Aberfoyle
Community Life Plan 2022

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

We the Community of Aberfoyle have come together and produced this Life Plan in order to set out:

- Those **Important Things** (see 1.1) we hold in common to be vital to the lived experience of our Community, and which we aspire to improve and safeguard for future generations.
- Our **Core Principles** (1.2), **Themes** (2.0) and **Guidelines** (3.0) for local development and action over the next 5-10 years, which we have agreed will ensure our Community improves as a vibrant, cohesive, functioning and sustainable Place to live and work.

Our Community Life Plan has been created in a process involving virtual conferencing, online and postal surveys, and two face-to-face events at the Memorial Hall between July 2020 and December 2021 (see Appendix F). In total, these involved the participation of 60%+ of all residents in Aberfoyle ward. The rest of this introduction sets out the fundaments of what we all agreed.

In 1812 Patrick Graham described, *"the valley of Aberfoyle, with its precipitous rock, its winding river, its meadows, and richly wooded knolls, has long been admired by strangers for its singular beauty".* The singular beauty and tranquility of our natural surroundings remains the Important Thing that we collectively value the most about where we live. Our aspiration to protect and improve our precious natural habitats, wildlife and views for posterity is embodied in the first of our four Core Principles.

The Life Plan process has also surfaced our shared pride and value for our local heritage. Aberfoyle is blessed with an embarrassment of riches, which we believe can be undervalued or overlooked by visitors. Many of our local families are very much a part of this history, claiming ancestry in the village which goes back through the decades, and possibly centuries.

Our ward constitutes one of the most geographically-diverse regions in Europe, with the Highland Fault representing a historical divide between clashing continents, and Highland and Lowland cultures and landscapes. In the prehistoric era, Aberfoyle was on the coast, and historical remains from these times include the Clachan Stone Circle, reputedly located in Kirkton woods. In the Dark Ages, Aedan, king of the Pictish kingdom of Dalriada is said to have lived in a fort atop Doon Hill. Around this time, the area began to be known as *"aber poll"* or *"aber phuill"*, meaning the pool at the mouth of the Pow Burn, from which Aberfoyle took its name. Through the Middle Ages, the region area was dominated by large feudal estates, ending with the Duke of Montrose, who constructed the Dukes Pass toll road.

There followed the industrial era, our complex geology fuelling a range of quarries, providing whinstone which built the Primary School, lime for the kilns, and most famously, the slate which roofed Victorian Glasgow. Our slate quarry at one time supported a workers' settlement (of which only the gatehouse still remains) including a school and our first Coop, and in the 1880s it brought the railway to the village. In the c19th, due in large part to Sir Walter Scott immortalising the Trossachs in his works, we became one of the world's first tourist villages, and remain one to this day. Visitors came in their droves on the train, staying at the famous Bailie Nicol Jarvie Hotel and taking one of the many local tours. Later, in the c20th, Aberfoyle laid claim to being the birth of pony-trekking and the

site of Scotland's first motel. While our industry declined, we became the host of the UK's largest commercial forest, which is still important to our life and surroundings.

Another special aspect to our heritage is our unusually rich mythology. In the earliest guidebook for the area, Aberfoyle was termed "the capital of the kingdom of Scotland's fairy folk". The Reverend Kirk researched their 'commonwealth' upon our Faerie Hill, where he was to be found dead in his dressing gown one night after revealing their secrets. In the c21st, the late Louis Stott described the many other magical places nearby in "The Enchantment of the Trossachs", including the Corrie on Ben Venue which hosts the annual goblin parliament, several water monsters, and a number of smaller faerie hills. In the c19th, Patrick Graham speculated the rich folklore might be attributed to the last Druids still hiding out and practicing their magic in the local caves and corries.

Our desire to protect, enrich and celebrate our rich Heritage, is manifest in another of our four Core Principles. We also give further information on this in Appendices A and B.

Moreover, it is this deep history and the Important Things we share as a Community, that provides the roots of this Life Plan. These in turn give rise to those Principles and Themes for Action which can guide our improvements. The metaphor of a tree is a way of thinking about these relationships.

Our Life Plan is our wish to preserve the things we most value and care for, while also working to continue the positive trajectory Aberfoyle has established in recent years. Central to this is becoming more self-sufficient, resilient and sustainable, together addressing issues we have identified weaken the fabric of our Community. Some vulnerabilities have been brought into sharper focus by the COVID-19 pandemic, and emerged from the Life Plan process as the most important and urgent of our priorities overall. We wish to take greater control and have greater say in the decisions that affect our supply of food, energy and heat, our waste management and potentially, our housing and enterprise. All this is embodied in our first Theme for Action and 'Sustainability', the second of our Core Principles.

Our second Theme of Action is an agreement to take greater leadership on addressing local flooding, a chronic and worsening burden that constrains opportunities and constitutes a risk to property and life.

Our third Theme relates to our overdependency on the tourist industry, and of related trends and dynamics which put pressure on our Community, natural environment, and ability to meet our own needs. We need a strategy to manage visitors which aligns better with our values, while seeking ways to diversify our local economy, to provide more stable and higher paid employment. The fourth and last Theme relates to our recognition that we need to take better care of ourselves as a Community. This includes improving our functioning through enabling better communications and services, spaces and events for socialising, shared knowledge of our assets, and opportunities for our young people. To
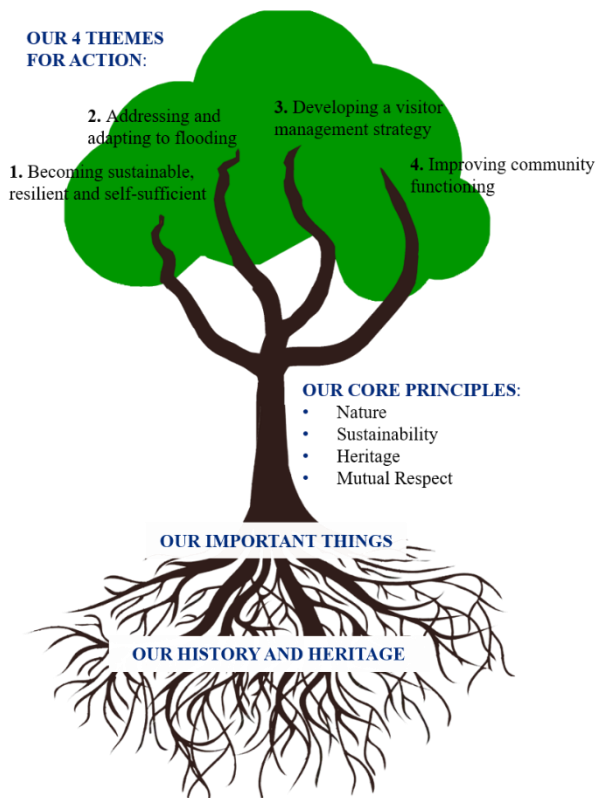
fulfil these aspirations, we recognise the need to collaborate and coexist together effectively, which gave rise to the fourth and last of our Core Principles: Mutual Respect.

The rest of this Life Plan sets all of this out in more detail, providing practical priorities and ideas for improvement over the next 5-10years. It represents our will to have greater say and level of control over the things that affect us and our Community. It demonstrates our love and care for the place we make our home. Our vision and values are clear. We now look forward to putting things into practice and seeing the changes we wish for in our community. Indeed, it is a testament to the strength of our Community that during a time of crisis which shocked most of the world into inertia, we have been able to come together to produce this and are ready to 'hit the ground running'.

The Life Plan is broken down into three sections, wherein all things have been agreed by consent, unless otherwise specified. In the remaining parts of the Introduction, we define those Important Things and 4 Core Principles which provide the foundations of our Life Plan. In Section 2 we describe our aspirations for the next 5-10 years, under 4 Themes for local action and development. In Section 3 we set out some Guidelines for Local Economic and Housing Development arising from these aspirations, which we have agreed can help ensure local development aligns with our Life Plan. Finally, there follows five Appendices, including; a timeline of Local History; three spatial planning maps which specify potential locations for new tourist signage and paths, and our preferred Exclusion and Development Zones; and lastly, details of the methodology used to develop our Life Plan.

1.1 OUR IMPORTANT THINGS

We have agreed by consensus the following Important Things which are an essential underpinning of our lived experience, and the health and wellbeing of this Community where we work and make our homes. We aspire to improve and safeguard them for present and future generations.

Our **Important Things** are:

- **Our Beautiful, Tranquil and Safe Natural Surroundings** (the thing we value the most):
    - Our hills: Craigmore, Limecraig, Ben Venue and views of Ben Lomond.
    - Our forests and trees, particularly the ancient woods such as the Faerie Tree, our bluebell woods, and Balanton, which also includes a rich bog area with rare sedges, sphagnum and spiders, as well as juniper and old crab apple trees.
    - Our lochs and lochans: Lochs Ard and Drunkie, and Lochans Spling, Ghleannain, Eabarach.
    - Our rivers and waterfalls, the Forth, Duchray Water, the Waterfall of the Little Fawn.
    - Our views
    - Our dark skies
    - Our fresh air

- **The abundant Wildlife** living in the area: including red squirrels, pine martins, otters, deer, foxes, badger, hares, ospreys, and spawning salmon and sea trout.

- **The Dukes Pass.** One of Scotland's greatest roads.

- **Our rich History and Heritage** (see Appendix A)
    - One of the most diverse geological landscapes in Europe, including the boundary fault (historical and geological divide) and rocks which span many ages.

- o Being "the capital of the kingdom of Scotland's fairy folk": our folklore, our Faerie Tree, and other enchanted sites described by Louis Stott, the Reverend Kirk.
  - o Our historical buildings and treasures dating back to prehistoric times, including the Clachan Stone Circle, the ancient Manse and Pow Bridges, the Poker Tree, the Old Kirk and much more (see Appendix B).
  - o Our industrial heritage: the slate quarry and village, whinstone, lime, lint, the railway, The Glasgow Water Scheme.
  - o Being "the Gateway to the Trossachs" and playing an important part in the beginnings of the tourist industry, Sir Walter Scott, Rob Roy, pony-trekking, and Scotland's first motel (the Rob Roy Inn).
  - o Our role in commercial forestry in the c20th: the Queen Elizabeth and Loch Ard Forests, the David Marshall Lodge and Braeval Cottages.
  - o Dounans: one of the UK's first outdoor education centres.

- **Our Outdoor Activities** and being one of the best centres for these in Scotland:
  - o Our myriad hiking, cycling and mountain-biking routes, Go Ape, the Dukes Weekender, and opportunities for active travel and adventure.
  - o Our water-based activities, including canoeing, kayaking, paddle-boarding, wild swimming and fishing.
  - o Our unprecedented access to public forests and the land which enables these opportunities.

