closeburn if there was significant interest and capacity in the village. In order to do this it will be essential to liaise with existing care providers in the area to establish if there is scope for an expansion of existing provision in the area- particularly if there is an evidenced need from the community. The community may also wish to look at attracting a different developer to the area to build new sheltered housing properties locally.

Another option may be for a local development trust to take ownership of property in the area and offer this as sheltered housing alongside some form of support provision from an existing provider. To establish the best route to offering additional sheltered housing in Closeburn or Thornhill the community will need to undertake careful discussion with a range of partners and stakeholders and a thorough examination of the various possibilities on offer in order to determine the best possible option.

### Potential Funding

**D&G HSCP-** responsible for providing joined-up quality health and social care services with Dumfries and Galloway.

**Housing Associations-** may be in a position to offer sheltered housing properties in the area.

**Scottish Government- Rural Housing Fund-** aims to increase the supply of affordable housing of all tenures in rural Scotland. Available to a wide range of applicants, including community organisations, development trusts, private landowners and private developers, as well as more traditional housing providers, enabling them to take a more active role in meeting the housing needs of their communities.

### Potential Partners

**Local Sheltered Housing Providers-** including Trust HA who are responsible for existing properties at Drumlanrig view.

**Local Housing Associations-** including DGHP and Loreburn Housing Association.

**Dumfries & Galloway NHS-** responsible for healthcare within Dumfries and Galloway.

**D&G HSCP-** responsible for providing joined-up quality health and social care services with Dumfries and Galloway.

**Local Development Trust-** who are able to take property into community ownership and ultimately make available to rent.

## 8.4 Internet Hub



- Aim** To build a new community internet hub in Closeburn, enabling local people to access high speed internet and IT facilities within their community.
- Outputs**
- Develop a business plan for the internet hub including options review, costing plans and designs.
  - Undertake review of funding options in order to secure funding for the project.
  - Contractors carry out building works in line with the agreed project plan.
- Outcomes**
- All residents within Closeburn and the surrounding area are able to access high speed internet connection and modern IT equipment.
  - Residents are better connected to a range of key services and opportunities
  - Development of a multi- use community asset
- Underlying Need and demand** 86% of people in Closeburn indicated in the household survey that it was 'essential' or 'important' for them to have improved internet access. Additionally, 48% of respondents were strongly in favour of developing a new community hub in Closeburn. Further discussion at the drop in events showed that most residents who live in the more rural areas of Closeburn Community Council area, and many in the village itself, currently experience difficulty accessing the internet. This project would ensure that all residents have access to the IT resources they need locally.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area** There is no community internet facility available in Closeburn or the surrounding area, meaning that this facility would likely serve other nearby settlements such as Thornhill and Auldgirth. Furthermore, as mentioned above, a great number of local residents are unable to access superfast broadband speeds in their homes. This highlights just how much work needs to be done locally in order to ensure that all residents are provided with the requisite infrastructure to get online within their community.
- Project Proposal** Nith Valley LEAF Trust has earmarked a small plot of land on Castle Crescent in the centre of Closeburn which they have suggested would be an ideal location for the development of a community internet hub. This internet hub would have a number of computers available for use by the whole community and could offer a range of IT training and support classes alongside this core provision. The facility would be run and maintained by a group of local volunteers identified by Nith Valley LEAF Trust.

The main facility would have a number of desktop computers for the community to use in addition to a range other key IT hardware including printers and scanners. This facility will look to address to long- standing difficulties the community have faced in accessing up to date and superfast broadband. From the new community internet hub residents will be able to access a range of online opportunities and services which they have previously been unable to make full use of.

The proposed development will perhaps be of particular use to residents in the area who do not wish to invest in IT equipment of their own as they feel that their need is not so great, but who would like to make us of equipment on a more ad hoc basis. The community internet hub could also offer IT training courses for local people who feel that they would like to improve their skills with regards to confidently navigating and making use of a range of digital software.

### Potential Funding

**Investing in Ideas Fund-** will fund groups and organisations of all sizes to improve their skills and knowledge to; think differently about how a service is delivered, and help them to design and test new projects or better ways of working.

**The Start-Up Fund-** is intended to help communities with the costs involved in establishing local community-led projects to access superfast broadband services – where projects can demonstrate local need and demand, and the capacity to make it happen at a reasonable cost.

**Awards for All-** A Lottery grants programme that funds small, community-based projects across the UK up to £10,000

**Bank of Scotland Foundation-** May provide support to projects working to improve the standard of local facilities

### Potential Partners

**Nith Valley LEAF Trust-** to commission plan and coordinate project implementation

**Community Broadband Scotland-** support and empower rural and remote communities across Scotland to gain access to faster broadband by supporting them to create and manage their own infrastructure.

**Digital Scotland-** The Digital Scotland Programme is a key step in the Scottish Government's aim for Scotland to become a world class digital nation by 2020

## 8.5 Availability of Broadband in Rural Areas



- Aim** To ensure residents within the Thornhill and Closeburn Community Council Areas can access broadband in their homes.
- Outputs**
- A community action group is formed to work for expansion of broadband into rural areas
  - The Action Group Liaises with relevant bodies to identify routes to securing broadband.
  - Preferred route to achieving better broadband connection identified.
- Outcomes**
- Broadband is rolled- out in rural areas around in and around Thornhill and Closeburn, increasing residents' and businesses' connectivity.
  - Residents and businesses are able to more easily access a wider range of online services.
- Underlying Need and demand**
- Closeburn is a rural area in Dumfries and Galloway where many residents are currently unable to access high- speed internet, negatively impacting upon their ability to source information, resources and services online. Residents are being excluded from an increasingly online world simply due to their geographic location which detracts them in myriad ways, and will continue to do so if they are not provided with better internet access. Responses from the community during the consultation stage of this community plan indicated an overwhelming support among residents for improved internet access with 86% indicating that it was 'essential' or 'important' to them. Residents have made it abundantly clear that this is something that they want and need in their community. This situation is compounded by poor internet connection on mobile phones in the village. The majority of residents at the drop- in event had experienced difficulties accessing the internet at home and were keen to see these issues addressed.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area**
- While Thornhill centre is mostly well served by high- speed internet access, Closeburn village and more rural parts of the two Community Council areas are not at all with virtually all respondents from outside the main village claiming that they find it difficult to access the internet during second- stage consultation discussions.
- Project Proposal**
- This project proposes the establishment of a community internet action group for the area which will campaign for better internet access across the two community council areas. This will ensure that the drive to access improved internet will be coordinated, organised and effective in its approach to ensuring inline access. The action group

must liaise with elected members, service providers and the community, ensuring that the community's voice is heard clearly and loudly 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 Thornhill, Closeburn and the surrounding area to access faster and more reliable internet. This may be a long process requiring sustained pressure to achieve results. 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 and positive effect can be evidenced, making the case for further development clearer.

One other option could be to explore options for broadband delivery via non- land based routes. These routes would be either via satellite or mobile phone technology. The action group should explore different options and costs for such provision.

The community may also be interested in a community design, build and operate model. This involves a community organisation together with a great deal of 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.

### Potential Funding

**The Start-Up Fund-** is intended to help communities with the costs involved in establishing local community-led projects to access superfast broadband services – where projects can demonstrate local need and demand, and the capacity to make it happen at a reasonable cost.

**Scotland Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 – LEADER-** delivers support to communities for rural development to build knowledge and skills, and encourage innovation and cooperation in order to tackle local development objectives.

### Potential Partners

**Community Broadband Scotland-** support and empower rural and remote communities across Scotland to gain access to faster broadband by supporting them to create and manage their own infrastructure.

**Digital infrastructure and network providers-** provide experience and skills in bringing better internet access to rural communities.

**Digital Scotland-** The Digital Scotland Programme is a key step in the Scottish Government's aim for Scotland to become a world class digital nation by 2020.

