

# Barrhill

## Community Action Plan 2017 - 2022

Making our Natural Resources Work for the Benefit of the Whole Community



*Managed by;*  
Barrhill Community Council (BCC)  
*in conjunction with*  
The Barrhill Community Interest Company (BCIC)

## ► Introduction:

Barrhill Community Council decided to update the Community Action Plan (CAP), which was originally produced in 2008. Consultants were commissioned to prepare a review of the previous Barrhill CAP and carry out a community wide survey of residents and interviews with key stakeholders.

This would result in the provision of an updated Community Action Plan, which the Community Council would review, prior to the production of a CAP Information brochure. The final publication would be used to inform the local community as well as potential funding agencies and would be available for individuals and businesses who may be considering relocating to the area.

The Barrhill CAP is split into four sections as follows:

- Background to the Community Action Plan (CAP)
- Community Profile - Research & Analysis
- A Strategic Vision for the Future
- Key Objectives & Actions



## ► Background:

Two previous reports supported by research were prepared for the village of Barrhill and the immediate surrounding areas. The Horizons Group produced the 'Barrhill Community Appraisal' in 2007 and this was followed a year later with the 'Barrhill Community Futures Community Action Plan 2008 – 2011'. There are also previous studies that specifically looked at tourism and leisure opportunities associated with the ongoing development of windfarms in the locality.

Much has been achieved in Barrhill since the date of the last report but there are still some key issues, which have had both positive and negative impacts on the village and its residents. This new report focuses on the views, aspirations and expectations of the community as a whole and seeks to create a vision for improved development and an enhanced atmosphere of conciliation and co-operation.

McKenzie Wilson Consultants produced an extensive research questionnaire in conjunction with the Barrhill Community Council (BCC) and delivered it to every person over the age of sixteen in the Barrhill electoral area. The survey was also available for completion online and there were a number of alternative options for submitting paper questionnaires in a secure and confidential manner.

A workshop event was arranged in the Memorial Hall where local people could drop in for a discussion with local organisations and/or consultancy staff. The research was deemed to be robust as 127 completed questionnaires were received representing 46% of the population. 39% of the people who responded had taken part in the 2008 study with 61% stating that they had not been involved in the previous research. Individual responses were not available for members of the BCC or the community to view and only combined research analysis has been detailed in this report to maintain client and respondent confidentiality at every level.



## ► Community Profile - Research & Analysis:

The Community Profile was created by reviewing the information from the previous study and adding additional information and changes that have occurred since then. Results and analysis from the research undertaken in the community has been included under the following broad headings:

- Location, Environment & Heritage
- Population & the Housing Market
- Education, Health & Social Services
- Transport, Tourism & the Local Economy
- Community Facilities and Organisations.

Information was also gathered from a range of South Ayrshire Council departments, NHS Ayrshire & Arran, local development bodies, tourism agencies, transport organisations and local people.

## ► Location, Environment & Heritage:

Barrhill, along with the neighbouring communities of Barr, Ballantrae, Pinwherry, Pinmore, Colmonell and Lendalfoot make up the southernmost part of Carrick in the South Ayrshire Council local authority area. The village is located 12 miles from



Girvan and 18 from Newton Stewart in Dumfries and Galloway. Lying around sixty metres above sea level and in a relatively remote position, Barrhill is well connected by the A714, which connects these towns. The village also has the benefit of a railway station on the Glasgow/Ayr/Stranraer line, which was recently designated as one of ScotRail's six new scenic rail routes.

Barrhill covers an extensive area of around 200 km<sup>2</sup> with 70% of the land forested. The population is sparse with approximately one person for every 50 hectares. The remainder of the land is used largely for grazing cattle & sheep and nearby is the Galloway Forest Park, the Dark Sky Park and the Biosphere.



The combination of wind, open land and a sparse population makes South West Scotland suitable for wind powered energy generation. There are presently two operational windfarms in the locality, Arecleoch (60 turbines) and Mark Hill (28). Kilgallioch, which is under construction will eventually contain another 96 turbines to the south of Barrhill as well as Strannoch (24), which has just been approved. There are a further two windfarms being considered by the planning authorities at Chirmorie (22) and Altercannoch (8). Other prospective windfarms are being scoped in the area, such as the Mark Hill and Arecleoch extensions, Arnsheen (12), Balunton (9) and Lambdoughty (16). Two windfarms at Corwar and Breaker Hill have been refused permission.

The local environment is predominantly a managed agricultural landscape with land use determined by the quality of soil, which is mainly shallow or areas of deep peat. Much of the poorer land is now forested. Annual rainfall is high at around 1500mm and lochs, burns and rivers are a dominant feature.

Bog and moorland plants provide habitat for pipits and warblers, hen harriers, buzzards and owls. Red squirrels inhabit the deciduous, river valley woodlands, salmon and trout are to be found in the Duisk, Cree and Stinchar, and both red



and roe deer are frequently seen throughout the area. The Feoch Meadows is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The natural environment is of paramount importance to the community, supporting livelihoods and providing a fine quality of life for our residents and visitors alike. Pollution levels are very low and the area is relatively free of crime.

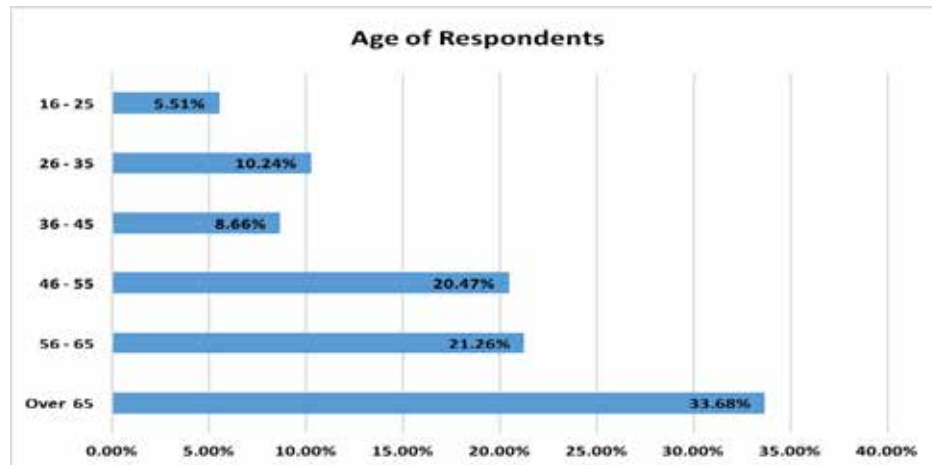
Geologically, the village lies at a conjunction of uplands caused by continental drift and subsequent fault lines. The social history of the area includes several important megalithic sites, Covenanter stories and martyrs from the 17th century, landowner country estates and mansions, and the arrival of the railway in 1877. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Barrhill was a populous rural village, in many ways self-supporting with weaving mills, shops, livestock markets and trades all flourishing.

In the general area surrounding Barrhill there are a number of small coastal and inland villages within a short drive. The Southern Upland Way, between Portpatrick in Dumfries & Galloway and Cockburnspath in the Scottish Borders, passes through Bargrennan, 9 miles south of Barrhill. The southern section of the Carrick Way includes the village and the Whithorn Way from Paisley to the Isle of Whithorn also passes through Barrhill, making the area an ideal location for walkers, birdwatchers, cyclists and those interested in natural history.

### ► Population & the Housing Market:

At the start of 2016 the population of Barrhill Community Council area was estimated to be under 300 people. Two hundred and seventy questionnaires were distributed to residents over the age of sixteen in the Barrhill area and 127 responses (47%) were returned to the consultants, providing what is considered to be a very robust response.

All of the respondents answered this question and their ages were shown as follows:



Based on 127 responses

People over the age of 65 account for 24% of the population in Girvan and the South Carrick villages, 23% in South Ayrshire as a whole and 18% across Scotland. These statistics are supported in the responses to the question, which asked how many children under the age of sixteen lived at home. 74% of total respondents had no children living with them, reflecting the 55% who were age 55 or over. There appears to have been a steady increase in the number of retired people in the village over recent years.



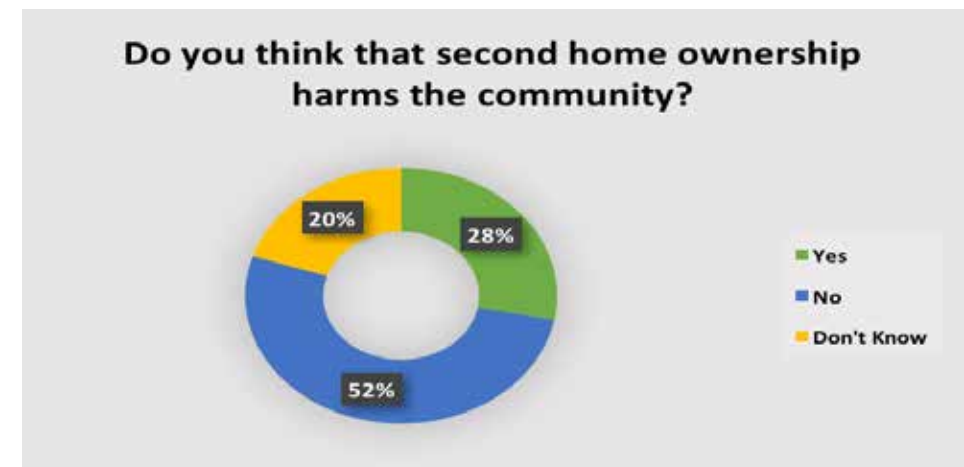
There are approximately 170 habitable properties in the Barrhill area with 150 of them currently occupied. There are also a number of holiday homes and rental properties within the area as well as a number of derelict rural properties. There is no sheltered housing or properties specifically suitable for disabled people. The research highlighted the following comments from residents.