- **Our Community:**
  - o The feeling that the Village has "turned a corner" and is "on the way up"!
  - o Having the best of all worlds! Feeling wild and remote, and yet being able to access the cities and great local amenities,
  - o Our local amenities, including our garage, post office, bank, pubs, restaurants, cafes, pharmacy, shops and services.
  - o A safe place to live for residents of all ages.
  - o Our community spirit and good people who help each other and volunteer their time on behalf of us all.
  - o Our community places, including The Memorial Hall, Primary School, St Mary's Church, Aberfoyle Parish Church, and the Business Hub.
  - o Our places for Young People: our playparks, the Rabbit Hill bike park and sledging slopes, and the biking trails in the hills and forests.
  - o Our Sculpture Trail.

1.2 OUR CORE PRINCIPLES

Their follows Four Core Principles which provide the foundations of our Life Plan, and should be used as a measure of the suitability and success of any local development (including community proposals and activities):

- **Nature:** Does this development protect, improve or properly consider the beauty, integrity and tranquility of the natural environment, wildlife and landscape we cherish?
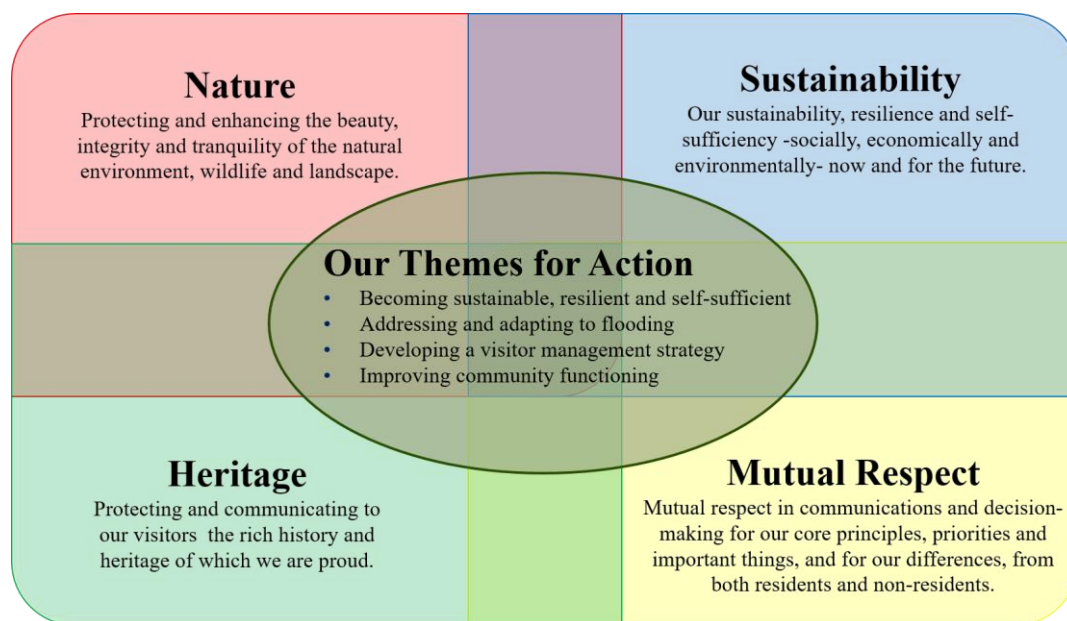
- **Sustainability:** Does this development contribute to the sustainability, resilience and self-sufficiency of our community – socially, economically and environmentally – and our ability to adapt to immediate challenges and future uncertainties?
- **Heritage:** Does this development protect, enhance or communicate to visitors the rich history and heritage of which we are proud?
- **Mutual Respect:** Throughout our developments and decision-making, is there mutual respect for our agreed Principles, Important Things, and for our differing needs, so that we can work together to strengthen our community and capacity to meet our priorities?

2. OUR FOUR THEMES FOR ACTION

Our four Themes for action set out in greater detail our aspirations for improving our community, and are:

(1) Becoming sustainable, resilient and self-sufficient (economically, socially and environmentally)
(2) Addressing and adapting to flooding
(3) Developing a visitor management strategy
(4) Improving community functioning (assets, infrastructure and communications)

The four Themes for action are a distillation of eight priority areas which emerged from the Community Life Planning process (see Appendix F for details). While there was some variation between individuals and groups as to their rank order of priority, none received strong objections. This is held to indicate a strong level of agreement amongst us all about *what* needs to happen, although the *how* in some cases may require further and ongoing discussion.

Nature
Protecting and enhancing the beauty, integrity and tranquility of the natural environment, wildlife and landscape.

Sustainability
Our sustainability, resilience and self-sufficiency -socially, economically and environmentally- now and for the future.

Our Themes for Action
- Becoming sustainable, resilient and self-sufficient
- Addressing and adapting to flooding
- Developing a visitor management strategy
- Improving community functioning

Heritage
Protecting and communicating to our visitors the rich history and heritage of which we are proud.

Mutual Respect
Mutual respect in communications and decision-making for our core principles, priorities and important things, and for our differences, from both residents and non-residents.

Themes (1) and (2) were those which ranked highest for most residents, and were chosen as the main subjects for discussion at the Memorial Hall events in October 2021. Theme (3) was one of the original priorities, which initially had a lower ranking, but residents attending the events agreed unanimously that it had become urgent due to the impacts of increased visitor numbers in 2021.

Theme (4) groups four of the original eight priorities relating to community functioning in rank order, and includes others put forward during the engagement.

The graphic overleaf above illustrates the relationship between our Core Principles and Themes for Action. It demonstrates how our Core Principles guide the activities within each Theme and, in turn, how the activities can strengthen and enhance these Principles in our Community. Our Core Principles also act as a lens, through which we can better understand the kinds of actions we want to see in our Community. As each Principle also relates to the others, we want to demonstrate how each Theme and Principle are intrinsically interdependent. By understanding these relationships and acting in accordance with them, we believe that our Community will grow and prosper in a genuinely integrated and sustainable way that is beneficial to all. We hope that all within our Community and any non-resident will consider the place where we live in this holistic way, before deciding on or carrying out any activities and developments here.

It is equally true that our Themes are intrinsically and systemically related and must not be seen in isolation. The diagram below demonstrates how each Theme depends on and has knock-on effects on every other. We ask that anyone with an interest in carrying out activities with potentially lasting impacts on our Community, familiarise themselves with these relationships. Without an integrated understanding of each Theme, their interrelationships and interdependencies, we believe the necessary social, economic and environmental regeneration needed here will neither happen effectively nor sustainably.
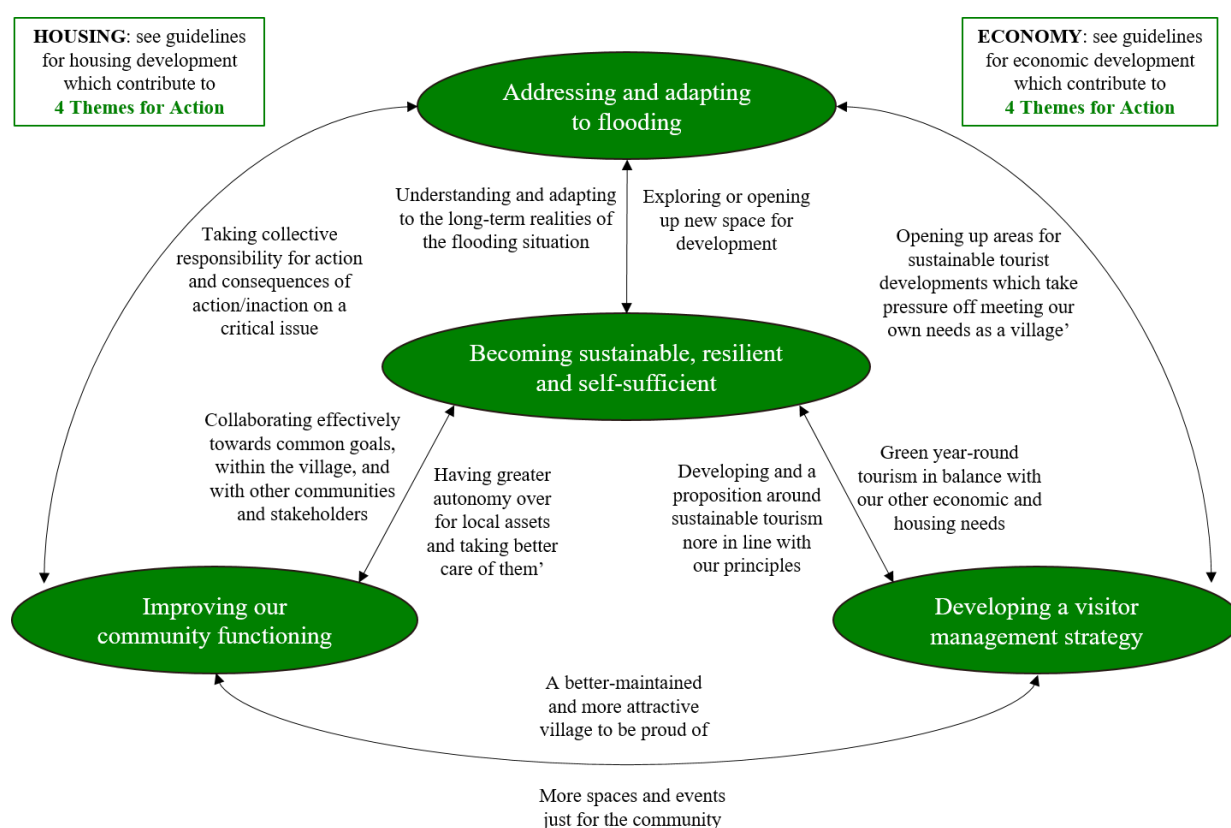
2.1 Becoming Sustainable, Resilient and Self-Sufficient

For our Community, this was the foremost priority which emerged from the Life Plan process, and topic for discussion at the Memorial Hall events. Concerns about our social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, have been sharpened as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. We wish to

take a joined-up approach to addressing various issues, as we see these as being connected, where action on one will have benefits for the others. We have an aspiration to protect and enhance our natural surroundings, the thing we love most about living here. We feel an urgent need to focus on economic diversification, creating employment and entrepreneurial opportunities which are not dependent on the tourist industry, and which ideally leverage latent potential and capacities in the area. To reduce our increasingly fragile and costly dependencies, we must explore ways of developing our own community-sourced food, heat, energy and waste management solutions, which could in themselves promote diversification. We have also identified the need to take action to strengthen our social sustainability, where the provision of care and places to live for our young people and older senior citizens emerged as particular priorities, thereby enabling them to stay in the village for the good of the whole community. Lastly, we have seen our public services declining and have come to realise that none of these vital priorities are likely to progress unless driven by our needs. In short, we recognise the importance of exploring local conditions and spaces for realising sustainable development by the Community, for the Community.

