



KIRKMICHAEL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

PREPARED AND PRODUCED BY CREETOWN INITIATIVE LTD



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SUMMARY

Like many small rural settlements in South West Scotland the Kirkmichael Parish has been handed the opportunity to make a difference to their community through access to wind farm benefit funds.

In order to maximize the potential of this cash windfall the community council received some funding from Local Energy Scotland to commission consultants to produce a Community Action Plan.

This Community Action plan is for the people who live in the Kirkmichael parish/Community Council Area Parkgate and Nethermill areas in Dumfries and Galloway. The contents provide the results, conclusions and recommendations from the survey and one to one and group consultations carried out through the latter months of 2017. The Action Plan is a statement about the type of place the community wants the area to be and what needs to be done. It provides an outline of the community profile, a summary of the community's views and a vision for the future, where the issues that matter the most are priorities for action to be taken.

Often a failing of some communities in receipt of wind farm benefit funds has been not to develop a legacy from these funds. The funds have been used for small quick fix projects which have done nothing to secure the long-term future and sustainability of the settlement. This plan will try to create a plan of action which meets both the short-term and the longer-term needs of the community. It will also demonstrate how wind farm benefit funds can be used to lever additional funds, adding further value to projects.

Crucial to the successful management of wind farm benefit funds is the need for transparency and the community must have the capacity to manage the process. Transparency takes the form of creating an application procedure that people understand. It also sets out clearly what the money can and can't be used for and explains the size of the fund and its limitations.

In some cases communities have decided to employ staff to help manage wind farm benefit funds, both to administer grants to organisations and to help develop bigger legacy projects by obtaining

additional funds. This plan will illustrate how the community can build its capacity and the benefits of doing so. However the decision to go down this route will rest entirely with the community.

The Community Action Plan is a document designed to support the community make best use of the wind farm benefit funds and insure that the funds are being used for projects that the majority support. Its findings are based on extensive community consultation which took place during October, November and December 2017 which included a questionnaire delivered to every house in the parish and one to one focus meetings with the steering group members and other organisations, partners and stakeholders.

The Action Plan is a guide for what the community want to achieve over the next five years, laying the foundations for change over the longer term.

KIRKMICHAEL PARISH COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2018 - 2023

This Community Action Plan is a tool for change. It will help the parish of Kirkmichael achieve its aspirations and to make a better place to live, work and visit.

This will be the guide for what the community will focus on achieving over the next five years.

This plan will show:

- what it's like to live in Kirkmichael parish now
- how Kirkmichael could change in the future
- what things matter most to the people who live there
- what the priorities are and how they can be addressed

Many communities in Scotland produce such plans, as they deal with issues arising in changing times and often in relation to the receipt of Community Benefit Funds.

A community action plan needs to be:

- ✓ clear, well-researched, robust, strategic, accessible and importantly, readable
- ✓ designed in a way to contribute to securing funds for projects
- ✓ able to help shape local services
- ✓ able to make best use of community assets - land, buildings, funds and people



KIRKMICHAEL PARISH NOW

Local Economy and Employment

70% travel to work by car

A higher than average % of the population are self-employed

A larger than average 17% of the population are retired

A higher than average % of the population work from home

Those living within the parish work more than 49 hours a week, mainly due to time-intensive agricultural work

27% of the population work in skilled trades, compared to the national average of only 12.5%

Many people work in retail, motor vehicle and motorbike repair, caring and health

55% of unemployed people living in the parish are aged 16 - 24

The main employment sector is agriculture

Data from Scotland Census Online.

Population and Demography

Kirkmichael has a population of approximately 725 people, comprised of 19% aged under 16, 66% aged 16 – 64 and 15% aged 65+. These figures reflect the Scottish national averages of 17.3%, 65.9% and 16.8% respectively.

