

Newton Stewart & Minnigaff  
**LOCAL PLACE PLAN**  
2024-2034



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# Our Vision

*“To facilitate the regeneration of our community to become a thriving tourist town for living, working and leisure whilst retaining both the natural scenery and sense of community that makes Newton Stewart and Minnigaff the unique place that it undoubtedly is. We aim to create a vibrant rural community that will encourage families to settle here by capitalising on the surrounding natural beauty of the town’s location amidst the rolling Galloway Hills. And all of this whilst welcoming new opportunities for growth and development.”*

## An Overview of Newton Stewart

Newton Stewart, also known as “Gateway to the Galloway Hills” is a former burgh town in the historical County of Wigtownshire in Dumfries and Galloway, southwest Scotland. The town sits on the banks of the river Cree, with Newton Stewart on the West Bank and Minnigaff on the East bank.



The town hosts regular cattle and sheep markets, whilst also offering a fine range of independent shops, cafes, public houses and hotels and a cinema along the high street. There are three supermarkets and other amenities, such as the local museum and library, that are all within walking or cycling distance from the high street. In July, annual Newton Stewart & Minnigaff Traditional Music & Dance Festival is held in various spaces across the area with the main hub at the Vault Arts Centre, which also provides year-round programme of live musical entertainment. The surrounding hills offer many opportunities for mountain biking, walking trails and angling. The town plays host to an annual walking festival held in the town every May organised by the Newton Stewart Walking Festival, this popular festival covers Newton Stewart, Minnigaff and the entire Cree Valley.



The recently launched Kirkpatrick C2C, South of Scotland's Coast to Coast cycling route, celebrates Scotland's rich history of innovation and the South's key role in the creation of the bicycle. The on-road route offers 250 miles of uninterrupted joy for experienced cyclists from Stranraer on the west coast to Eyemouth on the east coast. The South of Scotland is looking to become the country's leading cycling destination. The South of Scotland Destination Alliance have produced a brief on Newton Stewart and tourism.<sup>1</sup>

In 2022 there were 4.13 million visitors to the South of Scotland creating £762 million of economic growth.

With a population of just over 4000, Newton Stewart is a beautiful town, surrounded by countryside and gorgeous scenery and has a community feel to it. The aspects people love most about living in Newton Stewart are the people of the town and the local scenery.



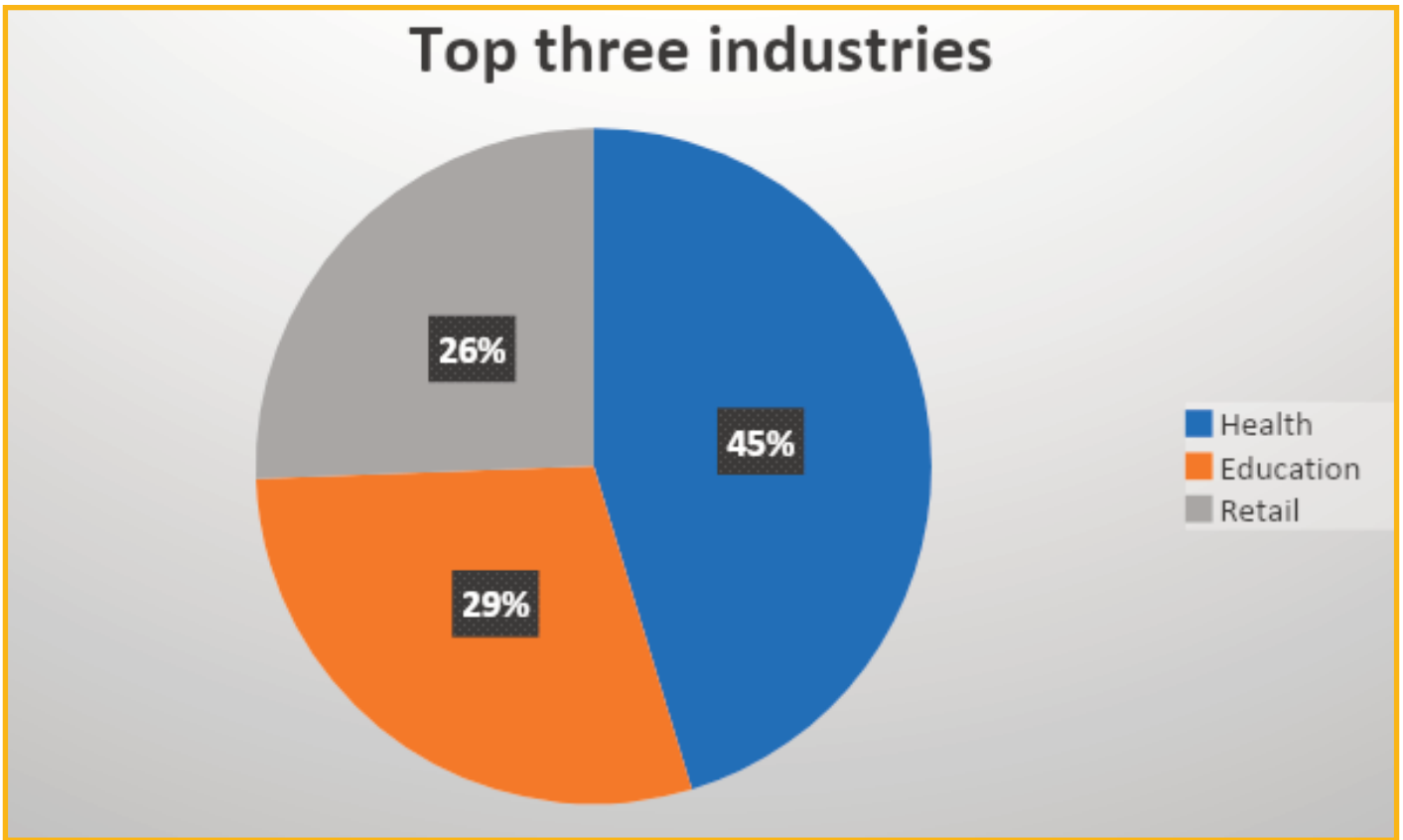
*Photo taken by local blogger and photographer. Credit Dabby McCreadie.*

Newton Stewart is a conservation area and has several listed buildings including the Galloway Arms Hotel.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ssdalliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Newton-Stewart-Locally-Led-Destination-Development-meeting-6th-Sept-2023.pdf>

## Industry and Employment

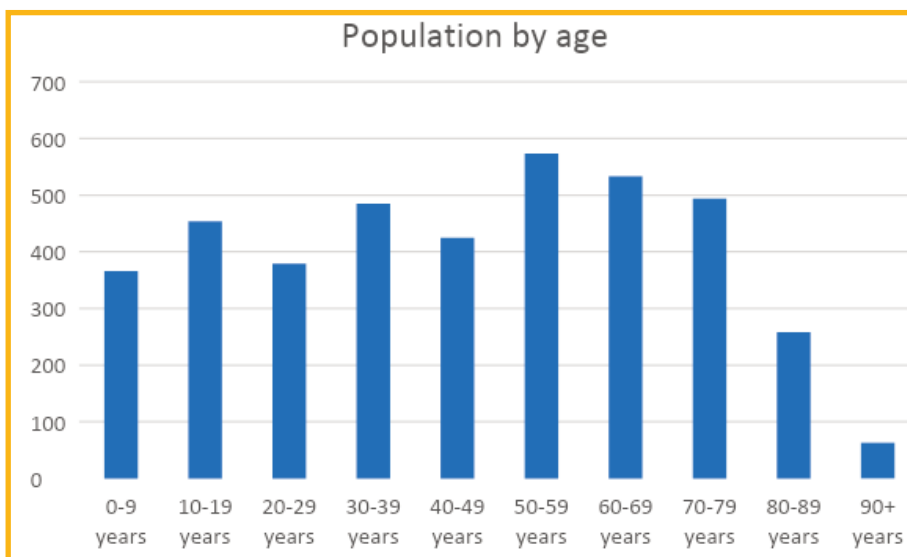
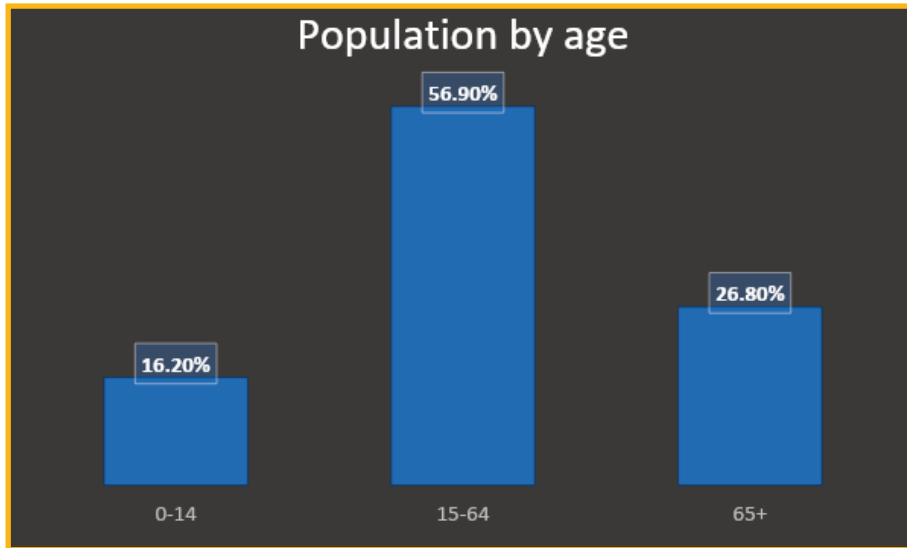


Excluding self-employed, 30.4% of employees are employed in the public sector, compared with 20.6% across Dumfries and Galloway, and the Scotland average of 22.2%<sup>2</sup>. In 2017 8.73% of the population in Newton Stewart were self-employed.

<sup>2</sup> Community Action Plan 2020

## Population

In 2020 the population of Newton Stewart was given as 4020 according to the General Records of Scotland<sup>3</sup>. The demographics are broken down below.



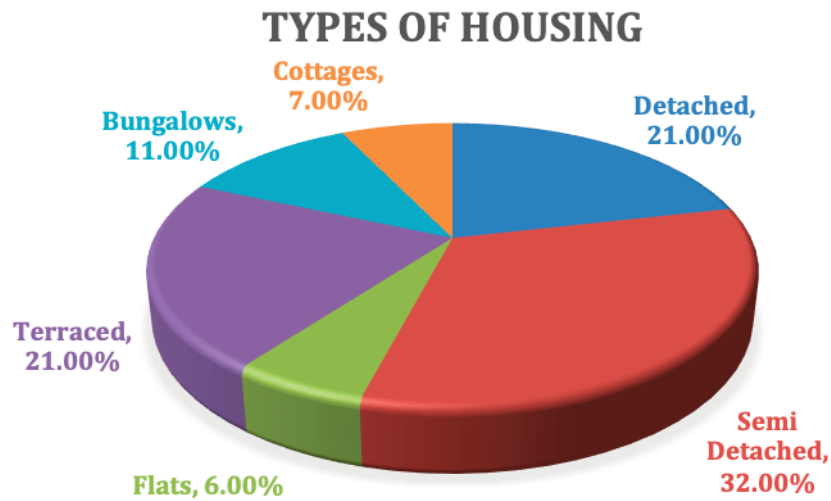
The proportion of people of working age is slightly lower than the regional figures and 7.1% lower than national averages. The recent population trend in Cree Valley shows around a 2% decline since 2016.

However, this area has been in a general pattern of population growth over the past 20 years in contrast to the trend across Dumfries & Galloway as a whole<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/scotland/dumfries\\_and\\_galloway/S19002413\\_\\_newton\\_stewart/](https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/scotland/dumfries_and_galloway/S19002413__newton_stewart/)

<sup>4</sup> Community Action Plan 2020

## Housing



According to the Housing Needs Demand Analysis, conducted by South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) in 2021 on behalf of Newton Stewart Initiative:

- 32% of respondents lived in semi-detached houses
- 21% lived in terraced houses
- 21% lived in detached houses
- 6% lived in flats
- 11% lived in bungalows
- 7% lived in cottages

62.4% of dwellings are owner-occupied, slightly lower than the regional average but comparable to national levels.

The Council no longer owns dwellings for social rent, housing associations are the main providers of new and affordable social housing in Dumfries and Galloway and 20.8% is socially rented<sup>5</sup>.

This shows a need for more houses and accommodation to be rented in the area. The Housing Needs Demand Analysis, conducted by SOSCH showed that most respondents were.

- homeowners 56%
- privately rented accommodation 20%
- renting from a housing association 15%
- in a home tied to employment 1%
- living in temporary accommodation or with family and friends 7%

<sup>5</sup> Community Action Plan 2020

As part of Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 there is an opportunity for 200 houses to be built in the area.

Wheatley Group have proposed building 70 new homes on Corsbie Road. The site is allocated for housing development, site NST.H4, in the Dumfries & Galloway Local Development Plan 2, October 2019. The proposals are to develop the site for around 70 properties with a mix of bungalows and houses - there are no flats which are being served off a common stair or close included in the development. The new properties will be served from a new road entrance off Corsbie Road with a new road network developed to serve the dwellings. The current draft proposals would see the pedestrian link between the school and the playing fields to the west remaining<sup>6</sup>.

There is a high demand for more housing and a recognised need for social housing within and around the town which has been identified through several community consultations. A Housing Needs Demand Analysis was conducted in October 2022 by South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH).

*“The online survey ran from June 2022 until August 2022 and together with written survey submissions, received a total of 253 responses representing 668 people within the 253 households. This represents approximately 17% of the total population of approximately 4,000 for Newton Stewart. With the level of overall community engagement, SOSCH would consider the response rate to be excellent. As such, the evidence can be considered as a viable insight into the housing needs of the community.”*

Overall, 48% of respondents said they were currently in need of affordable housing or stated that they or someone in their household may be in need in the future.

50% of respondents said they were in need of housing in Newton Stewart and a further 46%, although not in direct need themselves, felt there was a need for affordable housing in the town.

The complete survey can be found in the appendices.

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<sup>6</sup><https://mctaggartcon.wixsite.com/corsbieroad/proposals>



## Challenges for Newton Stewart

As a small town, Newton Stewart is currently facing many challenges. This Place Plan is a snapshot of the residents' views at a point in time. The surveys began in February 2023 and ran until November 2023. Empty shops and derelict buildings on the high street are needing to be occupied and renovated/converted. Employment opportunities for young people is vital if we want to encourage them to stay in the town or to return on completing studies elsewhere. Ensuring that residents can travel between various towns on reliable community transport is increasingly important, as noted in the Local Place Plan survey results.

## What is the Local Place Plan?

Local Place Plans (LPPs) offer communities the opportunity to produce a plan for their area expressing their aspirations and ambitions for future change.

They are produced by the community, with support from the Council and its partners. LPPs focus on the community's proposals for the development and use of land and provide a new opportunity for communities to feed into the planning system with ideas and proposals.

Local Place planning was introduced in 2019 by the Scottish Government to empower a community-led approach to town planning and development.

Newton Stewart Initiative (NSI) is a charity organisation within the town of Newton Stewart and Minnigaff. NSI submitted an expression of interest to Dumfries and Galloway Council in December 2022 to undertake the development and delivery of the LPP for Newton Stewart & Minnigaff. This was borne of the region coming out of Covid lockdown and the ensuing cost-of-living crisis. NSI recognised a need for residents to be able to have a say on their town and their vision for the town.

The Local Place Plan is a working document, which can be added to or amended at any time. It can be used by any individual or local groups looking to provide evidence of need within the town for a project or service.

These survey results are from the first initial survey aimed at gaining views on priorities and targets within Newton Stewart for the purpose of developing a Local Place Plan for the town, this was carried out in February 2023 by Newton Stewart Initiative and the Local Place Plan group.

The generic information gathered in this survey helped the team get indications of potential gaps for further action and will ensure all voices in the community have an opportunity to be heard.

A steering group was set up to look at the ideas and comments and create an action plan for the town based on these. The steering group has consisted of representatives from Newton Stewart Initiative, Cree Valley Community Council and Cree Valley Area Development Trust.

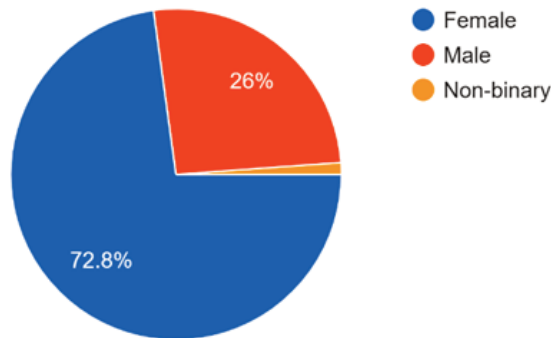
## The Initial Survey

In February 2023 the group ran drop-in sessions and consultations both in person and online. The results of these are shown below. These sessions ran for a period of three months following which we published the Place Standard Tool<sup>7</sup> as developed and recommended by the Scottish Government which went into more depth. This tool was live for eight weeks to ensure everyone had a chance to complete the survey.

Below are the demographics based on age and gender through the surveys of which we had 180 responses.

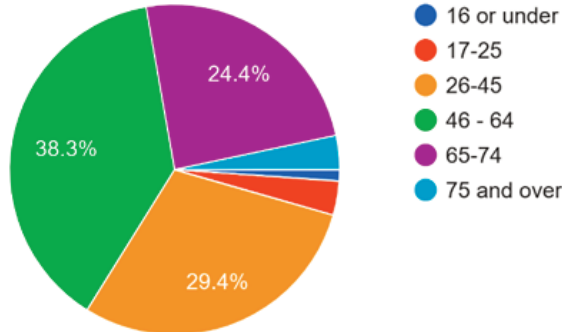
### Gender

173 responses



### What is your age

180 responses



We created a basic survey to gather information from the residents of the town. These questions were as follows.

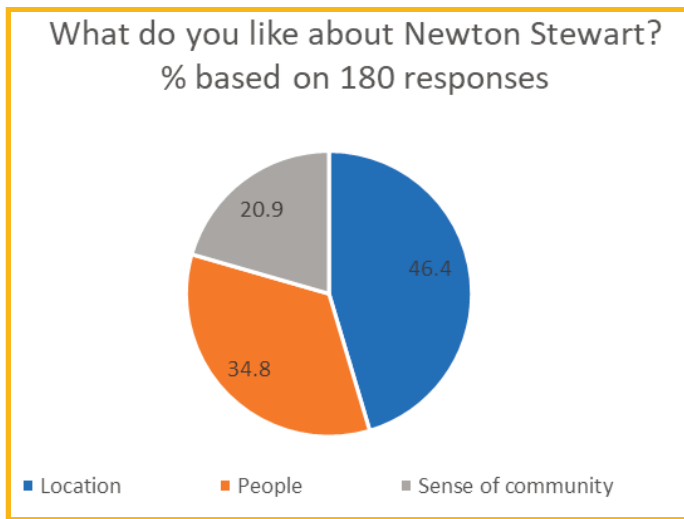
Questions asked:

1. What do you like about Newton Stewart?
2. What do you think the challenges for Newton Stewart are?
3. What should the priorities be for Newton Stewart moving forward?

Based on the ‘post-it’ notes from the drop-ins and survey sheets completed we compiled a spreadsheet with the following as the most popular answers.

<sup>7</sup><https://www.ourplace.scot/tool>

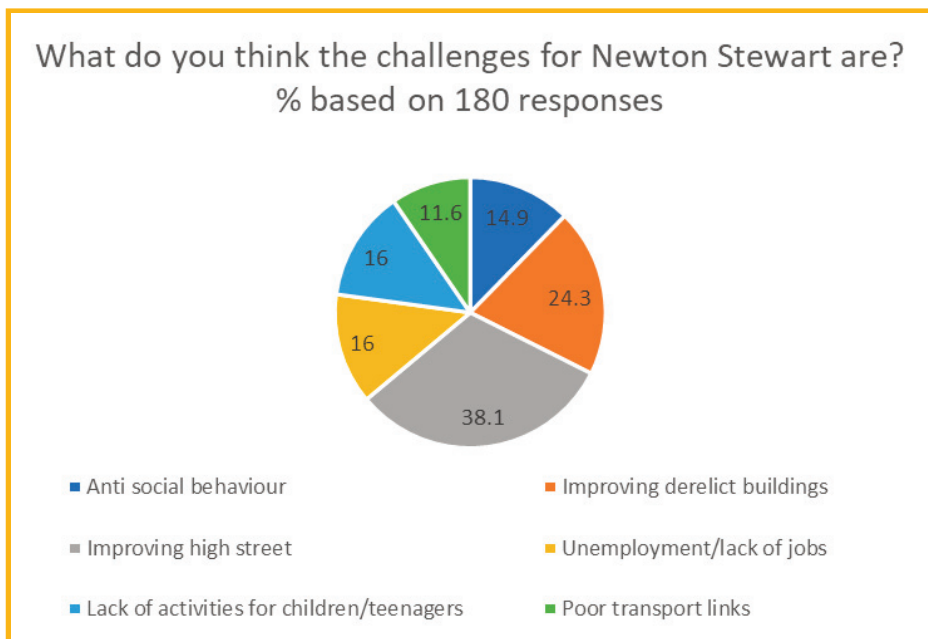
### 1. What do you like about Newton Stewart?



**Summary:**

- 46% love the location
- 35% love the people in the area
- 20% love the sense of community

### 2. What do you think the challenges for Newton Stewart are?

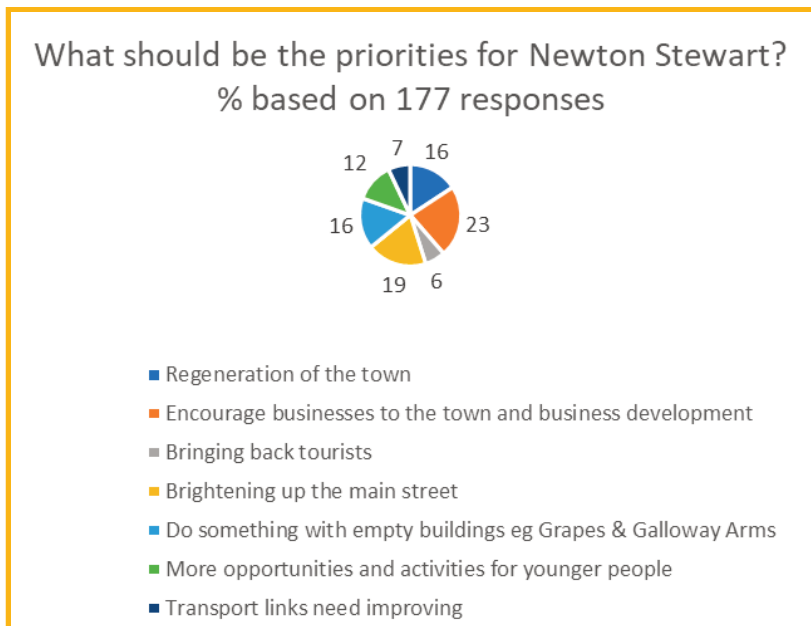


**Summary:**

- Improving the high street is the main challenge in Newton Stewart currently with 38% of responses.
- 24% of people mentioned improving the derelict buildings in the area such as the Grapes Hotel and the Galloway Arms.
- 16% of people felt that unemployment/lack of jobs as well as a lack of activities for children and teenagers were a challenge within the community.
- 14% of people stated anti-social behaviour was a concern.
- 11% of people cited poor transport links as a challenge.



### 3. What should be the priorities for Newton Stewart?



**Summary:**

- 23% of respondents felt that the priorities for the town should be encouraging businesses to the town and business development.
- 19% felt that brightening up the main street should be a priority.
- 16% of respondents felt that town regeneration was important, and the same percentage wanted action to be taken in relation to empty buildings such as the Grapes Hotel and Galloway Arms
- 12% felt that there should be more opportunities and activities for younger people.
- 7% of people felt that transport links could be improved.

### Overall Summary

183 responses were recorded from in person drop-ins and online forms. Most respondents felt that the location, people and sense of community were what they liked most about the town. The responses to the challenges and priorities varied significantly, depending on the age and respondents’ circumstances.

**The main challenges for the town are:**

- Improving the high street
- Taking action in relation to empty and/derelict buildings.
- The main priority identified by respondents was the need for the town to be actively encouraging businesses to the town and business development.

## Who has been involved?

We had 1580 responses in total to all of the surveys, online and in person. The Local Place Plan is available online at [www.newtonstewart.net](http://www.newtonstewart.net) and a hard copy can be found in the library.