Within this Theme the ACLP currently identifies **6 Priority Areas** for action that we believe will enable our Community to move towards becoming more sustainable, resilient and self-sufficient:

2.1.1 Stewarding the Natural Environment. Exploring opportunities to rewild and restore our natural surroundings, the thing we value most about living here. Some noted areas of the forest are degraded and we are seeing increases in invasive species. It is important we preserve and improve our rich wildlife and natural treasures such as Balanton Woods (see below) and the Faerie Tree. For many there was a desire to gain a better understanding of the local ecology and find ways of making more of this in our tourist proposition in order to promote care for the environment.

2.1.2 Diversifying our Local Economy. While we recognise the importance of the tourist industry to Aberfoyle, we also agree that our overdependence and overemphasis on it in the long-term is eroding the sustainability and viability of our community. Challenges we discussed include the lack of availability and rising cost of local property, the boom and bust and primarily seasonal nature of the tourist industry, and the low wage and skilled nature of much of the available jobs. The lack of good local apprenticeship and career opportunities, and affordable homes and office space, were held to be key reasons for the drain of young people and talent away from Strathard. We also have concerns and see indications that the tourist market may be subject to a law of diminishing returns. In the past, our community was stronger because tourism was balanced by other employment, including farming,

industry and forestry. For these reasons, we see economic diversification as fundamental to reversing our decline and increasing our sustainability in the 5-10 years ahead. We are aware that we need to think creatively in order to realise this. We believe a level of self-sufficiency to be an essential part of this, and which can be driven by us identifying and exploiting economic opportunities for the community, by the community, including land ownership, energy, services, housing and enterprise.

Some **initial ideas** (for discussion) about how we might go about this have included:

- **Providing support and office space for local entrepreneurs or virtual businesses.** Many residents run businesses or work virtually from home, but there is minimal office provision for small or medium sized enterprises to get up and running.

  Together with improvements in local broadband, a small industrial estate or office facility could enable and support the development of a virtual location-independent economy. This may offer opportunities for higher wage and skill jobs locally, including for young people to practice digital skills they have learned at school.

  One idea put forward was that in additional to providing business units, a new industrial estate close by (e.g. at Braeval) might also enable the relocation of the fire station, which in turn, could free up a village centre area or 'square' for retail and housing development.

- **Enabling outlets for local creatives or food producers**, such as via a community-subsidised 'pop-up' shop, market or office space. We believe there may already be latent economic potential locally for such types of businesses, but that they require a suitable outlet in order to start trading: i.e. where local economic enablement, and not profit, is the primary motive.

- **A community-owned distillery or brewery** was suggested as an offering consistent with our Core Principles, which Aberfoyle might host, one which could combine local year-round employment, with a visitor attraction.

2.1.3 Improving Food and Energy Security, and Waste Management. COVID-19 has brought into sharp focus some basic vulnerabilities and dependencies we face as a community, particularly around food and energy security, and managing local waste effectively and sustainably.

Becoming more self-reliant with regard to these was a major topic of survey responses and event discussions. So too was the range of benefits other than sustainability and resilience that this could represent, which included opportunities for social interaction, education, health and wellbeing, and income generation for the community:

- **Food growing.** Our dependency on a small number of suppliers and supply shortages have caused us to reflect seriously on local food security. As such, providing areas for food-growing, allotments or a community farm as a priority was a focus of discussion in both events. Some ideas for locations appear on the map in Appendix E.

- **District Heat.** We recognise there is an imminent risk of fuel poverty in the ward due to rapidly rising costs of oil and gas, and our reliance on these and external suppliers for central heating. New regulations may soon force us to move to sustainable heating solutions at our own cost.

Many consider it to be in the common interest to begin exploring suitable alternative local heating systems which have worked for communities elsewhere, and any associated costs, benefits and challenges. Initial investigations suggest district heating may require a minimum buy-in of 50% of a community to be viable, so it is important that any solution is something upon which we can all agree. There may be subsidies available, as well as opportunities to cooperate with neighbouring communities around such developments. The idea of setting up a "Wood Bank" was also put forward, whereby local fallen timber might be made available for Strathard residents in need.

- **Renewable Energy.** There is a strong desire among many to investigate the potential for local hydro or wind projects to provide us with energy security, lower-cost green electricity, and community income. We welcome the community funding provided by the Bruach Caorainn hydro scheme via the Strathard Development Trust.

  However, research since the events by local anchor organisations suggest this is too risky at this time, as there is little support or subsidies available for community renewables. Nevertheless, our aspiration remains in the case that opportunities manifest in the coming years. In the meantime, some have suggested other routes to explore such as leveraging renewables to power heating solutions (the Memorial Hall already provides a good model of this), public buildings, or superfast EV charge points for delivery drivers, visitors and locals.

- **Waste Management** is a challenge in the village. We think that exploring the potential for local waste management or recycling solutions may be worthwhile. This would save us unnecessary long roundtrips to the recycling centre, and may also present opportunities for dealing with the increasing and unmanageable volume of visitor waste.

2.1.4 Providing lifecycle housing. We have recognised the need for more diverse affordable housing stock. For many years, we have seen young and senior residents having to leave our Community due to the unavailability of (genuinely) affordable or sheltered housing. To be a healthy, vibrant and sustainable Community, all ages must be enabled and supported to live comfortably and happily here, from cradle to grave. The lack of suitable housing alongside employment opportunities (see 2.1.2) for younger residents, risks reinforcing our aging demographic. Similarly, if our senior citizens cannot down-size to a suitable home within the village, we risk isolating them and losing our intergenerational relationships (see also 2.1.5). Our criteria and conditions for "future-proof" housing (see 3.2) stem from the same aspiration.

To make wise decisions on the desirability of new housing developments it is important we have a clear idea of the state of our current stock and demand. We have concerns about the numbers of Air BnB accommodation, second homes and empty houses, and propose research to assess this is in relation to developing an effective Visitor Management Strategy (see 2.3.1). If we do not understand and cannot control the relationship between local development and need, we fear new housing may end up contributing to the problem and not the solution.

2.1.5 Care services for infants and the elderly were also deemed to be an unmet local need, the provision of which would reinforce the Community as a whole. Childcare or nursery services might support young families living in the village, and attract more, while potentially providing local employment.

A care home, sheltered housing or intergenerational facility were also put forward, as well as the Wool Centre being a potential location for this (see Appendix E). This would enable our senior

citizens to stay in their village and downsize, rather than having to move to care facilities elsewhere should they become unable to meet their needs in their own homes.

2.1.6 Establishing space and conditions for community development. The event discussions highlighted both the potential need for land or assets under common ownership to take forward the above priorities, and also multiple significant constraints on the availability or attainment of these.

Both the old Coop and Wool Centre buildings became the focus of many of our ideas for development by the community, for the community (see Appendix E). Consequently, many considered it important to begin exploring seriously our options for and barriers to community-owned land or asset transfers, where starting points included:

- **Evaluating the feasibility of bridging points across the Forth** which could open up areas of commercial forestry as well as other development opportunities.

- **Better understanding land-ownership in Aberfoyle ward**, and Strathard, to identify and explore potential opportunities for community ownership and asset transfer.

- **Investigating exemplars of successful community ownership and asset transfer** elsewhere in Scotland, and further afield, which may provide a model for our approach.

2.2 Addressing and Adapting to Flood Risk

The second of our urgent priorities was addressing flooding. Flooding constitutes a risk to property and life, and puts a stranglehold on the village's capacity to function and develop to meet its own needs. The issue has been the subject of various projects, groups and costly research over the years, but we have yet to see any meaningful outcomes or actions to show for it. Moreover, there is disagreement within the village and with experts on some proposed solutions, such as a bund or dredging (the latter which in the past, was done regularly by residents and used to fill local potholes).

In short, we are fed up with inaction on something which constitutes a fundamental risk and barrier to our priorities. We need an action group to work together to gain a clearer understanding of the complex flooding situation, and options for mitigation and adaptation. As the Community has the most reason, motivation and energy to find a suitable resolution, we feel such a project is best led by local residents in collaboration with relevant authorities and experts.

At this time, we have identified **2 Priority Areas** that we believe necessary to establish and execute effective action on flooding in Aberfoyle and Strathard.

2.2.1 Clarifying and implementing appropriate courses of action. Given the level of the priority, we propose a process of 4 steps be initiated urgently:

1. **Convening a Working Group** of residents with knowledge of flooding and stakeholders with relevant technical or policy knowledge, or the powers to facilitate action. As mentioned, we believe meaningful community involvement and leadership is critical to success, due to our motivation and urgent need for an effective solution, and our understanding of the river and flooding patterns, past and present.

2. **Building a "whole-picture" descriptive model of flooding on the Forth.** The aims of the model would be to establish what is reasonable or possible to mitigate, and our options for

intervention. In order that localised actions don't result in unintended consequences for people or the ecology upstream and downstream, we believe data to inform the model should involve the entire Forth from source through to where it becomes tidal at Stirling. It needs to incorporate anecdotal local knowledge, and all historical, predictive or modelling information previously produced by SEPA or other authorities. Additional data-gathering may also be required to fill any identified knowledge gaps, for example, the potential impacts of runoff from new developments.

3. **Discussing the model and deliberating on courses of action.**

- **Mitigation**. Taking action to address flooding. In the Memorial Hall event, the table focusing on flooding strongly agreed that initial actions should proceed in small steps. Before implementing controversial measures -such as a bund or dredging- they felt these should first explore 'low hanging fruit' such as the removal of deadfall in the water by landowners. Through progressive narrowing of the field of options, while testing hypotheses and building knowledge, we hope to establish a course of action upon which we can all agree and which balances the needs of both our community and our ecology.

- **Adaptation.** Evaluating options to adapt to flooding. The incidences and severity of flooding have increased in recent decades, and are likely to continue to do so regardless of measures to address it. Many feel we may need to accept a certain level of flooding as a fact of village life, and live and work with this the best we can. Some felt "reframing" flooding in this way could even open up new opportunities and benefits for the community, where ideas included:

    o Using the floodplain for food growing or nature reserves
    o Harnessing floodwater as a renewable energy or heat source.
    o Technical solutions to developing on floodplains, where future floodwaters are a consideration (e.g. buildings on stilts).
    o Converting any land unusable due to flooding into a nature reserve (a potential additional visitor attraction)

2.2.2 Establishing an emergency evacuation route for Aberfoyle Primary School. We have concerns about the risks flash flooding might represent for our schoolchildren and residents along Lochard Road. In case floodwaters render buildings inaccessible to emergency services from the road, we feel it sensible to establish a route to the village through the higher wooded ground behind the School and houses along Lochard Road. This will also provide a pedestrian access route to local shops and services for residents affected by the flooding.

