



Strathpeffer and District

Community Action Plan 2019 – 2024

Strathpeffer and District Community Council with
Strathpeffer Coordinating Group

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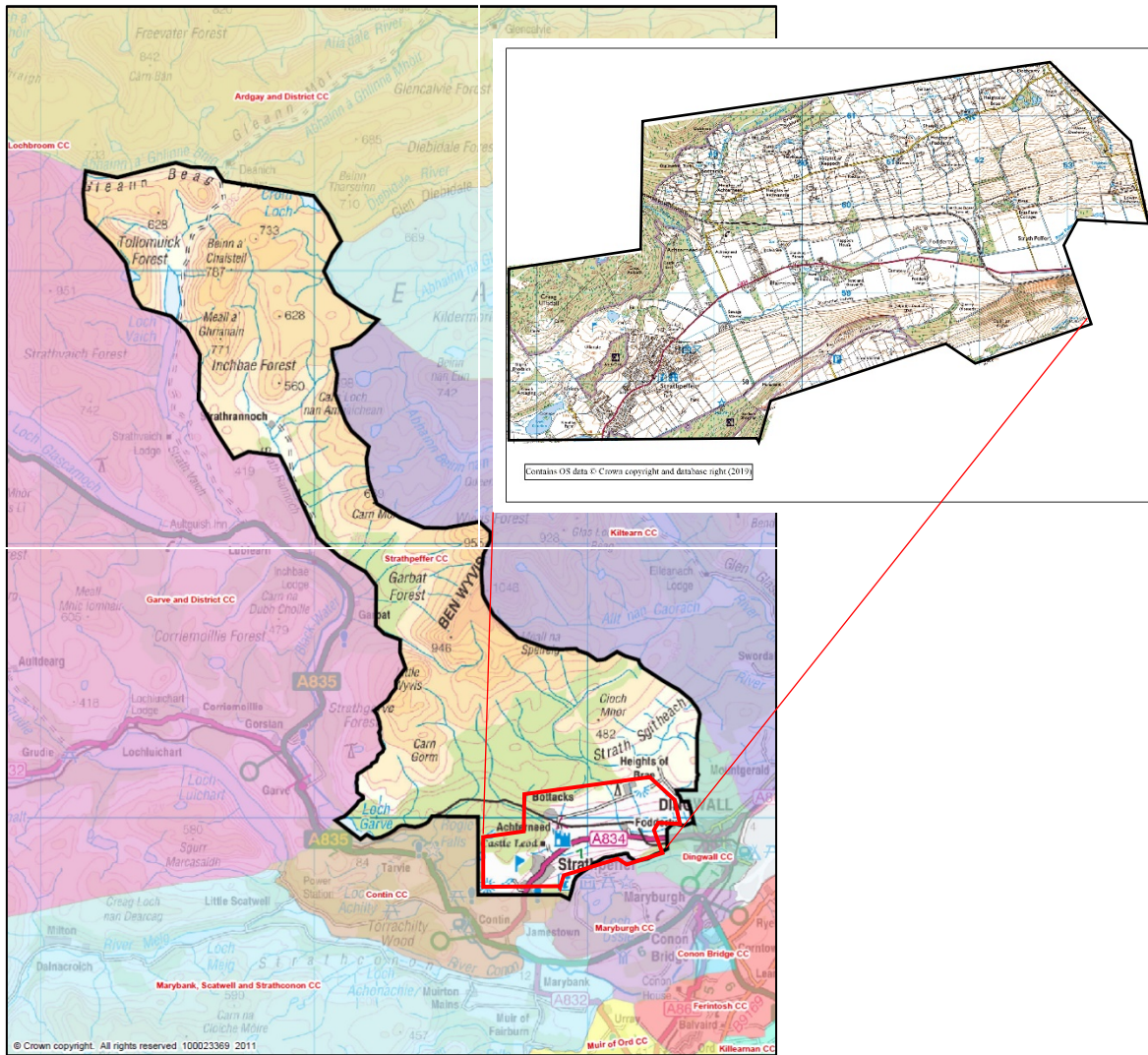
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1 Introduction

1.1 Why a Community Action Plan for Strathpeffer and District?

Strathpeffer and District is an area of stunning natural beauty 20 miles north of Inverness. Strathpeffer and District Community Council area (referred to in this Plan as “Strathpeffer and District”) is centred on the historic Spa Village of Strathpeffer, and includes the hamlets of Fodderty, Blairninich, Achterneed, Bottacks, and the Heights. Around 1,600 people live in Strathpeffer and District, and this population is supplemented annually by an estimated 30,000 visitors to the area.

Figure i. Strathpeffer and District Community Council Area Map



The Strathpeffer and District community have a strong sense of place and identity based on the village of Strathpeffer. There is a high level of community activity and volunteering. Individuals and groups are involved in setting up, developing and maintaining a wide range of community assets from the Community Centre to early years childcare, from Arts Groups to creating the Peffery Way, from the Community Park to gardening groups maintaining the green assets of Strathpeffer, to seeking to buy and run the Strathpeffer Pavilion.

The community survey carried out as part of the consultation work for the Community Action Plan showed that one in two people who responded, were volunteers.

Voluntary activity is an essential ingredient in the quality of life of Strathpeffer and District, supported by the finding that 100% of the survey responders agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed living in Strathpeffer and that Strathpeffer is a scenic and attractive place to be.

The community want to ensure that Strathpeffer continues to develop as an active, welcoming community with thriving businesses and social life, encouraging residents and visitors to enjoy its beautiful natural and heritage environment.

To develop and achieve this vision, it is essential that the energies of the community are harnessed to working together. Agreement and delivery of this Community Action Plan will help ensure that Strathpeffer and District stays vibrant and sustainable, through the delivery of long lasting social, economic and environmental benefits not just for the current, but for future generations.

The catalyst for creating the Plan was the increasing availability of funding from the Corriemoillie Community Fund. Strathpeffer and District Community Council successfully applied for funding which has supported the creation of this Plan over a 6-month period of consultation and community engagement. The Plan in turn will also help ensure that any income from the wind farm – and any other community income opportunities - are invested in projects and initiatives which will bring optimum economic and social benefits to the whole community.

The Plan sets out Strathpeffer and District's community vision and aspirations for delivering a range of projects and activities, under a set of key strategic themes, and how to start setting about achieving them.

2 About the Strathpeffer and District Community

People have lived in this area for thousands of years, evidenced by Neolithic and Pictish remnants around the area. Activity was based around agriculture on the fertile plain and upland of the Strath, with access to the sea and onward transit at what is now Dingwall, 6 miles to the East. Although there were some houses existing in the area, Strathpeffer itself did not exist in its current form until 1861.

Strathpeffer is one of the last Scottish “planned villages”. Most of Scotland’s villages did not exist in 1700; nearly all of them did by 1850. Strathpeffer came into being at the end of this Scottish “Age of Improvement”. While most of the planned villages were designed around manufacturing, forestry or sea-based industries, the Countess of Cromartie’s vision was to engage the emerging leisure time and tourism inclinations of both high society and the growing wealthy merchant class.

Strathpeffer’s history was carefully documented by Archaeology for the Communities in the Highlands (2016), available on the [Arch website](#) with the summary reproduced at Appendix 1. A fuller analysis is also available on the [Ross and Cromarty Heritage Website](#).

2.1 Geography and Geology

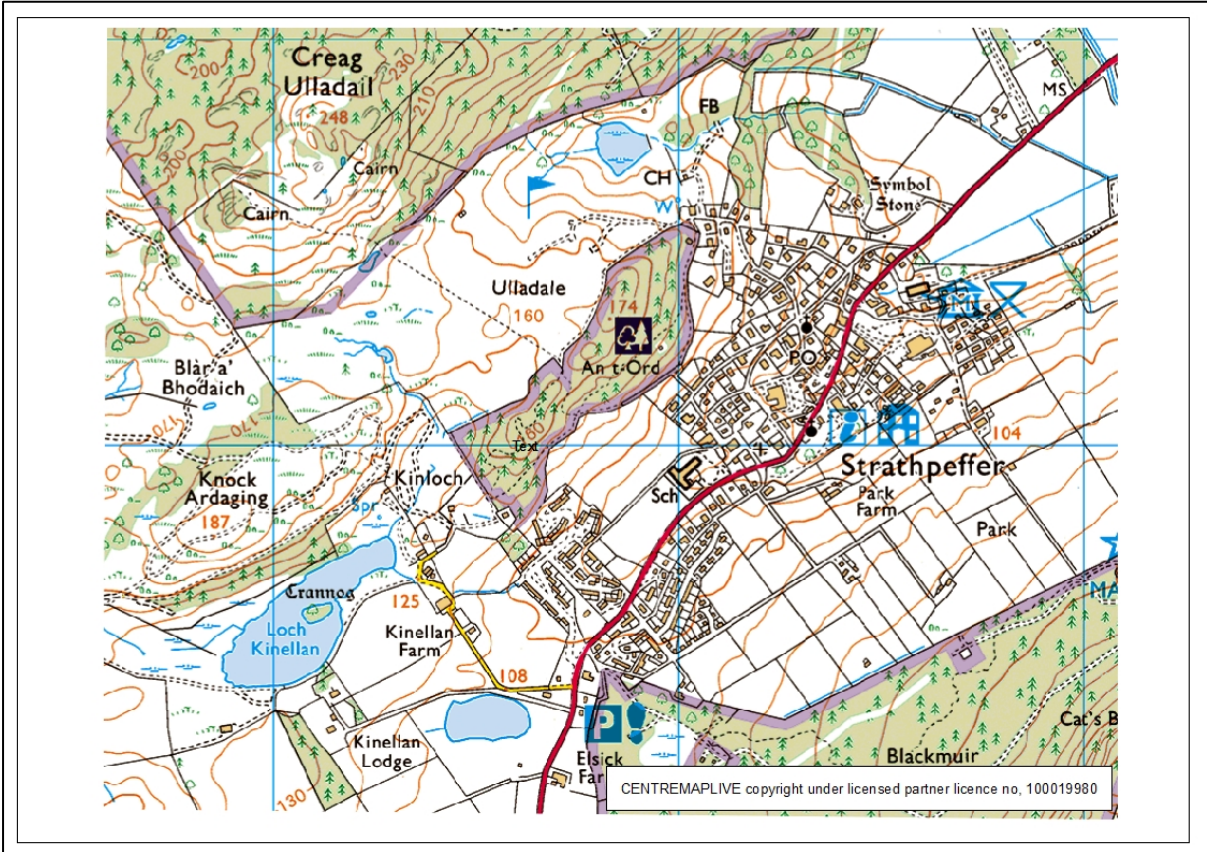
Geology is important to Strathpeffer and District. The village was built around the four sulphur and one chalybeate (mineral) springs which emerge from the ground just below the pass over from Strath Peffer to Strath Conon. The village of Strathpeffer itself is squeezed into a narrowing gap at the head of the broad and flat Strath Peffer, a flat and fertile glacial plain which continues to the head of the Cromarty Firth at Dingwall. The River Peffery drains the land in the Strath to the Firth.

The steep sides of the village of Strathpeffer add to its visual appearance, displaying the buildings of its Conservation Village to advantage, but making flat land in the village itself something of a rarity. The undulating and at times steep hills and climbs within the village contribute significantly to its character and offer a wide range of views and vistas from where to appreciate the village and the hills beyond.

The “cat’s back” of Cnoc Farril to the South is of “Cnoc Fyrish” conglomerate, 400 million years old. Due to its nature this was able to be quarried and mined thousands of years ago and, together with the fine silt soil, used to create a vitrified hill fort, providing safety for the ancient peoples of the Strath. The north side of Strath Peffer rises steeply into the foothills of Ben Wyvis, with the higher plateau providing farmland for the communities of the Heights.

Views from the village towards Cnoc Farril are key to the setting and appreciation of the village; views from the Cnoc over the Strath and to Ben Wyvis beyond provide a vista of Strath Peffer at the edge of a huge area of wild land.

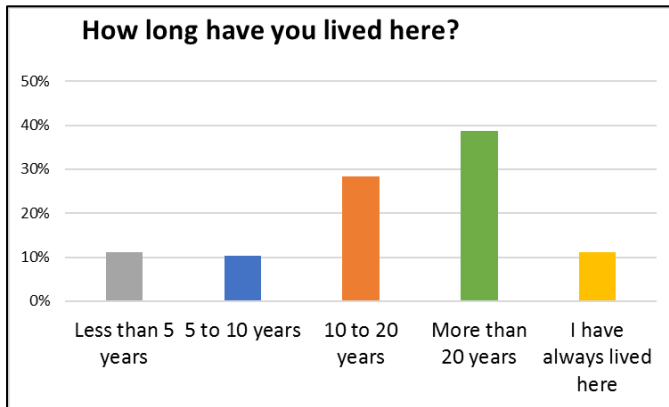
Figure ii. Map of Strathpeffer showing the steep slopes of the village



2.2 Population

Strathpeffer and District’s population of 1,600 people (Census 2011) is a settled population. People have often lived in the area for many years.

