



COALFIELDS
COMMUNITY
FUTURES

Community Action Plan 2015 - 2020



FORTH & DISTRICT

Forth and District – Our Vision for the Future

Flourishing Forth and District

Forth and District are working together as a vibrant and resilient community with a strong community spirit.

Well located with good links to other places, we have an attractive, busy and safe community that welcomes visitors. Promoting music and dance and a variety of popular annual events, Forth and District encourages people to realise their potential.



Offering good walks in a fantastic landscape, a rich cultural heritage and a forward looking vision, we embrace change, with an appreciation of our industrial past that is the foundation of our present.

Forth and District are making the most of its green energy links with the financial and environmental benefits it brings to the local and wider community, now and into the future.

Forth and District are actively investing in a future that encourages its young people to stay in the community and to welcome in new people with fresh ideas and skills to match.

We will continue to build on our strong volunteer base that cares for and respects its community members. With a focus on good communication between local groups as well as agencies, we will help create life long education opportunities for all.

We will work together with others to achieve excellent services that give quality, affordable housing, good roads and transport as well as health care that suits the needs of our community.

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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 Open Event.

Projects funded through the Participatory Budget are highlighted under Early Actions on page 12.

123 surveys completed
133 pupil surveys completed
21 stakeholder interviews
250 people attended
the Open Day

Introduction

Coalfields Regeneration Trust have been working with a committed local steering group to deliver the Coalfields Community Futures programme in Forth and District, made up from representatives of the Forth District Initiative, Braehead Village Trust, Gentle Giant Music Festival, Gala, Forth Wanderers FC, Parent Council and the Forth Bowling Club. In September 2014 the group came together with the purpose of creating an Action Plan that will focus the efforts of the communities of Forth, Braehead, Wilsontown and Climpby over the next 5 years. The process has been in depth, with a community survey being delivered by the steering group members to 1000 homes, with many words of encouragement to people that this is something worth investing time in. The survey was simple, what do you like, what don't you like, what would you like to see happen in your community and what is your vision for the future? The surveys were then collected in and analysed to see what key themes were emerging and what was the vision of the people for the future. The Primary schools of Forth and Braehead had every class fill out a survey to discover what was important to our young residents and what they want to see improved in the future. They also expressed their views through art and some their contributions are used to illustrate this action plan.

This Action Plan documents what these emerging themes are and identifies priorities for action. This is a mandate for action that has come from the people who live here, and it will be up to the people to work together with agencies and partners to take it forward and make their vision a reality.

Our Community Now

Background

In the early 1900's Forth was a thriving village, well served by a variety of shops and services. By the 1930's, as more people moved in from the surrounding declining villages, Forth grew. The village developed the cultural and recreational facilities of a fairly large and prosperous community.

In 1955 Dixon's Pit closed and by 1963 Kingshill No.2 had also closed. As they were two major employers in the area their closure marked the beginning of a population movement away from Forth.

Through various local groups there has been a renewed sense of community and a willingness to revive cultural and social life in the village.

Population

The population of Forth from the last census was 2,220, include the wider area and the population comes to 3,719. The area profile generally follows the Scotland profile until we get to the 60 - 74 year old group where there is more than Scotland as a whole. There are less single people, never married than Scotland as a whole (26.7% compared to 30.5% for Scotland) and more married (54.3% compared to 49.8%). The most recent population projection predicts a population of South Lanarkshire to rise by 21,152 by 2031. However, the age group of under 50 is dropping and the 50+ age groups increasing significantly.

Housing

The spread of household size reflects the picture for Scotland as a whole. Forth has a mix of traditional stone built cottages and houses primarily along Main Street, with council and modern private housing in schemes off this road. The % of housing which is detached or flats or maisonettes is less than half of that of Scotland as a whole. The % of semi-detached houses is almost the same so it follows that terraced houses are present in more than twice the numbers than the profile for Scotland. The % of housing rented from the local authority is more than twice that of Scotland (51.5% compared to 21.5%) with private rented and ownership being less.

Health

While the average age of people with good health or people with a limiting long term illness roughly equates to Scotland, those who are economically inactive and permanently sick / disabled is almost 8 percentage points more. The % of the population with a limiting long term illness is higher than Scotland (27.7% compared to 20.3% for Scotland).

