

BLANTYRE COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



2019-2024



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Introduction

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

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

The Coalfield Regeneration Trust's (CRT's) overarching priority is to develop community capacity; everything we do is about supporting coalfield communities. CRT works in the heart and soul of our coalfield communities; by investing resources, expertise and knowledge to ensure local people can fulfil their potential.

Coalfield Community Futures

This programme works with local residents and groups to develop a common sense of purpose and assist them to produce a deliverable community action plan which makes a case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen.

Household Survey

As part of the process, a household survey was conducted. It was available in both paper and electronic format and was distributed via a variety of groups and individuals, and via social media.

The Big Blantyre Blether

On Sunday 4th November 2018 the "Big Blantyre Blether" forum was held in Blantyre Miners Welfare, 60 people participated. This event allowed local people to discuss issues raised in the survey and to apply their own experiences and expertise as people who live in the area. The information from the deliberations has been used to inform the various propositions and priorities included in this Action Plan. This event was developed in partnership with the Electoral Reform Society as part of their "Act as if you own the Place" campaign; an initiative aimed at involving citizens more in local democracy.

The Family Fun Day

The voting event, aimed at attracting a wide range of people from the community, was billed as a Family Fun Day, and attracted in total 700 people including adults and children of all ages. As well as a range of activities for children, local groups and organisations were invited to provide a display of their work, and the main purpose of the event was to get the public's vote on the Themes and Priorities identified from the household survey and the "Big Blantyre Blether".

Community Futures Steering Group

A steering group was formed at the beginning of the process, with a number of people volunteering their participation following the initial public meeting. This included representatives from Terminal One, Hyper Cyber Youth Project, Blantyre Soccer Academy, Blantyre Old Parish Church, Priory Bridge Residents Association, Family Learning Action Group, Blantyre Community Committee and a number of local residents.

Blantyre Community Action Plan

This Plan summarises community views and contains the following sections:

- Our Community Now
- Our Shared Vision for Blantyre
- Priority Themes and Actions
- Making the Links to Community Planning

- **509** household surveys were returned
- Representing the views of over **1500** residents
- **60** people attended the "Big Blantyre Blether"
- **700** people attended the Voting Event

Thank you to everyone who took part in helping Blantyre plan for a bright future!

The One Day Poem

ONE DAY

*One day, I'd like to see friendship for all
In a community where we all stand tall.
We need the spirit of "we're all in it together"
On the banks of the Clyde and purple heather.*

*On day, not far, I'd like to hear
That our community can live without fear.
We can enjoy a walk or bleather on oor streets
No need for fear of the strangers we greet.*

*One day, I hope we can all feel safe
As we welcome the poor, the needy, the waif
To this lovely town and its great people
Where all live together under one steeple.*

*One day, I hope we can taste victory
As we take our place in Blantir's history,
And know we helped changed our town for the good
To a place where are all truly understood.*

Tom Slaven



*Changing Places An Anthology of Verse, Edited by
Frank Devine, Tom Slaven and Jimmy Whelan.*

Our Community Now

Background

This profile has been produced to give an insight into the Blantyre area.

Location

Blantyre is located in a civil Parish of the same name, in South Lanarkshire, Scotland. From north to south the length of the parish is six and a quarter mile long and varies greatly in breadth, not averaging more than one mile in the whole. Blantyre comprises 4170 acres of which, excepting 200 acres of moss land and plantations, all is or was once, arable. It has boundaries consisting mainly of the River Clyde to the north and northwest forming a boundary with Glasgow, Uddingston and Bothwell. The western boundary is largely the Rotten Calder River next to adjoining East Kilbride and Cambuslang. To the east, the Park Burn, separating Blantyre from Hamilton. The Boundary to the elevated south is the Rotten Burn.

The Local Government administrative boundary for Blantyre Ward 15 in South Lanarkshire, now covers a reduced area but this plan includes the areas which residents naturally identify as Blantyre, including: Blantyre Industrial Estate and Hamilton Technology Park, Auchentibber, Westcraigs, Whistleberry and the whole of Springwells.

Blantyre's origins date back to the 1200's with the construction of Blantyre Priory in Blantyre Barony, formerly habited by monks and now a listed ruin. The Civil Parish of Blantyre can be dated back from the 1700's, evolving from the Barony. Initially a scattering of various small hamlets immersed in farming and weaving, it took until 1785 with the arrival of the Blantyre Works mills for the population to surpass 1,000 people. The arrival of coal in the 1860's saw a rapid expansion in population, tripling in two decades as workers arrived for the opportunities in several collieries. Perhaps best known for being a former mining village, Blantyre is now a growing town and is the birthplace of famous explorer, David Livingstone. Its many miners' rows were extensively cleared to make way for modern housing.

