

# Carstairs Junction Community Action Plan

2020-2025



COMMUNITY ACTION  
LANARKSHIRE



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# 1. Background and Context

## 1.1 Why have a Community Action Plan?

A Community Action Plan (CAP) is developed by the local community, for the local community. Local people can best assess problems, needs and potential of the community, and use this to harness community action and change.

Plans provide a framework for implementing activities decided by the community itself, with a focus on working together to work through identified issues, rather than just a physical development such as building houses, providing health services or recreational facilities. The process of working together can create a better sense of community.

The plan sets out what the community wants to achieve, and what activities and resources are required for it to be successful. Many funding bodies prefer community consultation to have taken place before a project has been funded.

## 1.2 Who has Prepared these Plans?

The Carstairs Junction Five Year Community Action Plan was overseen by a Steering Group, comprising of representatives from Carstairs Community Council, Carstairs Junction Primary School, Carstairs Parish Church, Carstairs Junction Welcome All Hub, Healthy Valleys, Londis and The Playbarn. It sets out the views and aspirations of the residents of Carstairs Junction.

The plan was facilitated by Community Action Lanarkshire (CAL), a LEADER supported programme that offers capacity building support for rural communities in North Lanarkshire Council and South Lanarkshire Council. This CAP is one of a number of plans facilitated through CAL. Funded by LEADER, the Steering Group commissioned Community Enterprise to undertake the development of the CAP, from January to May 2020.

## 1.3 What We Did

A comprehensive programme of community engagement was carried out between January and March 2020 as outlined below. It was supported by a media campaign including multiple press releases in the Carluke Lanark Gazette, posters and leaflet drops. Unfortunately, the onset of COVID-19 social distancing restrictions put in place in March required that some planned approaches had to be remodelled or cancelled. The final part of the community consultation, which would have presented research to date, asked people to vote on project priorities and provided a forum to discuss ideas, had originally been planned as a Spring Tea. It took place as a Virtual Spring Tea instead.

This document provides an overview of key information gathered during the process. For full details and links to other resources, please refer to the Research Report, available on request.



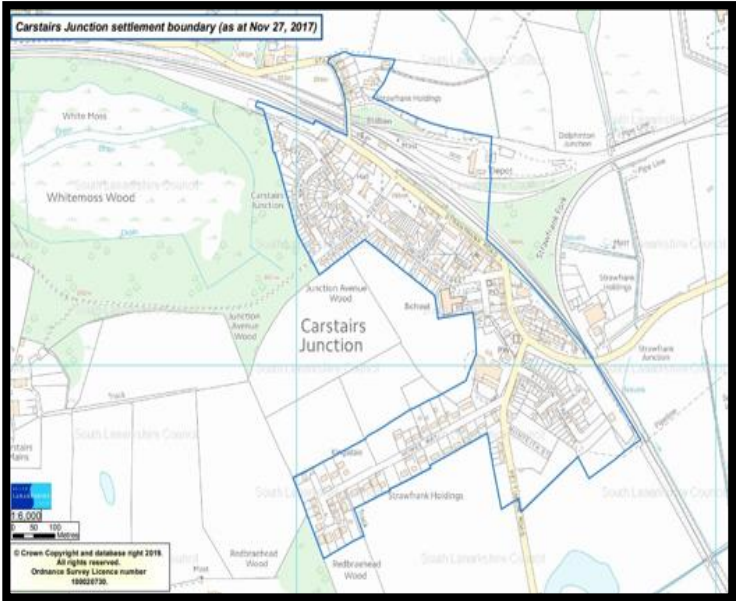
# 2. Our Community

## 2.1 Carstairs Junction

Carstairs Junction is a village in South Lanarkshire situated on the river Clyde in peaceful open and scenic countryside. The village grew around the railway station which opened in 1848, though its importance as a junction reduced with the introduction of fast through electric trains.

It lies 1.5 km east southeast of Carstairs and 8 km east of Lanark. It is located almost exactly between the Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Carstairs Junction has a busy and friendly Primary School, playpark with newly installed play equipment, local shop, Hall and a community flat owned by South Lanarkshire Council Housing Department which has accommodated the Welcome All Hub since March 2020. Carstairs Junction lacks a range of other facilities and assets. There is no pub, restaurant, café, GP surgery, choice of shops, sports facilities, bank, mobile services e.g. ice cream van etc.



## 2.2 Demographics and Statistics

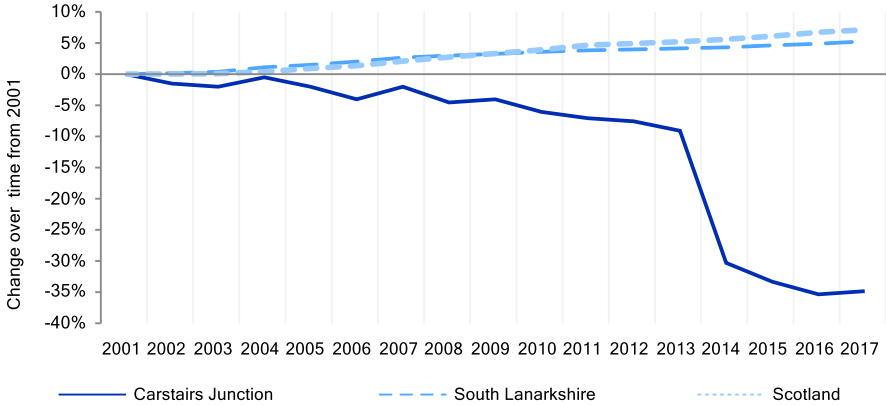


### Population

Carstairs Junction has a population of 640.

