

COWDENBEATH COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



2019-2024



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Introduction

The Coalfields 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 where you are, in whatever way you can. If everyone did something positive for their community every day, then what a difference that would make!

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust's (CRT) overarching priority is to develop community capacity; everything that 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 are able to fulfil their potential.

Coalfields Community Futures

The Coalfields Community Futures Programme is an approach to local community planning and sustainable community development that aims to encourage active citizenship and build local democracy. It enables communities to devise a community action plan which makes a case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen.

The process builds on the findings of the community action research to identify local needs and priorities, using residents as co-researchers. We work with local residents and groups to develop a common sense of purpose and assist them to produce a deliverable community action plan.

To support the action planning process, the community receives a Participatory Budget which is available to local constituted community or voluntary groups.

This budget enables the community to fund small projects that are identified by the community through the results of the household surveys, stakeholder interviews and the Community Voting Event.

The Big Beath Blether

As a way to further develop our Coalfields Community Futures process we worked in

partnership with the Electoral Reform Society. The process has been developed and built upon by adding in a deliberative democracy forum which is designed by the steering group with support from 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 'Big Beath Blether' event was a series of small group roundtable discussions. The participants comprised of anyone in the community who wanted to attend. The discussion groups were facilitated by ERS. The forum was held in Maxwell Centre, Cowdenbeath on 9th December 2018 and 30 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 there. The information from the deliberations has been used to inform the various propositions and suggest priorities put forward to be included in this Action Plan.

540 Community Household Surveys were returned representing the views of over **1700** residents.

30 people attended the deliberative event (Big Beath Blether).

300 people attended the voting event.

Cowdenbeath Community Action Plan

The plan summarises community views and information about:

- Our community now
- Our shared Vision for Cowdenbeath
- Priority themes and actions
- Making the links to Community Planning

The Steering Group brought together representatives from a number of local community organisations.

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

Our community now

Background

This Profile has been produced to give an insight into Cowdenbeath. It is part of a wider Community Futures process being delivered by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust across Scotland's coalfield communities to assist them to reflect on what is good, what could be improved and how to go forward.

Location

Cowdenbeath is situated north-east of Dunfermline and north west of the Scottish capital, Edinburgh. The town grew up around the extensive coalfields of the area and became a Police Burgh in 1890. Cowdenbeath is a busy hub town for the wider Cowdenbeath area, a local authority administrative area in West Fife, Scotland. The town gives access to countryside areas including woodlands and marshes.

Population

The total population of Cowdenbeath is just over 14,000 with a working population of over 6,000.

Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2016

Housing

Cowdenbeath has a wide range of detached, semi-detached, terraced housing and flats. As at 2018, 64.58% of housing is owner occupied with 22.3% being council/housing association tenants and 10.2% being rented privately and the remaining 2.92% being unspecified.

Source: Fife Tenure Dataset

The number of households in Cowdenbeath is around 5500. There has been a major new development in recent years at Leuchatsbeath, with more housing planned for the future.

Health & Care

In the town, there is one medical practice, one clinic, two dental surgeries, two opticians and several pharmacies.

There is also a care home, a nursing home and two sheltered housing complexes. Fife Council and private providers also offer care in the community to elderly and vulnerable residents who require it.

The nearest minor injuries department and Out of Hours' Doctors Service are based at Queen Margaret Hospital in Dunfermline with the nearest A&E department and maternity services based at the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy.

Local Economy, Shops and Services

Cowdenbeath High Street has over 115 shops and businesses such as supermarkets, butchers, bakers, clothing and shoes, homewares, gift shops, card shops, jewellers and clock repair, florists, shoe repairs, key cutting, carpets and rugs, hairdressers, barbers, beauticians, nail bars, tanning salons, charity shops, betting shops, solicitors, estate agents and letting agencies, kilt hire, party/event supply and hire, tattoo artists, computer repairs, mobile phone repairs, fishing tackle, dog grooming and vaping shop. There is also two banks, an independent travel agent, funeral parlour, a post office, library, bingo hall, petrol station, car sales, car repairs, car wash, Post Office depot, council services at Brunton House, Citizen's Advice and Rights Fife, Home-Start (family support charity), a laundry, payroll services, veterinary clinics, a gym, an MSP constituency office, a selection of sit in and take away food outlets, a few restaurants and a number of pubs some of which serve meals during the day and evening.

Across the town, there is a range of other businesses and services including: guest houses, a credit union (Kingdom Bank operating from the Maxwell Centre), another petrol station, convenience stores, a Co-Op, a factory outlet store, numerous MOT and car repair garages and several industrial estates which house a number of local businesses. There is also an outdoor market in the town every Thursday.