Employment and Economy

The biggest differences between Forth and the rest of Scotland is the % of people who are economically active and self-employed. The % is lower than Scotland as a whole. Similarly the % of people economically active and retired is higher. Youth unemployment is high running almost 3% above the national figure of 27.8%.

In terms of occupational groups, there are fewer managers, senior officials, professional people and administrative and secretarial and many more process, plant, machine operatives and skilled tradespeople. The former accounts for 21.2% compared to 9.8% for Scotland as a whole.

Education and Training

The % of households where no one aged 16-74 has qualifications or is in full-time education is significantly higher (46.85%) than Scotland as a whole (33.11%) This educational attainment level is underlined by the discrepancy between the % of the population with no qualification being more than half in Forth and a third in Scotland. The area



Our Community Now

outscores Scotland markedly for the number of people with low level qualifications.

Social and Community

Local amenities in Forth include a number of small local shops. There is also a doctors surgery, health centre, pharmacist and community flat. One of the main facilities in Forth is the Sports Centre. Forth Community Resource Centre is a branded Learning Centre and runs a number of projects and classes.

Due to the rural nature of the villages there is no mains gas available. Fibre optic broadband was installed in November 2014 to some parts of Forth. From the community survey and the stakeholder interviews, the community spirit stands out as ranked well above everything else. Dog mess and a lack of investment in services were cited quite high in terms of dislikes, with the state of the roads, litter and vandalism contributing to a poor environment also noted. The interviews with stakeholders in particular highlighted the problems associated with the state of the roads.

Although it is difficult to believe from the Braehead's rural setting today, it once stood at the heart of a heavily industrialised landscape. If you look closely it is possible to see that the surrounding area is pock-marked with traces of a dozen or more quarries, which at various times were home to well over a hundred clamp kilns. Some of the quarries were created in search of rock, but most were dug in the 1700s for the extraction of lime, in increasing use at the time to improve the quality of agricultural land.

Environment, Access and Outdoor Space

There are a number of important peatlands including 'The Moss,' a SSSI area, plateau farmland and forestry. The feedback from the survey and stakeholder interviews is that the degraded environment resulting from mining operations is improving.

Transport

Public transport to and from Forth and surrounding villages is very limited, therefore a car is a requirement. Bus services operate from Lanark run by Stuart's, and the Blue Bus Company operate a bus service to Livingston several times a day. Lanark



train station also has links to several major towns across South Lanarkshire, including Glasgow.

Community Action Plan: Considerations

We have a relatively stable community experiencing an aging population. Population projections for South Lanarkshire suggest that the overall population might increase slightly but the numbers over 50 years old will increase significantly.

There are no major issues in relation to housing at the moment. With an ageing population however there may be a future mismatch between household size and the type of housing available as the demand for housing for the elderly increases.