At 19.2%, this area has a higher proportion of 0-15 year olds than average. The working age population is also higher within Carstairs Junction, 2.7% higher than regional averages and 2% higher than national levels. Conversely, the proportion of adults aged 65+ is considerably lower than comparator measures

The population can be seen to be in slow decline until around 2013-14 at which point a sharp decline can be seen. This represents a percentage change of approximately 20% and in real terms.





### Housing

Owner occupier levels are between 15.2% and 21.5% lower in Carstairs Junction when compared to averages for Scotland and South Lanarkshire; 76.9% of housing in this area are classified within Council Tax Band A, the lowest band available.



### Transport /Connectivity

33.2% of households in Carstairs Junction do not have access to a car, 5% higher than the regional levels and 2.7% higher than national figures. A further 35.3% of households only have access to one car which is considerably lower than the proportion observed across South Lanarkshire and Scotland



### Employment

22.1% of employed residents work in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations. This is lower than the national average (at 37.8%). The proportion of skilled tradespeople locally, however, is almost 5% higher than the overall figure for Scotland. This indicates the presence of a skilled local workforce who have the potential to be a valuable, hands-on, asset within community projects.

The area has a slightly higher than average level of unemployment benefit claimants locally (2.7% higher than national averages). When examined in more detail, this appears to be centred around youth unemployment claimants (aged 18-24 years) and male claimants.



### Households

The number of lone parent households – along with cohabiting households – reverse this trend with these both emerging as more common types of in Carstairs Junction when compared to Scotland as a whole.



### Families

The proportion of children in ‘out of work’ households is 5.5% higher than the national average and the levels of children in poverty is also considerably higher than comparator figures. The children in poverty measure for Carstairs Junction is 28.8% 14.4% higher than South Lanarkshire.



### Health

Local GP services are provided by Medwyn Medical practices, operating two surgeries in neighbouring villages of Carstairs and Carnwath.

There is no surgery in Carstairs Junction.



### Education

The proportion of people aged 16-74 years with no qualifications is 36.7%, considerably higher than the regional and Scottish averages (29% and 26.3%, respectively). Only 12% of local residents have Level 4+ qualifications (correlating to those with a Degree or higher).

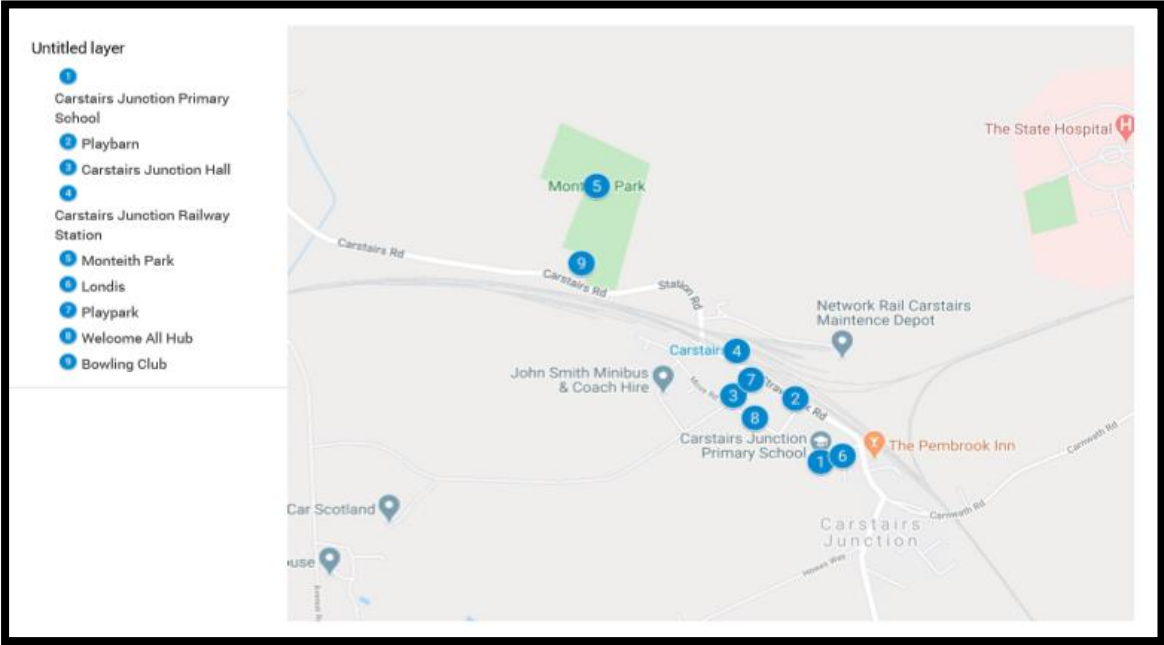


### Vulnerable Groups

The data zone for Carstairs Junction (S01012581) has an overall SIMD rank of 3 illustrating a fairly high level of deprivation. When examining each domain we can see that ‘education/skills’ and ‘geographic access to services’ are both ranked in the second highest deprivation decile (2).

### 2.3 Community Assets

Carstairs Junction has a very limited range of services and facilities available to its residents. The map below reflects these assets and services within the community to shine a light on the nature of the place, identify gaps, ensure we invest in the good things that already exist and to encourage collaboration. It is a snapshot of the area and is not meant to be exhaustive.