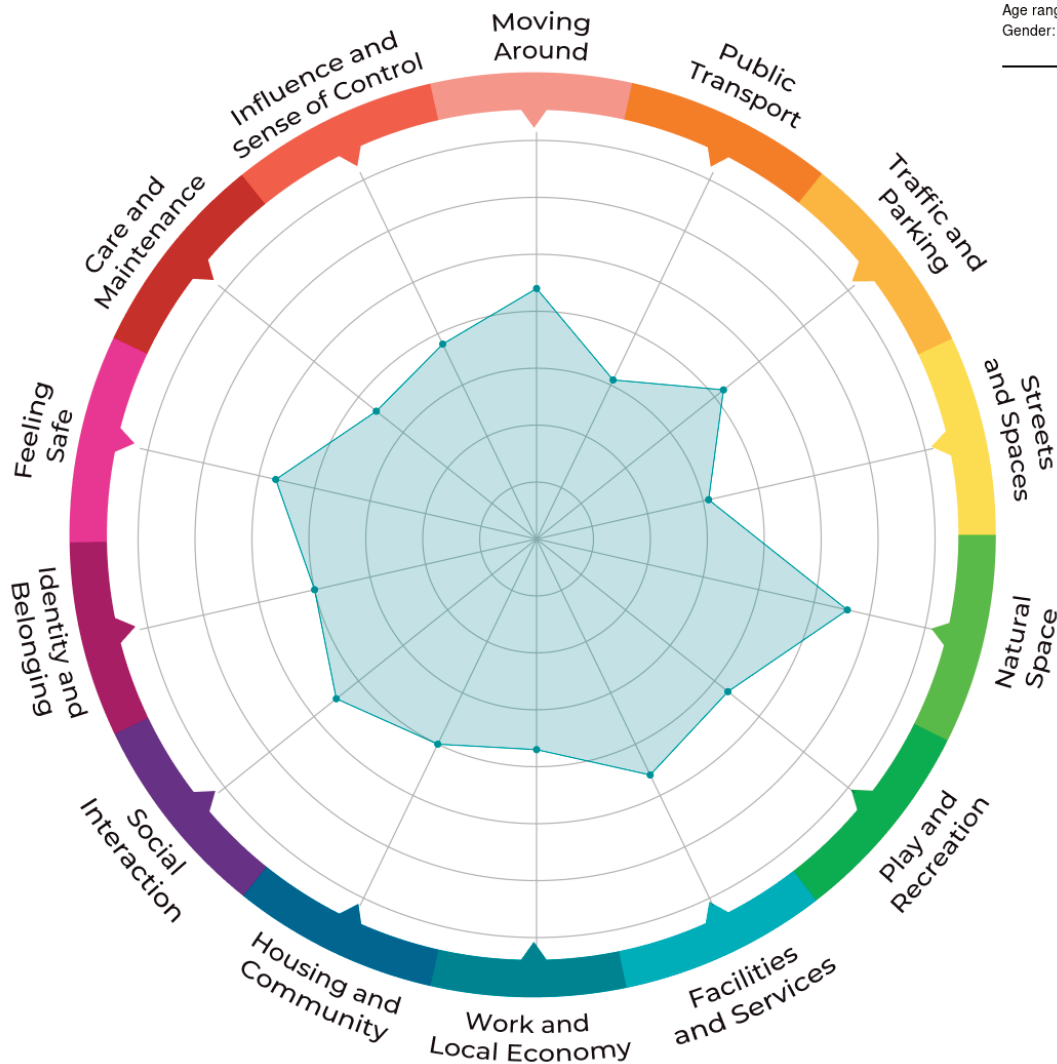
The graph below shows the 14 themes covered by the Place Standard Tool and how important these themes are to residents. This is a snapshot of resident’s opinions.

TOTAL RESULTS: 1308

CHART KEY:  Data Set 1

Data set 1

Sub-area: All Sub-areas  
Age range: All Ages  
Gender: All Genders



The second graph highlights the priorities for the town. Residents love the natural space and beauty of the surrounding countryside, which is highlighted as being a point far out in the graph.

The main priorities for the town are highlighted below:

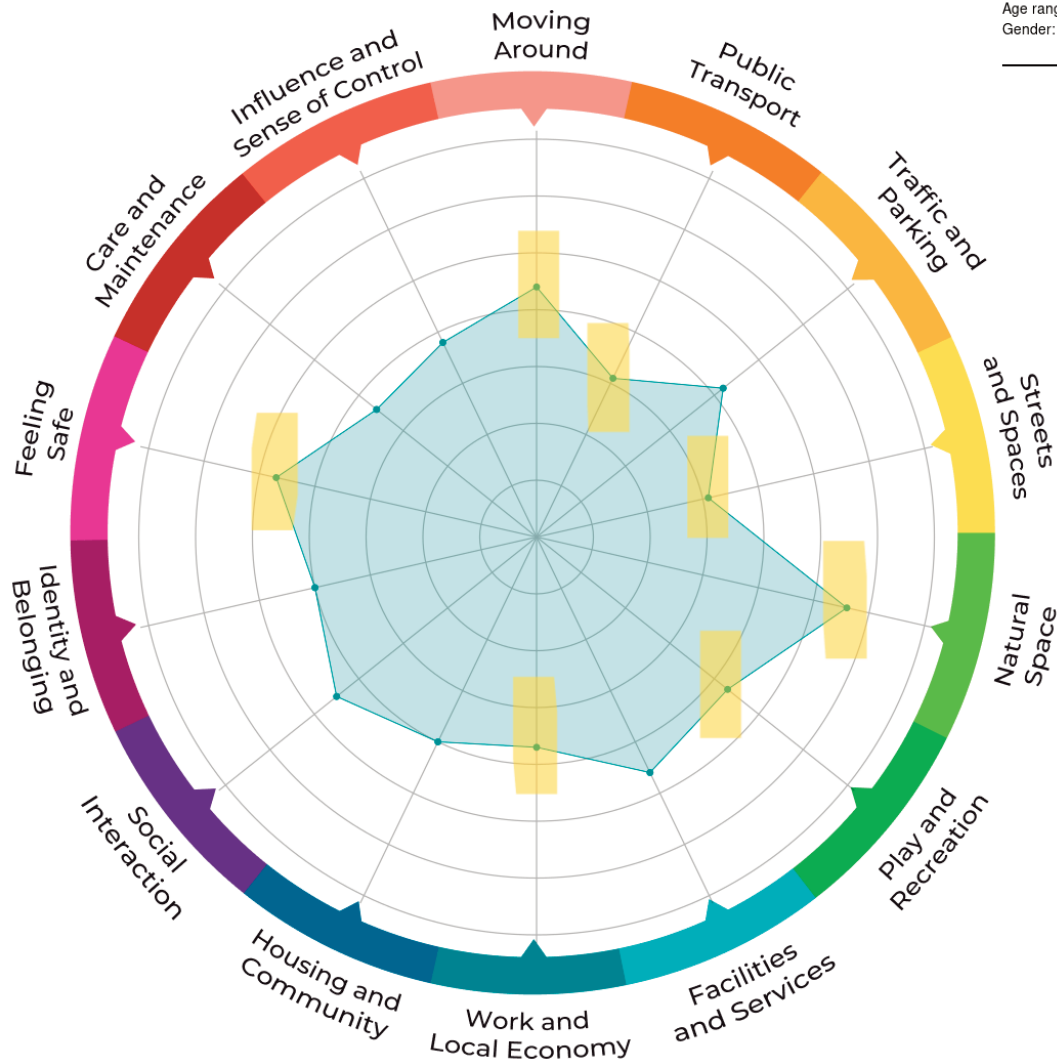
- Streets and Spaces
- Public transport
- Moving Around
- Play and Recreation
- Work and Local Economy
- Feeling safe

TOTAL RESULTS: 1308

CHART KEY:  Data Set 1

Data set 1

Sub-area: All Sub-areas  
Age range: All Ages  
Gender: All Genders



The results from the online Place Standard tool and the initial surveys were combined to come up with the six main priorities for our town.

NSI facilitated the Local Place Plan information gathering and asked for members of the community to become part of a steering group to help move the Plan forward.

Thanks to the Cree Valley Area Development Trust (CVADT), Cree Valley Community Council (CVCC), Dumfries & Galloway Council and the numerous other community groups and organisations who have participated in the Local Place Plan.

We then shared the Place Standard Tool on-line for the community to give feedback. This had over 1400 responses but only 61 comments which have been considered within the plan. Many of the comments were similar to the initial survey. After identifying the main priorities within the surveys, we asked residents to rank them based on the order of importance.

## Local Place Plan - Other priorities for the town

When we did the initial survey and the online survey, we looked at 14 themes according to the Place Standard Tool.

The other themes looked at within the Local Place Plan were as follows:

- Care and maintenance
- Identity and belonging
- Natural spaces
- Social interaction
- Housing and community
- Facilities and services
- Traffic and parking
- Influence and sense of control

There were many comments and views made by residents on how these areas could be improved which are included in the appendices. However, these themes at the time of writing the plan weren't the most important to residents in town.

## Top 6 themes to come out of the Local Place Plan

The top 6 themes which mattered most to residents of our town were:

1. Safety
2. Streets and Spaces
3. Public Transport
4. Moving Around
5. Work and Local Economy
6. Play and Recreation

These themes have become the basis of our action plan. Alongside our Local Place Plan, we have included as appendices.

- 10,000 Voices survey, which was aimed at gathering the views of 16–25-year-olds within the Dumfries and Galloway Area. This was conducted by Youthwork D&G using the Place Standard tool to gauge views and opinions of 16–25-year-olds. It has been included in the Place Plan to ensure this age groups representation as the engagement within this age range was quite low.
- The Community Action Plan, which was created in 2020 by the CVADT.
- The Newton Stewart Active Travel Stage 2 report.
- Housing Needs Demand Analysis conducted by South of Scotland Community Housing on behalf of NSI.

The infrastructure of the town, public transport and moving around were other priorities highlighted by residents. Improving cycle tracks, creating more bike racks, and ensuring everyone can get from A to B is paramount. D&G Council are currently undertaking consultations to improve the town transport links.

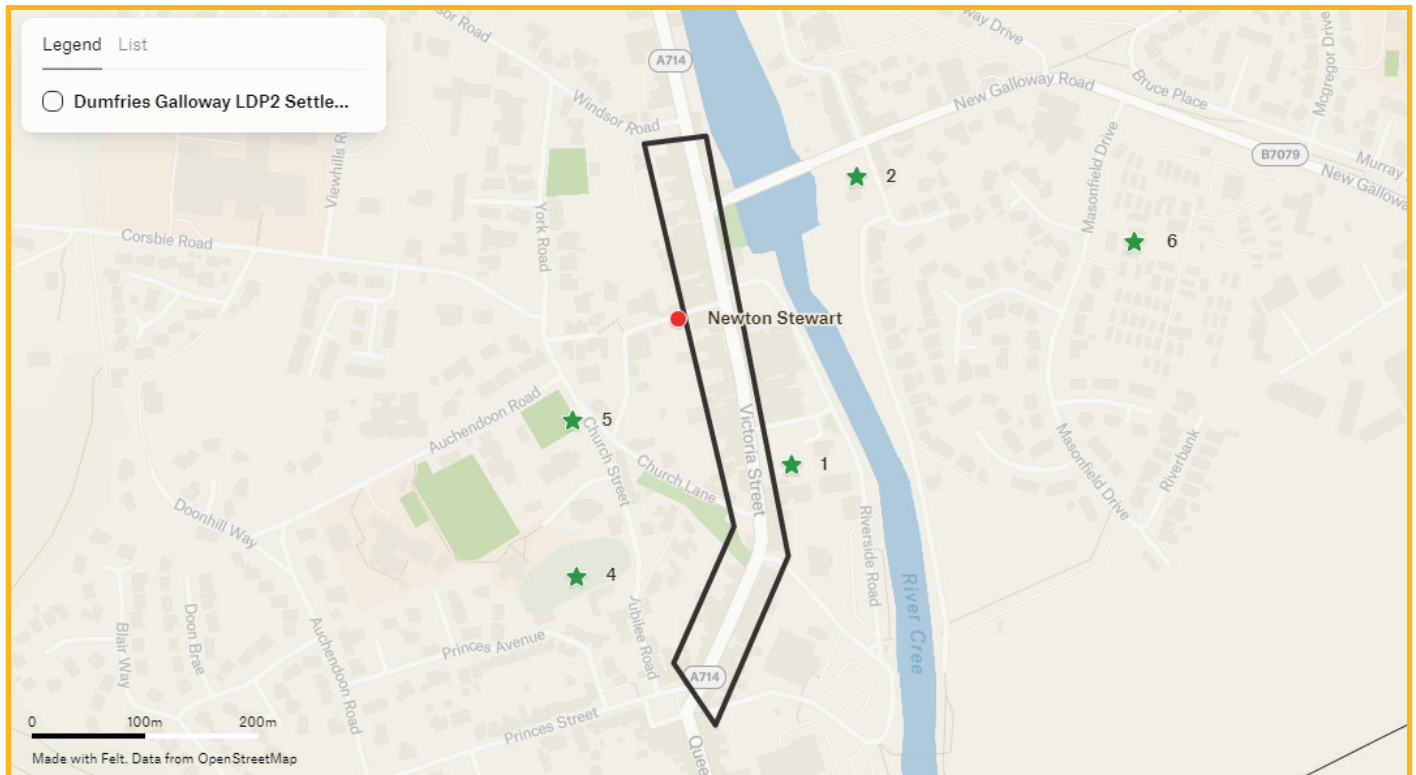
## How can we use the Local Place Plan to move forward as a town?

The Local Place Plan is a working document. It isn't set in stone but provides ideas for the community to be able to take forward to create the town we strive to live in.

Below are maps of the town with the main priorities and current building usage. Empty buildings are marked with a red dot. Priorities are marked with a green star. You can find the map online here<sup>8</sup>.

Map 1 shows the priorities in and around the town centre.

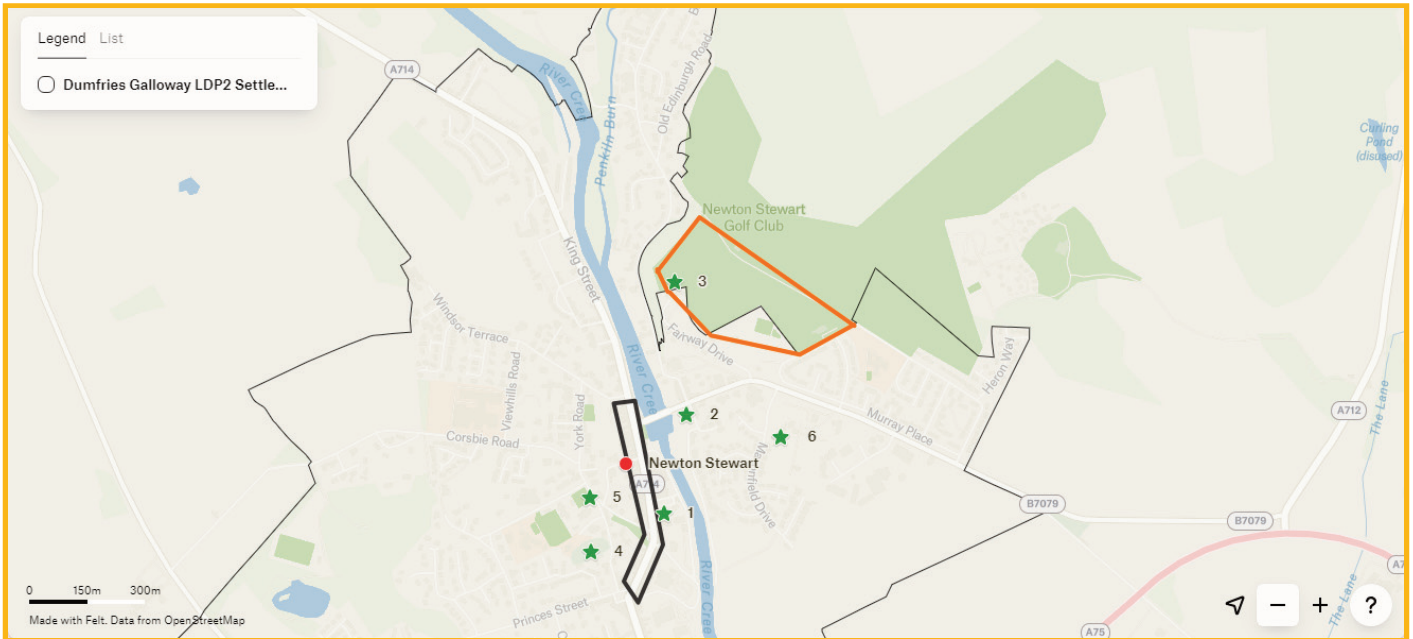
- Priority 1 is high street regeneration.
- Priority 2 is safety.
- Priority 3 is play and recreation (Minnigaff Park redevelopment not shown on this map)
- Priority 4 is public transport.
- Priority 5 is moving around.
- Priority 6 is work and local economy.



**Map 1**

<sup>8</sup> <https://felt.com/map/LPP-Map-Newton-Stewart-Minnigaff-RQ5n0KXTRrqJlCayn3a2QA?loc=54.95944,-4.483503,18z>

Map 2 below shows priority 3, play and recreation. Minnigaff Park sits outside the LDP2 boundary. However, as it is a space that has been highlighted for redevelopment within the Local Place Plan, a new boundary has been drawn around it in orange to highlight that it is important to our town.



**Map 2**

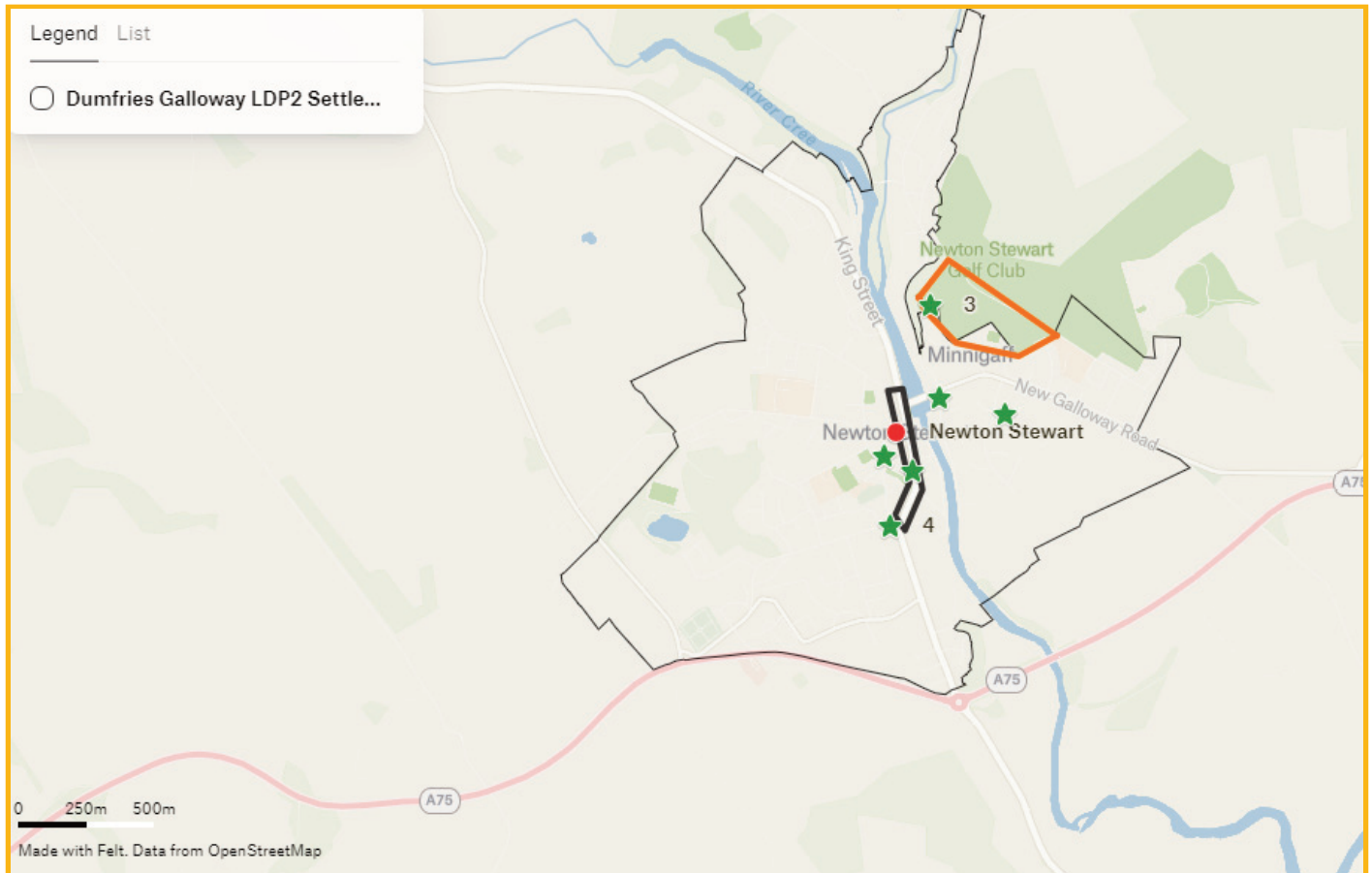
### Priorities for Newton Stewart & Minnigaff

As a town there are many needs and priorities which haven't been included within the plan as we are focusing on the top six priorities according to resident's answers. Mental health is an important topic, but it wasn't one of the main priorities for the residents in the town at this time. The other priorities and themes can be found in the appendices.

The priorities for Newton Stewart are shown in the map below with areas highlighted for regeneration. An online copy can be found here<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://felt.com/map/Newton-Stewart-Minnigaff-Priorities-z5rSEJIST2KU5m0paFomeC>





From the six main themes that were identified and prioritised the following includes some of the ideas that emerged from the consultations and the plan, and the main projects identified under those headings.

## 1 Streets and Spaces

High street regeneration and empty buildings featured high amongst the priorities under the heading of streets and spaces. Newton Stewart Initiative have successfully received funding from Scottish Land Fund, the Agricultural Heritage Fund and Rural Housing Fund to take over and refurbish the Grapes Hotel. In 2021 an article was written about the uncertain future of the Grapes<sup>10</sup>. It was published on the DGWGO website in relation to the state of the building and concern was growing within the town over the uncertain future of it.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.dgwgo.com/community-focus/concern-grows-for-future-of-derelict-grapes-hotel-building-in-newton-stewart/>



*Photo from the 1920's of people gathered outside the old Grapes Hotel*



*Grapes Hotel circa 1970's*





*Grapes Hotel 2024*

## ‘Vibe 75’

Newton Stewart Initiative have recently negotiated a five-year lease on the previously named ‘Cinnamon Café’ which has now been renamed Vibe 75. This building had been a café and bookshop for several years before the owners decided to retire. They wanted the building to be used by the community and for the community and agreed to lease the building to Newton Stewart Initiative, with the idea being that we would apply for funding to acquire the building, something they are currently in the process of doing.

This, along with the progress in purchasing the above-mentioned Grapes Hotel are examples of how the Local Place Plan aims to tackle town centre neglect.

## Town Centre Regeneration...

Dumfries and Galloway Council conducted a town centre audit in September 2023. For all units within the town centre boundary, as defined in Dumfries and Galloway Council’s Local Development Plan<sup>11</sup> (both retail and otherwise, excluding housing), the vacancy rate was 21% which was a total of 18 vacant units in the town centre. Vacancies in 2023 was considerably higher than that recorded in the 2021 audit, which only had 6% vacant units. By observing the condition of vacant units, it was clear there was a mix of units that had been vacant for long periods of time and those that had recently become vacant.

One of the main issues, not only in our town, but in many towns in Dumfries and Galloway and throughout the UK is empty buildings with absentee landlords. Finding the landlords and beginning negotiations with them to bring about renovation or sale has proved difficult.

Attracting new businesses to the area is another issue. Ensuring our high street is filled with shops that cater for our residents and tourists alike must be a priority.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/ldp2>



## Galloway Arms Hotel

Another example of the issues faced is with regards to The Galloway Arms Hotel. This building has been identified in the LPP as another eyesore in the high street by many residents. The Galloway Arms Hotel dates back to 1750 and was built for the Earl of Galloway. It is a category B listed building and has the oldest pub entrance in Newton Stewart. It is a three-storey building located opposite the old Town Hall on Victoria Street.



*Galloway Arms Hotel, 2024*

Although our buildings in Newton Stewart are reasonably priced compared to other places in the UK, there are other, macro issues which may be seen to be making the town less attractive to new businesses and inward investment, such as high insurance costs due to flood risk issues, utility costs and business rates, all of which are out of 'local control'. On 19 November 2012 the highest observed water level in the River Cree occurred when it is thought that around 50 properties were affected<sup>12</sup>. This is still impacting the town through high insurance costs, more than ten years later.

Derelict sites can have a big impact on town centres. Quite apart from potential safety concerns around empty buildings or gap sites, neglected land and buildings can invite vandalism, deter investment and cause damage to community pride and individual mental wellbeing, as research by the Scottish Land Commission has shown<sup>13</sup>.

Bringing unloved town centre spaces back into productive use can involve anything from pop-up spaces to new buildings. Newton Stewart Initiative are currently completing a Stage 2 Asset Transfer request to take over the Old Town Hall building. This is a category B Listed Building. If successful, the ground floor rooms will be used as an administration base. Various services such as a local jobs board, tourist information point, community groups support desk, management office for Vibe 75, bus information and community events promotion among other things. The snooker club, one of the longest established clubs in the area, will remain on the first floor of the building if the transfer is approved by Dumfries and Galloway Council.

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<sup>12</sup> [https://www2.sepa.org.uk/frmstrategies/pdf/pva/PVA\\_14\\_12\\_Full.pdf](https://www2.sepa.org.uk/frmstrategies/pdf/pva/PVA_14_12_Full.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d4dfa39b6\\_VDL%20in%20Scotland%20Final%20Report%2020191008.pdf](https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/5dd7d4dfa39b6_VDL%20in%20Scotland%20Final%20Report%2020191008.pdf)





*Old Town Hall aka The Clock Tower, Newton Stewart*

Projects of this type can help create jobs, restore community esteem, address climate change, and improve health and wellbeing.

Every year a local group, W.O.M.A.N.S. (Women Of Minnigaff And Newton Stewart) run by volunteers, create hanging baskets to be hung outside all of the local businesses to brighten up the high street and take care of the public garden spaces in town. This is just one example of how a voluntary group can take ownership of regenerating our high street.