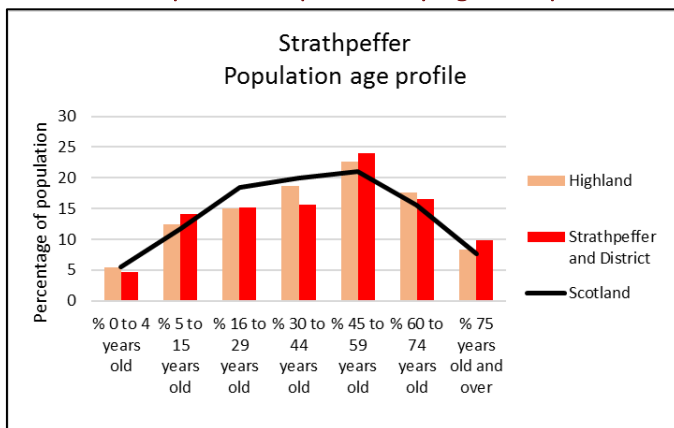
Figure iii. How long people have lived in Strathpeffer and District



The people who responded to the community survey revealed that 80% - 4 out of 5 – have lived here for more than ten years, and half have lived here for more than 20 years. Strathpeffer and District clearly offers a quality of life.

Strathpeffer and District has a broad age profile. Unlike many rural communities in Ross-shire and elsewhere, the area has a balance of ages and population that closely reflects the Highlands as a whole.

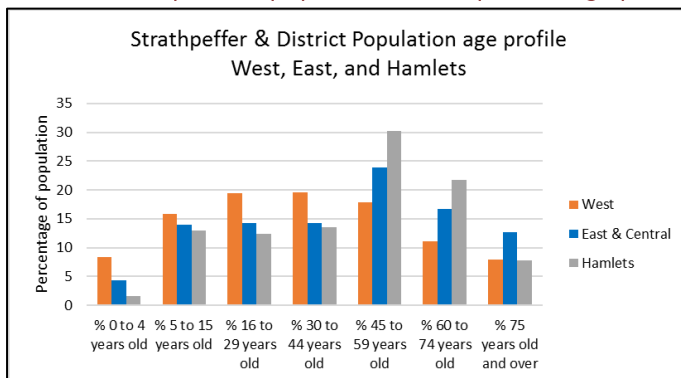
Figure iv. Strathpeffer’s Population by Age Group



Strathpeffer and District, as does Highland, have a “population gap” – there are fewer people between the ages of 16 and 45 than there are in Scotland as a whole. This Highland-wide issue reflects young people leaving the home and Highlands to seek work elsewhere, but fewer coming in to the area to start their careers.

Beneath the overall statistic, there are different age profiles for different parts of Strathpeffer and District.

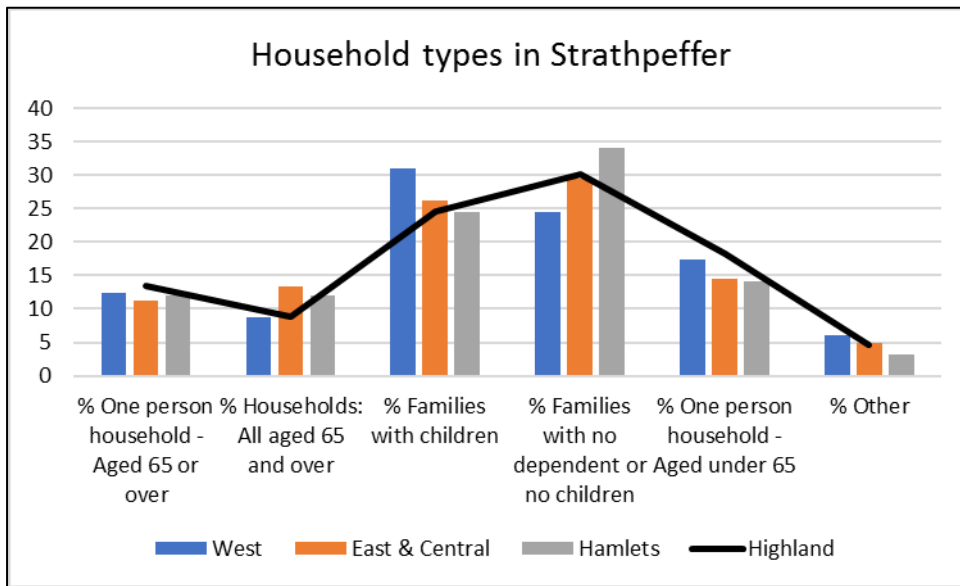
Figure v. Strathpeffer’s population – comparison age profiles



People living in the West of the village around the primary school tend to be younger, with children at home. People living in the East and Centre Strathpeffer are older on average; and people living in the hamlets around Strathpeffer tend to be older still.

The types of household reflect these different life stages in population.

Figure vi. Households in Strathpeffer and District



The Eastern and Central part of the village, which is mainly in the Conservation Area, has a household profile very similar to Highland where there are more families without dependent children than there are families with children. This part of the village has the highest proportion of households where all members are over 65.

The Western part of the village has a higher proportion than Highland of households with children at home, so that this newer housing has brought families in, bringing young people to a village that was slowly aging and reversing a very Highland pattern of population decline.

The Hamlets has a very high proportion of households with no children, and fewer with dependent children. It is the only part of the village which has the same proportion as Highlands of what might be regarded as vulnerable households – older people who live on their own. While the huge majority of people over 65 live healthily and well, this age group also contains others who become increasingly vulnerable.

As a generalisation, these differences in life ages and stages create welcome variety in peoples’ focuses, interests and priorities. People with dependent children necessarily focus on issues impacting on their children; those without dependent children may have more free time (depending on other caring responsibilities) and therefore be more interested in a different range of activities. Some of these differences may give rise to the same issues; for example, an older person living on their own in the Heights and with limited access to transport may feel socially isolated, as may a parent of very young children who is full-time looking after their family and has limited access to a car.

All of this points to a rich variety in the activities and priorities of the people living in Strathpeffer and District

2.3 Heritage and sense of place

Strathpeffer and District's heritage and sense of place are strong in the community. Before the Spa Village, the Strath's economy, community, and employment were based on agriculture, guarded by the seat of the Strath's location close to Dingwall, the Ross-shire County town, enabled close links to a large market and therefore to prosperity.

Castle Leod provides the link between the agriculture of the Strath and its development as a Spa Village. The current castle was built by Sir Robert Mackenzie, a younger brother of the Chief of Clan MacKenzie of Kintail and the ancestor of the Earls of Cromartie, and was funded by his marriage to a wealthy heiress from the MacLeods of Lewis. The Castle has been the seat of the Earls of Cromartie ever since. The family and the castle suffered as a result of their support for the 1745 uprising, with both becoming semi-ruinous by 1814. The fortunes of the family and the castle were restored by another aristocratic marriage, this time of Ann Hay-Mackenzie to the 3rd Duke of Sutherland in 1861, resulting in the restoration of the title of the Earl of Cromartie. The new Countess of Cromartie continued to repair the Castle and initiated the planning for the Spa Village with the building of a second pump room in 1861. She encouraged the building of tourist accommodation and the extension of the Railway, first to Achterneed (just outside Strathpeffer village) and eventually to the new village of Strathpeffer in 1877. Shortly afterwards her plans for the Strathpeffer Pavilion were realised when it opened in 1881.



1 Castle Leod

Despite this key role in Strathpeffer's history and a continuing interest today for its part in the highly successful historical drama "Outlander", Castle Leod remains a much under-advertised part of Strathpeffer's culture and history, at least in part because of the owner's desire to retain privacy in what is still a family home.

The Pavilion, more than any other building in Strathpeffer, has represented the village's success since Strathpeffer's role as the most Northerly Spa in Europe. Its heyday as the setting for the gatherings of Society as they took the waters lasted only until after the social evolution catalysed by the First World War. As taxation, increased wages, and the impacts of the 1920s Depression took hold, the Spa became less popular. Strathpeffer and the Pavilion dwindled.

The village's fortunes resurged in the 1960s with the generation that had, famously, never had it so good. The increased spending power and leisure time of the post-war generation influenced more investment into the Pavilion, allowing it to be restored and refurbished as a dance hall and concert venue despite the axing of the Railway. People travelled from all over Ross-shire and the Highlands for the events, and the hotels and accommodations in Strathpeffer benefited from this and from the increasing coach tour trade. Again, this lasted only a few decades. While the coach tours remain key to the hotels' prosperity, the other tourism infrastructure in the village suffered as people increasingly chose to holiday abroad and stay in for home entertainment.

Other developments helped restore Strathpeffer's fortunes. The Primary Schools were moved from Fodderty and Contin into a new building within Strathpeffer itself in 2000. The School Roll has increased from 156 in 2004 to 175 in 2018. The adjoining Community Centre was built at the same time. The restoration of the Pavilion by the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust in 2004 from what was

then a derelict ruin restored a source of pride in Strathpeffer's heritage. Housing has expanded on the South side of the village and around the School from 2000 on, bringing new families and new energy into Strathpeffer, and the current local plan proposes an additional 40 houses including low-cost housing, west of the village.

This housing expansion also expanded community activity in Strathpeffer, with the formation of the Strathpeffer Community Association who manage the Community Centre, hosting a variety of activity groups for all ages and providing community access to a gym and other leisure facilities; the Strathpeffer Under Fives which is one of the longest-lived community groups; the Strathpeffer Primary Parent Council at the School; and the Strathpeffer Residents Association, which was formed in 2012 and has led the feasibility, planning, and funding applications to turn the underused flat area behind the school into a Community Park (see 2.4. below).

The Strathpeffer Pavilion Association ran the restored Pavilion's activities for 8 years before running into financial difficulties associated with the difficulties of running a Category B listed building on an arts programme. A new group, the Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Steering Group, has led the feasibility, planning, and funding applications to purchase the building outright, hoping to end almost a century of uncertainty over its ownership and continuing maintenance as a key part of village life.

The Highland Museum of Childhood, a charity and limited company, owns the old B-listed Station which was built in 1884 to bring visitors from as far away as London. The railway closed to passengers in 1946 then completely in 1951. Highland Council refurbished the then-derelict building in the 1980s. The Highland Museum of Childhood opened as one of four enterprises in the Station in 1992. The Museum Trustees bought the Station and land from Highland Council in 2009 to ensure its continued management for the benefit of the community, and it along with three other local business at the Station attract around 10,000 visitors a year.

The Pump Room, built in 1839, is one of the oldest buildings in Strathpeffer and one of a few remaining in Britain. The Pump Room is now run as a museum, visitor information centre, and shop, safeguarding the social importance of this asset to Strathpeffer.

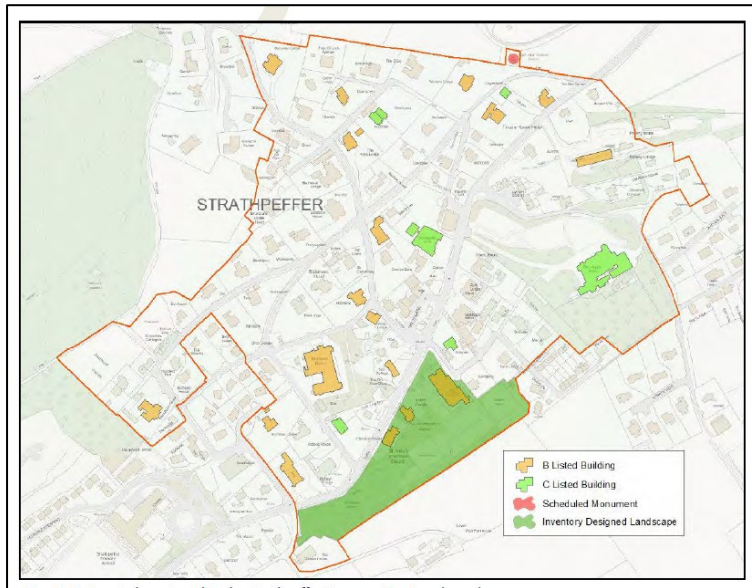
Groups have also tried to pull together for the economy of Strathpeffer and District, including the Victorian Day to celebrate Strathpeffer's heritage; proposals for a Community Market and for a Business Forum organisation; and even proposals to re-open part of the railway. As with many other ventures, these have not yet been successful but typify the energy of Strathpeffer and District's residents to ensure their community's own future.

The Conservation Village

As a planned village, the older part of the village was built over a short period of time, and in the style fashionable at the time. While its street pattern gives the impression of organic growth an informality, it has been heavily influenced by the existing network of tracks which once serviced the original farming communities of the Strath, and by the steep hills on either side of the main road, the A 834. This part of Strathpeffer and District was designated as a Conservation Village in 1974 and has been detailed both by the ARCH project, "Remembering Strathpeffer" (2016), and by the Highland Council's Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2016). The heritage was then made available in an electronic App and also in a self-guided Archaeological Trail booklet, "A Walk Around Strathpeffer" still available for download on the [ARCH website](#) and at the Highland Museum of Childhood and the Real Sweets and Gifts Company.