#### 1. Carstairs Junction Primary and ELC

Carstairs Junction Primary was rebuilt and reopened in 2017. It is a busy and friendly school, which is very much part of and respected by the local community. The school has a capacity for 110 pupils and currently has 105 children in the school, including 26 pupils in Additional Support Needs Classes and 28 pupils in the ELC.



#### Playbarn

The Playbarn is a high quality and friendly childcare service (before and after school) which offers extensive indoor play and activity areas as well as secure outdoor play areas. Transport is provided to and from a wide range of primary schools in the Lanark, Carstairs and Clyde Valley areas. The Playbarn is seeking funding to support children in poverty from catchment schools and Carstairs Junction in particular, which will support children so they can benefit from play and social experiences, enabling parents to seek employment or training opportunities.

#### 2. Carstairs Junction Hall



Carstairs Junction Hall is situated on St Charles Avenue in the centre of the village. The accommodation comprises a main hall with stage, meeting room, kitchen and toilet facilities. This facility can be used for a variety of community, social and commercial activities. The key users of the Hall are Healthy Valleys who provide a community cafe on a Monday and yoga class on a Thursday. The Hall lacks some modern services e.g. Wi-Fi and it can be costly to hire. Consequently, the hall usage is significantly under capacity.



### 3. Carstairs Junction Railway Station

Carstairs Junction railway station is a major junction station on the West Coast Main Line. The rail station is used by people from neighbouring towns and villages who commute to Glasgow and Edinburgh. This has presented challenges with car parking in Carstairs Junction and a park and ride carpark is currently being built.

### 4. Monteith Park

Monteith Park occupies 23 acres of land and is situated at the edge of Carstairs Junction on the approach to Carstairs Village. The park once hosted a children's play area (which is no longer there) and playing fields. The tennis court is now used as a car park and the football pitch and pavilion are not maintained. It is not a valued community resource due to ongoing challenges associated with flooding and lack of South Lanarkshire Council investment.



### 5. Londis Store

The Londis Store and Post Office is run by independent retailers and provides a range of everyday essentials and flexible opening hours.

### 6. Playpark



The park with new, modern equipment was officially opened in 2018 and was funded through a grant from waste management firm Viridor and matched by funds raised by the Carstairs Junction residents. This demonstrates community spirit which was supported by the Community Council and Parent Teacher Council.

### 7. Welcome All Hub Community Flat

Acting on a feasibility study and community support, the Welcome All Hub has entered into an agreement with South Lanarkshire Council Housing to rent a flat in Coronation Street.

### 8. Bowling Green

Based within Monteith Park, the bowling green closed in 2019.

**Other Assets** include the closed Pembroke Inn, the State Hospital, Monteith House which now operates as a care home, the Masonic Lodge and Woodland and countryside.

**Services:** Residents of Carstairs Junction are required to travel to Carstairs, Carnwath and Lanark to access shops and retail including GP and health services, shops and retail (including energy top up cards), places of worship and High School.

### Community groups and organisations

In addition to the community assets detailed above there are a small number of active community groups operating in Carstairs Junction. Healthy Valleys are a vital partner delivering services in the village such as the Community Cafe and yoga class. Carstairs Community Council is pro-active and there is a Messy Church initiative, as well as a small number of activities in the underutilised hall.

Some residents of Carstairs Junction access activities in groups in the neighbouring village of Carstairs Village in the Community Centre, 1.5 miles away. These include the Carstairs Anchor Boys and Boys Brigade, Carstairs Girls Brigade Explorers and Juniors, Carstairs Parish Church Guild, Prayer Group, Bible Study and SoSing choir group.

Lists of services as well as community groups and organisations can be found in the Research Report, available upon request.

### 3. Community and Stakeholder Feedback

The consultation aimed to gain wide representation from the community by using a variety of approaches including events, an online survey, focus groups and one to one conversations.

A range of communication channels were used to inform and engage including press releases, social media, posters, leafleting and word of mouth.



#### 3.1 Community Survey

The community survey was available online from the start of January to the end of March 2020. It was also available in paper copy format at the Londis shop and was promoted in the Primary School through the school app and copies sent home with the children. A number of people represented family groups rather than individuals and altogether, the survey represented the views of 124 people including children.

##### Profile

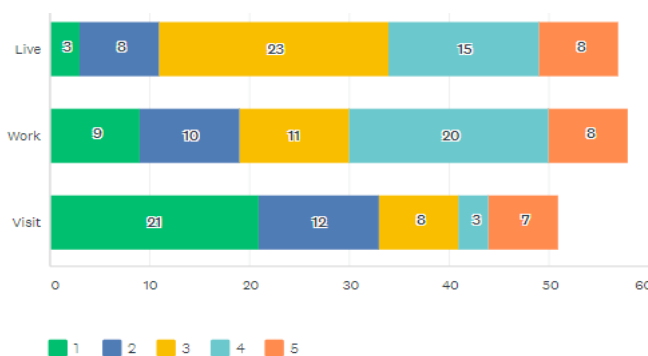
All age groups were represented, although the 35-65 age brackets were most heavily represented.

The majority of people have lived in the area between 6-30 years (48%) and more than 30 years (24%) indicating a settled community.

##### Feelings about the Place

A significant 63% felt they would still be living in Carstairs Junction in 10 years' time, indicating a long-term commitment to the area. Those who don't intend to stay gave their reasons as lack of community spirit, lack of services as they get older and the lack of appropriate housing to meet the needs of people with mobility challenges.

