



COALFIELDS
COMMUNITY
FUTURES

Community Action Plan 2015 - 2020



MACMERRY & GLADSMUIR

Foreword

Macmerry was first mentioned as the hamlet of MaK.Mery in the early 17th Century. Over the following 330 odd years the name of Macmerry has seen several derivations. It has been known as Macmerry, Macmery, McMerry, McMirrie Macmirrie and in its iron smelting days as 'The Blast', a nickname that remains today. Mining has taken place around Macmerry since the 14th Century. The coal was of good quality and continued to be mined until the 20th Century. Macmerry was established as a mining village by the 19th century. The two main coal seams generated various pits including the Engine, the Kennedy, the Merryfield, the Mountfair, the Brierbush, the Peewit, the Henmuir and St Germain's. By 1927 all the pits had closed. The poor quality accommodation that existed then is now all gone with the exception of one row of sandstone faced houses. From the 1930's until late into the twentieth century there were several phases of local authority house building and now Macmerry is a substantial village. Recently there is an estate of houses built for private ownership. Local authority built houses are an attractive asset and many of these have been purchased by former tenants.

Gladsmuir is the older of the two settlements. It successfully resisted major development of 500 homes which would have overwhelmed the small village. Historically, typical of an 'estate' village, Gladsmuir featured a schoolhouse, joinery workshop, smiddy and, adjoining the farmhouse, a coaching inn. The smiddy has been demolished and the other buildings are now private houses. Relics of an industrial past are two "Brickfield

Cottages". In the 20th century around 20 local authority houses were built and a number of these are now in private ownership.

For many years the Cooperative grocery store in Macmerry along with the Livingstone's general shop and Post Office were at the center of village life. George E. toured the district with his ironmongery van which was equipped with a tank to dispense paraffin oil, essential when many of the farms had no electricity.

Gladsmuir now has a garage for fuel, car repairs, MOT and well regarded small car sales operation. The joinery business is in new premises behind the original workshop.

Macmerry has a mini-market shop which also houses a Post Office service. There is a market trading greengrocer based here, opening on some days each week to the village. There is a butcher, take away pizza and a garage whose business is with small commercial vehicles.

Villagers feel the lack of a hairdresser, medical practice and ancillary healthcare services that could be accommodated, on an occasional basis, in a community center.

There is good community spirit in Macmerry with a number active groups such as, Keep fit; over 50's; line dancing; country dancing; men's shed; the Rural; Friends of Gladsmuir Church; Bowling Club; Beavers. Gala Week and Christmas lights events. The basketball and 5-a-side football facility in the park is good but little used.



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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 existing processes of 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 receive 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 Open Event.

Projects funded through the Participatory Budget are highlighted under the Actions and Priorities in this document.

112 completed
Community Views
Surveys were received

150 people attended a
Community Open Event

Introduction

Coalfields Regeneration Trust have been working with a committed local steering group to deliver the Coalfields Community Futures programme in Macmerry and Gladsmuir. Made up from representatives of the Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Council, The Gala Committee, the Macmerry Miner's , the Macmerry Men's Shed, Macmerry Bowling Club, the Over 50's and the Macmerry Line Dancing group. The steering group have proved that by working together with a common goal all differences can be overcome and great things can be achieved.

In November 2014 the group came together with the purpose of creating an Action Plan that will focus the efforts of the communities of Macmerry and Gladsmuir over the next 5 years. The process has been in depth, with a community survey being delivered by the steering committee members to 1000 homes with many words of encouragement to people that this is something worth investing time in. The survey was simple, what do you like, what don't you like, what would you like to see happen in your community and what is your vision for the future? The surveys were then collected in and analysed to see what key themes were emerging and what was the vision of the people for the future?

This Action Plan documents what these emerging themes are and identifies priorities for action. This is a mandate for action that has come from the people who live here, and it will be up to the people to work together with agencies and partners to take it forward and make their vision a reality.

Our Community Now

Macmerry is a large village located on the former A1 road now renumbered the A199. It lies within the East Lothian Council area. The majority of the village comprises public housing built by the local authority and the National Coal Board. There is an industrial estate to the east of the town.

Gladsmuir takes a linear form along the north side of the A199 road. Gladsmuir developed as an industrial village associated with the working of coal and fire-clay and with an iron works which operated in the latter half of the 19th century. A Science Park was developed at Elvingston to the north.

