

**BARRHILL Community Futures**

**Draft Community Action Plan 2008 - 2011**

*FRONT PAGE PHOTO OF BARRHILL*

***“Barrhill - Thriving in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”***

**Barrhill Development Association  
Barrhill Community Council  
Barrhill Community Association**

## INTRODUCTION

### BARRHILL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

This Action Plan is a clear statement about the type of place the community wants Barrhill to be - and what needs to be done.

There are five sections:

- An outline of our community profile
- A summary of our community's views
- A vision for the future
- The issues that matter most, and
- Priorities for action

### BARRHILL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

The Association was formed after an initiative from Barrhill Community Council in December 2006 and given the task of preparing a plan for the future of Barrhill. Many members of the community and the Barrhill Development Association have worked together as a steering group to guide the preparation of this plan. Community Agents, also members of our community, carried out the work of gathering and sharing information about both our area and our residents' views.

Steering Group Members **LIST OF NAMES**

Alan Tuffs from the Small Town and Rural Development Group worked with the steering group to support the process.

### LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

The Plan was prepared following extensive community engagement over a six-month period.

Community engagement included;

- A Community Futures Launch Event in November
- Publication and distribution to every household of an information booklet about the project and some views from our partners
- A series of interviews with different groups and individuals representing a wide cross section of the community
- A community views survey that went to all households
- A community profile detailing facts and figures about the community
- A Community Exhibition and Open Day Event in April

Over 65% of all households completed the survey return form and about 130 people attended the Open Day.

### MORE INFORMATION

This Action Plan is supported by a full report on the Community Views Survey, a summary of the Stakeholder Interviews and a detailed Community Profile, each of which can be downloaded from the Barrhill website on [www.barrhill.org.uk](http://www.barrhill.org.uk)

## **OUR COMMUNITY NOW**

*This summarises information from the COMMUNITY PROFILE and some of the views from the COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY.*

### **AN OUTLINE COMMUNITY PROFILE**

#### **A remote rural area of South Ayrshire**

The Barrhill Community Council area was established in 1975 - formerly part of Carrick District Council in Strathclyde Region. The area, together with our neighbouring communities of Barr, Pinwherry, Colmonell and Ballantrae make up the South Carrick part of what is now South Ayrshire Council.

Barrhill covers an extensive area of 200 km<sup>2</sup> with a sparse population level of just 1 person for every 50 hectares. About 70% of the land is forested - including part of the extensive Galloway Forest Park - and the remainder used largely for grazing sheep and cattle. Our population resides predominantly in the valley corridor of the Duisk.

The village is around 60m above sea level and lies 12 miles from Girvan and 18 from Newton Stewart in the neighbouring local authority - Dumfries and Galloway. Although a remote location, it is also on a route through the Southern Uplands and consequently is well connected by both road (A714) and rail networks.

The combination of wind, open land and a sparse population makes SW Scotland suitable for wind powered energy generation. In Barrhill there two proposals for windfarms - Arecleoch (60 turbines) and Mark Hill (28 turbines) - and these could be constructed in the near future.

#### **Environment**

Ours is predominantly a managed agricultural landscape with land use determined by the quality of soil. These are mostly shallow soils or deep areas of peat but some of the alluvial valleys were once cultivated for arable crops but now mostly used for sheep and cattle rearing which are usually moved off to other areas for finishing. Annual rainfall is high at around 1500mm and lochs, burns and rivers are a dominant feature. Much of the poorer land is now forested.

Bog and moorland plants provide habitat for pippets and warblers, hen harriers, buzzards and owls. Red squirrels inhabit in the deciduous river valley woodlands, salmon and trout, once frequent in the Duisk are still to be found in the Cree. A local Site of Special Scientific Interest is the Feoch meadows.

The natural environment is of paramount importance to our community, supporting livelihoods and providing a fine quality of life for our residents and visitors.

#### **Heritage - Pre-history, Covenanters and the railway**

Geologically, Barrhill lies at an amazing 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.

