

# **SORN & AUCHENCLOIGH**

## **COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN**

### **2014-2019**



**Carried out by Sorn & Auchencloigh  
Community Action Plan Steering Group**



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# INTRODUCTION

This Community Action Plan summarises community views about:

- Sorn and Auchencloigh now
- the vision for the future of Sorn and Auchencloigh
- the issues that matter most to the community
- our priorities for projects and action.

The plan is our guide for what we - as a community - will try to make happen over the next 5 years.



## **SORN AND AUCHENCLOUGH COMMUNITY STEERING GROUP**

The preparation of the Action Plan has been guided by a local steering group which brought together representatives from the Community Council, Sorn and Auchencloigh Village Hall Committees, Sorn Bowling Club, Sorn Guild, Sorn Old Folks Committee, Sorn Primary School, Sorn Angling Club, local businesses and interested members of the community.

## **LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY**

The Action Plan has been informed by extensive community engagement carried out over a four month period from December 2013 to April 2014.

The process involved:

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

**127 COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY FORMS WERE RETURNED FROM OUR 281 HOUSES**

**57 SURVEY FORMS WERE ALSO RETURNED FROM SCHOOL PUPILS**

**27 STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS WERE HELD WITH LOCAL GROUPS,  
BUSINESSES AND SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS**

**138 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE COMMUNITY EVENT**

**THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART – IT'S A GREAT RESPONSE AND  
GIVES WEIGHT TO THE PRIORITIES IDENTIFIED IN THIS PLAN**





# OUR COMMUNITY NOW

## FACTS & FIGURES

We have summarised below some of the main facts and figures from the **Community Profile - a report produced by the Steering Group to give a picture of Sorn and Auchencloigh now.**

### LOCATION

**Sorn** is an attractive village situated on a narrow strip of land by the idyllic upper stretches of the River Ayr. From Mauchline you dip down from the rolling fields of rural Ayrshire, flanked by neatly trimmed beech hedges, past the famous red sandstone Sorn castle, toward the 300-year old church and bridge.

Travelling from Muirkirk down another dip, this time from the wilder regions of the Ayrshire / Lanarkshire boundary, past some houses, old and new, and on past the playing fields, you reach the Post Office / General Store, Coffee Shop and Village Inn.

**Auchencloigh** is situated on the B7037, equi-distant between Sorn and Galston. The village is surrounded by farmsteads. The village also boasts a hall which is used by those living both within and outwith the village.

### POPULATION

The population of the area is approximately 600. It has increased in recent years due to new builds in both Sorn and Auchencloigh. There are 25 young people from Sorn attending Auchinleck Academy and 53 children attend Sorn Primary. There are 6 children attending Galston Primary and another 3 at Loudoun Academy who travel from Auchencloigh.

### EMPLOYMENT AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Sorn has a mixed economy comprising of retail, leisure and hospitality while the wider parish has agriculture and forestry as well as a number of people working from home in a variety of areas.

The majority of adults from Auchencloigh work outwith the community, with a few being retired.

### HOUSING

There are approximately 300 households in the area, of these 15 are owned by East Ayrshire Council. This works out at around 5% which is lower than both the East Ayrshire percentage (30.6%) and the Scottish one which is 21.6%.



### Sorn

#### Housing Developments in the last 20 – 30 years:

The Woolmill development, to the East of the village was built in 2012. Before this, the last estate to be completed was Dalgain Drive.

### Auchencloigh

Auchencloigh has been expanding steadily in recent years as demand for rural living has been increasing. Only one house is owned by East Ayrshire Council.

### EDUCATION

#### Pre School:

Catrine and Galston Primary Schools and Early Education Centres, Sorn Mother and Toddler Group.

#### Primary Schools:

Sorn Primary School and Galston Primary School.

#### Secondary Schools:

Auchinleck Academy and Loudoun Academy.