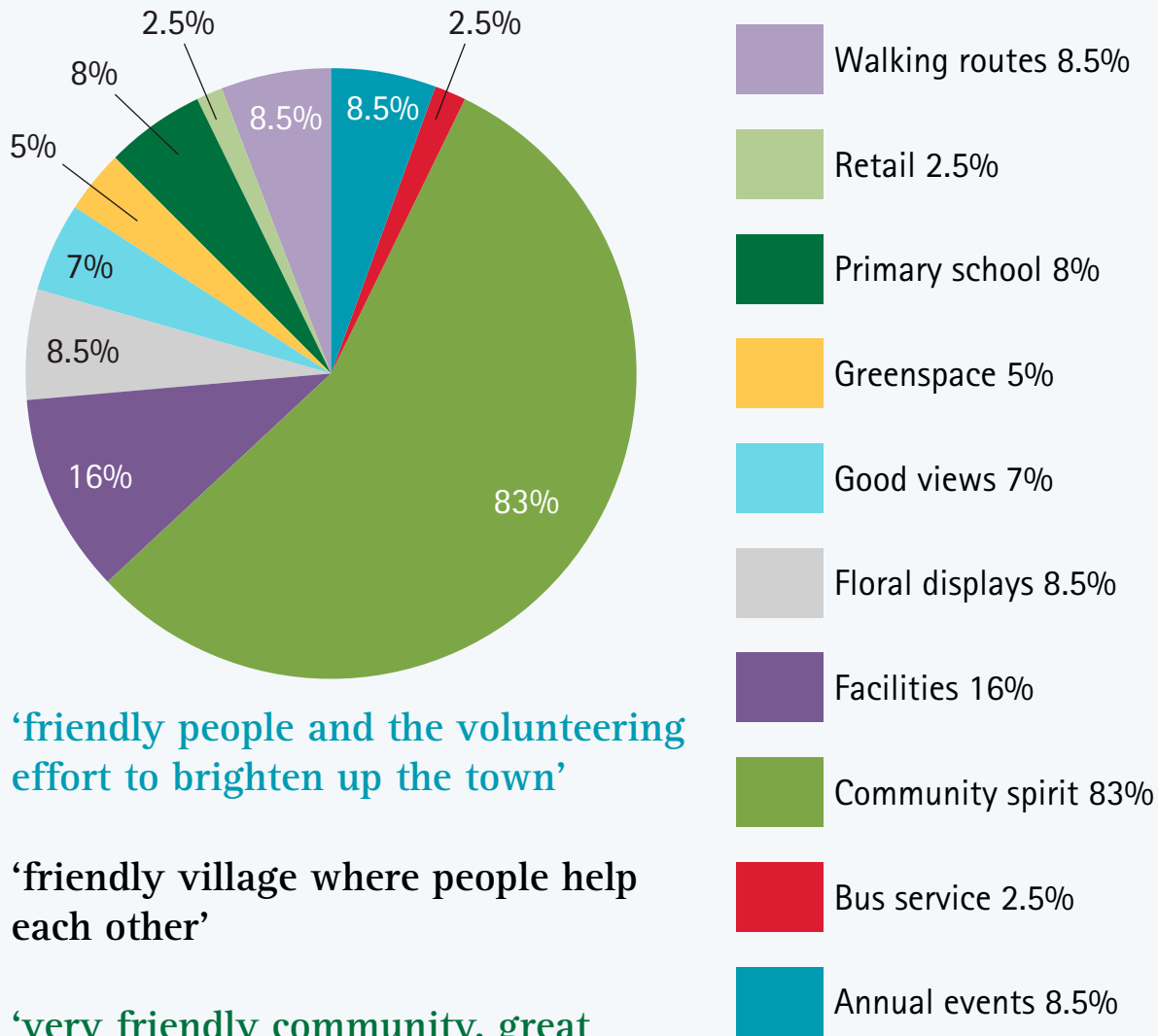
The main challenge for health services is the number of people with chronic illness and those who become economically inactive, permanently sick and disabled. The general health of the population within the area is also described as not good.

Youth unemployment is a concern. There are also low levels of people in higher paid jobs and low numbers of people involved in small businesses. There is a reliance on cars as a mode of transport to travel to work.

The need to improve the levels of qualification through education and training in the area is quite apparent. This impact is evidenced in the employment profile with few managerial, professional and technical workers and on the high youth unemployment figures.

The lack of facilities for younger ages is a concern as is the state of roads, lack of parking and dog mess.

Our Community Likes



‘friendly people and the volunteering effort to brighten up the town’

‘friendly village where people help each other’

‘very friendly community, great walking area, a great deal for the older generation to do, of all abilities’

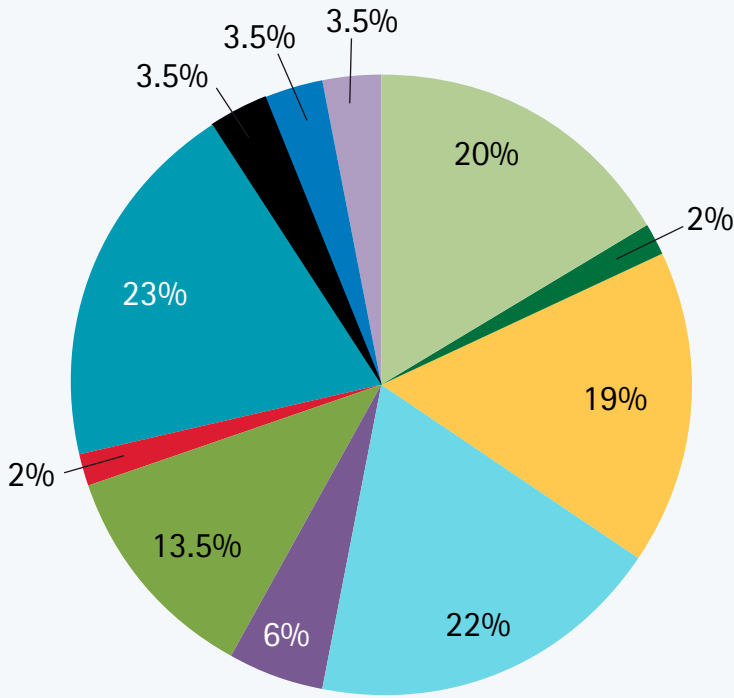


‘the changes made over the last few years. The new school. The community centre. The poly tunnel work making the village nice in summer’