## 8.6 Reintroduction of Thornhill Railway



<b>Aim</b>	To reintroduce Thornhill Railway Station.
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Formation of Thornhill Station Action Group</li> <li>- Liaise with relevant public and government bodies regarding the various options for station reopening.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	- Thornhill station reopens, enabling residents to more easily access a range of national destinations via public transport.
<b>Underlying Need and demand</b>	<p>Thornhill Station was closed in 1965 and has had significant public support for its reopening ever since that time. The current unused station sits on the Glasgow South Western Line on the stretch of railway between Sanquhar and Dumfries, which is one of the longest in the country without a stop. Responses to the household survey indicate that 60% of people in Closeburn think that the reopening of the station is either 'essential' or 'important' for the community. Support for reopening Closeburn station was even higher at 70%, however SWestrans have already ruled out that option during the recent STAG pre-appraisal in favour of developing other reopening options including Thornhill. Furthermore, discussions with the community at the drop-in events highlighted that the reopening of the station would enable people to travel more easily to larger towns and cities for leisure and to visit family. It was also made clear that the reopening of the station would open up jobs in cities like Glasgow and Edinburgh for people from the area as it would significantly reduce the commute.</p>
<b>Current provision in Closeburn Area</b>	<p>Currently Closeburn has no train station with the nearest stations being located in Sanquhar and Dumfries which both lie about half an hour journey away by car. The stretch of railway between these two stations, which includes the unused Thornhill station, is one of the longest in the country without a stop. The village is also served by a number of bus routes however these are prohibitive in terms of travelling to larger cities given the lengthy journey time.</p>
<b>Project Proposal</b>	<p>This project would seek to reopen Thornhill Train Station through sustained community action and awareness. By developing a coordinated community action group the community will be able to ensure that the reopening of Thornhill Station remains firmly on the agenda, at a local, regional, and national level. At the time of writing this report there have been significant positive steps in terms of achieving the reopening of Thornhill Railway Station with a successful STAG pre-appraisal</p>

submission on behalf of Thornhill from SWestrans and the decision to progress this to the next stage of the process. Successful completion of the STAG process will mean that stakeholders will be able to apply to the Scottish Stations Fund for a significant contribution towards reopening Thornhill Station.

By sustaining interest among the community, liaising with all relevant parties and ensuring that the issue of station reopening stays firmly on the agenda, then the community can maximise the likelihood that Thornhill will be successful in attracting funding to reopen the station. Should Thornhill be unsuccessful in attracting funding this time then it will be necessary to continue to campaign for the reopening and apply for any future funding opportunities.

Unfortunately Closeburn Railway Station was not progressed past STAG pre-appraisal stage indicating that the reopening of that station is not a viable option at this time.

### Potential Funding

**Transport Scotland-** The national transport agency for Scotland, delivering the Scottish Government's vision for transport and responsible for major national transport infrastructure projects. Funding available through the Scottish Stations Fund.

**SWestrans-** Regional Transport Partnership responsible for public transport in the area including enhancing the quality and integration of public transport.

**Dumfries and Galloway Council-** to provide match funding.

### Potential Partners

**SWestrans-** is the Regional Transport Partnership covering Thornhill and will be essential to liaise with regarding the public transport options for the area.

**Scotrail-** Scotland's national rail network, responsible for operating train services across the country.

**Transport Scotland-** Transport Scotland is the national transport agency for Scotland, seeking to deliver a safe, efficient, cost-effective and sustainable transport system for the country.

**Buccleuch & Queensberry Estates** provides a platform for sustainable economic development for the communities living in and engaging with local land resource.

**Thornhill Community Council and neighbouring community councils-** to evidence significant local and regional support for the reopening of Thornhill Station.

## 8.7 Walking/ Cycling Path to Thornhill



<b>Aim</b>	To create a safe walking and cycling route between Thornhill and Closeburn
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Liaise with D&amp;G Council to explore options for constructing walking route between Thornhill and Closeburn.</li> <li>- Identify optimal route for path between the two villages.</li> <li>- Appoint professionals to design and develop the new walking route</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Residents of Thornhill and Closeburn are able to easily and safely travel between the two settlements.</li> <li>- Improved health outcomes among residents making use of the new path.</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying Need and demand</b>	<p>Currently there is no designated walking route between Thornhill and Closeburn with no pavement located on either side of the A76 between the two villages. This means that residents must either walk on the main A76 road or walk along the B- class 'Cample Road' both of which are majority national speed limit traffic routes. Better walking and cycling routes were highlighted as very important for the community throughout the consultation with three quarters of residents indicating that this particular issue was either essential or important. A number of local businesses were also keen to see local walking and cycling paths improved with many stating that this could lead to an increase in footfall and custom for their businesses. A footpath between Thornhill and Closeburn would significantly reduce residents' reliance on public and private transport to travel between the two settlements.</p>
<b>Current provision in Closeburn Area</b>	<p>Currently there is no designated walking route between Thornhill and Closeburn. At present walkers need to either walk on the A76 road or take the alternate route along 'Cample Road' adding on an extra one mile to the overall journey time. This alternate route is however still not on a pavement, and while it is a quieter Minor road, it is not particularly safe given the national speed limit designation. There is a path between Thornhill and Carronbridge which residents stated they would like to see the path between Thornhill and Closeburn emulate.</p>
<b>Project Proposal</b>	<p>Responses from residents from both Thornhill and Closeburn community council areas indicate that many want to see a walking route put in place between the two villages. This project would involve the community engaging with the relevant bodies and organisations in the area to develop a plan for this infrastructure project. This plan would include identifying key stakeholders, commissioning professional</p>

planning drawings and sourcing funding for the development.

Utilising the outputs from the project plan, works could be undertaken to begin construction of a walking route between the two settlements 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 jogging, dog walking and cycling. This will have a resultant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of residents.

### Potential Funding

**Dumfries & Galloway Council-** responsible for road and pavement maintenance in the area.

**Paths for All Fund-** offers individual grants of up to £1500 to help community groups improve, maintain and promote their local community paths. Includes buying tools, insurance and materials, hiring a contractor, plant and machinery.

**Community Links Grant Programme-** provides grant funding to local authorities, statutory bodies and educational institutions for the creation of cycle network infrastructure for everyday journeys.

**WREN- FCC Scottish Action Fund-** considers applications across all types of projects including: land reclamation, community recycling, public amenities and parks, biodiversity and historic buildings.

### Potential Partners

**Dumfries and Galloway Council-** maintain existing roads and pavements and are involved in building new infrastructure.

**Sustrans-** works closely with communities, the Scottish Government, local authorities and other partners to ensure that the people of Scotland have access to a network of safe walking and cycling routes.

**Paths for All-** aim to significantly increase the number of people who choose to walk in Scotland - whether that's leisure walking or active-choice walking to work, school or shops.

## 8.8 Community Action Group



- Aim** To undertake a range of environmental projects and activities that will contribute to the enhancement of Closeburn and the surrounding area.
- Outputs**
- Identify interested individuals from the local community to form an action group.
  - Develop a number of short, medium, and long term project ideas for the group to undertake in Closeburn.
  - Source appropriate funding.
- Outcomes**
- Local people are able to take a proactive approach to the upkeep and enhancement of their community.
  - Increased sense of community and community ownership.
  - Closeburn residents are well equipped to address a range of environmental and aesthetic issues affecting their community
  - Closeburn becomes a more attractive place to live, work, and visit.
- Underlying Need and demand** Forming a local action group would enable the community to effectively address a number of issues highlighted by residents in the household survey. 67% of respondents thought that improved road verge maintenance was essential or important, 68% thought the same about having better signage to local points of interest, and 74% wanted to see improvements made to the appearance of the village generally. This project would enable the community to address all of these issues with support from key stakeholders. Furthermore the community were very keen on seeing more joint projects for all age groups locally with 70% supporting that, this project could form a first step towards achieving that ambition. In the drop in sessions the community identified a number of improvements they would like to see locally 59% supported better tree/ path/ hedge maintenance, 48% wanted to see more flowers around the village and 41% wanted more bins in the area. If community members were able to form an action group they could undertake these improvements themselves.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area** At present in Closeburn there is no community action group set up, however the local community development trust (Nith Valley LEAF Trust) would be well places to take the first steps towards forming one. Inspiration and advice could be sought from similar local groups such as 'Keep Sanquhar Beautiful'.
- Project Proposal** This project would see the development of a community action group in Closeburn who would be able to take forward a number of ideas and aspirations identified by the community during the consultation stage of this community plan. The first step in

achieving this would be to identify a core group of interested individuals in the community who are willing to develop the project and form the community action group. Upon creating this group it will then be necessary for them to identify a number of key short medium and long term ideas for what the group could be involved in over the following weeks, months and years. This community plan would form a valuable resource in identifying what upgrades the community want.