2.3 Developing a Visitor Management Strategy

We take great pride in the role our village has played in the tourist industry since its earliest days. Nevertheless, since the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen a sea change in the volume of day visitors to the area, and believe the trend to be permanent. During the 2021 tourist season, we struggled unsupported to maintain Aberfoyle as an attractive tourist destination in the face of unprecedented

levels of tourist waste, car traffic and antisocial behaviour, and poorly maintained paths and greenspaces. While following the May 2021 survey, visitor management was ranked relatively low among the 8 priorities, by the time of the in-person events in October 2021, all present agreed it had become one of the highest as a result of the interim experience.

An effective strategy to deal with the situation is now essential, as without it we cannot maintain the village as a living Community and a high-quality tourist hub. We also run the risk of losing the reputation we are working hard to develop. We believe the community perspective is integral to this, and that a strategy must have an immediate focus on better understanding and dealing with the tourist numbers and its impact. At the same time, we need to further build a sustainable tourism proposition around our Important Things and Core Principles, encouraging long-stay year-round visitors who love the area for the same reasons as we do and understand how to respect it. Through this, we hope to work towards a more harmonious coexistence between residents and visitors, and greater stability and benefits from the local tourist economy.

We have **3 Priority Areas** for inclusion in any Visitor Management Strategy. (Of these the first priority was a standalone priority emerging from the process, and rose over the course of 2021 to be one requiring urgent and immediate action):

2.3.1 Working with the authorities to respond effectively to increasing tourist numbers. Many felt it was important that this was a community-led initiative working in collaboration with the National Park and other relevant authorities. The key priorities for any group working on this issue were agreed to be:

- **Planning and support for waste management and general maintenance.** Over the 2021 tourist season, bins in the village were overflowing, and our paths, cycleways and greens overgrown. Litter and human excrement were a problem in many beauty spots, such as the Faerie Tree, the forest car parks and the cycle routes. This resulted in serious general concerns about vermin and public health, as well as serious negative impacts on our tourist proposition.

  Of the immediate priorities related to visitor management, this is our highest. We cannot fulfil our objectives, and those articulated in the Strathard Framework, of becoming a premium tourist hub for the region if the area is shabby and looks like a dump. An attractive well-maintained village we can be proud of, will promote greater care from visitors and residents alike, while the opposite condones disrespectful behaviour and harms our reputation.

  To ensure this decline doesn't continue in 2022, we feel we need to codevelop a plan for what we need regarding regular waste management and maintenance over the tourist season. If our local authorities are unable to deliver on what is needed, then we will have to discuss delegation of responsibilities, in order that our other shared priorities can be met.

- **Making it "easy" for visitors to behave well.** A key element of Memorial Hall discussions related to action which make it easy for visitors to do the right thing. This included provision of litter bins in beauty spots, and signs giving guidelines on acceptable behaviour and the reasons why it is important. The Young People specifically mentioned the Faerie Tree and Bike Park as places which would benefit from such action.

- **Community rangers for welcoming and guidance.** At the Memorial Hall, residents of Milton spoke of a successful "meet and greet the tourists" pilot in Summer 2021, where they approached visitors with guidance on facilities and appropriate behaviour. They felt this had

reduced antisocial behaviour significantly, by combining a friendly welcome with a reminder that people live here and were monitoring visitor conduct.

If it is difficult for the police or local authorities to effectively manage antisocial behaviour, Community Rangers performing a similar "meet and greet" service could help to regulate the worst of the antisocial behaviour and littering.

- **Tourist Transport.** Our general view is that building more car parks to cater for increased visitors could be feeding a vicious circle. Instead, we feel we should seriously explore strategies for *reducing* tourist car use, an approach thereby aligning with our core Theme and Principle around Sustainability. Our main ideas in this respect are a Tourist Bus to Aberfoyle from Glasgow and / or Stirling, and a Shuttle Bus to ferry visitors up and down the glen, while teaching visitors about our rich heritage and stopping off at local businesses. This might be similar to the "Trossachs Trundler" which used to do a circuit between Aberfoyle and Callander in the past. The benefits of this include:

    o Reducing parking pressures on Strathard.
    o Reducing emissions from car use.
    o An opportunity for us to promote our Heritage and Important Things.
    o An opportunity to direct tourist traffic in a way which benefits the local economy and relations between residents and visitors.
    o Potential for local employment.

- **Research to better understand visitor pressures and profile.** We propose that we cannot codesign an effective visitor management strategy without first filling two (to our knowledge) research gaps, namely:

    o **Visitor Profile.** *Who is visiting Strathard, when, why, for how long, and by what means?* Clear information in this respect can inform how a Visitor Management Strategy can exploit, influence and monitor our visitor profile towards greater alignment with our Life Plan's other priorities and principles.

    o **Tourist pressures on housing stock.** In recent years, we have seen a significant rise in the number of Air BnB 'places' in the village. There is currently up to 22 in the village alone, with a maximum capacity for 90 people, which is approximately a fifth of the resident population of the ward. We have no data on the number of second homes or of empty housing stock.

    We accept tourism is our economic mainstay, and that losing or gaining bed for visitors impacts on the spend we need to maintain and grow. The village has also seen the loss of accommodation due to the conversion of hotels such as the Baillie-Nicol and Covenanters into residential properties. Nevertheless, as things currently stand, every new Air BnB or second home means one less household of permanent residents, with younger and older residents most affected. Without a better understanding of the situation and its impacts, and the appropriate regulatory policy, we fear new housing developments which purport to be addressing pressures may instead exacerbate them. We feel this information must link, and be essential to, effective holistic visitor management and housing strategies.

2.3.2 Encouraging year-round, long-stay, green tourism around our Important Things. We do not want Aberfoyle to ever become, as one resident put it, a "Disneyfied" tourist destination. Building a proposition around what we value will attract visitors who love and respect our place for the same reasons we do, promoting a more harmonious coexistence. It will also help diversify and strengthen our tourist economy by encouraging longer-stay year-round visitors. Four strong ideas about this emerged from the Life Plan process and Memorial Hall discussions:

- **Outdoor Activities**. We see a golden opportunity for Aberfoyle to become Scotland's capital for outdoor activities, particularly cycling, and welcome developments towards this such as Aberfoyle bike hire, Go Ape, the Dukes Weekender and Gravelfoyle, which contribute to the local economy and provide jobs. Outdoor activities are an Important Thing for residents of all ages, and we therefore welcome such improvements for visitors too e.g. more mountain-bike and forest trails, better signposting or mobile coverage in the wilder areas.

- **Dark Skies.** We share a love of Strathard's dark skies with the other communities of the glen – an Important Thing for us all. Some of us also believe achieving status as a "Dark Sky Sanctuary" could be a win-win opportunity for us. It would formalise conditions to preserve our experience of the night sky for present and future generations, while providing an attraction for visitors within easy access of the Central Belt which encourages year-round overnight stays, or longer.

- **Local Heritage, Geology and Folklore.** A discussion topic at both Memorial Hall events was how we might capitalise on the untapped potential of our rich local heritage -both one of our Important Things and a Core Principle. The conclusion was that making more of our rich heritage – geological, historical, industrial, natural, folklore – could attract longer-stay visitors, particularly for those with professional, amateur or educational interests. Some initial ideas put forward included:

  - Dounans partnering with a university or schools to provide a "country campus" for students on particular courses relevant to the local environment (e.g. rural studies, ecology or forestry and land management).

  - A heritage centre, museum, or community-run tours or activities which revolve around the wealth of the local geology, folklore and wildlife. An idea was to utilise the Manse Road field as a wildlife area with a crannog to promote both.

  - QR codes which bring to life our local heritage via a phone app (see Appendix B). Young People mentioned they felt The Poker Tree was an important piece of heritage which tended to be overlooked, and deserved more attention.

  - A Faerie Festival to celebrate local folklore. One idea was for a ritual walk to the Faerie Tree on the Summer and Winter Solstice to burn 'wishes.'

- **A Community-Developed Tourist Map,** which celebrates our local Heritage, and promotes local businesses which may otherwise go under the tourist radar was called for by some. (The Strathard Development Trust have produced a similar map which could be added to).

2.3.3 Generating community income from tourism was a route some of us felt worthwhile to consider, where profit is rechannelled towards our other higher priorities, such as those related to sustainability and economic diversification covered in Theme 2.1. Some initial ideas which were put forward included:

- A laundry service for the local hospitality industry.
- Paid parking for cars and campervans -i.e. with hook-up points, water and toilet emptying facilities- where the East Pier at Loch Katrine may provide ideas. Overnighting facilities in or near the village would enable them to access local restaurants and visitor amenities without having to drive.
- A community-run Strathard tour bus (see 2.3.1 Tourist Transport).
- Glamping pods, for example, in the Braeval woods on the Rob Roy Trail, or on cycle routes, where again the village is easily accessible and the East Pier may offer ideas.
- Community-administered Air BnB.

2.4 Improving Community Functioning

This Theme groups together five priorities related to improving the healthy functioning of our Community (two of which were among the original 8 priorities). The first – opportunities for young people – should carry due weight as it was ranked third highest for the village as a whole, and covers a range of areas. The second pertains to a need to cultivate shared knowledge of and engagement in our valuable Community assets: places and spaces, anchor organisations and volunteer groups. The others set out our aspirations to address road safety, promote fruitful collaborations within the village and with stakeholders and neighbouring communities, and have more spaces and events which enable us to come together as a Community.

Our **5 Priority Areas** for improving community functioning are:

2.4.1 Opportunities for Young People. The absence of and need for better opportunities for our Young People, particularly teenagers, was their foremost priority. For adults, enabling and motivating young people to stay in or return to the village, and to live sustainably, was seen as a fundamental underpinning of Theme 2.1, and to halting the drain of Young People, and their energy and ideas, out of the area. This section is to be read as if it was voiced by the Young People of the ward who contributed to the Life Plan process.

See Appendix C for a map we, the Young People of Aberfoyle, have put together which sets out some of our immediate needs and priorities. These include:

- **A Youth Club**, particularly over the winter months, when there is nowhere in the village for us to socialise or hang out, other than each other's homes. The Memorial Hall would be willing to host this, and donations of equipment have been offered by residents, but we need volunteers to help get it up and running.

- **A bus to Callander** (and other communities within the McClaren High school catchment). The right service could enable us to access services, afterschool clubs, and friends in neighbouring communities, without having to rely on our parents to drive us. It would give us greater freedom, opportunity to learn and socialise, and enable us to get to school should we ever miss the school bus, while also reducing unnecessary car travel. One Working Group member said that his business now relies heavily on relationships formed with communities he used to travel to using previous bus services whilst at school.

- **Improved Outdoor Activities**. The Bike Park is popular with both boys and girls, but we all wish it had greater variety, with jumps and more challenging runs. The Bike Park would also benefit from a litter bin and signs which warn walkers of the bike tracks so as to avoid

clashes. We would also welcome a Skate Park in addition or as an extension. Some of us have strong ideas on improvements and the 3D software we might use to sketch these, and would

be eager to participate in any redesign. In addition, we would also love more mountain bike trails in the surrounding hills, and other sports facilities.