Transport

The village of Parkgate is served by buses which run between Dumfries, Moffat and Glasgow. The bus service from Dumfries to Edinburgh via Moffat also serves the village. Buses run every hour on weekdays and Saturday and 3 hourly on Sunday. The last bus to Glasgow leaves Parkgate at 18.05 pm and 22.05 pm to Dumfries. No buses pass through Nethermill.

There are no rail links within the parish, but the area is served well by stations in Dumfries going to Carlisle and Glasgow, and Lockerbie for services to Edinburgh, Glasgow and Carlisle.

Safety, Health & Wellbeing

Overall, the health of the inhabitants of Kirkmichael Parish is good, with only 4.9% of people limited a lot by a long term health problem or disability, which is below the national average of 9.6%. The drive time to the nearest GP is 11 minutes and within the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation, Kirkmichael's ranking for health is 7 out of 10 (10 being the least deprived). Furthermore, the crime ranking for Kirkmichael is ranked at least deprived and therefore indicates that crime levels are very low, most likely due to the isolated and rural location of the parish.

Education

Nursery/early learning provision is available at Lochmaben Primary School, which is outside of the parish.

The primary school in the parish is located with in the small hamlet of Nethermill. It is a small, rural school with only two classes and a school role of 36 children and is partnered with Johnstonebridge Primary School, however there is now no school transport for pupils. The school has an outdoor learning area in the playground which they hope to develop into an eco-classroom. There is also an area opposite the school which is used for as an outside classroom (the land is owned by a local farmer who allows the school to use it).

There is not a secondary school located within the parish, but families have the choice of two catchment institutions; Lockerbie Academy and Dumfries Academy, whilst Moffat Academy is out of catchment. All schools are between 8 and 13 miles from the parish, however only Lockerbie Academy has a school bus. Therefore pupils of Dumfries Academy are required to use public transport which could limit the opportunity for out of school activities.

Further and higher education is available locally via the Barony Campus of the SRUC (Scotland's Rural College), situated within Kirkmichael Parish and offers a selection of agricultural, veterinary and landbased courses. Other college courses are available from Dumfries College and the University of Glasgow has a campus in Dumfries, as does the University of West Scotland which provide courses in other subject areas.

Community Organisations and Facilities

Kirkmichael Community Council ● Indoor Bowling Club ● Church Guild
Woman's Rural Institute ● Badminton Club ● XYZ Club
Pilates Club ● Kirkmichael Parish Church ● Kirkmichael Village Hall
Parkgate Play Park ● Nethermill Play Park ● SRUC Barony Campus
Nethermill Primary School ● Singleton Park Care Home

Geographic Access and Environment

The Parish of Kirkmichael is located 8 miles north of Dumfries on the A701 road to Moffat, 40 miles from Carlisle and 70 miles from Edinburgh. The Water of Ae runs through the parish, the Forest of Ae is to the west of the parish and the M74 is less than 10 miles away.

Kirkmichael is very rurally isolated and rates within the most deprived ranking on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation for geographic access to facilities (1 out of 10). The rural location is reflected in the drive time to facilities; 10.7 minutes to the nearest post office and 17.9 minutes to the nearest secondary school. The small hamlet of Parkgate formerly had its own post office and the Ae Inn, both of which have now closed. The nearest police station, fire station and ambulance is in Lockerbie, whilst the nearest hospital is in Dumfries. Other essential services are also outside of the parish - the nearest doctors surgery, dental surgery, pharmacy, sheltered accommodation and taxi service are all in Lochmaben, which is 12 miles south east of Parkgate.

According to www.statistics.gov.scot, Kirkmichael Parish has 0.03 dwellings per hectare, which is substantially lower than 0.12 for Dumfries and Galloway as a whole.

Heritage and History of the Parish

"Many remains of ancient fortifications and Roman roads are visible in this district. There is a small fort on an eminence in the Knockwood, known as Wallace's House, near which are stones marking the spot where that hero killed six Englishmen. Kirkmichael House is the chief seat in the neighbourhood. More than half the parish belongs to the Duke of Buccleuch."

