



the coalfields
regeneration trust

TWECHAR

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2017 – 2022





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FOCUS ON THE FUTURE - REFLECTING ON THE PAST

Twechar Heritage Centre 'Preserving our rich and diverse histories for future generations'

The project will build a heritage interpretation centre at the front of the Healthy Living Centre's community space and deliver a range of heritage, people and community centred activities. The Centre will contain digital interpretation units, including a range of video monitors and audio units to house a large collection of existing, project, and future generated oral history and local history film and audio recordings. Exhibition space will host static displays of heritage-related photographs, texts and maps, and a workspace will allow group heritage activities and learning, including skills development and experiential learning for new and existing volunteers. These will embrace film making, photography, oral history and heritage-relevant craft workshops, including archery equipment and cobb making, which have special relevance to local heritage. The Centre will also host a series of public lectures about local history and heritage, with speakers being invited from across Scotland. Adult and youth centred workshops will explore Twechar through the ages, with school pupils and young people creating original artwork and a series of maps to illustrate the many changes; these will be digitised to supplement the interactive learning programme.

Twechar Heritage Centre will be a wonderfully accessible and engaging focal point for heritage learning.

Twechar has been a site of notable historical significance dating back to the 2nd century. This project will focus on mapping the natural, historical and industrial heritage which has served to form Twechar and the surrounding areas.

The UNESCO world heritage site the Antonine Wall, runs right through Twechar, and physical remains of an associated Roman fort sit atop Bar Hill, which overlooks Twechar. At the time it was built, the Wall was the most complex frontier ever constructed by the Roman army. These sites and the spectacular surrounding countryside attract visitors from far and wide.

The Forth and Clyde Canal also runs along the northern edge of Twechar and is a nationally recognised ancient Scottish monument flowing from Grangemouth in the east, to Bowling in the west. This was a site of much industrial travel in the 1700s and 1800s, with the section at Twechar being built in 1771. The section, at Auchinstarry, a mile from Twechar, was a port from which people could emigrate down the canal to the ships that would cross the Atlantic Ocean to America. The canal's main use was promoting industry and travel.

In the summer of 2014, the John Muir Trust opened the 'John Muir Way', a walking and cycling route which passes through Twechar as it makes its way 134 miles across Scotland (between Helensburgh and Dunbar), in memory of the great Scottish Outdoorsman. In January 2017, The John Muir Way has officially been recognised as one of Scotland's Great Trails. The route attracts many old and new visitors to our village and the Bar Hill fort is a notable stop along the way; it is highly likely that interest in the trail will increase further following world-wide publicity of its recent prestigious accolade.

In the mid-1800s William Baird opened the first of the Twechar Mines. Twechar quickly became one of the focal points for Scottish mining, housing the engineering works, and a regionally important training school for apprentice miners. This important and fairly unusual industrial heritage is well known to older community members but is in dire need of preservation. Alongside this is Twechar's community heritage. The mines attracted not only workers but families and, from this point, Twechar became a mining village for the relatives of people working in the mines and related service industry workers.

84 Community Household Surveys were returned representing the views of approximately 252 people

2 Stakeholder interviews took place with local people, groups, businesses and support organisations

110 people attended the Community Futures Voting Event.



INTRODUCTION

Coalfields Community Futures

The Coalfields Community Futures Programme is an approach to local community planning and sustainable community development that aims to encourage active citizenship and build local democracy. It enables communities to devise a community action plan which makes a case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen.

The process builds on existing processes of community action research to identify local needs and priorities, using residents as co-researchers. We work with local residents and groups to develop a common sense of purpose and assist them to produce a deliverable community action plan.

To support the action planning process the community receive a Participatory Budget which is available to local constituted community or voluntary groups.

This budget enables the community to fund small projects that are identified by the community through the results of the household surveys, stakeholder interviews and the Community Open Event.

Twechar Community Action Plan

The Action Plan summarises community views and information about:

Our community now

Our shared Vision for Twechar

Priority themes and actions

Twechar Community Futures Steering Group

The Steering Group brought together representatives from Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre, Twechar Youth Group, Twechar community Action, local residents

Thank you to everyone who took part in helping Twechar plan for a bright future.