Population

The population resident in the area from the last census was 1,113. It is characterised by large retired segments, with the latter growing rapidly and becoming predominantly female as it ages.

Overall from the Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics the population has shown a steady growth rate from just over 600 in 2004 to its current level while the population of working age has gone down slightly over the same period from 61.6% in 2004 to 58.3%.

Housing

There are slightly more 2 and 3 person households and slightly less households with 4, 5 and 6 people in residence. This reflects the ageing population profile and would suggest there is an appropriate fit between population and household.



The public rented sector is more than twice that of Scotland as a whole with private rented and ownership being less.



Health

The general health of the population in the area is better than Scotland as a whole.

Similarly the percentage of people with limiting long term illness is the same as for Scotland. The most striking difference is in the percentage of carers who are above pensionable age. Macmerry and Gladsmuir has almost 10% more than Scotland as a whole.

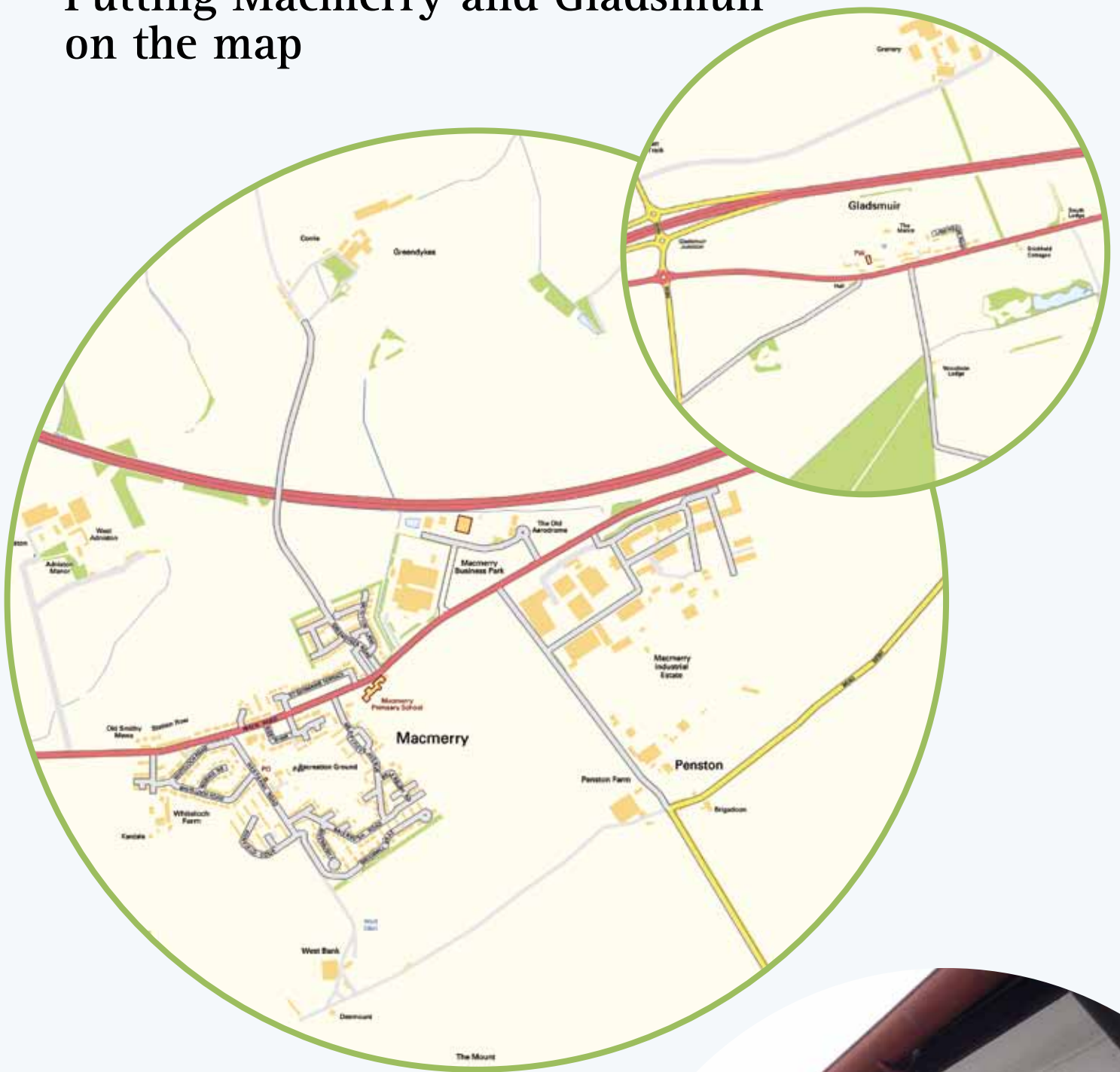
Employment and the Economy

Overall more people are economically active than inactive. The biggest difference between Macmerry and Gladsmuir and the rest of Scotland is the increased number of people who are economically active but retired. Youth unemployment is running slightly above the national figure. This above the national unemployment rate is mirrored in the aged 50+.

The profile of employment types largely follows the national profile and also reflects the area's past industry, no fishing and still a % of people employed in mining and quarrying. The 2 main differences and the larger % of people than Scotland involved in construction and much fewer engaged in education.

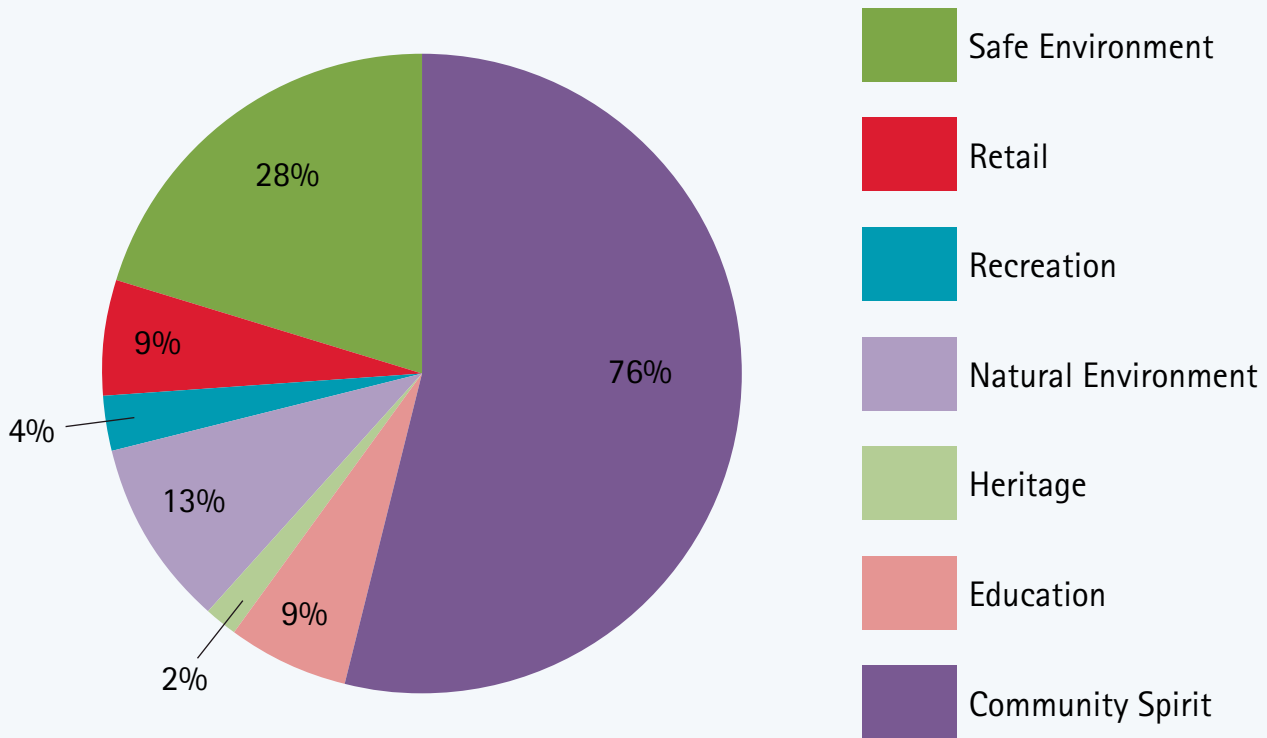
In terms of occupational groups there are fewer managers and more skilled trades, process and plant and machine operatives. The predominate method of travel to work is car.