- Description from *The National Gazetteer of Great Britain and Ireland* (1868)



PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

This Action Plan has been created by community engagement and the process of gathering and prioritising the views of the community involved:

- Interviews and meetings with different groups and individuals representing all aspects of the community.
- Carrying out a community survey, which was delivered to every household in Kirk Michael Parish.
- Collection of questionnaires and informal discussions with residents.

Questionnaire Responses

Approximately 200 questionnaires were distributed and 74 questionnaires were completed and returned; a rate of 37%, which is above the average return rate - a good response.

The following summary highlights the key findings:

- The majority of respondents were aged 60 - 74 years, a figure reflected in the employment status, with 35.8% of respondents being retired. The next highest category was 24.4% stating they were in full time employment, followed by 21.3% in education and 15.2% self-employed. Overall, this is in line with expectations.
- The three most positive things about living in Kirk Michael included the quiet and peaceful area, the countryside and the community spirit.
- The three biggest challenges about living in Kirk Michael included the poor internet connection, the lack of amenities (eg post office/shop/pub) and the lack of bus service.
- 87.9% agreed that broadband connectivity needs to be improved in the parish, whilst 65.3% of the figure **strongly** agreed this.
- 70.5% agreed that there should be more activities and support for young people.
- 66.5% would like to see more services, activities and support for elderly people.
- 50.4% would like to see better play park facilities in Parkgate, whilst a greater 68.4% would like to see better play park facilities in Nethermill.
- 54.7% believe that the bus service is insufficient and unreliable.
- 4.2% thought the local landscape should be made better use of, eg walks.
- There was very strong support (89%) for a community information website and 77.7% also supported the development of a community newsletter.
- Views of community social media pages (eg Facebook/Twitter) were mixed, with 39.1% unsure.

- 62.4% would like to see more music events take place, but 33.3% were unsure about this.
- 54.5% thought the fast, busy main road was a problem for the community, whilst 60.8% thought there should be improved parking in Nethermill.
- 50.7% thought accessibility to community buildings should be improved.
- There was strong support (84.2%) for improving the attractiveness of the parish.
- The top three issues for improvement included road safety (access onto A701), improvement of communication and improvement of Nethermill Play Park.



Interview Consultations Responses

- The main priority is transport for children to the primary school, since the school bus has stopped, resulting in congestion at drop off and pick up times. Possibly move school boundary fence to implement additional parking.
- There is a safety concern for the children walking along the very narrow path to the primary school.
- Traffic speed past the school can often exceed the 30mph limit - more traffic calming required.
- Funding for improvements to outdoor class room space and is required.
- Parkgate play park needs to be improved.
- Lack of shelter or bus stop in Nethermill where secondary school children get dropped off.
- The main issue is the speed on the A701. Double white lines are required to prevent overtaking and speed restrictions of 50mph. Also a crossing near the bus stop is required.
- A de-fibrillator is required at Parkgate and Nethermill and training for people to use it properly.
- The play park at Nethermill needs to be upgraded, as it is limited with equipment and access is very poor; children can't walk there safely.



Top Priorities at a Glance



Whatever course of action the community decides to take, capacity to deliver and manage the process is critical. There are possible scenarios for use of the Community Benefit funding:

- 1) The money is distributed each year to groups that apply for the money
- 2) The funding is targeted at major long-term (potentially self-sustaining) projects
- 3) The funding is used to distribute to groups, as well as to carry out long-term projects

If the money is to be distributed each year to groups that apply for funds, there has to be a procedure in place. The procedure must explain carefully the application process and explain how decisions whether to fund or not are made. It must be transparent and explain the selection process and who will make the decisions.

Similarly if the money is to be used for major legacy projects the community will need people to take any such projects forward. It is unlikely that all of the potential projects could be delivered by volunteers so such a course of action would require the employment of staff. Employing staff in itself is often a daunting prospect for some communities, but the benefits of doing so often outweigh the challenges.