#### Further Education:

Ayrshire Colleges (Ayr, Kilmarnock and Cumnock Annex) University of West of Scotland (Ayr)

### COMMUNITY AND RECREATION

#### Community Facilities:

Sorn Village Hall, Sorn Cabin, Sorn Church, Sorn Church Hall, Auchencloigh Village Hall, Bowling Club.

#### Community Groups & Clubs include:

Sorn Community Council, Sorn Village Hall Committee, Sorn Rural, Sorn Bowling Club, Sorn Parent Council, Sorn Guild, Sorn Angling Club, Auchencloigh Village Hall Committee, Auchencloigh Indoor Bowling Group (Ladies), Auchencloigh Indoor Bowling Group (Men), Auchencloigh Rural.

# OUR COMMUNITY NOW

## FACTS & FIGURES

### Health and Care

Dental , health and optical services are not available in Sorn or Auchencloigh, closest services can be found in Mauchline, Auchinleck or Galston.

### Transport

The majority of those living in the Sorn area are car owners due to the rural nature of the area and the lack of public transport.

As there are no bus services to/from Auchencloigh, by necessity, all those in the area are car owners.

### Roads and Traffic management

Sorn lies on the B743 & Auchencloigh lies on the B7037. There has been an increase in the number of cars using Sorn as a route to the M74 and in the number of heavy lorries in the area. This has led to a deterioration in the quality of the roads network.

There are chicanes at one end of the village to slow traffic while there are speed bumps and 20mph speed restrictions around the school on the Main Street. It is felt that the traffic is driving too quickly at the north end of the village and this can make it difficult to cross the road at the church.

There are two old bridges in Sorn neither of which have pavements. The heavy traffic crossing them can make it dangerous for pedestrians.

### Heritage & History

#### Auchencloigh

Auchencloigh Farm was the birth place of Alexander Peden known as the Prophet of the Covenant. He was born in 1626 and was a preacher at the time of the Covenanters.

During the first war moss was gathered from the Brown's Muir (Moor) and used to treat wounded servicemen.

#### Sorn

Sorn Castle has been an important part of Sorn Parish since the middle ages. The castle has been home to the McIntyre family since 1908, when the building underwent major renovation.

The village church has been around since the mid 1600's. One of the headstones in the well kept cemetery is that of George Wood, shot at Tincornhill in 1688, for his adherence to the word of God during "the killing times". The Reverend Lewis Balfour was Robert Louis (Balfour) Stevenson's grandfather and preached in Sorn from 1806 to 1829.

On the wall of the village church hangs a set of joughs, where in olden times "sinners" would be put and shamed, during services.