##### Rating Carstairs Junction



5% , 16% and 41% of people dislike Carstairs Junction as a place to live, work and visit (respectively).

Overall 80% of respondent stated they feel Carstairs Junction is a good place to live, 67% like or love working there (score 3-5) and 36% like or love to visit Carstairs Junction (Score 3-5)



## What is Valued Most and What are the Challenges

People were asked to choose up to 5 aspects that they **value about Carstairs Junction and would like developed or “built” upon**. They were then asked to comment on what the biggest challenges were and the things that needed to be addressed. The table shows what is important to people with the top 5 highlighted.

Answer Choice	What is Valued	Challenges
Transport and getting about within the community	51%	30%
Our streets and spaces	43%	42%
Feeling safe	40%	12%
Things to do (play and leisure)	39%	41%
Community facilities	37%	55%
A place which cares	37%	22%
Strong sense of belonging to community	33%	27%
Housing for all	25%	25%
Jobs and a strong local economy	13%	22%
Good social contact	11%	32%
Influencing what happens	11%	17%
Heritage	0%	0%

In open comments, respondents identified the new playpark, access to open country and woodland and quiet roads, as opportunities for Carstairs Junction to be a cycling destination. The primary school was highly valued, as was the local shop.

People said they had good neighbours and appreciated the quiet but also appreciated services starting to open up including Healthy Valleys and the Welcome All Hub.

“I have only worked here for 2 years but I have been made most welcome by the families I have met and worked alongside”

People particularly noted that residents needed to be more respectful of the **environment** and keeping the area clean and tidy.

Some streets in particular are so poorly kept that it's an eye sore. Rubbish spreads all over due to lack of garden, bin and general maintenance.

**Lack of community spirit** emerged consistently as a big issue. With the lack of gathering places, people feel they are not mixing as much as they used to. With no pub, hotel or café there is no natural gathering spaces and a real **dearth of facilities and services**.

Our village has drastically changed from a static population to an ever changing one. Due to lack of heart in the Community we now don't even know our neighbours

It was particularly noted that there is nothing for young people.

There was some concern about very small numbers of volunteers and a low level of community activism.

Everybody wants things to do but nobody wants to help get anything up and running and keep it running

Roads and **transportation** were identified as a concern, especially the Sunday train service and poor wheelchair or bike access to rail station platforms.

### **Skills and Experience**

Survey respondents were asked what skills and experience they could bring to developing projects in Carstairs Junction as part of stimulating community activism and volunteering. There were offers of support to work with young people and several comments around bringing people together to co-ordinate activity. Communication and information sharing was also suggested and there is a clear appetite for more people to get involved in the structures required to encourage them. There were a number of offers of more practical assistance from DIY and gardening to litter picks.

Having been involved in various groups within the community, I am committed to help put activities back into the area for this and future generations.

## **3.2 Stakeholder Interviews**

A number of stakeholders were approached to take part in the consultation and give their perspective about the community. This included South Lanarkshire Council officers, local business representatives, NHS officials, community group leaders, schools, Scotrail and Police Scotland. The following is a summary of these interviews.

### **The challenges facing Carstairs Junction**

High levels of isolation in the area was identified as a key issue. This isolation was related to social isolation and loneliness, geographic isolation from services, digital isolation and poor connectivity and a lack of transport links. This resonated with the survey results.

Lack of access to basic facilities like good shops, pub and GP etc. while transport is poor and hard to access if you have a mobility issue. The Hall is rundown and not affordable for community groups. This was consistent with the survey results and the feedback from public consultations.

Lack of access to information where people are unsure what is available. General advice and support is lacking for residents dealing with social, health, economic issues (including DWP), and mental health.

Lack of employment and insecure employment was important. It was also noted that there were learning gaps and that people have low digital skills.

Poor health and a need to enhance the well-being of local people.

An environment that is not attractive and a need to develop good green space.

### **Project Ideas**

- Scope to develop Monteith Park
- Community garden projects
- Influencing housing developments
- An advocacy service would help some vulnerable residents
- Community café or social space for people to meet
- Better transport infrastructure
- Improved community facilities, assets and services for residents
- Introduction of a community mobile shop
- Estate and environmental improvements
- A joined-up approach for a low carbon economy
- Activities and partnership links which focus on community resilience in emergencies and build community spirit
- The GP Attend Anywhere Scheme could be introduced in the area
- The development of cycle and walking paths
- Electric vehicle charging point

### 3.3 Community Ceilidh

A free Family Community Ceilidh was held to launch the Community Action Plan project. The event was advertised by poster, social media, word of mouth, through the school and on the Eventbrite platform. This welcomed and highly successful event was attended by around 60 people in the Carstairs Junction Hall. The Steering Group took an active role in organising the event and ensuring its success. The ceilidh aimed to be a consultation opportunity to hear people's views but was also a chance for people to come together and connect socially.



