

Upperton Community Action Plan

Community & Heritage 2023 - 2028



COMMUNITY ACTION
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Cover photograph shows the view from the Upperton residents community garden

1. Introduction

Why do we need a plan?

A community plan sets out the aims and priorities of the community.

Everyone in the community has an opportunity to contribute to the plan by highlighting issues that cause concern and by suggesting ways to make the community a better place to live.

Local people know their area best and are the best people to ask about what will make a difference in their community.

The Upperton Community Action Plan 2019-2024

A community Action plan was produced by Community Action Lanarkshire through funding LEADER funding enabled a community action plan to be produced and in 2019 a Upperton Community Action Plan 2019-2024 was published.

Updating the 2019 Plan

Upperton Residents Committee have undertaken a number of projects outlined in the 2019-2024 plan. However, it was highlighted at the Upperton Heritage and Community Drop-in session in March 2023 that an update to the Upperton Community Plan would be beneficial.

This document is the updated Upperton Heritage and Community Plan 2023-2028 and is based on engagement that took place as part of Heritage Drop in Sessions in March 2023, a community survey undertaken by the Residents Association in April 2023, a Family Fun and Consultation Day held in June 2023 and a Tea Party with children's activities in September 2023.



Upperton growing space and MUGA pitch

2. Place and spaces

Upperton is a village in North Lanarkshire, Scotland, near Airdrie and Cumbernauld, about 20 miles north-east of Glasgow.

During the 1900's a tuberculosis sanatorium was operational on the site that the village now occupies. Antibiotics reduced the need for sanatoriums and the hospital closed in the 1950s. It was then converted into a remand centre called Longrigg Remand Centre. The houses and flats in the village were originally built to house staff at the remand centre. The centre closed in 2000 and was demolished in 2007.

Upperton was formerly a part of the neighbouring village of Longriggend, but changed its name in 2013 to Upperton to become a separate village in its own right. The name of 'Upperton' was adopted from a local farm.

The vast majority of the village is privately owned, and there have been ongoing issues relating to the responsibility of upkeep of spaces and properties within Upperton.

This lack of clarity has led to continual deterioration of much of the village infrastructure, compounding the challenges already facing residents in trying to bring infrastructure up to a suitable standard.



Community seating area



The MUGA (Multi Use Games Area)



Garages and heras fencing



Dervaig Gardens with both the houses and the flats in view



The site of former remand centre. Previously the location of the fever hospital



Remains of the Remand Centre Foundations

The Existing Roads

History of the roads and pavements

When Longriggend Remand Centre was open, the settlement at Upperton was owned by the Scottish Prison Service. The houses and flats were built to serve the remand centre.

The roads, pavements and lighting were not 'adopted' by the local authority. This means that the roads, pavements and lighting were not the responsibility of North Lanarkshire Council and therefore were not maintained.

Today, the houses and flats are in private ownership. This means the maintenance of these areas is the joint responsibility of the homeowners.

The consultation undertaken for the 2019 Upperton Community Action Plan confirmed that the bringing the roads and pavements to an acceptable standard was the top priority. In 2016 the community obtained a quote to upgrade the roads. Unfortunately the cost was too high for homeowners to fund the works themselves. The community is actively seeking a way to improve the roads.

Parking

There is also a lack of parking in parts of Upperton. At Dervaig Gardens most people have to park on street and there isn't enough spaces to meet the demand.

Garages

There are around 40 garages in the village but many are in a poor condition and are not in use. The garages are in private ownership. Improvements would need the agreement of owners.



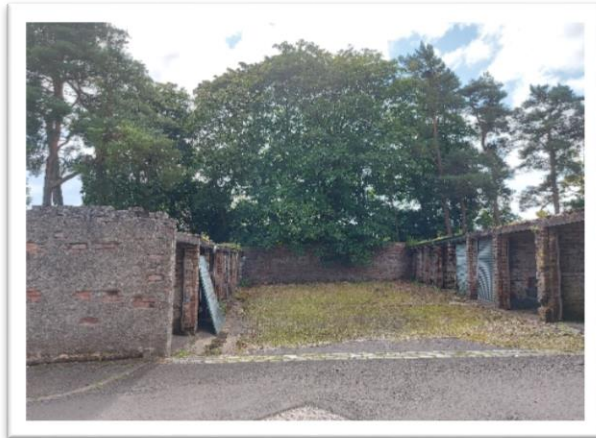
Photo of road surface



Condition of the existing roads



Heras fencing used to prevent access



Existing garages



Some garages remain in use but the access road is in poor condition



Example of road surface/edging



Photo showing deterioration of road and pavement surfaces

3. Residents Committee

Upperton has an active residents committee who have undertaken a range of improvements including:

- Installation of a MUGA pitch
- Installation of benches
- Installation of picnic tables
- Establishing a community garden
- Establishing a growing space
- Grass cutting
- Installation and maintenance of planters
- Improvements to street lighting



Barrels and planters



Community garden and seating



Community owned MUGA pitch



Signage to growing space



Views from Upperton



Raised beds in growing space



Community seating area



Seating in the community garden area



Community garden and seating



Signage at growing space



Raised beds in community growing space

4. Updating the Plan

What we did

A community and heritage action plan gives local residents the opportunity to say what is important to them and to set out the priorities and aspirations of Upperton residents.

At the Heritage Drop In Session in March 2023, Upperton Residents Committee suggested hosting an event on site in Upperton to gather additional views and ideas for projects.

The information gathered has been included in this **Upperton Community Action Plan Update**. Survey information was gathered by Upperton Residents Committee.

Additional information on both community projects and heritage projects was gathered in partnership with Upperton Residents Committee and Community Action Lanarkshire during a Heritage Drop in Session in March 2023, a Family Fun Day in June 2023 and a community tea party in September 2023.



Community Action Lanarkshire is a project of the Rural Development Trust and support for this update is possible due to funding from the National Lottery Community Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Upperton Residents Committee

The Upperton Residents Committee has been the driving force behind the delivery of local projects and things are changing for the better in Upperton.

“The new street lights are in place. We will continue to tidy up public areas, and plant in some green spaces. Local people, through the Upperton Residents Committee, are keen to do more.

Upperton Residents Committee April 2023

Survey Results April 2023

Survey by Upperton Residents Committee. Residents were asked what improvements in Upperton were most important to them.

OPTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Upperton residents were asked to select the improvements that were most important to them. 19 responses were received and respondents could pick more than one issue.

Figures are based on the percentage of responses received as part of the community survey.

100% of responses want to: Use funding from wind turbine community fund for roads & pavements

42% want: The demolition of disused lock ups to give more parking spaces

26% want: To have the committee purchase more green areas to preserve

10% want: To have more planting/gardening opportunities

26% want: Better play facilities for children

26% want: To have better connecting walkways / cycle routes.

Residents were asked which improvement would be their top priority.

If you had to pick one of these improvements/issues as a priority, which would it be?

89% percent of those responding said that their top priority was improving the roads and pavements, followed by the demolition/improvements of the lock ups and purchasing green space to benefit the community.

Potential Improvements

Residents were asked if there were any other improvements that they would like to see happen in Upperton.

Are there any other improvements that you would like to see in Upperton? The responses are listed below:

- Improvements to the roads and pavements
- clean up of the entrance to Upperton (car park)
- Place a road mirror at the exit from the Crescent on the main road to see oncoming traffic from around the corner.
- Gully drainage – improvements
- Defibrillator in an accessible secure area
- Access to a small community centre
- A hall or similar facility for community activities
- Trees in Avon Avenue would benefit from being cropped as they prevent daylight getting to the houses (in darkness for 6 months of the year)
- Buy the burn/land at the burn and spend money transforming this area.
- Bin for dog poo bags
- Local security cameras

Thank you to everyone who helped complete the survey

Heritage Consultation

As part of the North Lanarkshire Rural Heritage Programme, a Drop in Session took place in March 2023.

The communities included in the Heritage Programme are Caldercruix, Greengairs and Wattston, Harthill, Plains and Upperton.

The feedback will identify projects and initiatives that will help a wider audience engage with the rich local history of these Lanarkshire villages.



Drop In Session

The Upperton Heritage Drop In Session, Saturday 4th March 2023 11am-2.30pm

Upperton has no community space to hold an indoor meeting. The Upperton Drop in Session was held at Greengairs Primary School. .

