

Newmilns & Greenholm

Community Action Plan

2022 - 2027



Your Future Vision for Newmilns & Greenholm

As part of your responses to the survey, you were asked what you would wish our town to be like in 5 years time. This is YOUR future vision for our town. Here are a number of your responses that summarise the main aspirations:

“Tidy with new houses in Loudoun Road”

“More community minded”

“Attract families with new homes”

“The history of the area to be preserved and showcased”

“In 5 years I would like Newmilns to be a town for outsiders to want to visit. A place that looks clean and tidy from start to finish”

“Tidy and vibrant town, with annual calendar of events that everyone pulls together to put on. A gala with lots of floats”

“More new businesses and employment. A prettier thoroughfare with well-maintained properties and gardens”

“A growing population with more kids to keep attendance up at the school”

“A town that reflects it's countryside surroundings; tidy, green and somewhere people want to visit. More social housing for locals who want to stay in the area and properties in the private landlord category that make the town look tidy and not rundown and derelict”

“Cleaner, with more shops and something a bit different”

“A prettier town to visit, with more care taken of all the buildings. Lots of activities happening and places to meet. A destination restaurant, café, deli”

“A vibrant town where people actively want to live and stay in”

“Number one village for living across East Ayrshire”

Thank You

We just want to thank everyone who has been involved since 2014 in trying to improve Newmilns & Greenholm, whether you have been involved directly or have supported the people, groups and events.

Thank you to the Community Action Plan Steering Group as well as Maggie Henderson from EAC Vibrant Communities who have created the 2022-27 Newmilns & Greenholm Community Action Plan, based on 729 survey returns. Finally thank you to all those who took the time to complete the surveys.

For further information about Newmilns & Greenholm and its groups:

Contact: hello@lovenewmilns.org

Or visit: www.lovenewmilns.org

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Rotary Club of Loudoun

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Introduction

Welcome to the Newmilns & Greenholm Community Action Plan (CAP) for 2022 to 2027. This reflects views of our community gathered from a series of surveys and online voting that was open to all residents, businesses and visitors to our town. This latest community action plan follows on from the last plan that was launched in 2014. The plan has been prepared by a steering group comprising representatives from local groups, residents and also help from East Ayrshire Vibrant Communities. Its production was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with meetings being moved online with limited opportunity to gather more opinions from doorstep distribution of the survey.

Activity Since 2014

The Newmilns Regeneration Association (NRA) was established in 2014 to take forward elements of the first Community Action Plan (CAP). This didn't mean that the NRA had sole responsibility for taking forward the priorities, but they were heavily involved. The responsibility was and will still be, shared between many groups and businesses in the town; as well as East Ayrshire Council (EAC), our Ward 6 Elected Members, MPs and MSPs but most importantly we, the residents of Newmilns and Greenholm.

Some of the achievements and activities from the 2014 Community Action Plan include:

- The old Post Office in Brown Street has been refurbished by the NRA and is now a Community, Heritage and Tourism Hub, available for groups within the town to use for meetings and events.
- New planters, benches and litter bins have been sited to enhance the town's appearance. Local groups including NRA, Community Council and the TARA groups maintain these as well as other beds and gardens.
- Organised litter picks, clean ups and green space tidy ups (including Jacobs Ladder).
- Events such as the Newmilns Food Festival, Christmas Fayres, New Year Ceilidh, Easter Egg Hunt, Gillfoot's G in the Park and the Gala.
- New tubing slope and regular organised events at the Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex.
- Newmilns and Greenholm were the first area in East Ayrshire where EAC adopted Placemaking.
- Petitioned the Scottish Government to retain the bank in Newmilns, sadly this failed.
- Created and promoted "Love Newmilns" on social media to share information about the town.
- Continued to press EAC on the restoration and renovation of historic buildings including the Town House.
- Worked with EAC, ward councillors and local businesses on the potential for development of the old Vesuvius site in creating business opportunities and employment.
- Continued to press EAC on buildings and land that are seen as a blight on Newmilns.
- Promoted the conversion of flats at Gilfoot into 3 bed houses.
- Created Christmas displays at the Kirkgate Gardens and within Morton Hall.
- Worked with other valley towns in creating the Irvine Valley business directory.