The feedback and views gathered at the ceilidh are summarised below:

#### Good things about Carstairs Junction

Assets	People	Services	Neighbourhood and Environment	Transport and Roads
The local shop Good play park The school and nursery	Small number of volunteers We look after each other here – family	Healthy Valleys Community Cafe	Countryside access Quiet	Train station

#### Challenges about Carstairs Junction

Assets	People	Services	Neighbourhood and Environment	Transport And Roads
No snack options in the community Need new use for old bookies building Not many shops	Lack of community spirit Isolated community The area is a dormant village now	Statutory sector not listening Need to have more community events	Litter – especially Coronation Street & the Avenue Dog fouling	Speed of traffic on Strawfrank Road Lack of reliable transport Poor access to trains and buses No bridge to Pettinain

## Project Ideas

Assets	Services	Neighbourhood and Environment	Transport And Roads
Dog park Better hall for the community with up-to-date facilities Takeaway Revamp Monteith Park Have a football pitch and football team for all ages Somewhere to socialise	Summer group in the summer months Community Events Gala Day Parties – BBQ's together Sport and Activity Keep fit classes Community library Men's shed Community pub	Gardens, flower beds, Carstairs in bloom Litter picker Flower beds through the village Clean up and revamp streets, pavements, exterior of homes not covered by upgrade scheme Support to help people tidy gardens & houses e.g. lawnmowers/ladders /strimmers Public art	One-way system along Coronation Street past the shop Improved transport links – i.e. train times & stops from England Bridge fixed quicker

The ceilidh was also videoed and can be seen by following this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XPtqAE19-g>

### 3.4 Youth Ideas

Using a platform called All our Ideas, young people were asked to suggest then vote on ideas for projects they would like to see. 11 ideas were suggested and 194 votes were cast. The most popular ideas were youth club, youth cafe, film nights and activity holidays.

### 3.5 Focus Groups

Two Focus Groups were held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020 in the Carstairs Junction Hall. The main issues identified by local people were:

- A feeling that there is a lack of community spirit
- The lack of things to do and structured activities for different groups including men, young people
- The neighbourhood and environment is run down. This is perceived to be because the Council do not invest in the area (apart from the recent investment in some houses) and some houses, gardens and community spaces are not well tended
- The need to travel for essential services including medical services, banking, electricity keys. This is further complicated by the irregular and infrequent public transport service and poor digital connectivity
- The need for a wider range and improved community assets, including the poor facilities in the Hall, lack of shops and the need for a community café.

The local businesses and community stakeholders attended a second group. The main issues identified by were:

- Concern over the Council housing department approach to allocations and the lack of engagement from new residents in the community
- The public transport bus timetable and service is unreliable and infrequent. There is no disabled access to the train platforms
- Nowhere to buy refreshments
- The Councillors praised the local community for coming together in the Playpark Project and identified it as a successful community activity

### 3.6 Virtual Spring Tea



Following the success of the Family Community Ceilidh event, the Steering Group put plans in place to hold a Spring Tea event on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 in the Carstairs Junction Hall. The purpose of this event was to report back on the consultation, share what people had to say, flesh out ideas, agree priorities for the area and hear the results of the photography competition.

As with other organised activities, the COVID-19 restrictions meant that the event could not go ahead as a face to face gathering. A live Virtual Spring Tea online on the Community Action Lanarkshire Facebook page and YouTube took place to allow interested people to further influence the CAP process and shape priorities. The virtual tea took place with a live Facebook video presentation, live voting and comments and a follow up opportunity to view the video and provide further feedback.

<https://www.facebook.com/118454058311579/videos/149338639734016/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CD2NM35gq5M&t=1618s>

The Virtual Spring Tea reached 483 people on the Facebook page, generated 98 engagements, had 261 views and generated 14 general comments.

A short questionnaire was launched after the live Facebook presentation to give people an opportunity to vote and rate priorities. 38 surveys were completed and respondents were asked to select their high medium and low priorities.

Housing and Neighbourhoods	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
1. Setting up a Tenants and Residents Association and /or Development Trust to influence decision making through community engagement and consultation	30%	38%	32%
2. Find out more about how the Council allocates houses and hear about the future plans for Council housing	21%	37%	42%
3. Improve the neighbourhood and environment including green spaces, verges, litter pick	50%	26%	24%
Roads and Transportation	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
1. Improved local bus service	50%	36%	14%
2. Road safety	30%	46%	24%
3. Active travel	24%	21%	55%
Leisure and Outdoor Space	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
1. Develop walking and cycle paths to make the most of the woodland space	37%	51%	11%
2. Improve and rejuvenate Monteith Park	49%	34%	17%
3. Develop a community garden	16%	16%	68%
Community Resources	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice
1. Community Café	36%	33%	31%
2. Develop accessible groups (young people, elderly, Men's Shed, befriending)	45%	37%	18%
3. Opportunities to share resources and skills	16%	32%	51%



## **4. What We Found Out : The big Issues**

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### **Access to resources and services**

People appreciate the assets that do exist, including the playpark, the school and the shop. With a poorly used hall, only one shop and no GP, pub or café, there was a consistently high concern about a lack of facilities.

Healthy Valleys are an active partner and the Welcome All Hub aims to develop a programme of activities and support from the community flat.

Linked to the lack of facilities is the lack of services. Though there are some local services, most people have to travel outwith the village to access what they need. There is also a lack of information and a lack of connectedness between services that do exist.

It is recognised that the population is in decline and this may be due to the lack of things to do, so there is a need to make this a more vibrant and interesting community. Numbers of children under 15 years is higher than the South Lanarkshire and Scottish average so there is also a need for a youth and family focus to these activities.

### **Community Connections**

A significant majority (80%) of those surveyed rated Carstairs Junction highly as a good place to live. Additionally, there is a stable population who have lived there for some time (24% have lived there for over 30 years). 63% of survey respondents expected to be living in Carstairs Junction in 10 years' time. However, 32% of respondents in the survey said there is a low sense of belonging and social contact in Carstairs Junction, which is reflective of the recurring theme that came up through the research that there is poor community spirit. People feel that the lack of community spirit and social connectivity is partly related to changing demographics and partly to the lack of gathering spaces such as pubs.