During the drop in session there was a general discussion on the history of Upperton. This included links to farming and the Young Offenders institution. Upperton was the site of the Longriggend Fever Hospital. In the late 19th century and early 20th century it was a vital part of infection control prior to the introduction of antibiotics. After the closure of the hospital, the site was repurposed as a remand centre. The houses were originally built to house prison officers then sold when the remand centre closed. The centre has since been demolished though part of the fencing remains. The site remains derelict and the current owner of the site hopes to built houses on it.

The residents committee would be keen to see something that could tell people where the important historic sites are around the village. However, as there is no land in public ownership it can be difficult to install any facilities including signage.

Ideally the residents committee would like to see some kind of multipurpose installation – e.g. something that could be used for signage with a mound or similar at the base which local children could use to play on. Food and nature based projects were also highlighted as being potentially beneficial to the community e.g. planting apple trees.

Upperton Family Fun Day

Upperton Family Fun & Consultation Event, Saturday 17th June 2023 11am-3pm

The aim of the Family Fun and Consultation day was to give residents the opportunity to talk about projects they would like to see included in the heritage plan without having to travel outside Upperton and to consult on an update to the Upperton Community Plan. The event was hosted by Community Action Lanarkshire, a project of the Rural Development Trust.

In addition to the consultation, activities included a number of traditional fete/gala day style game such as tin can alley, buzz (wire game with buzzer), and guess the number of sweets in the jar. There was an opportunity to taste traditional sweets, play games, paint nature themed rocks, try an Upperton themed word search, try the Upperton colouring sheets and try the sandbox archaeology activity.

The event was well attended from the opening at 11am until the close at 3pm. It was estimated that around 50 children and adults attended throughout the day.

Members of the local community completed expression of interest sheets and wrote down ideas for projects that they felt would benefit the area.

Several residents made comments that they had few opportunities to meet their neighbours and this was the first chance to socialise in Upperton since they had moved to the area.

General comments included the importance of the surrounding landscape and the opportunity to connect to nature.

There was significant interest in natural heritage and improving biodiversity including further development of the community garden areas and sharing gardening knowledge with others.

However, the issue raised most frequently was the condition of the roads. Residents spoke of their frustration at damage to their vehicles from potholes. Residents stated that the condition of the roads had a negative impact on quality of life. Some residents talked of feeling ignored and excluded due to the lack of basic facilities.



Traditional games & outdoor play



Traditional sweets and recipes



Child blowing bubbles

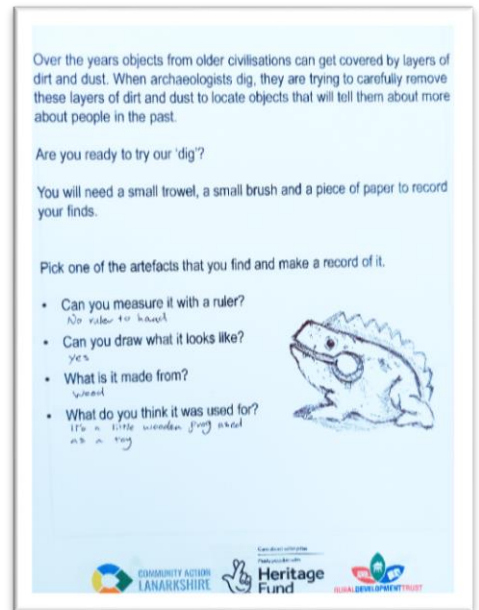
Lack of facilities and interest in future activities

The history and heritage of the local area was discussed. Mining and farming were the two main industries in the 19th Century. In the 20th Century the Sanatorium and the Remand Centre brought employment to the area. The Remand Centre had a social club on site. The club was well used and residents had been offered the opportunity to purchase the club after the closure of the remand centre. However, it wasn't financially viable.

The children attending the event also talked about their experience of living in Upperton and what they would like to see happen in future. A lack of local facilities left children feeling isolated. The children attending the event enjoyed the Sandbox Archaeology activity, expressed an interest in learning more about how to search for historic artefacts and wanted to know more about the science behind using a metal detector.

The children asked if we could return to set up more activities at the end of summer, Halloween and Christmas. The adults attending asked if we could host an outdoor tea party at the end of summer to review the proposed projects and provide another opportunity for residents to meet and discuss the future of the community.

It was agreed that a follow up event would be hosted in September 2023.