Following on from the planning stage it will be necessary for the group to source funding and liaise with key stakeholders, such as the council, in order to assess the feasibility of the ideas and ultimately bring them to fruition. The group at this point will then be in a position to begin working on their ideas. This community action group will at its core be a means for local people to take a more proactive role in the development and upgrading of their community. It will allow residents being to take control over the future of aspects of their village, allow them to learn new skills.

### Potential Funding

**Awards for All Projects-** is an easy way for smaller organisations to get small amounts of funding for projects that aim to help improve local communities and the lives of people most in need.

**D&G Council Common Good Fund-** provides organisations with financial help to organise events and activities for residents in their area, including improving the appearance of the area.

**Volunteering Matters- Action Earth Awards-** Awards are available to groups of volunteers carrying out environmental activities including improving ponds, woodlands, meadows and other green spaces to make them more wildlife friendly.

**Mushroom Trust-** supports the creation and improvement of green spaces, particularly in urban environments.

**Russell Trust-** usually supports specific services or projects and prefers to give start-up grants for new initiatives. Grants are usually one-off and average £1,000.

### Potential Partners

**Nith Valley LEAF Trust-** Experience working in the community and accessing funding.

**Dumfries & Galloway Council-** to provide practical support and guidance to the action group, particularly in terms of any environmental improvements the group wish to make in the village.

**Closeburn Village Hall Committee-** may be well placed to offer support, experience or resources to any new community group in the village

**Closeburn Primary School-** may be interested in organising and running joint environmental projects in the community

## 8.9 Gardening Service for Elderly Residents



<b>Aim</b>	To ensure that all residents in Thornhill, Closeburn and the surrounding area have the means to maintain their gardens.
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify a suitable model of delivery</li> <li>- Agree eligibility criteria based on age and capability to include residents of social rented, private rented and privately owned housing</li> <li>- Determine potential for training opportunities in the project and identify suitable training partners</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhanced amenity of the area</li> <li>- Increased community pride</li> <li>- Individuals supported in accessing training opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying Need and demand</b>	<p>Closeburn is a community with an above average proportion of older people living in it many of whom indicated over the course of the consultation that they would appreciate a gardening service in the village. This may be due to many feeling that they require support with the physical aspects of maintaining their gardens as they get older. In fact 78% of respondents thought that gardening services for elderly and disabled residents was either 'essential' or 'important'. Furthermore, development of a gardening service aimed at supporting older and disabled residents could have a significant positive impact in terms of the ongoing aesthetic upkeep of the area. It would also provide opportunities for training and skills development, within the community for those interested in pursuing that type of career.</p>
<b>Current provision in Closeburn Area</b>	<p>There are a number of formal landscaping, tree felling and grounds maintenance services however these may not be suited to the particular needs of older residents in the community. It will also be necessary to provide gardening services and support to those on low incomes who are disproportionately older and disabled persons. Current council provision of help with garden maintenance is available but there are limitations in terms of availability, affordability and eligibility which this project would address.</p>
<b>Project Proposal</b>	<p>One option for this project would be to develop a voluntary gardening group in the community who offer their time and skills to local residents who are in need of gardening services. Older and disabled residents who wish to garden but cannot manage independently may want to contact the gardening team to request</p>

assistance. Not only will this enable residents to participate in the upkeep of their own gardens, it can boost individuals' self esteem, and reduce isolation which has been shown to disproportionately affect older people. Appropriate support and training would be provided to the gardening group, this would include first aid training and PVG registration.

Another option for the delivery of a gardening service for elderly and disabled residents in the area could be through council provided gardening support, the Home Garden Maintenance Scheme. This support is available for residents who are finding it difficult to look after their own gardens. Volunteers within the community could offer assistance to residents wishing to access this support in terms of understanding and completing application forms. Another option could be for a local employability initiative to work with D&G Council Home Garden Maintenance Scheme on a sub contract basis to extend provision in Thornhill, Closeburn and to other parts of the community council area to enable the service to be more responsive and deal with increasing demands to reduce waiting list time.

### Potential Funding

**The Volunteering Support Fund** is open to support third sector organisations to create new volunteering projects. Funding will be used to buy in specialised support in this area. Action will need to contribute significantly to the development of volunteers.

**Greggs Foundation** for financial contribution towards the required equipment, funding may also cover the costs associated with activities and trips.

**Esmee Fairbairn Foundation** would be useful if gardening services focus on community growing, particularly through their funding strand focussed on food.

**Keep Scotland Beautiful Community Grants Scheme** provides small grants of £250 to local groups, to make small improvements to their local environment. Eligible projects will include local action to improve the local environment, delivered in an environmentally sustainable manner, involving and benefitting the community, and will be volunteer led.

**Disabled Facilities Grant-** may be available to cover costs of improving access to residents' gardens.

### Potential Partners

**Dumfries and Galloway Council-** offer support to residents who are experiencing difficulty in maintaining their gardens through their Home Garden Maintenance Scheme.

**Volunteer Scotland-** offer support and training for voluntary groups in Scotland.

**Existing or previous projects-** to offer advice and experience on how to run a similar project e.g. Garden Buddies SNVB.

## 8.10 Upgrade Closeburn Village Hall



- Aim** To upgrade the existing village hall in Closeburn in order to provide a better equipped, modern recreational space for a range of services and activities.
- Outputs**
- Commission options study to assess options for upgrade
  - Undertake extensive renovation and refurbishment works to upgrade Closeburn Village Hall
  - Upgrade open space surrounding the Village Hall
- Outcomes**
- The Village Hall renovated to a high standard including better kitchen and toilet facilities
  - Closeburn Village Hall has improved disabled accessibility
  - Closeburn Village Hall has improved heating and insulation
  - Closeburn Village Hall is better equipped to accommodate a wider range of services and activities
- Underlying Need and demand**
- Closeburn Village Hall is a well- used and well- loved community asset however it is widely recognised that the facility is in need of renovation, particularly the toilet facilities, heating and insulation, and general appearance. Consultation with the community showed 74% of respondents to the household survey thought that improving the village hall was essential or important. Given the clear importance of this for the community, they were asked to provide some more detail during the drop on sessions. Further discussion found that in terms of the type of improvements residents supported, providing better heating was the clear priority with 66% of people selecting it as one of the improvements they would like to see. This was followed by upgrading outdoor space with 44% and improving toilet facilities at 34%. These responses show that there is significant demand from the community to have a high-quality facility offering a wide range of services and activities.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area**
- Closeburn Village Hall is the main community space serving Closeburn and a number of the surrounding villages including Croalchapel and Park. As such it is a regional hub for a number of services and activities in the area and without this key facility it is unlikely that a number of existing groups could operate in their current capacity. Closeburn does not have any other village facilities capable of offering sufficient space for activities.
- Project Proposal**
- This project would initially see the development of an options study for the upgrade of the existing village hall in Closeburn. This options study would determine the best

option for carrying out the works to the village hall in terms of affordability, usefulness for the community and sustainability. The options study will include input from architects, quantity surveyors, landscape architects (where appropriate), and experienced consultants. Input will cover costing plans, design drawings, identifying potential funders, coordinating input from key stakeholders, and business planning. Upon completion of the options study, assuming the project is indeed feasible, work could then begin on the chosen plan for the community centre. Based on identified demand the plan would likely include improved heating, upgraded outdoor space, better disabled access, improved toilet facilities, and more storage space.

