

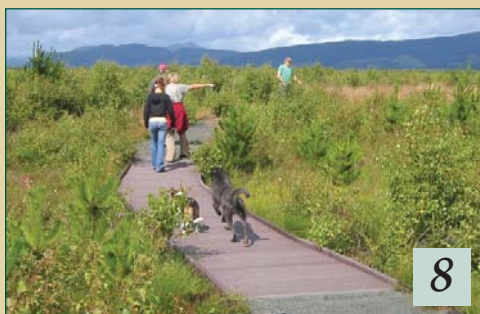
THORNHILL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2011 - 2016



CONTENTS



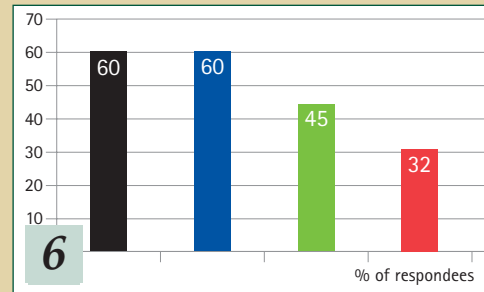
Our Community Now



Main Aims and Priorities



Our Vision



Survey Results and Quotes



Actions



Making it Happen

INTRODUCTION

THORNHILL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

This Community Action Plan summarises community views about:

- Thornhill now
- The vision for the future of Thornhill
- The issues that matter most to the community
- Our priorities for projects and action

**The plan will be our guide for what we
– as a community –
try to make happen over the next five years**

THORNHILL COMMUNITY TRUST

The preparation of the Action Plan has been guided by a local steering group set up by Thornhill Community Trust. The steering group brought together representatives from other community organisations including the Community Council, the Community Hall Management Committee, The North Common Trust, Playgroup and local business.

Thornhill Community Trust was formed following the first *Thornhill and Blairdrummond Community Action Plan* in 2003. Its role has been to carry out projects identified in that Action Plan and it has successfully helped to develop and promote local paths, drain and improve biodiversity on the South Common, improve play facilities, establish Thornhill Kids Club and lobby for traffic calming through the village.

This Community Action Plan project was carried out to update and identify a new set of priorities for the community. We prepared this Community Action Plan with the assistance of the Small Town and Rural Development Group's Community Futures Programme.

LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

The Action Plan has been informed by extensive community engagement carried out over a three month period from September to November 2010.

The process involved: **stakeholder interviews and meetings** – with groups and individuals representing all aspects of the community; carrying out a **community views survey**, which was delivered to all households; preparing a **community profile** detailing facts and figures about the community; organising a **Community Futures Event**.

**205 COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY FORMS WERE RETURNED FROM OUR 278 HOUSEHOLDS
18 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS AND INTERVIEWS WERE HELD WITH LOCAL GROUPS
116 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE COMMUNITY FUTURES EVENT
THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART**

OUR COMMUNITY NOW

THORNHILL COMMUNITY PROFILE 2010

LOCATION

Thornhill village is situated in the Carse of Stirling straddling the A873 road to the Trossachs, a popular route for tourists to the National Park. Kippen, Callander, Aberfoyle and Doune surround Thornhill, all between 3 and 8 miles away.

POPULATION

The village population has grown slowly by about 8% over the last 10 or so years and is now around 590 people. The community has a relatively lower percentage of people of a pensionable age, a higher percentage of working age, and a lower percentage of under 16s than either the Stirling Council area or Scotland as a whole.

HOUSING

There are approximately 278 households in the Thornhill area, with high levels of owner occupation and private rented accommodation. There is a lower percentage of Council rented housing than Stirling and Scotland, and no provision of social housing by Housing Associations. Over the last 20 years, housing development has been small scale.

EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Many people in Thornhill commute to Stirling, Falkirk and Glasgow and other parts of the Central Belt due to the easy road connections to motorways and main rail stations. Connections by bus into Stirling are very infrequent.

The local economy has taken a knock with the loss of the Post Office and the closure of The Crown Hotel, however there are still the good Village Store and the Lion and Unicorn Hotel.

One of the main features of the local economy is the large percentage of self-employed people, at 20% of the workforce compared with 8.9% for Stirling and 17% for rural Scotland.