The town has two main thoroughfares. Main Street to the south and Glasgow Road to the north. The latter being a street which saw extensive development in the 1970s following the removal of tenements, shops and homes. It is a legacy for many, according to the results from the household survey, which still seems to be unpopular today despite the building of modern supermarkets and the Sports Centre. The surrounding scenery however is, in many parts, exceedingly beautiful and generally well wooded. The survey results also clearly showed that there is a strong community spirit in Blantyre.

Population

The population of Blantyre is 17,195. 52.4% female and 47.6% male. There is a working age population of 10,975. Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2017

Housing

Blantyre has a wide range of housing including detached, semi-detached, terraced, flats and maisonettes. 61% are owner occupied, with 32% council/housing association tenants and 7% private let. Source: Census 2011.

There has been a number of new housing developments which include social, private and council. This has been the first time in many years that Blantyre has seen new developments and demand is still high. There are four sheltered housing complexes within the area, this type of property is also in high demand. As at January 2019 there were 2499 general needs Council owned properties and 656 properties owned by a total of 11 housing associations. It is anticipated that the number of lets available during 2019/20 is likely to be as follows: 110-140 general needs properties; 14-18 sheltered housing units and 6-10 amenity properties. During April 2018 to January 2019, a total of 87 general needs council properties were let. The sizes of the properties let were as follows: 37 x 1 bedroom; 36 x 2 bedroom; 13 x 3 bedrooms and 1 x 4+ bedrooms. As at January 2019 there were 1269 applicants looking for a house in the Blantyre area, of these: 53% were single people, 25% lone parents and 83% of these applicants require a 1 bed or 2 bed property. Last year 40 applicants were assessed as homeless or potentially homeless. The council have a legal duty to provide "settled accommodation" to these applicants. The number is expected to remain broadly the same during this year. Source: Blantyre Local Letting Plan 2019/20.

Health and Social Care

There is a dedicated medical centre in Blantyre which houses three GP practices and primary care services. There is also three dental practices and four pharmacists based locally. University Hospital Hairmyres serves the local population whilst Wishaw General Hospital provides maternity services for the area. There are three care facilities in Blantyre: Victoria House Care Home, Calderglen Care Home which are private nursing homes and Kirkton (based in High Blantyre) which is a Council run residential care home. There is care facility development proposed for the St. Joseph's site which will provide 20 intermediate care units. There are also 20 houses proposed for people with long term care needs together with 20 mainstream houses. It will be a South Lanarkshire centre for excellence with accommodation for third sector providers and carer support based within the site.

Local Economy, Shops and Services

Blantyre has more than 500 shops and businesses spread across the town including Glasgow Road and Main Street. There are several industrial estates including Parkburn, Blantyre and the Technology Park.

Our Community Now

There are a number of retail businesses across Blantyre which include supermarkets, 2 butchers, 17 beauty and hairdressers, 7 charity shops, 6 bookmakers, 13 cafes and 14 takeaways. There are also 25 garages and auto repair businesses, 2 B&Bs, 2 hotels, 10 public houses and 2 taxi firms locally as well as veterinary clinics, funeral parlours, opticians and a gym based at the sports and leisure centre.

The South Lanarkshire Crematorium is based in Sydes Brae near the Hamilton International Technology Park in High Blantyre. It opened on 5th September 2006 and serves the local and surrounding areas within South Lanarkshire. The crematorium was one of the first in the UK to use new technology which cuts mercury emissions. A total of 200 mourners can be accommodated at this site and a 140-space car park is also included, as well as a memorial garden and a book of remembrance.

Notably, there are no banks, although there is a credit union, and only one petrol station (unmanned and card payments only). Approximately 30% (108) of the businesses in the area are industrial, with only 18% (64) being retail. 4.5% (16) of the business properties in the area are empty.

