Plains Community Plan
2019-2024
Plains is a village outside the town of Airdrie, in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, about 14 miles east of Glasgow city centre and 32 miles west of Edinburgh. The nearest major towns are Airdrie (2.5 miles) and Coatbridge (5 miles).

There are two state schools: St David’s Primary and Plains Primary. Both schools are accommodated in a shared campus built on the former football pitches on the west side of Bruce Street. St. Philips School is an independent residential centre for the education and care of young people situated just outside Plains.

New housing developments in Plains have seen the population grow significantly in recent years. The most recent of these developments to the north east of the village, known locally as Beverley Park and Ballochney Brae, is still ongoing as of autumn 2019. The ongoing local development highlights the growing need for more and better local amenities and services.

The village was founded in the mid-19th century along what is now the A89 Airdrie to Bathgate road. The population of the village in 1860 is recorded at just over 200. Much of the original growth of the village can be attributed to the expansion of the coal mining industry in North Lanarkshire, most notably the Ardenrigg Coal Co Ltd. Much of this coal mining activity shrank in the second half of the 20th century, reflecting the situation across Scotland; however, Scotland’s largest opencast coal mine is still currently in operation at Drumshangie Moss, a few miles north-west of Plains. The village was near the site of the Stanrigg Mining Disaster, where in July 1918 a collapse led to the deaths of 19 local mine workers.

Community Planning

What is a Community Plan?
Community Plans give people a real opportunity to say what’s important to them and what needs to happen to make sure their communities are better places to live for everyone. This community plan sets out the priorities and aspirations of Plains residents and identifies ways of making these things happen.

Why do a Community Plan?
• Local people are the best source of knowledge about their communities, which leads to better decision making
• The process of working together and achieving things together creates a sense of community
• Community involvement accords with people’s right to participate in decisions that affect their lives
• Many grant-making organisations prefer, or even require, community involvement to have occurred before handing out financial assistance

What we did for this Plan
• Held a Place Standard workshop with the Plains Steering Group to draw out priority themes and key issues
• Developed a community survey based on these priorities to find out what the wider community thought
• The survey was distributed to a number of locations in Plains including the chemist, takeaway, and hairdressers where residents could pick them up and return using freepost envelopes; these locations were publicised on the community Facebook pages
• The surveys were also delivered via a bag drop in the two primary schools for pupils to take home to their families
• A separate survey for young people was distributed to pupils at the two local primary schools
• Two follow up community drop ins were held at St David’s and Plains' Primary Schools campus and at Plains Gala Day to discuss ideas with the community in more detail in order to develop projects
• The Plan was then developed based on the consultation and research was undertaken in support of project ideas

Survey Responses

174

Plains

146

Young Person Responses

2

Community Drop Ins

Background

Plains is a village outside the town of Airdrie, in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, about 14 miles east of Glasgow city centre and 32 miles west of Edinburgh. The nearest major towns are Airdrie (2.5 miles) and Coatbridge (5 miles).

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Plains Community Futures (PCF) is a voluntary group that strives to make Plains Village a more pleasant place to live and visit. It aims to bring people together to maintain and enhance the village. PCF has many projects including wooden flower tubs throughout the Main Street; a newly created woodland park with bespoke climbing boulder; and a new community garden on Main Street Plains. The group also carries out regular litter picks and welcomes new volunteers, young and old.

Plains Community Futures have recently secured funding for and begun work on the development of Stanrigg Park in the village, located on land between Jarvie Avenue and Beverly Park. The project has been supported by the Central Scotland Green Network Trust (CSGNT), and has received £90,643 funding through FCC Scottish Action Fund (formerly WREN); £135,957 from Lanarshire LEADER; while North Lanarkshire Council contributed the remaining £52,000 required. In addition to a boulder feature, play park, and playing fields, unused land prone to flooding will also become a “biodiversity haven”, and include wildlife areas, tree planting and improved footpaths.

Plains Community Council have been successful in recent years in securing improved traffic calming measures through the village, they have also advocated tirelessly on the community’s behalf on issues such as public transport and the need for a station for Plains, local amenities, and health and safety, including the location of a new Monklands Hospital at a more accessible location than Gartcosh. They campaigned successfully for the reinstatement of a post office, established and funded a lunch club for the elderly/isolated in our community, and initiated the huge civil engineering project for the safety of pedestrians at the east side of the village.

Plains Evangelical Church offer a number of activities throughout the week for the whole community including youth club, toddler group, CAMEO social group, Bible study, and church services.