Main economic sectors are in health and social work, real estate and renting, agriculture, business activity, wholesale, retail trade and repairs. There is still a high percentage of people employed in agriculture in the area compared with both Stirling and Scotland.

EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

There is a Mothers and Toddlers group for babies and children up to 3 years old. This is community run, alongside a Playgroup twice a week in the Community Hall for children of 3 years to school age. The closest Stirling Council nurseries are in Doune and Arnprior.

Primary school children attend either Thornhill Primary School or Kincardine-in-Menteith Primary School. Both schools are highly regarded and have a close connection to the community. Thornhill Kids Club is a community run Out of School Care provider. Most secondary school children go to McLaren High School in Callander, a few attend school in Balfour or Stirling.

HEALTH AND CARE SERVICES

The Doune Health Centre practice covers Thornhill and runs surgeries in the small medical centre in Thornhill. Some people use the medical practice in Kippen.

The new Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert opens fully in 2011 and Stirling Royal Infirmary is due to become a community hospital.

A Meals on Wheels service is run from Thornhill Primary School by local volunteers. A Home Help service is run by Stirling Council. Residential care is available in Callander.



OUR COMMUNITY NOW

THORNHILL COMMUNITY PROFILE 2010

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

Facilities include: Thornhill Community Hall; The Church Hall; The Masonic Lodge; Stirling Council's Mobile Library; McLaren Leisure Centre in Callander.

The West Moss-side Centre provides crafts courses set on an organic farm.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Local groups include:

- Organisations for young people – Brownies, Young Farmers
- Early Years Education and Play – Mothers and Toddlers, Playgroup, Kids Club
- General – Church of Scotland and its Church Guild, WRI, Masonic Lodge, Thornhill News
- Environment – North Common Trust, Gardening Society
- Culture, Arts, Music and Events – Thornhill Players, Accordion Club, Gala Committee
- Sports – Thornhill Football Club, Badminton, Table Tennis Club, Fitness Classes
- Community Development – Thornhill & Blairdrummond Community Council, Thornhill Community Trust and its subgroups, Thornhill Community Hall Management Committee

ROADS

The busy A84 trunk road goes from Stirling through Blairdrummond and on to Doune.

From the junction at Blairdrummond the A873 runs west towards Aberfoyle, passing through Thornhill. Several traffic calming measures have been introduced in Thornhill, including speed limit signs, vehicle activated speed signs and road narrowing.

TRANSPORT

There is a very limited bus service. One bus service runs from Aberfoyle to Stirling passing through Thornhill. The last bus back from Stirling leaves at 5.35pm. There is no Sunday service. There is no public bus service to connect Thornhill with Callander, Doune or Kippen.

The nearest railway stations are in Stirling, Bridge of Allan and Dunblane.

There is a school bus that takes children from Thornhill Main Street to McLaren High School in Callander and back, and there is a minibus service for primary school children, operating from Thornhill Primary School to households around Thornhill.

ENVIRONMENT AND OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

The commons in Thornhill are a unique facility almost encircling the village. The North Common is in the ownership of the village and is managed and maintained by the North Common Trust. The South Common is owned and maintained by Stirling Council. The South Common has a play area and football pitch.

There are a number of paths leading from the village, some of which form part of Stirling Council's core path network.

The surrounding countryside is farmland. Land to the south was reclaimed hundreds of years ago from the peat bogs that used to cover the Carse of Stirling. Flanders Moss is a National Nature Reserve a mile from the village and is the largest remaining raised peat bog in the UK. It is managed by Scottish Natural Heritage.