### **The Physical Environment**

Residents were concerned about the appearance of the place, in relation to green space, gardens and litter, indicating that there was a lack of pride in the community. When prompted to suggest any ideas or projects for improvements, local people suggested neighbourhood improvements, rejuvenation of Monteith Park and access to green space.

Carstairs Junction is blessed with a beautiful surrounding natural environment and there was appreciation of this through the consultation process. The community clearly value the green space on their doorstep and want to see more being made of the woodland areas, the park, and the river, with potential to develop more walking and cycling paths around the area.

### **Getting About**

Many people consulted highlighted the need for more regular and reliable public transport operating to/from the area, which in particular could help combat social isolation, especially amongst the older population and those who do not have access to a car. In addition, transport solutions need to be accessible to all.

## 5 Action Plan

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### 5.1 Vision

We live in a safe and friendly place with a strong sense of community, able to enjoy a place that offers quality of life to all residents

### 5.2 Thematic Areas

Based on the research findings, we have identified six key project areas for the Community Action Plan along with project priorities to be developed and delivered over the next five years. Projects will be developed by various groups and new groups within the community. The full Carstairs Junction Community Action Plan Research Report, available by request, should be referred to in the development of projects.



### 5.3 Values and Principles

The following values and principles will underpin the way in which this action plan is rolled out and implemented;

1. Everyone's plan – project development is the responsibility of the whole community and projects can be developed by existing organisations or groups of people coming together
2. Co-production – all ideas should be planned and researched openly and with lots of groups contributing to the ideas as they develop
3. Collaboration – partnership will be at the heart of any activity arising from this plan
4. Inclusion – everyone is invited to participate and everyone benefits, regardless of age and ability
5. Effectiveness – the success of this plan will be judged on things happening
6. Involvement – ensuring the community is involved in decisions that affect their lives

### 5.4 Monitoring the Community Action Plan

Monitoring and evaluation is an essential requirement of any Community Action Plan to ensure it is being implemented. The steering group will evolve into a working group, meeting twice a year to review progress on the plan and may form the basis of a Development Trust. Keeping records against each theme and project will be a useful tool to ensure progress is being maintained. These meetings will be open to accessible to all groups and individuals. Evaluation provides an opportunity to reflect and learn from activities, assess the outcomes and effectiveness of a project and think about new ways of doing things.

## **5.5 Project Priorities**

### **The Community in Control**

#### **Aim**

To ensure the community action plan is progressing effectively over the five years and benefiting the people who live in Carstairs Junction.

#### **Summary**

This is an action plan for the whole community and any local organisation or group of residents can come forward to lead on projects. Though it is not the responsibility of the steering group to lead on everything, a mechanism will be required to oversee the process. In the short term, the current steering group will evolve into more of a management group. Following training and support during year two, the aspiration is for this group to become a constituted place-based group, such as a Development Trust or a Tenants and Residents Group. A Development Trust has the powers to raise funds, acquire land and employ staff, to achieve community renewal goals, whilst a Tenants and Residents Group represents the needs of households. In time, a Development Officer may be required to provide support with project implementation. Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS) and Tenants Information Service (TIS) can provide free support during the information and establishment phase.

#### **Existing Provision**

Though the Community Council is a strong proactive organisation, there are restrictions on what it can do. For example, they cannot employ staff or acquire assets amongst other things. There is currently no village wide representative group and this has limited the ability to progress with projects.

#### **Supporting evidence,**

The majority of people have lived in the area between 6-30 years (48%) and more than 30 years (24%) indicating a settled community that would be an ideal base to build a representative body from. The 2005 Community Action Plan was not implemented due to there being no active group to drive it forward. Setting up a Development Trust and / or a Tenants and Residents Group was voted second choice in the priorities under Housing and Neighbourhoods via the Virtual Spring Tea.

#### **Funding options**

In early years small grants from National Lottery Awards for All, Scottish Government Investing in Communities Fund and Foundation Scotland may help kick start activity. As the Development Trust grows there may be some funding via DTAS such as Strengthening Communities funding.

#### **Potential partners**

It is important to connect to the Community Council, Welcome All Hub, the Primary School, local businesses and other local groups and organisations through the development of this group. DTAS will be a strong partner in the establishment of the Development Trust whilst the Tenants Information Service would assist in the establishment of a Tenants and Residents Group. VASLAN, the local Third Sector Interface, may help the group in deciding which option to choose, as well as support the group policies as more local people get involved. The Rural Development Trust may provide strategic support and may be willing to act as employer if there is a development officer.

## A Better Informed Community

### **Aim**

To empower the people of Carstairs Junction to take control of the things and spaces that matter to them.

### **Summary**

A communications group will be set up in year one as a sub-group of the evolved steering group. This will be a precursor to establishing a community newsletter (both digital and physical) that will be distributed to the whole community and that will need to be resourced. In future years, this could become more professional, attracting commercial sponsorship as well as grants. The group will support the promotion of new clubs / activities / events / initiatives arising from the plan, as well as share news and information on a range of topics that is relevant to the community. A welcome pack for new residents will be developed in the medium term, to help them feel linked into the community. The group will also have a lobbying and campaigning role with things that are outwith the control of the residents, particularly in relation to housing and transport. They will start to lead on lobbying for better facilities at the Park and Ride and more traffic calming measures in the village. SLC can arrange for speed surveys to be undertaken for areas where communities consider there to be an issue, via the Roads and Transportation Department.