This project would ultimately see the development of a well- equipped community space for all of Closeburn, and indeed the surrounding areas whose residents make use of the services and activities on offer there. The upgrades that this project envisions would ensure the long term sustainability and viability of this key community asset. By providing the community with an upgraded village hall it will enable more groups to make better use of the facility and local people will have more opportunity to participate in a wide range of high- quality activities locally.

### Potential Funding

**Investing in Ideas-** will fund groups and organisations of all sizes to improve their skills and knowledge to; think differently about how a service is delivered, and help them to design and test new projects or better ways of working.

**Trusthouse Charitable Foundation- Community Centres and Village Halls-** interested in applications for capital projects at community centres in the most deprived urban areas and village halls in remote and economically deprived rural areas.

**Dumfries & Galloway Council-** Currently own the building and have a statutory obligation to provide recreation facilities for residents

**Foundation Scotland - Annandale and Nithsdale Community Benefit Company-** will support charitable activities that support the rural regeneration and sustainability of communities for a wide range of costs and activities including maintenance or refurbishment of community facilities and capital costs to purchase or develop community assets.

### Potential Partners

**Dumfries & Galloway Council-** The Council currently own the centre and would be a key stakeholder in any future developments in the centre

**Closeburn Community Council-** to support the community and the Community Centre Committee to undertake any feasibility study and future works.

**Nith Valley LEAF Trust-** Local community development trust who are capable of undertaking some works which community councils are not.

**Current Village Hall Tenant Groups-** To offer assistance with fundraising and planning.

## 8.11 Upgrade Football Pitch



<b>Aim</b>	To provide a high quality multi- use games area in Closeburn
<b>Outputs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project plans and drawings commissioned</li> <li>- Source appropriate funding streams for the development of the MUGA</li> <li>- Works undertaken to create a high quality, modern sports amenity in Closeburn</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increase in the range of sports and recreation amenities available locally</li> <li>- Sports clubs and interested individuals are provided with high quality sports facilities</li> <li>- More local people are able to participate in sporting activities</li> <li>- Improved health outcomes for local people</li> </ul>
<b>Underlying Need and demand</b>	<p>There is significant need and demand for a development of this type in the area, not only from Closeburn residents, but from residents of Thornhill and other nearby rural areas as well. 58% of respondents to the Closeburn Household survey thought that having a new sports facility in the community was either essential or important indicating a significant level of support locally. Furthermore, in Thornhill 71% of people wanted to see better access to existing sports facilities, perhaps a bellwether for wider interest in this type of project. Discussions with community members throughout the consultation highlighted that people want to see better, and more accessible, sports facilities enabling more sports groups to operate locally and engage more people in sports activities. This project would go a great way towards addressing this community demand.</p>
<b>Current provision in Closeburn Area</b>	<p>In Closeburn at present there is an informal football pitch in the park adjacent to the primary school and some open space in the park in the centre of the village which children play football in. These facilities however are not appropriate for the needs of other groups such as youth football teams who require more formalised spaces for training practice. Thinking more widely, Thornhill also does not have access to this type of community amenity meaning that it is highly likely that this development would be a valued community resource in light of the lack of provision throughout the two community council areas.</p>
<b>Project Proposal</b>	<p>This project aims to develop and carry out a significant sports infrastructure project in Closeburn through the construction of a multi- use games area on currently underused land in Closeburn village. One area which residents identified as having the potential to accommodate such a facility was the open space behind Closeburn Primary School</p>

which at present is occasionally used as an informal football space by local residents. The space is large enough to accommodate a number of options which will be considered as part of the first stage of the project- a planning study. The planning study will enable the community to assess the viability of different options for carrying out the project. The planning exercise will also contain a comprehensive review of funding options which could be explored in order to realise the development.

The development of a MUGA in Closeburn will enable a range of sports clubs and community groups, either already existing or to be set up as a result of the project, to make better use of the existing space. This will allow more people of all ages from Closeburn, Thornhill and further afield to participate in a range sports at a high- quality facility, something they are unable to do at present without significant travel time to Dumfries.

Given the location of the space which the MUGA may be built it would also be pertinent to ensure better community access from the main village. The park behind the primary school is around a 1km walk from the centre of Closeburn village, across the busy A76 road and along a poorly lit Minor road. If the MUGA is to be accessible for all, including young children from the area, it will be crucial for the planning stage of this project to look at ways of reducing the risk posed to people crossing the road and walking along the Minor road to the primary school. Measures to consider would be a pedestrian crossing, better maintenance of walkways and lighting options.

### Potential Funding

**WREN- FCC Scottish Action Fund-** considers applications across all types of projects including: land reclamation, community recycling, public amenities and parks, biodiversity and historic buildings.

**Sport Scotland- Sports Facilities Fund-** funds developments that are for the public good and will provide equitable opportunities for increased sports participation by the community at local level.

**Awards for All-** A Lottery grants programme that funds small, community-based projects across the UK up to £10,000

### Potential Partners

**Dumfries and Galloway Council-** A key regional stakeholder in the provision of community and recreation facilities across the local authority area.

**Closeburn Village Hall Committee-** have significant experience in managing and maintaining key village assets in Closeburn.

**Closeburn Primary School-** May be interested in making use of the MUGA as part of school curriculum.

**Nith Valley LEAF Trust-** To act as lead partner in planning and development stages of the project. Also able to access funding.

## 8.12 Tourist Information Point



- Aim** To provide visitors and tourists to the area with a well equipped, informative first point of contact offering information on local attractions and activities.
- Outputs**
- Liaise with wider tourist information services to establish best mode of provision and any support on offer
  - Tourist information point established in a central village location
  - A wide range of activities and services advertised via the tourist information point
- Outcomes**
- Residents and visitors are more aware of and more likely to make use of the wide range of activities and services on offer in the area
  - Tourist attractions in the area are better advertised and able to attract visitors
  - Increase in local tourist industry
- Underlying Need and demand** 54% of respondents to the household survey thought that having an accessible tourist information point in the area was 'essential' or 'important'. Further face to face discussions with residents and business owners highlighted how much the community valued the attractions and natural beauty on offer around their village and wanted to ensure that this was being enjoyed as fully as possible. As such it became clear that there was a need for tourist information to be better provided in the area, most likely in Thornhill, particularly given that there is none available currently. Residents also highlighted support for a walkers' map for the area and more tourist attractions with 68% and 55% support respectively.
- Current provision in Closeburn Area** At present tourist information is offered inside a shop in Thornhill, which has been mostly closed in recent months. The area has a need to provide high quality tourist information to ensure that visitors to the village, and residents, are able to make the most of all the village and its surroundings have to offer. At present in Closeburn, there is no formal tourist information provided, likely as a result of the tourist draw of Thornhill.
- Project Proposal** Offering a formal tourist information point in Thornhill is the most feasible option as it draws more visitors than Closeburn, however it will be essential to ensure that this service makes visitors fully aware of what Closeburn has to offer as well. By establishing a well- resourced and accessible tourist information point in Thornhill, the community will be able to inform themselves and visitors to the village of all that is on offer in terms of attractions, services and activities in the area. The information point will offer

leaflets and advertisements for local services and activities, a walkers' map, and information on the area's heritage. This will enable visitors take advantage of what is on offer locally, contributing to the local economy and developing the area's reputation as a tourist destination. One important aspect which the community were particularly keen on during the consultation was a walkers' map, therefore it will be important to ensure that this element is included in the final tourist information point design. This resource will require funding to develop and create the map in consultation with designers, mapping experts and local walkers.

By hosting such a resource in the community, Thornhill will be able to encourage local people and visitors to make the most of the range of opportunities and activities on offer in the area. While this tourist information point may begin life as a small information stand located in an existing business, it may evolve into a more substantial staffed facility depending on its popularity and success. Most importantly in achieving this, it will be essential to ensure that the information point, in whatever form it may take, is as accessible as possible for all. In terms of providing Closeburn itself with a tourist information point, it is likely that any provision would be small. Setting up a smaller 'sub-point' offering leaflets and info about more Closeburn specific amenities could be an option for the village. This could be set up in the Post Office as a means of attracting additional customers.