Putting Macmerry and Gladsmuir on the map



Our Community Likes

"I like everything about Macmerry"



"easy access to town or countryside"

"community spirit which is created in many ways but particularly with the Gala and the facilities available at the Miners Club"



"Friendly"

"friendly place with lovely walks and countryside to enjoy"

"A united community, very close. I have lived here all my life and couldn't see myself living anywhere else."



"I like the village, it is a pleasant village, always someone to have a chat with if you are out for a walk"

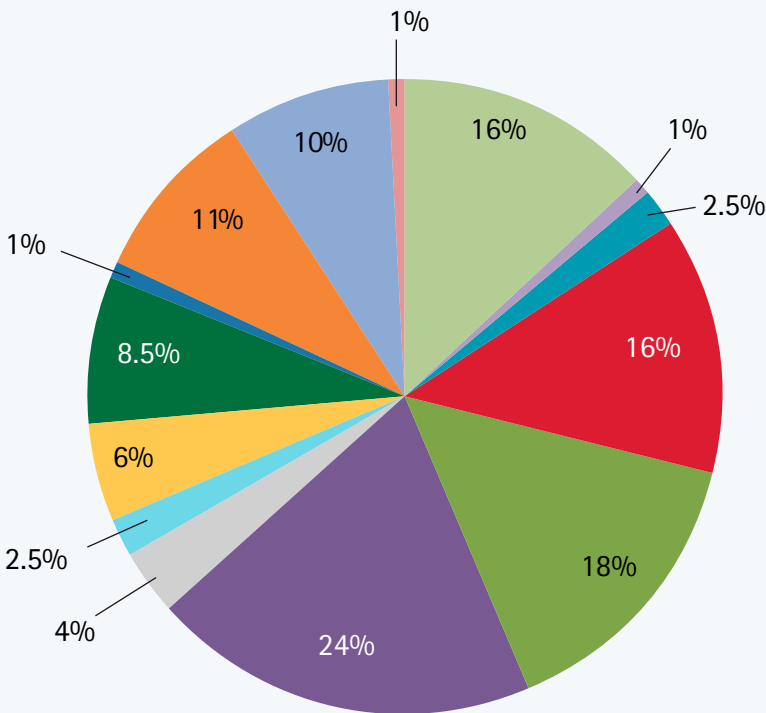


"mostly friendly and helpful people"

"I feel pretty safe here, the increases in a few more shops has been positive. Its generally quiet and safe for children."

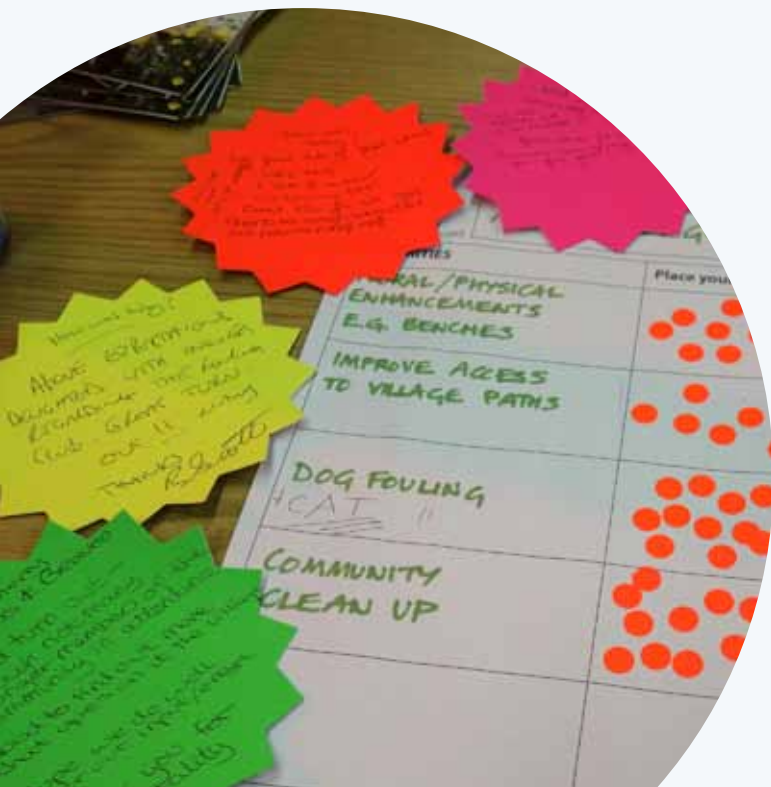


Our Community Dislikes



- Vandalism
- Unsafe School Crossing
- Speeding
- Road Condition
- Poor Communication
- New Housing
- Litter
- Lack of Shops
- Lack of Jobs
- Lack of Community Spirit
- Lack of Activites
- Lack of Floral Enhancement
- Inadequate Bus Service
- Dog Fouling

"Both villages can feel isolated with few facilities and little social contact."