Figure vii. **Strathpeffer Conservation Area Boundary and Designated Assets**

From Highland Council (2016)



The Conservation Area includes over 200 buildings, of which 18 are Category B and 8 are Category C listed buildings, one scheduled (ancient) monument, and one Inventory Garden – Designated Landscape – which is the Spa Gardens.

The Highland Council’s Management Plan also highlighted ongoing concerns with maintaining the Conservation Area. These included lack of repair and maintenance including to the “green infrastructure”; loss of original architectural detail; use of inappropriate materials; loss of boundary walls and hedges; and alterations and extensions; and maintenance and promotion of footpaths. The Plan notes that “the quality and upkeep of the realm is of importance to the interests of commercial business and residents and presents an impact on the village to visitors. Principle areas of concern include quality of paving; damages by utility companies; maintenance of public and amenity spaces; street furniture; street clutter and inappropriate sighted and/or designed advertising and signage.”

These challenges have not gone unanswered in Strathpeffer. The Gardening Group has long been active in maintaining the Spa Gardens and in assisting with other maintenance tasks throughout the village. As noted above, two of Strathpeffer’s key assets, the Pavilion and the Railway Station, have been restored at least in part through the energies of the community, and continue to be managed and maintained through those efforts.

2.4 Natural environment

A Green Village

Strathpeffer and District is a rural area where the natural environment is highly valued by the local community and visitors alike. Within the village itself green infrastructure is critical to the townscape and local amenity, and has visual, ecological and biodiversity value. The private and public ground and open space – and the plants, trees, and built structure that help form them – make an important contribution to the area’s cultural heritage and provide both amenity and wellbeing value.

Strathpeffer Conservation Village is fortunate in having an abundance of specimen trees, having been created when the Victorians were determined on exploring and bringing back “exotics” from the then Empire to decorate their gardens and public spaces. Many of the trees are contemporary with the 19th and early 20th century flourishing of the Strathpeffer Spa, and while this adds to the beauty of the many mature trees in the village, there is a risk that they will all become aged at the same time.

The Designated Landscape, the **Spa Gardens**, forms the largest green area. The spa gardens, originally a Victorian pleasure garden, were laid out as part of the 19th century health resort and illustrate a recognition of the important curative role of landscape and gentle recreation. The Gardens are included in the National Inventory of Gardens and Designated Landscapes in Scotland. The Gardens suffered as the Pavilion became neglected, were transferred to the Highland Council in 1996 and remain under their ownership. The Council carried out a significant planting programme and environmental works in the Gardens in 2008 and for the subsequent three years. The gardens, which cover some 5 acres of ground, were originally equipped with bowling greens, croquet lawns, tennis courts and a curling pond as well as winding woodland paths. The woodland paths remain, as do the bowling greens although the curling pond has now been replaced by a tennis court.

Again, Strathpeffer and District's volunteering community is very involved in management and maintenance of its "green" village assets.

The Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Steering Group have included the Spa Gardens and Pump Room in an asset transfer request from Highland Council, to ensure their ongoing management and maintenance for the benefit of the community. The Strathpeffer Bowling Club now owns and manages the bowling green; the Dingwall and Strathpeffer Tennis Club manage the tennis courts; the Gardening Group have assisted greatly with the green infrastructure; and there is a Strathpeffer Croquet Club which still uses the original Lawn.

The most significant addition to the natural asset amenities will be the new **Community Park**, where the Strathpeffer Residents' Association has recently been successful in winning funding to buy land for its development. This will transform an underused and undermanaged flat area behind the School and in the centre of the newer housing into a new Community Park for all, including elements such as a new children's play park, path network and social food growing opportunities.

The Park is intended to be developed in a phased approach, with four priorities in their Business Plan:

- Play facilities for children to replace the existing small run-down play park that is nearing the end of its operational life.
- Improved appearance of an area of wasteland in the centre of a village that depends on its image to support the important local tourism industry.
- To reduce our carbon-footprint by increasing local outdoor recreation opportunities without the need for residents to travel by car to other parks.
- To provide a focus to unify the community, breaking down barriers of age and of social status. This will be done by linking to other village initiatives e.g. through the Strathpeffer Village Plan and Strathpeffer Saves.

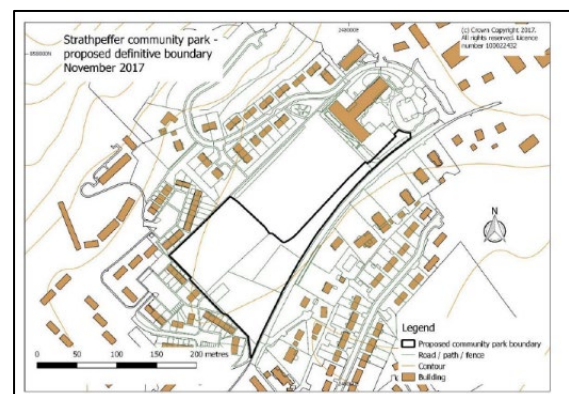
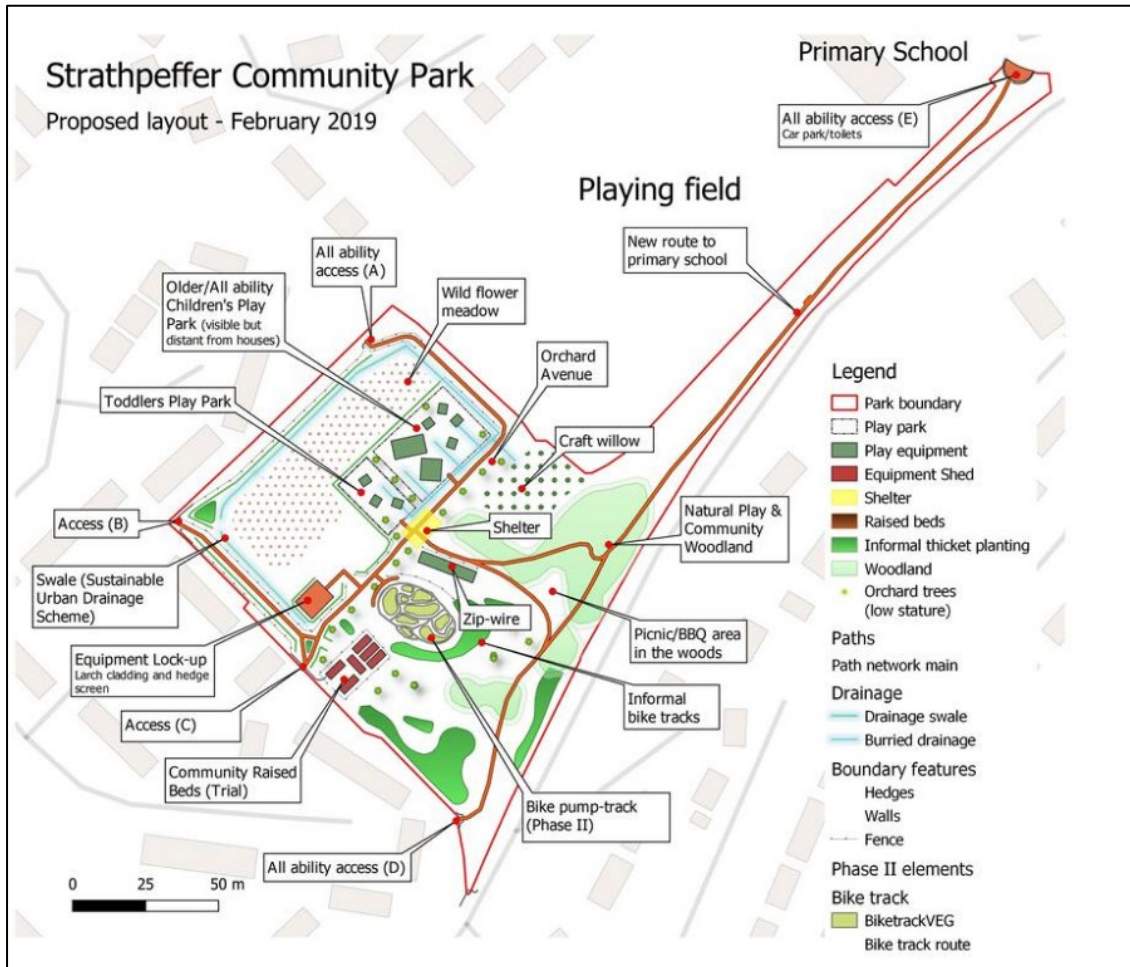


Figure viii. A vision of the Park



Natural Heritage and Recreation

Outside the Strathpeffer village boundary, Strathpeffer and District is fortunate in its access to the natural heritage – again, supported and developed with an active community.

The **Strathpeffer Golf Course** just to the North of the village is an undulating and hilly course and was designed by one of the grand masters of golf, and promotes itself as “a hidden gem in the Highlands” and “one of the most scenic courses in Scotland”. Its Clubhouse provides a venue for events and celebrations.



2 Strathpeffer Golf Course (From Golf Club Website)

The Club does suffer from its natural advantages – the hills and undulations make this a more challenging course than the flatter links courses and newer courses, and reportedly the hills make it less accessible to older members.

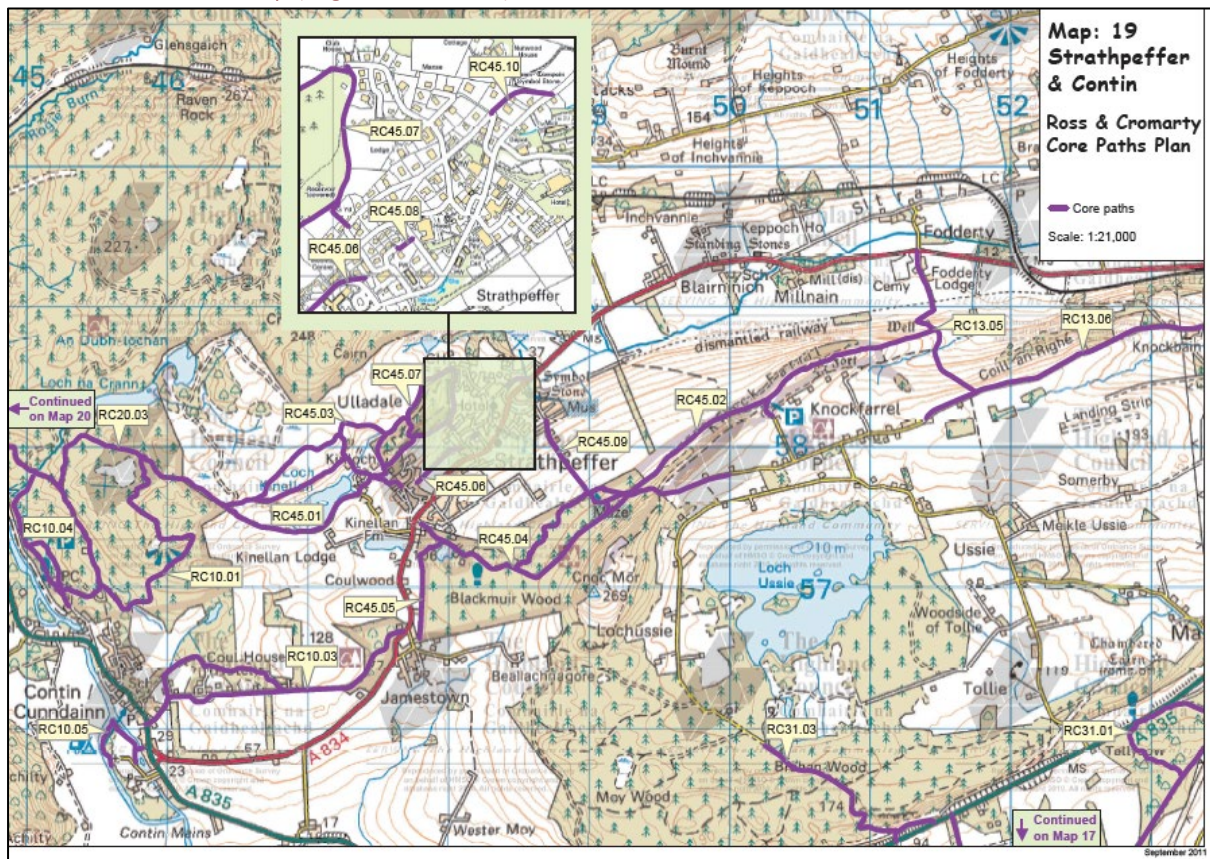
Strathpeffer is at the centre of an extensive **path network** and walking around the area is extremely popular with residents and locals alike.

Highland Council has also ensured access both within and around the village through its [Core Paths](#) work, with a map showing access to the many trails around the village.

This was developed into a leaflet with path descriptions, available on the Highland Council’s Outdoor Highlands website [here](#).

This map demonstrates how residents and visitors can access the many places of natural beauty and viewpoints in the area but does not link on to the more detailed descriptions available on Walk Highland or the Forestry Commission website. Some businesses, including the Pump Room, the Highland Museum of Childhood and local hotels, publicise the walks on their website and provide copies of the leaflet.

