



Muirkirk

Community Action Plan

2016 - 2021

Carried out by Muirkirk Community Action Plan Steering Group

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*Muirkirk may say when he's away,
He scarce has left his marrow,
For decency in each degree,
Thus I repeat with sorrow.
He was a noble friend to me,
For which I do regard him,
For kindness and humility,
May the powers above reward him.*

Adieu Muirkirk
Tibbie Pagan

In 1755 Tibbie Pagan poetess arrived in Muirkirk.
DID YOU KNOW ?



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Introduction



MUIRKIRK COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN STEERING GROUP

The preparation of the Action Plan has been guided by a local steering group which brought together representatives from the Community Association, Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG), Muirkirk Learners Group, Muirkirk Women's Rural Institute, Muirkirk Primary School & Early Education Centre, local businesses and local residents.

LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

The Action Plan has been informed by extensive community engagement carried out over a six month period from April 2015 - October 2015.

The process involved:

- a community views survey, which was delivered to all households;
- stakeholder interviews with different groups, organisations, businesses and individuals representing all aspects and ages of the community;
- young people's survey, conducted through Auchinleck Academy and Muirkirk Primary School;
- preparing a community profile detailing facts and figures about the community;
- a Community Event.

426 Community views survey forms were returned from our **716** houses

61 Survey Forms were also returned from school pupils

19 Stakeholder meetings were held with interested parties

210 People attended the event

Thanks to everyone who took part - It's a great response and gives weight to the priorities identified in this plan

Our Community Facts & Figures



Below is a summary of the main facts and figures from the Community Profile report produced by the steering group to give a picture of Muirkirk now.

LOCATION

Muirkirk is a small village in East Ayrshire, southwest Scotland and was created when the 'Kirk of the Muir' was built in 1631 and became a parish in its own right by dis-joining from the parish of Mauchline.



POPULATION

The resident population has been in decline for a number of decades and at the last census (2011) stood at 1528. This from a peak of 5670 in 1901. Muirkirk has an ageing population and a declining birth-rate in comparison to East Ayrshire Scotland averages.

EMPLOYMENT AND LOCAL ECONOMY

Muirkirk has suffered a similar fate to the other nearby villages with the closure of all the local coal mines and textile factories, which has led to a rise in unemployment and of population drift. This has resulted in the majority of people in Muirkirk having to travel to work outwith the village with opencast mining and construction being among the biggest employers. Within the village the main sources of employment are transport, health and social work activities, agriculture and retail. Lack of public transport makes it more difficult for people to get to work in the event of them not having a car.

HOUSING

There were 716 houses in Muirkirk at the last census (2011). There has been a decline in the number of properties due to the demolition of all the three & four storey flats due to lack of demand. The rate of owner occupation at the census was 46.5% compared to 61.9% in East Ayrshire and 62% in Scotland. Housing rented from the council was 45.4 % compared to 23.4% East Ayrshire and 13.2% Scotland as a whole. The figures for the rented sector give a false impression insofar as East Ayrshire and Scotland as a whole are concerned as there are other large scale rented housing providers such as housing associations and cooperatives and a much greater private rented sector.



EDUCATION

Pre School:

Muirkirk Early Education Centre

Primary School:

Muirkirk Primary School

Secondary School:

Auchinleck Academy, Auchinleck
St Joseph's Academy, Kilmarnock

Further Education:

Ayrshire College with campuses at:

- Ayr (Dam Park)
- Kilmarnock (Holehouse Road)
- Kilwinning (Lauchlan Way)

University of West of Scotland (Ayr)

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY

Community facilities include:

Community Centre, Library, Games Hall, Museum, Day Centre, Muirkirk Parish Church, St Thomas the Apostle, St Thomas Hall, Astro Turf, Football Pitches, Skateboard Park, Caravan Park and Community and Kirk Plantations.