Community Groups and Organisations in Plains

- Weekly lunch club
- Scouts and Beavers
- Allotment groups
- Karate
- After school clubs
- Community Learning and Development in the joint school campus
- Pensioners’ club
- Outreach Citizens’ Advice Bureau
- A number of other groups are active locally including AA

What’s Happening in Plains

Population
- 2017 Mid-year population estimates show that Plains has a population of 2,729
- 20% of residents are under 16; 64% are working age; and 16% are ages 65 or over
- The working age proportion of the population is slightly lower than what is seen across North Lanarkshire and Scotland (both 66%)
- The average age is 38.5 years old

Health
- Male life expectancy is 72.0 years, lower than the Scottish average of 77.1 years
- Female life expectancy is 77.5 years, lower than the Scottish average of 81.1 years
- 77.0% of people rate their health as good or very good; only 10% rate it as bad or very bad
- 285 people in Plains are carers

Income & Employment
- The level of income deprivation in Plains is as high as 26%
- 38% of people work full time, 13% work part time, and 5% of people are self employed
- 14% of residents are retired
- The unemployment rate is 8.5%, compared to 4.8% across Scotland

Housing
- 28% of households are made up of families with dependent children; 4% higher than the Scottish average
- 52% of homes are owned; compared to 62% nationally
- The average number of persons per household is 2.3; slightly higher than the Scottish average of 2.2

Education
- 57% of 16-17 year olds are in education; compared to 80% across Scotland
- Around 4% of 17-21 year olds enter into full time higher education
- 8% of people aged 16-19 are not in full time education, employment or training
- Wider educational attainment is lower than the Scottish average; 33% of residents have achieved qualifications at Level 2 or higher compared to 50% nationally

Access to Services
- 58% of the population live in the 25% most access deprived areas of Scotland
- The average number of cars per household is 0.9
- 73% of people travel to work by car compared to 62% nationally; 14% use public transport to get to work, lower than the national proportion of 20%
- Average drive times to GP surgery, primary and secondary schools, Post Office, and a petrol station are all below 10 minutes; public transport travel times are higher

Data sources: Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2016; Scottish Public Health Observatory; and Census 2011
The community consultation carried out in support of this plan used a three-stage approach; this allowed us to draw out priority themes and issues early on, then test the popularity of potential actions focused on those themes with the community over the next two stages.

1. **Transport**
   - No train station/ Bus route does not run regularly or in evening

2. **Traffic and Parking**
   - Bottlenecking issues on some roads/ No traffic calming through village/ Parking at school pick up

3. **Moving Around**
   - Footpath to school/ Pedestrian crossing on Main Street

4. **Work and Local Economy**
   - Difficulty finding volunteers/ Public transport issues key/ Few local employers

5. **Care and Maintenance**
   - General village clean-up/ Fly tipping/ Access to recycling facilities

Using these identified priorities as a starting point a survey was created which asked community members to say how important they felt a number of potential actions were, this was the second stage of the consultation. These actions related to the priority themes identified in the Place Standard. This process allowed for an effective prioritisation of all activities and actions listed in the survey. The survey was made available for residents to collect from locations in Plains, and an online version was created.

The third stage of the consultation involved hosting two pop-up community drop in events in the village which all community members were invited along to; the first was an evening in St. David’s Primary School and the second was a stall at Plains Gala Day. The drop ins were designed to ask questions which built on the actions identified by residents as most important to them during Stage 2; allowing us to flesh out actions and activities into more viable and detailed project ideas. The drop ins also offered a chance to discuss the Plan with community members face to face, allowing them to see how their priority issues were being actioned as the consultation progressed, and offering residents an opportunity to input their own ideas and suggestions directly. This approach enabled us to develop more robust projects which better reflect what people living in Plains want to see.
Community Drop In

Where would you like to see a community bus route from Plains to? What time of day would you be most likely to make use of a community bus?
Coatbridge was by far the most popular option for community bus route destinations, followed by Glasgow. Generally there was demand for the service throughout the week, however there was a slight preference for during the day.

Where in Plains do you think there is a need for more traffic calming measures and what type of measures would you prefer to see?
Main Street was identified as a key stretch of road in need of traffic calming measures as there are no measures currently on either of the approach roads to the village. Ballochney Road and Meadowhead Road. Another suggestion was to have ‘acoustic cameras’ which recorded vehicles breaching legal noise limits, which have recently been trialled elsewhere in the UK.

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What activities for older people would you like to see in Plains?
The most popular activity for older residents was exercise classes, with some interest from the community in a walking group, lunch club, and social events. Generally people were keen to see any sort of activity which offered an opportunity for older people to socialise, helping to reduce social isolation.

What activities for young people would you like to see in Plains?
Most options under this question were of interest to the community, with youth club, sports clubs, arts/music club, and playpark being the most popular. There was also some interest in organised shopping and cinema trips for young people, as well as volunteering and training opportunities and a youth outreach worker. Again, there was interest in having any type of new activities set up in Plains which would give local young people something positive to do.

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What kinds of community events would you like to see in Plains?
By far the most popular event people wanted to see increased support for was Plains Gala Day, as one of the drop ins took place at the Gala Day this may have had some influence, but the high attendance on the day showed that this is a popular and valued local event that should continue to be supported. The community were also keen on supporting Christmas events such as the Santa parade which happens each year. Popular potential new events were sports and music events; the community were keen to access funding to help support existing and new events in Plains.