‘that there are people in the village working to improve it’

‘friendly community and people always give people a friendly hello’

Our Community Dislikes



- Vandalism 3.5%
- Street lighting 3.5%
- Shops 3.5%
- Services 23%
- Safety 2%
- Roads 13.5%
- Housing 6%
- Facilities 22%
- Environment 19%
- Lack of employment 2%
- Dog fouling 20%

‘lack of outdoor playgrounds, people’s lack of respect for environment i.e. dog fouling and vandalism’

‘road conditions and pavements around the village’

‘litter and dog dirt’

‘no facilities for older children’

‘lack of a good bus service. Lack of communication and sharing ideas between village’

‘the fact some people don’t care about the mess they leave and expect others to pick up after them’



From our kids perspective

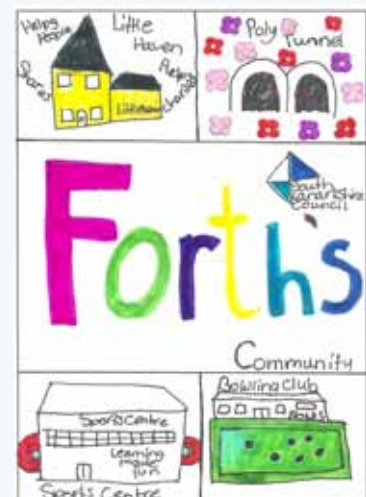
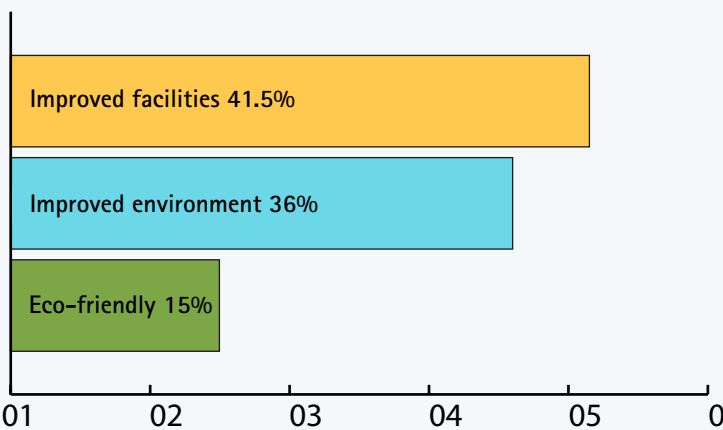
Pupils from Forth Primary and Braehead Primary made their contribution to the Forth and District Community Action Plan by completing their own questionnaire which asked pupils questions like What things do you like to do most of all? What hobbies do you have? Are you a member of a club? What do you like most about living here? What do you dislike most about living here? What would you like to see happen here in the future? In total 133 pupils from P1 to P7 took part with the majority being from P5, P6 and P7.

The results gave an insight to the thoughts and feelings of our young residents and their concerns about the village reflect that of the adults with litter, dog fouling and village appearance being top ranking in their dislikes. Community spirit and friends are top of their likes, with parks and school following next.