Education and Childcare

There are five primary schools and one high school based in the town. St John Ogilvie High School in Hamilton also educates children from Blantyre. Three of the local primary schools have nurseries attached and there are also five private nurseries, childminders and out of school care available. Most schools offer breakfast clubs as well as a range of lunchtime and afterschool activities. This year a range of holiday activities are also being rolled out for Blantyre's school age children. Kear campus supports young people access education when previously this has, for a variety of reasons, been difficult. Young people attending any of Kear's primary and secondary schools may have a range of Additional Support Needs (ASN) that may include diagnosed medical conditions or they may simply have found it too stressful and overwhelming to make a success of mainstream education. 36% of households with residents aged 16-74 have no one with qualifications. This is above the national average of 26.8%. Source: Census 2011

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Community Activities

There are several community facilities in the town which include: Hyper Cyber, TACT Community Hall, Springwell Community Hall, Priestfield Community Hall, Terminal One, Blantyre Miners' Welfare, Sports Centre, Blantyre Soccer Academy and a number

of church halls. The town lost a valuable facility when the Miners' Welfare Community Resource Centre was destroyed by fire in November 2017. This led to the relocation of a number of community activities, and the loss of the boxing club. There is a lack of 3G and 4G football facilities as was identified through the household survey. There are many active community groups in the town who look after particular aspects of the community such as young people, the environment etc.

Environment

The climate of Blantyre and the West of Scotland in general is milder than that of Eastern Scotland due to the stronger maritime influence, as the prevailing winds blow from the sea. May and June are months with longest average sunshine. Average annual rainfall totals range from less than 1000 mm to 3500 mm. On average, the number of days with snow falling in the Blantyre area is about 20. The town sits above many coal seams although most of these have now been exhausted. Although Blantyre can be perceived as being 'built up' or industrial, it does have several large recreational green spaces and parks and is generally surrounded by woodland offering good walks. Agriculture, once a stalwart industry for Blantyre is in decline with few working farms remaining. On the upper, southern slope, wind turbines have appeared, and alongside an increasing number of homes with solar panels, a trend towards sustainable energy is becoming more apparent. [Source: Blantyre Project]

A proposed Incinerator on the outskirts of Blantyre is now no longer going ahead after the Developer withdrew their appeal in May 2019. This perceived success was secured through collective efforts of the Community Council and several political parties, Councillors and MSPs.

Traffic & Transport

Blantyre has enviable modern, well maintained road and rail networks. The M74 motorway connecting Carlisle to Glasgow runs directly past the town. The recent, multimillion-pound upgrade of Raith Interchange allows vehicles to directly connect to the M8 and M73. The adjacent, busy A725 'East Kilbride Expressway' connects the town to neighbouring Hamilton, Bothwell and East Kilbride. Blantyre Railway Station offers direct links to Glasgow to the west and as far as Lanark to the East with frequent services 7 days a week. Similarly, bus Networks are adequate but could be improved upon. The town is just 30 minutes from Glasgow Airport. [Source: Blantyre Project].



A shared vision for our community

As part of the household survey, those who completed it were asked to share their vision for Blantyre. Below is a very small selection of more than 500 responses received, representing some of the most common themes overall.

Blantyre

Give the young people a voice.

For the young people to have a strong identity and pride for their town.

More for the young people as they are our future.

To be a safe, friendly and accepting town.

For everyone in the community to feel safe whether young or old.

To have the opportunity to use facilities in the community that provides inclusiveness and tackles social isolation.

To be a thriving town with well-placed small local businesses re-enforcing the unique community spirit.



The results from the community survey show us what the people of Blantyre like

- 67% community spirit
- 24% community activities
- 19% community facilities
- 17% environment
- 13% services
- 6% transportation



Quotes taken from the survey

"I love that my kids have a second home in Terminal One where they feel safe and they trust the staff."

"Blantyre Community Committee also do great work at Christmas and the summer fete."

"The sense of local identity and tradition that the Town has."

"Easy access to all major roads. Good bus and train service."

"Lots of local amenities library, train station, leisure centre, Stonefield park, David Livingstone centre."

"That we have access to beautiful nature trails."

"Given the number of small businesses that are in Blantyre, it is great that they serve and care about Blantyre."



The results from the community survey show us what the people of Blantyre dislike

- 42% crime
- 19% environment
- 19% services
- 10% community services
- 8% community activities
- 6% roads and pavements
- 3% parking



Quotes taken from the survey

"Parking, especially around schools, post office and credit union."

"No investment in children's services and the Terminal One building repairs are still outstanding."

"Litter and dog fouling."

"Quality of roads and pavements. Rubbish in the streets."

"Lack of amenities and restaurants."

"Nothing much for kids to do. Nothing for kids with learning difficulties to do at weekends, or nights."

"Don't know where to get information on activities."

"Increasing vandalism and crime. There's a worrying rise in house break ins, car theft and damage to property and belongings."



Theme 1: Glasgow Road and Shopping Facilities

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

To create a good working relationship with ASDA

- Promote a positive working relationship with ASDA's Community Champions.
- Effectively share information with wider community.
- Seek meeting with ASDA regarding their next phase of development.