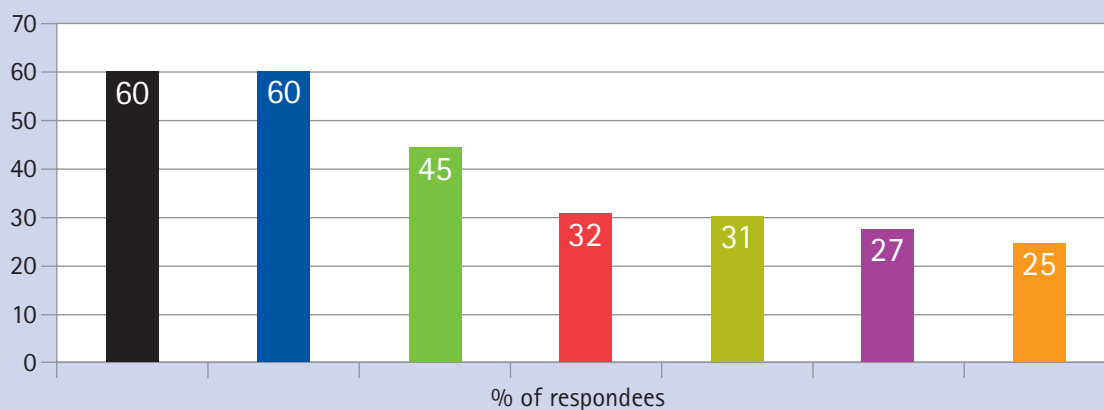
CULTURE AND HERITAGE

Thornhill was laid out in 1696, and gradually outgrew the neighbouring hamlet of Norrieston. The history of the village is closely connected with its links to farming and the Carse. In terms of today's landscape and farming economy the most significant period in the history of the area was the late 18th Century, when peat was cleared from the Moss.



OUR COMMUNITY NOW

SURVEY RESULTS AND QUOTES – LIKES



The friendly people and the sense of community

*Even in the street I get a smile from everyone I meet.
Friendly, rural, good community spirited village.
The villagers care about Thornhill and are very proactive.*



The nature of the area – clean, safe, quiet and rural

*Some traditional with a mix of new without losing its identity.
Quiet and friendly atmosphere where we can safely bring up children.
The size of the village – it is not overdeveloped.
Small enough to be friendly, large enough to support school, shop, church and various societies and groups.*



Local amenities and services

*Well stocked and friendly village shop.
The shop and its owner and staff – long may it be there for everyone.
It has a great school and everything we need.
The library van calls once a week.
Village market with local produce.*



The surrounding countryside

*In lovely country with places like Flanders Moss on our doorstep.
There are some lovely walks and places to cycle.*



Village environment/open spaces/park

*Not being a built up area and that we still have common ground.
Walks around the village – the new upgraded path along the 'Hedges' is fantastic, North Common, South Common.
The environment has been kept clean and tidy by our street cleaner. I would like the community to thank him.*



Community facilities, activities and events

*... the community hall is a great venue.
I'm so impressed with all the interests on offer – led by volunteers.
Annual scarecrow competition.*

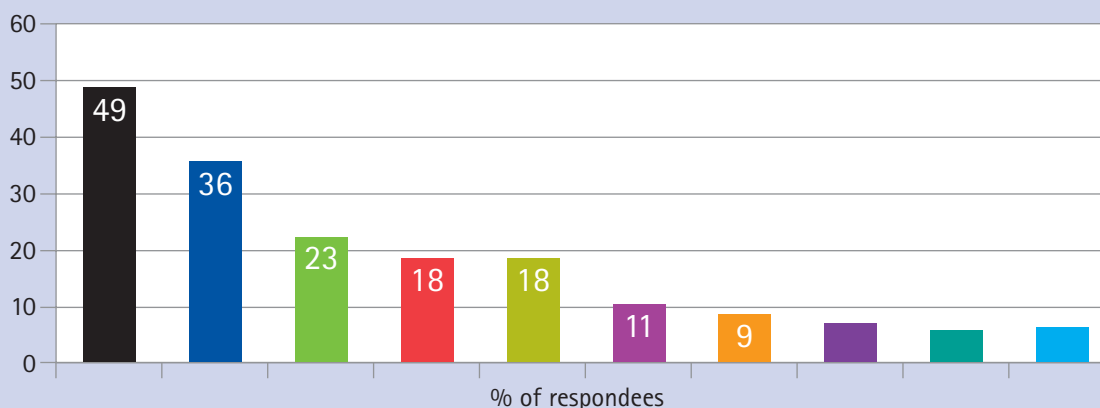


Location

*Not too far from the city but far enough to be rural.
The advantages of living in a rural community while only 10 miles from Stirling.
Relatively easy access to Central Belt, Edinburgh, Glasgow.*