Why hasn't it already happened?

Sometimes we can have objectives that take longer to achieve, which can be hampered by:

Funding – groups within the town have applied for numerous grants over the years, sometimes successfully, but more often than not they were unsuccessful. We all wish there was a huge pot of money, but sadly that isn't the case. Groups are having to fight hard for any funding, often against many other groups across the country or within East Ayrshire itself.

Ownership – we all know of areas and buildings within the town that need refurbishing, renovating, repurposing or just removed. But these may be privately owned and the owner doesn't share the thoughts expressed in the CAP. While we can talk to the owners, we have no powers to impose the wishes of the community. We have spoken with EAC to express the frustration of the people of the town and to investigate whether they have the powers of enforcement or are able to take out compulsory purchase orders, these conversations continue.

Involvement – we need residents and businesses within Newmilns & Greenholm to continue to support the many groups within the town, including the NRA, the Community Council, the Gala Committee and the TARA groups. These groups also need new members as well as volunteers to help at events. At the last Newmilns Gala in 2019 we should all recall that only 2 floats took part.

What we as a community need to do

We all want improved community spirit, we want changes, we want more events and all of these include that word "we". This refers to the entire community of Newmilns & Greenholm, we should not always expect others to be the ones making a difference, we all need to step forward and do what we can if we want Newmilns & Greenholm to improve. Not everyone can do everything, but there will be some things that suit each of us, so if you are able to do any of the activities then please consider stepping forward for Newmilns & Greenholm.

Activities you may be able to help or support include:

- Joining the Newmilns Regeneration Association as a Trustee.
- Joining the Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council.
- Joining the Gala Committee.
- Joining one of the Tenants & Residents Association (TARA) groups in your area.
- Support local businesses – "Love Newmilns, Love Local, Shop Local".
- Support the "Love Newmilns Lotto" (in turn this will raise funds for Newmilns & Greenholm good causes).
- Join one of the groups highlighted in the community pages of this brochure.
- Support local events, including stepping forward when they ask for volunteers.
- Take part in litter picks when organised, or pledge to keep your doorstep or street clean.
- Help plant, maintain and water the flower planters and beds.
- Be a responsible dog owner and pick up after them.
- Don't drop litter and don't dump household belongings in front gardens or on the street. There is a recycling service, please respect your town.

Newmilns History and Newmilns Today

Location

Newmilns and Greenholm is situated in the narrowest part of the Irvine valley. The main trunk road A71 runs directly through our town and is around 7 miles from Kilmarnock. We sit between the “Valley towns” of: Galston to our West and Darvel to our East.

Population

Our Town’s current population estimate is **2759**, a decrease of 200 since our previous action plan (2014-2019).

We are the least populated of the 3 towns: Galston Popn. **4750** and Darvel **3837**.

Demographically:

Ages	Population
Under 16	455
16 - 64	1729
65+	616

(Source: Scotland’s 2011 Census)

Employment and Local Economy

With declining industry over many years, most of our working population has had to commute for work. Indeed 2009 saw the closure of our largest factory employer Vesuvius however they still have offices in Brown Street employing a small number of office staff. The factory site is currently empty. Madras lace is still manufactured in one of the Lace factories situated at Stoneygate Road, this being the only factory worldwide supplying this type of lace.

With a reduced footfall and the change in shopping habits we have seen some shops close although there have been a few open. Newmilns is home to a diverse range of small to medium size businesses covering areas such as Art and Design to Groundworks and Landscaping. There are many cottage industries able to sell their products locally and beyond with the use of social media and the internet. Our town is home to a number of farms with mainly sheep, beef and dairy cattle. Farmers are also producing tomatoes and potatoes who supply local businesses.