### Potential Funding

**VisitScotland Growth Fund-** supports industry groups with marketing projects. The fund supports projects aimed at increasing visitor numbers and reaching new target markets. Funding can cover 50% of approved marketing costs from £10,000 - £40,000.

**Paths for All Fund-** offers individual grants of up to £1500 to help community groups improve, maintain and promote their local community paths. Includes installing signage and way-markers and producing a leaflet or promotional materials.

**D&G Council Common Good Fund-** can provide organisations with financial help to attract people into the area; positively raise the profile of the area; and promote awareness of the area.

**Business Contributions-** Businesses who advertise through the tourist information point could contribute a small fee to maintain the resource.

### Potential Partners

**VisitScotland-** Scotland's national tourism organisation working to maximise the economic benefits of tourism to Scotland.

**Buccleuch & Queensberry Estates-** provides a platform for sustainable economic development for the communities living in and engaging with local land resource.

**Local businesses-** may wish to advertise their business through the information point, contributing to funds, or accommodate the resource.

## 9.0 MAKING IT HAPPEN

### Action So Far

Throughout the consultation process as potential project ideas have become clear, steps have been taken to act upon the priorities and demands identified by the community. Primarily this has involved putting interested parties in contact with each other and providing guidance to groups or individuals looking to undertake projects locally, based on the information gleaned through the community plan. This has meant that the positive effects of the community plan are already being experienced in and around Closeburn by making tentative steps towards the type of positive change community members have made it clear they would like to see. With this completed community plan, using the information contained within it, these first steps will be built upon and worked into longer term, realistic community projects.

So far the consultation work carried out as part of the Community Plan has facilitated the formation of Thornhill Station Action Group which now has an active local presence, as well as a significant online presence through their dedicated website, Twitter, and Facebook feeds. This group has been set up to campaign for the reopening of Thornhill Railway Station and sustain community interest in the station's reopening. The Thornhill Station Action Group have also been in discussion with local land owners including Buccleuch and Queensberry Estates and Thomson & Roddick, who own the old cattle market on the east side of the line, to discuss the availability of land. At this stage they have been successful in securing a written offer of the land required.

Furthermore, work carried out as part of the community consultation has been used by local groups to evidence local support for the reconditioning of unused local buildings. More specifically this work has focussed on bring the old primary schoolhouse in Thornhill back into use as an arts space. Support has been provided by consultants to a new community/thematic group who expressed an interest in purchasing and upgrading the old school building. Talks have also been held with Buccleuch Estates and potential grant funders on potential legal arrangements and consideration over potential end use, which is likely to focus on a co-working art space.

### Next Steps

The next steps for the Closeburn community will be finding workable ways of implementing some, or all, of the recommendations and options contained within the plan. As a first action the community may wish to prioritise the action points and project outlines above. While it is important to address the most important community issues, it may also be prudent to consolidate interest in the work carried out in Closeburn so far by implementing a few of the more easily achievable, quick impact actions. This will help build confidence in the community plan by highlighting early on

how residents' input has affected positive changes in the area. The community should be mindful of a number of factors while determining their priorities. Whilst the preferences of the local community are important they should not be the only information used to determine which area is addressed first. For example, it may be that something considered by the community to be the third or fourth priority is more achievable due to available funding, partnership links etc. and therefore a top priority.

While Closeburn Community Council and Nith Valley LEAF Trust will have a key role in the future of the report and a great number of the projects contained within, there will also be significant scope for other local groups to take the lead on projects, with support from the community council and the development trust. For example community members may be interested in setting up other groups and clubs locally that will be well placed to take forward small scale projects particular to the group's interests or skills, in line with the findings from the community plan. These activities could generate income through enterprise and the ownership of assets; this would help reduce dependency on grant support.

Nith Valley LEAF Trust may also wish, in light of the findings of this Community Plan, to explore options for the potential employment of a Community Development Officer. This staff post would be responsible for taking forward the Action Points and Project Outlines contained within this Community Plan. Further to this, it may also be the case that a Community Development Worker would identify other suitable projects to address local need and demand within Closeburn as and when it arises.

### In The Long-Term

It will be essential for Nith Valley LEAF Trust and its partners to revise this Community Plan in the months and years to come. This will ensure that works undertaken locally continue to be in line with the wishes of the community as evidenced by the extensive community consultation works undertaken as part of this Community Plan. It may be appropriate that this plan is supplemented with additional, more specific, consultation work undertaken in Closeburn and the surrounding area on particular projects. It will fall to NVLT and its partners to decide the final timescale, scope and method for this update.

Whatever ideas and projects the community decide to take forward, by utilising this plan they can ensure that their actions will help realise the community's aspirations, and in turn are supported by the community themselves. Further to this, it will be important to maintain an open dialogue between stakeholders throughout the implementation of the community plan. This will ensure that the community continues to be well-informed about what is going on locally and they ultimately remain invested in the ongoing development of the area.

## 10.0 APPENDICES

### 10.1 National Policies

#### *Scottish Government Purpose, Strategic Objectives and National Outcomes*

Launched in 2007, to run a minimum of ten year, the overriding purpose to which all the work of the Scottish Government and its partners is aimed at, and which all projects should contribute towards the achievement of, is;

“To focus the Government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth.”

In order to meet the Purpose and increase the success of the country, the Scottish Government is focusing their actions around five Strategic Objectives;

1. *Wealthier and Fairer* – enable businesses to increase their wealth and more people to share fairly in that wealth.
2. *Safer and Stronger* – help local communities to flourish, becoming stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.
3. *Healthier* – help people to sustain and improve their health, especially in disadvantaged communities, ensuring better, local and faster access to health care.
4. *Smarter* – expand opportunities for Scots to succeed from nurture through to lifelong learning ensuring higher and more widely shared achievements.
5. *Greener* – improve Scotland’s natural and built environment and the sustainable use and enjoyment of it.

Within these five areas the Scottish Government has also developed 15 specific National Outcomes to work towards over the next 10 years:

- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing [business](#) in Europe.
- We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.
- We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation.
- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed.
- We live longer, healthier lives.
- We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society.

- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk.
- We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger.
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations.
- We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.
- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production.
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs.

### *Scottish Government Regeneration Strategy: Achieving a Sustainable Future*

This strategy was launched in December 2011 and is the Scottish Government's 'vision of a Scotland where our most disadvantaged communities are supported and where all places are sustainable and promote well-being'. The Strategy acknowledges that many regeneration efforts in the past have concentrated on depressed areas, however new investment should redress the balance by also focussing investment on stronger areas too in order to create sustainable economic growth. The Strategy states that funding should be targeted not only on tackling deprivation and reversing decline but also on ensuring that communities are resilient. The Strategy emphasises community-led regeneration with the 'Focusing our Interventions' section recognising that 'local partners and communities themselves are best placed to identify local assets and needs'. Communities should have more responsibility for determining their own needs and acting upon these, taking responsibility for the delivery of regeneration projects.

The Strategy has three categories of outcomes the Scottish Government wants to achieve: economically, physically and socially sustainable communities.