There is an award winning children's play centre on the edge of the town and a new retail development under construction at the north end of the High Street, which is due to open Autumn 2019.

There is also a number of religious organisations within the town.

Mossmorran Petrochemical facilities operated by Shell (Fife NGL) and ExxonMobil (Fife Ethylene Plant) are based south east of the town.

Education and Childcare

There are three primary schools in the town all with nursery provision and one high school with a catchment from the wider Cowdenbeath area. St Columba's Roman Catholic High School in Dunfermline also educates children from Cowdenbeath. There is after school provision at Lumphinnans Primary School which provides services for children from Cowdenbeath. There are a number of childminders together with numerous parent and toddlers' groups hosted at a variety of venues across the town.

Community Activities and Facilities

There is a wide range of facilities in Cowdenbeath which include Beath High School Community Use and the Maxwell Centre both of which have a range of community learning opportunities and youth clubs, and Cowdenbeath Leisure Centre (which has a Swimming Pool). There is also a skate park, astro turf facilities, bowling clubs and a golf course.

Cowdenbeath Football Club, also known as the Blue Brazil play at Central Park located in the heart of the Town, just off the High Street. Formed in 1881, Blue Brazil have played there since 1917. Central Park is also home to Cowdenbeath Racewall which attracts stock car drivers and fans from all over Scotland. Races take place every Saturday night from March to November. Central Park is also home to Kingdom Bike Night which host monthly bike nights from April to September. The Thursday market is also held on the site.

Cowdenbeath have a number of voluntary groups including the Community Council, Civic Week Committee (they organise an annual programme of affordable events for all ages including the children's' gala and Christmas events) and the Environment Group. There are also juvenile football clubs, walking groups, running club, craft groups (including knitting), cookery, social groups including lunch clubs and coffee mornings, the horticultural society, scouts, guides, cadets, martial arts eg judo, karate etc and dance groups. The town also has a Probus Club, Rotary Club and Masonic Lodge who host regular meetings locally for their members.

Environment

The town is surrounded by open and green spaces such as Dalbeath Marsh (Site of Scientific Interest), the Millennium Garden, the Public Park, Cowdenbeath and Leuchatsbeath community woodlands, Scottish Water wetlands and the Line (a significant greenspace in the heart of the town).

As part of the High Street redevelopment, more improvements have been made such as the Shutter Art project, the installation of new street furniture and pavements and a heritage garden at Brunton Square. The Environment Group and their volunteers, in partnership with Fife Council Parks and Open Spaces work to maintain the tubs, planters and floral enhancements. They also work together on the "Beautiful Fife" campaign and in 2018 Cowdenbeath achieved a Silver Gilt award.

There are two windfarms – Mossmorran and Little Raith - situated on the edge of the town. An outcome from the windfarms, is two community funds made available to local groups and organisations in the town.

Cowdenbeath is also home to a large recycling centre on the Cuddyhouse Road operated by Fife Council. This recycling centre is well used by the residents of the town and the many nearby villages and towns.

Traffic & Transport

The town is conveniently situated on the A92 dual carriageway and approximately two miles from the M90 motorway and is well connected by public transport. There are regular buses travelling to Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Glenrothes, Kelty, Ballingry and many other communities along the way, as well as routes that go via the Queen Margaret Hospital in Dunfermline and the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. The X54 bus to Dundee also stops in the town. There is a major park and ride hub at Halbeath (2 miles from Cowdenbeath) with bus connections to most parts of Scotland, including Inverness, Aberdeen and Glasgow.

Cowdenbeath has its own train station and there are regular trains travelling on the Fife Circle with two trains per hour travelling to Edinburgh, with other train connections north to Dundee and Perth less frequently. Due to the location of the station (it sits high above the High Street) access is limited, particularly to people with mobility issues.

The town has around 500 free parking spaces conveniently located near the High Street.

There are several taxi companies who have offices in the town operating a number of licenced taxis between them. There are also a number of independent licenced taxi drivers who operate from the High Street.