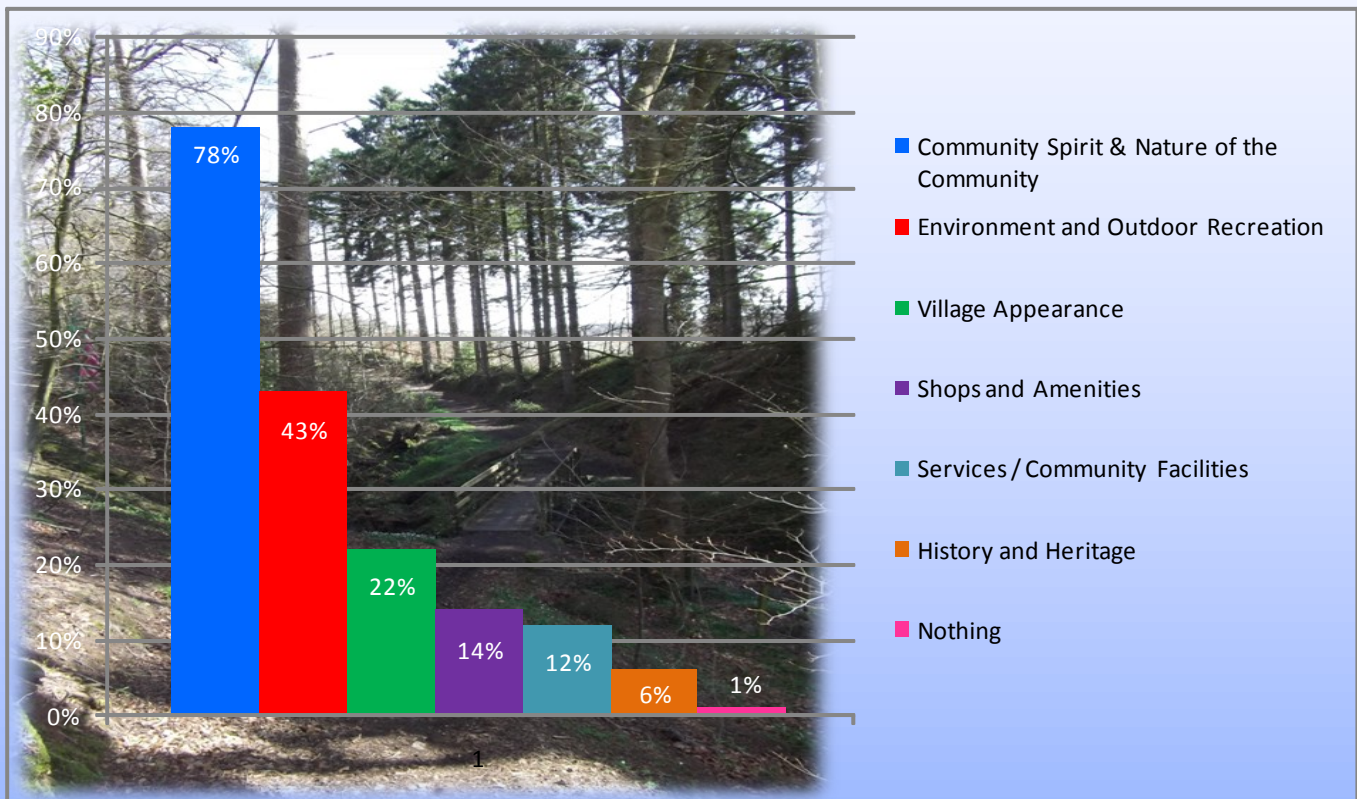
The church hall, which opened in 1927, is situated on the opposite side of the road from the church. This building was a former meal mill. Still visible today are the foundations where the old water wheel once stood. Sorn School was situated near the church up until 1850, when the current school was opened.

Little evidence now exists of the handful of mines in the district, where various ores as well as coal were extracted. Some of the stonework from old lime-kilns is still visible from the River Ayr Walk.