Increase number of small business and key services

- Work with South Lanarkshire Council planning team on town centre plan.
- Set up a "shop local" campaign.
- Explore the viability of a trader's/local business forum.
- Draw up an economic/business strategy for Blantyre.
- Seek to encourage more cafes, restaurants, community drop in and community cafes to set up in the town
- Identify a "unique selling point" (eg Fairtrade/Foodie /Craft Town) for Glasgow Road.
- Address parking on Glasgow Road
- Review current arrangements and seek solutions as part of the town centre plan
- Pilot possible solutions, including time limited parking.



Increased access to Post Office services

- Consultation with the community to explore current issues.
- Involve current Post Office services in the town.
- Explore the option of a "whole business" approach (levy) - Business Improvement District.
- Brighter shop fronts/shutter art/community art/floral enhancements.
- Review cleanliness and seek solutions to litter issues.



Potential Partners

South Lanarkshire Council, town centre planning team, local business and property owners, Community Council, local politicians.

Theme 2: Our Community

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

More activities and clubs are required for all children and young people.

- Map existing provision.
- Work with local schools to promote existing provision.
- Work with local schools and youth organisations to survey young people and involve them in designing new innovative projects to address gaps identified through the survey.
- Investigate ways of breaking down financial barriers for low income families.
- Increase/improve access to the Sports Centre and other community facilities for children and young people.
- Seek funding to expand current provision and establish new opportunities.
- Look at setting up intergenerational projects.
- Investigate training/apprenticeships available locally.
- Engage young people in environmental initiatives.
- Work in partnership to promote youth volunteering opportunities.

Increase young people's involvement in decision making

- Raise awareness of Blantyre Youth Development Team
- Explore how young people want to be involved and organize opportunities to enable this.
- Work with South Lanarkshire Council and residents to create a schedule of improvements to Logan Street e.g. maintenance, safety and environmental health.
- Explore with housing providers and local authority the potential for additional affordable housing and also retirement housing in the community
- Establish additional support services for vulnerable members of the community eg drop ins, community cafes etc.
- Promote support services for mental health and addiction issues.
- Promote life skills support including financial advice

Community Facilities

- Look at increasing access to community halls and identifying potential new venues, including the Miners' Welfare.
- Work with the Health and Social Care Partnership regarding the development of the St Joseph's Care Facility

- Work with variety of partners to identify ways of improving access, particularly for those families and individuals on the lowest incomes.
- Identify and promote free and costed activities locally
- Explore potential for re-establishing community cinema
- Explore need for 3G/4G/all-weather pitches and potential locations.
- Explore possibility of refurbishing local sports facilities
- Seek investment in parks and greenspaces

Community Activities

- Identify and promote free and costed activities locally.
- Explore potential for community art project.
- Establish a "town" day annually with a David Livingstone theme.
- Explore the possibility of establishing a community lottery to help fund local events.
- Provide more digital literacy opportunities locally
- Explore feasibility of establishing health and wellbeing opportunities locally.



Potential Partners

South Lanarkshire Council, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Fire Service, Blantyre Youth Development Team, Hyper Cyber, Terminal One, Blantyre Soccer Academy, local primary and secondary schools, nurseries, uniformed organisations, Police Scotland, local politicians, churches, David Livingstone Trust, Miners' Welfare, Liber8, Citizen's Advice, Credit Union.

Theme 3: Civic Pride

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

Dog fouling, Fly tipping and litter

- Establish a "scoop yer poop" initiative with access to free bags .
- Put up signage in problem areas with hotline number(s) for reporting.
- Work with schools to establish environmental campaign.
- Organise community litter pick events.
- Identify key areas for additional litter bins.
- Explore solutions to fly tipping.
- Increase volunteering opportunities.
- Host an annual volunteering event/initiative.
- Establish new groups such as environment group, "friends of" groups, community growing group etc.



Maintain and develop footpaths and nature trails

- Map areas still requiring upgrading/connectivity.
- Improve way markers.
- Improve accessibility.
- Improve interpretation.



Improve Gateways to the Town

- Improved signage.
- Additional trees and flowers.



Potential Partners

South Lanarkshire Council Land Services, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture, Sustrans, Paths4All, Forestry Commission, Community Council, VASLAN, Terminal One, Hyper Cyber, Schools, NHS, David Livingstone Trust, Bonnie Blantyre, Friends of the Calder.