A shared vision for our community

COWDEN**BEATH**

To continue to grow as a community where all ages can live in harmony and enjoy all aspects of the town, whether that is the green area, the garden trail, the leisure centre or the public park

Youth involvement in the development of safe, social and recreational spaces open to all young people

Good roads and cycle paths to encourage people to get outside and enjoy living in the town

A thriving High Street, no empty shops and a facility for young entrepreneurs to try out their ideas

A vibrant town centre and public park that people would want to visit and come from further away to spend their money and enjoy the experience

More improvements to public spaces which will help the town feel better and more positive about the environment

Well maintained traffic flow, parking and planning to develop access to amenities and local economy

To make the town a more friendly place with affordable housing and more investment in schools and local infrastructure

For everyone to be proud of their town



The results from the community survey show that the people of Cowdenbeath like;

30% community facilities

25% community activities

23% community spirit

13% services

11% environment

10% roads and transport



Quotes taken from the likes

'I like all the improvements over the last few years. It's a lot nicer to go down the High Street as a good variety of shops.'

'Good public transport links.'

'Lovely green spaces for all ages to enjoy.'

'Civic week committee, shop fronts, mural at the side of Brunton House and new mono blocking.'

'It's an affordable and nice place to live, close to Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and only a 15 minute drive from the Queensferry Crossing.'

'I like the new skate park as it keeps people out of trouble. Lots of sport facilities and nice pool area. There is a good gym facility.'



The results from the community survey show that the people of Cowdenbeath dislike;

21% community activities / facilities

17% roads and transport

16% dog fouling / litter

15% anti-social behavior

15% built natural environment

10% services

3% community spirit



Quotes taken from the dislikes

'parks as they are usually full of broken glass bottles and also dogs dirt lying on the footpaths.'

'lack of useable parkland for kids to play.'

'potholes on the road.'

'not enough shops.'

'lack of traffic wardens especially on the high street. Drivers parking on pavements and dangerously on street corners. My biggest issue is the lack of disabled spaces on the High Street.'

'derelict buildings on High Street.'

'the junction at Morrison's is a problem.'

'lack of opportunities for older people to help combat social isolation and loneliness.'



From our kid's perspective

Pupils from Foulford Primary School, Cowdenbeath Primary School and St Bride's Primary School made their contribution to the Cowdenbeath Action Plan by completing their own questionnaire which asked pupils;

- What things do you like to do?
- What hobbies do you have?
- What do you like about living in Cowdenbeath?
- What do you dislike about living in Cowdenbeath?
- What would you like to see happening in the future?

216 pupils took part and the results give an insight to the thoughts and feelings of our young residents.

Anti-social behaviour and littering are top of the young people's dislikes with friends and skate park top of their likes.

Looking to the future the three most important issues for our young people are:

- Improving play facilities
- Improving local environment
- Less anti-social behaviour from all ages

Pictures are of the winning drawings from the local Primary Schools.

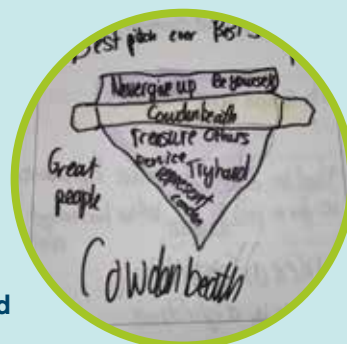
Thank you to all the children who took part. Your drawings were all fantastic and very inspirational.



Cerys McHale
- P5 St Bride's



Lacey Allan -
P5 St Bride's



Emma Stuart
- P6B Foulford
Primary



**Mackenzie
Moffat - P6/7
Cowdenbeath
Primary**



**McKenzie
Easton -
Foulford
Primary P7B**



**Christina
Stobbs - P6/7
Cowdenbeath
Primary**

Theme 1: High Street

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

Explore potential use of empty and derelict buildings

- In partnership with others, develop a range of proposals for empty buildings.
- Explore with Fife Council options for the historic Town House.
- Re-visit the potential for a development trust.
- Young people want “cool” places – explore options with young people and Fife Council.

Attract new businesses to the town

- Work with Business Gateway and Fife Council to look at ways of encouraging small businesses and individuals to consider the High Street to establish/locate their retail/service/manufacturing business.
- Explore the feasibility of setting up a Trader's/ Business Group.

Continue to Improve the character of the High Street/Promote the “COWDENBEATH” branding

- Continue to explore and seek funding for a range of further improvements eg signage.
- Explore the opportunities for more events in new square to build on the existing eg music events, pop up markets etc.
- Explore the option of “dog-friendly” businesses.
- Work with Fife Council and business/property owners to ensure good maintenance and tidy appearance on High Street.
- Diversify offer and promote facilities eg use of toilets, free water, inclusivity eg disabled/child friendly.

Improve lighting on the High Street

- Explore with Fife Council how to improve the street lighting.

Increase number of cafés and restaurants open in the evenings

- Share information locally regarding those businesses who already operate in the evenings.
- Explore with existing businesses the potential to trial later opening hours.
- Explore the possibility of a “café culture” in the town.