### Local Views on the Current Housing Supply:

Good Supply	About Right	Require More
30 (27.52%)	55 (50.46%)	24 (22.02%)

Based on 109 responses

### Do you think that second home ownership harms the community?



Based on 116 responses

### Is There Suitable Accommodation to Attract Young Families to Barrhill?

A number of participants stated that there were many houses for sale but very few three bedroom properties available at affordable prices. Comments from the research suggest that there is a lack of three bedroom local authority housing, sheltered accommodation and affordable accommodation to attract younger



families to the area. It is clear that the lack of employment in the local area is probably the main reason for people not moving to Barrhill. The results for this question were as follows:

Good Supply	About Right	Require More
14 12.73%	53 48.18%	43 39.09%

Based on 110 responses

Holiday homes were not seen as a great issue but it was understood that these properties brought less economic benefit to the community, particularly at off season times or if left empty for longer periods of time. There was a feeling that more could be done with some of the derelict properties in the area if they could be purchased by the community and renovated for families to lease/purchase were they to relocate their business to Barrhill, although it must be said that ownership of these properties may restrict their possible availability for use. When asked if the community should consider buying derelict/unoccupied properties and refurbishing them to be used as housing the following results were given:

Yes	No	Don't Know
73 63.48%	31 26.96%	11 9.56%

Based on 115 responses

This is a bit of a 'chicken and egg' situation and it may well need the community to consider whether Barrhill can provide an entrepreneurial working/lifestyle



environment that can offer facilities for new business opportunities that in turn will attract and encourage families to move into the area, thereby underpinning the sustainability of economic development in South Carrick.

At the present time there appears to be little appetite for building additional homes and in fact the only two sites identified in the South Ayrshire Local Plan remain undeveloped, suggesting that low market demand is still prevalent. During the study period there were a number of houses in the village for sale and the consultants were advised that property sales were relatively slow.

There have been various energy saving insulation projects undertaken on domestic properties in the area from different schemes. There could be significant benefit to residents if domestic properties could be given an allowance to allow householders to increase the energy efficiency of their homes with priority given to houses most affected by the location of wind turbines. This could cover double/triple glazing, roof/wall insulation, solar panels, biomass or heat pump heating systems etc.

Any energy efficiency upgrades could remain with the property if the occupier changes, thus improving energy efficiency within the overall community. A sustainable energy project for the Memorial Hall was undertaken in 2012 to get a biomass heating system installed to reduce the cost of heating the hall and this has proved to be very successful. Retained improvements of this kind may well assist property sales in the future.

## ► Education, Health & Social Services:

There is an excellent primary school in Barrhill, which South Ayrshire Council has refurbished and modernised. If efforts made by the community are successful in attracting new families to the village this will provide the mechanism for maintaining the primary school and securing the long term sustainability of the community. Secondary school students currently travel by bus to Girvan Academy.

With suitable facilities being made available in the village hall it would be possible to deliver some adult education opportunities in Barrhill. There is a significant need



to improve broadband and mobile phone services locally and this would allow greater opportunity for introducing IT, social media and communications training locally. Access to online computers would particularly assist older and disadvantaged members of the community and create a more inclusive service in the village. Social isolation is a growing health issue in rural communities and every effort should be made to avoid this becoming a greater problem in South Ayrshire.

If families and new businesses are to be attracted to the area, high speed broadband would provide the foundation for Barrhill to market the availability of modern technical support services locally. Access to email and the internet is a fundamental requirement as the basis for a good business development environment.

Health and social services are provided at the local Barrhill medical facility by the health centre practice in the village of Ballantrae, which is twelve miles away. Doctors provide two sessions on a Monday and Thursday and nurses attend on a Tuesday and Wednesday. An automatic defibrillator is now located on the wall of the Doctor's surgery. It is enclosed in a lockable cabinet that has a digital access code and easy instructions for its use. The Ballantrae health centre practice currently covers an area of some 350 square miles.



Thirteen miles away some additional medical facilities are available at the Girvan Community Hospital, which was completed in 2010. This is a 26-bed hospital with minor injuries service, diagnostic facilities, rehabilitation suite, day service and outpatient department, which is staffed by local GPs supported by other professions. The Scottish Ambulance Service and a pharmacy are based on site along with local authority social services providing a multi-agency hub. Full hospital services are provided in Ayr and Kilmarnock.

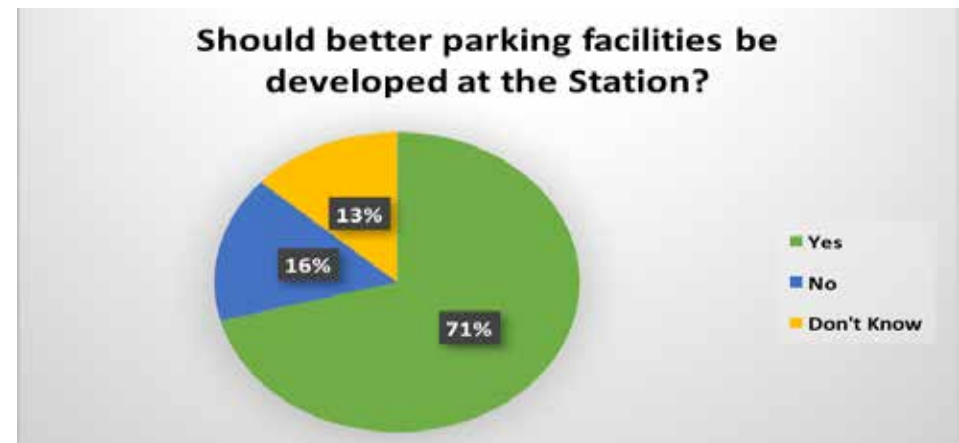
The most recent health figures show the combined figures for the town of Girvan and the south Carrick villages, making it difficult to extrapolate accurate figures for the Barrhill area, however the consultants were advised by NHS staff that there were no medical issues prevalent in the village locality. Girvan is often shown as being above the South Ayrshire and Scottish averages for health conditions, such as cancer, respiratory, coronary conditions and hospital admissions but in all cases the villages in south Carrick are usually shown well below the combined figure when Girvan is included. The current practice believes that more health education and activities could be undertaken in Barrhill and this would help to create a better health legacy for the village in the future. Residents' research also highlighted a number of good ideas on how the health and wellbeing of the community could be improved and details of these are shown below in their order of preference.

- New paths, walking routes and outdoor activities
- Improve community spirit and civic pride
- Provide outdoor and indoor fitness equipment
- Reduce traffic speed and pollution from lorries in particular
- Help towards heating, fuel and transport costs

Other general suggestions included the provision of allotments, more planters & benches, improved local communication, repair pavements, attract jobs to the area, clear up garage site and improve the Memorial Hall. Suggestions for a day club for older people were also mentioned but the consultants were advised that a previous service provided in the village had not been supported. With social isolation becoming more of a problem in many rural locations, any future plans for the provision of a new service should be considered in partnership with the local authority.

## ► Transport, Tourism & the Local Economy:

Barrhill has a station on the Stranraer to Ayr line, which connects with points north to Glasgow and beyond. Since the ScotRail franchise was acquired by Abellio in 2015 the service frequency has been increased and there are now eight services operating in both directions between Monday and Saturday and five in each direction on a Sunday. Parking at the station is limited and when asked if better parking facilities should be developed the following results were noted in the research analysis. This appears to be a key priority for many local people.



Based on 127 responses

The bus service between Barrhill and Girvan has been reduced with only five services in each direction between Barrhill and Girvan between 0806 and 1629 with the last bus back to Barrhill leaving Girvan at 1730. The service to Newton Stewart is similar with five daily services in each direction between 0921 and 1801 with the last bus back to Barrhill leaving Newton Stewart at 1540. Sunday services on both of these routes have now been withdrawn.

Strathclyde Partnership for Transport (SPT) operate a 'ring and ride' service number 700 in Carrick, which operates from Monday to Saturday on a first come, first served basis. There was a small taxi operator in the village but the owners have now moved away, although this could provide a business opportunity for someone else. The availability and cost of public transport is an area of concern for many people living in rural South Ayrshire.

There have been a number of comments about the general state of roads in the area, particularly with the number of heavy goods vehicles operating both with the forestry and windfarm sectors. The degradation of road surfaces is further exacerbated by the speed of lorries travelling through the village and this was highlighted in the community research when residents were asked if the speed limit through Barrhill should be reduced to 20 MPH.