Housing

In regards to housing for Newmilns & Greenholm community, there has been very little change in the housing landscape. There is a demand for more family housing types to be available, as primarily housing type tends to be comprised of smaller one/two bedroom properties. Historically these properties would have been occupied by those employed in the local lace industry. There is low demand for these one bedroom properties, leading to many remaining empty.

Newmilns and Greenholm housing includes privately owned, private landlords, Housing Associations and East Ayrshire Council rented properties. In the town there are 375 council owned properties, 36 tenancies with Shire Housing as well as 223 privately rented homes. Other housing providers in the town include Trust Housing, Lady Flora’s who have sheltered housing tenants and Murdoch Nisbet serving tenants over the age of 60.

In recent years the town has seen a number of properties demolished (e.g. Kilnholm Street, Nelson Street), or be identified for demolition. No replacement housing has been built on these areas and they currently lie neglected.

In general, there are demands for all occupancy types of family housing in the area, however there are no future plans for development at this time. Plans for housing at Nelson Street were rejected by SEPA on the grounds of future flooding, though this is being pursued by East Ayrshire Council to try and reach an agreement to allow housing to be built.

Newmilns History and Newmilns Today

History and Heritage

Early History: Evidence of early habitation can be found across The Valley, with the earliest sites dating from around 2000 BC. To the east of Loudoun Gowf Course, evidence has been found of the existence of a Neolithic stone circle and a Neolithic burial mound lies underneath the approach to the seventh green. A site in Henryton uncovered a Neolith barrow containing stone axes (c. 1500 BC) and a Bronze Age cairn dating from about 1000 BC. From around AD 200 evidence exists of a Roman camp at Loudoun Hill and a Roman road running through The Valley to the coast at Ayr.

The period AD 800 - 1200 can be evidenced by the presence of a motte and medieval earthworks north of Loudoun Kirk, the remnants of a medieval castle and lime-kilns to the west of Woodhead Farm and a profusion of forts across Loudoun Parish. These have been attributed to the presence of Vikings in the area.

Burgh of Barony: Newmilns became a free Burgh of Barony on 9 January 1490, a privilege bestowed upon George Campbell of Loudoun (and consequently the people of Newmilns) by King James IV. This was an important stage in the development of Newmilns as it granted liberties over control of the local economy, the right to elect local Baillies and necessary local government officials and the right to hold weekly markets and annual fairs.

Newmilns is Ayrshire's oldest inland burgh, ahead of Auchinleck (1507), Cumnock (1509) Mauchline (1510), Kilmaurs (1527) and Kilmarnock (1592). The granting of burgh status is generally recognised by residents of Newmilns as the birth of the town, hence the quincenatary celebrations in 1990. Newmilns was upgraded to a Burgh of Regality in 1707 and became a Police Burgh in 1834.