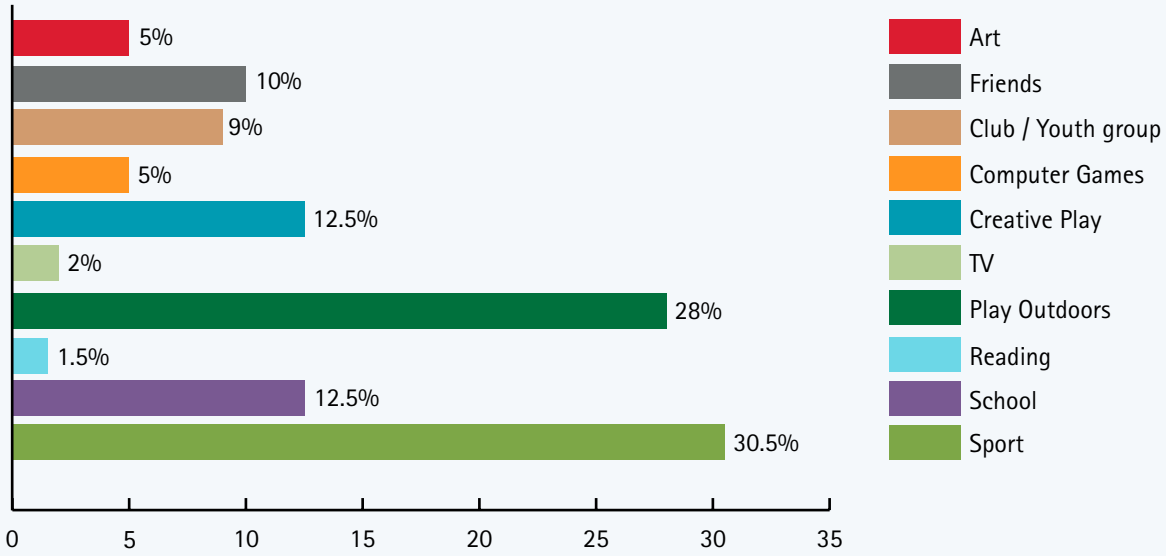
Also of interest is the response that 72% of our young people are involved in a group or club of some description, with only 2% mentioning TV as something they like to do most of all.

Looking to the future the three most important issues for our young people are improving facilities, improving the environment and going eco friendly. With this vision Forth and District has a secure future if it's young people continue to grow up and live in the local area.

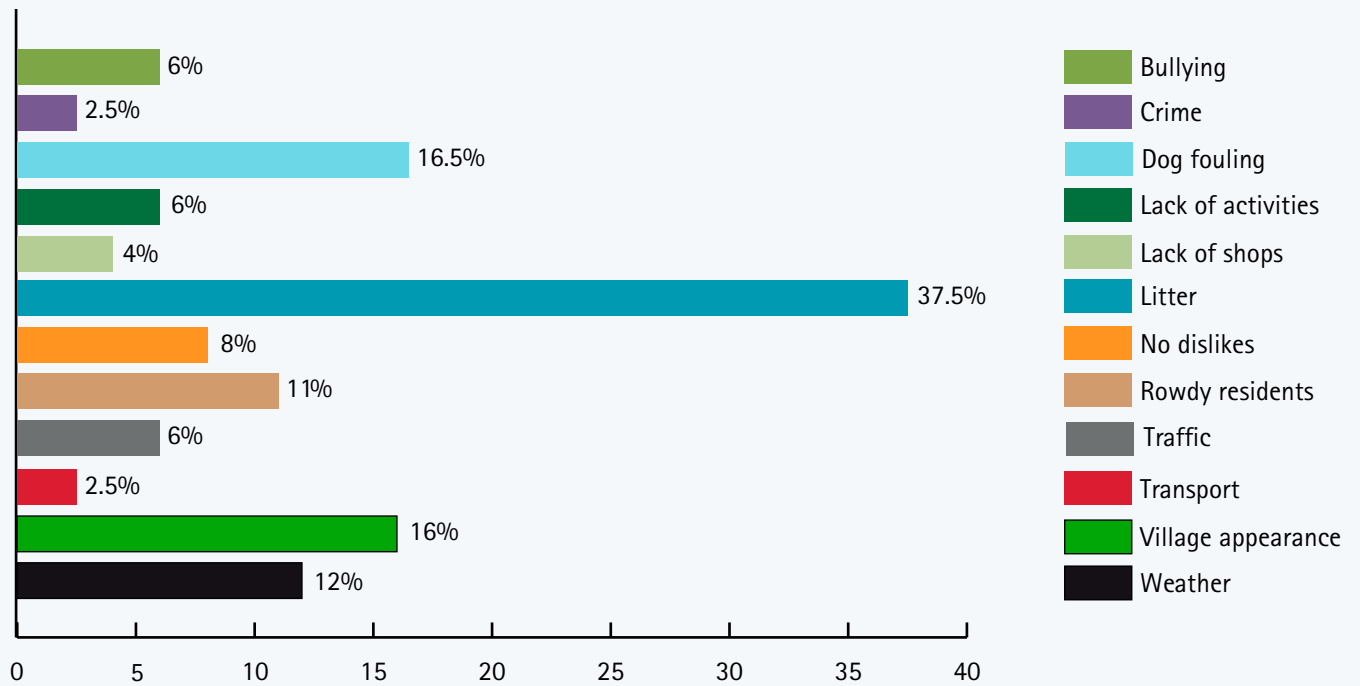
Three priorities for the future from the young people of Forth and District