### **Population - falling and ageing**

Figures from the 2001 Census show a population of 385 with about half of the total number of residents in the village and half more widely dispersed. In common with many other rural areas including our neighbouring communities, the population is in steady decline, and has fallen from around 1,000 at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Compared to both Ayrshire and Scottish averages, Barrhill has a lower proportion of young children and a very much higher proportion of people aged 45 - 59. More recent figures than the 2001 census show that these characteristics have become more pronounced and that pensioner numbers have increased as well. The age range of the population indicates that the community is not naturally sustainable but is dependant upon in-migration. The trend of decline could continue if these concerns for future sustainability are not addressed.

### **Housing - diminishing availability**

The community has just fewer than 190 houses of which only about 150 are lived in. These 150 homes are predominantly owner occupied (77%) with a very low proportion of them being social rented accommodation (8%) from the local authority. There are no housing association properties. Properties are not-permanently-occupied for a variety of reasons - some for short-term holiday purposes, some because they are for sale and others because they are left to lie empty by their landowners. This lack of housing opportunity is a serious concern to the community.

*Insert table or bar chart here*

### **Economy - an enterprising community**

Self employment in Barrhill is almost three times the regional average. Agriculture, horticulture and forestry are highly represented locally (24% as opposed to 3% for South Ayrshire and 2% for Scotland) - and there is also a strong construction sector which includes Solway Precast with 63 employees of whom 19 live locally. Unemployment levels are just higher than regional and national averages.

There is a small but important tourism sector with two caravan parks, B&Bs and a small pub/hotel and a herb nursery.

*Insert table or bar chart here*

### **Land and development**

The South Ayrshire Local Plan was adopted in 2007. It shows the Barrhill Settlement Boundary as being very tightly drawn around the built area. There is a very restricted number of development opportunities within the boundary and this limits the potential for expansion of the village - for example for additional housing at affordable levels.

The area from the church to the top of Main Street is proposed in the Local Plan as a Conservation Area. Beyond the Settlement Boundary, the land is designated as both a "Scenic Area" and as an "Area for Rural Diversification". The second of these applies to much of the southern part of South Ayrshire and relates to policies which recognise the need to promote the social and economic sustainability of this remote rural area.

### **Education - the school as a beacon**

The village school has a roll of 32 pupils with a further 10 in the nursery class. It is seen as a vital part of the community's infrastructure - the fact that there is a school attracts new people to the village. There are concerns about the continuing viability of the school in the medium term because of falling numbers of children moving

through the school. The majority of secondary school students travel by bus to Girvan Academy.

### **Health and Social Services**

The majority of Barrhill residents are registered at the Barrhill medical facility which is open for four sessions a week - two with GPs and two with nursing staff. It is a satellite service of the practices in the neighbouring villages of Colmonell and Ballantrae.

Other key points include:

- Compared with the regional average, the overall number of local people who are permanently sick or disabled is slightly high but the number in the village is much higher.
- The medical practice considers that promoting healthy diet and exercise is an essential element of improving the health of the community.
- The number of carers providing support for family members is higher than average.
- The nearest ambulance service is provided from Maybole (40 minutes)
- The nearest hospital with A&E is in Ayr (60 minutes)

Local residents hope to tackle this issue of distance from services with an increased ability to respond themselves to cardiac emergencies.

### **Community Facilities and Organisations**

As well as the school and the medical centre, our community has the Memorial Hall which is the focus for many activities, a bowling green, a play park and a sports field, a village shop and a pub but no church, garage or post office. The Memorial Hall is owned and run by the Community Association with support from South Ayrshire Council. A playgroup meets in the Memorial Hall one morning a week.

Local groups and associations include: Barrhill Community Council, Barrhill Development Association, Barrhill Community Association, the Bowling Club, the Gardening Club, the Six-O- Club, the Over-fifties group

### **Transport Networks**

There is a train service to Glasgow, Ayr, Girvan (20 minutes) and Stranraer (30minutes) with seven daily services each way including evening travel. Although nearly a mile away, the station has neither a scheduled bus link to the village nor a car park. Bus services connect Girvan (30 minutes) and Newton Stewart (50 minutes) five times a day.