Figure ix. **Core Paths Map (Highland Council)**



Loch Kinellan, just outside the village, is popular with birdwatchers due to its population of Slavonian Grebes and mute swans, and is home to a crannog (an artificial iron-age lake dwelling which provided a safe haven from raids or wolves) and has a short and popular circular walk including a viewpoint.

Strathpeffer is also host to a Scottish Wildcat Action project involving the Primary School, as a known “hotspot” for Scotland’s critically endangered native cat.



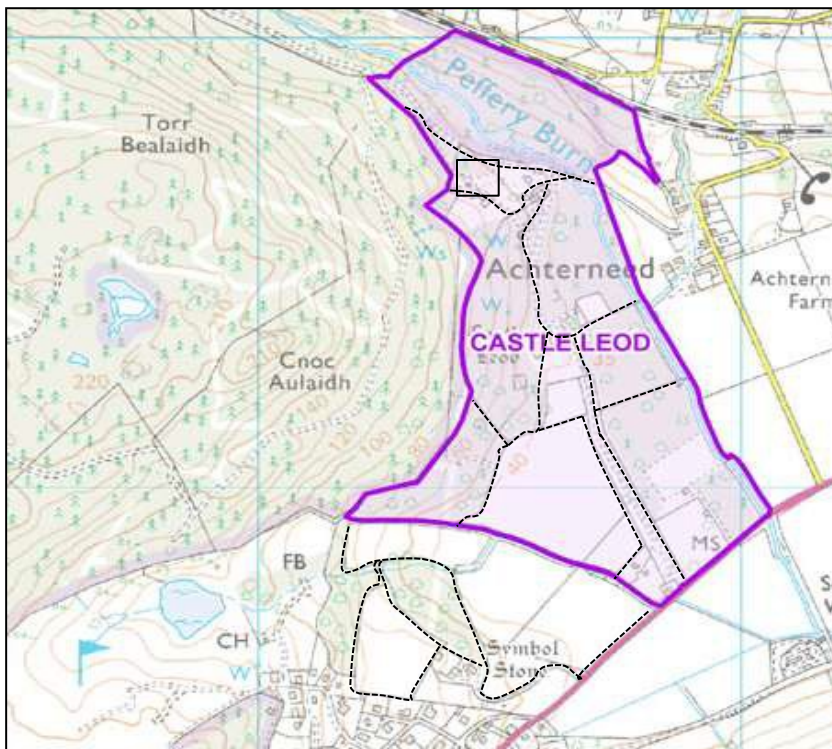
3 Loch Kinellan showing the wooded crannog

The **Peffery Way Association**, a relatively new community group, is further extending this network of paths with an exciting plan to link the communities of Dingwall and Strathpeffer along the old railway link between the two populations. This aims to provide a flat or easily graded walk avoiding the busy A834 road and avoiding crossing the railway line. The route will also provide a safe link to the hamlets of Fodderty and Blairninich. The route has been well-publicised and is already being used extensively as a walking route thanks to volunteer work to maintain the rough path. Fundraising is well underway to improve the surface and accessibility.

Re-opening this route would potentially allow better pedestrian access to Castle Leod, its policy woodland and the network of 19th century paths, at the East of the village.

Figure x. **Castle Leod's estate showing path network**

Source: Castle Leod Tree Management Plan 2013

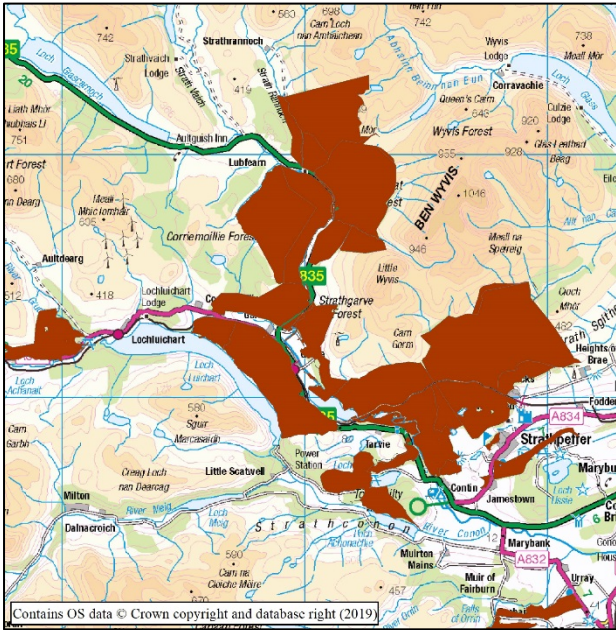


Castle Leod's policy woodlands are part of the privately-owned Castle and Gardens, but are recognised by the National Tree Collection of Scotland for the importance of their collection. The most important of the trees at Castle Leod is the Sweet Chestnut planted in 1556 for Mary Queen of Scot's mother, Mary of Guise. Much of the historic landscape is now publicly accessible, partly due to the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, but largely as a continuation of the free access encouraged by the estate, particularly following the creation of the 19th century footpath network.

The grounds host the Strathpeffer Highland Games as well as the local Caberfeidh Shinty and Ross County Cricket clubs.

The Scottish Government (**Forestry and Land Scotland**) owns substantial land assets in Strathpeffer and District, including Blackmuir Woods, to the South and on the slopes of the Cat's Back; Ord Woods which separated the Golf Course from the Village; and the almost 10,000ha Ben Wyvis and Strathpeffer Forest, which stretches from Strathpeffer to Contin and on to Garve.

Figure xi. Forestry Commission landholdings around Strathpeffer and District



These holdings are managed on behalf of the Scottish Government by Forestry and Land Scotland, who are required to allow access to members of the public under the Land Reform Act of 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code 2003. Visitors and residents in the Strathpeffer area can access the forest holdings on a variety of paths and forest roads. Forestry and Land Scotland encourages visitors through its publication of walks in the forests of [Ross and Cromarty](#), and more walks are available from the [WalkHighlands](#) website. The forests are a popular visitor destination and visitor numbers peak in the summer.

The Forest Enterprise Management Plan 2017-2029 notes:

“Currently the main visitor hotspots within the Plan area are: Torrachilty Forest (with its extensive network of ‘wild’ cycle trails, forest road the iconic Rogie Falls and other trails), Blackmuir (with a network of forest walks and roads and access to Knock Farril – Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) and a popular view point), Achilty (with a popular picnic spot) All forest blocks are used daily by local residents, mainly for dog walking, but also for walking, jogging, cycling and horse riding, with the highest visitor numbers noted in blocks located close to big population centres (e.g. Blackmuir and Torrachilty)..... The forest road network provides excellent opportunity for longer walks, cycling and horse riding.”

Four community-minded entrepreneurs created and funded the mountain biking trail to the North of Loch Kinellan in the Torrachilty Forest. This loop is host to the “**Strathpuffer**”, a 24 hour endurance race taking place each year in January and last year attracting over 900 competitors from all over the world - probably because it was included in the US Bike magazines top 10 toughest Mountain Bike events on the planet. In addition to the main trail, there are many more accessible off-road trails on forest roads; the main issue with access to these being a lack of information readily available, although maps of the technical trails can be purchased on-line and information is also provided by Square Wheels.

The community survey showed that “going for a walk” was the most popular regular activity in Strathpeffer and District.

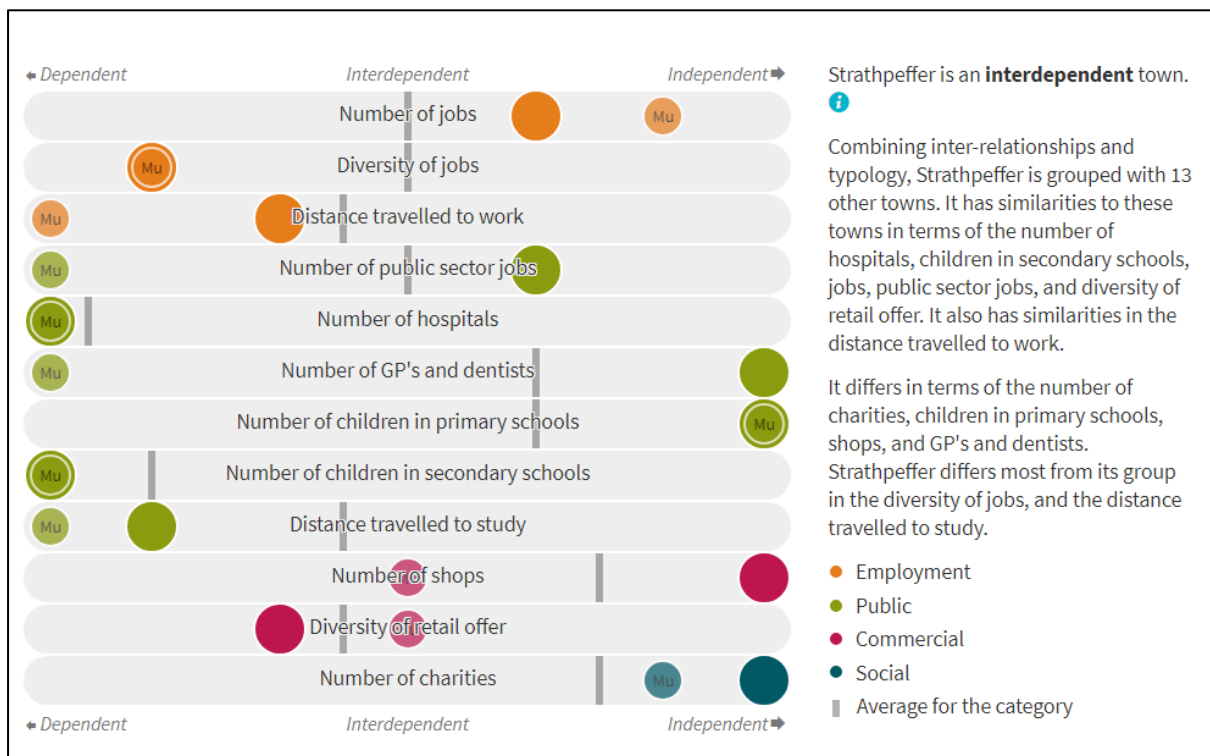
2.5 Access to services

Strathpeffer and District retains key services in the community. It retains a village centre with a Convenience Store and other retail, supplemented by the offering at the Station. It has a Primary School, Community Centre, Post Office, a Health Centre, a Visitor Information Centre, tourism accommodation, retail services, cafes and gathering places. The Spa Pavilion provides a celebrations and events venue with regional reputation. It retains two active Churches. It has access to leisure resources at the Community Centre and in the other assets already listed. One main resource it lacks for a community of this size is a petrol station – the nearest is in Dingwall.

[Scotland’s Town Partnership](#) refers to Strathpeffer as an “interdependent” town, where people travel out from Strathpeffer to access e.g. employment, but where people also travel in to Strathpeffer to access e.g. services. Compared to the much larger and fast-growing Muir of Ord (population around 3,000), Strathpeffer residents travel less far to work; have nearer access to GPs and dentists; travel less far to study; have more shops; and more charities. The latter is not surprising considering the engagement and effort of the Strathpeffer and District community to build and maintain community assets, both physical and social.

Figure xii. Strathpeffer compared to Muir of Ord: key indicators of interdependence.

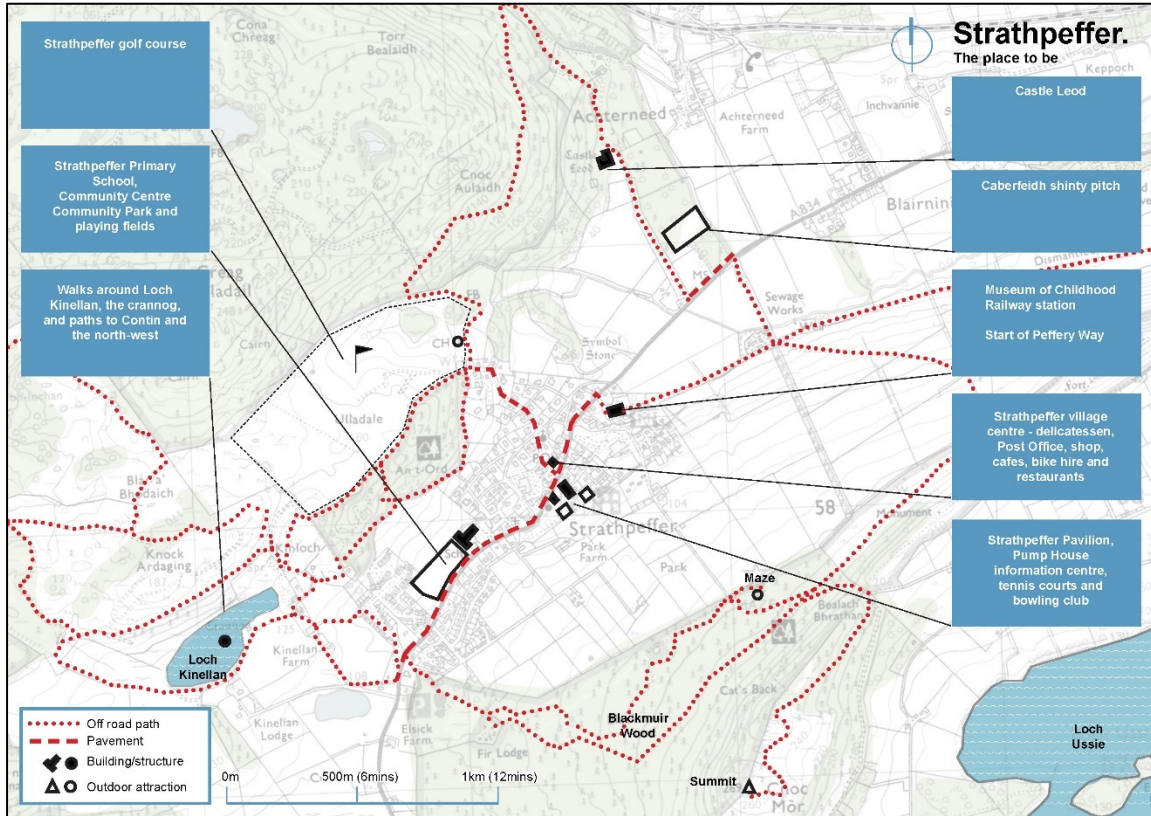
From: Scotland’s Town Partnerships



The lack of easy access to major services in Strathpeffer and District is not an issue for people who have access to a car, as Dingwall and then Inverness are a short drive away. However, it is an issue for people who either cannot drive or who do not have a car. Older people in the more distant hamlets who are not on a main bus route said in the consultation that when they reached the point that they could no longer drive safely, they would have to consider leaving friends and the community, moving away from Strathpeffer to access these services.