Our Likes



Our Dislikes



Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 1: Village Appearance

Summary: Forth and its surrounding villages want village appearance to be one that they are proud of. We plan to work together with appropriate partner agencies to address some of the key issues that have been identified. The main streets are a key priority for positive action with a focus on important issues such as the poor condition of the roads, and improving the visitor experience when entering and leaving the village. The centre of any village should be attractive and welcoming, improving the area with the better use of plants and trees will be important.

Action to reduce dog fouling, litter and fly tipping throughout the area.

- Work with South Lanarkshire Council to make sure there is an effective response time to litter and dumping
- We will work together with other agencies to address the issue of dog fouling
- Identify need for more litter bins, their maintenance and work with South Lanarkshire Council to ensure needs are met
- Organise regular litter picks on an area by area basis involving local volunteers

Improve the Main Street

- Improve the top part of the Main Street
- Work with local businesses to identify opportunities and initiatives
- Make the best use of any buildings that become available
- Enhance the appearance of village main streets with additional planting, making them attractive and welcoming

Make the entrance and exit routes to the villages even more attractive.

- Carry out environmental improvement work at the approaches to the villages to create a greater visual impact



Key Partners:
South Lanarkshire Council
Forth and District Initiative
Levensat Trust
Braehead Village Trust
Gateway Project
Braehead Project Group
Local businesses
Local Schools
The Resource Centre

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 2: Natural Environment

Forth and District is extremely fortunate to be located within a beautiful natural environment with woodland walks and scenic views. We want to build on this great asset and make the most of it.

Improve path networks

- Paths required from Climpy to other areas
- Paths from Forth to Pleasance Row
- Host a Paths information day
- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify other key path routes for all users
- Create a walking & cycling map of the local area

Enhance natural environment

- We will do this by organizing the appropriate planting of spring bulbs throughout the villages
- Tree planting activities
- Create a biodiversity garden involving school pupils



Key Partners:
South Lanarkshire Council
Forth&District Initiative
Forestry Commission
Local Farmers
Paths for All
Braehead Village Trust
Local Primary Schools

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 3: Community Groups, Facilities and Activities

Forth and District has a vibrant community with many active groups and annual events that are enjoyed by all. Creating this Action Plan has highlighted that we work best as a community when we work together and so we plan to investigate establishing a Community Development Trust that will help us take forward many of the actions contained in this plan.

Establish a local Community Development Trust

- Invite DTAS to talk to local groups about the benefits of doing this

Make the most of our community facilities

- Investigate opportunities for developing the White House
- Improve Bowling Club building
- Improve football club changing facilities
- Carry out a feasibility study for a new skatepark
- Promote local library to encourage residents to make better use of service

Improve skills development for local people to assist them back to work

- Need for local training to break down barriers of time and cost of travel to colleges
- Support for local people setting up in business
- Need for life skills training
- Need for ongoing investment in the local training centre
- Build confidence through learning activities such as craft and leisure which could also lead to job opportunities

Activities and facilities for people of all ages

- Promote the existing activities available for all age groups using the Forth and District Initiative newsletter and website (www.forthinitiative.org)
- Encourage links to websites of other local groups including Facebook and Instagram
- Work with CLD council staff to look at setting up youth and adult learning activities
- Promote and develop the Community Growing Space

Annual community events

- Continue to organize and develop the great tradition that is the Forth and District Children's Gala Day.
- Continue to develop the Forth and District Christmas Event
- Promote and develop the Gentle Giant Music Festival
- Continue to support the "Scotland in Bloom" initiative
- Continue to support the Braehead Village Day

Key Partners:
Development Trust
Association Scotland (DTAS)
South Lanarkshire Council
Forth & District Initiative
Braehead Village Trust
Gentle Giant Music Festival Group
Forth & District Childrens Gala

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 4: Services

As a rural community we want to have safe communities and part of that relies on good street lighting. Unfortunately the new street lighting in the Main Street is not giving sufficient illumination and many people are unhappy with it. On the safety theme, we will work with others to encourage local residents to report any incidents to the police as it is generally felt that not enough people do this. We plan to set up a credit union to encourage people develop a culture of saving and keeping money local. We would also like to see another post box in the village.