**Should the Speed Limit through Barrhill be reduced to 20 MPH?**

Yes	No
81 64%	46 36%

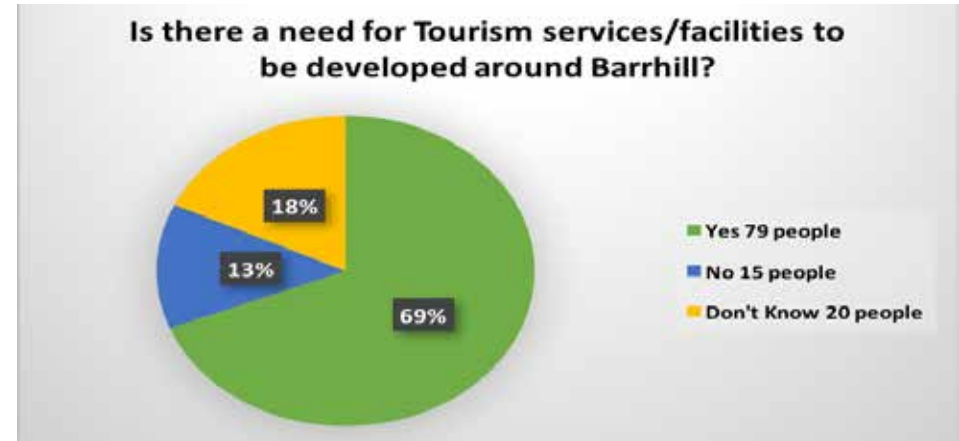
Based on 127 responses

All 127 people who returned a questionnaire commented on this with 64% in favour of having the speed limit reduced to 20 MPH.

Transport is at the core of tourism development and even allowing for the continued increase in the personal use of cars, there are still many people who would be prepared to use public transport to access rural communities if better integrated services were more readily available. This is particularly relevant to the railway line between Stranraer, Ayr and Glasgow, which ScotRail has designated as one of Scotland's six 'Scenic Routes'.



Barrhill Community Council should have a close relationship with the Community Rail Partnership operating on this line.



When asked "If there was a need for tourism services/facilities to be developed in and around Barrhill" the following responses and key comments made by the 70% who answered 'Yes' can be summarised by the following statements:

- Hall refurbishment could include a tearoom and visitor information centre
- Shops and food need to be available to encourage passing motorists to stop in the village
- Barrhill requires more varied and quality accommodation to be established
- Walks, paths, cycle routes, nature trails and supporting maps
- Information boards and improved signage
- Activity tourism, fishing, horse riding, endurance riding
- Improve the look of the main street, clean up untidy premises
- Proximity to the Galloway Hills, the Dark Sky Park and the Biosphere
- Tourism will support full and part time employment as well as a wide range of new business start-up opportunities, such as a ranger service, cycle hire, tour guiding, activity tourism and a wide range of support facilities.
- Install electric car charging units in the village and at the railway station.

There is of course a section of the village that is less supportive of tourism and wishes to see the community remain as it is, along with others who believe that windfarms have a negative effect on potential visitors. This is perhaps only natural but more discussion about the future economic direction of the village is needed to ensure that Barrhill does not send out mixed messages to potential new residents or new business developers.

The economy around rural villages has suffered over the years and Barrhill has not been exempt from the subsequent decline. Nineteen years ago the local Bank of Scotland closed. Since then the village has lost a shop, a garage and the Post Office. Any future developments in the area should be sustainable and capable of generating high value economic benefit to new business operators as well as helping to support the local community.

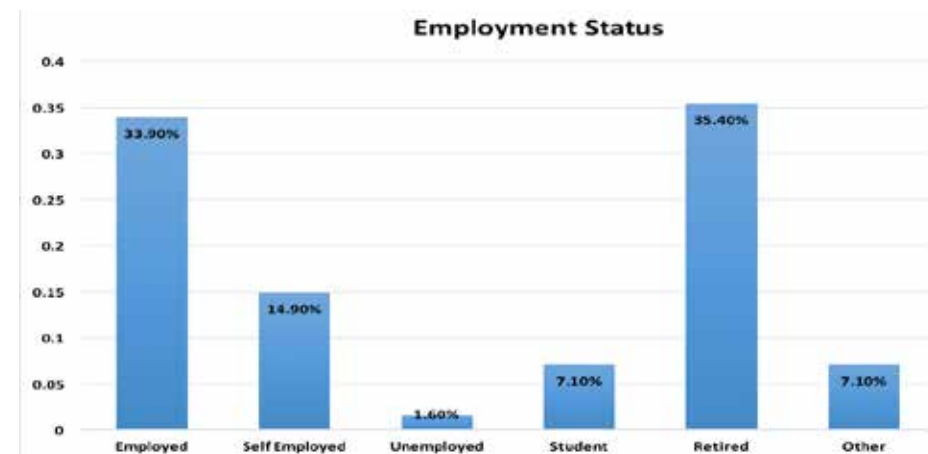
The labour market statistics (2012) in Girvan and the South Carrick villages showed that the percentage employment deprived was 15.6% compared to 13.3% in South Ayrshire and 12.8% in Scotland. The population aged 16-64 claiming key benefits is 19.5%, which is above the South Ayrshire average (15.7%) and Scotland (11.6%). However, the total for South Carrick villages (14.5%) is lower than the South Ayrshire average. The percentage of the population claiming guaranteed pension credits (21.4%) is higher than South Ayrshire (15.4%) and Scotland (17.5%).

Unemployment figures detailed in the research amongst respondents was only recorded at 1.6%, however, this may be partly influenced by the larger number of retired people in the Barrhill area. We cannot gauge how many unemployed people did not respond to the survey but were advised by the Job Centre that they were not surprised with the low unemployment figure for Barrhill. Jobcentre Plus acknowledged that the case load generally in Girvan and South Carrick villages is primarily amongst 16-24 year olds and that there were only a handful of people in the villages collecting Universal Credit.

The research analysis indicated the following breakdown:

Employed	33.9%
Self Employed	14.9%
Unemployed	1.6%
Student	7.1%
Retired	35.4%
Other	7.1%

(Others included homemakers, semi-retired and disabled people)



Based on 127 responses

As previously stated, there is a clear need for high speed broadband and effective mobile phone coverage to be secured, which will help to attract younger families and help create growth in new business activity.

When residents were asked if there was a need to develop other services/facilities in Barrhill as a source of employment there was significant support for additional developments.

## Is there a Need to develop other Services/ Facilities in Barrhill as a Source of Employment?

Yes	No	Don't Know
79 71.82%	12 10.91%	19 17.27%

Based on 110 responses

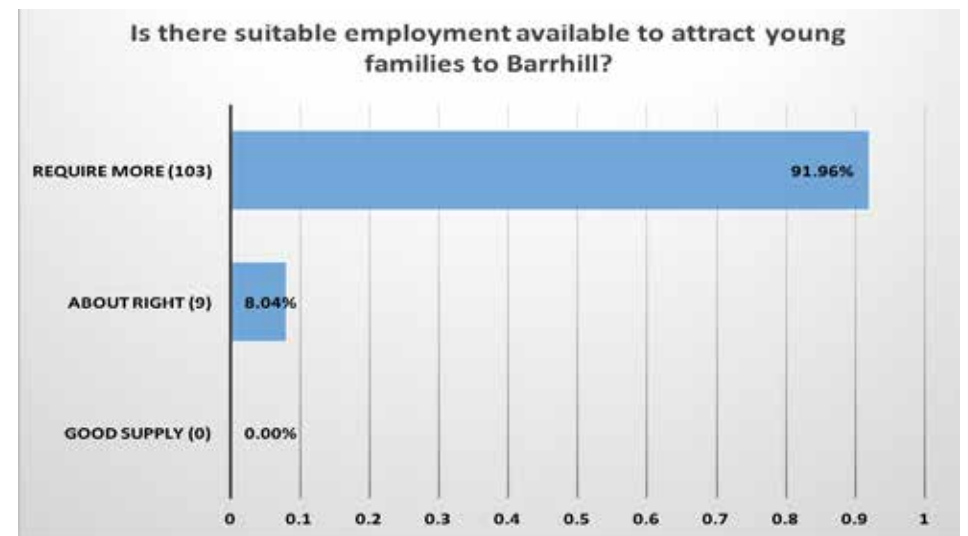
The most common suggestions included greater use of the Memorial Hall with the development of a coffee shop, shop, crafts etc. This was followed by high speed broadband, internet based companies, activity/adventure opportunities and visitor information facilities.

The survey also asked what are the most important industries for the future of Barrhill and residents were asked to put them in their preferred order of importance.