### ***What can we do about it?***

- Constitutionalised charities and groups can apply for funding to take over empty buildings and turn them into community use. There are a variety of funding sources including Scottish Land Fund, National Lottery, Plunkett Foundation and funding opportunities are available on the SCVO website and Third Sector DG website. The Scottish Land Commission has also produced a useful PDF of where to access funding for empty buildings<sup>14</sup>.
- Write to your local community council and councillors asking them to speak up about the issue.
- Set up a group whose primary aims/ objectives are to work on campaigning/ filling the empty buildings.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/621fdf47f1f07\\_Funding%20sources%20for%20bringing%20vacant%20and%20derelict%20land%20back%20into%20use%20-%20March%202022.pdf](https://www.landcommission.gov.scot/downloads/621fdf47f1f07_Funding%20sources%20for%20bringing%20vacant%20and%20derelict%20land%20back%20into%20use%20-%20March%202022.pdf)

- Community ownership - In Dumfries a community benefit society was set up to take over ownership of empty buildings. Every member was given a share and profits distributed amongst members. This is called Midsteeple Quarter.<sup>15</sup>.
- You can find more information about empty buildings on the At-Risk register, or the private landlords register. The Buildings at Risk Register is maintained by Historic Environment Scotland and contains a list of all at risk buildings within Dumfries and Galloway. The private landlords register is a list of all private landlords which is accessible to anyone trying to find the owner of an empty building. The information is out there for people, it is just knowing where to find it and access it.
- Community Asset Transfers- Groups and organisations can apply to transfer council owned buildings into charity ownership. This has been done successfully in many towns across southwest Scotland.
- Currently there is the Penninghame Centre, Minnigaff Units and the Old Town Hall available for community asset transfer. A stage two community asset transfer application has been submitted for the Old Town Hall to convert it into an office and information centre and currently have a stage one application in for the Minnigaff Units.

## 2 Safety

When the initial survey was conducted in February 2023, Newton Stewart was seeing some higher levels of anti-social behaviour than had been seen in a while. Newton Stewart Initiative employed three part time youth workers on a temporary contract. Together, with Youthwork D&G, (which is a D&G Council initiative), we have been involved with up to 80 young people every week, through detached work and youth clubs. Relationships are being built, connections are being made and at the Cree Valley Community Council meeting in November 2023 the police report noted a decline in anti-social behaviour.

Newton Stewart Initiative and Youthwork D&G will continue to work together to offer opportunities for young people and a safe space that allows them to thrive.

In terms of police presence in the local town we understand that police budgets are tight and that they don't have the time to be on the streets patrolling as they used to. There are various reasons given for this and we recognise that such issues are on a local and national level.

### *What can we do about it?*

- Safety around street lighting is something that can be addressed and taken up with the council as they are responsible for maintaining lighting in our streets and spaces.
- Newton Stewart Initiative and Youthworks DG are continuing to build their partnership working with and for the young people of the town to address anti-social behaviour.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.midsteeplequarter.org/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://buildingsatrisk.org.uk/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.landlordregistrationscotland.gov.uk/>

### 3 Play and Recreation

Newton Stewart has several facilities and open spaces for residents and tourists. These include:

- Minnigaff Park
- Blairmount Park, home of Galloway Thistle and Newton Stewart Football Club, who provide coaching to kids from age 5. There are also rugby clubs for both women and men and a tennis club.
- Douglas Park and BMX track
- St. Couans Place Playground
- Glebe Crescent Playground
- Albert Street Gardens
- Earl of Galloway Memorial Gardens

As well as these we have the Merrick Leisure Centre, a private gym at Minnigaff Industrial Estate, a bowling green, Newton Stewart Golf club, a tennis club and rugby club as well as Newton Stewart Angling Association.

There are several cafes and bars within the town open from 9am - 12pm including the Belted Galloway, Brew Ha-Ha and the Brigend Pantry. Public-houses include the Star Inn, The Central Bar, The Crown Hotel, The Bruce Hotel, The Black Horse Hotel, The Cree Inn and Creebridge House Hotel. At one time in the not-too-distant past Newton Stewart was well known for having more bars per population than any other town in Scotland.

The Vault Arts Centre is a popular venue for live music in the town and runs a Traditional Music Festival every year.

#### ***What can we do about it?***

- Redevelopment of Minnigaff Park as a destination space for residents and tourists. Cree Valley Area Development Trust are currently awaiting feasibility studies on Minnigaff Park
- Set up groups to maintain and adopt our parks.
- Find out what events people would like to see in the town and to organise these.
- Set up an events group and share a calendar of events for the town so everyone knows what is happening within the town.
- Encourage later opening for cafes and restaurants especially in the summer months, when tourist numbers are higher.

## 4 Public Transport

Newton Stewart is in a rural location. 22.9% of the population do not have cars and therefore rely heavily on public transport. With the closure of the local hospital many residents now must travel to Dumfries or Stranraer for medical appointments etc. Buses are infrequent and aren't direct, travelling around many villages before getting to the final destination. This means some appointment times are impossible to keep whilst adding extra time to all journeys.

SWESTRANS is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland and covers an area contiguous within the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Partnership Board consists of five Councillor members and two external members, one from South of Scotland Enterprise and one from NHS Dumfries and Galloway.

Stantec are a specialist consultancy firm who have been appointed by SWESTRANS to undertake public consultation on transport issues in Newton Stewart. This will then feed into the Regional Transport Strategy. The Regional Transport Strategy<sup>18</sup> sets out a vision for a transport system for the Southwest of Scotland that delivers the internal and external connectivity required to sustain and enhance the region's economy and communities whilst minimising the impact of transport on the environment.

The town has four bus services operating:

- Dumfries - Newton Stewart - Stranraer – 500/X75
- Newton Stewart - Whithorn - Stranraer – 416
- Newton Stewart Town – 420
- Port William - Newton Stewart – 415
- Newton Stewart - Girvan – 359

In the town centre there are five bus stops with approximate service times being between 07:00 and 22:13. Further out of the town centre there are 12 bus stops with operating hours between 07:01 and 22:14. There are approximately four buses per hour. There is also a bus service to Girvan via Glentroll and Barrhill although it doesn't go up to the railway station.

Newton Stewart is approximately 70 miles from the nearest motorway, the M74 which runs from M8 to M6 Carlisle and south; and 25.7 miles from Stranraer, which is the second largest town in Dumfries and Galloway, after Dumfries itself.

There is no direct link to the nearest railway station at Barrhill some 19 miles away.

Local residents and groups have been campaigning since 2017 to dual the A75. A recent announcement was made in 2023 by the UK Prime Minister to invest in the A75. Gail MacGregor, leader of Dumfries and Galloway Council noted, “upgrading the A75 will lead to reduced journey times and bring significant economic benefits and CO2 savings to our region and the UK. In turn, this will help us address the climate emergency and make our communities connected to the A75 safer places to live, work and visit”. This will be a huge benefit to the town.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.swestrans.org.uk/article/23892/Regional-Transport-Strategy>



### ***What can we do about it?***

- One option might be to apply for funding for community transport to enable residents access to hospitals in Stranraer/Dumfries. Galloway Community Transport and Wigtownshire Community Transport both currently operate in the area. The Riverside Day Centre also has a bus. It would be helpful if groups in Newton Stewart could come together and form their own group to raise funds to improve such essential transport links
- Engage with public consultations around public transport.
- Option to lobby SWESTRANS
- Car sharing

## **5 Moving Around**

The pattern of car ownership in Cree Valley largely matches the regional and national averages. 22.9% of households do not have access to a car. This is lower than the Scottish average of 30.5%, but slightly higher than the levels for Dumfries and Galloway, where 47.5% of households have access to one car, around 5% higher than national levels. (Community Action Plan 2020).

Newton Stewart has a walking festival every year and the Galloway Hillbillies are a local Cycling Club in the area. Not only do they organise regular road and mountain biking events but also run a monthly BMX drop in at Douglas Park, Newton Stewart.

The NC73, national cycle route, runs along the River Cree on the outskirts of the town centre. There are only two bike racks outside the Co-Op on Victoria Street and some railings where cyclists would be able to lock up their bikes. We have two cycle shops in the town and two specialist outdoor shops for walkers, cyclists and campers.

### ***What can we do about it?***

- Put more bike racks in the town centre to encourage people to cycle into town instead of driving.
- Work with local and national walking and cycling groups to ensure Newton Stewart is a walking and cycling friendly town for residents and tourists.
- Set up a cycling group who are interested in promoting Newton Stewart as a cycling destination.
- Offer cycling workshops for residents to gain confidence in cycling.
- Work with South of Scotland Destination Alliance to put Newton Stewart on the map as a cycling and walking destination.
- Add seating/benches on the high street to encourage people to walk and rest.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.gallowaycommunitytransport.org/>

## 6 Work and Local Economy

As mentioned above, Newton Stewart's main industries are health, education, retail, farming and agriculture.

With a higher-than-average percentage of the population being over 60 there are many people working in public, voluntary and private health care as well as the NHS. The economy overall has changed with many people working from home, setting up their own business or side hustle and less focus on traditional style jobs. Apprenticeships within the town are limited and the nearest job centre is Stranraer, 40 minutes away.

### *What can we do about it?*

- Have a centralised jobs display board for local job opportunities.
- Have a learning centre for adults and 16-18 year olds where they can access new skills, courses and learning opportunities.
- Re-establish the Business Association as a voice for local businesses and support.
- Establish links with local colleges and Universities in Dumfries and Stranraer - D&G College.
- Improving transport links to further education campuses in Dumfries and Stranraer.
- Making apprenticeships easier for businesses and local employers to access - potentially working with DGC Employability & Skills team and D&G College
- Make the town attractive to potential employers through the promotion of Newton Stewart as a town for new businesses through the creation of an action group specifically for this. Also, by lobbying the local council for business relief rates and funding for new businesses to set up.

### Listening and Visioning Events

Our listening and visioning events were held both in person and online and were an opportunity for residents to think 'outside of the box'. The question was posed to participants...

***'If you had a million pounds to spend in the town, what would you spend it on?'***

We also aimed to capture a collective vision by asking them what their hopes were for their loved ones for the future. All the responses are included as an appendix to this plan.

### Conclusion and potential projects

With regards to the top six themes to come out of the Local Place Plan we have summed up what potential projects could be created.

## Safety

Residents voiced their fears regarding how safe they felt in Newton Stewart, the consensus was one of negativity, meaning they didn't always feel safe. One of the reasons stated for this concerned anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the town. Since the engagement of several youth workers by Newton Stewart Initiative and co-operative working with Youthwork D&G, there has been a noted shift in the pattern of ASB, according to the last police report presented to Cree Valley Community Council in November 2023. There had been a significant decrease. Newton Stewart Initiative and Youthwork D&G will continue to provide after-school access and opportunities to young people five days a week in the town through funding applications and support of local community groups and D&G Council.

One of the aims for Vibe 75 is to turn the upstairs space into a place where Youthwork D&G and NSI can continue to work together and create a space to include young people from the town and give them an option to engage, rather than turning to anti-social behaviour.

## Streets and Spaces

Derelict and empty buildings were a high priority, and the main theme was of the need for high street regeneration.

As well as the previously mentioned Vibe 75, Newton Stewart Initiative have recently acquired funding to redevelop the derelict Grapes Hotel. The plan is to create a multi-purpose facility on the High Street which will include a dedicated community shop, and, with co-operative working with South of Scotland Community Housing, create bespoke, affordable accommodation.

## Play and Recreation

Minnigaff Park, has been identified as a space ideal for community development, with the aim of achieving an attraction for both residents and tourists. Cree Valley Area Development Trust are currently working on feasibility studies for Minnigaff Park.

Other parks in the area have been identified as needing development. This would present an opportunity for community groups to take the lead, look at re-development options and identify potential funding sources to allow delivery.

## Public Transport

Stantec will be publishing a draft of the Newton Stewart Active Travel Stage 2 Report, due at the end of February 2023. All stakeholders will receive a copy for feedback and be informed of any decisions to be taken forward. The recommendations will be left with the Local Place Plan Team.

SWESTRANS is one of seven Regional Transport Partnerships in Scotland and covers an area contiguous within the boundaries of Dumfries and Galloway Council. They will look to fund Stage 3 & 4 (Detailed planning and Design) and/or any public realm work that the community would like to have carried out off the back of this report pending available funding. The report will be quite long but very comprehensive and evidence based. This report can be found in the attached appendices.

Whilst restricted public transport continues to cause issues there are potential opportunities that could be exploited, introducing a car sharing scheme, a community bus that could either be hired by members of the community, or community groups on an ad hoc basis, for hospital appointments, or social events etc. A facility of this type would require funding, but looking at options such as use of electric vehicles may offer suitable routes to funds.

## Work and Local Economy

Whilst there are many employed in the public service and retail sector within the town, there are also many self-employed business owners. Being able to offer young people opportunities, not only in the form of work experience and apprenticeships but also giving them an opportunity to see what self-employment can offer, could help the town to grow by retaining the younger workforce.

Re-establishing the local business association would ensure that local business owners have a collective voice in terms of campaigning, lobbying and contributing to anything that will impact their ability to thrive.

Having a one-stop-shop for job vacancies, a jobs board, opportunities, CV building, interview skills etc. will support people within the local town.

## Moving Around

Newton Stewart is known as a walking and cycling town and continuing to build upon this will be paramount for the future of the town. Ensuring not only residents' safety, but also tourists in terms of parking and crossings, which is part of Stantec's consultation, is an area that needs to be looked at within the Local Development Plan that D&G Council has created and an area that Stantec are currently working on, especially in terms of Dashwood Square. One idea has been to make a one-way system through the high street and widen the pavements on the high street. This would need public consultation as well as liaising with a number of bodies including CVCC, D&G Council, Transport and Planning etc.

The overall vision,

**“To become a thriving town for living, working and leisure, retaining our natural scenery and sense of community, whilst welcoming new opportunities”.**

This came out of taking on board residents' views of what they hoped for, for the future. The only way we can deliver this vision is by working collectively and collaboratively as groups and individuals within the town.

Looking ahead to the future there is a lot of work to be done in our town, which we know will take time, but everyone has their role to play in creating the town that we want to live in. As mentioned above this Local Place Plan is fluid and can be reviewed and amended at any point over the next ten years according to the towns needs and priorities.

## Appendix List

1. Residents' comments under the top six themes- page 33-43
2. Other priorities for the town-page 44
3. Listening and Visioning comments by residents- page 45-48
4. Community Action Plan page 49-80
5. Housing Needs Demand Analysis conducted by South of Scotland Community Housing 2021- page 81-103
6. 10,000 Voices Survey 104-114

## Appendix 1 - Residents comments under the top six themes

Please note all comments are sic. These comments were made when we conducted our online survey and are all residents' comments under the top six themes.

FROM ONLINE SURVEY		
Streets and Spaces	What is good now?	How could we make it better in the future?
	Not much	Buildings need better maintenance and parks or gardens need to be looked after better
	A number of buildings in Newton Stewart’s main streets are in an awful state	Enforce positive action on the owners
	There are some lovely areas, however there is a distinct lack of civic pride. Women's group do an excellent job, but individuals could maintain their own patch, help neighbours who can't do.	Residents \ groups could work together to improve and maintain our area. Main street premises need taking in hand, serious development needs to take place
	The main street has a few individual businesses, but has some old shabby building that need more than tlc.	
	Small businesses, organisations and individuals have tried their best to make the high street as inviting as they can but are fighting a losing battle against dilapidated buildings which are a complete eyesore.	Funding should be made available to support both new and existing businesses and organisations that have taken on old buildings on the high street to ensure that they don't close.
	theres some places to go	there’s a lot of mean teenagers that hang around in public spaces, it’s scary
	They work	Buildings are all really old
	Public places are well maintained	Not enough places that are designed/friendly towards young people
	The community work hard to keep the green spaces looking good	The number of crumbling buildings in the high street is letting to town down
	There is lots of natural beauty around the area	There isn’t a lot for youngsters would be nice to see some more indoor activities in the area for when the weather isn’t great
	Great parks and shops	Improve social areas in the town centre

		Improve the towns gardens and footpaths
		Some derelict buildings
	There okay	Some empty shops
		The Grapes Hotel and the Galloway Arms need to be addressed. These buildings are in a terrible state of repair and make the main street look uncared for and unattractive.
		Encourage business in vacant premises. Enforce upkeep on Main Street buildings
	Streets and parks are good	Buildings falling apart on high street. Almost no 'public spaces' where the community can gather.
	The existing shops are good.	Difficult as so many landlords are not local and don't care about property they own.  Rates high for some small businesses.
	The scenery is beautiful	Derelict buildings affect the appearance of the high street. There are lot's of empty shops which could do with some sort of tax breaks/ rate reductions on to encourage people to set up their own shops. There are points of interest but at the moment you have to find them yourself as no tourist information centre or guide to the area. There is a beautiful little fountain on Dashwood Square which doesn't work and tourists struggle to know where to ask for information
		Take over some empty buildings and either knock them down to create more parking or do them up as a community hub space
	Half of shops and other buildings in Main Street are empty or falling to bits.	Approach owners to open them up to smaller retail /pop up shops or tidy them up. Put art in windows
	Some historic buildings  Good green open space  Clock is being refurbished  Hanging baskets and flower pots - by ladies of NS.	There are a lot of buildings that are empty (or look empty) and could do with painting and the gutters clearing etc.  More flowers and hanging baskets  Better lighting at night



		<p>More pavement and road cleaning</p> <p>End illegal parking</p> <p>More benches</p>
	Some buildings around NS are being used very well and are assets to the community as a whole.	There are a few buildings being under used and degrading, particularly on the highstreet.
	There is a good variety of shops in the high street	Speak to the AONB and building listing people to allow sympathetic modernisation of buildings in the high street using modern materials to allow the buildings to all look fresher. It is far too grey and drab and needs a good clean up. It could look great. If the planning people wish the buildings to remain exactly as in olden times, then they should contribute money the constant update to maintain the buildings and not just expect building owners to keep it that way at their own expense
		<p>Fix unused buildings, make use of empty shops</p> <p>More crossing points</p>
	Very little good about the town . A lot of closed shops - looks awful	Maybe a nice wall mural
	<p>Empty shops</p> <p>Vandalism</p>	
	Generally pretty good, pleasant parks and public areas around the Cree. Plenty of kiddies playparks and areas to exercise dogs.	Stop mowing every possible green space (Blairmount Park, around Princes Street). Selective mowing for access supplemented by large areas of wildflowers, scrubland, community orchards... would increase biodiversity and reduce maintenance costs.

Work and Local Economy	What is good now?	How could we make it better in the future?
	There are plenty of food shoos	We need more specialised shops like shoes and clothes shops
	I don't think we offer much to encourage young people to stay within the area	
	I can keep myself fully occupied by getting involved with the community	Jobs and opportunities needed for youth, young people and young families.
	There are lots of individual groups all doing things which people can work, volunteer and train at.	Groups should be working together far more than they currently do. There is far too much jealousy and bickering and that has held the town back for years, and continues to do so.
	there's some restaurants	a lot of places aren't hiring and there's not many businesses that need workers as the town isn't very busy
		There may be opportunities bus accessing them/finding out about them/signing up for them is difficult
	There is a collage in Stranraer but unfortunately the one in Newton Stewart closed.	Very little jobs locally due to not being much industry
	Pleat third sector organisations and good independent shops	More support to bring town centre shops and building back into use

		So far I'm gonna say it quite poor maybe your just not advertising it but when I asked around it doesn't seem the case no I don't think there may opportunity in newton Stewart for people - jobs are quite hard but do pop up which is good training well not so good special not at college again funding and school isn't helpful for those leaving
		There needs to be more employment opportunities for younger people.
		at the moment NS is not built for the future, the number of new families here are decreasing and with that the number of young people. NS needs to become more welcoming to new people, this could be done by services such as childcare, youthwork, police making the community safe etc. and then the town needs to build a reputation for that. The schools & their management could also do with improvement.
	Good variety of shops	Employ initiative similar to Dumfries to repurpose empty shops to allow small start up business run by local youngsters, maybe get some business guidance assistance for them, to breathe life and variety into the high street.
	Services mainly good	Try to get free courses etc like whithorn manage to do
	Online classes	Offer classes in more towns or online
	Overall, my needs are met, from shopping to GP practice. Love that we have a working cinema and a music venue.	A dentist! Could not get treatment even as a private patient, nearest available was Stranraer.
		I believe the focus should be on growing businesses in the area and encouraging younger people to move into self employment. This will give them skills for the future and encourage them to stay in the area
	No jobs, no education unless you are in school.	Open up high school for evening classes

		More support for local businesses
	<p>Lots of opportunity to join in community activities and volunteer</p> <p>Community shops are really good</p> <p>I have good broadband so am able to work from home</p>	<p>There is limited higher education or education for adults available</p> <p>It is difficult to find work locally</p> <p>It would be good to have a more formal FE type college/apprenticeships</p> <p>Unable to find citizens advice or local information centre</p> <p>NS looks shabby and as if it is declining - especially at the creebridge end</p> <p>Pubs are scruffy and uninviting for visitors- could do with a decent wine bar/ bistro or that they are generally refurbished to encourage people to come into town to eat</p> <p>Cafes are tired as well - They look like old fashioned greasy spoons and need updating. It would be nice to have seating out on the pavements with umbrellas and patio heaters etc.</p>

Feeling Safe	What is good now?	How could we make it better in the future?
	Very little	A lot more visible policing would help . More powers to stop unsocial behaviour
		HAVE A POLICE STATION THAT IS ACTUALLY OPEN AND ACCESSIBLE
		there's a lot of anti-social behaviour, more young people are being involved in crime
	Everyone is friendly and look out for each other	
	Generally a safe place to live with good community feeling	More visible police presence

	Friendly community.	Some antisocial behaviour of teenagers with not enough to do.
		Lack of policing.
		More local police as there seems to be a lot of anti social behaviour happening right now
	Its ok in the summer and in the daylight in the winter  Local police station and visible police	Carpark feels unsafe at night in the winter  Better lighting along alleyways and along the river  Life belts along the river  Not sure where the nearest defib machine is - but we could do with some in town.  More accountability for the reported antisocial behaviour that is scaring some of the local residents. - Maybe neighbourhood watch or neighbourhood patrols during the winter months.
		there's a lot of anti-social behaviour, more young people are being involved in crime
	Everyone is friendly and look out for each other	
	Generally a safe place to live with good community feeling	More visible police presence
	Friendly community.	Some antisocial behaviour of teenagers with not enough to do.
		Lack of policing.
		More local police as there seems to be a lot of anti social behaviour happening right now
	Generally people are friendly	Tackle broke shop window straight away , tackle graffiti straight away, teach the kids in the school about keeping the place clean. Give them a sense of pride and respect for the place and this will transfer to the adults as well.
		More police presence
	Generally very safe place	Traffic calming measures on station road as they go far too quickly
	Place feels very safe, no serious incidents take place either day or night.	As before, mindless vandalism and poor parking are annoying.



Moving Around	What is good now?	How could we make it better in the future?
	There are plenty of good walking paths however they could be better for disabled access.	Better disabled access and possibly a public scheme to rent mobility vehicles.
	Reasonably good access to lots of walks, but limited upkeep of off-road trails	Improve trails and maintain them - add paths where access is poor
	Town buses	Buses that link to trains
	Outwith the town centre, there are any number of amazing walks and cycle routes.	The town centre is ridiculously busy, almost dangerously so, at times and with some buildings in danger of falling onto the street it is imperative that something is done to support, and make safer, pedestrian use of the town.
	there's a lot of busses	
	there's buses everywhere	have more buses
	Sainsburys	Capybara statue  Penguin exhibit  Raccoons  Dinosaur park
	A lot of walks and such	Paths could be more pedestrian friendly
	There are path ways around town to make easy access to get to places	More cycle routes in and out of towns around the small villages would be good to allow safe access from one place to another. Also safe footpaths between local villages and towns.

	Geographical position Easy Outdoor Access	Investment in regeneration of the town and town centre
	The bus times are really bad	Get better bus times
		There are some roads without pavements which means lack of safety for pedestrians, especially children. Example is Windsor Road, Newton Stewart.
		1. Potholes on the roads are unbelievable it not hard to fix  2. More footpaths I've seen plenty of people with children and dogs walking on the road because there isn't any footpath
	Driving only	Rural paths. Rail links
	Walking routes	Cycle paths
	Local bus but it stops early.	More accessible
	Very little traffic congestion, easy to walk around town	If I couldn't drive I would find it difficult to commute between places. Buses are few and far between and taxis are expensive.
		Better street lighting. Some areas are dark in Newton.
		Disabled parking  Pavement surfaces
	Paths good condition in the main	More cycle paths
	roads are ok  bus routes seem good  There seems to be lots of school buses  Cycle paths and path along the river is good	Fill in the potholes  Pavements are narrow for more elderly, prams and disabled people.  Could do with more dropped curbs  Less double parking in the High Street  Need a pedestrian crossing at Creebridge end of High street  Lighting in the alley by the Coop

	<p>Its great how Newton Stewart is essentially a hub for lots of different and little communities. This means that there are regular busses to other towns. (however, regular is based upon comparison to other areas within d&amp;g) but may be considered irregular, infrequent and poor looking from the outside in, if you've had experience with other bus services in other areas. e.g. lothian busses. The sparling bridge is also good.</p>	<p>Widen the pavement on the creebridge, this seems very danegerous at the moment. The crossing on the victoria's street side of the creebridge is also very difficult. There also needs to be smoother pavements and more drop down curbs.</p>
	<p>I like that you can park close to the shops</p>	<p>Open the space next to the central bar that is fenced off to allow more parking</p>
		<p>Better more frequent bus service to places like Kirkcudbright</p>
	<p>Some buses do still run</p> <p>Plenty of local walks</p>	<p>Better bus services</p> <p>More lighted / safe areas to walk/run</p>
	<p>Pretty good overall, easy to get about.</p>	<p>Stop / fine cars illegally parking on pavements, double yellow lines, junctions. Can make crossing the roads dangerous and forces mobility scooters into traffic.</p>

## Appendix 2 - Other priorities for the town

When we did the initial survey and the online survey, we looked at 14 themes according to the Place Standard Tool.