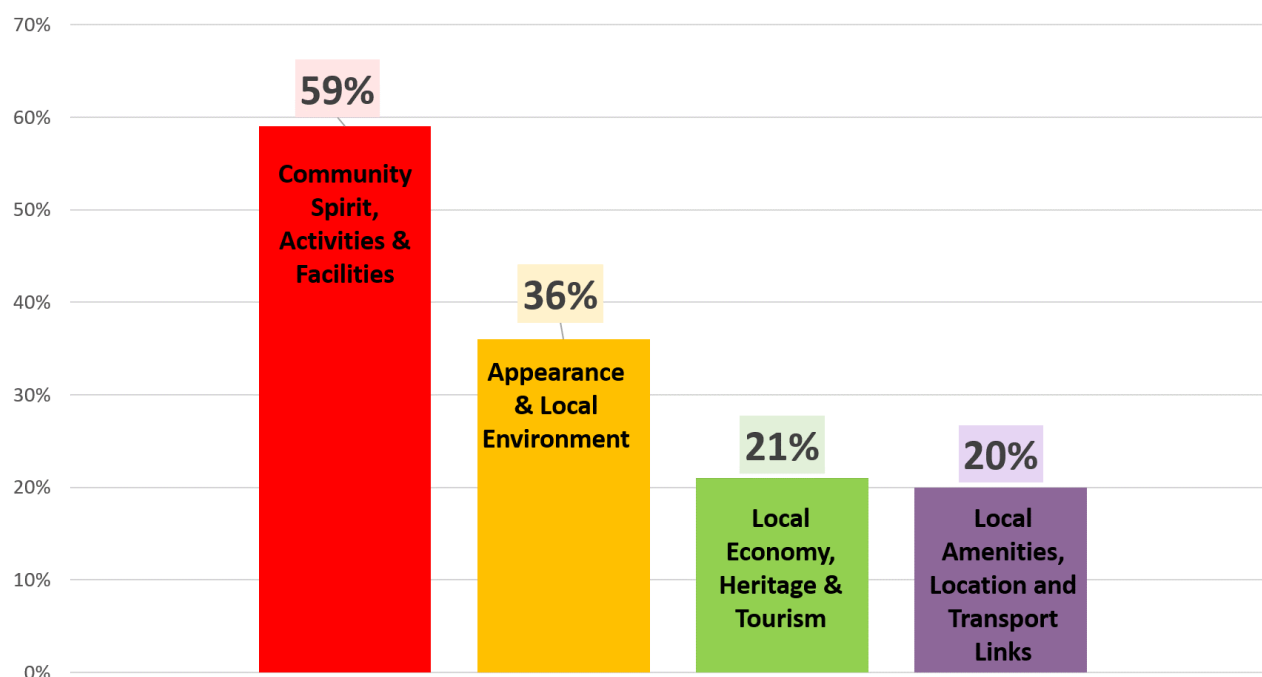
Weaving, Lace and Industrialisation: Towards the end of the 16th century, Huguenot refugees settled in the area and introduced Newmilns to the craft of weaving. About two centuries later, Britain began importing cotton from the United States and as Newmilns by this time had a long-established weaving tradition, the town's handloom industry rose to national prominence. Newmilns also became very prosperous during this period, evidenced by both buildings around the Cross and the institution of the Trades' Race in 1743, which became an annual event for many years to come.

Born in Newmilns in 1821, Joseph Hood became a major player in the lace industry. By the age of 21, he had already developed, manufactured and supplied many Jacquard Looms and throughout his life, was responsible for many weaving innovations. Joseph Hood and his colleague, Hugh Morton, installed a lace curtain machine in Newmilns in 1876 and very quickly, others followed suit. Within ten years, a further eight companies had formed, providing work for over 1,500 people.

The success of the lace industry prompted a boom in the urban development of Newmilns. The town expanded rapidly in all directions, particularly to the east of the townfoot and south into Greenholm, with areas such as Loudoun Road, Darvel Road and Borebrae seeing the erection of many villas for Newmilns' growing middle-class. This was further augmented by the creation of council housing during the 20th century, primarily in Gilfoot, Mason's Holm, Campbell Street and Ladeside. Expansion slowed however as the lace industry fell into decline during the 20th century, with foreign competition, World War I, the Great Depression and World War II all contributing to the loss of markets and access to raw materials. Only two lace mills remain in operation, MYB Textiles and Haddow & Aird.