	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	Total
Agriculture	64 52.89%	22 18.18%	21 17.36%	7 5.79%	2 1.65%	5 4.13%	121
Country Pursuits	17 14.17%	20 16.67%	27 22.50%	25 20.83%	21 17.50%	10 8.33%	120
Forestry	17 14.41%	34 28.81%	24 20.34%	14 11.86%	16 13.56%	13 11.02%	118
Internet Based Industries	29 24.58%	18 15.25%	14 11.86%	14 11.86%	22 18.64%	21 17.80%	118
Manufacturing	15 12.93%	10 8.62%	9 7.76%	15 12.93%	25 21.55%	42 36.21%	116
Tourism	44 35.48%	19 15.32%	17 13.71%	18 14.52%	11 8.87%	15 12.10%	124



When asked about the availability of employment to attract young families to Barrhill the following results were collected.



Based on 112 respondents

92% of respondents stated that Barrhill required suitable employment to attract young families to the village. Suggestions being made by respondents, other than the main comment about increasing employment, included improving internet access, promoting and supporting the school, better housing, improved transport as well as identifying suitable businesses to bring to the village.



The main source of differing opinion within the community lies with the development of windfarms in the local area. This one factor has had a fairly negative impact within the community and is an issue that requires to be fully resolved if the resultant financial benefits from these turbines is to be used to best effect locally.

In the research there was an 'Optional' question asking what people's views were on local windfarms. One hundred and five comments were received, which is an 83% response based on total questionnaires received. Other percentages below are based on the 105 responses to this question:

- 75 people (72% of 105) made positive comments about windfarms.
- 15 of these people (15%) stated that there should be no more windfarm developments – "enough is enough".
- 18 people (18%) made positive comments relating to windfarms providing better energy provision and that the environment benefitted from their use. A few mentioned that wind power was much better than nuclear.
- 26 people (25%) made reference to the turbines bringing money and employment opportunities to the community. These included comments about community benefits, improved tourism and better local facilities.
- 30 people (29%) made more negative comments about windfarms, some believing they should never have been allowed to be developed.
- 14 people (14%) made comments saying turbines should be sited away from houses, too close to the village, a blight on the landscape etc. There were a couple of comments about construction traffic damaging the roads.
- There were also a few concerns about property prices in the Barrhill area being reduced as a direct result of the impact of windfarm developments.



Finally, there were a significant number of comments about how the development of windfarms has created disharmony in the village. This is a theme that emerged from other parts of the research and an issue that must be addressed if the village is to be allowed to go forward and benefit from windfarm revenues. Failure to address this fundamental point could lead to increased animosity and an inability for Barrhill to gain any real long term benefit in the community.

South Ayrshire Council (SAC) adopted the most recent Local Development Plan in October 2014 and shows the Carrick Investment Area, which covers the Barrhill community. The Barrhill settlement boundary still shows as being tightly drawn around the current built area. This restricts the number of development opportunities within the boundary such as affordable or sheltered housing or space for small scale business units. However, there may be opportunities for some entrepreneurial, shared service options in such a location as the Memorial Hall when it is redeveloped.

In the Carrick Investment area, the council states that it will encourage development if:

- It results in new housing at allocated housing sites (not applicable in Barrhill)
- It promotes rural diversification and tourism
- It results in the non-residential re-use of a substantially intact building, which will benefit the local environment
- It promotes the Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere and Galloway Forest Dark Sky Park
- Wind farms are directed to preferred wind farm search areas

The Local Development Plan also seeks to help deliver the spatial strategy and that includes the main points that are relevant to the Barrhill area, such as support for:

- Improved rail services and facilities throughout Ayrshire and between Ayr and Glasgow
- Improvements to strategic and local road networks
- Promoting, safeguarding and developing public transport networks, accessibility and cycling and walking networks

South Ayrshire Council's Local Development Plan has a clear mandate for many of the potential development opportunities that could be realised in the local community. Tourism will be a key element of that policy and around 11% of the population of South Ayrshire are already employed in that sector. The types of tourism activity likely to be attracted to Barrhill will have the least impact on the village although the economic impact could be developed in an organic manner over the years. This would allow subtle development to take place without spoiling the natural beauty of the area.

SAC are keen to ensure that any new developments make best use of the area's environment and assets, which support the local and rural economy. Barrhill sits close to the buffer zone of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. This has been confirmed as a location for a UNESCO biosphere reserve because of its unique combination of special landscapes and wildlife areas, rich cultural heritage and communities that care about the environment and culture and want to develop it in a sustainable manner. It would make sense for any future Barrhill developments to follow this philosophy wherever possible.

### ► Community Facilities & Organisations:

The Memorial Hall should be at the core of the village of Barrhill. A new car park has been constructed between the hall and the refurbished school and a new play park and sports field is now open across the road from the hall. The community also has a medical centre, bowling green, pub and village shop. There are a number of local

organisations such as the Barrhill Camera Club, Club Diamonds Keep Fit, the Stinchar Valley Gardening Club, Barrhill Angling Club, Darts team, Badminton, Wee Whist, Playgroup, Parents' Council and the Friendship Group. Visual improvements have included the waste ground at the bridge, which was chipped with planters placed there and elsewhere in the village. Barrhill has public toilets but there is a general feeling that they could be improved.



The former Barrhill Development Association is now the Barrhill Community Interest Company (BCIC). There is a quarterly issued 'Stinchar Valley Magazine', which covers local villages in the wider area and the BCIC produces a regular updated newsletter for the community.

There is also a Barrhill website, which is good but only attracts around 75 hits per week. The website must be used along with other forms of social media to send out more co-ordinated and positive messages about the village community.



The residents were asked if they thought that Barrhill was a welcoming village and this was further broken down for local people, new residents and visitors. The following results were shown:

### Do you think Barrhill is a Welcoming Village?

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Total Respondents
For Local People	64 61.00%	29 28.00%	12 11.00%	104
To New Residents	62 57.41%	33 30.56%	13 12.03%	108
To Visitors	53 50.48%	30 28.57%	22 20.95%	105

The figures are self-explanatory but perhaps a little bit lower than expected in such a small rural community.

Residents were asked what had improved in Barrhill since the last Community Action Plan and although only 77 people (61% of total responses) answered this question the following key responses were:

- New children's play park (71%)
- New car park between school and the hall (56%)
- Refurbished school (29%)
- Winter fuel payments (8%)

Similarly, the research questionnaire also asked if there was anything in the village that they thought was not as good today as it was before. Fewer people answered this question with only 58 responses (46% of total responses) as follows:

- Lack of community spirit (28%)
- Garage on the main street (19%)
- State of the Memorial Hall (14%)
- Poor roads and heavy lorries (14%)
- The state of the derelict church (11%)

The survey continued by asking respondents to rate a series of services and facilities in the Barrhill area and included the following:

- Rural Environment
- Peace and Quiet
- Community Spirit
- Community Facilities & Amenities

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Standard	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Rural Environment	15 13.27%	27 23.89%	47 41.59%	17 15.04%	4 3.54%	3 2.65%	113
Peace & Quiet	24 19.83%	31 25.62%	41 33.88%	16 13.22%	7 5.79%	2 1.65%	121
Community Spirit	8 6.72%	21 17.65%	32 26.89%	31 26.05%	18 15.13%	9 7.56%	119
Community Facilities & Amenities	2 1.68%	15 12.61%	50 42.02%	36 30.25%	7 5.88%	9 7.56%	119

Respondents were also asked to comment on facilities available for younger people (including Pre Primary, Primary, Secondary & Youth). The following results were collected from the research:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Standard	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Pre-Primary	14 14.00%	9 9.00%	37 37.00%	2 2.00%	3 3.00%	35 35.00%	100
Primary	25 25.25%	15 15.15%	27 27.27%	1 1.01%	4 4.04%	27 27.27%	99
Secondary	4 4.12%	2 2.06%	24 24.74%	21 21.65%	7 7.22%	39 40.21%	97
Youth	1 1.03%	4 4.12%	11 11.34%	31 31.96%	14 14.43%	36 37.11%	97



The higher level of 'Don't Knows' again reflects the number of older and retired people in the village who have little recent knowledge of school services in the area.