#### *Economically Sustainable Communities*

- Strong local economies, providing access to jobs and support for business
- A well trained workforce whose skills meet economic needs
- People have access to the learning and development opportunities that they need and the right support is in place to help people to work
- A thriving private sector and social enterprise
- Effective strategies in place to link economic opportunity and demand

- The right affordable housing options with sufficient availability and quality of housing across all tenures
- Places encourage positive and appropriate private sector investment and social enterprise which provides opportunities for business and jobs
- Infrastructure fosters the right conditions for growth and community cohesion, including good transport and digital connectivity
- Thriving towns and high streets
- Sustainable employment and reducing welfare dependency

### *Physically Sustainable Communities*

- People have access to quality public space and appropriate greenspace
- Well planned neighbourhoods and local areas, with accessible facilities and amenities
- Communities have a positive appearance and are places where people want to live, work and invest
- Quality design and upkeep of buildings and spaces
- Address vacant and derelict land and property and preserve heritage/built environment for productive use
- Use resources efficiently and respect the natural environment

### *Socially Sustainable Communities*

- Communities and people are protected and feel safe
- Delivery is focussed on the needs of people
- Communities are involved in designing and delivering the services that affect them
- Strong and effective community networks are in place
- People have access to appropriate community facilities and places to meet
- Communities have a positive identity and future aspirations
- People are empowered to improve their area and maximise local assets
- People have good physical and mental health
- People have access to effective local services and facilities, including health, education and early years support
- Towns and high streets act as a focal point for social and economic interactions
- Communities are fair and inclusive, where all have a voice and can participate
- Sustainable employment to tackle worklessness.

### *Community Learning and Development Strategy*

Community Learning and Development (CLD) is seen as a key tool in delivering the Scottish Government's commitment to social justice. This Strategy establishes that

CLD capacity should be targeted towards activities aimed at closing the opportunity gap, achieving social justice and encouraging community regeneration. The Strategy outlines three priorities for Community Learning and Development;

- *Achievement through learning for adults* - Raising standards of achievement in learning for adults through community-based lifelong learning opportunities.
- *Achievement through learning for young people* - Engaging with young people to facilitate their personal, social and educational development and enable them to gain a voice, influence and a place in society.
- *Achievement through building community capacity* - Building community capacity and influence by enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision-making.

### ***Scotland's Economic Strategy***

The Government Economic Strategy (updated March 2015) reflects the changes in the current economic environment, and sets out how the Scottish Government will work with businesses and individuals to achieve its Purpose. The purpose is 'to make Scotland a more successful country, with opportunities for all to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth'. This updated Strategy focuses on two mutually supportive goals of increasing competitiveness and tackling inequality and has four priorities enabling actions that can make a substantial difference:

- **Investing** on our people and our infrastructure in a sustainable way
- Fostering a culture of **innovation** and research and development
- Promoting **inclusive growth** and creating opportunity through a fair and inclusive jobs market and regional cohesion
- Promoting Scotland on the **international** stage to boost our trade and investment, influence and networks

This strategy also highlights and supports the important role organisations across Scotland have – whether voluntary organisations, third sectors partners or through informal relationships – which together empower local communities and underpin the structures which many individuals rely on to participate within society.

### ***All Our Futures: Planning for a Scotland with an Ageing Population***

Launched in 2007 this remains the lynch pin of Scottish Governments strategy to enable the effective planning for the needs of an ageing population. The strategy has three basic premises to safeguard this sector of society:

- Older people are contributors to life in Scotland;
- There are barriers which need to be broken down between generations;

- Services should be in place to ensure that people can live life to the full as they grow older.

To achieve this, six priority areas for action were identified:

- We will act to continue to improve opportunities for older people - to remove barriers and to create more chances for older people to participate and to be involved in their communities - as volunteers; through paid work; in learning, leisure, culture and sport.
- We will act to forge better links between the generations
- We will continue to act to improve the health and quality of life of older people
- We will continue to improve care, support and protection for those older people who need it.
- We will ensure that the right infrastructure is in place for a Scotland with an ageing population with housing, transport and planning progressively meeting the needs of all ages.
- We will offer learning opportunities throughout life.

## 10.2 Local Policies

### *Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan*

The Local Development Plan (LDP) covers all of Dumfries and Galloway; it guides the future use and development of land in towns, villages and the rural area. It also indicates where development, including regeneration, should happen and where it should not. The overarching principle of this Plan is that all development proposals should support sustainable development, including the reduction of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions. The vision for Dumfries and Galloway is for it to be:

*'A thriving region with a sustainable economy built on sustainable principles that safeguard the landscape, natural and historic environment, promote growth, maximise the use of existing infrastructure and enhance connectivity. It will have maximised its location to attract investment to create employment and investment opportunities which will in turn attract people of working age to the region.'*

This will be characterised by a rural economy with:

- more rural businesses;
- more houses in small groups;
- more recreational activity;
- more woodlands;
- high quality distinctive landscapes;

- high quality accessible viewpoints, paths and green networks;
- a range of renewable energy developments;
- a protected and enhanced natural and historic environment;
- access to sustainable transport;
- ready access to higher education and opportunities for knowledge transfer;

and vibrant towns and villages that have:

- more businesses and people working from home;
- more opportunities to meet locally arising affordable housing needs;
- housing developments of a scale appropriate to their location that incorporate features such as open space, green networks, SuDS and are based around sustainable transport modes;
- high quality, affordable housing;
- a range of services and facilities that help support the local community;
- enhanced historic environment, streetscape and open spaces;
- a distinctive landscape setting or sense of place;
- more green networks providing a range of environmental, social and economic benefits;
- more sustainable developments linked to allotments, waste recycling, energy generation and so on, that are based around sustainable transport modes;
- access to a wide range of good quality sport, recreation and leisure facilities;
- developments served by district heating systems.

### ***Dumfries and Galloway Single Outcome Agreement 2013-16***

The Single Outcome Agreement sets out a strategic ten year vision for Dumfries and Galloway. We want to see work at pace, identifying and making service improvements and achieving a significant shift towards preventing problems arising rather than tackling them after they have happened. We want all our people to fulfill their potential and make the most of our rural and urban communities. The SOA commitments to achieve this will be through initiatives to address the following priorities:

*'We will provide a good start in life for all our children'*

We want a region where every child from pre-birth to 8 years old is prepared for, cared for and nurtured to be the very best and healthiest that they can be.

*'We will prepare our young people for adulthood and employment'*

We want our children and young people to be successful learners and will provide a range of flexible learning options to help them do so. We want them to be confident individuals and will support them to make informed choices and have the right skills for

life, learning and work. Young people will be retained as there is access to opportunities for them to be effective contributors to the local economy, culture and society.

*'We will care for our older and vulnerable people'*

We want our adult population to have good levels of health and wellbeing and to remain as independent and physically and economically active as they can be. We will support people who are vulnerable particularly those experiencing mental or physical health problems or who face poverty by providing the right type of information and access to services, facilities and support delivered by a range of providers.

*'We will support and stimulate our local economy'*

We want to achieve sustainable prosperity by attracting and retaining successful businesses and quality jobs and to galvanise our local businesses and social enterprises to develop their ambition and capacity for growth and to support them.

*'We will maintain the safety and security of our region'*

We want to retain our existing high levels of community, personal and home safety. We want a region that respects and celebrates the diversity of the people who choose to live and visit here and to embed a sense of community, integrity and achievement.

*'We will protect and sustain our environment'*

We want to get the right balance of social, environmental and economic land use to develop more attractive and sustainable neighbourhoods, promoting engagement with communities to build civic pride.

### ***Dumfries and Galloway Regional Economic Strategy 2014- 2020***

The Vision for the Dumfries and Galloway regional Economic strategy is:

*'By 2020, Dumfries and Galloway will have a more diverse and resilient economy. One which is capable of taking advantage of opportunities by combining an appropriately skilled workforce and connected infrastructure to support more prosperous and inclusive communities where every member of every community has equality of access to that prosperity.'*

The strategic objectives for achieving this Vision are as follows:

- Capitalising on the strength of the region's base to increase productivity and provide the conditions for business-led growth.
- Empower the region's communities to address their distinct economic challenges and opportunities.

- Create a vibrant culture of opportunity in the region to retain and attract people of working age and improve the competitiveness of individual businesses.
- Enhancing regional connectivity, removing barriers to business competitiveness and improving access to economic opportunities for individuals and businesses.
- Large investment projects that will make a significant impact on the regional economy.
- Attainment of our aspirations requires a shared vision and partnership working across the public, private and third sectors along with our providers of further and higher education. Our partners must demonstrate strong, confident leadership and effective partnership working.