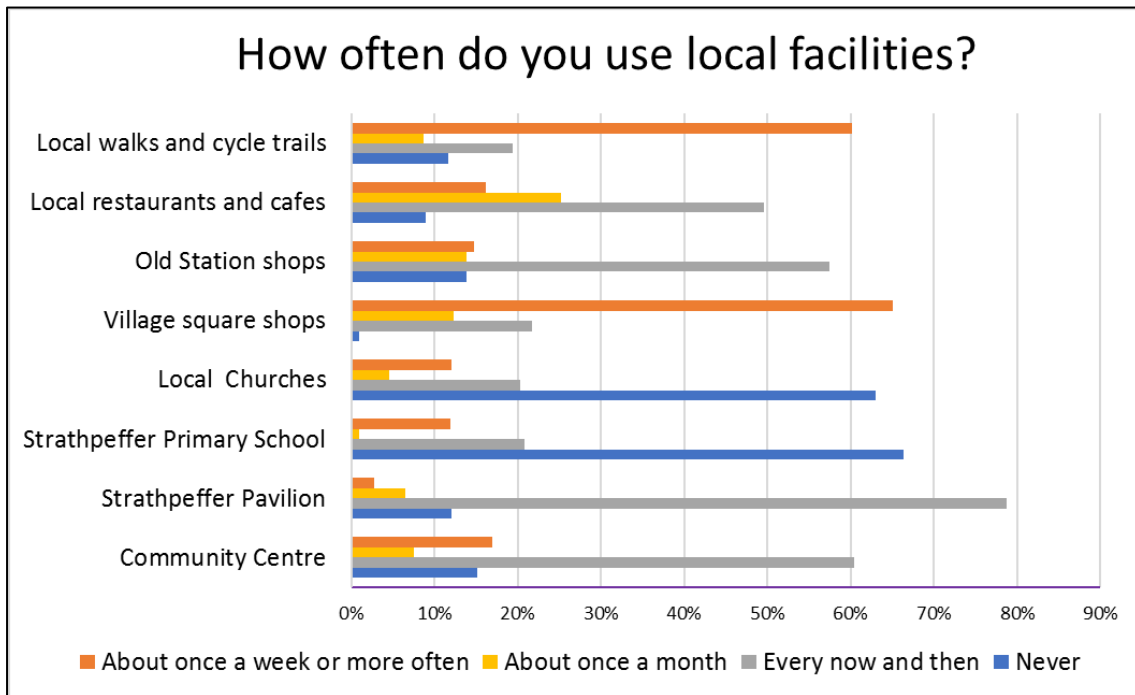
As identified above, Strathpeffer and District have many community and social assets, and these are indicated on the map below.

Figure xiii. Strathpeffer and District: community assets in the village



People who responded to the community survey showed that they did not access many of the existing services or community gathering places.

Figure xiv. Use of community assets in Strathpeffer and District



From this, there are two places that people go most often; they go for a walk (60% of responders go once a week or more often), or to the Village Square shops (65% of responders) – which include a Convenience Store and a Post Office. Local restaurants and cafés, Station shops, and the Community

Centre are all used by around 17% of responders once a week or more often, although 2% used the restaurants and cafes about once a month. The findings illustrate how important visitors are in helping maintain the retail and hospitality offering in Strathpeffer.

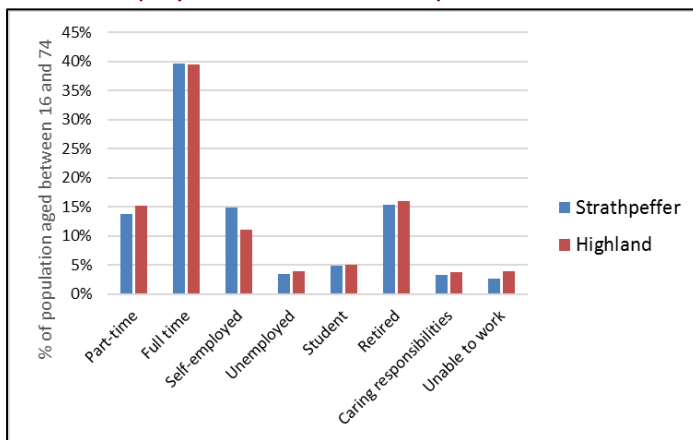
The Community Centre’s relatively low usage is typical for other centres the report authors have been involved with and highlights the challenges for a Community Centre committee trying to host other groups’ activities. The Community Centre is proactive in increasing its reach to wider members of the community by initiatives and events. Its proposed use as a supporting facility for the Park – e.g. access to toilet facilities, possibly provision of a small range of refreshments – may help encourage people to come inside and then to engage with other experiences in the Centre.

The usage of Strathpeffer Pavilion reflects the business decisions by the current operators, High Life Highland (HLH) to develop weddings, conferences and meetings followed by the use of the venue for events and performances. The current managers, High Life Highland, are seeking to expand the number of events at the Pavilion and are building this slowly to ensure that such a programme meets the wishes of potential audiences and is financially sustainable. One of the key findings of the consultations about the Pavilion was that people wished to see the Pavilion open more often and during the day, and this will be discussed and developed in partnership with the local community as financially sustainable opportunities are identified.

2.6 Employment and jobs

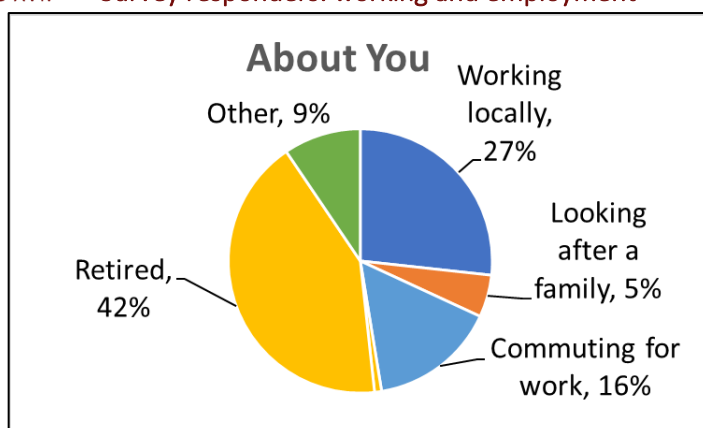
Strathpeffer and District’s over -16 population of around 1,100 people has an employment profile very similar to Highland as a whole.

Figure xv. Employment status in Strathpeffer and District – 2011 Census



Strathpeffer and District has a low unemployment rate – around 3% of people able and willing to work, are unable to find work. Strathpeffer has a slightly lower rate than Highland of people who are unable to work due to illness and disability, or due to caring responsibilities – both around 3%.

Figure xvi. Survey responders: working and employment



People who responded to the community survey were much more likely to be retired than the average for Strathpeffer and District – 42% in the survey compared to 15% overall. People who were working explained their working location. People were almost twice as likely to be working locally, either self employed or a business owner, than they were to be commuting elsewhere for work.

2.7 Economic prosperity

This section pulls together various sources to give an indication of prosperity that is about more than the number of jobs. In a low-wage economy such as the Highlands, jobs are not a full indication of economic wellbeing.

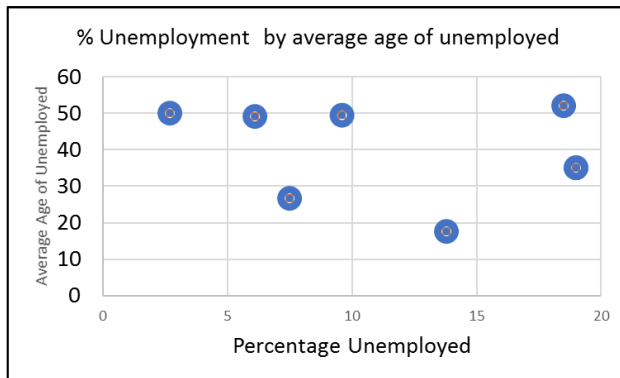
More information about the work sectors and commuting is found on the “Understanding Scottish Towns” website. This shows that the main source of employment for people living in Strathpeffer is in accommodation (39% of jobs), with education and the arts next, both at 13%. These are not typically highly paid jobs, so that while employment rates are high, pay rates may be below the Scottish average. A substantial proportion of the working population commutes to Dingwall and Inverness for work.

This website also looked at educational attainment, which has a strong correlation to people’s work futures and pay rates. While 28% of people over 16 had a degree or higher, 26% had no formal academic qualification and 24% had formal education to Standard Grade level.

96 households out of 430 in the village (excluding the hamlets) qualify for affordable or social housing.

What is slightly more surprising is the rate of unemployment among older people in Strathpeffer.

Figure xvii. **Average age of unemployed people for datazones in Strathpeffer**



While youth unemployment is correctly identified as a problem across the region and nationally, Strathpeffer’s average age of people who are unemployed is in the 45+ age range. The data from the Census (2011) shows that for the 7 “datazones” in Strathpeffer village, older age unemployment is an issue. In 4 of the datazones, unemployed people are, on average, 50 years old.

Other information from the Understanding Scottish Towns website shows that 14% of households have no access to a car. Over half of the population have at least one of these deprivation statistics, and one-fifth have two or more:

- employment: a person in the household aged 16 and over who is not a full-time student is either unemployed or long-term sick or disabled
- education: no person aged 16 to 64 in the household has a qualification of level 2 or above, or no person aged 16 to 18 is a full-time student
- health and disability: any person in the household has 'bad' or 'very bad' general health, or has a long-term limiting health problem or disability
- housing: the household's accommodation is either overcrowded, is in a shared dwelling or does not have central heating.

Given the sectors worked in, the number of people with low or no formal academic qualifications, and that one-fifth of households are in social housing, it is less surprising to find that according to Scottish Government SIMD statistics, **nearly 42% of the Strathpeffer village population are claiming Key Benefits.**

2.8 Community activity

As has been identified throughout this report, the community in Strathpeffer and District is already very active, with many people volunteering to lead and support a variety of groups and activities.

The community survey identified that one in two respondents were already volunteering.

The Community Coordinating Group in Strathpeffer sought to identify and bring together existing community groups who were active in the village and identified the following list.

Community groups managing community assets:

- Strathpeffer Community Association, who run the Community Centre;
- Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Steering Group, seeking to purchase and manage the Pavilion, Spa Gardens, and Pump Room;
- Strathpeffer Residents Association, who are taking forward the Community Park (Park)
- Peffery Way Association, who are establishing a safe “accessible by all” cycle and footpath between Dingwall and Strathpeffer;
- Highland Museum of Childhood, who own and manage the Station;
- Strathpeffer Spa Golf Club;
- Strathpeffer Pump Room (“Real Sweets and Gift Company”, who also provide a small museum and visitor information services);
- Strathpeffer Bowling Club.

Community groups who manage activities:

- Strathpeffer Gardening Group;
- Strathpeffer Indoor Bowling Club;
- Strathpeffer Under 5’s Group;
- Strathpeffer Walking Group;
- Strathpeffer and District Community Rowing Club;
- Strathpeffer Croquet Club;
- Ben Wyvis Cycle Club;
- Dingwall and Strathpeffer Tennis Club.

Note: Arrows indicate registered organisations (charities and / or companies); open bullets are sports associations, and closed bullets are voluntary associations.

Other individuals in the community also take on volunteer roles; for example the production of the Strath Times; the website strathpeffer.org; organising Victorian Day and the Community Market (now sadly in abeyance).