# OUR COMMUNITY NOW LIKES

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



## What People Said...

### Sorn

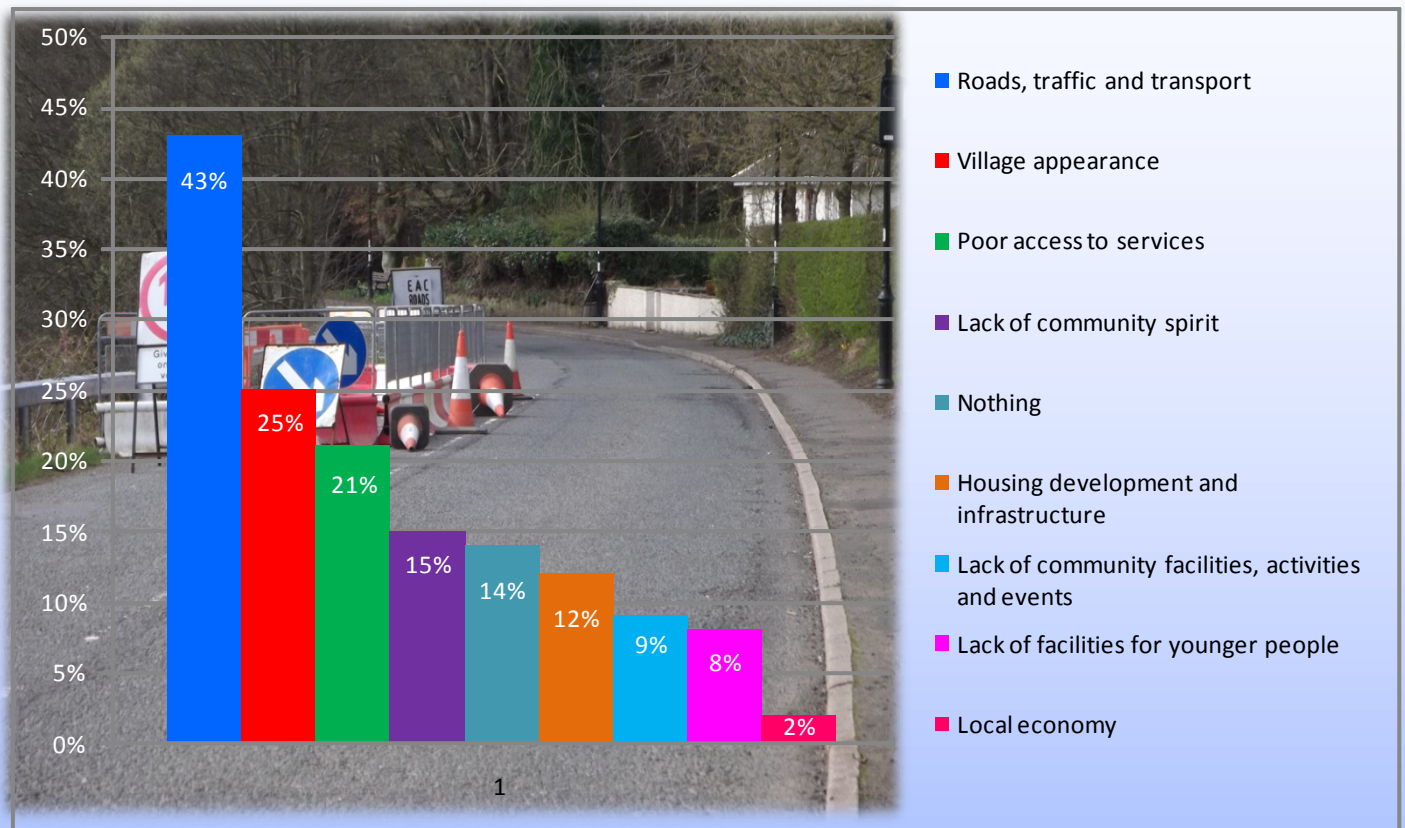
'No crime, feel safe.'  
'Active Community Council.'  
'Plenty of good characters.'  
'Lots of interesting birds, wildlife and flowers.'  
'Our own castle.'  
'Attractive village which is picturesque and quiet.'  
'Each property is different which makes the village attractive.'  
'Very good amenities for a village of this size.'  
'I love the schools, the walks, the older and younger generations.'  
'The area has a lot of character and history.'

### Auchencloigh

'Good community spirit, quiet and safe environment for children.'  
'A nice friendly close-knit community feeling to Auchencloigh.'  
'Rural locations with views and relative quietness.'  
'Nice places to walk the dog and feed the ducks.'  
'Quiet but near shopping centres.'  
'Auchencloigh Village Hall is a great venue for community gatherings.'



# OUR COMMUNITY NOW DISLIKES



## What People Said...

### Sorn

*'Large trucks etc. passing through the village makes me feel unsafe when I am out walking.'*  
*'The lack of traffic calming – people speed through the village, especially round the corner at the Church.'*  
*'A car is a necessity to access work and anything else really.'*  
*'Not as clean as it used to be.'*  
*'The large amount of dog mess in Sorn on the paths and in the parks.'*  
*'Slow broadband and patchy mobile services.'*  
*'No gas supply means less choice for heating.'*  
*'Cost of village hall for an event or to run a club.'*