Policing, local safety and the condition of roads in the area were also covered in the research. The speed and volume of traffic through the village are seen as an important issue and the survey results are shown below:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Standard	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Policing & Local Safety	6 5.36%	19 16.96%	48 42.86%	17 15.18%	11 9.82%	11 9.82%	112
Roads	0 0.00%	1 0.81%	12 9.76%	63 51.22%	47 38.21%	0 0.00%	123

	Very Acceptable	Acceptable	Needs to be Better Managed	Needs Special Control	Don't Know	Total
The Speed of Traffic	3 2.68%	25 22.32%	47 41.96%	33 29.46%	4 3.57%	112
The Volume of Traffic	19 20.65%	34 36.96%	26 28.26%	11 11.96%	2 2.17%	92

Survey respondents were asked to rate some additional local services, including a more detailed appraisal of the primary and secondary schools servicing Barrhill. This included:

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Standard	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Primary School	53 41.73%	24 18.90%	16 12.60%	1 0.79%	1 0.79%	32 25.20%	127
Secondary School	6 4.72%	20 15.75%	31 24.41%	1 0.79%	0 0.00%	69 54.33%	127

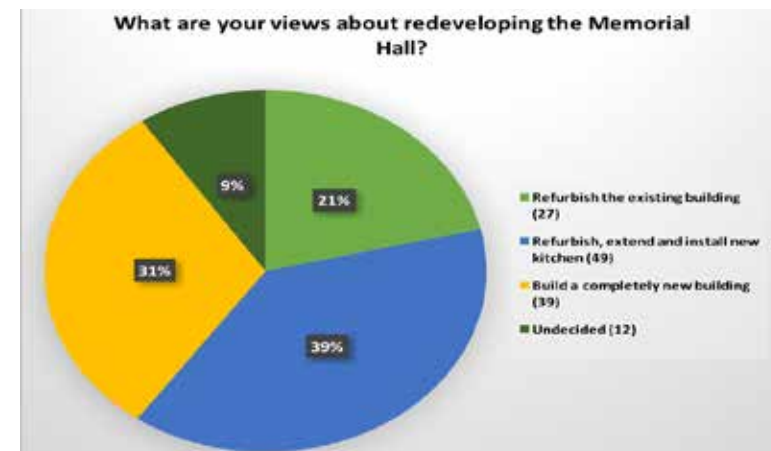
## Local Health and Social Services/Access to other NHS Services

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Standard	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Local Health & Social Services	31 24.41%	38 29.92%	41 32.28%	6 4.72%	2 1.57%	9 7.09%	127
Access to other NHS Services	9 7.09%	35 27.56%	50 39.37%	12 9.45%	5 3.94%	16 12.60%	127

## Bus Services/Rail Services

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Below Standard	Poor	Don't Know	Total
Bus Services	3 2.36%	12 9.45%	50 39.37%	40 31.50%	5 3.94%	17 13.39%	127
Rail Services	6 4.72%	17 13.39%	67 52.76%	20 15.75%	2 1.57%	15 11.81%	127

One of the key issues looking forward is what the community's views were on the options surrounding the development of the Barrhill Memorial Hall.



There were 127 responses and the breakdown was as follows:

(a) Refurbish existing building	(21.26%)
(b) Refurbish, extend & install new kitchen to existing building	(38.58%)
(c) Build a completely new building	(30.71%)
(d) Undecided	(9.45%)



A common theme was the fact that the building needed to be light and airy, a mix of the old and the new – like the school. The only consensus was that it was taking too long and needed to be done, whatever is finally agreed. The largest group appears to want to refurbish, extend and install a new kitchen and the consultants believe that this may be the compromise option, in that it retains all of the original building, protecting its original commemoration status, while increasing its size with a more modern extension that fits with the new car park leading over to the refurbished school. This would allow the Memorial Hall to be the hub of the community that connects the 'old with the new'.

There were many differing comments made by 53 respondents (42% of the 127). The largest group referred to cost, value for money and price but these came from all sides of the argument and from all preferences. Some people said that the Hall should be at the hub of the community and should provide services to attract families to the village and bolster community spirit, while providing additional facilities such as a gym and a games room. There were a number of comments about having a coffee shop and something that would attract people passing through Barrhill. Tourism was also mentioned throughout.

There were a number of comments about the fact that it was built as a Memorial Hall to those who had fallen during WW1 and that this should not be forgotten within the development plans. The architectural history was mentioned and the fact that it was designed by James Miller who also designed many famous buildings including Turnberry Hotel, St Enoch's Subway Station, Kildonan House, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, Wemyss Bay Railway Station, Glasgow Central Station and the Anchor Line Building in the city.

## ► A Strategic Vision for the Future:

### Mission Statement

“Barrhill will use the Community Action Plan to deliver a Vision for the next few years, based on research analysis and financial support from renewables and other funding sources. It is our intention to create an attractive and sustainable environment, develop new entrepreneurial business opportunities, attract families to live and work here, and use the area’s assets to improve services for the whole community, thereby ensuring the future success of the area”.

- ❖ When reflecting on the current situation in Barrhill we must recognise the efforts and achievements made over recent years in delivering improved facilities and services for the community. This includes the upgrade and modernisation of the local school, the new car park at the Memorial Hall, the children’s playpark and the distribution of funds from the Barrhill Community Interest Company for winter fuel payments, bursaries and support for community groups. The Barrhill Memorial Hall Community Association also organise a variety of community events including a gala day, Christmas dinner for retired residents, Christmas and Halloween children’s parties as well as dance and race nights.
- ❖ It is also patently clear that much of the effort to deliver these initiatives has come from a relatively small number of local organisations and stakeholders who continue to volunteer to support new development proposals. We acknowledge that the data analysis shows that not everyone agrees, supports or welcomes all that is proposed locally but this is quite normal in communities and Barrhill is no different from any other.
- ❖ If Barrhill is to ‘Thrive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century’ as stated in the previous CAP and deliver new initiatives to safeguard the village going forward, efforts need to be made by all to redress the somewhat fractured nature of community views on local wind turbines. The research responses were frank, fair and honest and showed that the majority of Barrhill residents supported turbine

development but many of them now believe that there may be less of a need for further development, once the current round of applications is completed.

- ❖ Perhaps now is the time to accept the current situation and make best use of the resultant revenue from the windfarm sector, to ensure that Barrhill receives the maximum benefit in support of the community that will enhance current facilities, develop new initiatives and provide a stable platform for local economic development.
- ❖ While the views of everyone in the community must be respected wherever possible, the results of the research are quite clear, giving Barrhill Community Council and Barrhill Community Interest Company the authority to proceed with a strategy to deliver the outcomes from the new Community Action Plan and secure the long term future of Barrhill.
- ❖ Barrhill has an exceptional natural environment in an area with an interesting and diverse history, where the potential for unobtrusive tourism development, such as walking, cycling, and bird watching could help to reduce the impact of rural unemployment and create community business opportunities to replace services lost over the years.
- ❖ We recognise that many of these possibilities could be developed around the preferred public option for the redevelopment of the Memorial Hall, if carefully managed plans could reposition the Hall at the ‘hub’ of the community, bringing people together in an enhanced atmosphere of conciliation and collaboration, allowing them to achieve their aspirations and expectations in a much more co-ordinated and acceptable manner.



## ► Key Objectives & Actions:

### Objective 1 – Project Manager:

If Barrhill is to be successful with these endeavours, it follows that any new initiatives must be co-ordinated with all of the organisations who represent the various community interests locally. The most effective way of delivering this would be for Barrhill Community Council, Barrhill Community Interest Company and the Barrhill Memorial Hall Committee to employ the services of an experienced project manager to act on behalf of everyone and deliver the strategy and work associated with these CAP proposals. We do not envisage that this would be a full time position but with the right calibre of person, the post could be managed with a 6 - 8 day per month contract. Funding for this post could possibly be sourced locally or using a programme, such as 'Awards for All'.

### Action:

The successful candidate would undertake the following key objectives and tasks:

- Create a medium term strategy and marketing plan to support the Community Action Plan, which should be updated as required going forward.
- Prepare a priority list of targets from the key objectives stated and agree these with relevant stakeholders, local organisations and landowners where appropriate.
- Agree a timeframe for the early development of the Barrhill Memorial Hall to act as a new 'Hub' for the community.
- Identify a working group of volunteers who can assist the development process across the sectors.
- Identify and prepare funding applications in support of the Priority Actions.

### Objective 2 – Barrhill Memorial Hall:

The community of Barrhill should continue their current strategy of developing and improving local facilities. We believe that the key priority in the CAP should be the planned development of the Memorial Hall. Although there were a wider range of views on how this should proceed the greatest support was to refurbish, extend and install a new kitchen in the existing building. There was general support for the Memorial Hall being at the hub of the community, to attract new families to the village and bolster community spirit. This can all be achieved without losing the justification behind its original construction and the memory of those lost in the Great War.



If there is to be an effective hub at the core of the community, it must be a facility that the whole community relies on and uses on a week to week basis as second nature. It also has to provide services that encourage local residents of every age to engage with the centre and other people using the varied facilities on offer. It can grow and expand in a manner and timescale that fits the needs of the village but as the hub acquires more new enterprises and activities, its role at the heart of the community will increase and bring people together in a new model of co-operation.

### Action:

We believe that the people of Barrhill should agree an open policy on how to take this proposal forward and form a working group, which includes members of the Memorial Hall Committee, other community groups, individuals and external stakeholders, to consider the options for inclusion at the refurbished hall. The Hall has been handed back to the community by South Ayrshire Council, which now requires the process to be started and preliminary plans agreed as soon as possible. This will be particularly important if structural changes to the Memorial Hall are to be made and consideration given to changes that result from any alterations that may be required to the external and internal layout of the building.

The new Hub at the Memorial Hall could include the following facilities and services.

The development of a new kitchen that would support a small restaurant/café, serving good quality, value for money food in a relaxed environment. The kitchen should have the capability of serving bigger functions, such as anniversaries, weddings and corporate groups. If set up and managed properly, this could be the best catering facility available between Newton Stewart and Girvan and would have the potential to attract visitors as well as residents of towns and villages in the surrounding area.

The creation of a new community business could be at the core of the Hall's operation and could deliver a range of services from a smaller room at the front of the building. This community business would seek to replace some of the services previously lost in the village some 20 years ago as well as acting as the entrepreneurial centre for new business development in the community.