Strathpeffer’s businesses also play an active role in promoting Strathpeffer and in improving infrastructure and access for residents and visitors. Accommodation providers and retailers have joined community groups, invested in publications of maps, hosted community events, and even managed and maintained the public toilets in the centre of the village for the benefit of all.

Strathpeffer and District Community Council, who commissioned this report on behalf of the Community Coordinating Group, are taking an active role to help ensure that this voluntary activity is supported. This has been strengthened by their recent additional role in channelling micro-grants from the Corriemoillie Community Fund to community groups.

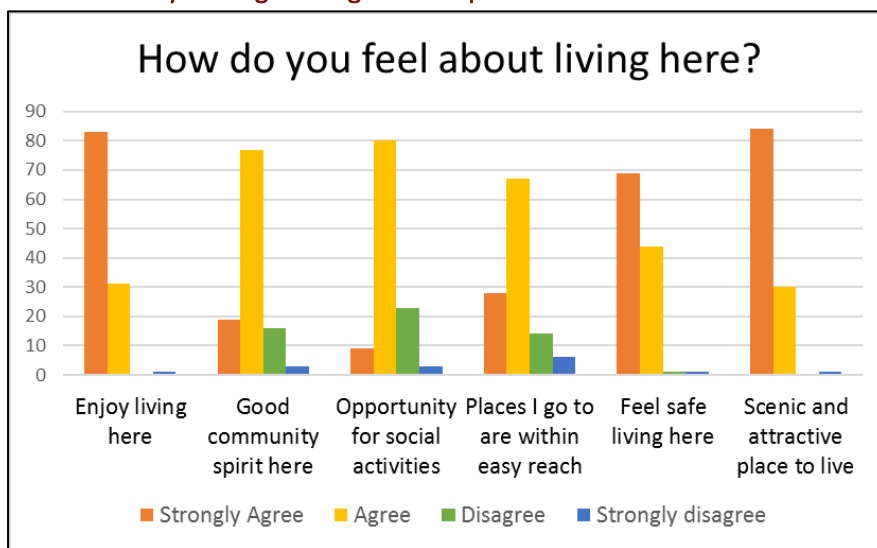
3 Community Engagement Findings – Strengths and Challenges

3.1 What is good about living in Strathpeffer and District?

The Community Coordinating Group instructed a variety of engagements to understand people’s views of living in the community and their wishes for changes. There were two open community events held at the Pavilion; a postal community survey to all households; and follow up interviews with members of the various community groups.

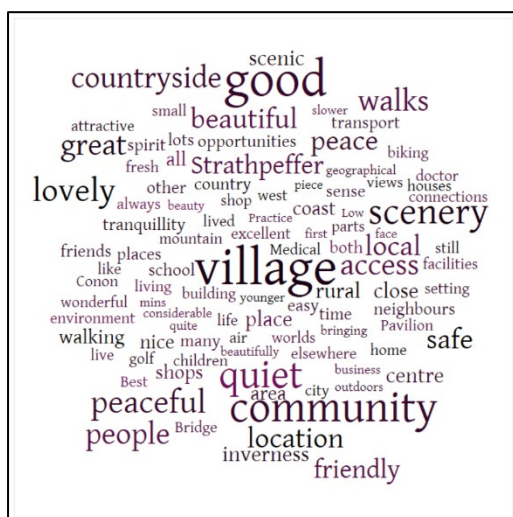
Overall, people clearly felt positive about living in Strathpeffer and District. The community survey, which had 124 responses from 738 households¹, asked people about how they felt about living in Strathpeffer.

Figure xviii. Survey findings: Living in Strathpeffer



Every person but one who responded strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed living in the area, and that it was an attractive and safe place to live.

Figure xix. “Wordle” – what people said they liked about Strathpeffer and District

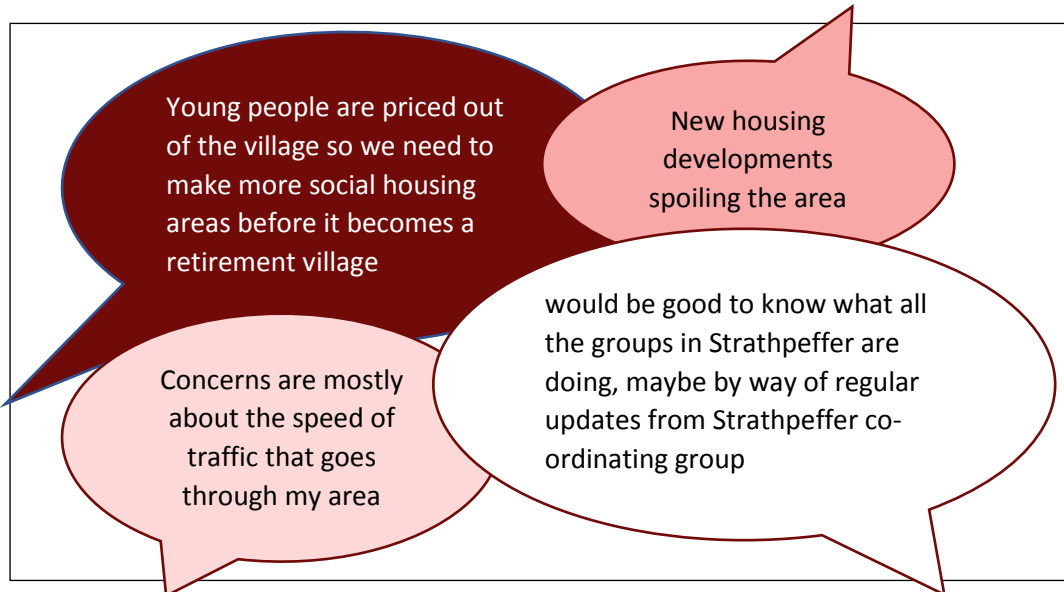


The “Wordle” is take from comments in support of the above question about what people liked. The larger the text, the more often the word was used. This demonstrates a very strong response to what is, in the emphasis in the Wordle, a “good village community”.

¹ Another 24 were received after the deadline.

3.2 What are our communities' concerns?

The survey asked people what the worst thing was about living here. There were some consistent comments.



Community cohesion

The most consistent concern, raised in previous consultations and in each event and discussion for this report, was the lack of communication across the village. It is indicated by the contrast between people in the community survey who “strongly” agreed that they enjoyed living here (82%) and those who “strongly agreed” that there was a good community spirit (18%). People talked of “splits” in the village, with a perception of almost different villages within one; of a lack of communication. One consistent comment was that there was no single calendar of events for Strathpeffer, including events put on by the large hotels, so that there were clashes and these events were therefore not well attended.

A consultation workshop exercise carried out in summer 2018 by “Live, Build Learn” identified a list of “what is challenging about Strathpeffer” and these themes were consistent there also. The list included:

External marketing of Strathpeffer:

- Buildings are run down
- Groups are not pulling together
- How to get people to come into the village
- People aren't stopping to spend time or money
- There is no single vision
- There is no parking
- The roads are bad

Strathpeffer and District cohesion:

- Everyone is on more than one committee
- There is more creativity and innovation needed
- It can be inward-looking
- People have long memories
- People are too quick to put up walls too easily
- Groups are operating separately from each other

- People are stuck in their box
- Not seeing the bigger picture
- There has been rapid growth
- There are two villages - uppys and downies
- Everyone is looking in different directions

The report concluded that “*The main challenge is around people* - getting members of the community talking, sharing ideas and finding new ways to support each other, committing to a shared vision for the future of the community which everyone can contribute to, through their own initiatives.”

Discussion with members of community groups demonstrated that there are already instances of working together. For example, the Strathpeffer Residents Association and the Strathpeffer Community Association are in discussion on how the new Community Park and the Community Centre can work together, with the Primary School very involved in consultation and design of the Park, and are reaching out to the Dingwall and Strathpeffer Men’s Shed groups to assist in developing the Park if the land is purchased.

The Peffery Way Association and the Highland Museum of Childhood have had initial discussions on working together, for example how to help ensure that visitors to the Peffery Way pause long enough to enjoy the amenities at the Station; and on the issue of parking at the Station.

The Strathpeffer Community Centre has long been a hub for community groups and works with many groups to put on events and fundraisers such as the Community Arts Fair, the Science Fair, the StrathBetter Festival which is organised by a local business, Strathpeffer Grows with the Park Project and the School. The Strathpeffer Community Association has supported the publication of the Strath Times for many years and is currently looking for the next volunteer to take it over.

Strathpeffer’s visitor economy

The concept of a shared vision for Strathpeffer to market itself to the outside was consistent in the consultation events and featured very strongly at the Co-ordinating Group event. People in Strathpeffer are very aware that the village’s economy is based on tourism and that most of the estimated 30,000 visitors each year are people on coach tours who stay in the large hotels in the village. The existing Bed and Breakfast operators consulted at an event noted that the number of B & Bers has fallen dramatically over the past years with only about six now offering accommodation. They also reported a downturn in visitors generally as fewer travel through the village and even fewer remain for any length of time. While the NC 500 has given a recent welcome boost, visitors are “one nighters” arriving late in the evening and leaving early in the morning as there is a perception that there is little to keep them in the village.

The Co-ordinating Group consultees were unanimous that there needed to be clear branding, marketing and infrastructure to encourage people to visit Strathpeffer and to be much more aware of what the village had to offer. While Strathpeffer has many assets that are attractive to visitors – history, archaeology, walks, golf, an improved provision of eateries, and the potential for more activity at the Pavilion – information on these was not readily available either to encourage them to come, easily available before visitors arrived, or even available in Strathpeffer. The owners of the Real Sweets and Gift Company, who also provide visitor information, noted that there had been initiatives over the years to improve this including “A Walk around Strathpeffer” from the ARCH project; an App which accompanied the Walk; a village map showing amenities. They noted efforts taken together with the Highland Museum of Childhood for an initiative working with Inverness

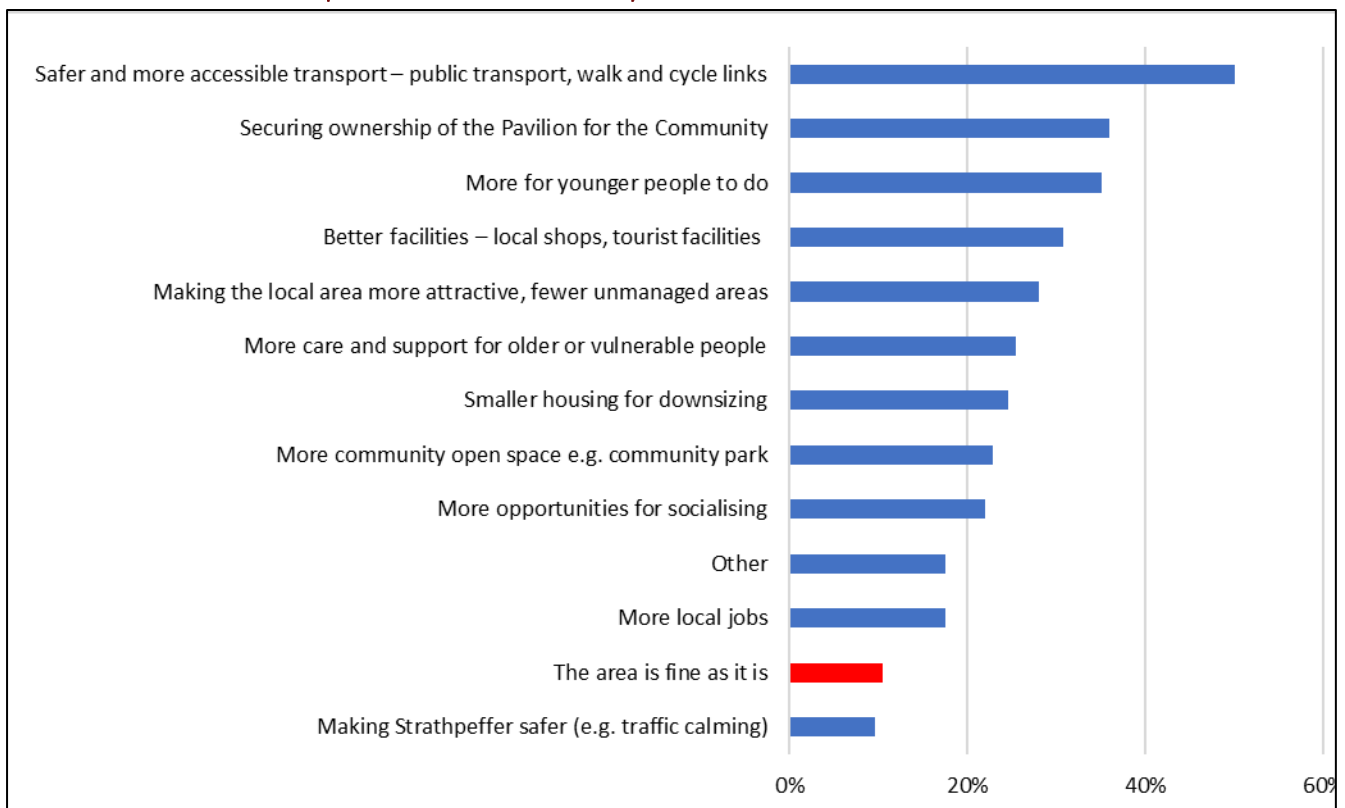
College UHI to create a “brand” appearance, and then to create souvenirs such as mugs and fridge magnets from that brand. These efforts were not widely known or recognised in Strathpeffer, and this meant that their impact was necessarily limited both inside and outside Strathpeffer. Small businesses, the Visitor Information Centre at the Pump Room, and the Highland Museum of Childhood were clear that there needed to be a much bigger concerted effort to bring people into the village to enjoy its amenities and support local enterprises.