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What kinds of sports and leisure facilities would you like to see in Plains?
The three most popular options for community members were having an outdoor gym, more walking paths, and a park run track in the village. These were among the most popular options across the whole drop in event. Other suggestions included indoor bowls and a motorbike track.

What equipment do young people want to see in play parks and where?
There was a level of support for all of the improvements suggested, trampolines were the most popular option for improvements followed by wheelchair swing, bouldering, and zip wire. Young people were supportive of all improvements that would increase the recreation opportunities available to them in Plains. Another suggestion for potential improvements was to have a skate park built in the village. Some residents expressed wariness of any improvements to play equipment in case it was vandalised.
In terms of general village improvements, what would you like to see in Plains?

Again, there was a similar level of interest in all village improvements proposed at the drop in event, this included village heritage information, entrance features, public art, and a community garden. St. David’s & Plains schools have a small shared growing space which has flower planting and food growing on site; there was interest in helping to set up and potentially use a new community garden beside the community centre. Plains Community Futures do undertake a lot of community improvements locally including installing planting tubs along the main street.

What local outdoor spaces in particular do you think need better maintained?

The walking paths in and around Plains were identified as needing to be better maintained, with a number needing to be repaved. The MUGA was also identified as needing better surfacing installed, in order to make it safer to use and more versatile. Anti-social behaviour within Plains was identified by residents as a significant local issue which has led to damage of community spaces; addressing this would reduce the need for maintenance. A covered picnic area was also suggested as a potential addition for the park.

Where do you think are the priority areas for addressing littering and fly tipping?

There were a number of areas identified as priority sites for residents; Main Street, Jarvie Avenue, Meadowhead Road, Balochney Brae, and Airdrie Hill. There was also interest in seeing a general village-wide clean up in Plains as well.

Which derelict sites do you think should be addressed as a priority and do you have any ideas about what could be done with them?

There were a number of vacant lots/premises in Plains that residents wanted to see used for provision of more community amenities. Some residents believed that proposals had been submitted for a dentist, shops and café to be built on the old Monklands Home site. Demolition work on this site began in summer 2019 with work ongoing at the time of printing.

Which of the following would you be interested in being involved with and volunteering your time to support in Plains?

The Gala Day was again the most popular option among residents, possibly due to the drop in taking place at the Gala Day, with some interest in community clean-up, befriending service, and community garden as well. Some residents discussed ways of getting more people involved, potentially through short term commitments (possibly a month) so that people weren’t tied in to being volunteers for long periods of time.

How would you prefer to be updated about events and activities happening in Plains and the wider local area?

Having a Plains website was the most popular option among residents, with updates through Facebook being the second most popular option. Generally people preferred to have information available online, although some older residents said they would like to see information available elsewhere too.

Other comments offered by the community at the drop in were:

“Need to have more for people to do in Plains, or better public transport, because have to travel to the Fort Shopping Centre or Hamilton to go to the cinema, or travel to Airdrie for swimming and some shops like the supermarket.”

“Pub! We need a pub in Plains because we have to go to the one in Airdrie now.”

“We need a doctor’s office and dentist in Plains. There used to be one in Caldercruix but it closed - now have to go to Airdrie which isn’t easy.”

“Public transport to Airdrie is not good, and it’s also really difficult to get to Motherwell on public transport.”

“Need a train station in Plains as have to go to Drumlithie currently and it’s difficult to get a taxi from there to Plains at night if coming home from Glasgow.”

“Other comments offered by the community at the drop in were:”
The images below show the consultation boards that were used at the community drop-in event. The top row shows the original boards; the bottom row shows the boards after the community indicated their preferences, and added comments using dot stickers and post-it notes.

As part of the community consultation for Plains we engaged with 146 young people at Plains and St. David’s Primary Schools. Pupils were asked to tell us how important they felt a number of proposed actions and improvements were to them for the future of Plains.

Plains Youth Survey

The four actions that most young people said were very important were having more bins in Plains, having more things for young people to do, having a safer walking route to school and having more for older people to do in the village. Interestingly, less cars at the school was the action that the fewest number of people thought was very important, but had the most ‘sort of important’ ratings. Making a community garden and having more cycle paths were the two least popular actions among young people.

Below are the common themes from the responses to the three questions we asked about living in Plains.

What do you like about living in Plains?
Sense of community, play parks, friends living nearby, it’s a quiet village, feeling safe, near the countryside, the football pitch, school, friendly people, good places to walk.

What do you not like about living in Plains?
The parks are empty, there’s lots of litter and rubbish, anti-social behaviour (shouting, drinking, fighting), there’s not a lot to do in Plains, vandalism, cars going too fast, noisy motorbikes.