### Auchencloigh

*'No bus shelter for school kids.'*  
*'Vehicles of all kinds speeding up and down.'*  
*'There is always a lot of litter on the roadsides at the junction at Sorn Castle, the verges from Auchencloigh to Sorn and layby on road to Galston.'*  
*'The woods in Auchencloigh are very untidy, the weeds are out of control.'*  
*'Inadequacy of technical infrastructure, particularly internet and telecoms and lack of cable.'*  
*'Expensive fuel costs and very, very poor broadband speeds (which has hindered my working from home aspect of work ever since I lived here), which is shocking in today's modern "equal" society.'*  
*'Children need lights and bus shelter to keep them safe.'*  
*'Having to take household waste 300-400 metres to collection point at Community Hall.'*

# OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## SORN & AUCHENCLOIGH 2020

*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.*

### Auchencloigh

**We will make the most of our environment and not spoil it through over-development of the area.**

*"I would like Auchencloigh to be not much different with controlled expansion".*

*"I would like Auchencloigh to remain the same with no new developments".*

*"Still to be a small rural community".*



**We will have a healthy local economy supporting small business and creating employment opportunities and have appropriate technology to support this.**

*"I would like Auchencloigh to look much like it does now but with better communication to allow small businesses to flourish in a small rural community".*

*"I would wish Auchencloigh to be less limited by its remote location. Technology, if reliable achieves that far more effectively than physical infrastructure changes".*

*"An eco-friendly, self-sufficient village with solar lighting".*

### Sorn

**We will have a healthy local economy creating jobs and providing excellent amenities, goods and services for locals and visitors**

*"A thriving village community which attracts visitors all year round to enjoy the walking/cycling trails, which will hopefully help the local businesses to go from strength to strength".*

*"Sorn to remain as a village with local businesses flourishing and strong support for all arts and crafts".*

*"The village should be aware of its place in the 21st century and have the infrastructure to maintain village life in terms of technology".*

**We will be known as an attractive and well looked after place to live and visit – a place we can all take pride in.**

*"The School will be bigger and more involved in village projects e.g. looking after flower beds and supporting Sorn Commonwealth Walk".*

*"The village will be safe and clean and taking part in 'Village in Bloom'; a village to be proud of".*

*"A vibrant bustling village".*

*"Keep Sorn as a beautiful, quiet village where residents feel secure and happy and visitors admire and want to return to.*

*"Bright and colourful".*

**We will be an active community with events and plenty for everyone to do. A community where people care about each other and work together to make things happen.**

*"Everyone will pull together. They will take advantage of and listen to the Action Plan outcomes".*

*"Maintain its present shops and local facilities".*

*"A vibrant community".*

*"Better community spirit with villagers willing to help out organising events".*





# 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.



## Community Events, Activities & Facilities

There was a strong feeling from the survey that there is a danger of community spirit declining. The community felt that one way to try to halt the decline was to increase the number of events, increasing the use of existing community facilities and to increase number of activities for all age groups. This would include enhancing current sporting facilities like the football pitch as well as offering more sports clubs in the Village Hall.

The need to improve play facilities was also identified. The play park in Sorn needs upgraded while there are currently no facilities in Auchencloigh.

## Main Priorities

- Improve sporting facilities.
- Increase activities for all ages.
- Improve play areas.
- Introduce more community events.

## Housing Development & Infrastructure

There are connectivity issues across the area. This was highlighted both in the survey and at the Open Event. This is particularly an issue for those living outside the village of Sorn. The issue not only impacts on households but on those who are running businesses or working from home. Some concerns have been raised about the potential for flooding in the area due to new builds and the existing drain network not being properly maintained. Some concerns were expressed at the lack of affordable housing in the area. It was felt that younger people may have to move away if they wanted to become independent and young families would not choose to move in. It was also felt that Sorn would be a good location for Sheltered Housing and could also prevent those with higher support needs having to move away.

## Main Priorities

- Better access to internet services/broadband/improve phone reception/coverage.
- Extend gas supply into area.
- Improve drainage to prevent flooding.
- Increase housing stock.



# 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.**

## **Roads, Parking & Transport**

The village of Sorn is attractive but has issues both with the speed of traffic entering the village and the number of HGV's passing through the area. The amount of traffic on the road is also having an adverse effect on the condition of roads.