Community Response

LIKES

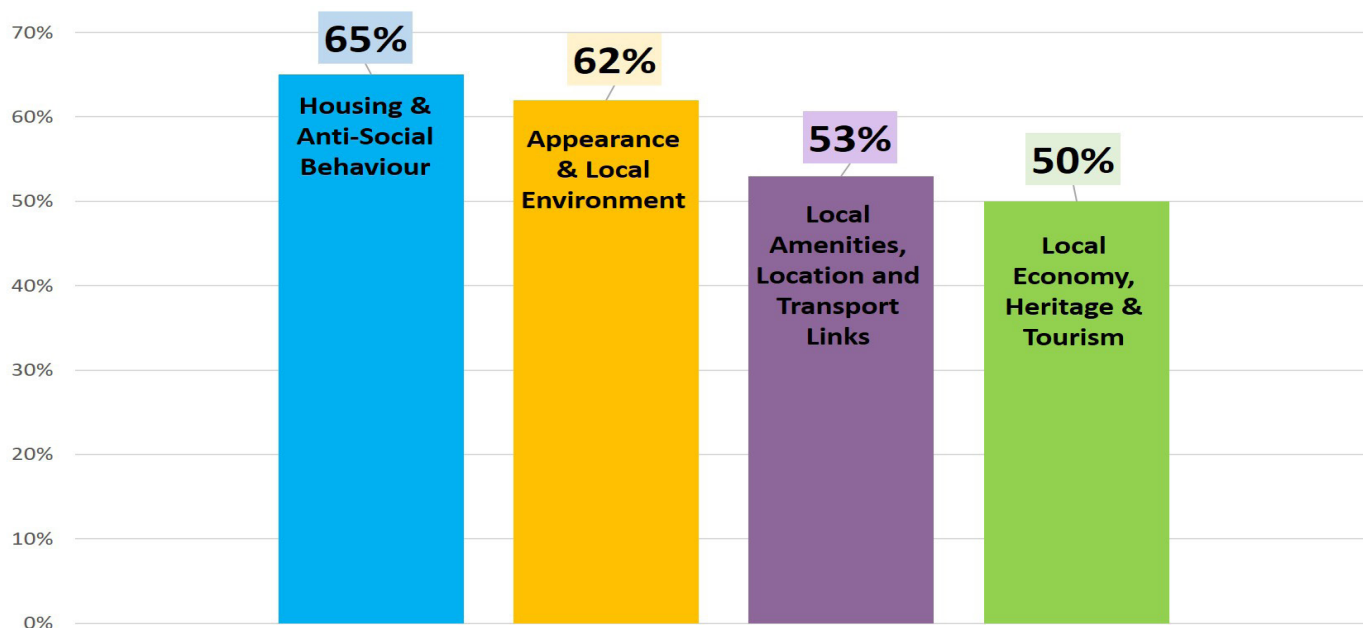


Quotes - What we like...

"The people are the best asset"
"Some great groups such as NRA, Gala, Bowling Club who are now working together. A great festival weekend for all of the community"
"It's a friendly colourful town"
"The food festival and other events"
"I like that the countryside is right on our door step"
"Plenty of litter bins and flower beds"
"It's position in the Countryside. It's close enough to a major town and hospital, without being too busy and crowded"
"Country setting but easy to reach coast and bigger cities and towns"
"The fact that we still have a library, optician and pharmacy locally"
"Lots of character buildings"
"The views across the valley"
"The town has huge potential, with a rich cultural and property heritage"
"We're close enough to bigger towns and Glasgow / East Kilbride"
"Pretty geographical location within a lovely valley"
"The beautiful surroundings and nature walks"
"Beautiful countryside"

Community Response

DISLIKES



Quotes - What we dislike...

"The state of the main street and the poor impression it gives"
"Crime, antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse"
"The amount of private landlords that are able to rent our properties without maintaining them and vetting properly who goes into them"
"Run Down Housing"
"The dog mess"
"The pavements are in a terrible state with cracks"
"First impression when driving through"
"The buildings that are left to go to ruin and disrepair bringing down the look of the area"
"Lack of essential services - post office, library etc."
"I don't like that the whole Valley community is being starved of life by public services such as the banks and the Post Office"
"Expensive buses compared with some local towns"
"The traffic! Shame on the council for discontinuing the plans for the bypass which would have transformed the place. A huge and crazy mistake!!!"
"It would also be nice to have a decent pub or restaurant where families could enjoy a nice meal"
"No employment in area"
"Empty shops and buildings that are left abandoned and unused, they could be offered out to let or be sold to bring in new businesses and other opportunities"
"Not enough shops and businesses because who would start a business when there is very few new houses being built"