"The built environment could be brighter and more attractively presented."

"Irresponsible dog walkers"

"Speeding motor vehicles through village"

"Inconsiderate parking at the school"

"There is no satisfactory social centre, daytime or evening."

"Not a lot of facilities. Often difficult to find out what's happening or available in the village"

"We feel the village has changed over the past 5 years since new housing has been erected and there is not much going on in the community anymore. Also living on the outskirts of the village we do not receive any correspondence on what is happening in the village. This is the first time we have been involved in anything to do with the village."





Macmerry and Gladsmuir Our Vision for the Future

Our Community thrives on its community spirit. We will continue to encourage all residents, local groups and businesses alike to work together to create a Sustainable, Vibrant, Safe, Caring and Clean environment for all who live and visit the area. Continuing to work together to inspire and support new ideas from all people of all ages, we will encourage local people to setup and participate in new activities. We will continue to build a strong volunteer base that cares for and respects its community members.

The local environment will be welcoming and safe, offering well mapped out walks and cycle paths. We will continue to work on reducing dog fouling, fly tipping and littering by encouraging individual responsibility and action.

Our local community hub will be a popular centre for people to meet and interact. We will work together and communicate effectively keeping a community calendar of events to encourage participation and involvement by the whole community.



Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 1: Village Environment

Summary: We would like to see the local villages brightened up and looking attractive using floral enhancements with future plans to establish a horticultural group to help encourage local people to grow their own flowers as well as their own fruit and vegetables.

There are a lot of interesting walks, some of which need improving so we plan to map where the repairs are needed and work with other agencies to get the paths fit for purpose. We also want to create a community map encouraging people to get out and enjoy the local walks and village environment. There is also work to be done to improve the village environment by putting measures in place to address dog fouling, litter and fly tipping.

Floral and Physical Enhancements

- Working together with East Lothian Council and Primary School to continue developing local green initiatives.
- Encourage the establishment of a local horticultural group
- Investigate options for the creation of a community growing space.



Improve Access to village paths

- Create a community walking map highlighting best routes and community assets
- Carry out mapping exercise to identify areas where path improvements are needed.

Action to reduce dog fouling, fly tipping and litter throughout the area

- Work with East Lothian Council to make sure there is an effective response time to dealing with the dumping of rubbish and litter.
- Identify need for more litter bins and their maintenance and work with East Lothian Council to ensure needs are met.
- Organise regular litter picks on an area by area basis involving local volunteers including uniformed groups.
- Link up with community wardens on 08456018518 to log complaints.

Key Partners:

East Lothian Council
Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Council
Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Futures Steering Group
Macmerry Primary
East Lothian Area Partnership.

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 2: Local Facilities

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

We are keen to support our local retailers and small businesses and will work with them to see how we can promote "localism", encouraging people to spend locally to help create a more sustainable and resilient community. We recognise the need for good communication between local organisations, groups, agencies and the wider community so we plan to create a newsletter, put up a noticeboard and use Facebook to do this.

We want to make the most of our indoor spaces and outdoor places and have plans to work with others to achieve this.

Better Shopping Experience

- Bring local traders together to see how they can work together to improve the shopping experience for local people.

Better access to local information: What's On?

- A newsletter, a Facebook Page and a community notice board will be used to raise awareness of what's happening locally.

Improvements to local community buildings

- Macmerry Miners Club will create a community café to enable families and friends to meet together.
- Lobby and work together with East Lothian Council for better access to the local village hall and a fair charging policy to help encourage more local groups to use it.
- Upgrade Bowling Club and make fully accessible.

Improvements to local green space

- Carry out a local community mapping exercise to highlight what parks already exist, what they offer in terms of interest and activity and identify improvements.