Example of a Community Making Things Happen for Themselves

A good example of the benefits of employing a project worker, is Creetown Initiative. This group set-up in 2000 and made limited progress in the first six years. Projects were dependent on volunteers and their time. So in 2006 the group decided to employ a project worker. Since doing so the group has:

- purchased a derelict pub and created an "Enterprise Centre" supported by a lottery grant of £730,000
- restored the local play park raising £280,000 to create a superb recreational facility for the village
- formed a car share scheme which owns three cars which people share the use of
- resurrected the production of a community newsletter, has developed a local information website and has active social media platforms

Creetown Initiative has achieved these projects, in addition to others, without the assistance of wind farm funding. Therefore, a community with wind farm funding has a huge advantage for initiating change and leveraging match funding.

COMMUNITY PRIORITY PROJECTS

Out of the consultation process there have been four main themes and priorities identified that the community will work towards achieving over the next five years. It is important the community only consider projects that are deliverable and have the required impact. There is a strong recommendation for a Development Trust to be established (explanation on page 14) and also to employ a part time project officer who will give the capacity to deliver the suggested projects. In the event that there was no project officer employed then all the delivery of the projects will fall to volunteers.

The four priority projects are:

- 1) Community Capacity
- 2) Location, Access and Safety
- 3) Communication
- 4) Facilities

Project 2: Location, Access and Services

Project - What	Details - How	Possible Funding Source	Who will do it
Realignment of physical features at road junctions to the A701	Physical improvements to road junctions coming out onto the A 701- improving sight lines and safety issues such as moving hedges, install mirrors opposite minor roads.	DG Council & Scottish Government contacts	Development Trust and Project Officer
Traffic calming on A701	Investigate suitable traffic calming measures on the A701 especially around the bus stop and crossing places such as solar signs, road lines and speed sensitive traffic lights	DG Council & Scottish Government contacts	Development Trust, Community Council and Project Officer
Local landscaping improvements	Undertake further engagement around improvements to pathways around the villages. Investigate options with landowners to clear and widen pathways particularly the path to the school.	Local landowners Robertson Trust Tesco Bags for Help WHSmith community fund	Development Trust and Project Officer Community Volunteers

Project 1: Community Capacity

Project - What	Details - How	Possible Funding Source - Not Exhaustive	Who will do it
New Organisational Model	Create an inclusive Members Charitable Trust - a 2 tiered structured SCIO	DTAS development	Kirkmichael Community Council
Employ Project Officer	Part time possible 2x days per week. The officer would support community development opportunities, identify and apply to funders for match funds and project manage project activity	Nithsdale Area Committee Robertson Trust TSB Foundation Big Lottery Henry Smith Foundation SSE	Development Trust
Volunteer Recruitment	Harness local community spirit and expand the volunteering network.	No funds required	Community Council, Development Trust and Project Officer Community volunteers
Volunteer Development	Provide training and encouragement to new volunteers	Access training through Volunteer Action and D&G Council	Development Trust and Project Officer.



Project 3: Communication

Project - What	Details - How	Possible Funding Source	Who will do it
Parish Newsletter	Develop a quarterly community newspaper to be distributed around the parish. It will keep the whole community informed of activities and acts a way to encourage involvement and community cohesion. It can be made available electronically through email, website and social media and posted out to those that choose not to receive it electronically.	Big Lottery Awards for All	Development Trust and Project Officer
Community Website	Develop a community website which is easy to update by Project Officer and members of the Trust. It could include a parish diary keeping everyone informed of activities and events.	Big Lottery Awards for All	Development Trust, Project Officer and independent website designer
Social Media	Updating and marketing the Facebook Page as another form of community communication and engagement.	No funds required	Project Officer
Access to Online Information and Computer Lessons	Organise community computer, tablet and smart phone training sessions.	Employability partnership D&G College Big Lottery	Development Trust and Project Officer