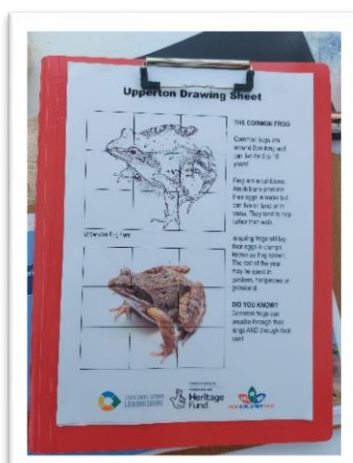
Completed archaeology worksheet



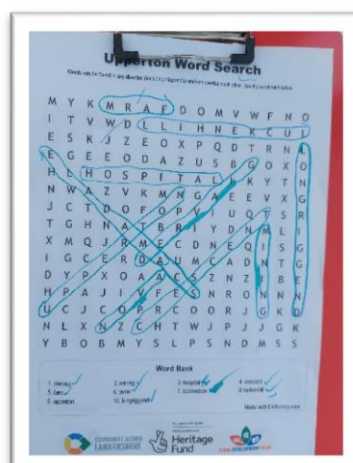
Sandbox archaeology activity



Traditional sweets and recipes



Upperton nature worksheet



Upperton word search

Upperton Tea Party

Upperton Tea Party and children's activities, Sunday 3rd Sept 2023 11am-2pm

At the Family Fun and Consultation Day in June 2023, it was agreed that another outdoor event would be held at the end of summer. A 'mad hatter's' themed outdoor tea party was planned for September 2023.

The aim of the Tea Party was to give residents the opportunity to bring the community together to discuss potential projects and to host a range of engagement activities suitable for children and adults.

At the event in June, local children expressed a desire to play traditional games, have another sand activity, learn more about archaeology and test a metal detector.

Activities for the 'Mad Hatter's' tea party included traditional games such as hook a duck, tin can alley, hula hoops and giant connect four. A 'Micro library' gave residents the opportunity to browse through local information and the grassed area provided an opportunity for children and adults to test out a metal detector.

Please note that the aim was to learn about different methods of gathering information and no materials were removed from site.

The event was well attended and took place between 11am and 2pm. People were able to look through draft copies of the plan and take them away for comment.



Attendees enjoying the sunshine



Jam tarts, traditional sweets and fruit



Micro Library

A number of residents attending mentioned that they had few opportunities to speak to their neighbours and that hosting the event in Upperton provide an opportunity for residents to meet each other and chat.

Community discussions focused on connecting with nature and habitats for wildlife (including the potential to host workshops on building a bug hotel), signage which pointed in the direction of local monuments such as Stanrigg and locations such as local towns, and the need for heritage interpretation and signage if the proposed cycle route goes ahead.

Several attendees mentioned the condition of the existing roads and expressed frustration about damage to vehicles.

There was a discussion about the potential to use translation services for residents whose first language was not English to ensure that all Upperton residents had access to information.

The local children were pleased to see their suggestions incorporated into the Tea Party and again suggested marking special times of year such as Halloween and Christmas. There was significant interest in learning how to use the metal detector. A guide to using a metal detector, the science behind how it works, legislation relating to Portable property (antiquities and treasures) and additional archaeology related activities can be produced and incorporated into future events.

The event provided feedback on the proposed suggestions in the community and heritage plan, reached a wider number of local people by hosting it on site in Upperton and enabled residents to meet their neighbours.



Tactile play in the sand



Tin can alley



Community tea party



Residents testing trying the metal detector

5. Potential Improvements

Our
priorities

Suggestions for potential community projects and heritage projects

Improvements the existing roads.

- The existing roads are in poor condition and much of the road surface has deteriorated making it difficult to drive. Road repairs are urgently needed to prevent the pot holes getting worse.
- Improving the existing road would make a significant difference to the lives of residents.