Theme 4: Community Safety

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

Quality of new street lights is a major concern and contributes to residents not feeling safe

- Explore improvements to current lighting
- Identify areas that require additional/new lighting



Vandalism and Anti-social behaviour are key concerns

- Discuss with Police Scotland the community's concerns
- Explore a whole community approach to anti-social behaviour and vandalism
- Identify areas that would benefit from CCTV
- Explore the feasibility of neighbourhood watch schemes



Improve community awareness of Police Scotland

- Communicate to the community the existing engagement opportunities with Police
- Explore the idea of setting up regular Police/Community meetings to discuss current community issues



Potential Partners

Police Scotland, Violence Reduction Unit, Problem Solving Group, South Lanarkshire Council Anti-Social Behaviour Team, local politicians, Community Council, primary and secondary schools, youth organisations

Theme 5: Roads, Traffic and Parking

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

Lack of gritting on paths and roads is an issue during winter months

- Raise awareness of process for requesting grit bins or replenishment of grit supplies.

Roads and pavements require significant upgrading and repair

- Work with South Lanarkshire Council to establish a repair programme for Blantyre.

Lack of parking and inconsiderate drivers are an issue in the town

- Seek update on parking review for Station Road
- Engage the community with active and future reviews.
- Explore the feasibility of a walking bus initiative for local schools.
- Seek information regarding plans for Park & Ride facility.
- Explore "Park and Stride" facilities.

There are accessibility issues related to bridge at train station

- Seek further information from Scotrail regarding Improvement Programme.

There are a number of streets and roads in our town with no adequate crossing points

- Review with South Lanarkshire Council the areas of concern to determine solutions.
- Establish a road safety campaign.

Bus links to surrounding areas are poor

- Discuss with bus companies the frequency and routes to identify improvements.
- Explore community transport options such as dial-a-bus and buzz bus.



Potential Partners

South Lanarkshire Council , Strathclyde Passenger Transport, Scotrail, Community Council, local politicians.

Early actions funded through Participatory Budget

To support the action planning process the community received a Participatory Budget of £20,000 which was available to local community groups and voluntary organisations with a constitution. This budget enabled small projects to be considered for funding. The decision on who to fund was a two pronged approach - the community were given the opportunity to vote for their preferred projects at the voting event and the steering group, supported by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, prioritised applications in relation to the key issues identified through the survey and the Big Blantyre Blether.

Blantyre Community Committee

- Blantyre Project

Blantyre Community Committee

- Equipment for Events

Terminal one – Blantyre Youth Development Team

- Train to Brain

Blantyre District/Division of Girl guiding UK

- New Equipment

Family Learning Action Group

- Improving Mental Health

Hypercyber Youth Project

- Dynamic Youth Awards

David Livingstone Trust

- New Equipment

Making the links to the South Lanarkshire community plan

| South Lanarkshire Partnership Community Plan Approach | South Lanarkshire Council – Connect Plan 2017 –2022 | Blantyre Community Action Plan Theme |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|
| Promoting Inclusive Growth | Support the local economy by providing the right conditions for inclusive growth | Glasgow Road and Shopping Facilities |
| Supporting Education, Skills and Development for Children and Young People; Promoting Inclusive Growth | Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning. Ensure schools and other places of learning are inspirational Support our communities by tackling disadvantage and deprivation and supporting aspiration | Our Community |
| Improving the Local Environment | Work with communities to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities | Civic Pride |
| Tackling Health Inequalities: Supporting Safeguarding Measures Improving the Local Environment | | Community Safety |
| Improving the Local Environment | Improve the road network, influence improvements in public transport and encourage active travel | Roads, Transport, Traffic and Parking |

Making it Happen

This report summarises the findings of the Household Survey carried out in Blantyre during August 2018 – January 2019 and the Voting Day which allowed the local community to review the results of the survey, make further comment on community issues and vote on which priorities were most important to them. The survey was carried out as part of the Coalfields Community Futures participatory process that will help to inform the preparation of the Blantyre 5 year Community Action Plan.

The Community Action Plan contains

- A summary of the Blantyre community profile
- Our main likes and dislikes expressed in the community survey.
- Our Vision Statement for Blantyre.
- The main themes and priorities for taking action.
- The Participatory Budget projects that are helping kick start the action plan.
- Making the links between the Blantyre Community Action Plan outcomes and those of South Lanarkshire Community Plan.
- Information on how to get involved or just be kept informed.

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

The Participatory Budget from Coalfields Regeneration Trust was £20,000. This is funding which has been used to help take forward local projects which support the key themes found in the action plan.

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



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The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

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