Community groups and clubs include:

Muirkirk Junior Football Club, Golf Club, Bowling Club, Fishing Club, East Ayrshire Car Club, Community Association, Camera Club, Enterprise Group, Knitting Group, Craft Group, Muirkirk WRI, Boy's Brigade, Masonic Lodge and Muirkirk Learners Group.

Our Community Facts & Figures



HEALTH AND CARE FACILITIES

Loudoun Medical Practice is made up of the three GP surgeries in Darvel, Newmilns and Muirkirk in Ayrshire, and is run by Dr Kondol and Partners. The practice has a website and provides information about the three surgeries, the services provided, health advice and links to other helpful sites.

District Nurses are also connected to the practice and provide a range of services including:

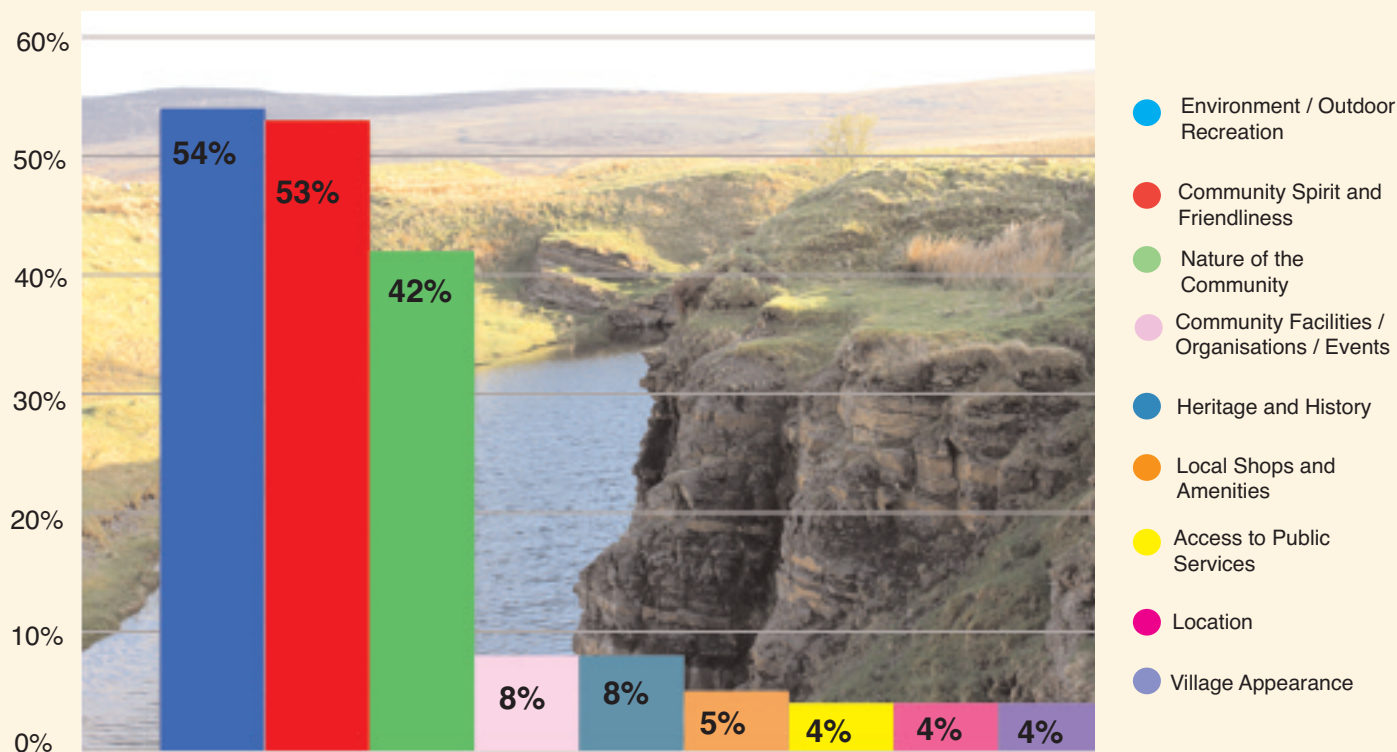
- Palliative and end of life care
- Acute and chronic disease management
- Wound assessment and wound care
- Post-operative care
- Leg ulcer management
- Continence care
- Ear care
- Health promotion and advice
- Prescribing and administering medications and treatments where appropriate
- Complex assessment of health needs and promotion of independence for housebound patients

Our Community Likes

Over 500 responses were made by local residents of all ages in our Community Views and Stakeholders survey. The results helped to inform this action plan. Here is what people said they like about the community now... and what they were not so keen on.