The other themes and priorities to come out of the Local Place Plan were:

- Care and maintenance- of the high street, buildings, littering and generally looking after the upkeep of the town.
- Identity and belonging- Ensuring all residents know what is going on in the town and keeping the sense of community strong.
- Natural spaces- Looking after the natural beauty around us and promoting it to visitors and residents.
- Social interaction- Ensuring there are plenty of activities for a variety of age ranges within the town to allow residents to interact with each other and reduce social isolation.
- Housing and community- Ensuring there is adequate and affordable housing in place for new homeowners, reducing the amount of second homes and Air B&B's.
- Facilities and services- Ensuring that everyone has access to essential services within the town such as doctors, dentists and hospitals. Providing adequate facilities such as gyms, community centres, tourist information centre and public toilets.
- Traffic and parking- Many residents liked the fact that we have free parking available although concerns were raised on the number of cars parked on the high street all day. Some residents wanted to see parking limitations enforced and a parking warden brought back into town as well as more disabled spaces allocated.
- Influence and sense of control- Many residents felt that they did have a say on what goes on in the town, however concerns were raised about organisations not working together for the best needs of the town.

There were many comments and views made by residents on how these areas could be improved.

## Appendix 3 - Listening and Visioning Event Comments

*Please note all comments are sic.*

### **If you had a million pounds, how would you spend it in Newton Stewart?**

- Improve public transport links
- Sheltered housing village - health hub, hairdresser, shops
- Training centre for young people
- Tourist Information facility
- Encourage more police to patrol the streets, keeping anti-social behaviour in track
- Create electronic bus stops with live tracking
- Solve the housing crisis
- Building rentable houses
- Spending money on stuff for younger people
- Education in children and younger people
- Sort out the derelict buildings on the main street
- Put a crossing in at Ewart Drive for people to cross the road safely
- Help our local girls football team
- Tidy up the high street
- Relocate businesses together to create a business district
- Create more town centre housing
- Pedestrianize an area to encourage people over vehicles
- A bigger car park on Main Street.
- Demolish the Grapes and make it a paid car park
- Stop windfarms being put up destroying the countryside
- Health centre moved somewhere with more parking
- Build a crematorium
- More social groups for people in the in between age
- More housing, social and private
- Redistribution of council housing
- Increased/better street lighting
- A footpath built beside or onto existing Cree Bridge, safer for drivers and pedestrians
- Parking for Minnigaff School (Unoccupied land behind)
- More places like Kirkcare and nursing homes
- More/better cameras
- Police on the streets chatting to kids
- Better roads and pavements
- More funding for young people to get into work (help for self-employed tradesmen to taking on apprentices).



- More acknowledgement of the people in the community who give up their time or go over and above to help others e.g. W.O.M.A.N.S. Group
- More social clubs for adults
- More classes for adults
- Another health centre.
- A train station with links to Glasgow
- More shops
- Future proof the town, invest in the tourism and infrastructure of tourism, public facilities, information points, parking, transportation, and accommodation
- Invest in the education of young people with the aspiration to contribute to the tourism of the area, the facilitation of guides, first aid training for outdoor activities.
- Real investment needs to be aimed at future investment and development
- More activities for younger people and a safe space for them to go
- Kayak station
- Buildings updated
- Community use of derelict buildings
- Set up a car sharing app
- Community transport- a vehicle accessible to all groups
- More volunteering opportunities
- To turn the Galloway Arms into a bunkhouse
- To have an internet café/centre
- Themed markets- rotate- e.g. food, craft, bringing what people need and want to the community
- Weekly market- bringing in other producers
- Restructuring the town
- A destination for cycling activities- bike hire, bunkhouses, bike storage, bike racks
- To become known as an activity town- cycling, golf, hill walking
- Statue on the roundabout
- Nicer entrances to the town
- Affordable housing
- One way street and pedestrianizing the main street- widening the paths
- Elderly funding- day centre- holistic approach to their care
- Smarten up the shelter at Dashwood Square
- Empty buildings- all to be repaired and filled
- Pop up ice rink at Dashwood Square
- Aquarium/ fishery centre
- Light feature along the river
- Better further education prospects brought into Newton Stewart
- An acre of land each for people to utilise in their own way- encouraging food production etc
- Homegrown business and business collaboration
- Having a community garden
- Subsidies for car insurance for people in rural areas

- Utilising hydro power
- Reduce barriers for employment
- Better parks
- Better healthcare
- More respite provisions
- More things to do e.g. stage/ theatre
- Redesign Earl of Galloway Gardens
- Having a community centre
- College for training
- Getting rid of all the potholes
- Rejuvenating the main street
- Developing Minnigaff Park
- Redeveloping the land next to AB Matthews
- Better health care- 24 hours
- Need more carers
- Better coordinated bus times
- More entertainment
- Cafes open in the evenings
- More community events
- Less single use plastic
- Better further education opportunities
- Improve local senior education (lack of teachers and topics)
- More professionals, e.g. doctors and dentists
- Wheelchair friendly pavements
- Modern facilities e.g. ten pin bowling, fast food and soft play
- Crazy golf
- Disabled activities
- Better parks
- Better parking
- Nightclub
- Newton Stewart Hospital reopen as a hospital
- Interactive wooden play in trees

### *What needs to change to achieve this?*

- Groups working together - events calendar
- Health board to pay attention to the consultations and act on what people want
- Bus times - consultation
- Develop action plan on derelict and empty buildings
- A willingness from people to help each other
- Community groups working together with a shared vision.
- Training for community groups and councillors on governance, community enterprise and succession

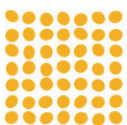
- Transparent councils
- Invest in stuff that's actually going to change the place
- Money, authority, planning, being pro active
- People getting involved
- People's attitudes towards youngsters
- More money
- A good committee or strong group
- Money being spent on silly things that aren't important to the people of Newton Stewart
- Road's planning to allow bypassing of town centre
- Rezoning of shops and housing areas
- More investment to attract more people
- Get the Grapes knocked down
- Transparency on the part of potential sources about the downside of their contribution

### *What are your hopes for your loved ones?*

- To have wildlife areas free from wind farms to enjoy
- To have a thriving town
- That there will be affordable accommodation
- More jobs with an opportunity for growth and advancement in learning, in turn creating a circular economy, providing the town centre with some rejuvenation and business
- Charity groups providing more opportunities for young people out of town and with the incentive to strive for better
- That there are enough services/amenities for them
- For the town to be self-sufficient and self-sustainable, not relying on funding
- A vibrant town for living, working and leisure time
- Better quality of life
- An unsullied and unspoiled environment that they can be proud of
- To have a bright and better future
- That they still have nature around them to enjoy
- That our loved ones can live safely in Newton Stewart
- Retaining our beautiful, clean, quiet, wildlife, enriched land
- To see the town vibrant again
- My parents to live independently as long as they can and a space in town where she can get the care she needs
- My children to get through high school safely and be safe out and about without fear of gangs or youths with knives
- For our young people to want to have a reason to stay in town
- Retaining Scottish traditions with welcoming the new

# Appendix 4 - Cree Valley Community Action Plan

2020-2025 Cree Valley Community Council  
November 2020



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## 1. Introduction and Background

### *1.1 Background and Original Drivers*

Cree Valley is located in the district of Wigtown in the local authority area of Dumfries and Galloway in South West Scotland.

Cree Valley Community Council (CVCC) is working with Local Energy Scotland to establish a local community benefits package linked to a Cree Valley area benefits project. Through extensive consultation with the developers (Scottish Power Renewables), CVCC and the communities they represent it was agreed that a Community Action Plan should be produced.

A Community Action Plan will allow CVCC to utilise community benefit payments effectively. Community benefit funds are expected to come from Kilgallioch Extension, Clauchrie and Arecleoch Windfarms and may exceed £100,000 per annum. Robust community consultation in the Cree Valley will ensure the funds are used sustainably and effectively.

To maximise the opportunity provided by the community benefits package and other income that could come to the community in the future CVCC commissioned Community Enterprise in May 2020. Community Enterprise acted as an independent consultant to work with CVCC to help them to design and facilitate a community consultation process and produce a Community Action Plan (CAP) from the findings of that process.

The CAP sets out the community's vision for the longer term (up to 20 years) with more detailed priority activity across identified themes or outcomes over the short (1-3 years), medium (3-10 years) and longer term (10-15 years). The forthcoming community benefits package is a catalyst to conducting this process now, but the CAP will encompass activity in excess of what the community benefits package will be able to support directly, providing a focus for other resources that the community may secure.

### *1.2 The Organisation*

CVCC has led on this work and has formed the Cree Valley Area Development Trust in October 2020 in order to administer the funds.

### *1.3 Methodology and scope of work*

Engaging with everyone in the local community is a critical part of any Community Action Plan. Community Enterprise, alongside Cree Valley Community Council carried out extensive and highly participative research throughout the Cree Valley area between June and September 2020 to ensure there was plenty of opportunity to share views. The Community Enterprise programme included time spent getting to know the area, encouraging engagement and

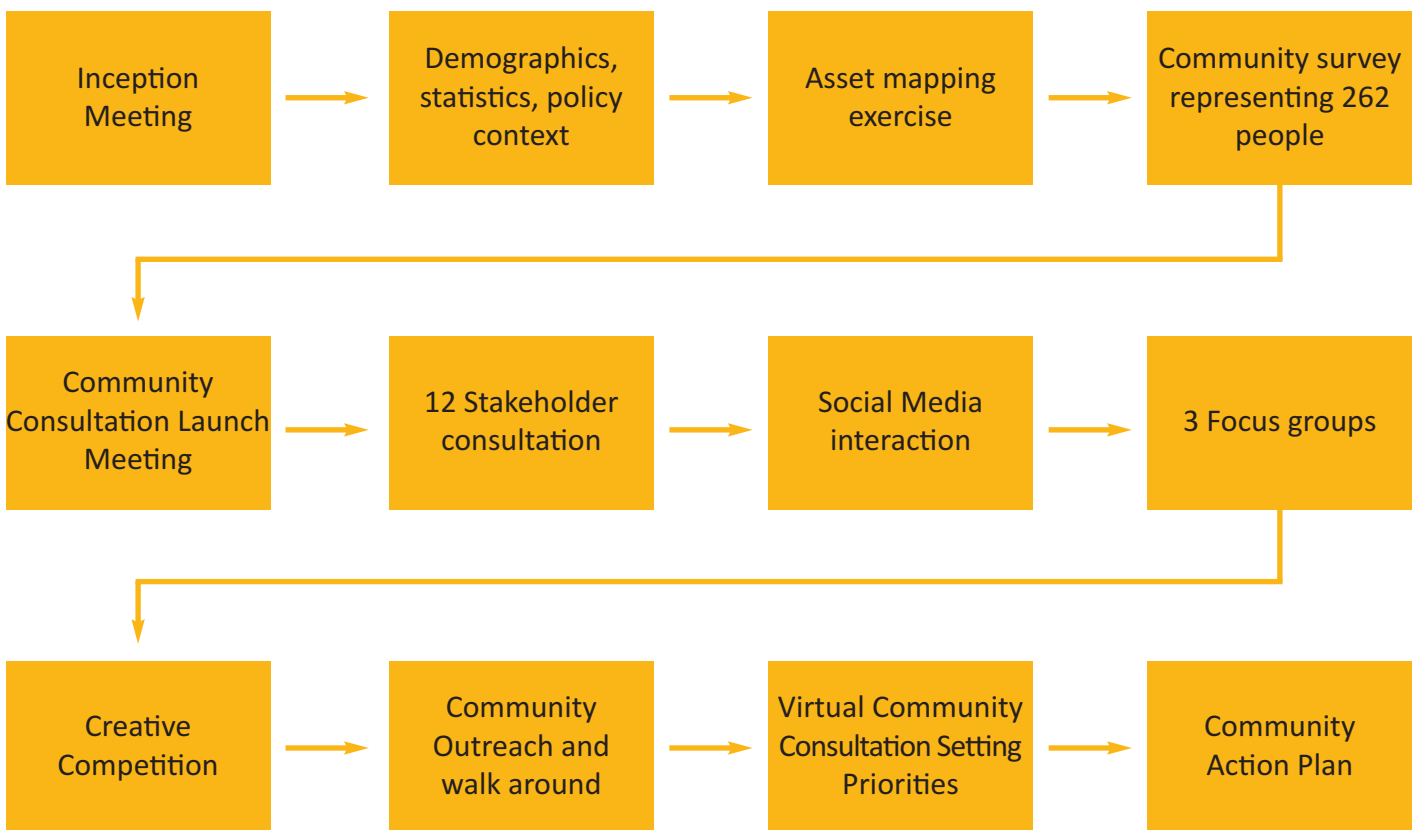
building a presence in the community. Community Enterprise were able to conduct significant research in the time following an agreed workplan with CVCC.

The COVID 19 pandemic and the restrictions put in place by the National and Scottish Government relating to social distancing and social isolation, required the traditional approaches to face-to-face consultation to be remodelled into video meetings (ZOOM) and an increased use of telephone and email conversations. In addition, Community Enterprise built on existing research in the area. As such Community Enterprise and CVCC is confident that significant data and information have been gathered.

The aim of the research was to build up both a quantitative and qualitative picture of what local people think. Analysis of the consultation programme method can be found in Section 4.

### Cree Valley Community Action Plan

The methodology can be seen outlined in the graphic below.



## 2. Research

### 2.1 The Boundary of the Cree Valley

Cree Valley is situated in south-west Scotland in the Dumfries and Galloway Region. The Cree Valley is a favourite for hill walkers and mountain bikers as it is near Galloway Forest Park, with internationally recognised biking trails amidst some of the most dramatic scenery in the south of Scotland.



Map 2: The Cree Valley Area within Dumfries and Galloway



Map 1:  
The Cree Valley Area Boundary



Map 3:  
The Cree Valley Area within Scotland

There is a wealth of wildlife, such as red and roe deer in the forest and hills, while wild goats thrive on the rocky slopes.

Newton Stewart is the main town in the Cree Valley. It is a small market town on the banks of the River Cree, surrounded by the Galloway hills. Historically, it thrived on its cotton and carpet industries, but is now more famous for its salmon and trout fishing on the River Cree. The town offers a wide range of shopping outlets (household names as well as many independent retailers) and places to eat.

The South West of Scotland has often been overlooked as a tourism destination, with many visitors heading to the more widely marketed and promoted 'Highlands and Islands' of Scotland. However, the South West of Scotland which was designated as a UNESCO Biosphere in 2012, has a rich natural and cultural heritage in its own right. Being less well known, its roads, its hills, its beaches are all quieter but the quality of authentic experiences that can be enjoyed are all there if only people knew where to go and what to see.

## *2.2 Demographics and Statistics*

### **Cree Valley**

Unless otherwise noted, the figures below are from Community Insight, a demographic software tool that collects data from over 30 databases including Census Scotland, Department of Work and Pensions, NHS and others. Community Enterprise does not own any of the following data. The headline results are shown below.

Cree Valley has a population of 4,770.

At 26.6%, the proportion of the population aged over 65 is generally consistent with the Dumfries & Galloway average (25.5%) but higher than the Scottish Population average. The proportion of people of working age is slightly lower than the regional figures and 7.1% lower than national averages.

The recent population trend in Cree Valley shows around a 2% decline since 2016. However, this area has been in a general pattern of growth over the past 20 years in contrast to the trend across Dumfries & Galloway as a whole.

The pattern of car ownership in Cree Valley largely matches the regional and national averages as seen on the graph below. 22.9% of households do not have access to a car which is lower than the Scottish average of 30.5% but slightly higher than the levels for Dumfries and Galloway. 47.5% of households have access to one car, about 5% higher than national levels.

There is a significantly lower jobs density in Cree Valley than the wider region, and Scotland as a whole.



## Economy and Employment

The largest industry sector is Health (19.3%) followed by Education (12.4%) and Retail (10.9%).

Excluding self-employed people, 30.4% of employees are employed in the public sector, compared with 20.6% across Dumfries and Galloway, and the Scotland average of 22.2%. The largest employment sector is health and social work (17% of people in employment) followed by retail (13%) and construction (11%).

35.3% of dwellings in the Cree Valley area are detached and 30.4% are semi-detached – both considerably higher than the Scotland averages of 21.4% and 19.7%. Flats, maisonettes and apartments make up just 11.3% of dwellings, compared with 37.7% across Scotland as a whole.

### Housing

62.4% of dwellings are owner-occupied, slightly lower than the regional average but comparable to national levels.

The Council no longer own dwellings for social rent, Housing Associations are the main providers of new and affordable social housing in Dumfries and Galloway and 20.8% is socially rented.



Households

There are a higher proportion of pensioner households than the Scotland average across Cree Valley at 28.3%. Over a third of households are married which is consistent with Scottish averages. The area has fewer one person households, lone parent families and no student households.



Health

Access to health services, such as GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, dentists and leisure services is poorer than for Scotland as a whole. GP services are provided in Newton Stewart. 24.5% of people have a limiting long-term illness, which is slightly higher than the Scotland average of 19.6%.

The area falls within the UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve and Galloway Dark Skies Park. The Southern Upland Way cuts through the area, passing near Glentroll.

## Environment and Infrastructure

In relation to broadband connectivity, the average broadband download speed is around half of Scotland's average (41.80 Mbit/s).



Education

35.7% of people have no qualifications (higher than the Dumfries & Galloway average 32.9% and the Scotland average of 26.8%). 20.9% hold higher education qualifications, similar to regional figures and around 5% lower than the Scotland averages.

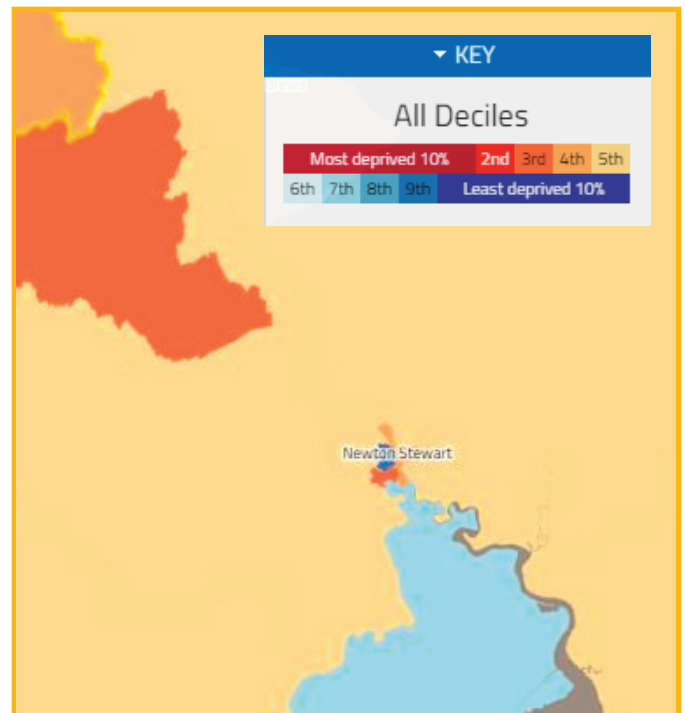
14.8% of pensioners are living in poverty in the Cree Valley area – a level slightly higher but largely comparable to the Scotland average. Levels of Universal Credit claims are 1.4% higher than the national average (14% vs. 12.6%).

SIMD<sup>1</sup> Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation ranks areas from most deprived to least deprived. The majority of people in the Cree Valley area fall within higher deprivation deciles; between 20%-50% most deprived. A smaller but notably population (658 people) can be seen with the 20-30% least deprived in Scotland illustrating a degree of inequality across the local area.

Whilst Cree Valley is not an area that could be classified as deprived in terms of education, health or housing, due to its mixed rurality, 807 people in the area do fall within the most deprived 10% for geographic access to services.

The map here shows the Cree Valley area according to the SIMD 2020 rankings. The red areas illustrate higher levels of deprivation and the blue areas correspond to areas of least deprivation. The map illustrates that much of the rural area outside of Newton Stewart has an overall ranking around the 5th decile (light brown). This sits in the middle of the deprivation profile.

Within Newton Stewart, there is a mixed profile of deprivation with some areas highlighted in blue (lower deprivation) and some within the 3rd decile or 30% most deprived. Consideration of potential regional inequalities therefore can be considered important within the Cree Valley region. Efforts to engage with and reflect on the needs and priorities of the whole community are paramount.



<sup>1</sup> The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) identifies small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland in a consistent way. It allows effective targeting of policies and funding where the aim is to wholly or partly tackle or take account of area concentrations of multiple deprivation. SIMD ranks small areas (called data zones) from most deprived (ranked 1) to least deprived (ranked 6,976).



### 2.3 Community Assets and Community Groups

The Cree Valley has a range of services available to its residents. The table below reflects these assets and services within the community to shine a light on the nature of the Cree Valley community, to identify gaps, to ensure against duplication, to invest in the good things that already exist and to encourage collaboration. It is a snapshot of the area and is not meant to be exhaustive.

Schools	Churches
Douglas Ewart High School Penninghame Primary School St Ninians RC Primary School Minnigaff Primary School Newton Stewart Nursery School Minnigaff Nursery School	Penninghame St Johns Church Our Lady and St Ninian RC Church Jubilee Road Gospel Hall All Saints, Challoch Minnigaff Church
Outdoor Assets	Community Facilities
Minnigaff Park Galloway Forest Park Kirroughtree Forest Penninghame Forest Glentrool Forest RSBP Wood of Cree River Cree Loch Dee Loch Trool Clatteringshaws Loch	Newton Stewart Centre Activity and Resource Centre Newton Stewart Initiative Community Shop Glentrool Community Hall Riverside Centre McMillan Hall Minnigaff Pavillion

In Newton Stewart, there are a number of vacant buildings within easy reach of the main street which have or are falling into serious disrepair and are an eyesore in the community. Community activists have explored the opportunities for development into community use for these buildings which include:

- The old Douglas Ewart Secondary School B Block Site – community use and affordable housing
- Former Grapes Hotel – community use
- The Minnigaff Park and pavilion has also been identified for a future community owned project.

The Minnigaff Park and pavilion has also been identified for a future community owned project.

### Community groups

In addition to the wide range of community assets detailed above there are some active community groups operating in the Cree Valley, all of which support the development and delivery of activity and events.

Church	Sport, Leisure and Activity	Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milestone Church Fellowship</li> <li>• Penninghame St John's Parish Church</li> <li>• All Saints Challoch</li> <li>• St Ninians RC Church</li> <li>• Minnigaff Church</li> </ul>	<p><b>In Newton Stewart</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rugby Football Club</li> <li>• Golf Club</li> <li>• Diving Club</li> <li>• Bowling Club</li> <li>• Angling Association</li> <li>• Football Club</li> <li>• Tennis Club</li> <li>• The Merrick Leisure Centre</li> <li>• BMX Track</li> <li>• Blairmount Park</li> <li>• Merrick Mavericks ASC</li> <li>• Angling Association</li> </ul> <p><b>Other areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Galloway Thistle FC</li> <li>• Dance X-Treme</li> <li>• Emma Louise Dance Club</li> <li>• Pony Club</li> <li>• Galloway Fishery Trust</li> <li>• Hatchery Trust</li> </ul>	<p><b>In Newton Stewart</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women of Minnigaff &amp; Newton Stewart</li> <li>• Rotary Club</li> <li>• Round Table (and District)</li> <li>• Baby &amp; Toddler Group</li> <li>• Newton Stewart Initiative</li> <li>• Penninghame Women's Guild</li> </ul> <p><b>Other areas</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cree Valley Area Development Trust</li> <li>• Various SWRI groups (Stronord &amp; Challoch)</li> <li>• Glentool &amp; Bargrennan Community Trust</li> <li>• Cree Valley Community Council</li> <li>• RBLS</li> <li>• RNLI</li> </ul>
Youth	Heritage	The Arts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace Advocate Group</li> <li>• Newton Stewart Brownies/Guides</li> <li>• Beavers / Scouts / Cubs</li> <li>• Dumfries and Galloway</li> <li>• Youth work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Museum</li> <li>• Bruce's Stone</li> <li>• Murray's Monument</li> <li>• Grey Mare's Tail</li> <li>• Crafty Distillery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Craft Club</li> <li>• Newton Stewart Players</li> <li>• Newton Stewart Cinema</li> </ul>
Environment and Outdoors	Music	Health & Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Galloway Mountain Rescue</li> <li>• Extinction Rebellion</li> <li>• Galloway Forest Astronomical Society</li> <li>• Cree Valley Community Woodlands Trust</li> <li>• Galloway Fisheries Trust</li> <li>• Southern Upland Way</li> <li>• Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere</li> <li>• Wigtownshire Ramblers</li> <li>• Newton Stewart Walking Festival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trad Music Trust</li> <li>• The Festival Operate in the Vault</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Befriending Project</li> <li>• Red Cross</li> <li>• Peace Advocacy Project</li> </ul>

## *2.4 Business and Employment*

Cree Valley and the Dumfries and Galloway Region is in large part a rural economy and employment opportunities are varied from traditional rural industries such as various forms of farming and agriculture, to manufacturing, food production, construction, transport and professions. Within the public sector Dumfries and Galloway Council is the largest employer along with the NHS.

Tourism and hospitality are some of the top employment sectors in the area, with a number of leisure and visitor attractions including mountain biking, sailing, heritage and so on. There is therefore seasonal employment in the region, as well as high levels of self-employment within the private sector.

## *2.5 Tourism in Dumfries and Galloway*

Newton Stewart is seen as and markets itself as “Gateway to the Galloway Hills”.

Tourism statistics paint a varied picture of Dumfries and Galloway. A survey conducted by Visit Scotland in 2015 showed that a whole, Dumfries and Galloway attracts 630,000 UK visitors per year – the majority come from England (355,000) with 42,000 overseas tourists per year. In line with the rest of Scotland, most trips from UK residents last between 1 and 3 nights.