New jump at the Bike Park

- **Improved Playgrounds**. Our main issue at the moment is our main playground has been left for months with a hole and a mound of earth in it, and we would ask that this work be completed. We'd also love to be consulted on any design improvements to our playparks before they are implemented. In the past, new equipment has had less play value than the older items they replaced, and we'd also like to have more challenging equipment for older children. Lastly, we feel our second, smaller Kirk Loan playpark is overlooked and neglected and would benefit from more care and attention.

- **Better career and housing opportunities.** We, older teenagers feel the area needs more affordable apartments, solid career or apprenticeship opportunities, or spaces and support for local entrepreneurship. As things stand, there is little incentive to stay in the area, and little capacity for it to support our independent living. There are little or no rental options appropriate for young people. Local jobs are primarily low-paid low-skilled work in the hospitality industry, insufficient for us to get on the property ladder locally or raise a family easily. Those who choose to stay are required to do multiple jobs and long hours in order to make ends meet, and with these being primarily dependent on the tourist industry, the winter months can be tough going. The ideas set out in 2.1 around economic diversification and lifecycle housing may serve to alleviate these issues.

2.4.2 Improving our knowledge of "local assets" (another of the 8 original priorities). We agreed it would be empowering to have some kind of central easily accessible and updatable repository of important village "assets". It was proposed by many that a **Strathard Life** delivered free to every resident might be one vehicle which could help enormously with this, by keeping the Community availed of all important work and information on a regular basis. The village "assets" referred to were:

- **Public or community-owned facilities, services or land**. We should compile a central register or map of these, including their main users, and who to contact in relation to them. This would enable residents to take the initiative on addressing issues directly. Evidence of neglect or inaction (such as the "hole" in the playground referred to in 2.4.1) might then be used to lobby for responsibility for related assets to be delegated to the Community. Evidence of clashes between different users could initiate discussion and actions towards finding more harmonious solutions.

- **Community anchor organisations and groups.** Many of us are unclear regarding the differing roles and responsibilities of the Strathard Community Council and Development Trust and for what and why we might approach them. Others feel a bit in the dark as to what is going on with all the various community groups and initiatives in the area. Equally, volunteers are finding it challenging to find the time to contribute, whilst *also* updating the community regularly. On numerous occasions, this had led to surprise, misunderstanding and demotivating criticism of their efforts. Therefore, it was felt clearer communications of all the good work volunteers perform on behalf of the Community would promote greater engagement, support and involvement from residents.

2.4.3 Addressing road safety: A new priority put forward by residents responding to the survey, three potential accident black spots to address were identified.

- **Manse Bridge and Road**. Pedestrian right-of-way and appropriate signposting on the single-lane bridge are considered essential. For many this is an "accident waiting to happen". Speed bumps on the Manse Road were also desirable for some, as this is used for visitors to walk to the Faeries Tree.

- **A821 between the Surgery and the Playground.** While we welcome the new 20-mile-an-hour speed limit near the Surgery, drivers still don't slow sufficiently until the electronic sign adjacent to the Playground. Children cross this section frequently, so for their safety, we need a crossing and / or for the 20 mile-an-hour and electronic signs to be positioned further towards Braeval to ensure drivers slow down before it. Others would welcome a second crossing further down the road between the Coop and the Post Office.

- **B820 outside school.** Local children and young people felt the safety of this section of road could be improved. During the Memorial Hall events, emphasis was put on the importance to this of resuming the school crossing patrol, and of finding a local who might be willing to take responsibility for this. It was noted that the council recognised this, and were keeping the role open in the hope that someone might come forward.

2.4.4 Strengthening community communications and collaboration around taking forwards our priorities. Particularly, we recognise the need to build a stronger relationship with and between the Strathard Community Council (SCC) and Strathard Development Trust (SDT) as the principal representatives of our Community and Life Plan. Ways suggested that this might be achieved include active representation or more regular attendance in meetings by residents, or sharing membership.

As a proactive community, we also aspire to form better and closer partnerships with the National Park and Stirling Council, as our local Planning Authorities, and with other local landowners and businesses, including Forestry and Land Scotland and Scottish Water, to encourage a spirit of collaboration around our Life Plan. At the Memorial Hall Events, the need for better communications with Forestry and Land Scotland was a particular discussion topic. This related both to establishing mutual trust around use of forest routes in emergencies, and better notifications regarding the what and why of major forestry operations, enabling residents to prepare for increased traffic and significant changes to the natural landscape.

2.4.5 Enabling spaces and events purely for the community: One theme of discussions was the lack of such spaces, with several residents suggesting it often felt that everything in the village "belonged" to the tourists. Albeit still shared with visitors, the Coop and pubs were mentioned as the only hubs remaining for ad hoc community interaction. How to enable and manage more community-dedicated spaces and events might be included as a pressure-releasing component of a Visitor

Management Strategy (see 2.4 below). In addition to the needs of Young People (see 2.3.1), some wanted to see more opportunities for senior citizens to socialise with each other and younger members of the community. Both Duchray Castle and the Memorial Hall put themselves forward as potential venues to host such events.

3. GUIDELINES FOR ECONOMIC & HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Economic Development

Our criteria for appropriate economic development are listed below. These set out what we see as our community's most important economic development considerations in the area. They are also part of our wish to have greater say in the decisions that relate to local economic development, to ensure our Important Things are protected and improved, and that economic progress aligns with our Core Principles, and supports and enhances our Community as a place to live and work.

Guideline Planning Criteria for appropriate local economic development:

- **Sensitive zones** for new builds and economic developments should be excluded, or proposals subject to discussion and the consensual agreement of our Community (see Appendix D).

- **Economic Zones** identified (see Appendix E) have not been consensually agreed, are speculative, and have caused us to realise the constraints on development we must overcome. Some aspirations pertain to the rethinking, or community ownership, of existing assets – notably the old Coop and Wool Centre buildings, and Dounans Outdoor Centre – as a basis for grassroots-driven economic diversification.

- **Improvements arising from a Visitor Management Strategy**, towards encouraging longer-stay year-round tourism, or activities which better align with our Life Plan (see 2.3). Any proposal for new tourist developments must be considered in the context of our need and aspiration for economic diversification, our local constraints on development, and the hidden negative consequences of our over-dependence on the tourist industry (such as our declining population and housing stock, low-wage and low-skill work, and the social, maintenance and infrastructural pressures we face).

- **Communication infrastructure enhancements**, which improve broadband bandwidth and coverage, and the mobile signal in the forest and hills, thereby enabling and supporting the tourist industry, and the potential for economic diversification which leverages the internet.

- **Moratoriums on Air BnB, new holiday-lets or second homes,** which put pressure on the local community, businesses and the housing market, until we better cater for local needs and implement strategies for increasing the productivity of our tourist economy (2.3).

- **District heating projects or small-scale community renewables** of an appropriate scale, location and design.

- **Developments which improve local transport links** for both visitors and residents, such as a bus service between Aberfoyle and Glasgow, Callander or other neighbouring communities.

- **Extensions or improvements to existing buildings**, providing they do not impact negatively on our Important Things and are in line with our Guidelines Planning Criteria for Housing (see below).

3.2 Housing Development

The criteria and conditions for what we feel is appropriate local housing are listed below. These are our priorities and preferences for the kinds of housing development we feel are appropriate or desirable in our area. These should be seen within the context of our overriding priority to improve our sustainability, resilience and self-sufficiency (see 2.1), as we believe new housing which is not sensitive to our specific needs and aspirations is in real danger of causing more harm than good.

Guideline Planning Criteria for appropriate local housing

- **Respect our Sensitive zones for new housing** (see Appendix D)

- **Consider zones with active travel routes to the village** (see Appendix E), for facilities, services and the school run.

- **"Lifecycle" affordable or community housing, tailored to specific local need and demand,** from entry-level rental or buying options for young people or families seeking to stay and work in the area, and who keep our Community vibrant, through to homes or facilities which enable senior citizens to remain in the village, and intergenerational learning.

- **No new housing which is not "future-proofed".** In accordance with our Core Priorities and Principles around Sustainability, we have a condition that any new housing improves on 2022 regulations, and to the extent possible builds for 2045 needs and standards. Specifically, every new house should be, or include:

    o A garden space sufficient and suitable for growing food
    o A room set aside for work or study
    o An electric-charge point
    o Renewable energy and heating sources
    o Effective home insulation
    o Easy to maintain

- **Exploring controls on holiday-lets and Air BnB,** which is eroding housing stock available for local residents to rent or live, and / or forcing long-term residents to move out of the area.

- **No 'social dumping'** or decanting of people here from elsewhere for no other reason than they are on the list and housing has become available. It is a cause of much frustration that such incidences frequently trump local residents who have been waiting for housing for years. To maintain community integrity, social housing should be offered in the first instance to locals or those with family in the area, and only when it is not taken up, be opened up to those on the local authority waiting list from further afield.

- **No speculative 'for-profit' or 'second home' housing developments**, which negatively impact housing affordability for local residents or young families wishing to move here, or for which there is little evidence of local need or demand

- **Use/restore/extend existing local housing stock or seek to activate extant planning permission** before new developments. Building new and more should not be the first port of call, particularly not if planning permission already exist but are on hold (as is believed to be the case at Old Kirk Loan).

Guideline Planning Conditions (sections in priority order)

- **General conditions:** Subject to dark sky regulations; Environmental impact assessment involving Community consultation required; Robust site analysis which takes account of impacts on views and setting; Maximum limits on number of new dwellings which can be built in the Wards over the duration of the next plan; Permissible, non-permissible housing needs.

- **Conditions applying to groupings:** Measures to ensure development is appropriate to, and does not dominate, scenery (particularly areas and views listed in the Important Things); Exclusion zones between new developments and existing housing, and sensitive approaches to the spaces between (e.g. landscaping); Other considerations which ensure appropriateness to setting, including scale and massing of units; limits on maximum number of units in groupings; and relationship to nearby housing design and patterns.

- **Specific design conditions:** To ensure building is consistent with surroundings and character of specific location; Non-standardised design of gardens, boundaries, parking areas, drives and access to avoid standard suburban development styles and layouts; Controls on placing of parking areas, drives and access ways; Definitions of appropriate/inappropriate building materials/styles; No 'could be anywhere' house designs and/or repetition of a limited number of similar type; Maintenance of existing features: e.g. verge, trees and stone boundary wall. Use of local contractors wherever possible.
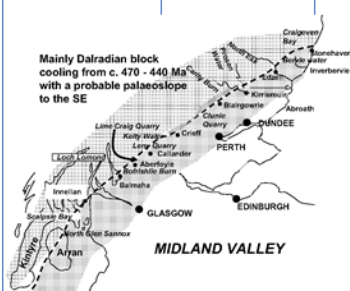
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Timeline of Our Local History & Heritage

700 million years ago   **Prehistory**   **5000yrs ago**

700m BC In the Southern Hemisphere Gondwanaland split to form Iapetus Ocean Upon which sediments from living things gather

430m BC Three continents collide (England, Scotland and the Baltics) forming Highland Boundary Fault, pushing up rocks into a colossal mountain range (with 'gold' intrusions).