The Community Business premises could provide the following services:

- A community shop supporting local crafts and services, which could operate as a part time post office on certain mornings during the week.
- A locally manned facility to support and attract new businesses to

Barrhill. This would be modelled on 'Money Penny PA', which is a national organisation that provides reception and telephone answering services for small businesses. Well trained local people could take some of the administrative pressure and cost off new developing businesses as part of a new innovative support facility for local community businesses. Modest fees could be charged to people and businesses using this service.

- A fast and efficient broadband service would require to be installed in the village and this would require to be supplemented with much improved mobile phone coverage. Computers should be installed at the hall for the use of visitors and local residents who currently do not have their own access to the internet. Extensive training can then be arranged for local people to upskill their IT abilities and improve their social inclusion status. Visitors could also access their email accounts and the internet when passing through the village, giving another good opportunity to stop them in the village and introduce them to the benefits of using local services and staying in the local area.
- A Visitor Information Centre (VIC) to service the needs of activity visitors to the area as well as passing trade on the road between Newton Stewart and Girvan. Staff would be trained to VisitScotland standards and would work in partnership with the tourism network in South West Scotland and deliver local booking services for the accommodation sector, to encourage visitors to overnight locally.
- Information displays could be produced and mounted on moveable frames for use in the main hall of the café area during the day. These would be removed later and stored in another part of the hall to ensure that local use of the facility is not restricted in any way. The Memorial Hall could take on the role as a temporary visitor attraction using the above displays and some relief models to highlight the potential walking and cycling in the area.
- The community business could develop additional small commercial activities to boost revenue whilst encouraging visitors to stay longer in the

Barrhill area by offering a mini active travel hub at the hall with the provision of some hire bikes for public use. There could be additional commercial benefit by offering bike washing facilities and storage on site for visitors bringing their own cycles to Barrhill.

- It follows that the provision of showers and a drying room in the Memorial Hall would attract more customers to the area for walking and cycling. Consumers are happy to pay for these facilities but it is also possible to incentivise these costs by offering a reduction in the fees paid if the customer, for example, stays and has dinner in the village. This is a service that has previously been operated successfully in the Highlands.
- Wet weather facilities could also be provided for visitors to Barrhill by making facilities available to them in the Memorial Hall. This could include table tennis, pool, games, television and a small reading library in the café area. These facilities would be jointly shared with local residents.
- The 'Hub' at the Memorial Hall could also be used for a series of workshops, courses and training in conjunction with other outside bodies, such as the NHS Ayrshire & Arran, South Ayrshire Council, VASA, energy firms, and these could form part of an annual programme of community activities, organised by the Memorial Hall and the Project Manager.

### **Objective 3 – Activity Tourism Development:**

This is a key area for potential development, which could deliver both direct economic benefit as well as attracting potential new business operators to Barrhill. The community must realise that the type of tourism development that is likely to be generated in Barrhill will be of a style that is unlikely to be intrusive in any way and is likely to mainly include walking, cycling and possibly equestrian activity in the medium term.

The natural resources of the area coupled with the profile of the visitors likely to be

attracted to them would suggest that there would be little detrimental effect, if any, on the community, particularly with those who have expressed a lack of interest in the tourism sector.

Tourism in the Barrhill area would develop in an organic manner and the area is capable of absorbing much greater input than is likely to be forthcoming, without any obvious visual or social impact on the local community. In saying that, the development of these tourism opportunities would be driven by the community and as such, the speed and volume of their introduction could also be controlled in part.

### **Action - Walking:**

This is an ideal area for walking and there are currently various levels to suit all tastes from rambles to the more experienced walkers. However, in the first instance there is a need to prepare an audit of paths and trails in the areas, which should include the following:

- List the existing paths & trails that are currently available for walkers' use.
- Record existing routes in need of repair and improvement, such as the path to the Martyrs' Tomb.
- Identify new paths and trails that should be developed to link sites in and around the village, which could include Bents Farm, the caravan parks, and Barrhill Railway Station.
- Ensure that adequate provisions are made for public access to the Arcleoch Windfarm site under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003, as detailed in the Public Access Plan submitted to South Ayrshire Council in 2013 by Scottish Power Renewables.
- Work with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Scottish Power Renewables (SPR) to agree a policy for new routes within their current land areas and agree a programme of development to construct additional facilities for the community to market to the public.
- Consider the benefits of creating and training some local walking guides who can provide escorted tours for groups, families and individuals visiting the area and this service could be based at the Memorial Hall.

A small working group should be set up, which could include the BCC, BCIC, BMHCA, FCS, SPR, South Ayrshire Council Access Officials & Planners as well as representatives from local walking organisations to take these ideas forward within an agreed timeframe.

Some of the existing routes include the southern section of the Carrick Way, which includes Barrhill and many of the surrounding villages but the current status of this route requires some further clarification as one of the group tasked with its redevelopment closed down earlier in the year. The Whithorn Way (formerly the Pilgrims' Way), which runs from Paisley to the Isle of Whithorn passes through the village and this route is now being promoted extensively, particularly to church walking groups. The more demanding Southern Upland Way, which spans a route from Portpatrick in Dumfries & Galloway to Cockburnspath in the Scottish Borders, passes through the hamlet of Bargrennan, 9 miles south of Barrhill.

### **Action - Cycling:**

The process for developing Walking also applies in a very similar manner for Cycling, however, it is our opinion that the community should be primarily marketing to families and older active couples. The current market for mountain biking is fairly saturated across Scotland and the economic return from that sector is relatively low. It is perhaps inevitable that some people will bring mountain bikes to the area and they should also be made very welcome.



Barrhill Railway Station provides an additional opportunity to market cycling and walking to any of the communities on the rail network. Discussions have been held with Scotrail and Stagecoach and concessionary travel may be available to support any new activity packages that the community or commercial operators may wish to set up. The community business should also consider providing hire cycles for visitors to rent on a daily basis. It would make sense to increase the working group for walking to accommodate a couple of additional representatives from cycling organisations in Ayrshire

### **Action - Orienteering:**

There are over twenty orienteering clubs in Scotland with more than half of them in the lowlands. The Scottish Orienteering association and all the clubs are listed at [www.scottish-orienteering.org](http://www.scottish-orienteering.org) Officials from the 2 nearest clubs at Ayr and Dumfries should be invited to visit the Barrhill area, initially to gauge the suitability of the local area as an event venue.

### **Action – Equestrian Activities & Trail Riding:**

Trail riding is becoming an increasingly popular sport for horse riders. This is when horses and their riders travel over longer distances using forestry roads, tracks and bridle paths as a form of adventure/endurance sport.

On certain occasions, linked to longer endurance holidays, groups travel between accommodation centres that are specifically geared up to meet the needs of equestrian visitors. There is an increasing number of accommodation operators who are members of the 'Horses Welcome' scheme, which is a quality assurance programme from the British Horse Society.

In the Tourism & Leisure study, which looked at the roads and tracks around Arecleoch three years ago it was considered that Barrhill could be used to provide a range of off road offers for riders wishing to take part in this type of activity.



There is a potential for specific 'entry level' routes, which could be set up to attract new users to this sporting activity but this initiative would require the services of a qualified equestrian operator. They would be required to work in partnership with FCS, SPR, landowners and the local community to consider potential routes and provide a series of proposals for further consideration and decision.

Routes for general equestrian access, particularly aimed at younger riders may well attract interest as it is increasingly difficult to find safe and attractive routes in Scotland where they can ride without fear of vehicular traffic or conflict with other users.

### **Action – Wildlife Tourism:**

This is another activity sector, which could support the type of unobtrusive tourism activity referred to earlier in this study and could be a further opportunity for employment. Escorted wildlife tours could be set up and operated by the community business or by an individual operator with administration and booking support managed from the 'Hub'.

FCS has taken a very responsible position with regard to wildlife and has instigated a number of measures to protect certain species and provide suitable habitat for others. On a previous visit to the Arecleoch windfarm site a member of staff from the Forestry Commission detailed the wildlife present in the area, which included:

- ❖ Various birds of prey including Hen Harriers, Kestrel, Buzzards and Sparrowhawks as well as Barn Owls and Crossbills that appear to be attracted to the local area.
- ❖ High numbers of Red, Fallow and Roe deer, which are often viewable on the windfarms.
- ❖ Red Squirrels and Otters can also be seen and there is a good Water Vole population in the watercourses throughout the site.

The Water Vole population in the UK has been reduced by 80% in the last 25 years mainly due to predators, such as the Mink. The Forestry Commission has increased the number of cuts off the existing watercourses, as Mink tend to travel along a waterway without deviating from the main watercourse route. Mink have not yet been sighted on the land around Arecleoch. FCS has stripped the land back near some of these watercourses and cuts to improve the habitat and provide food (grass) for the Water Voles.

There may be some worth in commissioning a study to determine whether remote cameras could be installed at key locations in the area, with images being sent back to the Visitor Information Centre at the Memorial Hall using a wireless relay system. The resultant images of the turbines and wildlife could form the basis of an interpretive centre based on renewables and the environment as an added attraction for non-walkers visiting the 'Hub'.