Visitors to Scotland are motivated by the scenery, landscape, history and culture. Repeat visits are frequent in Dumfries and Galloway – 43% of visitors surveyed were on a return trip. Overwhelmingly, 74% of visitors to Dumfries and Galloway travel there by car.

According to Dumfries & Galloway’s Regional Tourism Strategy 2016 to 2020, one of the growth sectors is “Nature based tourism” – developing the rich and diverse product associated with the region’s natural landscape (forest, hills, river, coast and lochs) and iconic international designations such as Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere and Dark Skies.

## *2.6 Policy Context*

Community Enterprise undertook research into the policy context. The Community Action Plan reflects the priorities as outlined within the relevant national and regional policy context including community regeneration, elderly and social isolation, young people, heritage, the natural environment and conservation, tourism and economic development.



## Profile

All age groups were represented although the 36-65 age brackets were most heavily represented.

The majority of people have lived in the area between 6-30 years (48%) and more than 30 years (24%) indicating a settled community.

## Feelings about the Place

A significant 85% of respondents felt they would still be living in Cree Valley in 10 years' time, indicating a long-term commitment to the area. Only 1% said they did not intend to stay and the remaining 14% were 'not sure'. Those who don't intend to stay gave their reasons as moving for university/jobs, lack of job opportunities in the area, little to do and lack of financial support in Newton Stewart (when compared with Stranraer and Wigtown).

## Rating Cree Valley

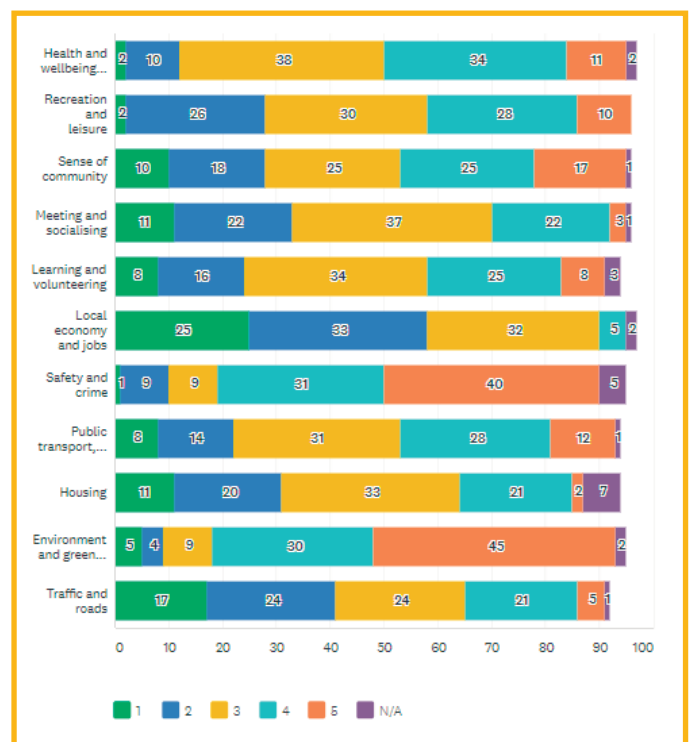
31% of people rated Cree Valley as an 'great' place to live overall. A further 42% as 'good'. 23% rated it as 'ok.' 4% rated it as a poor place to live. No-one rated it as 'awful'.

People were asked to rate specific aspects of life in Cree Valley. Health and wellbeing services was rated most highly, followed by recreation and leisure and, in third place, sense of community. Traffic and roads, housing and the local economy and jobs were rated the lowest.

What is Valued Most, What are the Challenges and Project Ideas for the Future? People were asked to rate aspects about the area and identify future project ideas. (1 = poor, 5 = excellent)

The graph shows the number of people from the 99 survey respondents and how they rated each area or issue.

The table shows what is important to people, what people like least and what projects they would like to see developed.



Like	Challenges	Projects
<p>Local environment, scenery, peace and tranquilly</p>	<p>Employment</p>	<p>Community spaces and groups</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Peace and quiet’</li> <li>• ‘Beautiful place to live’</li> <li>• ‘The outdoor spaces so near to us are stunning, there are brilliant places to visit, walk &amp; cycle.’</li> <li>• ‘The stuff we take for granted; we have beaches close by, hills, forests etc.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Jobs. We need ways to encourage more industries and business start-ups. Young people need to leave to be educated and to expand their job prospects leaving a majority of older residents’</li> <li>• ‘Long term job opportunities and employment’</li> <li>• ‘No long term employment prospects and wage levels among the lowest in Scotland’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Community theatre, film night and kids cinema’</li> <li>• ‘Using some of the rundown buildings for a well-managed community centre that caters for all needs’</li> <li>• ‘Build on COVID resilience group and create a local organisation’</li> <li>• ‘A friends of Cree group to help improve the local area e.g. litter picking with local schools’</li> </ul>
<p>Community and People</p>	<p>Transport</p>	<p>Paths, parks and environmental projects</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Kindness and generosity of people’</li> <li>• ‘Friendly neighbours’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘The lack of good access to and from the area is a problem i.e. poor road and rail connectivity.’</li> <li>• ‘We are still very rural, and disconnected with the only transport options still having to rely on the A75. This impacts tourism, the economy and job prospects as it isn’t reasonable to travel outside of the local community for work when there is such distance to go.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Riverside peace path’</li> <li>• ‘Woodland walks nearby’</li> <li>• ‘Flower beds and continue the work of the women’s group’</li> <li>• ‘Improve Glebe/Princes Rd Playpark’</li> <li>• ‘More benches’</li> <li>• ‘Creating a showcase community Peace Garden, Albert Street Gardens’</li> <li>• ‘Environmental employability scheme to combat impact of covid’</li> <li>• ‘Community growing zone where experienced horticulturalist can support local vegetable growing’</li> <li>• ‘Craft fayre/farmers market’</li> </ul>
<p>Local Amenities and Services</p>	<p>Isolation</p>	<p>Youth</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘We are very lucky to have the cinema and now the vault as a live music venue’</li> <li>• ‘Broad spectrum of services’</li> <li>• ‘I love the local businesses, cafes, and shops which are all one of a kind and real gems in the community.’</li> <li>• ‘Good schools’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Getting to know my neighbours. People keep themselves to themselves’</li> <li>• ‘Loneliness and isolation of older people’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Soft play area’</li> <li>• ‘Youth and children’s clubs’</li> <li>• ‘Places for children to play’</li> <li>• ‘Dance opportunities’</li> <li>• ‘New child friendly inclusive play parks in both Minnigaff and Newton Stewart’</li> <li>• ‘Children in the arts support’</li> <li>• ‘Youth employment support’</li> </ul>



Like	Challenges	Projects
Pace and Quality of Life	Roads and traffic	Services and Facilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘The peace and slower pace of life’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Our roads are often not suitable for the amount of busy traffic and minor roads not adequate for the huge Tractors and Trailers hence difficulty passing in an ordinary cars’</li> <li>• ‘Road infrastructure is appalling, public transport is few and far between. No straight link from here to Ayr/Glasgow or Dumfries/Carlisle.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better selection of shops and better stock in existing shops’</li> <li>• ‘Enterprise units’ · ‘Shake up of rural development &amp; planning - let derelict properties be restored in a cost-effective manner; give new business ventures hope’</li> <li>• ‘Maintenance of the library service’</li> <li>• ‘Revival of Main Street’</li> <li>• ‘More facilities for performing arts - dance, drama &amp; music’</li> </ul>
Safety	Lack of activity for young people	Litter and Waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Safe place to bring up children’</li> <li>• ‘Low crime levels’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Nothing for young people’</li> <li>• ‘There aren’t enough things to do in the area, especially for kids’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Green project to litter pick’</li> <li>• ‘Village recycling points’</li> <li>• ‘More bins, serious lack of dog poo bins’</li> <li>• ‘A partnership approach to a clamp down on litter’</li> </ul>
Further education opportunities	Cleanliness of streets	Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Further education options to school leavers and others’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Litter left by inconsiderate people.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘A yearly arts festival’</li> <li>• ‘Community cinema</li> <li>• ‘Community focused days/events’</li> <li>• ‘Annual Summer Festival’ / Galloway Pageant with new ideas, New Year’s celebrations etc.’</li> </ul>
Sport and Active Opportunities	Not enough shops	Café / Bistro
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to outdoor opportunities’</li> <li>• ‘Culture of cycling and running locally’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘We all complain that people go elsewhere to shop etc., aside from the supermarkets, there's very little to attract anyone to the town.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘Sheltered areas for outdoor eating’</li> <li>• ‘Community restaurant’</li> <li>• ‘Space for outside cafes’</li> </ul>



### 3.2 Stakeholder Interviews

A number of stakeholders were approached to take part in the consultation and give their perspective about the community and 12 organisations responded.

The Key Challenges	Project Ideas
<b>Economy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community resilience as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Support for businesses and the development of a Business Forum.</li> <li>• Grow ambition for businesses to trade outwith the region through greater confidence.</li> <li>• Regional Economic Partnership – strategy for the region to be linked to local area.</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of connection between community groups and organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overarching umbrella organisation representing the groups and organisations throughout the Cree Valley.</li> <li>• Working to agreed objectives and action.</li> <li>• The development of a clear theme for the area e.g. A Health and wellbeing project would take into account: eating places, shops, activities, leisure, mental and physical health.</li> </ul>
<b>Digital connectivity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved digital connections to address isolation, economic opportunities.</li> <li>• Support for businesses to gain confidence in their digital infrastructure to achieve a wider reach. Young people may feel motivated to stay in the area for employment if better connected.</li> </ul>
<b>Newton Stewart Town Centre</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration programme.</li> <li>• Community use of vacant and derelict buildings.</li> <li>• Closer look at assets which would benefit businesses · One way town centre traffic system.</li> <li>• Restructure of the pavements which are narrow · Improved street parking.</li> <li>• Improved signage to local attractions, better use of notice boards and a centrally sited town centre map</li> </ul>
<b>Tourism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed profile to benefit tourism and awareness of local business driven by partnership working with the Council and a community interest group</li> </ul>
<b>Transport</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a community transport scheme for the area</li> </ul>
<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of old railway lines through fields to make pathways and safe walking and cycling areas. To include marked out paths with seats.</li> <li>• Build on the river for leisure; walking, water sports, tourism, requires improved maintenance.</li> <li>• Opportunity for qualified Countryside Rangers to engage with the population and lead regular excursions to places of interest.</li> </ul>



### *3.3 Community Consultation Meetings and Focus Groups*

COVID 19 restrictions and social distancing requirements meant that it was not possible to hold face to face community open meetings. An initial local Consultation Meeting was held by Zoom in June 2020 to launch the Community Action Plan Project. Another similar meeting was held in September 2020 to allow participants to consider the research findings, discuss and agree priorities for action and see the entries and winners for the creative competition. Both meetings were advertised by press releases, direct email contact, poster, social media and word of mouth.

Focus Groups were held throughout the period of research with: Community Groups, Cree Valley Churches and Young People. The elected members and local businesses were unable to attend focus groups targeting them specifically, so the same community contacts were invited to join community meetings.

## Key findings

Transport	Heritage	Housing
<p>There is a limited bus service and flexible, accessible and affordable transport scheme is needed as lack of this is a barrier to employment, leisure and social activities.</p>	<p>Options need to be explored further including genealogy and church displays.</p>	<p>There is a lack of affordable housing for young people to buy or rent.</p>
Environment	Health and Wellbeing	Families and Young People
<p>There are options for the River Cree and forests be developed for cycling, walking, fishing and sport especially as the local Outdoor Education Centres have closed.</p>	<p>People are required to travel to health centre in Newton Stewart although there are GP practices and satellite services in other communities.</p> <p>The Council have invested resources to address young people’s mental health which can be poor as a result of lack of social activities, poor transport, and isolation.</p> <p>The Peace Advocacy Project is very successful and has a positive impact on young people who are motivated to work with the entire community.</p>	<p>There is a need for more youth work services which are flexible to the needs and challenges faced by young people. There is a current Youth Participation and Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>Families with young children struggle to find local activities and need to travel further afield as far as Dumfries and Stranraer e.g. soft play.</p>
Tourism	Leisure	Economy
<p>There is a need for Visit Scotland investment to sustain facilities for people. The return of festivals would be welcomed.</p>	<p>There are a lack of leisure opportunities for young people. The fenced areas at Blairmount are locked when young people need to use them.</p>	<p>There is concern about economic stability and there are very limited employment opportunities for everyone but especially young people both full time and part time.</p>
Church	Crime and Safety	Tourism
<p>Congregation numbers are falling and ministers need to share resources.</p> <p>Development of the pilgrimage route opportunities.</p> <p>Promote weddings, events and open weekends and encourage non church goers to activities.</p>	<p>There are low crime rates, but stereotyping of young people still exists, especially relating to anti-social behaviour.</p>	<p>Projects are needed to bring visitors to the area. This should be addressed as a priority.</p>



## Key findings (continued)

Community	Learning	Other
<p>It's a close knit community however communication between communities and groups is poor.</p> <p>The reminiscence project with high school pupils and the CVCC was very successful and the model should be repeated.</p> <p>The area is resilient with a close community and young people are "strong and tough".</p>	<p>Local further education opportunities are limited and young people are forced to move away. A move to online would be good, but many young people in rural areas have issues with broadband and accessibility.</p>	<p>We need bespoke towns and facilities with no chain shops.</p>

### 3.4 Creative Competition

A creative competition for children and adults ran throughout the period of the research. A total of 16 entries were received (6 over 16 years category and 10 under 16 years category) depicting what people like about the Cree Valley. The winners were chosen by independent judges.

**Under 16's Category**



**Over 16's Category**



## 4. What We Found Out: The Big Issues

### 4.1 Summary

Key findings identified through analysis of the research and consultation shows that this is the nature of the community:

### Assets

#### Geographical and Physical

1. This is an area of significant natural beauty that needs to be protected but could be used more effectively to improve the community. Specifically the River Cree offers excellent leisure opportunities which add to the fishing pastime current on offer.
2. The area falls within the UNESCO Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Reserve. The Galloway Dark Skies Park is located to the East and the Southern Upland Way cuts through the area. There are substantial opportunities to develop sustainable tourism. The new Tourism Strategy supports the development of this.
3. There are a number and range of physical assets including heritage, outdoor projects, forests and countryside.
4. Newton Stewart lacks an accessible building in the town centre which can offer flexible space for community activities and projects.

### People

5. The newly established Cree Valley Area Development Trust will act as a community anchor organisation to bring organisations together and coordinate partnership activity.
6. Professionals and local people have confidence and a strong skill set which is a vital component to get things done.
7. Community organisations are well supported by motivated volunteers.

### Challenges

#### A Changing Population

8. There is a higher proportion of people over 65 and a growing aging demographic while the numbers of young people is relatively low. The gap between older and younger populations and the reduction in working age people is likely to widen over time which results in pressure on services. Stakeholders identified a need to attract young families and appropriate businesses to the area and reduce the trend for youth outward migration.
9. The population of Dumfries and Galloway is projected to decline by 2.8% in the next 20 years, which compares to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole. Initiatives need to be put in place to protect the vibrancy of the community and the ability to live well.
10. Local people and recent research support the need to encourage youth involvement.



## Work and the economy

11. There is a significantly lower jobs density in Cree Valley than the wider region, and Scotland as a whole.
12. Excluding self-employed people, 30.4% of employees are employed in the public sector, compared with 20.6% across Dumfries and Galloway, and the Scotland average of 22.2%. The largest employment sector is health and social work (17% of people in employment) followed by retail (13%) and construction (11%).
13. The Covid 19 pandemic has required many more people to work from home and generally this has been successful. The local economy needs to build on this practice and promote the area as a place where people can live and work.

## Lack of Access to Services

14. Access to health services, such as GPs, hospitals, pharmacies, dentists and leisure services is poorer than for Scotland as a whole mainly due to the rural geographic area.
15. Average broadband speed is less than half of Scotland's average

## Connectedness

16. Although there are a large number of assets and organisations, evidence in the research indicates that information about them is poor and they tend to operate in isolation. This was clearly articulated by the stakeholders who have a good knowledge of the community.
17. There was a consistent concern about transport throughout the consultation. This includes a limited public transport system, the need for a flexible service and the need to own a car.

## Hidden Deprivation

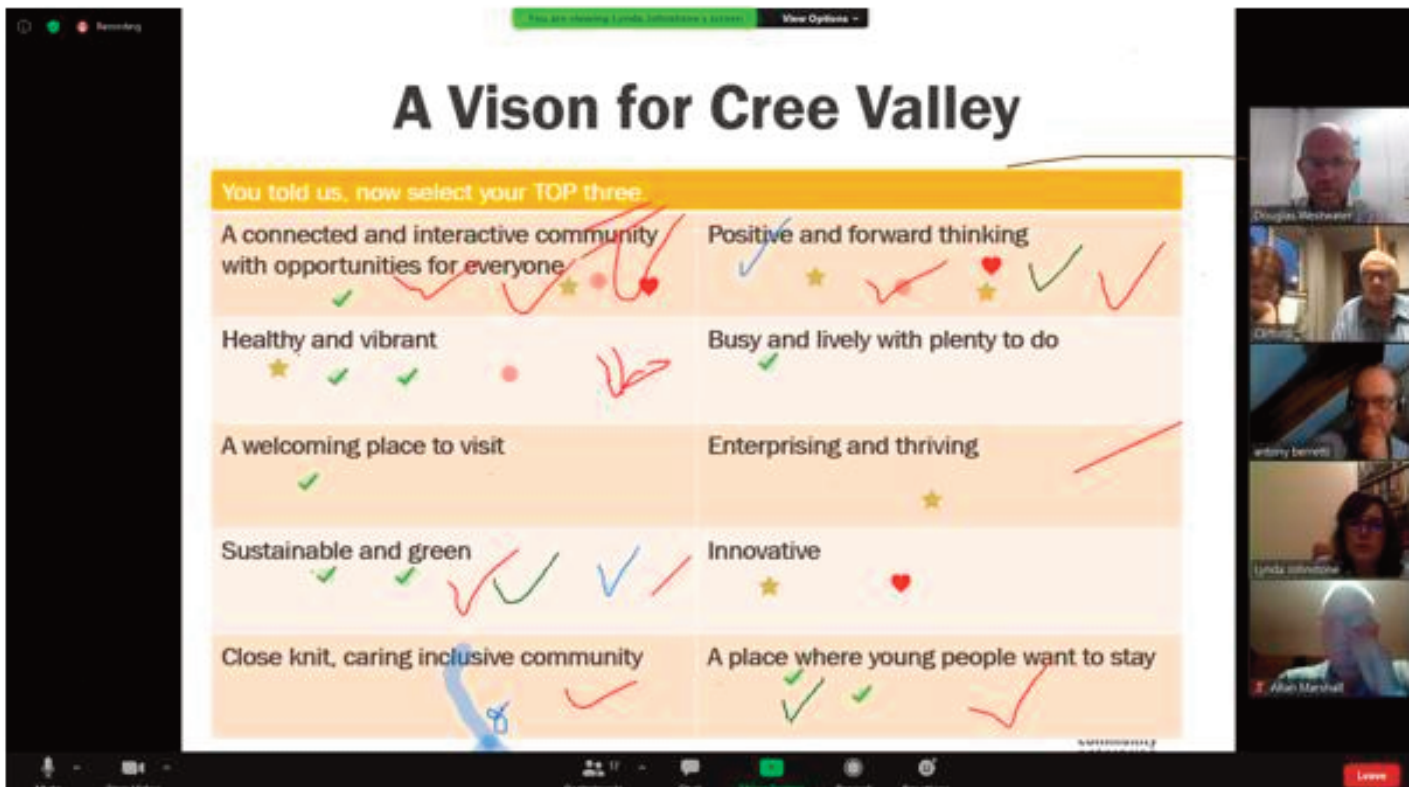
18. Whilst Cree Valley is not an area that could be classified as deprived in terms of education, health or housing, due to its mixed rurality, 807 people in the area fall within the most deprived 10% for geographic access to services. The pattern of service access across Cree Valley illustrates the mix of town and rural areas with a further 1,317 people within the least deprived in terms of service access.
19. There is a higher proportion of people providing unpaid care in the Cree Valley (10%, compared to the Scotland average of 9.3%). Of these, 1.9% are children and 3.1% of unpaid carers are providing more than 50 hours a week of care. These levels are both higher than the regional and national averages.
20. As part of the need to focus on local wealth creation and entrepreneurship, stakeholders considered affordability, economic connections, and trade important element to enhance equality and to attract and retain young families and young people to the area.

## 5 Action Plan

### 5.1 Vision for the Cree Valley

**Cree Valley is a connected, interactive, inclusive community providing activities to promote health, community well-being, the environment and vibrant business growth highlighting the areas as both attractive and welcoming to visitors.**

#### Vision statement ideas



*Open Meeting 21st September 2020*

### 5.2 Thematic Areas

Based on the research findings, we have identified five key project areas for the Community Action Plan along with project priorities to be developed and delivered over the next 15 years. Projects will be developed by various groups and new groups within the community.



### 5.3 Values and Principles

The following values and principles will underpin the way in which this action plan is rolled out and implemented:

#### 1. A PLAN FOR ALL

It is the responsibility of the whole community (individuals and groups) to unite and work together for project ambitions to be realised.

#### 2. TRANSPARENCY

All ideas should be planned and researched openly with a commitment to co-production where groups contribute to the ideas as they develop.

#### 3. PARTNERSHIP

Working together with a shared agenda will be at the heart of any activity arising from this plan.

#### 4. INCLUSION

Everyone is invited to participate and everyone benefits, regardless of age and ability.

#### 5. IMPACT

The success of this plan will be judged on activities which have a positive influence on people and communities.

#### 6. INVOLVEMENT

Ensuring the community is involved in decisions that affect their lives.

### 5.4 Monitoring, Auditing and Evaluation the Community Action Plan

Monitoring, auditing and evaluation are essential requirements of any Community Action Plan to ensure it is being implemented. The Cree Valley Area Development Trust will meet regularly to review progress on the plan. Keeping records against each theme and project will be a useful tool to ensure progress is being maintained. These meetings will be open and accessible to all groups and individuals. Evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect and learn from activities, assess the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and think about new ways of doing things.

### 5.5 Project Themes and Priorities

The CAP sets out the community's vision for the longer term (up to 20 years) with more detailed priority activity across identified themes with outcomes which are categorised in colour in the tables below for when they will be achieved: **short term (1-3 years)**, **medium term (3-10 years)** and **longer term (10-15 years)**.

It is important to note that some of the project outcomes will be a "quick fix" where as others will take time to plan and execute. To achieve results and outcomes in the short, medium and longer term each project/outcome will have its own activity plan which will be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) and determined and agreed in the first year of the CAP implementation.

## A Connected and Interactive Community

### Aim

**To ensure the community action plan is progressing effectively over the next 15 years, benefiting the people who live in the Cree Valley, who will be able to take control of the things and spaces that matter to them.**

### Summary

This is an action plan for the whole community and any local organisation or group of residents can come forward to lead on projects. Although it is not the responsibility of Cree Valley Area Development Trust to lead on everything, it will be required to oversee the process. The Development Trust has the powers to raise funds, acquire land and employ staff, to achieve community renewal goals. In time, a Development Officer may be required to provide support with project implementation.

A connections group will be set up in year one as a sub-group of the Cree Valley Area Development Trust. The group will support the promotion of new clubs / activities / events / initiatives arising from the plan, as well as share news and information on a range of topics that are relevant to the Cree Valley community. The group will also have a lobbying and campaigning role with things that are outwith the control of the residents, particularly in relation to tourism and transport.

The group will start to lead on changes to physical information points including notice boards in the towns and villages, and enhanced social media presence.

### Existing Provision

There are a range of active community groups and organisations throughout the Cree Valley but they work in a fragmented manner with a lack of partnership working. Although the Cree Valley Area Development Trust is an embryonic organisation, it has been formed with support from the Cree Valley Community Council, a strong proactive organisation. The Trust will be a Cree Valley wide representative group with the ability to progress with projects.

Community ownership of an empty building is a priority for the community e.g. this would allow groups such as the Newton Stewart Players to meet again.

### Supporting evidence

Most people have lived in the area for more than 30 years (48%) and a significant percentage (85%) of respondents felt they would still be living in Cree Valley in 10 years' time, indicating a long term commitment to the area. The research identified that bringing communities, organisations and groups together in a cohesive way through partnership working is essential. The community consultation meeting identified the formation of an umbrella organisation e.g. Cree Valley Area Development Trust to facilitate this.

Covid 19 has had a significant impact on opportunities for people to meet safely in their communities. However even before the pandemic there were a decreasing number of affordable and comfortable, flexible meeting spaces. Refurbishing empty buildings for community use was highlighted as a top priority in the community survey, stakeholder research and community open meetings. There are a number of buildings close to the Newton Stewart town centre High Street which are vacant and local eyesores which are ripe for community ownership including the Grapes Hotel, B Block of the old Douglas Ewart High School and the Print building.

## Funding options

Local funds such as the Dumfries and Galloway Community Grant Scheme and Renewable Energy Fund may invest in this kind of activity. If this grows further funding from charitable trusts may be required.

## Potential partners

It is important to connect the Community Council, Newton Stewart Initiative, the Primary Schools, Douglas Ewart High School, local businesses and other local groups and organisations through the development of the Trust and the Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) will be a strong partner in its development. The local Third Sector Interface may help the group in shaping the organisation, as well as support the group policies as more local people get involved.