3.3 What could be improved?

People’s choices about what could be improved here matched to the concerns raised about living here.

In the survey, people were asked what the most important thing for Strathpeffer and District in the future

Figure xx. **Priorities for Strathpeffer over the next 5-15 years**



Unusually, given the high level of satisfaction with living in Strathpeffer, only 10% of people thought “the area is fine as it is”.

The three top choices were:

- **Better public transport, walk or cycle links;**
- **Ownership of the Pavilion ; and**
- **More for younger people to do.**

Better visitor facilities and making the local area more attractive were next, reflecting the concerns that Strathpeffer is not attracting the type of visitors who would stay in the area and spend more time in the village and its amenities.

Support for vulnerable people and smaller houses for downsizing were next, which may reflect the concerns of the largest group to respond to the survey, which is people who have retired. It does

also reflect an aging population in the Conservation Area and particularly of the hamlets included in Strathpeffer and District, as discussed in this report.

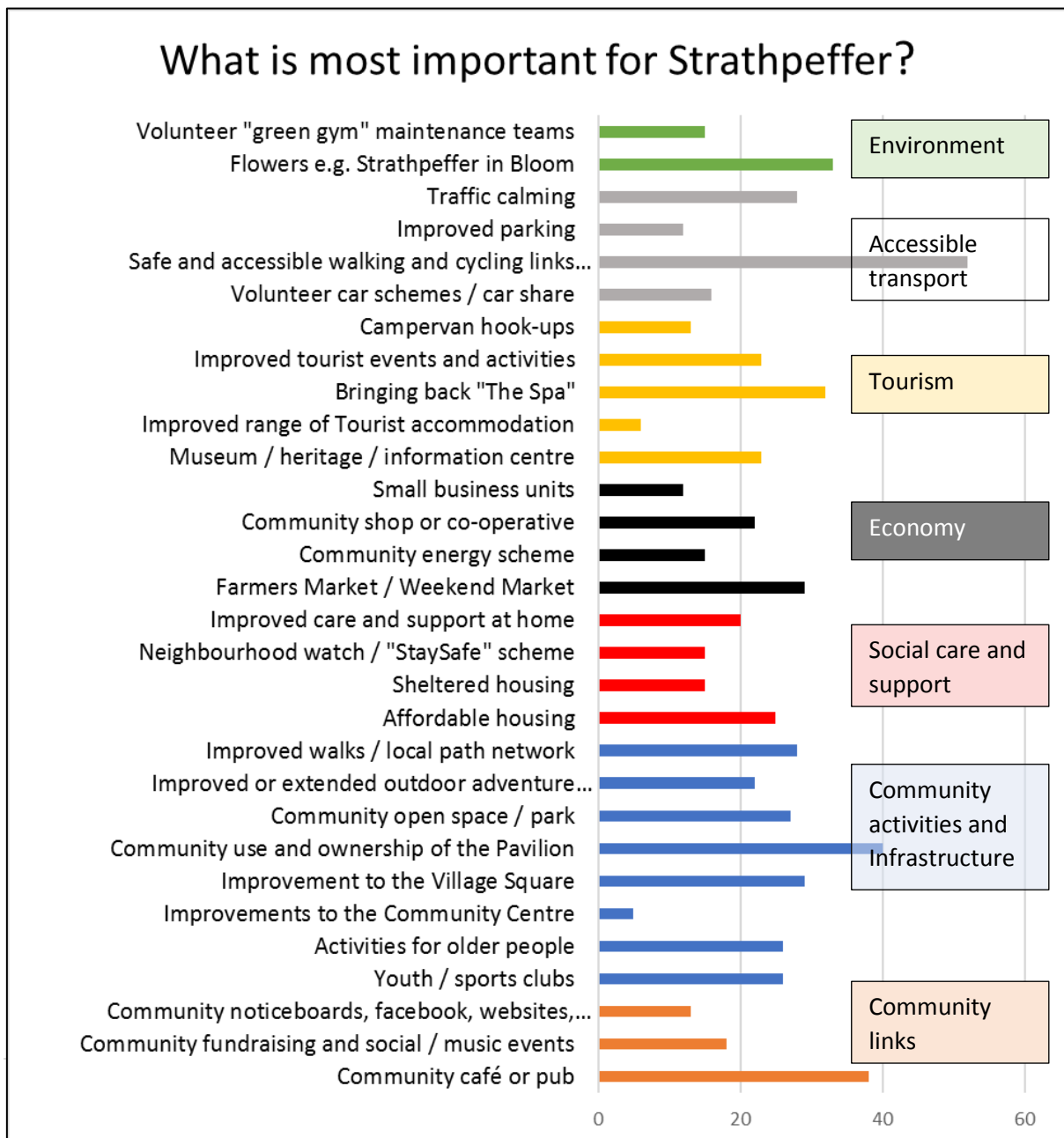
It is surprising that the Community Park is low down this wish list; the Park itself reported that it had delivered 750 questionnaires door to door in the local area of which 348 were returned highlighting the overwhelming support (97%) from local residents for improvements to the park area.

The low priority given to “more local jobs” is surprising given the comments on employment, inferred wages, and older adult unemployment above.

The survey consultation also asked in more detail for the priority for individual projects or focus in Strathpeffer. The results below broadly mirror the priorities above, with better non-motorised transport links and the Pavilion being seen as most important.

The need for a community café or pub was surprisingly important given the low priority given to “more opportunities for socialising”, above. The lack of a place for people to gather socially in the evenings was a clear find from all of the consultation events, with a general agreement that the facilities provided by the large hotels in Strathpeffer did not meet the community’s need.

Figure xxi. What projects are most important for Strathpeffer – choose 3



4 Community Vision and Aims

The community engagement process, drawing together existing activity in Strathpeffer and identifying gaps, has set out a clear Vision for Strathpeffer.

Our Vision is that Strathpeffer is a vibrant, welcoming community with a thriving economy and social life, encouraging residents and visitors to enjoy its beautiful natural environment and cultural heritage.

Sharing and connecting

Strathpeffer and District community is flourishing, caring and cohesive. It has a strong local identity and a sense of cohesion and pride in all parts of Strathpeffer and District. People of all ages know about and create opportunities to come together, socialise, and take part in activities they enjoy.

Visitors staying longer

Strathpeffer and District has a sustainable tourism economy, with the community and businesses working together to attract visitors to stay for longer and enjoy our spaces and places. This economy provides jobs and income for all members of our community and helps support local services.

An even better place to live

Strathpeffer and District's community maintains and enhances its natural and built environment, making it accessible for the enjoyment, health, and wellbeing of all. The community's pride in its environment helps encourage visitors, expanding on our history as a Victorian Spa Village.

5 Achieving the Vision – a Development Trust for Strathpeffer

Strathpeffer and District already has a wealth of heritage, a strength of community assets, and many volunteers to help maintain and promote its heritage, develop community assets, and encourage visitors. Strathpeffer already has an established tourism presence in the market, although like many other tourist destinations, it has not been able to maximise its market presence to visitors who will linger to enjoy the amenities and environment of the village.

To help achieve the Vision set out in Section 4, Strathpeffer must continue to link together its community assets and use these as part of its promotion to visitors, strengthening its economy and ensuring that both community assets and local enterprises flourish.

Strathpeffer's volunteers have already made efforts to commence a Community Market and a Business organisation to help pull efforts together for Strathpeffer and District as a whole and include both local enterprises and community groups. These attempts have not been successful; while they were greatly supported when proposed, they require effort, time, and commitment to deliver. This can only be achieved when a group of people have the remit, support, and can rely on the efforts of a wider group, to take this forward. Strathpeffer and District's residents put huge effort into individual priorities. To help these work better together for the benefit of the whole community, a new body is needed which helps make the most of those strengths, encourages and assists community groups and enterprises to work together, and takes forward initiatives which deliver identified benefits for all parts of the community.

Development Trusts are a well-established mechanism for taking forward a community vision. Some Development Trusts play a passive role, with a source of funding that supports groups who apply. More often, Development Trusts are set up as the primary source of community activity. However, Development Trusts can also act as catalysts, initiators, and collaborative mechanisms in a loose alliance with other community bodies – and these are the types of Trusts that are most responsive to changing circumstances in their communities. Individuals continue to volunteer and support the individual initiatives, actions, and groups which they are most interested in; the Trust is there to encourage and support such groups while guarding the overall Vision which the community has agreed.

Development Trusts are community-run bodies. They require a voting membership from the community to elect board members, who are legally held accountable to the community annually. Development Trusts are only effective so long as they are able to continue open discussions with their community; their right to act depends entirely on gaining consensus.

A Development Trust for Strathpeffer would be able to work with the community to define and deliver a Brand, Marketing and Communications Strategy for Strathpeffer and District, helping ensure that the community is able to communicate a clear image to visitors. The Development Trust would act as a Regeneration Trust, pulling across the private, third, and public sectors.

The Development Trust would also be able to access resources community-wide to support initiatives, for example in pooling funding and attracting additional funding to provide a Development Officer post which helps the Trust carry out the community's aims.

The Development Trust may also be able to assist with central resources, such as key skills, a legal structure, and a bank account, to support small or fledging groups which have difficulty finding those skills in a community where many are also volunteering.

Looking ahead, a Development Trust may be able to undertake some element of community budgeting or take on community budgets from Highland Council, carrying out the Council's statutory duties on

behalf of the Council for an agreed sum, and then deploying that sum in a way that best delivers those requirements in its own community.

Setting up a Development Trust is a legal and administrative process, and support is available from the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS), Ross-shire Voluntary Action, and others. DTAS will also provide a new Development Trust with links with the 272 Development Trusts across Scotland who are always happy to share experiences and information.

5.1 Development Trust: priorities for action

The Development Trust would have three clear priorities in the first instance:

- **Sharing and connecting:** To encourage and assist existing community groups and enterprises to work more closely together, promoting and sharing information about groups and their priorities, and hosting a single source of information to encourage working together.
- **Visitors staying longer:** To work with enterprises and community groups to establish Strathpeffer as a clear “brand” with a known identity; to agree how that identity will be marketed; and to manage the delivery of an action plan for the marketing, filling identified gaps in the visitor offering.
- **An even better place to live:** to support and link existing initiatives for the well-being of the community, helping ensure that the volunteer effort is sustained into the future and helps maintain Strathpeffer and District’s cultural and natural heritage.

Key first steps in establishing the Trust and in delivering these actions are set out, over.

5.2 Making it happen: the Action Plan

This Action Plan summarises the projects and proposals that came from the community consultation process. Each Action is developed in more detail in the tables, over.

Theme:	Implementation Timeline				
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Sharing and connecting	Establish Strathpeffer and District Development Trust				
	Strath Times re-start				
	Shared community calendar				
	Community social media supported; including rebuilding website				
	Community Transport				
	Community festival				
	Community Centre and Park, linked				
	Strathpeffer Pavilion, community owned				
	Peffer Way and Station working together				
	Structured volunteering opportunities				
Visitors staying longer	Strathpeffer Community and Enterprise Forum				
	Walks and cycle leaflets				
	Archaeology Trail				
	Recreation and activity facilities promoted				
	Strathpeffer rebranding and marketing				
	Signposting				
	"What to do in Strathpeffer" single booking point				
	Link to Castle Leod				
An even better place to live	Community Park				
	Peffer Way				
	"Greening Strathpeffer" through a health and wellbeing program				
	Civic infrastructure maintained through a Men's Shed program				

These initiatives would be undertaken with existing community groups and with the support of the broader community. Most of these initiatives – and many more – are already underway; the key need for the Development Trust is to help bring these together, support existing initiatives, and to fill gaps where existing arrangements have not been able to sustain effort for example in area-wide communication and branding.