Improve information/communication regarding what the Town has to offer

- Promote current Facebook pages.
- Look to locate information boards on the High Street and elsewhere in Town.
- Explore how to promote Cowdenbeath externally e.g. diversity of businesses, free parking, leisure and other facilities.
- Improved signage within the town.
- Improved signage outside of the Town including on A92.
- Promote “digital champion” volunteering opportunity for new “Love Cowdenbeath” website.

Potential Partners

Scottish Government, BEAR, Fife Council, Business Gateway, local business community, property owners, Community Council.



Theme 2: Local Roads and Traffic

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

Address potholes around the town centre

- Work with Fife Council to identify areas that need repaired..
- Promote "Hotline" number to enable public to report areas of concern.

Better junction on Bridge Street at Morrison's

- Continue to work with Fife Council and other partners to improve access.

Speeding drivers

- Engage public to identify areas of concern.
- Work with Fife Council and Police Scotland to undertake an audit of problem areas / areas of concern and identify potential solutions.
- Undertake community "speedwatch" campaigns in areas of concern.

Taxi rank location on High Street

- Work with Fife Council and licenced taxi drivers to ensure safe and fair use of the High Street.
- Continue dialogue with all users of the high street until the review of the location in November 2019.

Illegal and dangerous parking

- Liaise with Fife Council Parking Enforcers and Police Scotland to encourage better enforcement.
- Encourage public to report inconsiderate drivers.

Potential Partners

Fife Council, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, Sustrans, Scottish Government, Community Council, local transport operators such as taxi operators.



Theme 3: Community Facilities and Activities

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

Improve and promote access to leisure and facilities

- Work with a variety of partners to identify ways of improving access, particularly for those families and individuals living on the lowest incomes.
- Identify and promote free and costed activities locally.
- Work with schools to promote existing opportunities.
- Use social media platforms and new "Love Cowdenbeath" website to promote information on activities and facilities that already exist.
- Work with Fife Council, schools and other youth organisations to explore ways of encouraging more young people to participate in organised activities.
- Work with Fife Council's Community Learning & Development Section, Fife Sports & Leisure Trust, schools and other youth organisations to ensure all community facilities, including their opening times, reflect the needs of young people.

Increase range of activities and facilities for all ages

- Local groups and organisations to explore how they can promote their services, publicise for volunteers, fundraise etc.
- Undertake feasibility study with a view to establishing a "men's shed" in Cowdenbeath.
- Utilise social media to engage more young people in developing activities for their age group.
- Explore viability of new activities exclusively for 14-18 year age group.
- Work with Cowdenbeath Youth organisations to enable young people to identify and plan for a wide range of interests, including for "musicians, gamers, writers, readers, artists and thinkers."

More support required for people suffering isolation, mental health issues etc

- Work with a range of partners to identify potential gaps in services for residents and seek to establish relevant initiatives and activities e.g. a "lonely campaign", men's sheds, tea dances, community gardening club, community lunch club, etc.

GP surgery is over capacity and use of this needs to be explored and addressed

- Roundtable discussions with GP Practice, local pharmacies, politicians, Fife Council, NHS Fife, Active Fife and others to seek solutions to current issues, plan some local self-care initiatives and plan for future sustainability of services.

School catchment areas require to be reviewed

- Roundtable discussions with Fife Council Education Service, Head Teachers and local politicians to explore solutions to current issues and to plan for future sustainability.

Parks and greenspace need regular maintenance and further enhancements

- Work with Fife Council and Greenspace Scotland.
- Establish a plan of work required.
- Seek funding to establish walking and cycling routes and to develop/enhance facilities to meet public needs.

Potential Partners

Fife Council's Community Learning & Development Section, Fife Council Parks and Open Spaces, Greenspace Scotland, Paths4All, NHS, schools, politicians, youth organisations e.g. CACA, Cowdenbeath YouthBank, community organisations e.g. Community Council, local church organisations, Cowdenbeath Football Club etc.



Theme 4: Civic Pride

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

Litter, broken glass and dog fouling

- Re-evaluate location of bins available and assess number required across the town after mapping key dog walking routes.
- "Scoop Yer Poop"/"Dog Poo Detectives" dog fouling awareness campaign to be designed and delivered with community.
- Promote where to pick up free poop bags.
- Explore the potential for a community clean-up campaign – draw up priority list.
- Initiate a "Take a Pride in Cowdenbeath" campaign, promoting individual pride.

Involve more residents in improving the town and having more pride in their town and built environment

- Promote volunteering to the wider community via social media and a community event.
- Encourage residents to take part in clean-ups, establish community gardens.
- Survey the community on what other initiatives they would like to see and what ones they would like to get involved in.