What do you think could be done to make Plains a better place to live?
Make the parks better, more play park equipment, more things to do, less litter and more bins, dirt bike track, better football park, speed limit on Main Road, train station.
Community Involvement

Many community members were keen to see more opportunities within Plains for the community to get involved in activities happening locally. Plain Community Council and Plains Community Futures, as well as other local groups, have indicated that there is a demand for people to volunteer their skills and time, therefore it may be useful to look at options for better recruiting and coordinating volunteers in Plains, for example through a time bank initiative. Residents were also keen to see better publicity of what is happening already within the village, this could be through better use of existing social media channels, installing a community notice board, or creating a new community website. This could also be used for publicising any new activities which arise in future, using them as a tool for getting more residents to get involved and volunteer.

Public Transport

Public transport was identified as a major issue for Plains residents, particularly given the lack of amenities and services within the village which means many local people have to travel elsewhere to access shops, GP surgeries, leisure amenities etc. The lack of public transport has meant that many residents are limited in when they can travel outside of Plains, or are reliant on taxis and private cars. The current bus service is limited within the village with services operating between Plains and Airdrie and Coatbridge. One major difficulty was the lack of a GP surgery locally since the one in Caldercruix closed, meaning that Plains residents needed to travel to Airdrie to see a doctor which is particularly difficult and time consuming on public transport. The lack of a train station in the village was also repeatedly raised as an issue by the community, particularly given that the Airdrie - Bathgate Rail Link runs through the village without stopping; residents feel that a station is needed as the nearest stations at Drumgelloch and Caldercruix are not easily accessible without access to cars.

Traffic

Speeding through the village and on approach roads to the village was raised as an issue by a number of community members; in particular residents felt that the lack of any traffic calming measures on these roads was a significant enabling factor in traffic speeding through Plains. One major problem area is the road from Caldercruix all the way through to Airdrie on which there are no traffic calming measures along the entire stretch, which means that cars are able to speed through Plains unhindered. Many residents were keen to see some form of calming measures installed on Main Street which would make the village safer for residents crossing the road. There was interest in a number of different measures including speed bumps, chicanes, and better signage. The safety issues were the main concern for Plains residents relating to traffic, however people were also unhappy with the noise pollution associated with traffic speeding through the village.

Recreation Opportunities

Local residents were keen to see more, and a better variety of, opportunities for recreation within the village. There was a broad range of interests among residents in terms the types of opportunities people wanted to see in Plains from improved sports facilities to social events for older residents. Having a wider range of interest groups in Plains, better access to good quality sports facilities, and more activities for older people were all supported by over three quarters of respondents and they were also key points of discussion at the drop in events. The community consultation highlighted the significant level of interest in establishing more for residents to do within Plains, particularly given that transport links out of the village are not good. The level of demand from the community to create more things to do within the village suggests that new and different activities could be trialled in Plains to explore what is popular among residents and how it could potentially be introduced.

Community Priorities

Young People

Providing more activities for young people within Plains was the top priority identified by the community in the survey, 95% of people highlighted it as important to them. Throughout the consultation residents were keen to see more things for young people living within Plains to get involved in, not only would this benefit young people by giving them more opportunities to socialise, play, and learn, but also in some instances provide a positive alternative to anti-social behaviour. The popularity of the different options which were put to the community during the drop in suggest a high level of support for any new activity which targets young people in Plains. Responses from young people themselves in the youth survey showed that the vast majority of them thought it was important for the village to have more things for young people to do.

Environment

Maintaining the local environment was a key priority for the community who showed a high level of interest in addressing fly tipping and littering issues in Plains, as well as organising clean up events in the village, placing more bins around the village, and generally better maintaining outdoor spaces around the village. The environment theme within the survey had the highest proportion of actions receiving support from over 90% of respondents, further underlining to importance of the issue among residents. School pupils were particularly concerned with environmental issues, as evidenced in the youth survey results, more support for young people to make positive contributions to environmental improvements in Plains should be provided. All residents were keen to see the local environment upgraded and maintained in order to make Plains a more attractive, safe, and sustainable place to live. Having more bins was the most important action for young people in Plains in the youth survey.

Derelict Sites

There are a number of sites around Plains which residents were keen to see upgraded, and transformed into more positive spaces for the community to use. The former Monklands Home was one of these sites, although this was demolished in summer 2019, at the time of writing there were no plans available for the future of the site. Local residents were keen to see other vacant and unused sites within the village transformed potentially into housing or for the provision of new amenities. One site within the village has been considered for development into a community garden by Plains Community Futures, significant work has been carried out on the site to date.
The following sections of the Plan provide details on a number of potential projects and action points for the community to take forward. They have been designed to address the demands and aspirations of local people identified during the community consultation.

There are six project outlines.
These are ideas which the community could take forward themselves, with support from partner organisations.

- Youth Group
- Upgrade Multi Use Games Area
- Volunteer Project
- More Community Activities

There are two joint projects
These are ideas which may be more feasible for neighbouring communities to undertake in partnership, sharing resources and benefiting a larger number of residents, making the project more viable in the long run.