1964 Railway Line to Lanark closed.
1951 Railway line to Ayr closed.

DID YOU KNOW ?



What People Said...

"Shops are helpful and accommodating"

"It's isolation and tranquillity"

"A relaxing village to live in"

"Friendly and caring"

"Sense of community"

"An excellent place to bring up kids"

"Muirkirk is a quiet village with a relatively low crime rate"

"Village life and the people"

"The History"

"It has a local football team, golf course and racing track"

"The scenery, loads of great walks"

"The surrounding landscape"

"Great location"

"Outdoor activities"

"The health service"

"Easy access to the coast, the motorway and major cities"

Our Community Dislikes



What People Said...

- "No local work has led people to moving out of the village"
- "Lack of community interest"
- "Lack of volunteers"
- "Lack of employment opportunities for young people"
- "Empty properties (commercial)"
- "No street lights on Furnace Road to Kaimes"
- "Dangerous state opencasts have been left in"
- "The deterioration of the village and closure of businesses"
- "Poor public transport service, not practical for getting people to work"
- "No youth facility for young people"
- "Isolation if you don't have a car"

In 1957 Kaimes pit disaster in which 17 local men died.

**DID
YOU
KNOW
?**



Our Vision for the Future Muirkirk



This statement has been prepared to summarise the main aspirations for the future as expressed by local people and organisations in their replies to the survey and stakeholder interviews

A thriving local economy helped by Tourism and an increase in population

- Employment and Training opportunities for young people to encourage them to live and work here
- To have a clear vision and take effective action
- A main street full of shops
- A local identity to promote the heritage and culture
- A place that attracts visitors
- A public transport system to meet the needs of the community
- Investment in new business and social enterprise developments



Improved Community Facilities and increased Activities and Events

- Increased involvement and support for local organisations and events
- The continuation of community organisations
- Local organisations working together for the benefit of the community
- A prosperous modernised village with good amenities and local events.

A Clean and Vibrant Community

- Clean and tidy streets
- A thriving and more attractive village that encourages visitors and holiday makers
- A tidy village that people would be proud to live in
- Cleaner, tidier, more caring, happier, more jobs, better educated, healthier, safer and wealthier
- Disused buildings utilised to benefit the community



Our Vision for the Future Muirkirk

To be recognised for its Heritage, Environment and Outdoor Recreation

- A place where people want to come for the day because of its environment and outdoor recreation
- Recognised for its rich heritage and landmarks
- A village proud of its history and competent in telling this to the outside world.



A reignited Community Spirit and pride in our village

- A vibrant, welcoming community
- Close networks of people who will help each other
- A place where families want to raise their children proudly
- A happy little village that people would be glad to live in
- A Village to envy

Main Strategies and Priorities

These are the main strategies and priorities identified by the local community through profiles, surveys and interviews, which were further prioritised at the Community Event.

Local Economy, Tourism and Heritage

Muirkirk was a thriving village prior to the decline of the mining industry, the survey responses showed a strong need to increase employment opportunities, encouraging new businesses to the area and to develop a social enterprise focusing on training and preparation for work. It was evident that utilising the local heritage and history of the area to encourage tourism could boost the local economy.

Main priorities

- Increase local employment opportunities
- Create a unique tourist attraction/identity for the village
- Develop the local infrastructure to support tourism
- Develop a programme/resources to promote the village



Access to Services and Address Anti - Social Behaviour

The consultation identified that an improved transport service was essential to open up employment opportunities not only in Ayrshire but in Lanarkshire. This could also encourage new residents to the area as well as increasing tourism.