Theme 1 - Community Spirit, Activities & Facilities



Theme 1 - Community Spirit, Activities & Facilities

Priorities identified for action:	How this can be addressed:
Improve facilities for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with East Ayrshire Council - Vibrant Communities to encourage more leisure projects in the area. • Work with East Ayrshire Leisure on incentives to bring additional groups into the area, i.e. reduced hall lets. • Form a group made up of young people who can voice their views and work towards goals. • Work with local existing groups to encourage them to provide facilities/ clubs/activities for young people, e.g. Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex, Bowling Green, Church groups, NRA.
More community input	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local community groups to work together and share information and good practice. • Keep social media up-to-date, involving the community. For those not on social media post regular updates/community events on notice boards and shop windows. • Regular diared volunteer events - litter picking/clean up events. • Contribute to the local newspaper to keep the community updated.
Improve attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote an open door policy to encourage new ideas, concepts and fresh perspectives. • Run competitions to encourage pride in resident's properties & surrounding area e.g., garden competitions, best street initiatives, etc.
More community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the possibility of a post Coronavirus pandemic gathering/street party. • Encourage existing establishments/groups to run family fun days/events, e.g. bowling green, Riverside Inn, Newmilns Snow and Sports Complex throughout the year. • Approach other communities and share good practice on how they ran/ promoted/organised events. • Form a sub group that can organise and fundraise for community events.
New Community facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss with East Ayrshire Council/East Ayrshire Leisure Trust the possibility of establishing a community centre. • Discuss with East Ayrshire Council how to best utilise current establishments, i.e. The Morton Hall, Primary School and the Pavilion.

Who could help move this forward?

The above actions can only be met through working in partnership with various groups and organisations. We have identified the following as a starting point of groups and organisations that could assist with these actions.

They are: East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Leisure Trust, East Ayrshire Vibrant Communities, Newmilns Regeneration Association, Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council, Newmilns Snow & Sports Complex, Newmilns Bowling Club, Tenants & Residents Associations, Church Groups, youth groups, community groups and local residents of Newmilns & Greenholm.

Theme 2 - Appearance and Local Environment



Theme 2 - Appearance and Local Environment

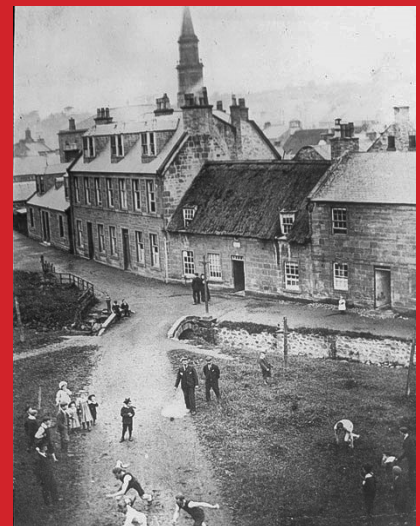
Priorities identified for action:	How this can be addressed:
Improved attention to derelict and run-down buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derelict buildings to be either demolished or renovated. • Absentee landlords/owners and tenants need to be aware of maintaining their properties and if they do not comply, then EAC should enforce this. • Abandoned buildings to be taken over by EAC; repurposed or sold. • A Housing Renewal Area to be established.
Clean up Dog Poo Initiative including Surveillance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More 24 Hour CCTV and access to mobile CCTV unit and Enforcement. • Warden/Patrol issuing fines. • More litter bins.
Leisure Improvements (river walks, cycle tracks & children's parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure and play parks to be better maintained: i.e. grass cutting, clean-up of poo/glass/equipment/litter. • Better and more signage/maintenance of cycle tracks/walking paths. • Green Areas to be maintained and improved with more bins and be emptied regularly. Warden/Patrol to Liaise with EAC.
Maintenance of Gardens, Paths and Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAC needs to maintain roads including potholes. • EAC needs to appoint a more frequent road sweeper. • Community to engage better with maintaining green spaces.