Policing in the village

- Work with Police Scotland to deliver more local police presence

More postboxes in the village

- Move existing postbox to a better position

Establish a credit union

- Create a working group to help promote and set up a Credit Union.

Street lighting is ineffective

- Work with South Lanarkshire Council to improve the quality of the Main Street lighting

Key Partners:
South Lanarkshire Council
Resource Centre
Police Scotland
Royal Mail
Forth & District Initiative

Early actions identified by the Community, and supported by funding from Coalfields Regeneration Trust

Braehead Project Group – Waymarkers and Benches

Forth Gateway Project Onwards and Upwards

Gentle Giant Music Festival Group – Cultural Project

St Paul's Church Forth – Planet Earth Club

Forth and District Children's Gala – New equipment

Forth Community Football Club – New equipment

Forth Community Resource Centre Steering Group – Rural Volunteering Initiative

Forth and Wilsontown Bowling Club – New equipment

Forth Primary & Nursery Parent Council – Active Kids in Forth

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 5: Roads and Transport

When it comes to roads and transport there are a number of issues that need to be addressed. These include a lack of car parking on the Main Street in Forth as well as in the residential areas. The pavements and roads are in a state of disrepair with potholes and trip hazards needing fixed. A major issue is the speed of the traffic travelling through Forth and better traffic control through Ravenswood, Cloglands and Climpy.

Traffic calming and lack of car parking

- Work with partners to look at innovative ways of encouraging drivers to travel at safe speeds through the villages
- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify potential parking areas

Improved bus links to other areas

- Continue to lobby for improved bus services locally

Poor condition of the roads and pavements

- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify pot holes, road repairs and liaise with South Lanarkshire Council to have priority repairs made

Key Partners:
 South Lanarkshire Council
 Forth and District Initiative
 Transport Company
 Police Scotland

South Lanarkshire Community Plan “Stronger Together” - Making the Links

The vision for Community Planning in South Lanarkshire is: To improve the quality of life for all in South Lanarkshire by ensuring equal access to opportunities and to services that meet people’s needs

The Community Plan has 5 cross-cutting themes that require a culture of integrated action and joint working. Our Forth and District Community Action Plan will help identify where our priorities for action can help realise the South Lanarkshire Community Planning Vision.

Themes – South Lanarkshire Community Plan	Themes – Forth and District Priorities for Action
Improving health and tackling inequalities	Natural Environment
Reduce crime and improving community safety	Services
Promoting sustainable and inclusive communities and opportunities for all throughout life	Community Groups, Facilities and Activities
Ensuring sustainable economic recovery and development	Village Appearance Roads and Transport
Tackling poverty	Community Groups, Facilities and Activities

Putting Forth and District on the map



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



the coalfields
regeneration trust



Community Contact List

GROUP	CONTACT	TEL.NO.	E.MAIL ADDRESS
Astronomical Society	Alice-Amanda Kay	811518	clydesdaleastro@hotmail.co.uk
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Bowling Club	John Stewart	07526 780687	emailjohnstewart@gmail.com
Braehead Project	Grace Graham	811130	gracegraham1@hotmail.co.uk
Braehead Village Trust	Carol Murchison	811349	themurchies@btinternet.com
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Church / Planet Earth	Karen Nicol	07802 678741	coordinator@forthstpauls.com
Community Resource Centre	Anne Carruthers	811002	frc@btconnect.com
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Community FC	Hugh Bryce	812130	brycehugh@aol.com
Forth & District Initiative	Billy Watt	811593	williamwatt623@btinternet.com
Forth Wanderers FC	Stuart Smith	811573	matthewpepsi2@aol.com
Gentle Giant Music Festival	Jimmy Brown	811763	novustelestai@outlook.com
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The Coalfields Regeneration Trust
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Check out our website at www.coalfields-regen.org.uk
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