There was also a need to increase police presence in the village to tackle anti-social behaviour and deal with drug misuse. Other issues identified were the need for affordable housing and for the upgrade of existing housing stock. A concern also identified by the community was lack of care facilities for the elderly resulting in elderly residents having to leave the village.

Main Priorities

- Improve and increase public transport links
- Community safety
- Develop and improve local care services for elderly and disabled residents
- Improving housing
- Improve road and lighting conditions in and around the village

Main Strategies and Priorities

Village Appearance

Muirkirk is a scenic village set in beautiful surroundings, but is blighted by the devastation left by Opencast Developments, which is a major concern to the community. There has been a major decline in local businesses resulting in many empty shops and derelict buildings. There is a strong desire by the community to create an attractive main street, they would like to see the removal or utilisation of the empty buildings and existing shop fronts painted. With increased flowers, trees etc planted in the empty waste land areas, making Muirkirk as attractive as the surrounding countryside.

Main Priorities

- Derelict buildings/Land
- Reduce litter and dog mess
- Improve the look of houses and shop fronts
- Reinstate or develop Open Cast Sites for the benefit of the community



Community Facilities, Activities and Events

The village has always had a strong sense of community with many local organisations carrying out activities and events for the community.

The consultation identified that due to ageing committees it is essential for volunteers to come forward to continue to organise the annual events including the Gala Day, Lapraik Festival and the Fireworks Display.

The consultation also identified that more facilities and activities are required for the younger generation of the village.

The Community Facilities are important to the community and they are keen to retain both the Library and Games Hall.

Plans are underway for the development of a New Primary School and Community Facility which will be ready in 2017.

Main Priorities

- Increase facilities and activities for young people
- Increase community events and social activities
- Retain and improve existing facilities
- Support for local organisations

Main Strategies and Priorities

Outdoor Recreation and Access to the Countryside

Muirkirk is proud of the excellent outdoor recreational opportunities including the Golf Course, the Car Track, fishing, and beautiful walks and cycle areas it has on its doorstep.

The consultation also identified that Victory Park, which is an asset in the village, is not used and could benefit from development.

It was highlighted in the consultation that more could be done to improve access including upgrading of the River Ayr Walk and more promotion of the area.

Airds Moss situated three miles from the village of Muirkirk is a site of Special Scientific Interest, is a protected area and a special area of conservation.

It was identified that more could be done to utilise and to support the local economy.

Main Priorities

- Develop Victory Park for the benefit of the Community
- Improve maintenance of existing and develop new walking paths in the area
- Develop and promote local cycling and walking routes
- Develop environment initiatives



Action



THEME 1: LOCAL ECONOMY TOURISM AND HERITAGE

Priority 1	Increase employment opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training opportunities for young people to support and prepare for the world of work • Provide local incentive to encourage new businesses to the area by utilising empty buildings • Upgrade village from remote to commuter village • Develop Enterprise Initiative to create training and local employment i.e. arts & crafts, teaching centre, health education and promotion through a training restaurant
Action	<i>Muirkirk Learners Group, EAC Skills Development & Employability Services, yipworld.com</i>
Priority 2	Create a unique tourist attraction/identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a unique identification for the village i.e. 'Scots Speaking Toon' • Identify projects to promote the rich history and heritage of the village
Action	<i>Lapraik Society, Ayrshire & Arran Tourism, Heritage Centre</i>
Priority 3	Develop the local infrastructure to support tourism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look to site public toilets in the village and at the local heritage park • Support and work with local businesses to support tourism • Support the local caravan park to develop rental accommodation
Action	<i>Caravan Park, Local businesses, EAC Economic Development, Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG)</i>
Priority 4	Develop a programme/resources to promote the village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a marketing strategy to highlight what Muirkirk has to offer including its history/heritage, walking, golf, fishing, etc • To continue to develop the Lapraik festival and other events/projects that promote the heritage • Update and develop website and other social media to promote the village and events
Action	<i>The Learners Group, Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG), Community Association, Ayrshire & Arran Tourism</i>