- Community Bus
- Outreach Health Services

There are seven action points
Action points are things that the community are unlikely to be able to deliver themselves, but which the community can advocate on their own behalf, using the plan as evidence, to organisations who are better places to affect that specific type of development.

- Speeding Issues
- Increase Number of Bins
- Address Fly Tipping
- Access to Sports Facilities
- Train Station
- Community Garden
- Derelict Sites

The projects outlined in the proceeding pages have been designed to meet some of the demands identified by the local community. The onus should be on local people to take these ideas forward as a community; identifying suitable leader groups and organisations, as well as local volunteers who can to help make activities happen. Any community members who want to take these projects forward or to start new community groups should feel encouraged to do so, and can use this plan as a starting point.

Windfarm Monies

Plains is due to begin receiving circa £25,000 every year for 25 years from 2020 up until 2045 through community benefit funding from Muirhall Energy windfarm. This will be paid directly to the community and will provide an excellent source of funding for any projects that the community want to take forward.

Other communities that have received community benefit money from windfarm developments have used the money to fund projects including staff costs for development trusts, community farms, provision of crisis and homelessness support, community swap shops, Scout groups, and gala days.

Any decisions about how community benefit monies should be spent should be made by the whole community, ensuring that there is consensus about how funds are allocated.

Community Development Trust

Setting up a Community Development Trust would offer an excellent means of delivering the various action and projects detailed within this plan, as a Community Development Trust could provide support to the Community Council and Plains Community Futures to carry out certain tasks which these organisations would not be able to such as employing staff. The development trust would combine community-led action with an enterprising approach to address and tackle local needs and issues. The aim of the development trust would be to create social, economic and environmental renewal within Plains, creating wealth within that area and keeping it there.

Contact: Development Trust Association of Scotland (DTAS) www.dtascot.org.uk info@dtascot.org.uk
Rural Development Trust www.ruraldevtrust.co.uk info@ruraldevtrust.co.uk

Community Development Trust

Through engaging with Community Land Scotland, the Plains community could receive support and advice to assess the options relating to the purchase of any specific areas within the local community and, if viable, undertake a community-wide ballot to get agreement to buy these and take the land into community ownership for the provision of new or improved amenities in future.

Contact: Community Land Scotland www.communitylandscotland.org.uk info@communitylandscotland.org.uk
Youth Activities

Aim
To support existing and facilitate the introduction of new activities and opportunities for young people in Plains through a dedicated youth worker.

Summary
The community could look to employ a youth worker for the local area who could engage young people through the two primary schools in the village and potentially help to set up a youth steering group in Plains representing young people in the local area. The direct involvement of young people in this way will ensure that the activities and services which are made available in the village reflect the interests and demands of the people who are supposed to use them. The group would steer the development of new activities in Plains which cater to the interests and priorities of young people; as well as activities the group could also lead on projects and wider issues which are important to young people. For example environmental sustainability was a key priority for young people during the consultation; this could possibly be an action which young people themselves tackle within Plains through the youth group. The youth group will also help young people to be more involved in the decision making process in Plains, and create more opportunities for young people to be independent, learn, and develop skills. All work of the group would be facilitated by the youth worker who would lead sessions, coordinate a pool of volunteers to run youth oriented activities, and work with existing youth clubs and other local groups to support their core activities ensuring all youth focused activities are able to access the resources they need to continue to provide opportunities for young people. Identifying interested young people through the school and existing youth activities would be a good starting point with young people potentially invited to attend community council meetings and participate in community projects as an introduction to the process before a separate group is created.

Potential Partners
• North Lanarkshire Community Learning and Development
• NL Leisure
• Local schools
• Local sports teams

Existing Provision
There is a dedicated youth club currently operating in Plains, and there are a number of activities and groups which primarily work with young people available locally.

Supporting Evidence
More activities for young people was the top priority in the survey with 95% of people supportive of more being provided for young people locally. There was also a significant level of interest in a number of the suggested youth activities at the drop-in event. In the youth survey responses 100 young people thought having more things for young people to do was very important; the second most popular action in the survey.

Funding Options
• Youth Scotland Rural Action Fund
• Variety - Youth Club Grants
• Chance to Succeed
• Garfield Weston Foundation
• Delverton Trust
• Investing in Communities Fund

Upgrade Facilities at Plains Park

Aim
To improve and create better access to play facilities at Plains Park.