OUR COMMUNITY NOW

SURVEY RESULTS AND QUOTES – DISLIKES



- Traffic and parking**
The Main Street and Kippen Road is still affected by traffic travelling too fast.
Like driving through a canyon of cars evenings and mornings and continually watching in case a child steps out.
The pavements on the south side of Main Street are dangerous and uneven and the kerbs are broken.
- Lack of access to services / transport**
Lack of regular transport to Stirling e.g. evenings and Sundays.
How to get to Doctors, Vets, Bank, PO hairdressers or whatever in Callander, Doune or other communities?
The new hospital by public transport is a major expedition.
People cannot take jobs because bus service does not suit working hours.
- Loss of Post Office and other village services**
Loss of the Post Office and The Crown.
Lack of a good café.
- Community Facilities**
Not much for teenagers to do.
The opportunity for youth activities has diminished.
Used to be a bus to get young folk over to Callander Sports Centre.
Community hall could be better used
Lack of play area for older kids i.e. tennis courts, 5 a side pitch, basketball courts.
- Open Spaces and outdoor facilities**
I'm not very happy about the Park and things being replaced that didn't need replaced and things being taken away and not replaced.
School playground and sports facilities for children are poor.
More could be done with North Common.
- Community Cohesion**
It has the rural, the church etc but all separate groups. The only place the whole village comes together is one day a year at the Fete.
- Nothing**
- Footpaths and cycle routes**
Lack of safe cycle routes.
Despite the excellent work of TCT there still is a dearth of paths to wander around the village. Difficult to walk off road. Would be good to be able to walk to surrounding villages.
- Housing and Development**
Severe shortage of social rented or otherwise affordable housing.
- Broadband and Mobile reception**
Poor broadband, some problems with digital TV and mobile phone reception.

MAIN AIMS AND PRIORITIES

IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY NEEDS

ACTIVITIES

The community would like to see more activities organised locally. Ideas that emerged as priorities from the consultation included establishing a local youth club, a cinema club and more local adult education classes.

There is also a need to improve access to other community facilities particularly in Callander – to the McLaren Leisure Centre, McLaren High School, and the Callander Youth Project.

PATHS

There is a real need to improve path connections – in and around the village, out to Flanders Moss, and to connect with other villages.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

With many young people in the community, there is also a desire to continue to improve sports and play provision on the South Common.

THE VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT AND ITS HISTORY

There is a desire to retain the strong sense of place of the village – keeping the village attractive as well as maintaining its visual and physical connection with the surrounding countryside, and celebrating our history and heritage. This includes improving and maintaining views out to the Carse and surrounding hills.



MAIN AIMS AND PRIORITIES

IDENTIFIED COMMUNITY NEEDS

TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Public transport is a major problem for people in Thornhill. Lack of public transport affects access to full and part-time employment, education at colleges and universities, health services at the local surgeries and more distant hospitals. Also affected is access to shops, banks, vets, social and recreational facilities, and rail stations and other further travel connections.

Traffic speeding through the village is still seen as a problem and there is a need for further traffic calming measures.

There is a need to improve pavements in key locations around the village.

HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

There was a sense that Thornhill needs more affordable housing for local families to sustain the future of its economy and services.

Mains gas is not available in Thornhill, so that there is a need to look at ways of reducing house bills and exploring renewable sources of energy.

An emerging proposal for a wind power development near the village has sparked interest in the potential for establishing a Community Wind Turbine that would contribute to renewable energy and also raise income to support local services and projects.

LOCAL ECONOMY AND LOCAL PRODUCE

Residents are keen to ensure the future of the local village shop and to maintain and develop other services and amenities. They would like to see The Crown Hotel developed to add to what the village offers. Many people think that a local cafe would add significantly to the attraction of the village both for locals and visitors.

Initiatives such as establishing a local business directory, developing workspace and improving telecommunications were all thought to be important for self-employed people in the area.

There is also the desire to help make the community more sustainable with local food production, through supporting community allotments and garden shares.