Action



THEME 2: ACCESS TO SERVICES AND ADDRESS ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Priority 1	Improve and increase public transport links <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with bus companies to increase and deliver a suitable service (which enables access to employment) • Look into opportunities to establish a transport service to Strathaven and Lanarkshire • Look into the feasibility of reinstating the local rail link
Action	<i>Stagecoach, Coalfield Community Transport, SPT My Bus, Rowe & Tudhope, Liddels, Milligans</i>
Priority 2	Community Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Police presence in the village • Initiative developed to tackle anti-social behaviour and drug misuse • Erection of speed cameras in the village
Action	<i>Police Scotland, EAC Antisocial Behaviour Officer (Housing)</i>
Priority 3	Develop and improve local care services for elderly and disabled residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A care facility is required to be established within the community • Develop a home delivery service for prescriptions
Action	<i>Health and Social Care Partnership, Community Alarms, EAC Care Coordinators, Local Chemist</i>
Priority 4	Improve Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade existing housing stock i.e. paint external Council houses • Develop affordable housing within the area • Link with housing department regarding their vetting system for Council tenants
Action	<i>Local Housing Department</i>
Priority 5	Improve road and lighting conditions in and around the village <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal of old lamp posts, lighting in Furnace Road and road conditions especially on A70 and B743
Action	<i>Ayrshire Road Alliance</i>

Action



THEME 3: VILLAGE APPEARANCE

Priority 1	Derelict buildings/Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with owners/local authority regarding plans for buildings • Develop a project to utilise or demolish the buildings, ideas include youth facility, community garden, care home, visitors centre • Landscape areas of waste land - planting more trees, shrubs and flowers
Action	<i>EAC, Private Owners, Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG)</i>
Priority 2	Reduce litter and dog mess <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a village clean up initiative i.e. 'Adopt a Street' campaign • Liaise with Council services to develop a programme of action to tackle and reduce dog fouling
Action	<i>EAC, Environmental Officers, Community Pay Back</i>
Priority 3	Improve the look of houses and shop fronts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with local businesses with aim of improving the look of the local shops and main street • More should be done to ensure that all residential properties are kept tidy
Action	<i>Local businesses, Housing Department</i>
Priority 4	Reinstate or develop opencast sites for the benefit of the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To research projects in other areas for innovative ideas i.e. Multiverse Sanquhar • Utilise the sites as a tourist attraction i.e. Wildlife Centre, Sports and Leisure facility • Climate controlled area i.e. Eden Project
Action	<i>RSPB, Coalfield Environmental Initiative, East Ayrshire Leisure Countryside Development</i>

Action



THEME 4: COMMUNITY FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Priority 1	Increase facilities and activities for young people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a designated youth facility in the village • Increase activities including clubs, sports activities e.g football team, holiday clubs
Action	<i>Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG), Community Association, Boy's Brigade, All Sports Clubs, EAC Young People, Sport & Diversion Team, yipworld.com</i>
Priority 2	Increase community events and social activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and develop existing events i.e. Gala Day, Firework Display • Reinstate Cairn Table Race • Initiate new events i.e. Craft Fair
Action	<i>Local groups, Craft groups, Gala Committee, Community Association</i>
Priority 3	Retain and improve existing facilities e.g. Library and Games Hall
Action	<i>East Ayrshire Leisure Community, local community</i>
Priority 4	Support for local organisations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a local volunteer initiative to ensure local groups continue to provide a service in the community
Action	<i>Local Groups, Volunteers Centre</i>