Mainly Dalradian block cooling from c. 470 - 440 Ma with a probable palaeoslope to the SE

MIDLAND VALLEY

Ice Ages

400,000-5000 yrs BC - Whole area covered in ice except Ben Lomond. Due to isostasy and ice melt, sea reaches to Duchray castle and Loch Lomond is sea loch.

5000yrs BC   **The Three Ages of Early Civilisation**   **100 yrs BC**

Stone age

c.5000-3000yrs BC The "Clachan" stone circle (Manse Road)

c.3000yrs BC The sea retreats from Aberfoyle and on the fertile soil grows a forest of giant oaks
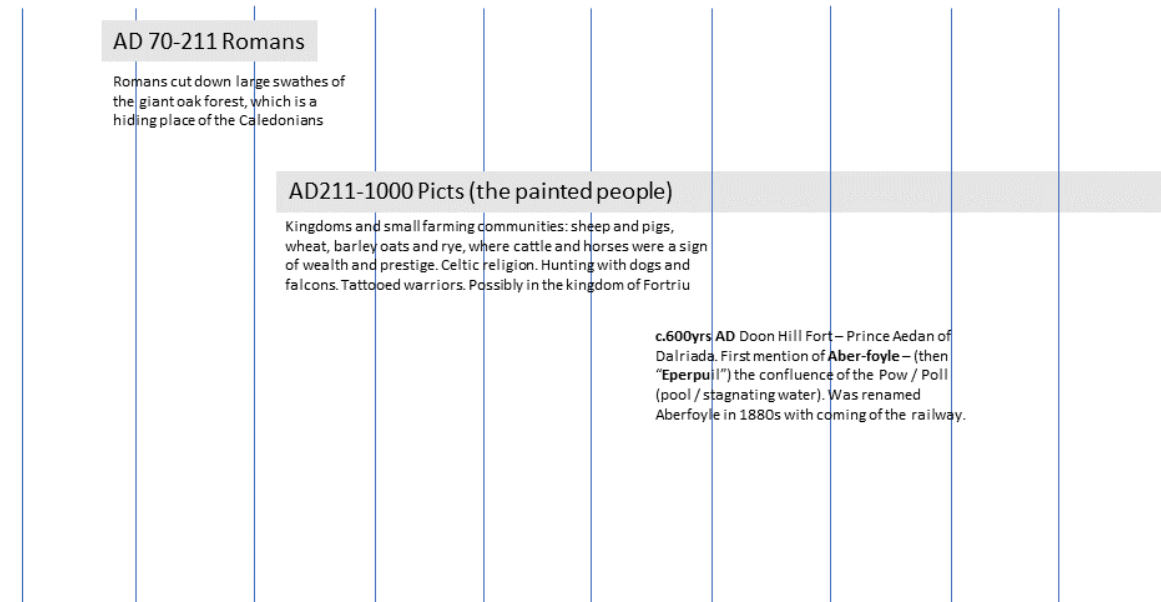
Bronze Age

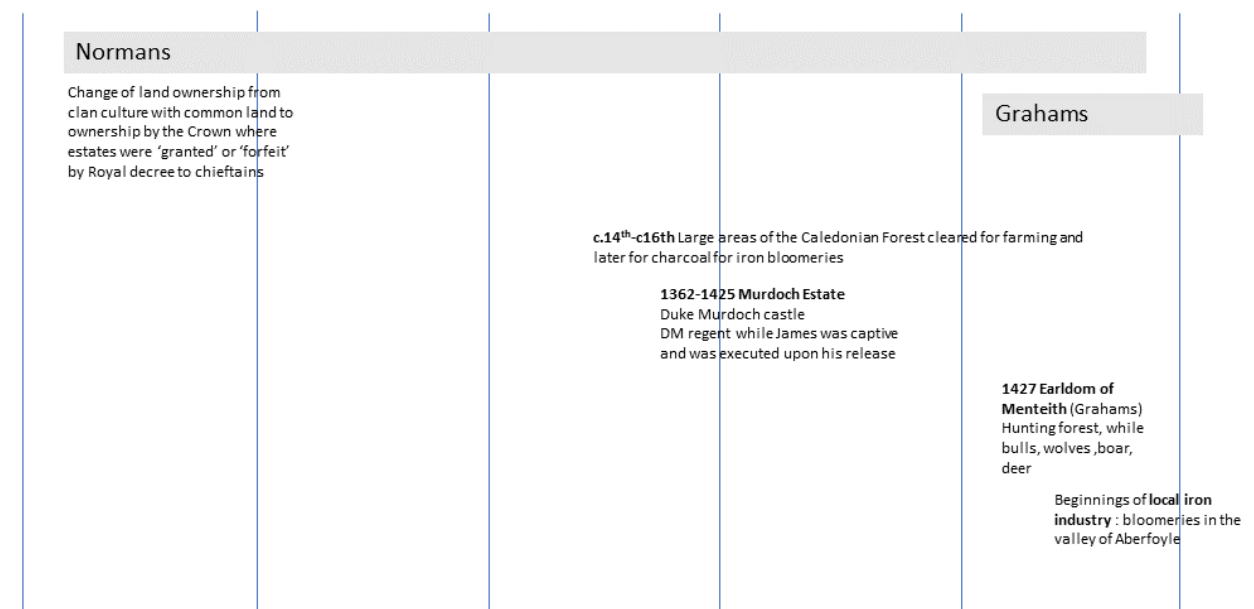**c.2000yrs BC** Cup and Ring marked stones – Ledard and Menteith

Iron Age

c.1000yrs Crannogs

0AD   **Romans and Early Mediaeval**   1000 AD

AD 70-211 Romans

Romans cut down large swathes of
the giant oak forest, which is a
hiding place of the Caledonians

AD211-1000 Picts (the painted people)

Kingdoms and small farming communities: sheep and pigs,
wheat, barley oats and rye, where cattle and horses were a sign
of wealth and prestige. Celtic religion. Hunting with dogs and
falcons. Tattooed warriors. Possibly in the kingdom of Fortriu

c.600yrs AD Doon Hill Fort – Prince Aedan of
Dalriada. First mention of **Aber-foyle** – (then
"**Eperpuil**") the confluence of the Pow / Poll
(pool / stagnating water). Was renamed
Aberfoyle in 1880s with coming of the railway.

1000 AD   **Mediaeval Period**   1500 AD

Normans

Change of land ownership from
clan culture with common land to
ownership by the Crown where
estates were 'granted' or 'forfeit'
by Royal decree to chieftains

Grahams

c.14th-c16th Large areas of the Caledonian Forest cleared for farming and
later for charcoal for iron bloomeries

1362-1425 Murdoch Estate
Duke Murdoch castle
DM regent while James was captive
and was executed upon his release

**1427 Earldom of
Menteith** (Grahams)
Hunting forest, while
bulls, wolves ,boar,
deer

Beginnings of **local iron
industry** : bloomeries in the
valley of Aberfoyle

1500 — Post-medieval period (c. 1500 – c. 1800) — **1800**

Grahams / Fairies

Feudal crofting system until 1750: tacksman work for the estate who manage poor crofters, houses of stones and turf, living with the animals, farming strips of land (gray oats, bere, flax and pease, small sheep and cattle). Paid a duty to the Laird and starved in difficult years. A lot of the important mills in the area date back to this era.

c.17th: Covenanters outdoor services below Creag Mhor

Montrose / Industry

1653 & 1654 & 1671: Battles at the Pass of Aberfoyle, Duchray pushing back Cromwell's army and then losing; parish burned; fray between Grahams and Menteith on the bridge at a christening party

1671-1734: Roy Roy. Evicted by Montrose, aligned with Breadalbane: The Clachan, the Baillie Nicol Hotel (named after a character)

1680-1880: Graham's oakwoods (largest in Scotland) become commercially viable and large scale coppicing begins

1691: "The Secret Commonwealth of Elves, Fauns and Faeries". Rev Kirk (1644-92) also published first Gaelic Book of Psalms and was abducted by faeries Grave in the Old Kirk (as well as mort safes to protect from the faeries.

c.18th -c19th: Smugglers and illegal whiskey stills, Dunivaraig gang (between Aberfoyle and Gartmore)

1720s First impact of industrial revolution - Dukes Pass slate quarries and village (site of our first Coop); lime quarries (until 1847) Aberfoyle Lint mill relying on Forth to provide water for weaving tweed from local wool / linen. Whinstone quarry on Creag Mhor (used to build the school)

1744 Kirk of Aberfoyle built

1750-1850 Clearances and move to large sheep farms begins. Aberfoyle parish: population between 1750 – 184 falls by 895 to 549

1800 — **Industrial / Modern** — **2000**

Montrose / Railway / Tourism / Victorian Villas

1810;1817: "Lady of the Lake" and "Rob Roy" published by Sir Walter Scott, driving first tourist industry

1812 description Patrick Graham: "the valley of Aberfoyle, with its precipitous rock, its winding river (Avendow: black river), its meadows, and richly wooded knolls, has long been admired by strangers for its singular beauty" **1840:** Baillie Nicol Jarvie Inn built – most famous in the area (drovers Inn, location of fight in Rob Roy, towards Milton). Up to 60 horses in the stables, dragging tourist carriages up the Dukes pass.

1850 Slate quarry enlarged; community; school larger than Aberfoyle; narrow gauge to Church and railway to transport to Glasgow

1856-1859; 1815; 1919: Glasgow Water Scheme

1870: Earliest guidebook published by Arnprior stationmaster (Aberfoyle: "the capital of the kingdom of Scotland's fairy folk)"

1873: Aberfoyle School opens (12-67 pupils in the first year

1884 Aberfoyle becomes terminus of a branch railway, relocating the village centre (red sandstone tested the tracks became Bank of Scotland, (Craiguchty and St Mary's (1893-93); Farmers complained the embankment cause flooding)

1885 Clachan Inn built

Forestry Commission

1901-13 Children's Home Hospital in Craiguchty Terace

Early 1900s: Sir Ian Bolton a key figure in the Scottish Scouting Movement lives at Duchray Castle

Movies: 1922- Rob Roy; 1953- Rob Roy (Richard Todd / Blairvaich); 1955 – Geordie; 1959 – the 39 steps Kenneth More (Altskeith); 1975 – Monty Python and the Holy Grail

1940s: Aberfoyle vies with Newtonmore as birthplace of ponytrekking

1945+: FS purchase land in valley of Aberfoyle

World War II: Dounan's built for evacuees / outdoor learning; Strathard munitions dump huts; gunboat patrolling Loch Ard, permits to enter. Queen of Yugoslavia hides out in village. Lumber Jills.