ACTIONS

THEME 1 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Youth Club

- Support Community Council's initiative to start Youth Club
- Further work with local young people to identify what they would like
- Involve them in researching how other small communities like Thornhill have provided clubs and activities for their young people
- Involve Stirling Council's Youth Team, Kippen Youth Project and Callander Youth Project in helping with emerging ideas

Cinema Club

- Set up a small working group to research how other communities have developed Cinema Clubs (e.g. Callander & Ashfield)
- Plan how it could work in Thornhill and identify a suitable venue
- Develop and submit funding applications for required equipment and licences
- Set up a programming group involving young people

Adult Education Classes

- Establish what courses people want to pursue by conducting a village survey
- Work with Forth Valley College, Stirling Council Adult Learning Team, West Moss-side Centre and University of the Third Age to progress
- Possible classes to explore include additional craft classes (dressmaking, knitting), keep fit (pilates/yoga), languages, computer skills

More activities for the elderly

- Support the current work of the Church Guild and WRI in providing activities
- Explore potential for more e.g. exercise groups

Improved access to facilities, activities and events in Callander

- Discuss and progress this idea with Callander Leisure Centre, McLaren High School, and Callander Youth Project
- Relates to improvements in public transport and use of on-demand transport

Action by

Thornhill & Blairdrummond Community Council, Thornhill Community Hall Committee, Church, local young people, with assistance from Stirling Council Youth Workers and Community Learning and Development Officers, McLaren Leisure Centre, McLaren High School Community Campus, Callander Youth Project, Kippen Youth Project, Forth Valley College, Church Guild, WRI, University of the Third Age.



ACTIONS

THEME 2 ENVIRONMENT, PATHS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

Develop path link to Flanders Moss

- To work closely with SNH and local landowners to explore how this path can be routed, designed, funded and developed

Develop path links to neighbouring communities – Doune, Kippen and Callander

- To work with Stirling Council, National Park Access Officers and neighbouring communities to develop path links and establish closer ties with these communities
- Complete a way-marked route to Callander

Develop local path network around the village in the North and South Common and connect to wider network

- To work with Stirling Council to develop and improve paths in and around the village
- Develop, interpret and sign paths around the village in a way that benefits local residents, visitors and the local economy
- Explore how local young people can be involved in the programme of paths development (e.g. training schemes).

Develop sports and play provision on the South Common

- To work with Thornhill Community Trust, Thornhill Primary School and its Parent Council, Thornhill Football Club, Thornhill Kids Club and Stirling Council to investigate potential for a multi use games area and to further improve the existing football pitch
- Continue to look at ways of developing play provision e.g. adventure playground for older children

Village environment and history

- Finalise and implement North Common Management Plan
- Encourage more floral displays within the village and at village entrances, through village organisations and Thornhill Primary School
- Consider ways of celebrating Thornhill's history and heritage, e.g. setting up a Heritage Group to support existing archives held by individuals
- Seek to maintain the village connection with the surrounding countryside and its views out to the Carse and surrounding hills

Action by

*Thornhill Community Trust,
Thornhill Community Trust Access Group,
Thornhill Primary School and Thornhill Primary
School Parent Council, North Common Trust,
Thornhill Gardening Society, Thornhill Football Club,
Thornhill Kids Club and others,
with assistance from Scottish Natural
Heritage, Stirling Council,
Loch Lomond & The Trossachs
National Park Authority, local landowners,
Paths for All Partnership and others.*



ACTIONS

THEME 3 TRANSPORT AND ROADS

Improve public transport

- Work with Stirling Council and existing providers to look at ways of creating a service that:
- supports links between the four rural communities of Callander, Thornhill, Kippen and Doune
- Improves the bus service to Stirling with better access in the evening and on Sundays

Develop further traffic calming measures

- Explore issues and solutions with Stirling Council and the Police
- Suggestions include flashing speed signs on approaches from Stirling and Kippen Road; making the village a 20 mph zone

Improve pavements

- Measures to reduce parking on the pavements and traffic mounting the pavements
- Improve pavements, especially along the Main Street and Kippen Road between Doig Street and the Primary School

Action by

Thornhill & Blairdrummond Community Council, with Stirling Council and the Police

THEME 4 HOUSING AND SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

More Affordable Housing

- Open discussions with Stirling Council and Rural Stirling Housing Association on how to progress proposals for social housing
- Consider the desire for a mixed small scale development to benefit local people that is carefully planned to be in keeping with the rest of the village
- Explore whether there is the potential to incorporate sheltered housing/independent living for older residents