Continue to improve community safety and wellbeing

- Work with community police to discuss community issues such as drug and alcohol abuse, vandalism, anti-social behavior and crime in general.
- Promote information on how to report incidents.
- Explore feasibility of setting up neighbourhood watch schemes.
- Review need for further CCTV.
- Promote the graffiti hotline.
- Encourage community support and involvement in community safety initiatives such as "community speedwatch", the "Ask for Angela Programme", "Best Bar None" and "I am Me."

Potential Partners

Fife in Bloom; Keep Scotland Beautiful; Zero Waste Scotland; Community Payback Team; Environment Group; Environmental Health; Dog Wardens; Schools; NHS Fife; Police Scotland; Safer Communities; Fife Council Parks and Open Spaces.



Early actions funded through Participatory Budget

Oliver's Army Assistance Dogs

- Assistance Training Project

Maxwell Centre Advisory Group

- Graffiti Boards

Families Affected by Autism

- The FABA Plan 2019

Cowdenbeath Civic Week

- Event Bank

Cowdenbeath Community Council

- Regeneration & Mural Project
- Wooden Sculpture Nature Trail
- Men's Shed
- Communications Project

Love 2 Dance

- New Equipment

The Clearing

- Community Action Team

The Salvation Army Cowdenbeath

- Equipment for community sessions

Broad Street Bowling Club

- New Equipment

Making the links to Fife Council community plan

Plan For Fife 2017-2027	Cowdenbeath Community Futures Action Plan 2019-2024
Priority Themes	Key Themes
<p>Opportunities for all Thriving places Inclusive growth and jobs Community led services</p>	<p>Community Facilities & Activities High Street, Local Roads & Traffic Civic Pride</p>



Making it Happen

This report summarises the findings of the Community Views Survey carried out in Cowdenbeath 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 helped to inform the preparation of the Cowdenbeath 5 year Community Action Plan.

The Community Action Plan contains

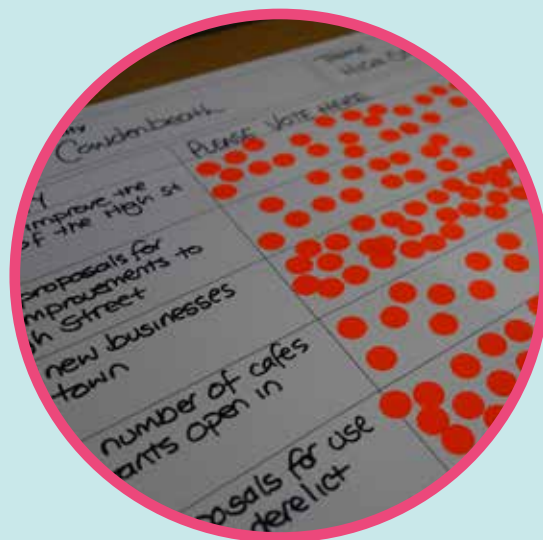
- A summary of the Cowdenbeath Community Profile.
- Our main likes and dislikes expressed in the community survey.
- Our Vision Statement for Cowdenbeath
- The main themes and priorities for taking action.
- The Participatory Budget projects that are helping kick start the action plan.
- Making the links between the Cowdenbeath Community Action Plan Key Themes and those of the Plan for Fife.

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 events a great success. Thanks go to members of the community who contributed the images in this Action Plan.

The Participatory Budget from Coalfields Regeneration Trust was £20,000. Fife Council contributed an additional £10,000. 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 Email: cowdenbeathcc@gmail.com



The Pit Piece Poem

The Pit Piece

When I wiz just a wee bit lad
On the stairs ad sit
Waitin fur ma tired dad
Tae come hame fae the pit

He'd tak a bag doon aff his back
Ad think its caud a haversack
He'd open up his double tin
An let me see jist whut wiz in

Inside a piece, 'o' whut a gift
It wisnae biled ham
Uneaten fae his hard earned shift
Delicious cheese 'n' jam

The jam wiz sooked up in the bread
And turned the cheese the colour red
'O' whut a treat am gone tae hae
I've waited here fur half a day

A thick end slice wi jam soaked thru
Am shair it made me fatter
The mair ah think about it noo
It maks ma mooth aw watter

Ah widnae thank ye fur the lamb
Corned beef or thick cut spam
But another piece ah could eat wi ease
Is a double slice o jam wi cheese

George Hunter

February 2014



COALFIELDS
COMMUNITY
FUTURES

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The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

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