OUR COMMUNITY NOW

Background

This Profile has been produced to give an insight into Twechar. It is part of a wider Community Futures process being delivered by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust across Scotland's coalfield communities to assist them reflect on what is good, what could be improved and how.

Location

Twechar is a small former mining village in East Dunbartonshire, Scotland close to the boundary with North Lanarkshire. It lies between the larger towns of Kirkintilloch and Kilsyth. The Forth and Clyde Canal runs close to the village to the north, and closely follows the line of the Antonine Wall.

Population

Based on 2014 mid-year estimates, the population of Twechar is estimated at 1,180. There has been a decline in the population of 13.5% since 2001. Twechar has a higher percentage of children aged between 0-15 (19.5%) than Scotland (17.4%). 49% male and 51% female. Within the Twechar Master Plan it is envisaged that the population of Twechar will increase to 2000 by 2020.

Transport

There is a regular bus service through the village and services the main towns. The buses are also disability and pram friendly.

Health

Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre houses a full time pharmacy which is open 6 days per week, a satellite GP surgery 1/2 day per week, Health Visitor and smoking cessation classes. The nearest hospital is Stobhill A & E and Glasgow Infirmary.

Employment and the Economy

There is an Industrial Estate in the village which hosts 10 businesses. There are two local shops, one which hosts the Post Office. Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre offers Employment and Training opportunities.





OUR COMMUNITY NOW

Education and Training

There is one primary school in Twechar which has a nursery class. The nearest Roman Catholic Primary School is in Kirkintilloch and the High Schools are also in Kirkintilloch.

The % of households where no one aged 16-74 has qualifications is significantly higher than Scotland as a whole, with Twechar figures 41% and Scotland at almost 27%.

Social and Community

Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre

Twechar Community Action transformed the old recreation Centre into Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre. A community hub apart from housing a pharmacy and satellite GP surgery also has a café, sports hall and meeting rooms and provide a vast range of activities and services. The company therefore has its origins in the action of local people to retain and improve one of the few facilities and amenities in the village.

Housing

In 2009 Places for People entered into a Framework Agreement with East Dunbartonshire Council to undertake in partnership with the Council and the community the regeneration of the village to deliver the masterplan vision.

One of the objectives of the Twechar masterplan was to broaden the range and type of housing to create a more sustainable community with more choices and a higher population rising to 2000 inhabitants by 2015. Three sites in the village were identified for housing develop-

ment to be progressed, Davidson Crescent, Coal Board (5 phases) and Glen Shirva Road (2 phases). Demolition of properties owned by the Council was also required which involved decanting some people from their homes to enable the new building programme to commence.

To date Davidson Crescent has been completed and provides 31 affordable rented homes and 10 homes for ownership through shared equity purchase. Roman Fields Phase 1 has been completed and provides 20 homes for affordable rent and 35 homes for a variety of sale options. Roman Fields Phase 2.1 due for completion February 2017 will provide 10 affordable rented homes and 21 homes for a variety of sale options. Roman Fields Phase 2.2 due to commence on site in March 2017 will provide 16 properties for a variety of sale options. 143 new high quality properties in total.

The pace of development has been based on market demand ensuring a balanced and sustainable housing market is created. The remaining phases will be progressed over the next 5 years and this remains a priority. There remains a continued aspiration for development of the canal corridor as this would provide an enhanced and attractive entrance to the village.

Environment

Twechar lies in a landscape setting of exceptional quality. The Forth & Clyde canal runs along the northern edge of the village and creates a strong landscape corridor linking to Kilsyth in the east and Kirkintilloch in the west.