Action



THEME 5: OUTDOOR RECREATION AND ACCESS TO THE COUNTRYSIDE

Priority 1	Develop Victory Park for the benefit of the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans to improve the park including drainage, improved kids play areas, community garden and cycle areas
Action	<i>Central Scotland Green Network Trust, Community Groups, East Ayrshire Leisure</i>
Priority 2	Improve maintenance of existing and develop new walking paths in the area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with organisation in the upkeep and maintenance of the River Ayr Walk • Develop new forest trails • Develop accessible walks for buggies and wheelchairs • Provide bins along walks
Action	<i>Countryside Development Service, Forestry Commission, Local Community</i>
Priority 3	Develop and promote local cycle and walking routes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link up all Covenanter walks • Develop cycle routes to link up other areas of the authority and beyond * Develop promotional materials
Action	<i>EAC, Access Officer, Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG), Learners Group</i>
Priority 4	Develop environmental initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to link with the Coalfield Environmental Trust to raise awareness of the local wildlife • Develop a programme to engage the community i.e. making bird boxes, writing blogs or creating art work
Action	<i>Coalfield Environmental Initiative, RSPB, Muirkirk Enterprise Group (MEG)</i>

Our Village

*O far fam'd RAB! my silly Muse,
That thou sae prais'd langsyne,
When she did scarce ken verse by prose,
Now dares to spread her wing.
Unconscious of the least desert,
Nor e'er expecting fame,
I sometimes did myself divert,
Wi' jingling worthless rhyme.*

Epistle to Robert Burns
John Lapraik



*I've scarce heard ought describ'd sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel;
Thought I "Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark?"
They tauld me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About Muirkirk.*

Epistle To J. Lapraik
Robert Burns



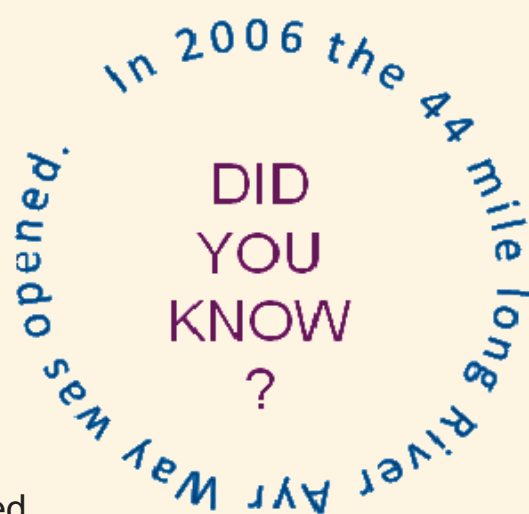
Making it Happen

WORKING TOGETHER FOR MUIRKIRK

Local groups will continue to work together to take forward the priorities within the Action Plan.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

The projects listed here will need to be progressed by the local community and its community organisations with the support of a wide range of partners including East Ayrshire Council, Police Scotland, NHS and the Scottish Government.



Theme	Contact
Local Economy Tourism and Heritage	
Access to Services and Address Antisocial Behaviour	Sean & Jackie MaGuire 01290 661486
Village Appearance	Karen Park 07921317163
Community Facilities, Activities & Events	Heather Morrison 07854352582
Outdoor Recreation and Access to the Countryside	Claire Mitchell & John Dempster



MUIRKIRK

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2016 - 2021



Photographs courtesy of Muirkirk Learners Group

This Community Action Plan sets out the priorities for the development of Muirkirk, over the next five years as determined by the community through an extensive process of community engagement.

Research was organised and led by local community groups and local residents, carried out over a nine month period from March 2015 to December 2015.

The Plan contains:

- A summary of our Community Profile
- Our main likes and dislikes as identified in our Community Views Survey
- Our Vision Statement for the future of Muirkirk
- The main Themes and Priorities for Action
- Information on how you can stay in touch and get involved

Thanks to all those who took the time to share their views and to all who gave their time voluntarily to be part of the Steering Group. Thanks to the Vibrant Communities team of East Ayrshire Council who supported the Steering Group in carrying out all aspects of the work involved in preparing this plan.

This plan is for the whole community and is jointly owned by all the organisations and individuals who took part in its preparation. We will be working together to ensure its implementation over the next 5 years.

Muirkirk Steering Group working together with **Vibrant**
COMMUNITIES