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They are: East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, Irvine Valley Police, Newmilns Regeneration Association, Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council, Tenants & Residents Associations, private landlords with property in Newmilns, community groups and local residents of Newmilns & Greenholm.

Theme 3 - Local Economy, Heritage & Tourism



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Theme 3 - Local Economy, Heritage & Tourism

Priorities identified for action:	How this can be addressed:
Retain and Encourage New Businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the possibility of setting up a Valley Business Association.• Work with local businesses to promote and expand to meet local requirements i.e shops and hospitality.• Encourage residents to support local shops and businesses.
Promote our History and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore the possibility of establishing a local history society/museum.• Promote local history by identifying a location to site a local history board.• Explore the creation of an App.• Improve signage for historical sites and buildings.
Maintenance of Historic Buildings and Paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improve signage for local walks, cycle route, recreation areas and historical buildings.• Encourage and assist in upkeep of historical and feature buildings.• Explore upgrading the Cross and the Town House area.

Who could help move this forward?

The above actions can only be met through working in partnership with various groups and organisations. We have identified the following as a starting point of groups and organisations that could assist with these actions.

They are: East Ayrshire Council, Enterprise Ayrshire, Loudoun Valley Trust, Newmilns Regeneration Association, Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council, Tenants & Residents Associations, Newmilns Snow & Sports Complex, local businesses, Burns Club, community groups and local residents of Newmilns & Greenholm.

Theme 4 - Local Amenities, Location & Transport Links



Lost to Newmilns:



Theme 4 - Local Amenities, Location & Transport Links

Priorities identified for action:	How this can be addressed:
More Amenities (Bank/ Post Office)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with financial advisers and partnerships to ascertain the best method of providing banking services for the residents and follow on with exploring facilities. • Investigate other postal providers that may wish to come into town. • Work with Business Enterprises and the community to discuss shops and businesses required.
Wider Council and Partner Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use our social media platform to spread the word to a larger audience regarding funding and investment. • The community seems desperate for improvements, so take ownership and start some sort of Community Fund focusing on a particular project. • Keep soldiering on and applying for as many grants that are out there with continued pressure on EAC.
Improvements to Local Road Network and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the community and prepare a realistic feasibility plan indicating the improvements for additional parking areas, pedestrian only zones, traffic movement and traffic control. • Arrange walk-around/presentation with EAC and ARA to present our case for the need for road improvements. • Offer financial incentive to landowners i.e. annual rent to use vacant ground for parking spaces. • Provide shuttle bus if outlying parking. • Work with EAC and energy providers for the provision of additional electric charging points. • Work with EAC, ARA and private landowners to resolve the issues of access at the Junction of Main Street, Bridgend and Brown Street, by introducing double yellow lines or some sort of barrier system or tree-planting in road grids from the Junction to Nelson Street. • Work with EAC, Community and private owner of the chinese restaurant building at the corner of Bridgend to resolve the issues of narrow access and obscured sight lines.

Who could help move this forward?

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They are: East Ayrshire Council, Ayrshire Roads Alliance, Enterprise Ayrshire, Irvine Valley Police, Newmilns Regeneration Association, Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council, Tenants & Residents Associations, Private Landlords and Landowners, Newmilns Snow & Sports Complex, local businesses, community groups and local residents of Newmilns & Greenholm.