### **Main Priorities**

- Improve road maintenance.
- Improve road safety by increasing traffic calming measures, reducing the amount of heavy traffic or pedestrianise the bridge.
- Remove speed bumps from Sorn Main Street.
- Erect a bus shelter at Auchencloigh.

## **Village Appearance**

In the past Sorn has been very successful in 'Village in Bloom' competitions. However, in recent times the village has stopped entering and it is felt that this has had a detrimental effect on the area. There is also an issue with rubbish being dumped on roads in the area

### **Main Priorities**

- Reduce dog fouling.
- Clean up the village.
- Re-instate "Village in Bloom"
- Improve maintenance and increase planting in public areas and flower beds

## **Local Economy, Tourism and Open Spaces**

One of the main reasons given for living in Sorn and Auchencloigh was the location and scenery. However, it was felt that more could be done to make the most of the area's natural beauty. This would not only enhance the lives of those living in the area but could also encourage more tourism.

It was also felt that a community renewable project would provide the area with additional income which could be used to fund other projects and therefore making the area more sustainable.

### **Main Priorities**

- Develop walking and cycling routes with improved signage.
- Increase facilities for tourists and those living in the area.
- Organise exhibitions in the Village Hall.
- Start a community renewable project.





# ACTION



## THEME 1: Roads, Parking and Transport

<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>Improve Road Maintenance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify worst areas and liaise with Ayrshire Roads Alliance to schedule repairs.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Community Council / Ayrshire Roads Alliance
<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>Improve road safety by increasing traffic calming measures, reducing the amount of heavy traffic or pedestrianise bridge</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Ayrshire Roads Alliance and Police Scotland to identify appropriate traffic calming measures for the area and to explore how traffic flow can be improved and to try to reduce the impact of heavy traffic in the area.</li> <li>Monitor traffic flow and the number of HGVs going through the villages</li> <li>Organise a survey of traffic speeds going through the village.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Community Council / Ayrshire Roads Alliance / Police Scotland
<b>PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>Remove Speed Bumps from Sorn Main Street</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with Ayrshire Roads Alliance to identify appropriate traffic calming measures for the area.</li> <li>Put in flashing speed signs</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Community Council / Police Scotland / Ayrshire Roads Alliance
<b>PRIORITY 4</b>	<b>Erect a Bus Shelter at Auchencloigh</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liaise with villagers and EAC to identify a suitable location.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	EAC / SPT/ Community Council



# ACTION

## THEME 2: Community Events, Activities and Facilities

<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>Improve Sporting Facilities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify volunteers to run new sports clubs e.g. badminton, table tennis, gymnastics, dancing club.</li> <li>Investigate the feasibility of increasing sporting facilities e.g. football pitch restored; blue cage/running track installed at football pitch, gym.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Community Council / Sub Group / Volunteers
<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>Increase number of activities for all ages</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify individuals willing to provide classes e.g. art, nature, baking, arts and crafts.</li> <li>Identify volunteers to run a youth club.</li> <li>Investigate the possibility of setting up a Breakfast Club and After School Club.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Community Council and Sub Group, Sorn Primary, EAC.
<b>PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>Improve Play Areas</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a Play Action Group of volunteers willing to take this priority forward.</li> <li>Work with EAC staff to identify what improvements can be made.</li> <li>If required fundraise to update / renovate existing equipment, set up new play area and improve picnic area.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Play Action Group / Community Council / East Ayrshire Council
<b>PRIORITY 4</b>	<b>Introduce more community events</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a social committee of volunteers from across the Parish.</li> <li>Develop a programme of events e.g. Craft Fayre, Beer Festival, First Aid Training, Discos.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Social Committee
<b>PRIORITY 5</b>	<b>Improve communication about events and activities.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start a community newsletter or a Facebook page.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	Community Council





# ACTION

## THEME 3: Housing Development and Infrastructure

<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>Better access to internet services/broadband and improve phone reception/coverage</b>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council / EAC</i>
<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>Extend Gas supply into area</b>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council / Transco</i>
<b>PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>Improve drainage to prevent flooding</b>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council / EAC / SEPA</i>
<b>PRIORITY 4</b>	<b>Increase Housing stock</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Housing</li> <li>• Sheltered Housing</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council / EAC</i>