Summary
This project would see the general upgrade of the existing play equipment at Plains Park, including the MUGA, to make it more useful and safer for the community to use. The existing equipment within the park is in need of upgrade having been installed approximately 10 years ago, and has understandably been subject to significant wear and tear. The play park will provide a variety of modern equipment for young people of all ages; ensuring there is adequate and suitable provision to meet the needs of all local young people. As well as upgrading and maintaining the play equipment already within the village, residents were also keen to see more play equipment in other areas of the village. The lack of multiple play parks means that many young people may have to walk quite far to play currently, which many parents may be reluctant to let them do, particularly if roads are busy. In particular the parks should provide play equipment infants; one age groups currently without age appropriate equipment in the village. In terms of the MUGA specifically, there are a number of options that this project could look at, including repainting of lines in the MUGA to include more sports, installing a cover over the MUGA to facilitate all weather play, and resurfacing of the MUGA to make it better to play on. The repainting of lines would likely be the easiest of these improvements to make, enable more mixed use of the MUGA if a wider variety of sports are included. Surfacing improvement options include synthetic grass, rubber mulch or another form of rubber surfacing, and would create a safer amenity which is playable all year round. Installation of a cover over the MUGA would be the most costly option, however this would significantly increase the usability of the MUGA when weather is poor.

Existing Provision
Plains Park, located adjacent to the primary schools on Bruce Street, is the main play park in the village; however much of the equipment was installed around 10 years ago and is in need of upgrading. There is a MUGA located on the joint school campus however this is not freely available for the community to use.

Supporting Evidence
Making the play parks better was the top thing for young people when asked what they thought would make Plains a better place to live. Having improved access to good quality sports was one of the most important issues for Plains residents with 88% of people supporting it. One of the comments at the drop in sessions was that while the existing MUGA at the school is good; it is difficult for the community to access. It is expensive, and young people are not able to freely use. Plains residents at the drop- in events were keen to see the MUGA upgraded.

Funding Options
• sportscotland - Sport Facilities Fund
• Cash 4 Clubs
• Scottish Landfill Communities Funds (FCC, Suez, Levenseat etc.)

Potential Partners
• North Lanarkshire Council
• Plains Community Council
• NL Leisure
• Plains Community Futures
• Local sports groups/ amateur football teams
Volunteer Project

Aim
To develop and coordinate volunteering roles within Plains.

Summary
This project will create opportunities and provide support for local people to take up volunteering roles within their community. The project will provide guidance and support for people who want to give back to the community to help run activities in Plains. Key to successful delivery of this project is identifying an individual or organisation who would be able to coordinate volunteer action within Plains. This role could be fulfilled by a development officer for the local area whose remit encapsulates the volunteer coordinator role; support from organisations specialising in this work, such as VANL, would also be essential. The involvement of residents on this project could be fairly informal with people participating simply for leisure, or the project could also provide a supportive structured training and practical work experience programme for people who wish to use the opportunity to gain skills, confidence, support, personal development and qualifications that help them progress at their own pace towards their vision of progression. The project could deliver a time bank style initiative within the community whereby spending one hour of time volunteering, for example, taking part in a community clean up, or supporting a youth group, earns you an hour in return. This can be spent on taking part in an exercise class delivered by someone else’s time. This approach would also allow people to commit their time on a shorter term, infrequent basis without being committed to offering their time every week or long term. By increasing the involvement of local people in volunteering roles in the village, we will be able to increase the variety of recreation and learning opportunities which are available in Plains; helping to address another key priority for the community, delivery of more community based activities.

Potential Partners
- Plains Community Futures
- Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (VANL)
- Timebanking UK

Funding Options
- The National Lottery Community Fund (Scotland) - Community Led Activity
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Robertson Trust - Open Grants
- Greenspace Scotland - Young Placechangers Ideas Fund

Existing Provision
Plains Community Futures is run by local volunteers who have carried out a number of community projects in Plains, and there are many other volunteer led activities happening including the Gala Day. These groups have been very effective in getting local people involved and could only benefit from a dedicated volunteer coordination project, reducing the demands on them to recruit etc., instead focussing on delivering activities.

Supporting Evidence
Early on in the consultation at the Place Standard workshop the ability of existing community groups to generate interest and involvement from the community was identified as a priority. It was highlighted that there is significant demand for volunteers in Plains, but it had been a challenge to secure commitment from people; meanwhile at the drop in events many local people indicated their interest in getting involved in a variety of community projects, but were unsure how to do so. This project would prioritise addressing these issues by linking people with available opportunities. Better community involvement in local projects was a priority for 82% of people.

More Community Activities

Aim
To increase and diversify the range of activity opportunities which are available in Plains.

Summary
This project could potentially be best facilitated by a development worker with a remit in Plains who could coordinate partnership working between the community, local groups, schools and businesses to create a wider range of community events and activities for all ages throughout the year with a particular focus on activities and events which bring people of all ages and backgrounds together. The development worker could engage with the community to identify popular activities that people would like to try, developing a programme of taster sessions to be delivered in the village. These taster sessions would allow people to discover new interests and allow for the feasibility of certain activities to be tested on a trial basis before a longer term commitment is made. They would also work with existing groups and premises within the village to identify any additional support groups might benefit from to allow them to accommodate more people, as well as to identify spaces in which activities could be delivered. A new community activities committee could be introduced in the community to coordinate community interest and action to help attract new activity and service providers to the village, as well as supporting local people to set up their own. The project would engage fully with residents in the planning of all new activities and community events to ensure these programmes reflect local preferences and to recruit groups and volunteers to become involved in the planning, fundraising and the running of these events and activities. This project would link well with the proposed volunteering initiative.