### **Action – Ecotourism:**

For many years, environmentalists have considered ecotourism a critical undertaking in order that future generations may experience destinations that are relatively untouched by human intervention. It is commonly accepted that

ecotourism concentrates on volunteering, personal growth and environmental sustainability and typically involves travel to destinations where flora, fauna, and cultural heritage are the primary attractions. One of the goals of ecotourism is to offer visitors an insight into the impact of human beings on the environment and to foster a greater appreciation of our natural habitats.

Ecotourism is primarily defined as a form of tourism involving visiting fragile, pristine, and usually protected areas, intended as a low impact and often small scale alternative to standard commercial tourism. Its purpose may be to educate the traveller, to provide funds for ecological conservation, to directly benefit the economic development and political empowerment of local communities, or to foster respect for different cultures.

Responsible ecotourism includes programmes that minimise the negative aspects of conventional tourism on the environment and enhance the cultural integrity of local people. In addition to the evaluation of environmental and cultural factors, a key element of ecotourism is the promotion of recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities. Ecotourism often appeals to environmental and social responsibility advocates, which is in keeping with the ethos of this Community Action Plan.

The decision to promote ecotourism must lie with the local community, working in partnership with major agencies such as Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), South Ayrshire Council, the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA), Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and Scottish Power Renewables (SPR), in the case of Arecleoch. If developed properly this could provide an interesting and effective promotional campaign that would sit comfortably alongside the current Biosphere and 'Dark Skies' initiative nearby.

### **Action – Community Ranger Service:**

During previous discussions with Scottish Power Renewables it was clear that the company was opposed to any vehicular access to their windfarm sites. This is primarily due to the fact that the main electrical cables connecting the turbines to

the sub-station are buried at the side of the access roads in relatively soft ground, at an approximate depth of 0.9 metres.

If a vehicle were to go off the road, as previously happened at Whitelee Windfarm near Glasgow, part of the windfarm would have to be powered down to effect recovery of the vehicle in a safe and hazard free manner. Health & Safety and risk assessment issues must be accepted as a priority but a complete vehicle ban potentially denies land access to many potential visitors.

The summit at Arecleoch is an excellent location, giving stunning views to the Paps of Jura, Ben Lomond, Ailsa Craig, the Isle of Arran, the Mull of Kintyre as well as the Antrim Coast and Rathlin Island in Northern Ireland. The main difficulty is that if the summit can only be accessed on foot from the Bents Farm road the round trip to the summit is likely to be too long (5-6 hours) for many visitors particularly older groups, such as ramblers. However, with the support of SPR and FCS and in the spirit of creating employment opportunities for South Carrick, a limited number of fully trained members of the community could become Access Rangers (3-4) and could be licensed to operate on the windfarm roads, using agreed vehicles approved by SPR and FCS, to carry small groups of walkers to the summit or provide wildlife tours of the area.

Strict rules on access would have to be agreed and training would require to be undertaken by both agencies. The benefits of having trained Community Rangers would mean that certain activities could be undertaken on the site with members of the public using the ranger service. We would anticipate that most of this activity would be fairly low level and much of it undertaken on the main access roads that enter the windfarm site. This service could be operated commercially and would be a very useful way of introducing members of the public to the operation of windfarm technology and allow them a better understanding of the renewables industry.

Community Rangers could use their local knowledge of the area to create additional trips and tours around other areas of local interest.

### Action – Archaeology:

Archaeology is a subject that is attracting greater interest from academic establishments, commercial archaeological companies and individuals wishing to get involved in supporting some open digs.

The archaeology of the area around Arecleoch is well documented in the SPR Report Part 2 (The Assessment) Chapter 8: Archaeology and Cultural Heritage, which was produced in February 2010. There is no intention to repeat the twenty pages of this report detailing the range of desk based studies and site visits that were undertaken, however it is worth recording that there are ten scheduled sites of interest in the locality of Arecleoch (including a reasonably well preserved chambered cairn) and 348 scheduled monuments within fifteen kilometres of the windfarm site.

The report states that: 'The whole of the development site can have the potential for the survival of unrecorded archaeological remains of all periods from the Neolithic to the present day. The potential is significantly reduced in the areas subject to commercial forestry operations, although any substantial features may have been damaged rather than destroyed.'

There is much more detail available in the report beyond the small section we have identified and we are conscious that the quality of any potential sites may be limited. However, there may be some worth in approaching Scottish Universities who have archaeological faculties with a view to offering them a lease agreement to use agreed parts of the site for research and development studies and field trips. If undertaken this would require an agreement from both FCS and SPR to ensure that any site visits or archaeological investigations were subject to strict Health & Safety agreements and did not interfere with turbine operations.

There may well be undiscovered sites of interest that would not normally attract any further investigation based on the findings of the report referred to above but a series of University based field trips, digs and desk research may offer some additional opportunities to record more detailed information on the area. More significantly, this type of arrangement would bring small groups to the area who

could travel by train and require accommodation in the local area. This would also be an additional marketing activity, which would be targeted at key special interest groups.

- Approach SPR and FCS to determine whether they would agree to allow University archaeology field groups access to some of the sites
- Contact the West of Scotland Archaeology Service to discuss these proposals. WoSAS operates a website where you can find information about sites and monuments, details of recent fieldwork and discoveries, and links to other archaeological organisations and groups. The site is intended for use by professional archaeologists, local societies and community groups, academic researchers, and anyone with an interest in the archaeology and history of Scotland.
- Consider whether there are opportunities to engage with an archaeologist to operate open digs that could be marketed to interested members of the public as part of a local business opportunity.

### Objective 4 – Accommodation Sector:

The current stock of accommodation in Barrhill is fairly limited with a minimal amount of serviced establishments and limited self-catering available. There are two caravan parks to the north of the village and other pockets of accommodation in neighbouring villages.

#### Action:

A detailed audit of accommodation should be undertaken and this should include all local villages and the towns of Girvan and Newton Stewart, where there is a more established accommodation stock, which already benefits from initiatives such as 'Dark Skies' and activity based tourism. The audit should identify any shortfall in sector provision and prepare an estimate of the likely requirement for the next three to five year period based on the development potential of initiatives in the CAP. Accommodation providers should be encouraged to network with each other and partner with any services provided at the 'Hub' to ensure that visitors coming to the

area are able to find suitable accommodation and services for their needs. If activity tourism is developed further there may also be a need for accommodation providers to supply additional services, such as bike and equipment washing facilities, storage and drying areas.

Through time the provision of a community hostel should be considered by BCC and the BCIC. If a viable proposition this could be a useful source of revenue for the village, notwithstanding the impact it could have in providing additional accommodation.

In the case of ecotourism there are some good examples of new innovative eco-friendly accommodation that could be evaluated as a possible way of increasing the local accommodation stock in a manner that is sympathetic to the environment and is aesthetically pleasing.

Some of these examples can be viewed at:

[www.domesweetdome.co.uk](http://www.domesweetdome.co.uk)

[www.glentressforestlodges.co.uk](http://www.glentressforestlodges.co.uk)

[www.armadilla.co.uk](http://www.armadilla.co.uk)

[www.canopyandstars.co.uk](http://www.canopyandstars.co.uk)

Kildonan Country House is just outside Barrhill and the development of this facility would provide an immediate increase in locally available accommodation. Discussions should be held with the owners to evaluate whether this significant facility is ever likely to become available as accommodation that could be used to support the promotion of the Barrhill area.

### **Objective 5 – Signposting:**

The community needs to develop a strategy for signposting that meets the needs of a number of different stakeholders yet creates a corporate style around the local area that is user friendly, welcoming and fits within the guidelines of South Ayrshire Council, Forestry Commission Scotland and the windfarm operators in the area. This strategy should be designed to fit with proposed development plans including:

- The 'Hub' at the core of the village
- Paths & trails around the village
- Walking, Cycling, Orienteering & Equestrian routes
- Wildlife & Ecotourism opportunities
- Visitor attractions & places of interest
- Engagement with the railway station and the community rail partnership to increase visitors to Barrhill on that route

The signs need to be able to provide quite a bit of detailed information with parts of them colour coded where necessary to highlight paths & trails for example.

The community could also consider using augmented reality signs where information is accessed via the use of mobile devices such as smart phones and tablets. This would require an 'app' to be produced and made available free of charge to the public. The app could then be downloaded on to mobile devices. When the mobile device is pointed at the sign, an augmented reality (AR) 'trigger', which is created when the panels are produced, opens access to the information stored on the download.

Augmented reality (AR) allows video, slides, maps and audio to be recovered from the display once the device has triggered the technology using the installed app. The augmented reality trigger can be installed on the graphic in advance of any support videos/media being produced. The display would be manufactured using a system called multiguard, which is virtually vandal proof, UV screened, weather protected and guaranteed for up to ten years. There is no limit to what can be installed in the AR programme and this could provide a wealth of potential information on the Barrhill area in a very modern and technologically advanced format.