### ***Dumfries and Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy 2016- 2020***

The Vision for the Dumfries and Galloway Regional Tourism Strategy is that by 2020 Dumfries and Galloway will be the destination of choice for quality, value and memorable experiences delivered by skilled and passionate hosts.

This vision will be delivered through three key themes:

- Providing Authentic Experiences: *An all year round offering of great and unforgettable experiences, events and hospitality.*
- Improving the Customer Journey: *Providing customers with a consistently high quality experience that will have them return and recommend the area to other.*
- Building our Capabilities: *Building a resilient, advised and collaborative local network of businesses and organisation.*

### ***Dumfries and Galloway Joint Strategic Plan for Older People 2012- 2022***

The Strategic Plan has been developed at a time of great challenge. It celebrates the fact that many older people are living longer and staying healthy for longer, while acknowledging that projections show that over the next twenty years, there will be a steady increase in the number of frail older people, people living with multiple long-term conditions and people with dementia. Most of these people are likely to require some level of care and support. It also notes that over this same period there will be fewer people of working age available to support them and there will also be less money.

The Strategic Plan supports the development of services which are:

- are provided as locally as possible;
- are person-centred and personalised;
- provide more choice and control through forward looking care;
- improve the experiences of people with dementia;
- recognise the needs of Carers;

- maximise an individual's independence;
- help to overcome barriers to participation in local communities including those who are socially isolated; and which
- result in a better integration of care across health, social care, housing, independent and third sector partners within communities through a joint use of resources.

### ***Dumfries and Galloway Draft Open Space Strategy 2014***

The Open Space Strategy covers the whole of the Dumfries and Galloway region and is an important document for the future development, management and conservation of open space in the region. The overall outcome of the strategy is to maintain (or increase where possible) reasonable quantity, accessibility and quality of publicly useable open space- especially in relation to wider connectivity and multi- functionality. Within the outcomes there are five objectives, as follows:

- Objective 1: Maintain or increase (where necessary and possible) the amount of open space with the aim of meeting the publicly usable open space quantity and accessibility standard;
- Objective 2: Avoid fragmentation of existing open space networks;
- Objective 3: Increase/ enhance connectivity between open spaces and between these and residential areas;
- Objective 4: Maintain or increase (where necessary and possible) the quality of existing spaces and ensure that new spaces are of good quality;
- Objective 5: Ensure new open space is made as multi- functional as possible, serving a number of different uses and aim to improve multi- functionality of existing spaces.

The strategy is structured around these objectives and includes action points and recommendations to allow for its implementation and monitoring.

The Open Space Strategy is of benefit to a range of users and interested parties including developers, community groups, residents and visitors. The OSS provides the Council's strategy in relation to open space requirements, will be a material consideration in responding to housing development proposals and will also feed into other strategies and programmes relating to human health and wellbeing, recreation and transport within the region.

### ***Nithsdale Health and Social Care Locality Plan 2016- 2019***

This plan is about how Health and Social care in Nithsdale will be integrated as part of a new Dumfries and Galloway Integration Authority. It sets out specific information, where this is available, and identifies what is working well but also some of the main

challenges which need to be tackled. Importantly, much of the plan is based on what people who live in the area and those currently involved in delivering health and social care in the area have said about how things could be better and what would make a difference.

The plan is shaped around the vision for Dumfries and Galloway as set out in the Dumfries and Galloway integration scheme- "A Dumfries and Galloway- where we share the job of making our communities the best place to live active, safe and healthy lives by promoting independence, choice and control". This means:

- a positive experience for people in our communities, their families and carers
- enabling people to take responsibility for their own physical health and mental well- being
- making sure that people, their family and carers are placed at the centre of all that we do, supported to make decisions and offer as much choice and control as possible
- making sure that the most vulnerable members of our communities are supported to live as independently as possible within their own homes or in homely settings
- supporting people to make positive lifestyle changes
- taking an innovative, creative, partnership approach to addressing health and social care challenges

### 10.3 Community Questionnaires

## CLOSEBURN COMMUNITY SURVEY



Nith Valley Leaf Trust is undertaking a Community Action Plan for Closeburn and the surrounding area to help develop projects that will benefit the local community and they have appointed Community Links Scotland to assist. As part of the consultation process a survey of all households in the Community Council area is being undertaken.

We would be grateful therefore if you could take a few minutes to answer the questionnaire and use the prepaid envelope supplied to return it to Community Links Scotland by **Monday 24th October**. Try to answer as a household but if you would like additional surveys, as opinions and priorities may differ, please contact us and we can send more surveys to you. If possible, we also ask you to note your number one top priority for the area on the enclosed luggage tag and return it along with the survey.



This is your chance to have your say on the development of new projects in your area by helping us to identify demands and priorities in the Closeburn Community Council area. Once we have these results we will organise further community consultations, drop-ins, chats, and workshops to prioritise the local needs. This information will provide us with a great opportunity to carry forward a variety of community projects in and around the village.

**THANK YOU—YOUR HELP IS MUCH APPRECIATED AND WILL HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE FUTURE OF YOUR AREA**

**Q1. Are you?**  
 Male  Female

**Q2. What age bracket do you fall into?**

Under 16	<input type="checkbox"/>	16– 21	<input type="checkbox"/>
22– 29	<input type="checkbox"/>	30– 39	<input type="checkbox"/>
40– 49	<input type="checkbox"/>	50– 59	<input type="checkbox"/>
60– 69	<input type="checkbox"/>	70– 79	<input type="checkbox"/>
80– 89	<input type="checkbox"/>	90+	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q3. Postcode?** .....

**Q4. The Internet**

	Yes	No
Do you have access to the internet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a PC/laptop/tablet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a smart phone?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you regularly use email?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you use social media?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For each issue, in each of the following questions, please indicate with a tick in the relevant box how important you think it is for the future development of Closeburn. This will allow us to prioritise the main issues for the area, and help us to identify potential project ideas for the Community Action Plan.

<b>Q5. Transport Issues</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Reintroduction of Closeburn Train Station				
Improved school bus service				
Reducing traffic speed in village				
Reintroduction of Thornhill Train Station				
Improved road verge maintenance				
Improved contingency arrangements when A76 closed				
Other? (Please State) .....				

<b>Q6. Environmental Issues</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Creation of community allotments/ gardens				
More litter bins and recycling points				
Additional local paths for walking and cycling				
Improve appearance of village generally				
Acquisition/ development of Community owned Woodland				
Garden services for elderly and disabled				
Other? (Please State) .....				

<b>Q7. Infrastructure Issues</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Affordable housing for sale/rent				
Improvement of Village Hall				
Retaining Shop/Post Office				
Development of a new community Hub Centre				
New small business units				
Improved Internet Access				
Other? (Please State) .....				

<b>Q8. Tourist Issues</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Tourism/Walkers Information Point				
Tourist Accommodation/ Attractions				
Walkers map of local areas				
Village Leaflet/website				
Better signage to local viewpoints, buildings, etc.				
More regular community events throughout the year				
Other? (Please State) .....				

<b>Q9. Health &amp; Welfare Issues</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Befriending service for everyone				
Expansion of Thornhill cottage hospital				
Chiropodist				
Support services for elderly and disabled				
Extended/consistent GP opening hours in Thornhill				
Local access to emergency medical equipment				
Other? (Please State) .....				

<b>Q10. Community &amp; Recreation Issues</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Less Important</b>	<b>Not Important</b>
Clubs for older residents				
Adult leisure classes				
All weather sports pitch in park				
Adult education classes				
Joint projects & events for all age groups				
A wider range of local interest groups and clubs				
Other? (Please State) .....				