More home energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources

- Research how other communities have carried out this work
- Put together funding proposals to e.g. Climate Challenge Fund for Home Energy Survey work and advice on 'micro renewables'
- Research the potential for larger scale 'community renewable' schemes e.g. combined heat and power
- Also explore community oil buying scheme/cooperative

Community Wind Turbine

- Explore how other communities have approached a community wind turbine project e.g. Fintry Development Trust
- Work with the windfarm developers to secure a community turbine
- Consider the need to retain and develop the quality of the views to surrounding hills and the Carse

Action by

Thornhill & Blairdrummond Community Council, Thornhill Community Trust, with assistance from Rural Stirling Housing Association, Stirling Council Housing Department, Climate Challenge Fund, Windfarm Developers.

ACTIONS

THEME 5 LOCAL ECONOMY AND LOCAL PRODUCE

Support and develop local shops, services and hospitality sector

- Continue to look for a solution to redevelop/ reopen The Crown Hotel in line with community aspirations
- Work with existing businesses to see how 'buying local' can be encouraged and promoted
- Support and improve the village market
- Encourage the development of a local cafe

Explore need for workspace/office space /storage space for local businesses

- Find out what local businesses require
- Liaise with Stirling Council regarding findings from their recent Rural Business Premises Survey
- Identify possible buildings or land
- Commission feasibility study

Develop local business directory

- To gather information on local businesses for the Community Profile and develop a local business directory
- Research examples from other communities
- Consider expanding the directory into a booklet with additional information e.g. on local facilities, walks, heritage and events

Lobby for improved broadband services

- Make BT aware that this need has been identified as a community priority and emphasise the extent of the self-employed sector in the community as well as local residents
- Continue liaison with BT to ensure their intention of carrying out improvements in April 2011 is realised

Local food production

- Explore potential for the development of local allotments and garden sharing

Action by

Thornhill Community Trust, Thornhill & Blairdrummond Community Council, North Common Trust, with assistance from local businesses, Stirling Council, local landowners.



OUR VISION

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Summary of the main aspirations for the future
as expressed by local people and organisations:

A SAFE PLACE TO LIVE

Thornhill will have an attractive and safe environment.

Further traffic calming measures will slow traffic through the village.

A GOOD SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Local activities and events will be organised to provide social activity for all ages. We will have improved our recreation facilities locally and continued to develop sports and play facilities.

A good public transport service will provide adequate access to employment, education, health services, shops, as well as social and recreational facilities and other services.

Our history and heritage will be celebrated. Thornhill will have a strong sense of place.

AN ATTRACTIVE PLACE WITH GOOD ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Floral displays will enhance our village environment.

Common land improvements will be agreed.

Thornhill's natural and cultural assets will benefit residents, businesses and visitors.

There will be stronger links with Flanders Moss.

Local paths and cycle networks will be improved and constructed.

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Our population and local economy will be sustained and grown with the development of more affordable housing and local businesses and services.

A LOW CARBON FUTURE

Our community carbon footprint will be reduced. Renewable energy and energy efficiency will be introduced. Foot and cycle paths will be developed to neighbouring villages and Flanders Moss. Fresh healthy food will be produced locally.



MAKING IT HAPPEN

ORGANISATIONS AND ACTION GROUPS

Responsibility for taking forward the Action Plan locally will lie with Thornhill Community Trust working with other local organisations, residents, businesses and public agencies.