### **Existing Provision**

There is no local community newsletter or website advertising what is happening around the community. There are limited local noticeboards and many people reflected that it is hard to find out what is happening locally.

### **Supporting evidence,**

Only 11% of survey respondents feel positive about being able to influence what happens in Carstairs Junction and it is important that this capacity grows. It will help residents feel more connected to Carstairs Junction, engendering a pride in place, as well as tackle social isolation that was highlighted in the community consultation and stakeholder interviews. Furthermore, lack of access to information on social, health, economic issues and mental health, was identified in stakeholder interviews.

### **Funding options**

Local funds such as the South Lanarkshire Council Community Grant Scheme and Renewable Energy Fund may invest in this kind of activity. If this grows further funding from charitable trusts may be required.

### **Potential partners**

The University of the West of Scotland or other journalism school may be able to provide support and local partners such as the school and community council will be important links. South Lanarkshire Council and the Community Council will support any lobbying activity about roads and transport and Scotrail could be an active partner in improvements to the station and its surroundings.

## Improving Community Connections

### **Aim**

To reduce isolation and bring the people of Carstairs together through events and activities, which will strengthen a sense of community and encourage people to look after each other.

### **Summary**

Coming together as a community was seen as a real gap in the village and a priority for the action plan. A suite of events will be organised that the community can enjoy, from film nights to seasonal events, a reintroduction of the Gala Day to community parties like the ceilidh. This will require an events group or existing organisation to take on responsibility for the development and funding of such events. Long term this could be part of the remit of the Development Trust or Tenants and Residents Group.

The Healthy Valleys Community Café is well supported and there was a demand for this to be extended to become a place where people can gather more frequently. The community can work with Healthy Valleys and others to expand that offering but there is an aspiration to secure a full-time café in the village by the end of the action plan.

### **Existing Provision**

The annual Gala Day was a big social event in Carstairs Junction until it ceased in 2013. There are currently no community-wide events that take place, and limited meeting places, such as a pub or café that's open for the majority of the week.

### **Supporting evidence**

The population is in fairly steep decline, as per the Population statistics on p5 which show there's been a decrease in population of around 20% since 2014. Reducing isolation would hopefully start to see a reverse in this trend. Additionally, a lack of community spirit emerged consistently as a big issue which the community look back on as something that has been lost. 32% of survey respondents were concerned about low levels of social contact and 27% didn't feel a sense of belonging. Lack of things to do and low levels of social contact were listed as the top 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> challenges of living in the area in the initial community consultation.

### **Funding options**

Connecting isolated people and developing place-based initiatives is a key outcome of the National Lottery Community Fund which may be a strong option for funding when their fund re-opens.

### **Potential partners**

Existing groups such as the Community Council, Primary School and Welcome All Hub will play a key role in supporting these events.



## An Attractive and Accessible Environment

### Aim

To increase pride in Carstairs Junction and encourage people to make it more attractive. In addition, increasing access to the outdoors will both improve health and well-being and could help to develop jobs and employability by enhancing skills, experience and qualifications.

### Summary

An Environment Group will be established initially as a group of local volunteers. They will undertake local improvements, most importantly regular litter picks and other improvements such as raising funds for planters and street furniture. Encouraging a sense of pride in place could be stimulated by establishing a “Carstairs Junction Pride of Place” award or taking part in Keep Scotland Beautiful initiatives. In the early years of the plan, a “living streets” project may be trialled, encouraging people to walk more and explore their local area which links to the “Getting About” theme. An initiative such as a tools swap may be considered to help people improve their gardens. Developing Monteith Park into a valuable community asset is a key priority but this will take time and the environmental group will act as a steering group, securing funds for a feasibility study to think through the plans before finally undertaking an upgrade of the park. Over time, there is an aspiration to encourage learning and employability in the village and beyond. This will evolve organically but could look like a training hub or a placement for modern apprenticeships.

### Existing Provision

There are currently no voluntary environmental initiatives in Carstairs Junction. A new Environment Group could help to fill the gap left by council cuts by engendering a greater sense of community responsibility, as well as increasing the capacity for people to take up active roles in their community.

### Supporting evidence

Issues with the local environment was a key priority during the public consultation indicating that people did not take a pride in where they lived. 42% of survey respondents value “Our streets and spaces” and it was the second biggest concern in the survey. The need for positive use of greenspace emerged as a priority during stakeholder conversations and the lack of good facilities emerged as a big issue in the community ceilidh. Improvements to the neighbourhood came out as the top priority under Housing and Neighbourhoods, whilst improve and rejuvenate Monteith Park came out as the top priority under Leisure and Outdoor Space, both in the Virtual Spring Tea consultation.

### Funding options

Small funders such as Tesco Bags for Life and the Mushroom Trust could support start-up costs in relation to environmental work. Going forward, more substantial funds will be required from sources such as the Landfill funds, Sustrans and Paths for All. If there is an aspiration to take the Monteith Park into community ownership, the Scottish Land Fund may be an option, and this will be considered during the action plan.

### Potential partners

Carstairs Junction Primary School have been identified as an important potential partner in environmental projects, as well as other local businesses such as The Playbarn. The Community Council, with their interest in physical developments, will be actively involved as will small local community groups. External partners such as Sustrans, Living Streets, Paths for All and Greenspace Scotland may provide support and guidance.

## Getting About

### Aim

To ensure services and facilities are accessible to all and to make the community safer. This will encourage active travel and reduce car use.