Maintenance and improving the local area

- Initiative to see all of the gardens tidy and filled with flowers and plants. Potential to support those with no access to gardening equipment. This would enhance the local environment, encourage biodiversity and improve health and wellbeing).
- Installation of a bin that is suitable for dog poo. This would help to enhance the local environment and make grassed areas safer for children to play.
- Improvements to the existing lock ups. This could be simply tidying up the area and removing fly tipping or it could include looking at a larger project to improve the area/demolish the garages. Improvements to the garages could create additional parking and even some form of community space
NOTE: garages are in private ownership and agreement would be needed to take this project forward.
- Rubbish and fly tipping removed



Potential Improvements

We want to
make the most
of the
outdoors

Access to Information

- Easier access to information on the local history of Upperton with more opportunities to access it. Information should be available in multiple formats including digital and hard copies such as leaflets.
- Heritage trails, walks and signage would be beneficial.
- Signage should be consistent and it would be helpful to include information boards on local history and heritage, directional signage, information boards on nature.



Access to the outdoors

- Upperton Residents Association have been campaigning for a walking route between Upperton and Greengairs. This route would provide a much needed link to local facilities and provide Upperton residents with an opportunity to connect with nature.
- There is an opportunity to increase knowledge of the local wildlife, natural landscape and local history through walking leaflets and information boards.

Multipurpose Heritage Installation

- There is interest in designing equipment that can be used by children to play on as well as provide information on history and heritage. Opportunity to use natural materials and combine it with directional signage.
- Play area for children and equipment for kids such as swings and slides

Potential Improvements

We want to
bring our
community
together

Activities and Events

- There is a desire to hold more events in Upperton. Events currently need to be held outdoors as there is no indoor space. Suggestions for activities included hosting an afternoon tea party in the summer.
- Additional Christmas lighting would add to the sense of community and provide an opportunity for a community gathering at Christmas to mark the official switch on. Local children expressed a desire to hold some form of activity/celebration at Christmas.
- There was an enquiry about reminiscence events and activities for older people.



Community Growing Projects

- Nature/food related project such as planting apple trees/fruit trees.
- Planting raspberry or other fruit canes.
- Bench near raised beds in allotment area
- Plants and soil (including plants that encourage pollinators and soil that is peat free).
- Water butts (residents noted having to carry water from their own homes to the community garden areas)
- Companion planting and other natural growing methods



Potential Improvements

We want to improve our green spaces

Improving Biodiversity, attracting pollinators

- Install bird boxes and bat boxes
- Install or build bug hotels. Host a workshop to learn how to build a bug hotel.
- Improve the natural environment by increasing planting in the community garden and community growing areas. Create additional opportunities for local volunteers through the development and promotion of the community garden and growing areas. Consider using some plant species that encourage pollinators. Peat free gardening should be encouraged.
- Prepare a guide to pollinators and plants that attract bees



Equipment to maintain Green Spaces and support local volunteers

- Water butts (residents noted having to carry water from their own homes to the community garden areas)
- Petrol strimmer and other grass cutting equipment to help maintain grass and cut access paths through grass.
- Ride on lawn mower to make it easier for volunteers to cut the large areas of grass (residents currently use their own equipment to maintain the grass areas)
- Garden tools so that more volunteers can help maintain the garden areas (see above – residents currently use their own equipment).



Potential Improvements

We want our green spaces to benefit our community

Food security, growing produce and traditional recipes

- Residents highlighted a general concern over food security and the knowledge the cost of living crisis is impacting many families. There was general support for projects that could tackle this and provide families with additional support.
- A new community growing space has been established in Upperton. Support for enhancing this space and promoting opportunities for volunteering are welcomed.
- There is an opportunity to promote community growing when the crops are harvested..
- There is interest in gathering traditional recipes and some favourite recipes were discussed at the Family Fun Day.
- Hold community gardening days so that volunteers can meet and support each other. Encourage new volunteers to participate in the community growing projects.
- Encourage best use of resources by hosting seed swaps and seed share events. Potential to host a gardening workshop to show how to split and share plants.



Thank you to everyone who attended the Heritage Drop In Sessions, the Family Fun and Consultation Day and the 'Mad Hatter's Tea Party. Your ideas have helped to develop this Community and Heritage Update to the Community Plan.

Acknowledgements

It would not have been possible to collate the information for these plans without the help and support of the local community in Upperton.

We would like to say thank you to everyone who gave their time, provided feedback and helped to ensure that this Community and Heritage Update accurately reflected the communities involved.

Thank you to all of the residents who attended the events and filled in surveys, thank you to the children who shared their ideas and thank you to Upperton Residents Committee.

For more information contact

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