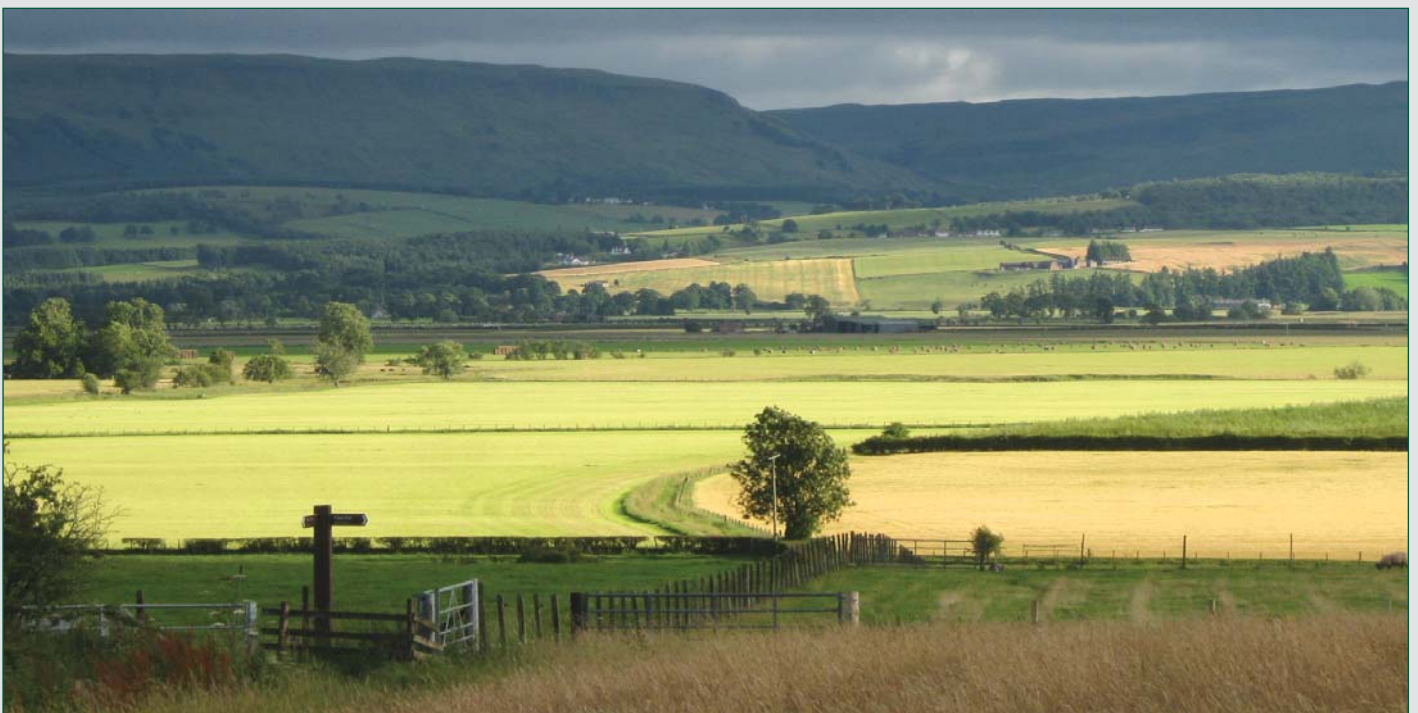
If you are interested and want to get involved or know more about any of the themes outlined in this Action Plan, please contact a member of the steering group. Members of the steering group were: Douglas Cumming, Kevin Dinely, Bea Dower, Fiona MacDougall, Heather Milligan, Peter Rickard, Margo Ritchie, Angelica Setterington, Richard Waite, Lawrence Waller, Rosemary Williams, and Drew Yule.

Contact details can be found in Thornhill Local Telephone Directory.

COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND

We also recognise that several of our aims around the future sustainability of the village will require the ability to access land – e.g. for food production, renewable energy production and workspace for local businesses. We would welcome the opportunity to work closely with local landowners to achieve these ambitions.

We will also explore ways of purchasing and managing land on behalf of the community and if required Thornhill Community Trust can alter its legal status to allow us to comply with the Scottish Government Community Right to Buy legislation.



THORNHILL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2011-2016

This Community Action Plan sets out the priorities for the development of Thornhill over the next 5 years as determined by the community through an extensive process of community engagement carried out over a three month period in late 2010.

The Plan contains:

- A summary of our Community Profile.
- Our main likes and dislikes, identified in our Community Views Household Survey.
- The main themes and priorities for action.
- Our Vision Statement for the future of Thornhill.
- Information on how you can stay in touch and get involved.

Thanks to all those who took time to share their views and take part.

Photography by: Bea Dower, Fiona MacDougall, Peter Rickard, Lawrence Waller, Rosemary Williams

Thornhill Community Future
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and Financed by:

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Rural Stirling
Housing
Association



Stirling Community
Planning Partnership
Stirling Council



Callander and
District Round Table
No 1252



Civil-Comp Ltd