## Objective 6 – Energy Saving:

Renewable technology already impacts on Barrhill and the surrounding area, therefore it makes sense to try and improve the village and make it an example of best practice for energy efficiency in south west Scotland. It was mentioned in the research that there have been various energy saving insulation projects undertaken on domestic properties in the area. There are solar panels at the new car park and the Memorial Hall is heated by a biomass boiler, which has proved to be very successful.

There is however a view that more could be done and further significant benefits given to residents if domestic properties could be given an allowance to allow householders to increase the energy efficiency of their homes with priority possibly being given to houses most affected by the location of wind turbines.

Future energy efficiency plans should be designed to make life easier and more cost effective for local residents, which will in turn help towards improved health and fitness levels.

### Action:

An energy working group should be set up under the auspices of the BCIC and a review undertaken, mapping out areas of investment that would improve the energy efficiency of properties in the village.

The BCIC group should consider sourcing funds to improving homes by installing some of the following benefits:

- Double/triple glazing
- Roof/wall insulation
- Solar panels
- Biomass or ground source heat pumps
- Small scale hydro schemes

All energy efficiency upgrades could remain with the property if the occupier changes, thus improving energy efficiency within the overall community. This could

be used to attract future residents to Barrhill as the village is perceived as a 'greener' location.

## Objective 7 – Community Health:

Recent figures from the health board and discussions with medical support staff would suggest that there has been a slight improvement in health in the Barrhill area since the last CAP was produced in 2008 but this theory relies primarily on anecdotal evidence.

Girvan tends to skew health figures in Carrick as it shows as being above the South Ayrshire and Scottish averages for conditions, such as cancer, respiratory, coronary conditions and hospital admissions but in all cases the villages in south Carrick are usually shown well below the combined figure when Girvan is included in these statistics.

The current medical practice stated that although there were no medical issues prevalent in the village locality there is a belief that more health education and activities could be undertaken in Barrhill and this would help to create a better health legacy for the village in the future.



## Action:

In the research a number of good ideas on how the health and wellbeing of the community could be improved were suggested by local residents and these ideas are worth expanding further. The list below is shown in order of preference.

- New paths, walking routes and outdoor activities  
Local people should be encouraged to make use of these developing facilities as well as using them to promote the area to visitors
- Improve community spirit and civic pride  
Some of the divisions in the community referred to in the research can be quite stressful and every effort should be made to remove these issues from within the community.
- Provide outdoor and indoor fitness equipment  
The redeveloped Memorial Hall should have indoor fitness equipment available for community use. Outdoor adult fitness areas within weather protected areas should be considered for both ends of the village at Arnshean Park and at the park at Wallace Terrace. These additional outdoor facilities should be linked to the development of the 'Hub' at the Memorial Hall.
- Reduce traffic speed and pollution from lorries in particular  
Further monitoring of through traffic and heavy goods vehicles in particular should be undertaken in the village and pollution levels analysed to ensure that systems are put in place to minimise any negative impacts that could affect local residents.
- Help towards heating, fuel and transport costs  
The proposals listed in the previous section on energy efficiency will help to improve people's health by ensuring that their homes are providing a quality environment to live in at a reasonable price. Transportation has reduced in relation to Sunday bus services but the frequency of trains has improved. Perhaps the community should consider the purchase of an electric or hydrogen powered vehicle that could be used for community transport.

Other general comments made in the research suggested:

- The provision of allotments, planters and benches would be a benefit to the community if they were looked after by local people.
- Improved local communication, pavement repairs and a general clean-up of the village. The garage site attracted a number of criticisms so it would be an idea for the community to discuss the possibilities for improving the look of those business premises without undermining the company's trading situation.
- The upgrade of the Memorial Hall and the general look of the village will improve its ability to attract people to the area, create jobs and leave a much healthier legacy for the community as a whole.



## Objective 8 –New Business Proposals:

Some of these ideas are taken from research comments and others from the many discussions held with local organisations and individuals over the last six months. Some are based on current developing proposals and others are just random ideas that have been generated from a bit of 'blue skies' thinking.

In a way, they show that people are thinking about how to bring new business to the community and this is encouraging to see. Perhaps there is some worth in continuing to seek innovative ideas from the community that could be developed further to create and attract the necessary future employment for Barrhill. These comments are certainly worth looking at as a prompt to attract new business operators to the area or alternatively, to provide some new ideas that could be developed as part of a community business.

- Acquisition of land and the development of a new car park for Barrhill Station, which has been identified by the community rail partnership as a necessary initiative to improve passenger handling and visitor usage in future years.
- Investigation to see whether a microbrewery or a small gin making facility could be developed in Barrhill. Microbreweries are springing up all over Scotland and are proving to be a great success. Scotland also now produces more gin than any other part of the United Kingdom. A significant number of the new Scottish gin producers are based in much smaller facilities.
- Review the provision of food producers in the area to see if there is any potential to link any production to the Barrhill area and use the sector to help promote the village. Investigate the potential for encouraging food production within the community.
- Work with Forestry Commission Scotland to evaluate the use of forestry artworks and sculptures on their land as part of the visitor attraction of the area and as a potential support theme for new trails. Examples of activities could include: -

- Forest art sculptures
- Wood carving and cabinet making courses
- Painting breaks with local artists
- Photography courses and field trips for individual groups and clubs

These activities could provide additional opportunities for attracting Rural Skills Training, which could assist local business expansion.

- Create a small working group within the Barrhill CIC that could support the introduction of new apprenticeships. This could include basic trades such as joiners, plumbers, landscape gardeners, green energy fitters, and workers involved with agriculture, forestry products and tourism related activities.
- Off road quad bikes are popular in many parts of Europe but there are no centres offering these facilities between central Scotland and the Border. A commercial operation would require permission to operate on forestry routes and would require to operate supervised tours. There are currently over sixty centres listed in the UK ([www.quadnation.co.uk](http://www.quadnation.co.uk)).
- Tree top activity operators should be encouraged to look at the Barrhill area for the development of a new site. Many of the current centres in the UK have walking routes, cycle trails, zip wires, kids play areas, bike hire as well as a range of support services for a wide range of clients, including adults, children, schools, colleges and corporate customers. The rail service to Barrhill could attract groups and corporate business to a facility of this kind.
- Discussions are being held to consider proposals for securing additional car parking at Barrhill Railway Station in keeping with the 71% of respondents who were critical of the limited space currently available. Meetings will require to be undertaken with Network Rail, Scotrail, the Community Rail Partnership and community groups in Barrhill to assess the feasibility of this proposal, any indicative costs and sources of potential funding.





## Summary Conclusions & Recommendations:

The research study, undertaken by the consultants, was considered to be robust as it was answered by 46% of the population, giving a very broad view of local opinion on a number of local issues. Sixty one percent of these respondents had not been involved in the previous 2008 study.

Barrhill has achieved much in recent years with modernisation of the local school,



a new public car park, a playpark for children, enhanced winter fuel payments and local bursaries.

Key issues emerged from the research such as the need for improved broadband and mobile coverage to boost the potential for online businesses and to provide effective communications. There was significant support for increasing employment opportunities and finding ways of attracting young families to the area.

There was a recognition that Barrhill had a high proportion of retired people, many of whom were a little more resistant to change, but there was also an acceptance that the village needed to move forward and develop new ideas to secure its long term future.

The development of windfarms had, in many cases, divided the community and although Barrhill was benefiting financially from their construction, the majority of people who still supported them, were suggesting that enough was enough. The divisive opinions about windfarms requires to be 'healed' to bring the community back together again.

There was general support for the employment of a part time Project Manager to drive forward these new ideas and initiatives in an independent and effective manner, without any particular bias in any direction.

There was a majority support for the refurbishment and extension of the Barrhill Memorial Hall, which would provide a range of new services for the local community and passing visitors. This 'Hub' would be key to bringing people back together and reinstating some of the services lost to the village many years ago.

A range of business development opportunities was identified along with energy savings, community health benefits, signposting and a range of activity tourism initiatives. There were a number of transport issues particularly relating to bus travel but there had been improvements in the frequency of rail services passing through Barrhill daily.

A development strategy should be prepared by the Project Manager to prioritise the agreed elements of this community action plan. This would require to be a fluid document, similar to a business plan, which would be continually updated to focus attention on where each project was at any given time. The strategy would include time schedules, local participants, funding plans, planning requirements and key stakeholders involved in the process.

### Statement from Corrie Wilson MP, Ayr, Carrick, Cumnock:

"The village of Barrhill and the surrounding areas has a strong sense of community, and the willingness of everyone to roll up their sleeves and get involved is clearly evident in these regeneration plans.

Much has been achieved in recent years, and these proposals build on those earlier efforts and set the foundation for turning the area into an attractive and sustainable location for the future.

I would like to congratulate everyone involved in these plans, and wish Barrhill Community Council and the Barrhill Community Interest Company, every success in tapping into the pride and passion local people have for the area to make the most of its natural assets. They will always have my full support".

### Statement from Jeane Freeman MSP, Carrick, Cumnock & Doon Valley:

"Close-knit, active communities like Barrhill are part of what makes Ayrshire such a great place to live and work. The Scottish Government are committed to supporting small communities to come together to thrive, and Barrhill is an inspirational example of this."



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