Theme 5 - Housing and Anti-Social Behaviour



Housing



Anti-Social Behaviour



Theme 5 - Housing and Anti-Social Behaviour

Priorities identified for action:	How this can be addressed:
Social and Private Landlords to take more Responsibility on who they Place as Tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with EAC to understand the vetting process used for social housing. • Understand the vetting process used by private landlords and letting agents. • Work with EAC to identify all private lets and ensure they are on the approved register, and meeting a required standard which is maintained. • Work with the police and EAC to advertise how issues and concerns around landlords and their tenants can be reported.
Act on Absent Landlords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with EAC over absent landlords who leave property empty and effectively abandon the property. • Identify all landlords and hold them accountable for reasonable care and maintenance of property, otherwise they default and the property is subject to compulsory purchase or equivalent. • Remove landlords from Landlord Register if they have properties that are not maintained to required standard.
Encourage Residents to Maintain their Property and Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with groups in Newmilns & Greenholm to encourage volunteers to step up where people need help with their garden or small maintenance jobs. • Run competition for best garden, most improved garden, best street display, "Newmilns in Bloom" and "good neighbour" awards. • Work with EAC to look at ways of issuing improvement notice and inspections whether on property or on gardens.
New Family Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with EAC to identify available land for social or private housing, other towns are growing, so must Newmilns. • Encourage building of larger houses to bring families into the area, both social housing and new private housing. • Support EAC in the challenge to SEPA around areas already identified for housing. • Demonstrate the need for new housing to show to potential developers.

Who could help move this forward?

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They are: East Ayrshire Council, Irvine Valley Police, Newmilns Regeneration Association, Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council, Tenants & Residents Associations, Private Landlords, Local Councillors, Local MSP, Local MP, community groups and local residents of Newmilns & Greenholm.

NEWMILNS & GREENHOLM



Newmilns Food Festival Volunteers (2018)



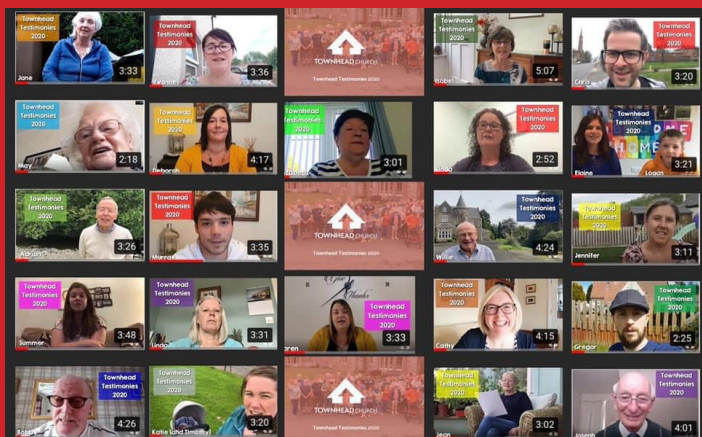
Newmilns Guides & Brownies



Newmilns Gala
Put on by Newmilns
Gala Committee



OUR COMMUNITY



 **TOWNHEAD** CHURCH

We'd love to see you at Townhead Church sometime maybe at our midweek Toddlers Group which is popular with parents in the Valley or at our Family Service (11.30am each Sunday). Townhead Church: bringing Christ to the community!



Newmilns Ladies Social



Gilfoot Tenants & Residents Association



Newmilns Primary Parent Council

NEWMILNS & GREENHOLM



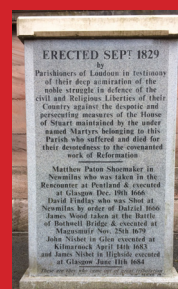
Rotary Club
of Loudoun



Presentation of the Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service to Newmilns
Regeneration Association



Campbell Area Tenants &
Residents Association



Church of Scotland
Loudoun Old Parish Church



Irvine Valley
Locality Policing
Team



Newmilns
Bowling Club



OUR COMMUNITY



Loudoun Academy
Parent Council



Newmilns Community
Fire Service



Covenant Church Newmilns



Newmilns & Galston
Brass Band



Newmilns Cubs, Beavers, Scouts &
Explorer Scouts



St. Sophia's
Parent Council



**Newmilns and Greenholm
Community Action Plan
Steering Group working
together with**

active connected
vibrant
COMMUNITIES