<b>Priority:</b> Build Community Capacity	<b>Priority:</b> Flexible and accessible community meeting spaces	<b>Priority:</b> Build on community resilience activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Develop the Cree Valley Area Development Trust as a community anchor organisation to lead and coordinate activity with staff support if required.</b></li> <li>• <b>Through partnership working identify opportunities for increased participation by local people in existing or new community groups.</b></li> <li>• <b>Build capacity for community organisations to work with other organisations (community groups, third sector organisations, businesses, social housing providers, health and local authority).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Undertake feasibility research and compile business plans to support the community asset transfer or purchase of an appropriate building or land area (to build on at a later date).</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Review current resilience activity and develop a Resilience Plan to be widely communicated.</b></li> <li>• <b>Encourage volunteering to support community groups and link to health and wellbeing.</b></li> <li>• <b>Develop and offer healthy food initiatives including a community growing zone, community cookery, community cafe.</b></li> </ul>

## A Sustainable and Enterprising Economy

### Aim

**To support the Cree Valley society to manage and develop resources to meet the needs of present and future generations of local people and businesses by creating new strategies and activities that accelerate positive economic change.**

### Summary

By sustainably using the areas natural assets and supporting local businesses to develop responsibly, the Cree Valley can establish a thriving and resilient economy for the next generation.

Initiatives outlined in the Community Action Plan will aim to drive the economy forward with growth that creates opportunities for all, where the benefits of increased prosperity are shared. Projects will sustain and grow communities so that people thrive in the places where they live and work. This can be achieved through making the most of existing skills, resources and assets.

### Existing Provision

The Cree Valley is mainly a rural economy and employment opportunities include traditional rural industries. However the largest employment sector is health and social work, followed by retail and construction. There is a significantly lower jobs density in Cree Valley than the wider region, and Scotland as a whole.

### Supporting evidence

The consultation highlighted that there are real concerns about employment opportunities for all. Businesses have been negatively impacted by the Covid 19 pandemic and there have been fewer tourist visitors to the area. Covid 19 aside, people have a low level of confidence about long term job opportunities for young people and offerings to help them stay in the area. In the consultation survey, respondents felt that the local economy and jobs was the poorest aspect about living in the area.

### Funding options

Scottish Enterprise, Visit Scotland

### Potential partners

Dumfries and Galloway Council Economic Development, South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE), Business Gateway, local businesses, South of Scotland Economic Partnership (SOSEP), Visit Scotland, Open Reach.



<p><b>Priority:</b> Support for people trying to get into work.</p>	<p><b>Priority:</b> Increase opportunities to attract tourism and business to the local area.</p>	<p><b>Priority:</b> Improve support and assistance for local businesses.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further encourage local businesses to offer apprenticeships, internships, work placements to young people.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance local attractions and natural assets to bring people to the area and encourage them to stay.</li> <li>• Develop a coordinated approach to preserving, developing and promoting local assets to expand tourism (attractions, events, activities).</li> <li>• Make the Cree Valley an attractive place for inward investment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a local business forum to promote local businesses, access grants and alternative funding opportunities.</li> <li>• Better broadband to encourage new businesses and home working.</li> <li>• Incentives and flexibility to encourage social enterprises which support local need e.g. childcare, community transport and facilities for families.</li> </ul>

## A Healthy, Vibrant and Positive Community

### Aim

To reduce isolation, develop community spirit and promote the well-being of the people of Cree Valley by bringing them together through events and activities in accessible community space, which will strengthen a sense of community and encourage people to look after each other.

### Summary

Coming together as a community was seen as a priority for the action plan. Previous to the restrictions put in place by Covid19, people informed the research that there is a lack of community activities especially for families and young people. A suite of accessible events for all ages will be organised that the Cree Valley communities can enjoy, from film nights to seasonal events, a reintroduction of the Galloway Pageant to community craft fayres. This will require an events group or existing organisation to take on responsibility for the development and funding of such events. Short term this could be part of the remit of the Development Trust to facilitate.

### Existing provision

The Galloway Pageant was a week-long social event but was reduced to a day in 2017. There are limited suitable and accessible community meeting places.

## Supporting evidence

Participants who attended the community open meeting at the conclusion of the consultation chose their top three priorities from ideas and feedback generated throughout the CAP research. These were activities for everyone, a yearly Cree Valley Festival, regular community and music events.

## Funding options

Connecting isolated people and developing place-based initiatives is a key outcome of the National Lottery Community Fund which may be a strong option for funding when their fund re-opens.

If there is an aspiration to take local buildings into community ownership, the Scottish Land Fund may be an option, and this will be considered during the action plan.

## Potential partners

Existing groups such as the Community Council, Newton Stewart Initiative, churches, sporting organisations, informed groups and community arts will play a key role in supporting these events.

<p><b>Priority:</b> Increase the number of engaging events and activities for all ages.</p>	<p><b>Priority:</b> A Cree Valley Festival</p>	<p><b>Priority:</b> A regular programme of community and music events.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable events for young people and families with small children.</li> <li>• Accessible events and activities for everyone and work to address social isolation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise and deliver an annual public event in the park.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish Newton Stewart as “a Health and Wellbeing “Feature” Town and build on the attractions of cycling, walking, music etc.</li> </ul>

## Getting About

### Aim

**To provide greater access to affordable and efficient public and community transport.**

### Summary

### Existing Provision

There is currently a public transport bus service for the communities of the Cree Valley. The service is limited and does not give the flexibility for people of all ages to use public transport for employment, leisure and social activities.

### Supporting evidence

The community survey identified that public transport does not meet the needs of the community in terms of timetables or accessibility, and most of the services people need are outwith the community and hard to access. 23% of households do not have access to a car which is slightly higher than the levels for Dumfries and Galloway.

The research highlighted significant support for the development of a community transport scheme which would provide flexible and accessible community-led solutions to respond to unmet local transport needs. It would represent accessible transport for many vulnerable and isolated people, often older people or people with disabilities. Successful community transport schemes exist in other parts of Dumfries and Galloway

### Funding options

NHS, Area Committees of Dumfries and Galloway Council, Integration Fund, donations, Scottish Government (Bus Service Operators Grant), contracts and local trade.

### Potential partners

Dumfries and Galloway Council, Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway, Community Transport Association, CVCC, Dual The A75 Project, Reopen Dumfries to Stranraer Railway.

## A Place Attractive to All

### Aim

**To increase pride in the Cree Valley and the town of Newton Stewart, encouraging people to make it more vibrant and attractive. In addition, increasing access to the outdoors and the pursuits the countryside offers will improve health and well-being, attract tourism and help to develop jobs and employability by enhancing skills, experience and qualifications.**

### Summary

Working with the Newton Stewart Initiative as the lead organisation, community members and businesses will work together to develop an improvement plan for Newton Stewart.

An Environment Group will be established initially as a group of local volunteers. They will coordinate and undertake local improvements, regular litter picks and other improvements such as raising funds for planters, seating and improvement to paths. Encouraging a sense of pride in place could be stimulated by establishing a “Cree Valley Pride of Place” award or taking part in Keep Scotland Beautiful initiatives. In the early years of the plan, a “living streets” project may be trialled, encouraging people to walk more and explore their local area which links to the “Getting About” theme.

Developing the River Cree into a valuable community asset is a key priority but this will take time and the environmental group will act as a steering group, securing funds for a feasibility study to think through the plans before finally undertaking an upgrade of the river and its banks and paths. Over time, there is an aspiration to encourage learning and employability in the Cree Valley. This will evolve organically but could look like a training hub or a placement for modern apprenticeships.

### Existing Provision

Environmental initiatives have been taken on by Newton Stewart Initiative, the Peace Advocacy Project, Newton Stewart Women’s Group and the Community Council. A new Environment Group could help to pull together efforts and fill the gap left by reduced council funding by engendering a greater sense of community responsibility, as well as increasing the capacity for people to take up active roles in their community.

### Supporting evidence

Issues and opportunities offered by the local environment was a key priority during the public consultation. 79% of respondents noted that the environment and green spaces are something they value but in terms of future projects the consultation highlighted that more could be made of the environmental assets. Specifically people highlighted a community growing zone and community garden, improving the River Cree as a recreational asset and developing walking and cycle paths as priority activities.

## Funding options

Small funders such as Tesco Bags for Life and the Mushroom Trust could support start-up costs in relation to environmental work. Going forward, more substantial funds will be required from sources such as the Landfill funds, Sustrans and Paths for All. If there is an aspiration to take the Minnigaff Park into community ownership, the Scottish Land Fund may be an option, and this will be considered during the action plan.

## Potential partners

The Newton Stewart Women’s Group, Newton Stewart Initiative, the Peace Advocacy Project and local businesses have been identified as important potential partners in environmental projects. The Community Council, with their interest in physical developments, will be actively involved as will small local community groups. External partners such as Sustrans, Living Streets, Paths for All and Greenspace Scotland may provide support and guidance.

<p><b>Priority:</b> Newton Stewart Town Centre Improvement Plan</p>	<p><b>Priority:</b> Making the most of the natural environment.</p>	<p><b>Priority:</b> Use the natural assets of the Cree Valley waterways to develop enterprise, sporting and business / tourism opportunities.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on the CAP research, conduct further community consultation to generate ideas to enhance the town and make it an attractive place for all.</li> <li>• Provide support to local businesses as the town adapts and thrives following the Covid 19 pandemic.</li> <li>• Address traffic management and parking concerns by exploring the possibility of a new traffic system for Newton Stewart and Minnigaff.</li> <li>• Improve Gateways to the Town including improved signage and public information boards, flowers, planters and seating.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing and improving the banks of the River Cree throughout the whole Cree Valley through a programme of essential maintenance and enhancement to the walk ways and paths, and freshwater environment.</li> <li>• Establish an active waterway project for the River Cree and other walking and cycling routes e.g. woodlands to include “walking for wellbeing”.</li> <li>• Re-energise play parks and play areas to facilitate their use by all ages and abilities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a multi facet, environmentally friendly project within a national park which could include:</li> <li>• River map</li> <li>• River history</li> <li>• Boating, canoeing and kayaking opportunities</li> <li>• Cycling</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Fishing / Angling</li> <li>• Nature and wildlife</li> <li>• River Art</li> <li>• Walking</li> <li>• River safety awareness</li> <li>• Dark Skies Park</li> <li>• Forest Park</li> <li>• Biosphere</li> </ul>



## GET INVOLVED!

This plan has been created by the community, for the community – anyone can get involved. To help progress or deliver any of the ideas and projects in the plan, or if you have other ideas for the future of the Cree Valley, then please get in touch with:

**Cree Valley Community Council**  
**Charles Marshall (Secretary)**  
**Email: [cvcc.sec@outlook.com](mailto:cvcc.sec@outlook.com)**

*Many thanks to all organisations, groups, businesses, stakeholders and individuals who contributed to the production of this Community Action Plan.*



## Appendix 5 - Housing Needs Demand Analysis by SOSCH 2022

### Newton Stewart Initiative Housing Needs and Demands Survey Report October 2022

#### Background to the project

Newton Stewart Initiative (NSI) is a community organisation with charitable status, we formed in February 2014 to regenerate Newton Stewart, encouraging all local groups, individuals, and organisations, to become involved to contribute to the community of Newton Stewart. NSI aims to develop community facilities, support community led initiatives, businesses and regeneration projects, youth, arts and sports projects and any other project that benefits the community living and working in and around Newton Stewart.

NSI are aware of the community feeling around the decaying state of some High Street buildings, together with an increasing need for affordable housing. Absentee landlords holding empty, deteriorating buildings, present as an eyesore along the main streetscape and NSI are keen to explore options, which could include a housing element, to address such issues.



*Location map of Newton Stewart*



## Community Engagement

Working with NSI, SOSCH developed a Housing Needs and Demands Assessment (HNDA) survey which was launched on the SurveyMonkey platform as a fully digital means of gathering evidence. During the earlier COVID restrictions, online surveys became a successful way to gather responses without physical engagement and therefore it was proposed to undertake an online survey as the primary means to gather information relative to housing, in addition to face-to-face community engagement, with this now being possible due to the withdrawal of COVID restrictions.

During the Survey period, SOSCH participated in 2 community engagement sessions in Newton Stewart, at the August Green Fayre and NSI office, with NSI undertaking 2 further public sessions in the High Street, providing the opportunity to discuss the survey and NSI intentions. In person discussions reflected the comments in the Survey, including lack of affordable housing and the deterioration of High Street buildings. The survey was also promoted on social media platforms with posters posted locally in public places.

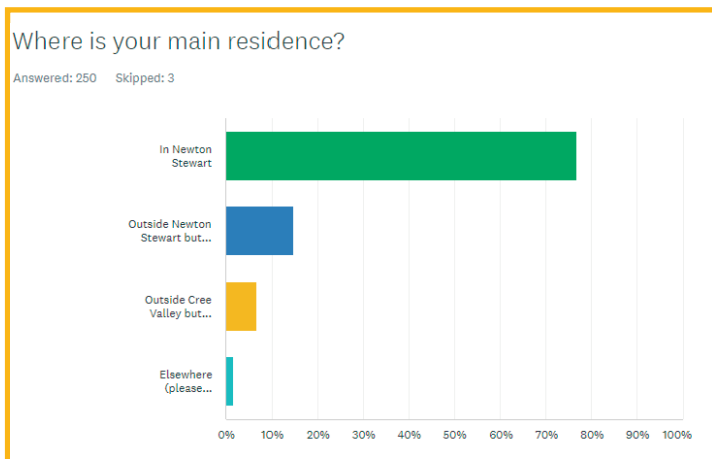
The online survey ran from June to August 2022 and together with written survey submissions, received a total of 253 responses representing 668 people within the 253 households. This represents approximately 17% of the total population of approximately 4,000 for Newton Stewart. With the level of overall community engagement, SOSCH would consider the response rate to be excellent. As such, the evidence can be considered as a viable insight into the housing needs of the community.



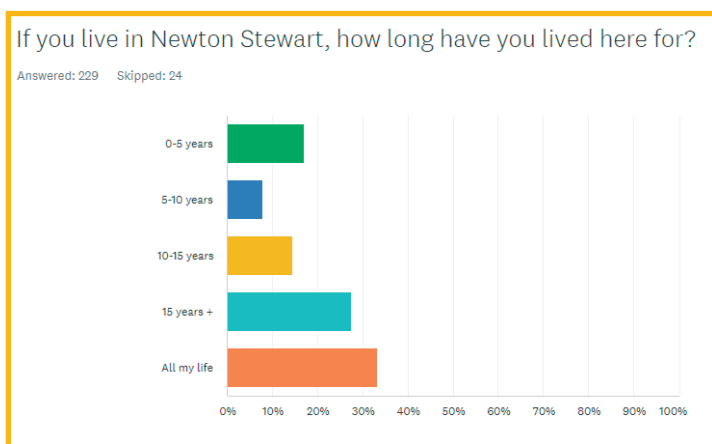
## Key survey outcomes

### Demographics

- From a total of 253 responses to the survey, 77% of respondents lived in Newton Stewart, 15% beyond Newton Stewart in the wider Cree Valley Community Council area, 7% beyond the Cree Valley but within the region, with 2% living elsewhere outside the Dumfries and Galloway region.

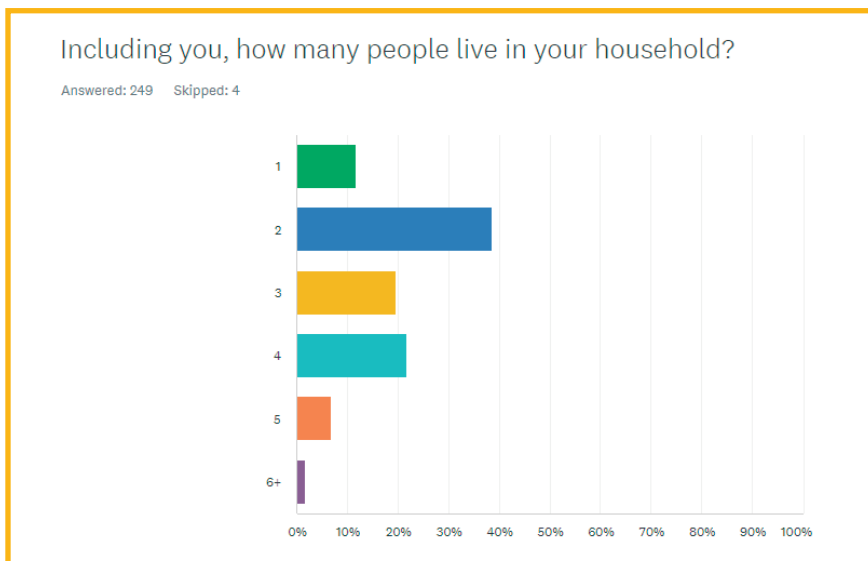


- A third of respondents who lived in Newton Stewart were life-long residents with a further 28% living here for 15 years or longer, suggesting that people tend to stay settled in Newton Stewart.

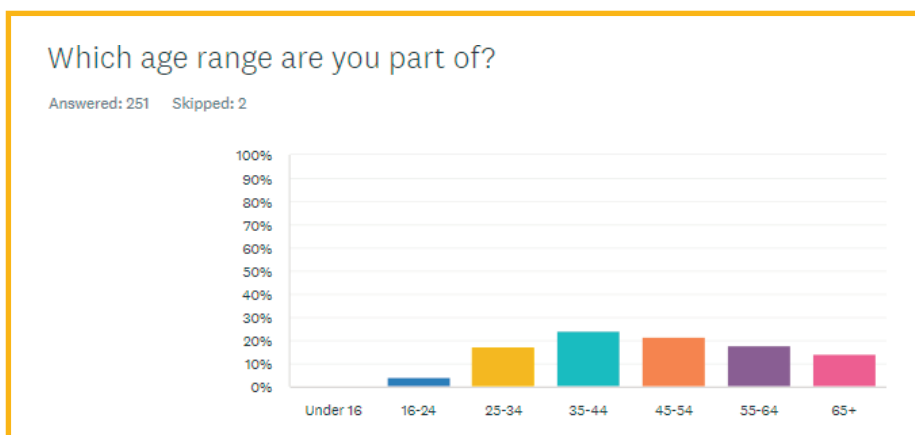




- Survey results indicated households comprising only 2 occupants represented the largest occupancy number group at 38%, with 12% having only one household member, 20% of households with 3 occupants, 22% households with 4 members and 8% of households with 5 or more members.



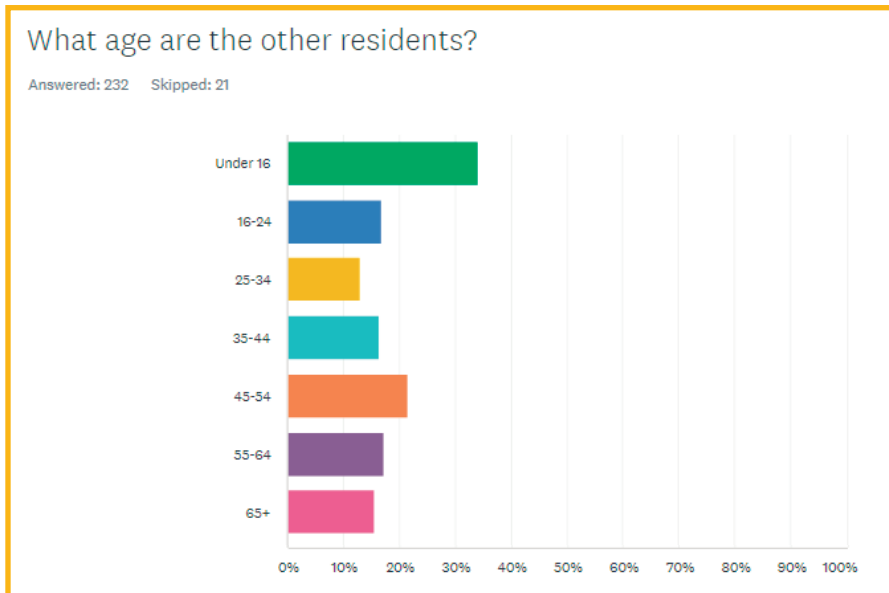
- The ages of individual respondents to the survey showed that all age-groups contributed to the survey: 16-24 (4%), 25-34 (18%), 35-44 (24%), 45-54 (22%), 55-64 (18%) and 65+ (14%).



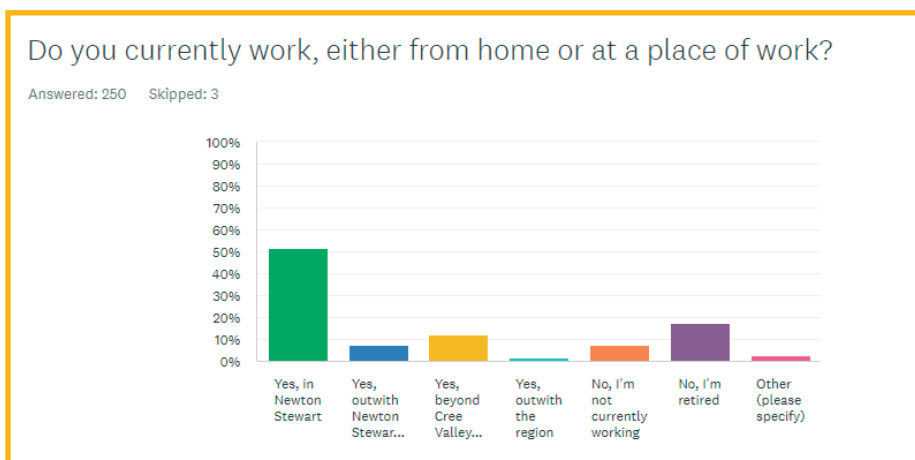




- The ages of the other residents within households, indicated many households with children under the age of 16. Other age group ranges were relatively evenly distributed, with a high percentage of the population of working age.



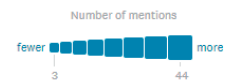
- 52% of respondents worked in Newton Stewart, with written responses reflecting the trend of homeworking since the start of the pandemic and the continuance of remote working post pandemic.



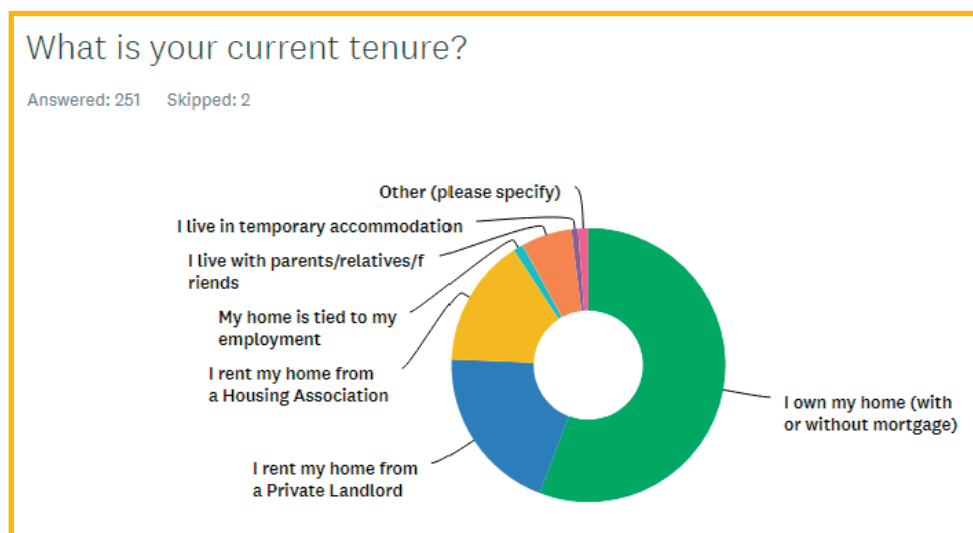


When asked what attracted them to the area, the most common words used in response to this question appear below in the ‘word cloud,’ with the most often used of these words being in the largest text:

Location now access raise Community spirit friends love plenty  
 feeling relaxed children Good facilities hills small town local safe place  
 quiet Peace quiet lovely feel safe people local amenities good  
 nothing beautiful supermarkets Newton Stewart  
 Brought child shops place Work school area Rural



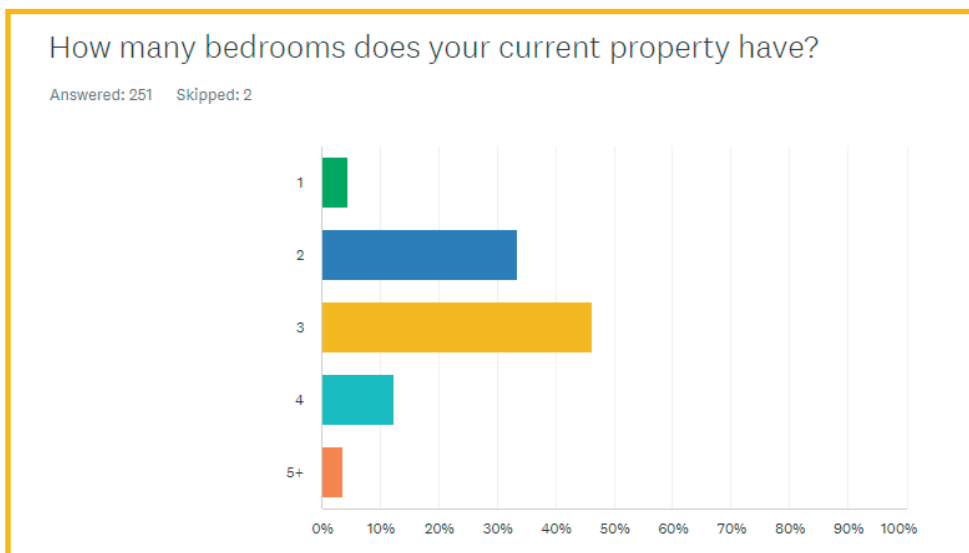
It is evident that people feel that Newton Stewart is an attractive place to live and work and is considered an area of high amenity value. The sense of community, available facilities and scenic rural location all contribute to the sense of place that local inhabitants value highly.