A SHARED VISION FOR OUR COMMUNITY

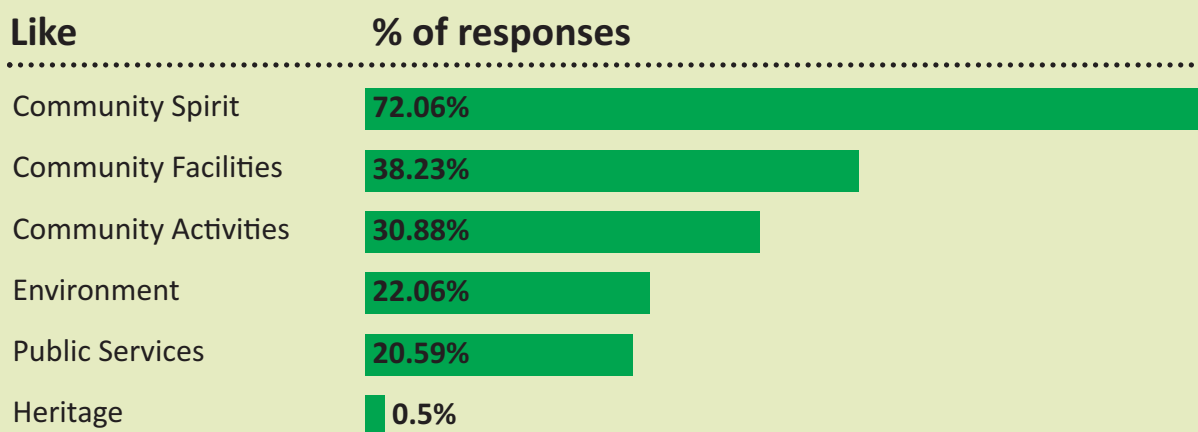
- That it is still a village and does not become part of the huge commuter belt that we become a thriving community in a thriving village where people will want to visit and live in. A bit like a conservation village. We are on the doorstep of a world heritage site
- To be a village to be proud of with plenty of services available for both young and old residents
- To keep up the community spirit, welcoming new families into our community from day one
- For the centre to keep up its great work in the village. The completion of the new houses being built bringing new families to live here in our great wee place
- For Twechar to continue to move onwards and upwards
- The completion of the house building programme and the attraction of new residents to the village increasing our population

Continuing to work on Vision Statements from Master Plan

- A stronger, growing residential community, over 2000 inhabitants, including a higher proportion of economically active people with:
- A wider range of house types and tenures including a higher proportion of owner occupied and family homes
- More community and leisure facilities and opportunities including retention of school with a rising roll
- Improving social and health indicators
- More local jobs and training opportunities – some linked to canal uses
- New residents and investment and holding onto existing residents
- Improved transport facilities



TWECHAR LIKES



WHAT PEOPLE SAID

I like Twechar because the people of the village are like family they all stick together in happiness and love. I have never had any problem with anyone in the village. I respect them and they respect me. Twechar is the way a small village should be like. Twechar is me and I am Twechar . . .

Quality of life and community spirit.

The Senior Citizens Club and the fact I was born and brought up here and have seen a lot of good changes but there is still a lot could be done.

I like the fact that I know most of the residents and this makes it a nice place

That they have a local football team . . . Parks that they have on both schemes

The range of clubs and classes available at the centre . . . The Twechar Miners Club

The great school . . . Very little violence Safe place for children and families

A small village where everyone knows each other . . . There is a lot of history about Twechar

The clubs and the park

Twechar is a fantastic community to live in . . . Great scope for outdoor activities like walking, cycling and canoeing – steeped in history

Although the village has changed over the years there is still a close community spirit. The new developments and the next phase has encouraged new people to the area which can only enhance the reputation of the village

Still a village in a rural setting, almost all houses in village have beautiful outlook

Lovely part of the central belt

It, on the edge of the Kelvin Valley, with good travel links to motorways, both north and south. Only a 20-30 minute car journey to Glasgow.