A new community centre

- Work toward having a new community centre built that could include community health facilities.

Key Partners: East Lothian Council, Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Council, Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Futures Steering Group, East Lothian Area Partnership.

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 3: Local Activities

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

We need to develop our community activities and events for all ages. We will improve communications so that people are aware of what is already happening locally and work with others to develop new activities that match the needs of local people.

More Activities for young people

- Identify what young people would like to do through local community engagement and work with local voluntary groups and East Lothian Council Community Learning and Development to create activities to meet the needs of local young people.

More Activities for older people

- Identify what older people would like to do through local community engagement and work with local voluntary groups and East Lothian Council Community Learning and Development to create activities to meet the needs of local older people.

Community Family Fun events

- Create a community calendar of existing community events and promote these locally.
- Continue to organize and develop the great tradition that is the Macmerry and District Gala celebrations.
- Establish a Community Christmas Celebration event.
- Create an annual community group gathering to celebrate all the local volunteering activity.
- Work with East Lothian Council Community Learning and Development team to create opportunities for families and toddlers.

Cultural and Industrial Heritage

- Set up a working group to investigate how best to recognize our cultural and industrial heritage and develop a project around this.



Key Partners: East Lothian Council, Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Council, Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Futures Steering Group, East Lothian Area Partnership.

Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

THEME 4: Roads, Transport and Services

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

We need to work closely with the East Lothian Area Partnership to help alleviate the issues relating to poor road conditions and traffic travelling too fast through the village. We want to promote cycling and launch a road safety initiative to get more people enjoying a safer, greener style of travel. Key to this is a good public transport service and we will continue to work to achieve this.

Improve Bus Services

- Continue to lobby for improved local bus services to Musselburgh, Dunbar, Edinburgh, the Royal Infirmary and the Western Infirmary. Services to include the outlying villages.

Improve poor condition of the roads, pavements and verges.

- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify pot holes and road repair sites. Liaise with East Lothian Council to have priority repairs made.
- Identify where drop kerbs need to be improved or created for wheelchair users.

Traffic calming

- Traffic calming needed prior to coming into the village, along the main Road, at the bad bend at school and on the road to Greendykes Farm. Work with East Lothian Council Roads department on taking forward these priorities. Work together on the feasibility of traffic lights at the school instead of a manned crossing patrol.
- Launch a road safety initiative at the school

Better provision to encourage cycling.

- Work with East Lothian Council to look at creating sufficient bike sheds in the school and elsewhere to encourage more people to use their bicycles.
- Create links to the local core path network.

Key Partners: East Lothian Council, Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Council, Macmerry and Gladsmuir Community Futures Steering Group, East Lothian Area Partnership.



Early actions identified by the Community, and supported by funding from Coalfields Regeneration Trust

Community Newsletter, Macmerry Hub, 1st Macmerry Cubs and Beavers, Line Dancing, Youth Bowls, Macmerry Gala, Over 50's Club and Macmerry Primary School.



Links to Community Planning

The East Lothian Partnership has set out its own long-term goal in their Statement of Intent.

"We will work in partnership to build an East Lothian where everyone has the opportunity to lead a fulfilling life and which contributes to a fair and sustainable future".

There are three strategic objectives through which it aims to meet its long-term goal. We see the Themes and Priorities that have emerged from our Macmerry & Gladsmuir Community Action Plan fitting comfortably within these strategic objectives and will actively work together with partners to successfully achieve our joint objectives.

East Lothian Partnership
Three strategic objectives:

The Macmerry and Gladsmuir
Community Action Plan Themes & Priorities

1. Sustainable Economy

Local Facilities:

- Better shopping experience
- Better access to local information: What's on?
- Improvements to local community buildings
- Improvements to local greenspace
- A new Community Centre

2. Resilient People

Local Activities:

- More activities for young people
- More activities for older people
- Community Family Fun Events
- Cultural and Industrial Heritage

3. Safe and Vibrant Communities

Village Environment:

- Floral and Physical Enhancements
- Improve access to village paths
- Action to reduce dog fouling, fly tipping and litter



Roads, Transport and Services:

- Improve Bus services
- Improve condition of roads, pavements and verges
- Traffic calming
- Better provision to encourage cycling

If you would like further information on the Action Plan please contact The Coalfields Regeneration Trust on 01259 272127



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead



the coalfields
regeneration trust