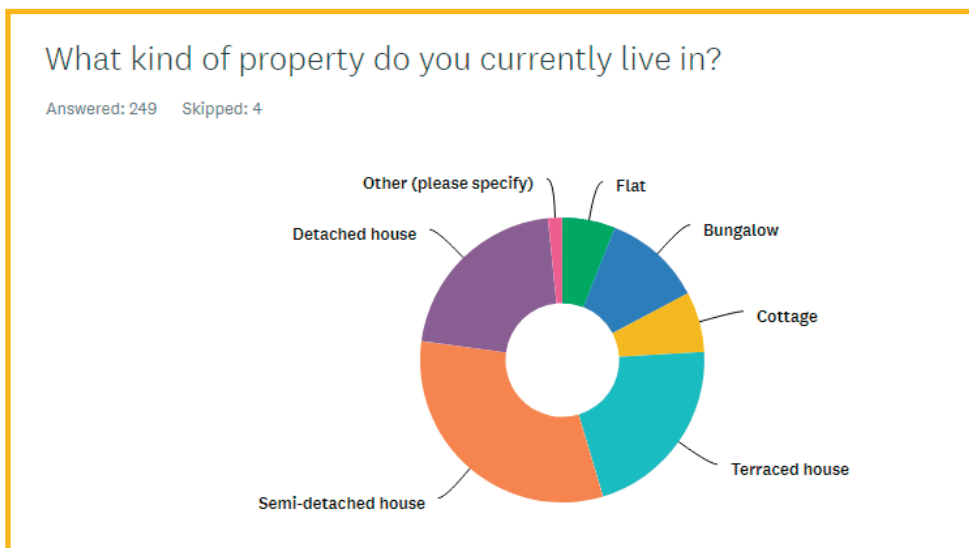
- As with many rural areas of the Dumfries and Galloway region, most respondents were homeowners (56%), with 20% living in private rented accommodation, 15% renting from a housing association, 1% in a home tied to employment, with over 7% either living in temporary accommodation or with family and friends.



- 46% of respondents occupied homes which had 3-bedrooms, 33% with 2-bedrooms, 4% with 1-bedroom and 16% with 4 or more bedrooms.



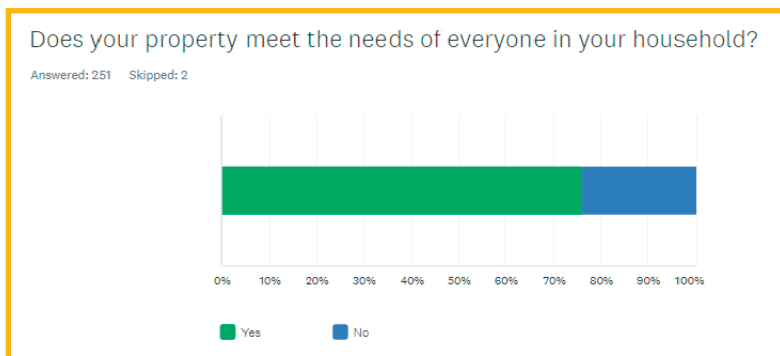
- 32% of respondents live in semi-detached houses, with 21% living in terraced houses and 21% living in detached houses. There are lower numbers of people occupying flats (6%), bungalows (11%) and cottages(7%).





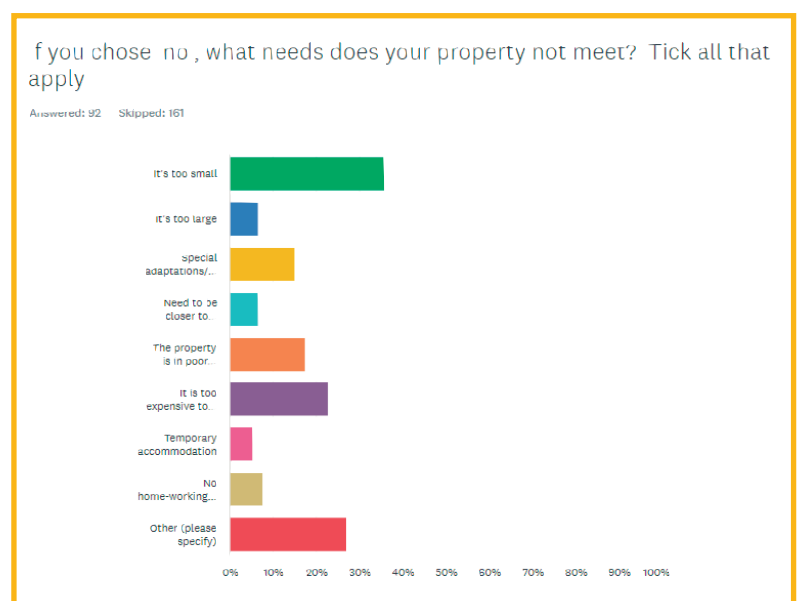
## Special Interest Questions

SOSCH are always keen to work collaboratively on our housing needs and demands approach, seeking the views and concerns of the community groups we work with whilst creating our Surveys. We have developed some special interest questions for inclusion which are particularly significant for the types of rural communities in the South of Scotland that we are working with. These questions relate to fuel poverty, energy efficiency, and working from home, all of which are now coming into sharper focus because of the COVID-19 pandemic. There has been a shift in workplace patterns, with the rise of working from home continuing post-pandemic, as well as an impact from the current energy crisis and cost of living linked to rising inflation on household finances. All these factors have a bearing on how our homes meet our needs and allow households to live affordably.



- When asked if their current property met the needs of everyone in the household, 24% responded that it did not.

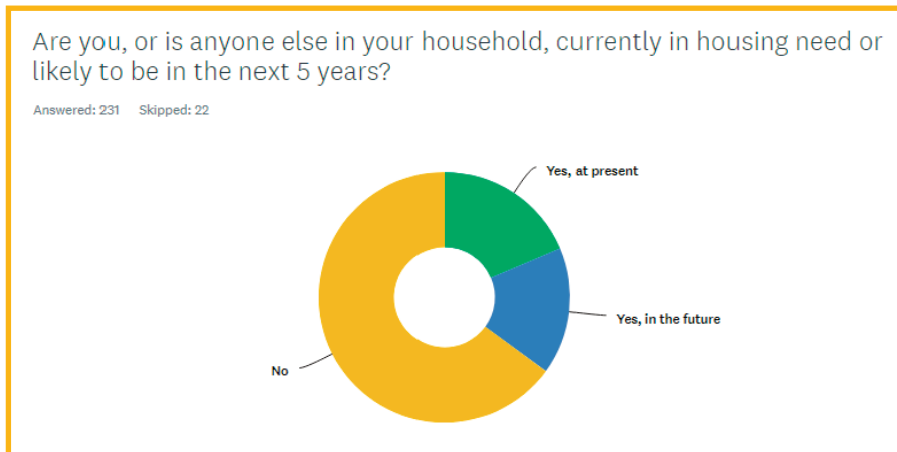
- Where respondents felt that their property did not meet household needs, most considered their home too small, too expensive to run or in poor condition. ‘Other’ comments were submitted: households with children in a position where the landlord has given notice to leave due to the landlord selling and with no other rental options available to them; grown-up children still living at home unable to move out due to lack of housing options and whilst the home was considered overcrowded, it met the householder’s needs long-term assuming that grown-up children would move out eventually; some households struggled to maintain their property due to financial constraints.



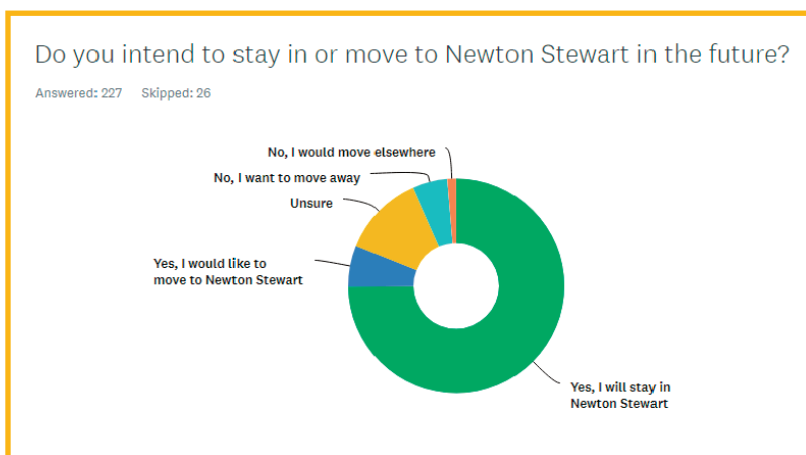


## Future Housing Needs

- Overall 48% of respondents said they were currently in need of affordable housing or stated that they or someone in their household may be in need in the future.



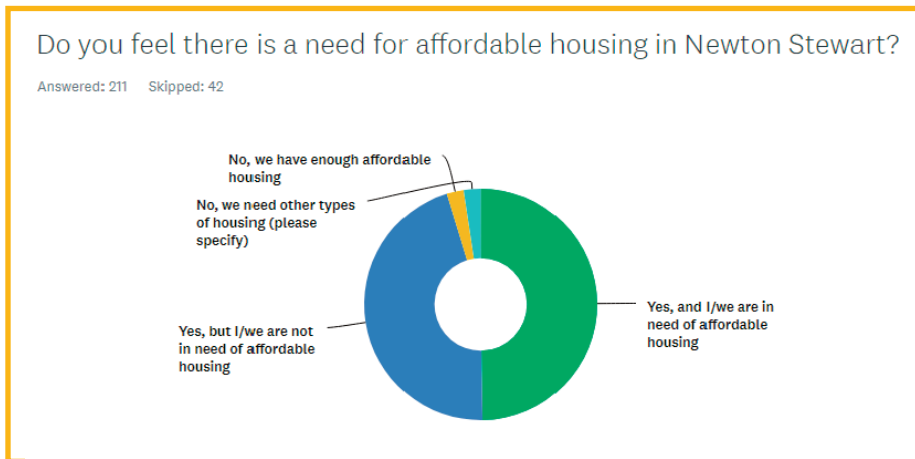
- 75% of respondents said they plan to stay in Newton Stewart, with 7% proposing to leave. 6% indicated that they would like to move to Newton Stewart with a total of 7% indicating they wished to move elsewhere in the Community Council area or move away from the area.



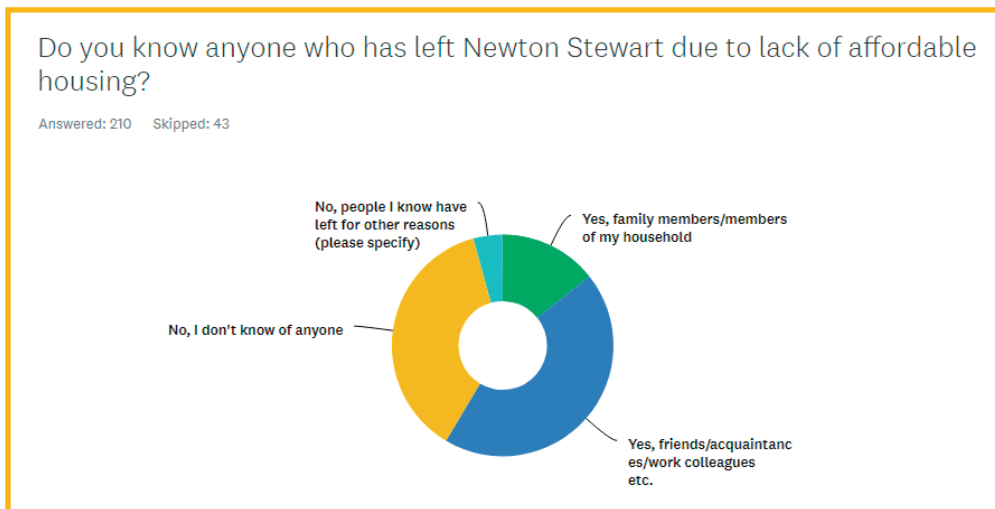




- When asked if they thought there was a need for affordable housing, 50% of respondents said they were in need of housing in Newton Stewart with a further 46%, although not in direct need themselves, felt there was a need for affordable housing in the town.

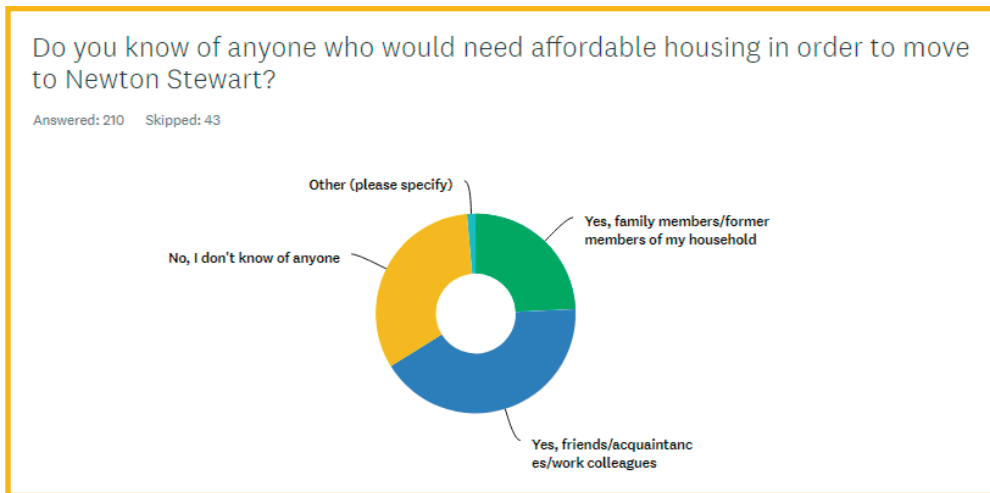


- 59% of respondents knew of someone who had left Newton Stewart due to the lack of housing options. Moving for work reasons was the main response for leaving Newton Stewart other than for housing or other reasons.

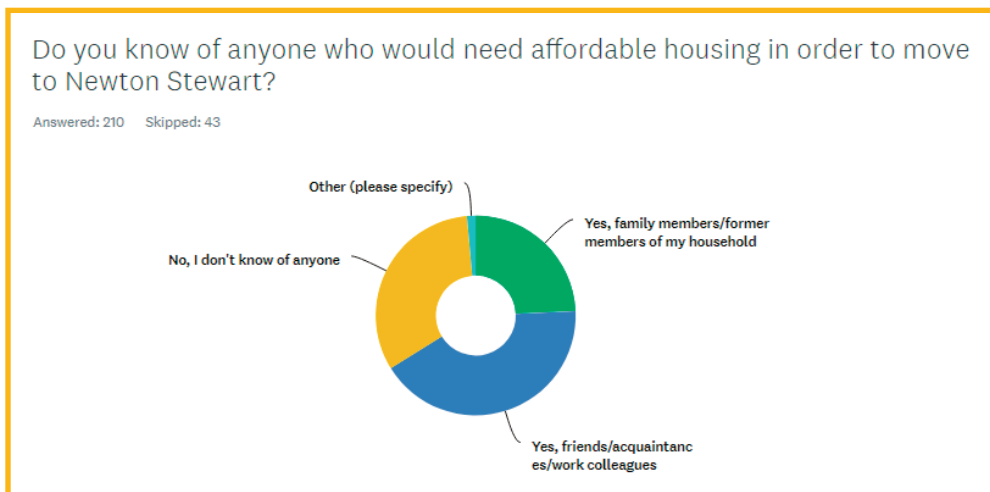




- When asked if they knew of anyone who would need affordable housing in order to move to Newton Stewart, 66% responded yes, they did.

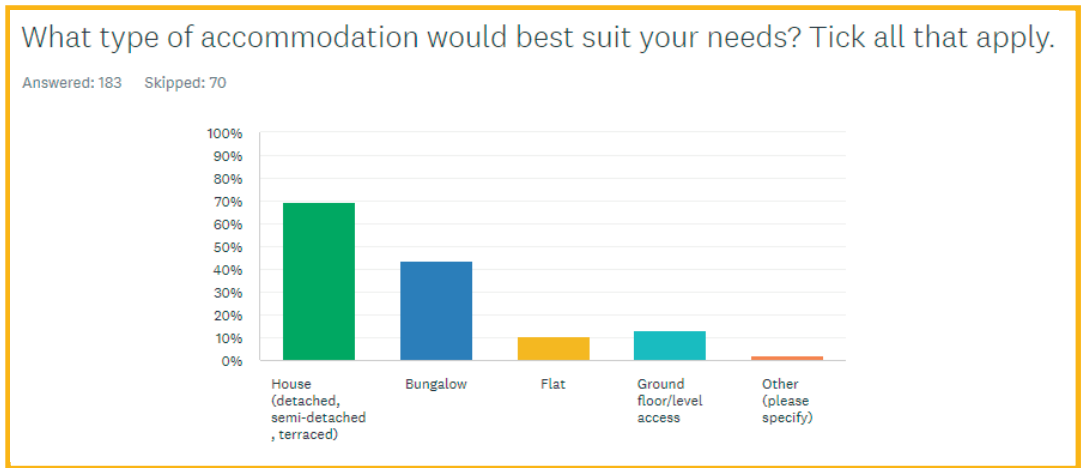


- When asked if they knew of anyone who would need affordable housing in order to move to Newton Stewart, 66% responded yes, they did.

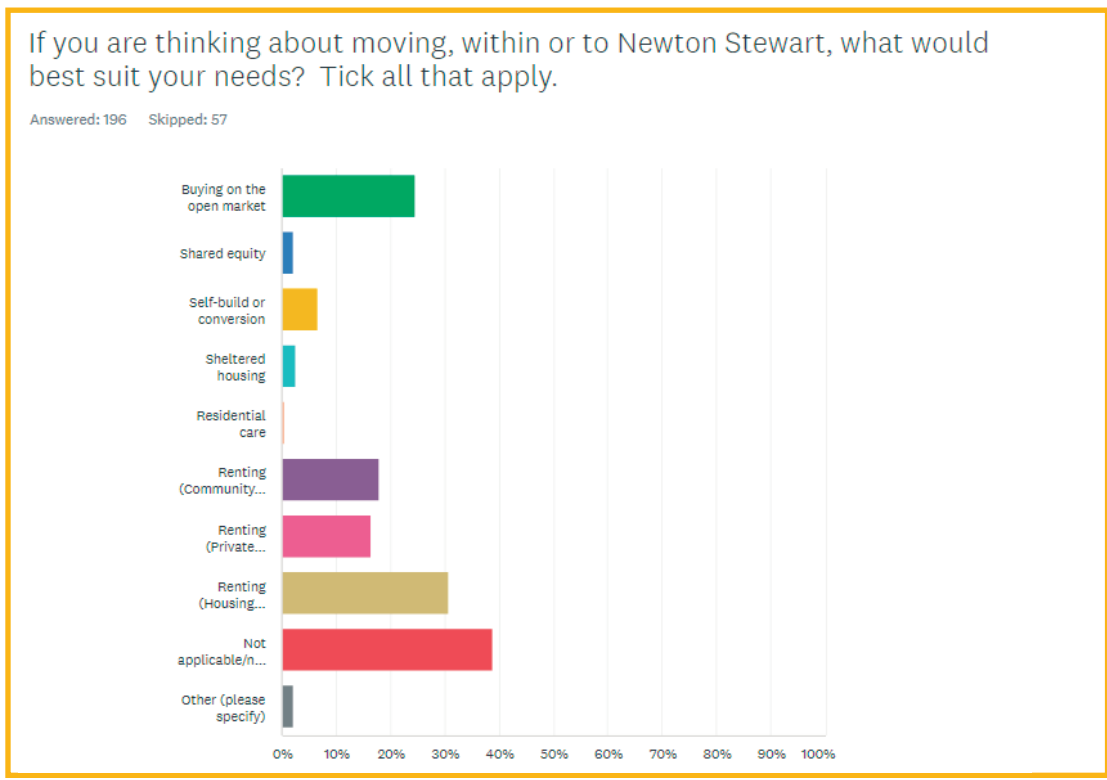




- When asked what type of accommodation best suited their needs, 69% of respondents felt that a house (detached, semi-detached or terraced) would be their preferred choice of house type, with bungalow (44%) being the next preferred option.

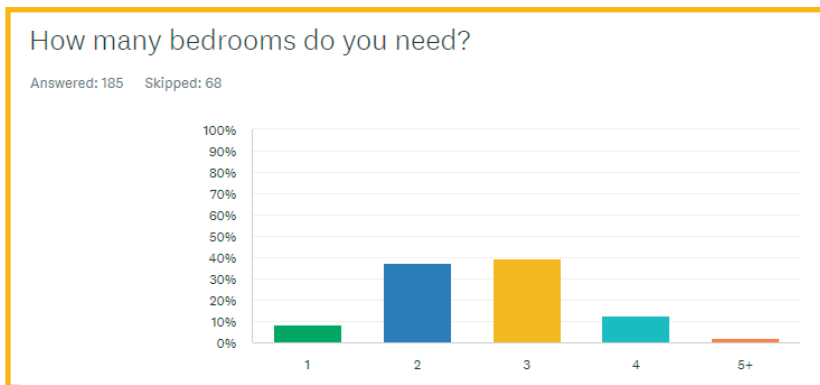


- Asked about the type of tenure they would prefer, 30% would prefer to rent from a housing association, 18% from a community organisation, 16% from a private landlord with 24% indicating they would want to buy on the open market. From the other options: 2% would consider shared equity, 7% self-build/conversion, 3% sheltered housing and 1% residential care as best suiting their needs.

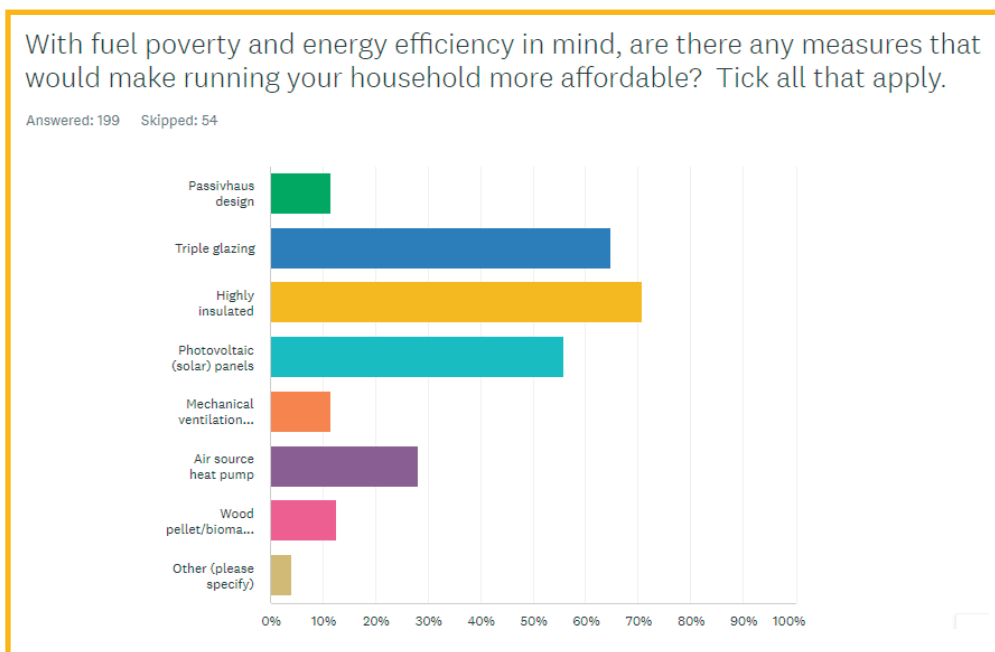




- When asked how many bedrooms they would require, 39% indicated that 3-bed properties were the option required most, followed by 2-bed properties (37%).

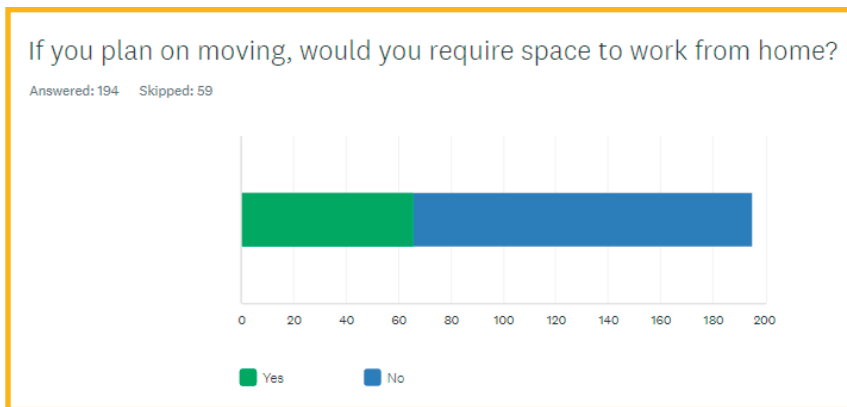


- Given the options on measures that respondents considered would make their homes more affordable to run, highly insulated and triple glazing were considered the best options.

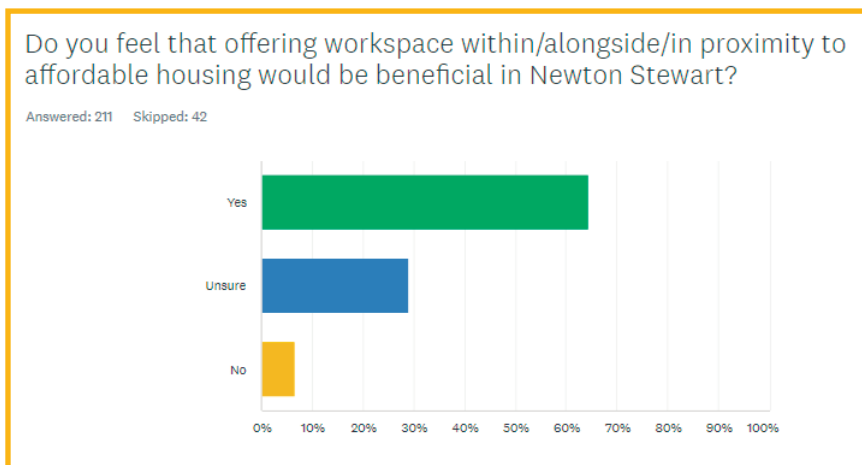




- When asked if anyone in their households require space to work from home, 34% responded that they would require home-working space.