1948: Aberfoyle (Welcome Home Trust) Memorial Hall built

1949: Scottish Covenant launched at the Covenanters Inn, gathering 2m signatures supporting self-government for Scotland. A landmark moment! (including hiding the stolen Stone of Scone)

1950s: "Rob Roy" Scotland's first motel; "Pavilion" (i.e. Forth Inn)

1950-5: Braeval Forestry Cottages built

1960: David Marshall Lodge was gifted to the Forestry Commission by the Carnegie Trust (DM was the CT Chair) (also a Cold War bunker)

1992: Scottish Wool Centre

2021: Louis Stott dies, local historian and writer of "Enchantment of the Trossachs"

Aberfoyle: name originates from Celtic, *"aber poll or aber phuill"*, meaning place at the mouth of the Phuill (Pow) Burn (prior spellings such as Abirfull, Aberfule, Aberfoill and Aberfoil have been recorded). The river name is derived from a Celtic word meaning 'pool' or 'sluggish water'.

Appendix B: Mapping some of Our Historical Treasures

1. Slate Quarry and Village
2. Bogey Line from Slate Quarry
3. Site of WWII Ammunition Huts
4. David Marshall Lodge
5. Dukes Pass Tollhouse and Road
6. Primary School
7. Old Police Station
8. Old Post Office
9. Baillie Nicol Hotel
10. Old Blacksmiths (and wells?)
11. The Poker Tree
12. The Ancient Manse Bridge
13. Memorial Hall
14. Old Reading Room
15. Old Children's Hospital (Arts and Crafts)
16. St Mary's Church
17. Old Piggery
18. Dounans: very early outdoor centre
19. Railway Turntable and Cottages
20. Lint Ponds and Forestry Offices
21. Site of old Lint Mill
22. Braeval Forestry Cottages
23. Duchray Castle
24. Convenanters Inn
25. Old Kirk, Rev Kirk's Grave, mort safes
26. Old Kirkton School
27. Pow Bridge
28. Clachan Stone Circle (exact location unclear!)
29. Faerie Tree

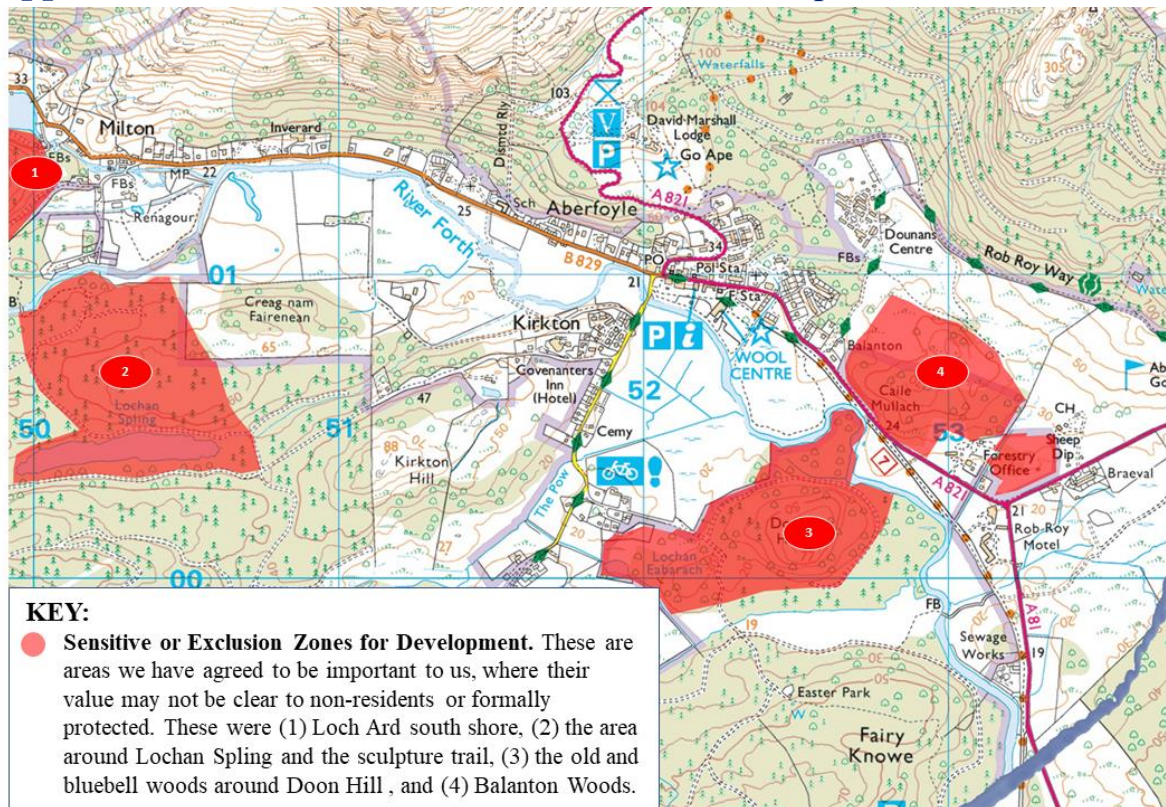From Memorial Hall event - 27/10/2021
"places worthy of QR Codes"
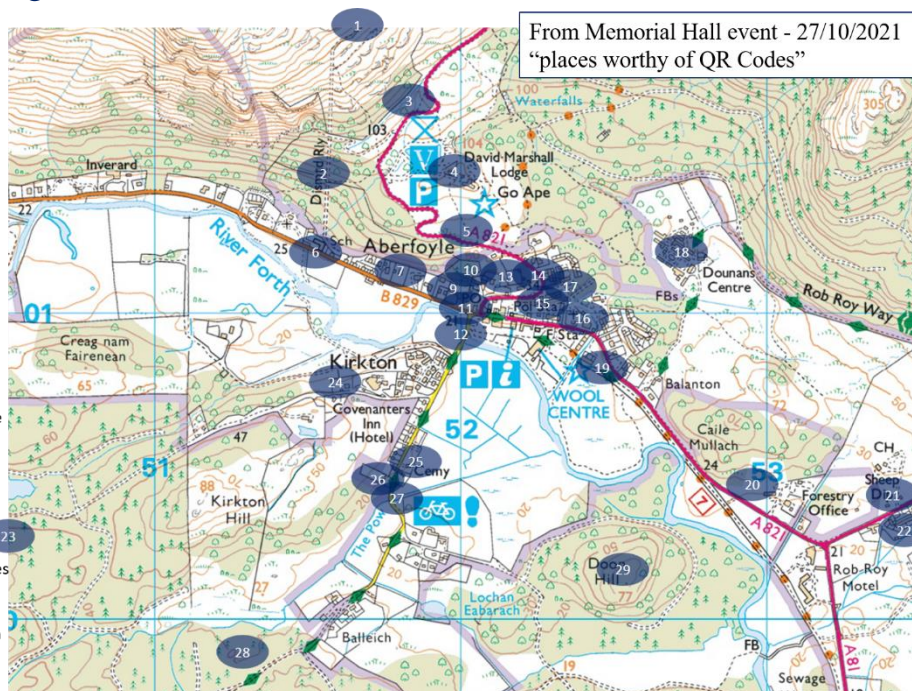
Appendix C: Young People's Map of Opportunities and Priorities

From Memorial Hall event - 24/10/2021
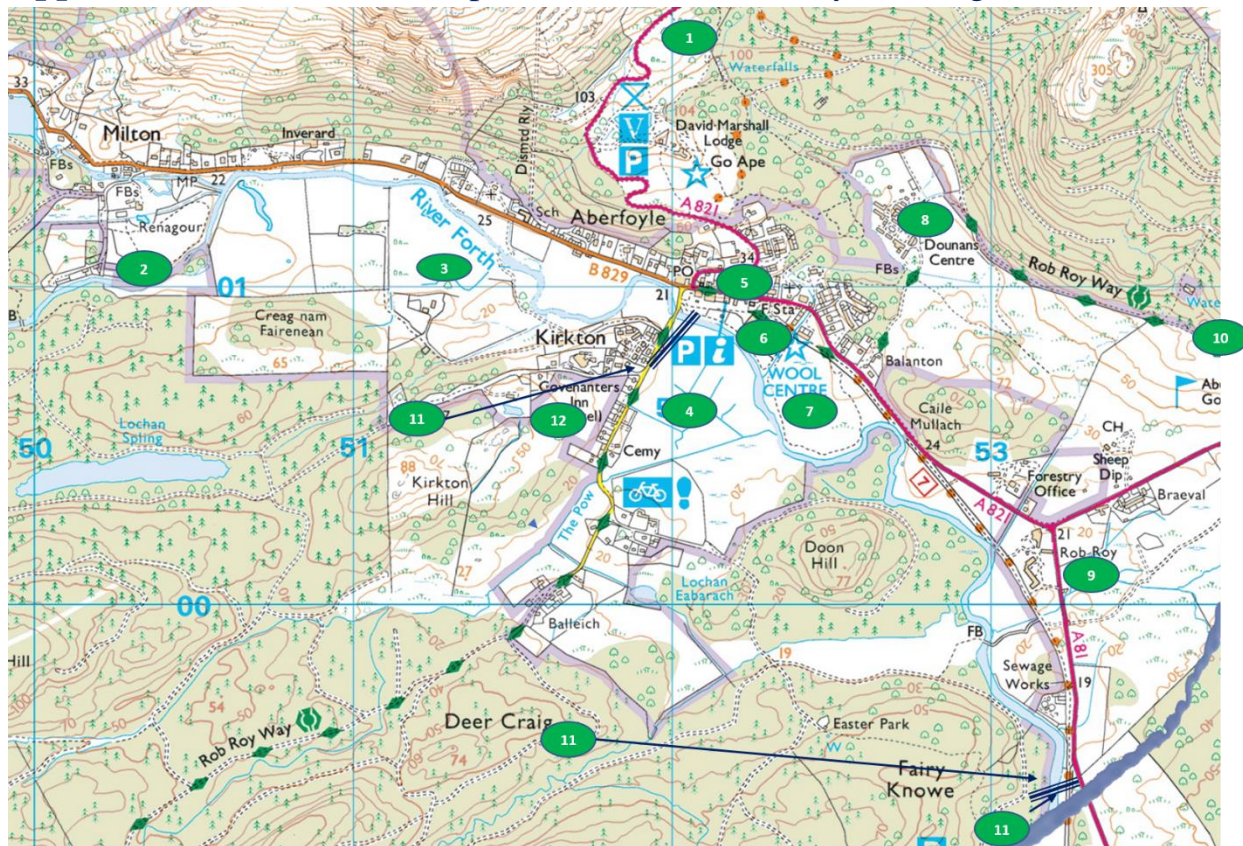"Young People's Map of Opportunities and Priorities"
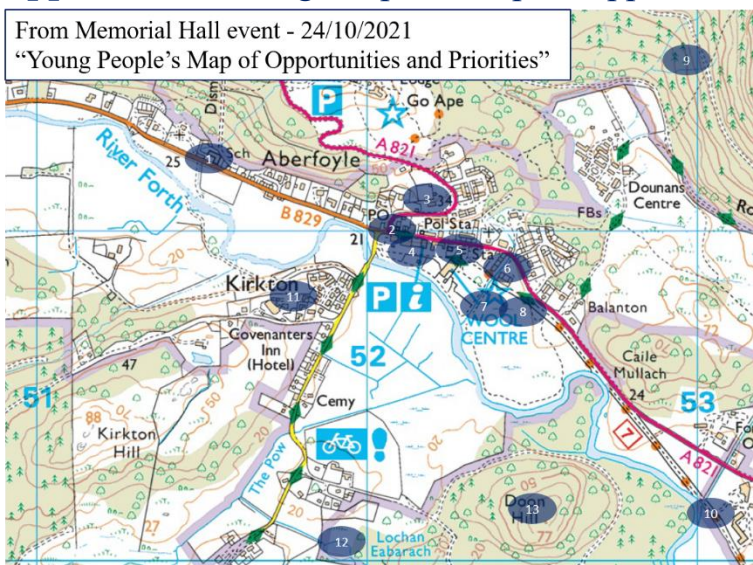
1. Improve road and road markings by Primary School.
2. **The Poker Tree:** take better care of and make more of this piece of our heritage.
3. **Youth Club** at the Memorial Hall (or in the old Coop).
4. **Bus shelter** for when it rains when we're waiting for the school bus.
5. **More Shops:** particularly, takeaways or clothes shops.
6. **Finish the Play Park** as it has a big hold in it, and engage with us on improvements.
7. Possible site for a **Skate Park**, an idea popular with both boys and girls.
8. **Improve Bike Park** – and design it together with us so it has more variety – jumps and better runs. It also needs signs which prevent clashes with walkers and dogs, and a litter bin.
9. **More mountain-bike trails**.
10. **Better maintained cycle way**, so it isn't so overgrown and is kept clear of horse and dog poo.
11. **Improve our second Play Park**.
12. **Concerns about fishing in Loch Eabarach** harming the local ecology.
13. **Faerie Tree:** needs litter bins and signs which ask people not to leave decorations. It disrespects the place, harms nature, and we have to tidy it up.