		Action	Outcome and Community Lead:
2019	Sharing and connecting	Establish Strathpeffer and District Development Trust (SDDT)	<p>Outcome: a community-led body driving forward delivery and development of the Action Plan, working with, collaborating, and listening to established groups and individuals; enabling funding and taking forward cross-community initiatives including branding, marketing, information, and publicity; and enabling skill sharing between groups.</p> <p>A community development resource would assist – to be researched.</p> <p>Current status: A Strathpeffer Coordinating Group has been formed from existing community groups and local enterprises. Many community groups are active, providing and supporting a wide range of facilities and services in all aspects of community life, but there is no single place where groups are listed and can be contacted easily.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Coordinating Group</p>
		Strath Times re-start	<p>Objective: re-commence quarterly publication of the community newsletter to improve communications, particularly for those who prefer print to digital.</p> <p>Current status: the Strath Times was produced until recently; new content and editorial volunteers are being sought.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Community Association</p>
		Shared community calendar	<p>Outcome: a calendar of events and activities shared across the community, including businesses, enabling better publicity and awareness of activities for residents and visitors, encouraging sharing and avoiding duplication.</p> <p>Current status: the old website, strathpeffer.org, has been corrupted and a volunteer has offered to reinstate the website on a new platform, including a shared calendar.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Community Council, then SDDT</p>
		Community website and social media set up	<p>Outcome: a single source which promotes Strathpeffer and District’s amenities, attractions, services and facilities to visitors, residents and businesses, enabling increased visitor numbers and promoting greater resident and visitor footfall across all facilities.</p> <p>Current status: the old website, strathpeffer.org, has been corrupted and a volunteer has offered to reinstate the website on a new platform.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Community Council, then SDDT</p>
		Community transport	<p>Outcome: improved transport for people who do not or are not willing to drive, to access services and facilities. This may include a community minibus to add to existing public service provision, possibly through an agreement with the local coach company.</p> <p>Current status: Ross-shire Voluntary Action hosts a Volunteer Driver Scheme which includes the Strathpeffer area and is always seeking additional drivers. Stagecoach is currently consulting on its timetables.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Coordinating Group, then SDDT</p>

		Action	Outcome and Community Lead:
2020-22	Sharing and connecting	Community festival	<p>Outcome: a programme of festivals and fairs which attracts visitors and bring together residents to enjoy and celebrate Strathpeffer's cultural and environmental heritage. This includes a "Strathpeffer day" which may be held more frequently during the peak tourist season, showcasing the best of Strathpeffer and promoted to cruise and coach tourists; a "Foot Festival" to promote Strathpeffer's interaction with Strathpeffer's cultural and natural environment.</p> <p>Current status: the village has a history of holding successful fairs and festivals, including Victorian Day, the Arts Fair, and a Christmas Fair. A community market has been proposed in the recent past. Other festivals and celebrations might centre on other village infrastructure, e.g. Castle Leod open days; biking festivals; archaeology events as part of Highland Archaeology Festival.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust</p>
		Community Centre and Park, linked	<p>Outcome: an expanded community "hub" at the west end of the village, physically linking the Community Park to the Community Centre, enhancing the enjoyment and use of both assets by residents and visitors.</p> <p>Current status: the Community Park has achieved funding for the Community Asset Transfer and the first stage of works. The Park and the Centre groups will continue to work together.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Residents' Association; Strathpeffer Community Association</p>
		Strathpeffer Pavilion, Pump House and Spa Gardens, community owned	<p>Outcome: a community owned asset which helps deliver the social and economic needs of the community by provision of services to local people, the wider area and an all-important tourist offering.</p> <p>Current status: the Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Steering Group has applied for Land Purchase and Asset Transfer of these assets and awaits the outcome. High Life Highland manages the Pavilion and is consulting with the SPCSG.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Steering Group</p>
		Peffer Way and Station working together	<p>Outcome: an expanded "hub" at the east end of the village, creating a welcoming space and signage to encourage residents and visitors to travel to and from the Station via the Peffer Way, and to link the approach into Strathpeffer through linked paths to other facilities and assets.</p> <p>Current status: the Station is an important visitor asset, with over 10,000 visitors a year. The Peffer Way is under development, creating a "terminus" at the Station and an opportunity for signage and information to encourage visits.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust working with the Peffer Way and the Station as part of a visitor infrastructure plan.</p>
		Structured volunteering opportunities	<p>Outcome: Strathpeffer organisations work together to address unemployment and underemployment in its area through recognised programmes of structured and unstructured volunteering, building on existing programmes such as Saltire (for 12-25 year olds); JobCentre Plus for people seeking jobs.</p> <p>Current status: many people in the village volunteer, and these opportunities could be expanded to help both the community and individuals.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust working with specialist partners including Ross-shire Voluntary Action and the DWP.</p>

		Action	Outcome and Community Lead:
2019	Visitors staying longer	Strathpeffer Enterprise Forum	<p>Outcome: a forum for locally-based enterprises working with the SCCG and then the SDDT to help promote Strathpeffer’s amenities and facilities particularly to the “slow tourism” market, which has a strong link to the SDDT.</p> <p>Current status: hotels and other enterprises are involved in ad-hoc promotion of the village. Some locally owned enterprises are already actively involved in promoting the village and developing a village identity including “Strathpeffer” souvenirs in addition to forming an active voice in the Strathpeffer Coordinating Group.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Community Council / Coordinating Group, then SDDT.</p>
		Walks and cycles leaflets	<p>Outcome: leaflets distributed at key points in Strathpeffer which show signposted walks and cycles both within and outwith the village, bringing together existing path and access provision, available to download, and linked to existing websites that promote accessible walking e.g. Walk Highlands, Forest and Land Scotland.</p> <p>Current status: existing walks leaflets available here.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Community Council / Coordinating Group, then SDDT.</p>
		Archaeology Trail	<p>Outcome: leaflets and other media which highlight and promote the cultural and archaeological heritage of Strathpeffer, available on the community website and forming the basis of an event or series of events for the Highland Archaeological Festival.</p> <p>Current status: leaflets and an App have already been developed and require to be re-printed or redeveloped for current social media. Signpost and other physical indications required to be checked and replaced as required.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Coordinating Group, then Strathpeffer and District Development Trust, with assistance from ARCH as required.</p>
		Recreation and activity facilities promoted	<p>Outcome: information on current recreation and activities is readily available through community social media so that both residents and visitors are encouraged to make use of the various sports and activities offerings including golf, tennis, bowling, cricket, the skiff, yoga and other classes, and the gym.</p> <p>Current status: the majority of these activities have their own social media presence including FaceBook sites. The Community Website and social media could provide a single point of information on all activities, including how to rent or book facilities.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Coordinating Group, then Strathpeffer and District Development Trust</p>

		Action	Outcome and Community Lead:
2020-22	Visitors staying longer	Strathpeffer rebranding and marketing	<p>Outcome: a single “brand” for Strathpeffer as a destination, on social media, leaflets, and in marketing materials for the village; linked with a clear message and brand value of Strathpeffer – the “Hidden Gem” and “slow tourism”. A Marketing Plan helps ensure the delivery of the message through outbound marketing and includes shared messages for use by enterprises and facilities throughout the village. Materials include a “handout” map of the village to guide visitors to attractions, services, and facilities.</p> <p>Current status: branding materials are in development by the Highland Museum of Childhood and The Real Sweets and Gifts Company.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust with the Strathpeffer Enterprise Forum.</p>
		Signposting	<p>Outcome: a set of signposts and markers, branded where possible with the Strathpeffer brand, linked to the walks and cycle leaflets and to the archaeological leaflets, and which point to the many facilities and points of interest both within the village and its area.</p> <p>Current status: there is existing signposting in the centre of the village; Forest and Land Scotland have produced maps and signposting on their land. Some of the Highland Council core paths have existing signposts. Cycle maps exist for some cycling infrastructure in the Strath.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust</p>
		“What to do in Strathpeffer” single booking point (on social media and in person)	<p>Outcome: a single location electronically, accessed both on-line and in strategic visitor points including the Pump House and Highland Museum of Childhood, which enables people to book and pay for all facilities from the tennis courts to golf, bike hire to accommodation, in one place and at one time.</p> <p>Current status: no development to date</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust</p>
		Links to Castle Leod	<p>Outcome: Castle Leod attracting a new market segment to Strathpeffer with a Strathpeffer-linked visitor experience to its attractive woodlands, its cultural history and its place in the “Outlander” series; connected to the village by signposted off-road trails.</p> <p>Current status: Castle Leod attracts coach parties and other visitors for its open days; there is little direct linkage to Strathpeffer and the owners are keen to explore possibilities.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust</p>

		Action	Outcome and Community Lead:
2019	An even better place to live	Community Park commenced	<p>Outcome: a new Community Park for all, including elements such as a new children's play park, path network and social food growing opportunities.</p> <p>Current status: the Strathpeffer Residents' Association has achieved funding and permission to buy the land, and is commencing the first programme of works.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer Residents' Association</p>
		Peffer Way near completion	<p>Outcome: a safe, accessible, off-road route for walkers and cyclists of all abilities, providing a link between Strathpeffer, Fodderty, Blairninich and Dingwall.</p> <p>Current status: The route has been well-publicised and is already being used extensively as a walking route thanks to volunteer work to maintain the rough path. Fundraising is well underway and improvements of the surface and accessibility have already been made.</p> <p>Lead: Peffer Way Association</p>
"Greening Strathpeffer" project promoting health and wellbeing		<p>Outcome: Strathpeffer's natural heritage assets, including the Spa Gardens, green landscaping in the Conservation Area, its specimen trees, are maintained and renewed. A "Strathpeffer in Bloom" group is supported to enhance Strathpeffer's visual amenity. The gardening and greening work is supported as part of a programme of nature-based therapy, working with organisations that support mental health including supporting young people at risk of exclusion; people who are socially isolated, and people with dementia.</p> <p>Current status: the Gardening Group is active but requires additional volunteers. Significant works such as tree surgery and footpath maintenance require funding and expertise. The Spa Gardens, once transferred to the community, will create an additional requirement for volunteer maintenance.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust working with the Gardening Group, Strathpeffer Pavilion Community Trust, the Dingwall and Strathpeffer Men's Shed, Dingwall Academy, and organisations supporting mental health.</p>	
Conservation Area and other civic maintenance through a Men's Shed program		<p>Outcome: Strathpeffer's civic assets, including the Conservation Area infrastructure, are maintained to a high standard with the support of a Men's Shed or similar programme. This may include structured volunteering and training as part of a back-to-work programme supported by volunteering agencies.</p> <p>Current status: the Dingwall and Strathpeffer Men's Shed Association carry out works in the village to help maintain and improve community assets.</p> <p>Lead: Strathpeffer and District Development Trust working with the Dingwall and Strathpeffer Men's Shed Association and other community groups.</p>	
2020-22			

Appendix A. Remembering the Strathpeffer Area

Contents in this Appendix are extracted from Archaeology for the Communities in the Highlands (ARCH) "Remembering Strathpeffer", (2016)

Strathpeffer before the Spa

People have lived in the Strathpeffer valley for over 5,000 years, as shown by Neolithic burial chambers and axes, and Bronze Age burials and round houses. From about 800BC, the Knockferrel hillfort to the east was defended, and perhaps lived in. Remains of the vitrified rock, melted during what must have been a catastrophic fire, can still be seen. The crannog, an artificial island, on Loch Kinellan to the west also probably dates to this period.

In Strathpeffer itself, the first surviving evidence is the Eagle Stone. In the Medieval period Castle Leod to the east of Strathpeffer, was built, and the Loch Kinellan crannog re-used by another branch of the Mackenzies. In the 17th or 18th century the crannog probably became a hunting lodge. Until the 19th century there was no Strathpeffer, just four main farms: Kinellan, Park, Kinnettas and Ardival. The growth of the village was due to the conscious development of the area into a spa resort.

Strathpeffer Spa

The benefits of the sulphur and chalybeate (iron-rich) wells in the area began to be exploited in the late 1700s. A wooden pump room was erected in 1819. This was replaced in 1829, and extended in 1871. A second pump room was built c. 1860 and still survives. After 1861 the Cromartie estate invested more in the Spa, encouraging building of much needed accommodation and expanding facilities. The coming of the railway in 1870 helped, although due to opposition by a local landowner the village was bypassed. The nearest station was Achterneed until the branch line to the Spa opened in 1885. Sleeper trains went from London to Strathpeffer.

Many hotels and large villas were built. The Spa Hotel advertised itself as the earliest. It burned down in 1942 while in use as a wartime hospital. Its rival, the Ben Wyvis Hotel, was built in 1879. Many of the villas were designed to be let to visitors during the season, and in some cases the family moved out to a small building in the grounds during the season. Many of the houses you pass on the trail date from the last two decades of the 1800s and into the early 1900s.

Many doctors consulted in the village. Visitors came from as far afield as the Continent and included royalty and famous people of the day such as Sir Ernest Shackleton and Robert Louis Stevenson. The poor were allowed free water, and later a hospital was built for poor invalids (no. 14). The bathing rooms had the most advanced facilities. There were concerts, excursions and sporting pursuits.

20th century Strathpeffer

During WWI many buildings in Strathpeffer were taken over, including by the US Navy. After the war, the fortunes of the Spa declined. WWII brought another brief and changed focus. After WWII the Spa never revived, but coach tours now bring many visitors to the surviving hotels. The Pavilion continued to hold concerts and attracted coach loads of music fans until it gradually fell into disrepair. Now fortunately restored, it again offers a range of entertainment events.

The Remembering the Strathpeffer Area project produced a Strathpeffer walk leaflet available locally and on the [ARCH website](#), focussing on selected buildings. The order of this listing reflects the walk, and can be used for those who want more detailed information.