- When asked if the offer of workspace alongside housing provision would be considered beneficial, most (64%) felt that it would.



## Evidence from Housing Waiting Lists

While there are several Housing Associations operating in Dumfries and Galloway, information on waiting lists is only readily available from the Common Housing Register which includes DGHP, Home Group, Irvine Housing and Cunninghame Housing Association properties. In addition Loreburn Housing Association has housing stock in both Minnigaff and Newton Stewart but are not included in the Common Register. Loreburn Housing Association’s figures have been provided in separately detailed tales below, alongside the tables from the Common Housing Register.



When comparing the 2021 figures to the 2022 list of the Common Housing Register for Newton Stewart in the tables below, there has been a marked increase in demand for all types of tenure with a significant rise in the number of applicants overall.

A breakdown of property type for the settlements within Newton Stewart for properties on the Common Housing Register, shows that the total number of applicants is 609 in 2022, which is up from 477 applications in 2021. Relative to 230 properties, with only 15 new tenancies in the past 12 months, it can be said that demand for all properties has increased. Considering the type of properties available on the register, the waiting list shows an overall higher demand for 1 and 2-bedroom bungalows, 1-bedroom flats and 2-3 bed roomed houses.

Whilst the housing association lists indicate that most demand is for 1-bedroom bungalows, this size and type of property is predominantly the highest in demand across the entire region. Housing association lists can contain individual applicants who have put their name on every settlement list across the region, and as one-bedroom properties are in short supply region-wide, waiting lists may not provide an accurate picture of direct housing need within a community. The community housing survey therefore provides a more accurate picture of need within the survey area.





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## Newton Stewart

### August 2022 Common Housing Register Waiting List:

**Newton Stewart**

Dwelling type	Beds	Dept	Number of Properties	No. Applicants on Homes4D&G Waiting List	Number New Tenancies in last 12 months
BEDSIT - 1ST FLOOR	1	HSG	2	15	
BEDSIT - GROUND	1	HSG	2	16	
BUNGALOW	1	HSG	8	132	
BUNGALOW	2	HSG	6	93	
FLAT - FIRST FLOOR	1	HSG	17	49	1
FLAT - FIRST FLOOR	2	HSG	13	11	
FLAT - GROUND FLOOR	1	HSG	19	69	5
FLAT - GROUND FLOOR	2	HSG	8	29	
FLAT - SECOND FLOOR	1	HSG	4	36	2
FLAT - SECOND FLOOR	2	HSG	8	9	1
HOUSE	2	HSG	89	76	6
HOUSE	3	HSG	41	49	
HOUSE	4	HSG	13	25	

### February 2021 Common Housing Register Waiting List:

**Newton Stewart**

Dwelling type	Beds	Dept	Number of Properties	No. Applicants on Homes4D&G Waiting List	Number New Tenancies in last 12 months
BEDSIT - 1ST FLOOR	1	HSG	2	8	
BEDSIT - GROUND	1	HSG	2	12	
BUNGALOW	1	HSG	8	91	
BUNGALOW	2	HSG	6	72	
FLAT - FIRST FLOOR	1	HSG	17	33	4
FLAT - FIRST FLOOR	2	HSG	13	5	
FLAT - GROUND FLOOR	1	HSG	19	48	2
FLAT - GROUND FLOOR	2	HSG	8	16	
FLAT - SECOND FLOOR	1	HSG	4	24	
FLAT - SECOND FLOOR	2	HSG	8	5	
HOUSE	2	HSG	89	55	4
HOUSE	3	HSG	41	41	
HOUSE	4	HSG	13	19	
OTHER FLAT - GRD FLR	1	HSG	1	48	1



Loreburn Housing Association’s data for Newton Stewart is detailed below and is presented as number of bedrooms, number of properties and those on the waiting list, which can include current tenants wishing to transfer to Newton Stewart. The Amenity, Wheelchair and Later Living properties are in addition to the properties available, detailed per bedroom number. ‘Later Living’ properties are mainly 1-bedroom, with some 2-bedroomed, and are for aged 55 and older. ‘Amenity’ properties are either 1 or 2-bedroomed and for aged 50 or older. Applicants who can demonstrate they would benefit from such properties, having mobility issues, can be considered if they don’t meet the age criteria.

Loreburn Housing Association Waiting List for Newton Stewart October 2022:

Bedrooms of bedrooms	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms	Amenity	Wheelchair	Later Living
Number of Properties	-	37	35	7	12	2	-
Waiting List	21	13	21	12	-	-	-



## Minnigaff

The settlement of Minnigaff lies across the Cree Bridge and is contiguous with Newton Stewart, and though separated by the River Cree, it shares many of the same services, most of which are located in Newton Stewart. It is viewed as a suburb to Newton Stewart.

Housing waiting list figures for Minnigaff show 317 applications in 2022 compared to 243 applicants in 2021, for 82 properties with only 5 new tenancies in the past 12 months. In line with the waiting list increases for Newton Stewart, Minnigaff figures show the highest increase in demand for one-bedroom properties but with an overall increase in all types and sizes of housing in general. This is again reflected in Loreburn’s waiting lists with 70 applicants for 7, 1-bed properties, as well as a strong waiting list for all sizes of properties.

August 2022 Common Housing Register Waiting List:

### Minnigaff

Dwelling type	Beds	Dept	Number of Properties	No. Applicants on Homes4D&G Waiting List	Number New Tenancies in last 12 months
BUNGALOW	1	HSG	30	97	3
BUNGALOW	2	HSG	7	73	
BUNGALOW	3	HSG	4	33	
HOUSE	2	HSG	24	57	1
HOUSE	3	HSG	16	39	1
HOUSE	4	HSG	1	18	

February 2021 Housing Waiting List:

### Minnigaff

Dwelling type	Beds	Dept	Number of Properties	No. Applicants on Homes4D&G Waiting List	Number New Tenancies in last 12 months
BUNGALOW	1	HSG	30	69	4
BUNGALOW	2	HSG	7	55	
BUNGALOW	3	HSG	4	26	
HOUSE	2	HSG	24	44	2
HOUSE	3	HSG	16	32	
HOUSE	4	HSG	1	17	



Loreburn Housing Association Waiting List for Minnigaff 2022:

Bedrooms of bedrooms	1 bedroom	2 bedrooms	3 bedrooms	4+ bedrooms	Amenity	Wheelchair	Later Living
Number of Properties	7	5	8	-	12	-	-
Waiting List	70	34	15	13	-	-	-

### Anecdotal evidence and future considerations

Comments contributed to the on-line survey as well as during the face-to-face engagements, highlighted the issue of the empty, dilapidated buildings in town and how the provision of affordable housing on these sites could address not only housing need but help to improve the visual aspect of the High Street for both residents and visitors.

Reference was made to the loss of local properties to the growing holiday and second home market and the impact of people in better financial positions relocating to Newton Stewart, where house prices have been historically cheaper, and thereby ‘locking’ locals, on relatively low wages, out of the market. The region has a low-wage economy, especially in rural areas, which are the very areas most attractive to holiday let and second-home buyers in terms of location and lower house prices. The impact of properties removed from the rental market and into the holiday and second homes market is therefore more acutely felt in these areas.

Additionally, with the recent changes in the EPC rating minimum standard requirements for private long-term rented properties (all private rental properties must be at least EPC D from March 2023 for new tenancies and March 2025 for existing tenancies), it is anticipated that many private landlords will choose not to bring their properties up to this standard as it will incur costs. Landlords may choose to sell properties rather than improve properties to meet these standards and further housing stock would be removed from the rental sector and therefore further decrease the availability of local housing to rent.

The recent, rapid rise in mortgage rates also presents another impacting factor on housing market sectors, not only to households with mortgages, but to landlords who themselves may have a mortgage on the property and now find it hard to cover their own costs.



Written comments showed that the reality for some families in Newton Stewart is that private rental accommodation can be insecure if a landlord decides to sell. There is also local concern that such properties would potentially become more lucrative holiday rentals for landlords or bought as second homes (currently exempt from the minimum EPC minimum standards). In a heated housing market, where property prices are already beyond the reach of those working in a low-wage economy, this would potentially further exacerbate the situation for housing availability and affordability.

Whilst people are familiar with housing associations and what housing provision they can offer, community-led housing developments are emerging as a solution to local housing issues. Increased community empowerment policies are affording community organisations more say in the type of housing offers they can provide within the local community for local needs and develop their own housing solutions.

Other perceived issues and factors relative to affordable housing provided numerous comments summarised below:

- There is a lack of housing for young workers-more housing would enable young folk to live and work in the area.
- More affordable housing is needed-young people have been forced to move away.
- We need housing for young families who will work and support the local service economy.
- There is nothing available that is affordable for first-time buyers on low income.
- People are accepting unsuitable properties just to stay in the area- they need choice to suit their needs.
- Not enough wheelchair accessible properties.
- Local people should be offered rental houses first.
- Lack of housing opportunities for health workers and other key workers is a barrier to attracting employees.
- Need for more bigger family homes.
- Not enough private rented accommodation available and waiting lists for housing association properties are too long.
- The rise in Airbnb is making the local housing situation worse.

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- Private rented accommodation is becoming more expensive.
- Low wages mean people can't afford rising rents.
- Need a scheme where new housing gives local people priority.
- Housing associations need to provide housing with 3 or more bedrooms to accommodate growing families.
- Smaller houses need for couples in 3–4-bedroom houses to downsize and allow bigger families the space in these houses.
- Too many second homes and Airbnb.
- Empty buildings should be used to provide accommodation.
- Affordable housing that is cheap to run is required.
- Doing up empty buildings will also help improve the look of the town.
- People who wish to stay in Newton Stewart are displaced to areas outside where they work or are needed to offer family support.
- Currently living in poorly maintained housing which is impacting on health of children.

## Conclusion

Newton Stewart Initiative have the positivity and appetite, whilst engaging with the community, to consider the repurposing of empty town centre buildings to ameliorate the blight these buildings have on the town whilst considering the shortage of available and affordable housing in Newton Stewart. Restoring old buildings to provide housing, as well as non-housing elements, to serve the community is a sustainable solution to address both issues.

By its very nature, the offer of living in the High Street will not meet the needs of everyone in housing need. The survey does, however, evidence the presence of an overall housing need which Newton Stewart Initiative will be able to use to also explore wider housing solutions within its community.





It is clear from the survey data and anecdotal comments that Newton Stewart is a town where there is high need and demand for affordable rented housing. The housing association waiting lists demonstrate needs have significantly increased across the board for all house types and sizes in the last 12 months.

Respondents and their households expressed housing need across the board in all age ranges and for all types of housing. Demand was clearly expressed for family sized housing as well as for smaller homes for those wishing to downsize or to have their first home, in both rental and buying options.

The survey results highlight the need for housing that is affordable, fuel efficient and low cost to run, whether re-developing existing property or new build. Respondents highlighted the need for more energy efficient homes and this was highlighted when 24% of respondents indicated that their housing did not meet their needs, with 23% of this group stating that the main factor were issues relative to energy efficiency and running costs. Measures such as higher levels of insulation, incorporating triple glazing and other energy efficient measures, would help tackle fuel poverty and work towards net-zero aims.

With numerous factors currently impacting on housing needs and affordability, community-led organisation housing provision, allocated with a local needs policy in place, can offer a solution to ensure that housing is provided in perpetuity for local needs and offer security to tenants. Increased provision of such housing will help to ensure the sustainability of communities as thriving and vibrant places to live and work.

The Newton Stewart Initiative Housing Survey has evidenced that the community has significant housing need. The Newton Stewart Initiative can now use this evidence to drive forward solutions to address this need.

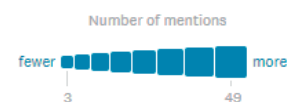


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- When asked if there was anything else to add about housing options and availability of housing in Newton Stewart the following Word Cloud was produced:

live want stay stop enough expensive landlord space  
 first time buyers first young people scarce help benefits  
 town school available folk homes within bedroom  
 struggle local afford rent live work Newton Stewart  
 properties available need bigger houses housing  
 family homes people region area without good hard  
 many go building something affordable housing  
 Newton work lot families plus local people will properties  
 offer don't rentals young disabled need affordable housing move make  
 housing association properties



# Appendix 6 - 10,000 Voices Survey

**Youthwork Dumfries & Galloway**

**YOUTHWORK**  
DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

# 10,000 VOICES

CAPTURING THE VOICES OF OVER 10,000 YOUNG PEOPLE IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

*THE LARGEST EVER  
COLLATION OF YOUNG  
PEOPLES VOICES IN  
DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY*



# 10,000 VOICES

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- 3** Introduction
- 4** Methodology & Considerations
- 5** Place Standards Tool
- 6** Overall Results
  - Results by Ward Area
    - 7** Stranraer & The Rhins
    - 8** Mid Galloway & Wigtown West
    - 9** Dee & Glenkens
    - 10** Castle Douglas & Crocketford
    - 11** Abbey
    - 12** North West Dumfries
    - 13** Mid & Upper Nithsdale
    - 14** Lochar
    - 15** Nith
    - 16** Annandale South
    - 17** Annandale North
    - 18** Annandale East & Eskdale
- 19** Implementing the Findings



# 10,000 VOICES INTRODUCTION

10,000 Voices ran in Dumfries and Galloway for the duration of 2018, and is the largest collection of young people’s views in the region, with all participants aged between 10 and 25. This is therefore the views of 46.9% of all young people living, working and studying in Dumfries and Galloway, making it the largest collection of young peoples views in Scotland for a single local authority area.

The project sought to gain the perceptions of 10,000 young people of the communities within which they live, this was done through formal consultations, focus groups, events and issue based groups.

The whole project involved young people in every single phase, from its initial planning and development through to the delivery and the subsequent analysis and reporting of the findings.

The information gained from the consultations will be used to inform a new five year strategic plan for Young People’s Services, and will provide professionals with an excellent insight into young people’s views and priorities for all organisations working with young people across Dumfries and Galloway.





# 10,000 VOICES

## METHODOLOGY & CONSIDERATIONS

10,000 Voices was conducted as part of a formal consultation process in Primary and Secondary schools from across Dumfries and Galloway. Young people were given a set of questions based upon what age they were, those at Primary were given a version suitable to them, and the same for those at Secondary school, and the age range itself was 10-25.

The formal consultation was also conducted within youth and community group settings across the region. Another method used by staff to gather the appropriate data, was to conduct the survey as part of a focus/issue based group.

By completing the consultation both formally and informally, this gave us the wide variety of views that we required to progress with the project.

The data gathered has been split into Ward Areas, in order to allow local Elected Members and other professionals to see what is being presented, and where key issues lie.



# 10,000 VOICES

## PLACE STANDARDS TOOL

10,000 voices was developed for Dumfries and Galloway, using the Scottish Government’s Place Standards Tool. The tool lets communities, public agencies, voluntary groups and other organisations find the specific aspects of a place that need to be targeted in order to improve people’s health, quality of life and well-being.

The tool provides a simple framework in order to structure conversations about places and communities. It allows us to follow a questionnaire format, and to think about and assess the appropriate issues.

Basing the format of our research on the Place Standards Tool, the questions within 10,000 Voices are based on the two following strands:

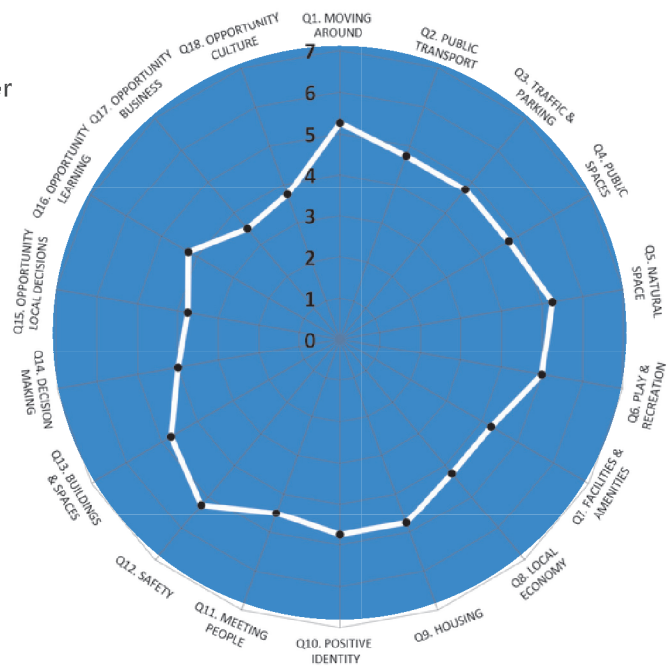
The physical environment: the buildings, streets, public spaces and natural spaces that make up a place.

The social environment: the relationships, social contact and support networks that make up a community.

The tool asks 14 questions on the physical and social elements of a place, which our survey is based upon. We ask questions, and the participant chooses a number from 1-7, 1 means there is a lot of room for improvement, and 7 means there is very little room for improvement, this is taken directly from the Place Standards Tool.

Results have been plotted on diagrams throughout this document, with points closer to the centre representing the ward areas which are most in need of improvement, whilst those plotted closer to the edge of the diagram displaying the strengths.

Utilising the Place Standards Tool for our 10,000 Voices consultation can benefit all new and existing communities, and can also help towards tackling health inequalities.



# 10,000 VOICES

# DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

NUMBER OF RESPONSES

# 10,642

## TOP 5 ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

1. BULLYING 2. DIET & BODY IMAGE 3. MENTAL HEALTH 4. SMOKING 5. TRANSPORT

## TOP 5 ISSUES YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON

1. ALCOHOL USE 2. CRIME & LAW 3. DRUG MISUSE 4. EMPLOYMENT 5. TRANSPORT

### THE SURVEY QUESTIONS WERE DEVELOPED USING THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT'S PLACE STANDARDS TOOL

#### WHERE YOU LIVE AND YOUR COMMUNITY

AVERAGE SCORE

1 = AWFUL 7 = EXCELLENT

REGIONAL AVE	QUESTION
5.25	Q1. I can easily walk and cycle around using good routes
4.75	Q2. Public transport meets my needs
4.75	Q3. Traffic and parking allow people to move around safely and meet the community's needs
4.75	Q4. Buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around
5.25	Q5. I can regularly experience good quality natural space
5	Q6. I can access a range of space with opportunities for play and recreation
4.25	Q7. Facilities and amenities meet my needs
4.25	Q8. There is an active local economy and the opportunity to access good-quality work
4.75	Q9. The homes in my area support the needs of the community
4.75	Q10. This place has a positive identity and I feel I belong
4.5	Q11. There is a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people
5.25	Q12. I feel safe here
4.75	Q13. Buildings and spaces are well cared for
4	Q14. I feel able to take part in decisions and help to change things for the better

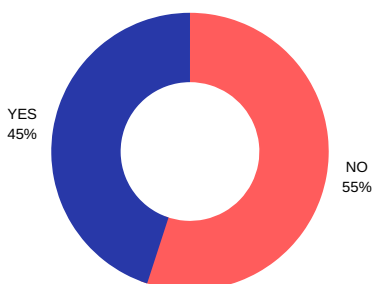
#### OPPORTUNITIES IN MY COMMUNITY

AVERAGE SCORE

1 = AWFUL 7 = EXCELLENT

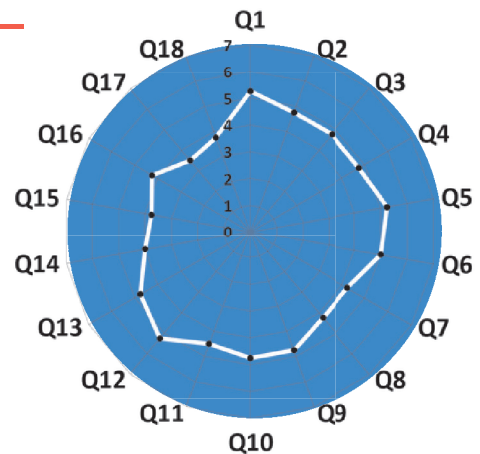
REGIONAL AVE	QUESTION
3.75	Q15. Opportunities to meaningfully participate in local service planning and decision making
4.25	Q16. Opportunities to engage in both formal and informal learning that is relevant to you and your needs or interests
3.5	Q17. Opportunities for young people to develop innovative projects and businesses and work within their local area
3.75	Q18. Opportunities to engage in activities focussed on culture and the arts (performance, production, heritage)

### DO YOU INTEND TO STAY IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY IN THE FUTURE?



### IF YOU DO NOT INTEND TO STAY IN D&G, WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE?

1. TRAVEL
2. STUDY
3. WORK



# 10,000 VOICES MID GALLOWAY & WIGTOWN WEST

NUMBER OF RESPONSES  
**852**  
8% OF TOTAL RESPONSES

## TOP 5 ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE WARD

1. EMPLOYMENT
2. SMOKING
3. TRANSPORT
4. YOUNG PEOPLES RIGHTS
5. WHATS ON IN MY AREA

## TOP 5 ISSUES YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ON

1. MONEY
2. DRUG MISUSE
3. DOMESTIC ABUSE
4. DISABILITY
5. BENEFITS & WELFARE

### THE SURVEY QUESTIONS WERE DEVELOPED USING THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENTS PLACE STANDARDS TOOL

#### WHERE YOU LIVE AND YOUR COMMUNITY

AVERAGE SCORE  
1 = AWFUL 7 = EXCELLENT

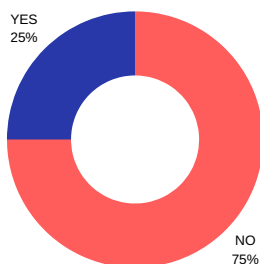
REGIONAL AVE	WARD AVE	QUESTION
5.25	5.5	Q1. I can easily walk and cycle around using good routes
4.75	5.75	Q2. Public transport meets my needs
4.75	5.75	Q3. Traffic and parking allow people to move around safely and meet the community's needs
4.75	4.75	Q4. Buildings, streets and public spaces create an attractive place that is easy to get around
5.25	4.5	Q5. I can regularly experience good quality natural space
5	4	Q6. I can access a range of space with opportunities for play and recreation
4.25	3.75	Q7. Facilities and amenities meet my needs
4.25	4.75	Q8. There is an active local economy and the opportunity to access good-quality work
4.75	4.75	Q9. The homes in my area support the needs of the community
4.75	5	Q10. This place has a positive identity and I feel I belong
4.5	3.25	Q11. There is a range of spaces and opportunities to meet people
5.25	6	Q12. I feel safe here
4.75	4	Q13. Buildings and spaces are well cared for
4	3	Q14. I feel able to take part in decisions and help to change things for the better

#### OPPORTUNITIES IN MY COMMUNITY

AVERAGE SCORE  
1 = AWFUL 7 = EXCELLENT

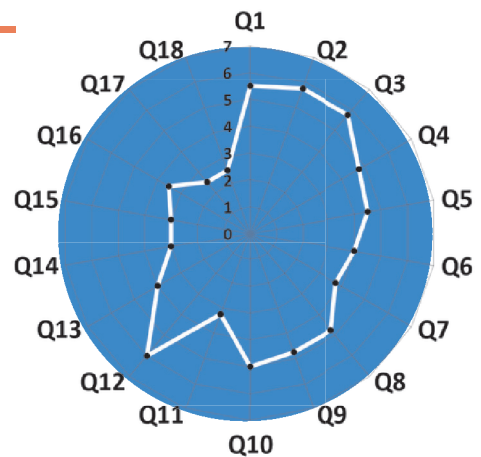
REGIONAL AVE	WARD AVE	QUESTION
3.75	3	Q15. Opportunities to meaningfully participate in local service planning and decision making
4.25	3.5	Q16. Opportunities to engage in both formal and informal learning that is relevant to you and your needs or interests
3.5	2.5	Q17. Opportunities for young people to develop innovative projects and businesses and work within their local area
3.75	2.5	Q18. Opportunities to engage in activities focussed on culture and the arts (performance, production, heritage)

### DO YOU INTEND TO STAY IN DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY IN THE FUTURE?



### IF YOU DO NOT INTEND TO STAY IN D&G, WHY WOULD YOU LEAVE?

1. STUDY
2. TRAVEL
3. WORK





# 10,000 VOICES

## IMPLEMENTING THE FINDINGS

The results of our engagement with young people through 10,000 voices has been streamlined in order to provide a clear picture of the current needs and interests of young people across our region, focusing on the key issues in each ward area.

As part of Dumfries and Galloway's Year of Young People Legacy, the information collated within this report will be used to inform a five-year plan for our Council's Young People's Services and will be shared with Community Planning Partners across the region.

We hope, moving forward, that the data contained within the report provides a snapshot of local need and helps organisations build upon the invaluable services, opportunities and experiences we offer our young people.

We would like to thank all of the young people and organisations who participated in and supported 10,000 voices during 2018.



10,000

VOICES

**YOUTHWORK**

DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**

Young Peoples Services  
Oasis Youth Centre  
Newall Terrace  
Dumfries  
DG1 1LW

01387 260243  
[youth.work@dumgal.gov.uk](mailto:youth.work@dumgal.gov.uk)

**FEBRUARY 2019**



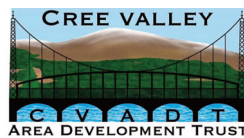




# LOCAL PLACE PLAN

## Newton Stewart & Minnigaff

### 2024-2034



Funded by  
UK Government

*This Local Place Plan of Newton Stewart has been helped and supported by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and Dumfries and Galloway Council and funded by the UK Government.*

*If you have any comments on this Local Place Plan please contact  
[info@newtonstewartinitiative.net](mailto:info@newtonstewartinitiative.net)*