### Summary

Working with the school and local groups, an Active Travel Plan will be developed that encourages walking and cycling in and around Carstairs Junction, on streets, core paths and greenspace. This could even be done in tandem with local historical research, stimulating an understanding of the heritage of Carstairs Junction and engendering a greater sense of place. It will also link with SLC Roads and Transportation and Clydesdale Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance (STAG) plans to support sustainable travel, improve signage and wayfinding related to the train station and consider the impact of further car parking for the station (see also An Attractive and Accessible Environment). It will also link to the School Travel Plan for Carstairs Junction Primary School. Funding will be sought to improve paths for walking and cycling, and the Environment Group may be able to take on small maintenance tasks in this regard. In time, it is hoped that this will evolve into a Community Transport group that in the long term will develop a transport project with suite of vehicles, ideally electric and ranging from mopeds to people carriers or just a local car share scheme.

### Existing Provision

There is currently no Active Travel Plan for Carstairs Junction, with limited Council resources allocated to path maintenance. Although there are train and bus services, it is felt that the timetables do not meet the community's needs.

### Supporting evidence

Though Carstairs Junction is a famous railway junction, the community survey identified that public transport does not meet the needs of the community in terms of timetables or accessibility, and most of the services people need are outwith the community and hard to access. 33.2% of households in Carstairs Junction do not have access to a car which is much higher than the national average. Transport and getting about within the community was identified as the top priority of what people would like to build upon in the community in the community survey, at 55%. Getting around, linked to lack of local services and the need to travel, was identified as a key issue in the community ceilidh, stakeholder interviews and focus groups. Improving the bus service was voted the top priority under the Roads and Transportation category, while develop walking and cycling paths was second highest priority under Leisure and Outdoor Space, in the Virtual Spring Tea.

### Funding options

Scotrail have small funds to support projects around stations which may be able to help with accessibility. Sustrans and the Road Safety Trust, as well as various charitable trusts support transport, in particular, active travel. The National Lottery Community Fund may be interested in funding a more substantial project to change the nature of the community through in relation to a place-based approach and climate emergency.

### Potential partners

Carstairs Junction Primary School were keen to be involved in active travel initiatives and South Lanarkshire Council Roads and Transportation Department should be consulted in any developments. Scotrail may be a partner in any rail associated developments.

## More Things to Do

### Aim

To bring services back to the local community which has to travel for most things. To address need as it changes over time in relation to poverty, health, jobs and learning by developing services here in the village that people can access easily.

### Summary

The Welcome All Hub is an important new initiative and a vital element of the early phase of this action plan is to secure a sustainable funding stream for this initiative as it is established and grows. It could be an important central point and catalyst for service development. In the medium term, a programme of activities will be created, based on community feedback with a focus on families and young people so that more and more will start to happen in Carstairs Junction. Better links will be made with local GP practices to encourage community led outreach work and 'social prescribing'. Long term, there is an aspiration to encourage a resurgence of local retail.

### Existing Provision

There is no health centre or GP surgery in Carstairs Junction and there is no pub or gathering space. Most services are in Carstairs village or further afield. There is a weekly yoga class run by Healthy Valleys that takes place in the Hall and a weekly dominos group that had been scheduled to take place in the Welcome All Hub before COVID 19 restrictions came into place, but the Messy Church is the only community group that takes place in Carstairs Junction – people have to go to Carstairs village for Carstairs Girls Brigade Explorers and Juniors, Carstairs Anchor Boys and Boys Brigade, church, Church Guild, Prayer Group, Bible Study, and SoSing choir group. Funding sought for The Playbarn to support children in poverty from catchment schools and Carstairs Junction in particular, will enable parents to seek employment or training opportunities, including any that are created through the Plan.

### Supporting evidence,

The children in poverty measure for Carstairs Junction is 28.8% which is 14.4% higher than South Lanarkshire, indicating a need for additional support. At 55%, poor community facilities was the top challenge identified in the survey, alongside 41% who identified "things to do" as something they'd like to build upon. Develop accessible groups was identified as the top priority under Community Resources in the Virtual Spring Tea.

### Funding options

The Robertson Trust and other charitable trusts will be well placed to fund these elements. Youth Scotland Rural Action Fund, Variety Youth Club Grants, Chance to Succeed and Scottish Government Investing in Communities Fund may be able to fund community and youth activities.

### Potential partners

Healthy Valleys will be an important partner for health and well-being projects, as may South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership. Business Gateway can support with financial sustainability and South Lanarkshire Council Youth and Family Learning may support project development. Seniors Together can provide support for any initiatives focussed on elderly residents.

**Get involved!**

This plan has been created by the community, for the community – anyone can get involved. To help progress or deliver any of the ideas and projects in the plan, or if you have other ideas for the future of Carstairs Junction, then please get in touch with:

Carstairs Community Council, [jacquimcdowall@outlook.com](mailto:jacquimcdowall@outlook.com), 07739 567 603

Carstairs Junction Welcome All Hub, [carstairsjunctionwelcomeallhub@hotmail.com](mailto:carstairsjunctionwelcomeallhub@hotmail.com), 07511 302 331

Many thanks to all organisations, groups, businesses, stakeholders and individuals who contributed to the production of this Community Action Plan. A special thanks is given to the steering group members who represent Carstairs Community Council, Carstairs Junction Primary School, Carstairs Parish Church, Carstairs Junction Welcome All Hub, Healthy Valleys, Londis and The Playbarn.