TWECHAR DISLIKES

Dislike	% of responses
Environment	36.76%
Public Services	35.29%
Community Facilities	13.24%
Community Activities	7.35%

WHAT PEOPLE SAID

I don't like cars parked on the pavement litter, dog fouling, vandalism

The road is not maintained

One of the problems is the speed bumps between the bridge and the school, heavy traffic does not slow down on this road. Motor cyclists and buses do not slow

Public transport, affordable houses, not enough parking the bus service

Rubbish that is left at the side of the road which has to be cleared by volunteers from the centre rubbish from the board burn also cleared by volunteers

The transport to and from work, college, Glasgow centre the wee burn could do with some TLC

The condition of the bottom estate. Shop looks terrible

I am disappointed with the playing area between the two parts of the village, especially the side nearest the Glen

Alexander Avenue badly needing upgraded badly needing external painting (houses)

Internet and mobile phone. Signals non existent.

Condensation/dampness problems in housing due to inadequate drainage and no ca

Nothing for kids age 1-5 to do! Apart from youth club.

State of the Barrhill Social Club and bottom shop is an embarrassment for the whole village.



MAIN STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Community Activities/Facilities

People highlighted that there was a need to develop and promote more activities. Suggestions included a Summer and Christmas Fayre.

There is also a need to encourage young people to get involved with the Youth Committee and further develop the Junior Volunteer Programme as well as encourage volunteers of all ages to be more involved in Activities.

Environment

There is a large support for the creation of the Fairy Glen. Young people need to be encouraged to get involved to ensure they appreciate and look after it.

There is a good network of footpaths in and around the village, but they are increasingly becoming overgrown, messy and less used as a result. These are the links within the community as well as with the wider countryside, so it is really important that they are improved and maintained.

A need has also been identified to install information signage and heritage landmarks for the entrances to the village.

Public Services

There is a need to improve public transport and also to promote the local bus and train timetables.

Traffic volume and road safety are a real concern for the community. There is a need to continue to work with East Dunbartonshire Council and other authorities to find lasting solutions so that the roads are safer.

Heritage and Economy

Twechar has been a site of notable historical significance dating back to the 2nd Century. The community have to develop and promote their natural and cultural heritage assets, to generate community pride and boost local economy.





THEME 1: Community Activities/Facilities

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

PRIORITIES	ACTIONS
Increase Events for Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organise a recruitment drive to encourage more volunteers to get involved ● Promote and share website, Facebook and events that are taking place ● Promote links between community groups ● Prepare plans for annual community events, summer fayre, Christmas fayre
More activities for families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with EDLC to establish pre 5's development i.e. language skills ● Investigate introducing a skills sharing programme for parents ● Create gardening activities at Mr Brothertons plot
More activities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with Youth Committee to identify activities and services required by young people ● Find resources to support the Committee ● Work with Twechar Youth Committee and Primary School to identify clubs, activities the young people would like to participate in ● Investigate potential funders to enable the activities to be run ● Establish issue based youth work programme ● Encourage young people to get involved with Youth Committee ● Further develop Junior Volunteer Programme
Improve/maintenance of football pitch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop and support proposals for improvements to the Football Park ● Work with Football Team to raise funding and implement
More activities for older people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Link in with EDVA befriending phone service for the most vulnerable in the community
Access improvement to HLEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate removing inside door and draft proofing reception area
Potential partners	<p>Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre, East Dunbartonshire Council, Twechar Youth Group, Primary School, Twechar community Action, Barrhill Football club, East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action, EDLCT, Tenants and Residents Association</p>



THEME 2: Environment

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

PRIORITIES	ACTIONS
Create fairy trail in the glen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create fairy trail in the Glen ● Set up group to look at planning Fairy Glen ● Get Youth Group involved in creating and design of Fairy Glen ● Attract funding to create the Fairy Trail ● Promote the Fairy Trail ● Work with the school and Youth Group to ensure children appreciate and look after the Fairy Trail
Reduce dog fouling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with East Dunbartonshire Council to make sure there is an effective response time to litter and dumping ● Organise a 'clean-up' event and campaign focusing on 'hot spots' such as the burn and wooded areas. ● Work with East Dunbartonshire Council to look at ways to tidy and maintain trees, grassed areas and pathways
Clean up the village and other open spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support the development of services for the most vulnerable in the community e.g. befriending service ● Investigate potential for lunch club which could be held in the Community Centre ● Look into developing an intergenerational project – contact Generations Working Together for support
Develop and improve pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify poorly lit areas ● Cut back overgrown trees and bushes from pathways ● Establish what would be required to improve access onto pathways
Improve village appearance at both entrances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Development of Barrhill Social Club area ● Improvements to houses at 1 – 4 MacDonald Crescent ● Improvements to Canal Bridge area ● Information Signage ● Investigate heritage landmarks for entrances to the village
Potential partners	East Dunbartonshire Council, Primary School, Community, Twechar Action Group, Twechar Youth Group, Tenants and Residents Association, ED Community Wardens, Paths for All, Twechar Regeneration Group, John Muir Trust, Scottish Canals