## THEME 4: Village Appearance

<b>PRIORITY 1</b>	<b>Reduce Dog Fouling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaise with EAC to have more dog litter bins installed and ensure that bag dispensers are available.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council / EAC</i>
<b>PRIORITY 2</b>	<b>Clean up the Villages.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organise regular litter picks.</li> <li>• Liaise with EAC to have more litter bins installed and regularly emptied.</li> <li>• Involve primary school in litter campaign.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Community Council / EAC / Sorn Primary</i>
<b>PRIORITY 3</b>	<b>Re-instate "Village in Bloom"</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set up a Village in Bloom committee to take this priority forward.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Village in Bloom Committee</i>
<b>PRIORITY 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Improve maintenance and increase planting in public areas and flower beds.</b></li> <li>• Identify which areas need better maintenance and liaise with EAC to agree a maintenance schedule.</li> </ul>
<i>Action by</i>	<i>Village in Bloom Committee / East Ayrshire Council</i>

# ACTION



## THEME 5: Local Economy, Tourism and Open Spaces

### PRIORITY 1

#### Develop Walking and Cycling Routes with improved signage

- Set up a Paths Action Group of volunteers to take this priority forward.
- Use "Paths for All" resources for support to set up group and access funding
- Identify priority paths to be improved or developed
- Contact EAC Access Officer to find out what support is available
- Identify ways to increase information and signage about routes
- Liaise with EA Woodlands and Sorn Estates to ensure paths are clean and safe (e.g. no motorised vehicles on pathways.)

#### Action by

*Paths Action Group / Sorn Estates / EA Woodlands / Community Council*

### PRIORITY 2

#### Increase facilities for tourists and those living in the area e.g. retail & hospitality outlets, public toilets, Museum/Craft Centre , Heritage Trail

- Identify gaps and assess different options which could increase tourism in the area and enhance the lives of those living locally
- Work to implement and promote priority projects to fill gaps

#### Action by

*Community Council / Tourism Sub Committee*

### PRIORITY 3

#### Organise exhibitions in the Village Hall, including local history

#### Action by

*Village Hall Committee*

### PRIORITY 4

#### Start a community renewable project of any form as sustainability for the future of the villagers

- Set up a business directory of existing businesses and prepare strategy for new business / activities and their development e.g. wind turbine / hydro power or other energy products.



# MAKING IT HAPPEN

## WORKING TOGETHER FOR SORN AND AUCHENCLOIGH

Local groups will continue to work together to take forward the priorities within the Action Plan. Any local community group, business or willing individuals would be most welcome to join us.



## 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, Scottish Government, SEPA

## HOW TO GET INVOLVED AND CONTACT INFORMATION

As a practical way of taking things forward we will be setting up a number of small Action Groups to lead on each aspect of this Plan. If you are interested and want to be involved please contact the Community Council at [communitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:communitycouncil@gmail.com)

ACTION PLAN THEME	CONTACT
Roads, Parking & Transport	Martyn Robertson
Community Events, Activities & Facilities	Eleanor Sutherland
Housing Development & Infrastructure	John Boogert
Village Appearance	Ian Young
Local Economy, Tourism & Open Spaces	Marie Rutherford

This Community Action Plan sets out the priorities for the development of Sorn and Auchencloigh over the next 5 years as determined by the community through an extensive process of community engagement organised and led by local community groups and local residents and carried out over a four month period in 2013\2014.

## The Plan contains

1. A summary of our Community Profile.
2. Our main likes and dislikes as identified in our Community Views Survey.
3. Our Vision Statement for the future of Sorn & Auchencloigh.
4. The main themes and priorities for action.
5. Information on how you can stay in touch and get involved.

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

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.

*Sorn & Auchencloigh Steering Group working together with*

active connected  
**vibrant**  
COMMUNITIES