**Q11. The Place Standard Table is a Scottish Government tool to evaluate the quality of a place.**

For each of the questions in the table below, think about where you live and how it meets your needs and demands as a resident. By putting a mark in the appropriate box, please tell us how satisfied you are currently with each aspect of your community on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 meaning there is a lot of room for improvement and 7 meaning there is little room for improvement.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Can I easily walk and cycle around using good quality routes?							
Does public transport meet my needs?							
Do traffic and parking arrangements allow people to move around safely and meet community needs?							
Do buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around							
Can I regularly experience good quality natural space?							
Do I have access to a range of space and opportunities for play and recreation?							
Do facilities and amenities meet my needs?							
Is there an active local economy and the opportunity to access good quality work?							
Does housing support the needs of the community and contribute to a positive environment?							
Is there a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people?							
Does this place have a positive identity and do I feel I belong?							
Do I feel safe?							
Are buildings and spaces well cared for?							
Do I feel able to participate in decisions and help change things for the better?							

*Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If there is anything you would like to add, please feel free to note it down in the space provided below.*

*For more information or additional survey forms please contact Community Links Scotland on 0141 952 4382.*

# THORNHILL GROUP SURVEY

Thornhill Community Council are undertaking a Community Action Plan of Thornhill and the surrounding area to help develop projects that will benefit the local community and they have appointed Community Links Scotland to assist. As part of the consultation process a survey of local community groups is being undertaken.

We would be grateful therefore if you could take a few minutes to answer the questionnaire and use the prepaid envelope supplied to return it to Community Links Scotland by **Monday 24th October**.

This is your chance to have a say in the development of new projects in the area by helping us to identify the demands and priorities of community groups and clubs in Thornhill. Once we have these results we will organise further community consultations, drop-ins, chats, and workshops to prioritise the local needs. All information will be treated confidentially and will be used by Thornhill Community Council and Community Links Scotland for the purposes of this study only.

**THANK YOU—YOUR HELP IS MUCH APPRECIATED AND WILL HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE FUTURE OF YOUR AREA**



**Q1.** What is the name of your group or organisation?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Q2.** What is the nature of the activities carried out by your group or organisation?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Q3.** Where do you currently run your group or organisation in Thornhill?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4.** Are there any other facilities your group or organisation uses? e.g. Dumfries, Sanquhar etc.  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**Q5.** How often do you provide your service or activity?

Daily  Weekly

Monthly  Occasionally

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Q6.** How many people typically attend your service or activity?

0-10  11-20

21-30  31-40

41-50  50+

**Q7.** What is the typical age mix of people who use your service or activity?

Toddlers  Under 12

13-17  18-24

25-49  50-64

65+  All ages

**Q8.** How much do you charge for your service or activity?

Free of charge

Annual charge  (£ \_\_\_\_\_ per year)

Per session  (£ \_\_\_\_\_ per session)

Other  \_\_\_\_\_

**Q9.** Which of the following existing facilities in Thornhill does your group or organisation currently use and roughly how often? (Please tick)

Facility	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	A few times a year	Very occasionally
Thornhill Community Centre					
Friendship Club					
Wallace Hall School					
Thornhill Library					
Other _____					

**Q10.** Which of these would your group or organisation most benefit from, or most like to see in Thornhill in the future (Please tick top 5)

Lockable storage	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better parking	<input type="checkbox"/>
Projector and screen	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improved access	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community notice board	<input type="checkbox"/>	Better heating	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community printer / scanner/ copier	<input type="checkbox"/>	Leaflets, Publication, Info stand	<input type="checkbox"/>
TV & DVD player	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loop system for hard of hearing	<input type="checkbox"/>
PCs or any other IT equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Loudspeaker facilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Internet access	<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium sized meeting rooms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sports equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Large hall for activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Better availability times	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q11.** How would you rate the standard of the facilities currently available in Thornhill?

Very Good  Good

Okay  Poor

Very Poor

If poor or very poor, why is this? \_\_\_\_\_

**Q12.** What is the top priority for you, as a local group or organisation, that would help you to provide better services or activities for the community?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## THORNHILL BUSINESS SURVEY

Thornhill Community Council is undertaking a Community Action Plan for Thornhill and the surrounding area to help develop projects that will benefit the local community and they have appointed Community Links Scotland to assist. As part of the consultation process a survey of businesses in the Community Council area is being undertaken.

We would be grateful therefore if you could take a few minutes to answer this questionnaire and use the prepaid envelope supplied to return it to Community Links Scotland.

This is your chance to have your say on the development of your community by helping us to identify demands and priorities in the Thornhill Community Council area. Once we have these results we will organise further community consultations, drop-ins, chats, and workshops to prioritise the local needs.

**THANK YOU – YOUR HELP IS MUCH APPRECIATED AND WILL HELP US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO THE FUTURE OF YOUR AREA**

### Q1a. What is the nature of your business?

Construction	Hospitality/accommodation
Machine/plant hire	Retail
Agriculture	Tourist attraction
Horticulture	Local service e.g. surgery
Forestry	Other (please state)

### Q1b. Approximately how many employees do you have?

	All year round		Seasonal	
	Full-time	Part-time	Full-time	Part-time
None				
Less than 5				
5 - 10				
10+				

### Q1c. Are you a member of any business support network e.g. Thornhill Business Traders Association? Yes No

**Q2. Business support issues:** In relation to the day to day running and future development of your business, how importantly do you rate the need for the following Business Support services? Please rank the list below from 1 to 6 with 1 as your highest priority and 6 as your lowest priority.

	Priority
Access to shared small business services in the village e.g. An administration, marketing and IT support centre.	
Employee development advice e.g. Health & Safety awareness, I.T. classes etc.	
Sustainability advice e.g. Energy conservation, recycling etc.	
Information on potential grant funding sources for development initiatives.	
New local business networks e.g. a co-operative or purchasing partnership.	
Access to business units or workshop space.	
Access to video conferencing facilities.	
Other (please state)	

**Q3. Transport issues:** In relation to the day to day running and future development of your business, how importantly do you rate the need for improvements in relation to local transport? Please rank the list below from 1 to 5 with 1 as your highest priority and 5 as your lowest priority.

	Priority
Village centre parking	
Dropping off/delivery area	
Public transport	
Good walking and cycling links to the village	
Competitively priced fuel sourcing	
Other (please state)	

**Q4. Environmental issues:** In relation to the day to day running and future development of your business, how importantly do you rate the need for improvements, in relation to the local environment? From the list, please rank 1 to 5 with 1 as your highest priority, 5 as your lowest.

	Priority
Appearance of local village generally	
Protection of local woodlands/hedges	
Natural/Local history visitor centre	
Development of local walking and cycling routes.	
Other suggestion (please state)	

**Q5. Procurement issues:** Do you have any issues in sourcing any of the following locally? If so please tick as many as are appropriate?

Unskilled labour	Business/storage space
Suitably skilled labour	Telephone/IT services
Machine/equipment hire	Infrastructural services e.g. Water, sewerage etc
Commodities/products	Other (please state)

### Q6. Future business development in Thornhill

**A) Can you think of any single facility or service not yet available in Thornhill that if provided would assist local businesses?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**B) Do you think that there are any business opportunities that could be developed in the area and if so, are you prepared to tell us what they might be?**

\_\_\_\_\_

## 10.4 Census Scotland Educational Attainment Levels

Highest level of qualification is defined as:

Level 1: 0 Grade, Standard Grade, Access 3 Cluster, Intermediate 1 or 2, GCSE, CSE, Senior Certification or equivalent; GSVQ Foundation or Intermediate, SVQ level 1 or 2, SCOTVEC Module, City and Guilds Craft or equivalent; Other school qualifications not already mentioned (including foreign qualifications).

Level 2: SCE Higher Grade, Higher, Advanced Higher, CSYS, A Level, AS Level, Advanced Senior Certificate or equivalent; GSVQ Advanced, SVQ level 3, ONC, OND, SCOTVEC National Diploma, City and Guilds Advanced Craft or equivalent.

Level 3: HNC, HND, SVQ level 4 or equivalent; Other post-school but pre-Higher Education qualifications not already mentioned (including foreign qualifications).

Level 4 and above: Degree, Postgraduate qualifications, Masters, PhD, SVQ level 5 or equivalent; Professional qualifications (for example, teaching, nursing, accountancy); Other Higher Education qualifications not already mentioned (including foreign qualifications).