Existing Provision
There are a number of community groups and activities operating locally to a range of age groups, particularly older adults and young people. One age group potentially lacking in activity provision however are working age adults.

Supporting Evidence
Having more things to do in Plains was something that community members were very keen on throughout the consultation. New activities for older and younger people were supported by 84% and 95% of respondents in the community survey respectively. Sports activities were a popular option for all age groups at the drop in events, and setting up a youth club was a particularly popular choice for young people. These are options that the community could look at taking forward.

Funding Options
- Awards for All
- Tesco Bags of Help
- Scotmid - Community Grant

Potential Partners
- North Lanarkshire Council
- Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire
- Community venues (churches, schools, community centre)
- Existing community groups in Plains
Joint Projects

Community Bus
This project would deliver a volunteer-led transport initiative offering a more accessible and responsive transport option to local communities that helps people to stay independent, participate in their communities and access vital public services and employment. The project would provide a flexible and community-led solution in response to the currently unmet local transport needs of local people, particularly vulnerable and isolated people, often older people or people with disabilities, who do not have access to private transport, and for the wider population who would benefit from an alternative to expensive taxis in evenings and at weekends to nearby town centres. The community would benefit from a community bus initiative as it would provide much-needed support to local residents who feel isolated due to a dependence on limited public transport to visit relatives, hospitals for appointments, leisure activities or shopping. This type of project could operate on a taxi bus-type service, an option which other rural communities have taken forward whereby local taxi firms do fixed rates to popular destinations subsidised by wind farm funding. Another option would be to work with Getting Better Together, based in Shotts, who run community buses which cover the Plains area, as well as a volunteer driver scheme whereby drivers are paid per mile to take people for hospital appointments etc. The community bus service is available to all non-profit making groups (Schools, Voluntary groups, Churches, Youth Groups etc.) and they come with a fully qualified Pats and Midas trained driver. This service operates on a paid membership basis with additional fees per journey; prices for this service are available on the organisation’s website. The volunteer driver scheme is a free service for people over the age of 65 who have difficulty in accessing transport and attending their appointments but are not eligible for transport from the ambulance service. They may not have their own car, no access to public transport or live too far away from their clinic to walk. Patients are referred to the Volunteer Driver Service by a health professional in their area. GBT also works with Glenboig Development Trust and Cumbernauld Action for Care of the Elderly to deliver Community Transport across North Lanarkshire.

Outreach Health Services
The aim of this project would be to deliver accessible NHS healthcare services to adults and children in convenient places close to their homes. This project would deliver outreach health services on a regular basis within Plains, without the need for a permanent health centre within the village. While many requirements would still need to be met at the community’s primary health centre within Airdrie, there is potential for some services to be delivered in communities outside of primary health facilities. Similar outreach health projects have seen services such as general health checks, blood pressure checks, physiotherapy, and health information being provided in community centres, flats, and other facilities in communities. The service offers screening, health advice, information, support and onward signposting and referral to empower and enable service users to make informed decisions about their health and wellbeing; particularly for people who may have difficulty accessing services in Airdrie regularly. This project could be delivered in partnership with Caldercruix, where Plains residents formerly accessed health care, to make the service better value for money, providing each community with (potentially alternating) regular access to health services. Having a drop in outreach service available, even one day a week, would enable people to see address less serious medical concerns in their own community and relieve the pressure on existing health services by reducing demand for GP appointments.

Action Points

Speeding Issues
This is a priority issue for the community which Plains Community Council have had significant difficulty in addressing given the specific requirements and specifications for installing traffic calming measures, although recently they have been successful in introducing speed bumps. This community plan and the evidence contained within should be used as a tool in any future engagement with NLC roads department to highlight just how important it is among residents to have these speeding issues visibly and positively addressed by the council. 86% of people wanted to see action taken in this issue and it should therefore be seriously considered by decision makers. Progress should be fed back to community members and a possible community meeting arranged to discuss options for new traffic calming measures, or to explain to the whole community directly why no action has been taken to address speeding.

Increase Number of Bins
There was high demand from the community to see more bins around Plains; specifically Main Street was identified as a priority area. Plains Community Council could engage with NLC to secure an additional bin on the main thoroughfare through the village, this would be a very visible improvement and a ‘quick win’ from the community plan. Engagement with local school to design novelty bins with young people or have their art work displayed on the side of bins would help engage young people with the project and create a sense of ownership which could increase use of bins. PCF have been carrying out regular litter picks in the village which they plan on continuing, and have advertised on social media for more community involvement.