Appendix D: Sensitive or Exclusion Zones for Developments

KEY:

● **Sensitive or Exclusion Zones for Development.** These are areas we have agreed to be important to us, where their value may not be clear to non-residents or formally protected. These were (1) Loch Ard south shore, (2) the area around Lochan Spling and the sculpture trail, (3) the old and bluebell woods around Doon Hill , and (4) Balanton Woods.

Appendix E: Potential Development Areas (community, housing, economic)

In a blue-sky thinking task at the Memorial Hall which explored potential areas which could be suitable for meeting our development priorities – Community, Housing and Economic – groups of residents put forward 11 ideas or opportunities.

It should be made clear, that these were neither considered in depth nor agreed by consensus, and should be viewed rather as ideas for further exploration and discussion as a community.

The 11 ideas were (numbers relating to the Key on the map).

1. Uphill areas towards the Dukes Pass nr old slate village may provide "Hollywood Hills" sensitive housing options with active travel route to village

2. Potential housing dev area round the back of Renagour Farm?

3. Could Flood Adaptation Project surface low-impact technological solutions to building on a floodplain (e.g. houses on stilts, river management, or raising the road)

4. Potential to repurpose low-lying area for "green tourism" rewilding (e.g. beavers) or for district heat generation?

5. Old Coop site: potential community purchase for housing, pop-up food or craft market, pop-up cinema, youth or childcare services, or a small heritage museum?

6. Wool Centre: potential community purchase for ideas including a Care Home, or waste management facility?

7. Wildlife Area potential community use for food-growing or better facilities for young people (e.g. bike / skate park)

8. Dounans and surroundings flagged with potential for business dev for office spaces or a "country campus"?

9. Potential housing dev near Braeval, providing (with a safe crossing) active travel route to school and the village?

10. Potential for tourist dev near Braeval Forestry area, leveraging parking area and Rob Roy Trail access (one idea: community-owned glamping pods)?

11. Potential for opening up lower-grade commercial forestry areas for housing and economic dev with appropriate river crossing and infrastructural improvements (one resident thought there used to be 'another bridge over the river near the Manse bridge'

12. Potential for community growing projects around Kirkton: pigs, bees, coppicing?

## **Appendix F:** Overview of Aberfoyle Community Life Plan Process

The Aberfoyle Community Life Plan is the outcome of a resident-led coproduction process initiated by Strathard Community Council, with funding support from Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park and Stirling Council. The process was designed and facilitated by the Community Chartering Network (CCN) in collaboration with a local Working Group, and required significant innovations and adaptations as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The original proposal entailed the same process as that for the previous Kinlochard and Stronachlachar / Inversnaid Community Life Plans, which were driven by a programme of face-to-

face community events. The new process took place almost entirely online, apart from two face-to-face events in the final stages, and entailed 3 phases between September 2020 and November 2021:

- **July-October 2020. Draft Plan**. A Working Group of 20 residents of Aberfoyle was formed, with the aim of representing to the extent possible the range of different perspectives, geographies and demographics in the ward. Via a series of online videoconferences with use of a digital workspace, the Working Group discussed and agreed a rough draft Plan, entailing 8 overarching priorities. These priorities and discussions provided a basis for Working Group members to represent the needs and aspirations of Aberfoyle residents at a workshop to coproduce new Land Use and Planning Guidance for Strathard (the Strathard Framework).

- **November 2020-June 2021. Gathering support and input for the Draft Plan**. Following a strategy coproduced by the Working Group, this phase began with building a contact database of residents of the ward, either by email or by post. The first call in 2020 involved a maildrop of a leaflet to every door in the ward, informing residents about the Draft Plan and an invitation to sign up to view and contribute to it. As this had limited success, a second call out was executed by Working Group members in March 2020 using social media and by leafletting door-to-door and in local shops. By the end of this, over 60% of all residents of the ward had signed up to participate.

  The draft Plan was sent out to residents expressing interest in May 2021 for comment and improvement via an online or postal survey. While some additional priorities were put forward, none of the 8 original priorities received strong objections, although preferences varied between individuals and groups. These appear in overall rank order in the figure below, where the top two were the clear outright priorities for residents overall.
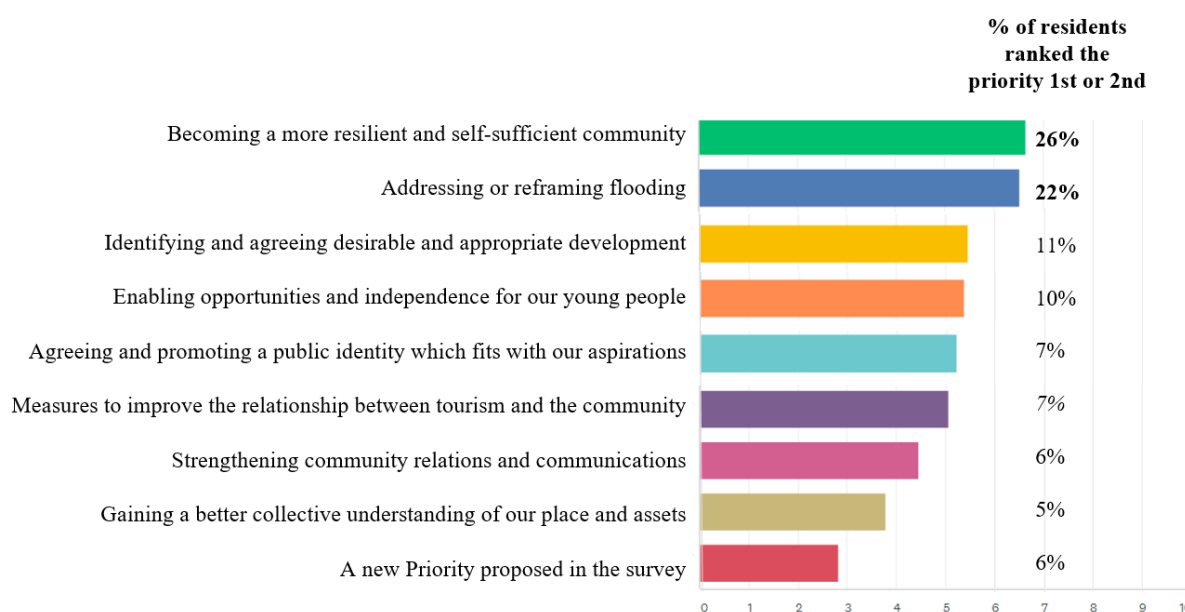
- **July 2021-January 2022. Finalising the first Community Life Plan**. Comments and improvements from the survey responses were then incorporated into the Draft Plan, which was shared with all those who had signed up to contribute. Two face-to-face community events were planned to discuss and agree the expanded Plan. These events were postponed due to Covid-19 and eventually took place at Aberfoyle Memorial Hall in October 2021, including two meetings for adults and one for young people. A total of over 50 residents

engaged in the lively discussions across the two events, from which crystallised the Important Things, Principles, Themes and Priorities set out here. A final document was written up and sent out to all those who provided contact information for comment, improvement or strong objection in January 2022, to ensure it was a faithful and accurate reflection of what had been agreed by the Community.

Each stage was followed-up by an outcomes document written by CCN where all participating residents were invited to amend or object to any part of these written summaries. This included creating online or postal questionnaires for those who could not attend the face-to-face events to contribute to and comment on the Life Plan. Between the events and online questionnaires, 60+% of all residents on the electoral register will have been engaged around the coproduction of the Community Life Plan.

Discussions across the various stages covered a wide range of issues and subjects relevant to the ward. They began with a look back over the history and heritage of the Community from the distant geological past to the present (see Appendix A). This aimed to put into context and shed light on the current conditions and nature of the area in order that residents could reflect on the present and consider the future. Due to the methodology taken, the Aberfoyle Community Life Plan incorporates more ideas for action around Themes and Priorities than the other Strathard Community Life Plans.

The primary focus of the process was to give space for residents to discuss significant developmental issues and find consensual points of agreement on what was most important to the life of the community. These were then used as a basis for articulating shared aspirations for future local development and action. The aim is that the Community Life Plan is founded only on what has been consensually agreed by residents. Where any strong objections to any of the ideas or content have been raised, or where proposals have yet to be agreed, these are noted in the Community Life Plan.

We are aware that the Community Life Plan document represents a 'snap-shot' of the Community's aspirations and wishes at its time of creation. The Community Life Plan itself is seen and understood as a process of engagement and activity, rooted in and guided by the aspirations expressed in this document. We have acknowledged to update the Community Life Plan document as and when this becomes necessary and to treat it as a new chapter in our process of community-building and place-making, rather than as an end point in itself.