Project 4: Facilities

Project - What	Details - How	Possible Funding Source	Who will do it
Broadband	Investigate the Digital Scotland Superfast Broadband programme. There is a new Scottish Government programme being launched shortly. This will provide 100% coverage by 2021. In the meantime, there is a Better Broadband Scheme which might bridge the gap. Contact can be made to D&G Council economic development team, and would require community commitment for a campaign.	No funds required	Development Trust and Project Officer
Nethermill School Car Park	Establish current position in relation to school parking, organise discussion with relevant council departments, land owners, school staff and parents	No funds required initially	Development Trust and Project Officer
Play Park Improvements	Park Improvement in Nethermill and Parkgate – to upgrade both playparks with new equipment. Involve community and children in design process	Robertson Trust DG Leader	Development Trust and Project Officer
Attractive Villages	Volunteers and community enthusiasts to organise clean up events – clean village signs, weed removal, clean bus shelters, planting and maintaining of planters.	Tie into Keep Scotland Tidy campaigns D&G Council support with collection of rubbish collected and bin bags and tabards. Tesco Bags of Help	Development Trust and Project Officer

Why Set Up a Charitable Development Trust?

Community Councils are limited by not having charitable status and their constitution status, which means that they are unable to apply to certain grant funders. Community Councils are not normally able to employ staff due to their constitution and insurance constraints.

**A charitable (SCIO - Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) development trust can access most funders, it can have unlimited members from within the community, or a defined area and its members control the organisation. They are able to attend the Annual General Meeting and stand as trustees and members of the board. A development trust can employ staff. It is also possible for them to become a member of DTAS (Development Trust Association Scotland) which offers support, advice, training and in some cases, additional funding opportunities.

SCIOs may have a single tier structure (governed by charity trustees with no additional members) or a two-tier structure (governed by charity trustees with a membership body which has certain powers or duties). The preferred choice would be a two-tier structured SCIO as this allows residents to become members, attend the AGM and stand as Trustees and effectively gives control of the organisation to the community.

Development trusts are enterprises with social objectives which are actively engaged in the regeneration of an area - a valley, a town centre, a parish, village - whilst ensuring that the benefits are returned to the community.

Development Trusts:

are concerned with the **long term regeneration** of an area in its widest sense - with its economy, its environment, its facilities and the services and the 'spirit' of its communities

seek to be **financially self-sufficient** and independent - not just relying on grants

aim to **create assets** in the community and make a profit - but not for private gain. Any profit made is re-invested in the community.

are **community based and accountable** - in their work, their style and the composition of their boards of management

are forming and **working in partnerships** between the community, voluntary, private and public sectors

demonstrate that **local people** can shape the future of their communities in ways that are **sustainable, innovative and entrepreneurial**.

In short they ensure that the process of regeneration works.



KIRKMICHAEL - THE FUTURE

The coming years will present numerous challenges, some of them are brought to our attention daily - for example Brexit. Added to this is the fact that Scotland's population is ageing faster than any other country in the UK. As mortality rates rise, dependency levels and strain on support services will increase significantly. With the concentration of centralised services in urban and main-population areas, reductions in rural services will almost certainly ensue. The only way to maintain some services in a rural location will be to deliver them through local organisations.

An attitude of community alertness *will* be necessary, and those communities that have put sustainable projects in place will fare better against this changing backdrop.

Looking to the Future

Following the 2015 Community Empowerment Act communities now have the opportunity to take ownership of local services and facilities. With reduced funding available to regional councils services will shrink unless communities take control and deliver themselves.

Communities who are ready to act on opportunities arising from these changes will be best placed to prosper in the long term. Kirkcaldy has a substantial advantage over many other communities due to the Community Benefit Funding and used wisely, could create a lasting legacy for the future.

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