Address Fly Tipping
This project would require close collaboration with North Lanarkshire Council and ensure that there was an effective process in place for the community to report any instances of fly tipping in the village; ongoing issues in certain areas could then be identified by NLC and steps taken to address. Another option for addressing fly tipping could be to have regular skip removals within the village where people could dispose of large and bulky household items, without having to take them to the waste disposal centres. Community skips could be made available in an agreed location and at an agreed time for use by the whole community. This could be provided through an agreement with NLC, or the community could split the cost, meaning that the financial implication of the skip hire is shared. Having regular access to disposal services for large items could reduce the need for people to fly tip.
Access to Sports Facilities
St. Phillip’s School in Plains are undertaking significant infrastructure works on-site to create a sports hub which will be accessible for all community members as well as for the school. The community should continue to be well informed about this process to ensure that the community sports hub is well used. Investment from the community through fees etc. could be reinvested to expand the provision on site to continue to meet the changing demands of the community. New activities and sports that the community are interested in could be delivered here, therefore close collaboration with the school should be encouraged to explore what types of new sports groups and classes could be brought to the hub once it is open and how timetabling would fit with the school’s own requirements.

Train Station
This activity would continue to seek to open a train station in Plains through sustained community action and awareness raising. By developing a coordinated community action group the community will be able to ensure that the opening of a station remains firmly on the agenda, at a local, regional, and national level. Plains could undertake the STAG (Scottish Transport Appraisal Guidance) process which comprises four stages to appraise the potential for opening stations. An appraisal using STAG is required when Government funding, support or approval is sought for justified proposals to change the transport system. Successful completion of the STAG process will mean that stakeholders will be able to apply to the Scottish Stations Fund for a significant contribution towards opening a station. By sustaining interest among the community, liaising with all relevant parties and ensuring that the issue of station opening stays firmly on the agenda, the community can maximise the likelihood that Plains will be successful in attracting funding to open the station. It should be noted that this is likely a costly and long term goal, which if Plains should be unsuccessful in attracting support and funding through STAG then it will be necessary to continue to campaign for the reopening and apply for any future funding opportunities.

Community Garden
Plains Community Futures have undertaken significant environmental improvement works around the village of Plains already; this project would seek to increase the support provided for this organisation to carry out more work. PCF have recently begun work to establish a community garden in the village; this project could contribute towards the development of the community garden by encouraging more local people to get involved in the development of the garden. Increased involvement will ensure the longer term sustainability of the garden as well as create a greater sense of community ownership. Allotments and gardening training could be provided on site to allow people to grow their own food and learn new skills. PCF now meet weekly in the garden carry out various gardening tasks and welcome all community members to come along to help.

Derelict Sites
Any existing derelict sites within the village could be taken into community ownership through a community development trust and the then developed with a view to creating premises for the provision of more community amenities. The sites would need to be purchased from existing landowners, with potential funding to do so from The National Lottery Community Assets Fund or the Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Grant Fund. Initial business planning and options studies should be undertaken first to identify what the best use of the sites would be for the community; undertaking this process will also help in securing funding for the preferred option. Sheltered housing, community shops, and health services were all mooted as potential options for the future of the derelict sites.

Getting Involved
The groups and organisations involved in developing this plan look forward to the suggestion by villagers of more local volunteering opportunities being made available to residents, and are keen to welcome volunteers from the village to help continue the work they do in Plains. If you want to get involved in helping to progress or deliver any of the ideas and projects in this Plan, or if you have any other ideas for the future of the village, then please get in contact with Plains Community Futures or Plains Community Council.

The community council are contactable at marydoris.plainscc@live.co.uk

Making it Happen
This Community Plan belongs to everyone in Plains and we hope that the whole community will use it and be involved in taking the Plan forward to help make Plains a great place to live.

Many thanks to all of the groups involved in the creation of the Plan:
Plains Community Futures, Plains Community Council, Plains Evangelical Church, Elim Gospel Hall, Plains Primary School, St. David’s Primary School, St. Phillips School, and North Lanarkshire Council.

All of these groups and organisations had representation on the Plains Community Action Plan Steering Group. The Steering Group wish to thank all those who have contributed their time and skills at various times throughout this process.

Updating the Plan
A dynamic plan is essential for the ongoing development of the local community. This plan can and should be regularly updated by the community to ensure it continues to be representative of their wishes.

A yearly review and update of the plan should be undertake by the Community Plan Steering group, potentially tying into the AGM of the Community Council or Plains Community Futures. This review and update should involve as many key stakeholders as possible, particularly those who have been involved in the delivery of any actioned activities or projects, or who would be involved in any proposed new activities or projects.

The community should also continue to be involved so that they can fully play a role in the decision making process. Ongoing involvement of the wider community will help people to see how their demands and aspirations are being addressed and reflected through ongoing work both in terms of delivering actions, and in reviewing the content of the plan.