THEME 3: Public Services

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

PRIORITIES	ACTIONS
Improve public transport/ Community Transport?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Investigate ways to lobby for improved bus service ● Promote local bus/train timetables ● Encourage people to report bad services provided by bus company regarding links to train times
Better car parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify potential areas that could be utilised for car parking ● Work with East Dunbartonshire Council to look at areas that have been identified for additional car parking ● Encourage public to be courteous when parking in built up areas ● Work with Community Police to identify safer parking practices
Better broadband	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify extent of problem ● Identify proposals and timescale for upgrading broadband ● Look at how other communities have been able to improve their service ● Lobby for improvements and/or take direct action ● Investigate mast upgrade
Improve appearance of some housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify extent of problem ● Work with East Dunbartonshire Council to make improvements ● Investigate grants for residents
Traffic calming and enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with East Dunbartonshire Roads Department together with community police on measures to reduce traffic speed ● Launch a road safety initiative at the school together with Community Police ● Work with Tenants and Residents Association for signs for safer driving
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with potential housing developers to ensure adequate provision is made for affordable housing
Potential partners	Tenants and Residents Association, Local Businesses, Community Police, B.T. Twechar Community Action, ED Council, S.P.T., Primary School, local residents












THEME 4: Heritage and Economy

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

PRIORITIES	ACTIONS
Create Heritage Centre at Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with potential funders and partners to create a heritage centre that will increase tourism to the village
Attract small businesses and jobs to the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate potential for small units in Barrhill
Promote local walks and heritage to attract visitors to the village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wider promotion of amenities, walks and heritage to encourage people to stop and visit Research and design local history leaflets providing information about the heritage of the area Signposting of Heritage Village
Potential partners	Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre, ED Economic Development, John Muir Trust, Twechar Regeneration Group

Early actions funded through Participatory Budget

The Fairy Glen	Music for Adults	Kids Get Knitting
		
Tales of Twechar	Tuesday Night Arts and Crafts Group	Kids Get Knitting
		
Toys for Learning	Greener Twechar and improvements to the entrance of THLEC	Tuesday Night Girls Group
		

MAKING THE LINKS TO THE EAST DUMBARTONSHIRE COMMUNITY PLAN

East Dumbartonshire Community Plan High Level Outcomes	Twechar Community Action Plan Themes
Employment	Community Activities/Facilities
Early Years	Environment
Safer and Stronger Communities	Public Services
Health Inequalities	Heritage and Economy
Outcomes for Older People	



MAKING IT HAPPEN

This Community Action Plan sets out the priorities for the development of Twechar over the next 5 years as identified by the community through an extensive process of community engagement carried out over a period of 5 months, May to September 2016.

Information on how to get involved or just be kept informed.

The Community Action Plan is not just for the few but for everyone, we hope you will read it, consider its content and help toward making it work by taking action where you are, in whatever way you can. If everyone did something positive for their community every day, then what a difference that would make!

Many thanks go to all those who took their time to share their views, to the volunteers and participants who made the Community Voting Day events a great success. Thanks go to members of the community who contributed the images in this Action Plan.

To find out more information about the Action Plan or to volunteer with any projects please contact;

Twechar Community Action

Twechar Healthy Living and Enterprise Centre,

Phone – 01236 827 154 email – info@twecharhleec.org.uk

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