Unfortunately, especially with no evening services, the bus timetables are not well co-ordinated for everyday needs like shopping or leisure travel to Girvan. A volunteer driver service for hospital visits by elderly and infirm people is available. Girvan Travel Connections provides a subsidy for taxi services when no public transport alternative is available.

## COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY

### THE LIKES AND THE DISLIKES

93 responses were received from the 150 inhabited houses, with both the village and the surrounding area more or less equally represented

What We Like	
Attribute	Number of times people mentioned this
Natural rural environment	60
Good community spirit	53
Peace and quiet	53
Good community facilities	22
Crime free and safe	20

*"The rural aspect and the surrounding beauty of the countryside"*

*"The feeling of being part of a community which cares about the people"*

*"Sense of community - friendly but not intrusive"*

*"The quiet village atmosphere is what brought us to the village"*

*"Nice and peaceful without any hassle"*

*"Having a local village school. This fosters a good community spirit"*

*"Doctors surgery very near which is good"*

*"Living in a small community gives you a feeling of security"*

What We Don't Like	
Dislikes	Number of times people mentioned this
Lack of local amenities	53
Traffic and roads	51
Poor state of the built environment	47
Local transport situation	22
Lack of activities - especially for younger people	17

*"Lack of some facilities makes it feel isolated - no bank, no Post Office"*

*"Public toilets recently closed down by the council"*

*"The hazardous road system linking the village to Girvan. It is no better than a donkey and cart trail"*

*"Poor condition of roads and volume of heavy goods traffic"*

*"At the moment the general look of the village is drab"*

*"Vacant plot next to bridge very untidy"*

*"There is no transport service up to or down from the railway station"*

*"Poor bus service with either having to shop in 15 minutes or hang around Girvan for 2 - 3 hours."*

*"Nothing for the children to do except for the basic park at the top end of the village"*

*"Lack of children's activities - sports facilities or other clubs, especially for younger children"*

## **OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

### ***The kind of place we want Barrhill to be***

*This statement summarises the main views of local people and organisations, about what they want for Barrhill's future.*

## ***~ Barrhill ~ thriving in the twenty first century.***

We will achieve our aim by building on our strong community spirit, taking the best of the past while building a sustainable and resourceful community, well equipped to face the challenges of the future.

Our focus will be on:

- providing first class community facilities;
- establishing a lively range of activities and leisure opportunities for people of all ages;
- welcoming new residents, visitors and tourists;
- ensuring there is housing for all needs;
- being a healthy community;
- creating new opportunities for businesses, jobs and work;
- developing a bright and welcoming village centre;
- tackling positively the need to reduce energy use.

Our rural community is getting itself organised for action and we welcome residents and supporters to join us and help take Barrhill forward.

## MAIN STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

*All the information that the Community Futures work brought forward - through the survey, the profile, the interviews and the Community Open Day - has helped to shape this action plan. In this section seven main development themes and priorities have been set down that the community is aiming for - both through its own efforts and in partnership with a range of agencies and supporters.*

*The order in which they are set down is not significant but alphabetical; all of these are priorities!*

### Theme 1 - Community Facilities and Activities

With the community's ambition of Barrhill being a thriving place once more - a great place to live and bring up a family - it is essential the existing community infrastructure is expanded and improved. More activities - for more people - in better accommodation. This is about both projects on the ground - like the hall, the park and the play areas - and what is able to take place because of them - a wider range of facilities and activities for people of all ages, local residents and visitors.

#### Main Priorities

- Set up more activities for young people
- Set up a refurbishing project for the Memorial Hall
- Create a modern play park for the children
- Set up a community newsletter to complement the local website
- Improve Arnsheen Park

### Theme 2 - Energy conservation and generation

With rising fuel costs for homes as well as transport, the community is keen to explore both energy saving measures (especially for existing houses and public buildings) and ideas for small scale and community based energy generation from renewable sources. The surrounding forests represent a sustainable resource which is currently unexploited for local needs.

#### Main Priorities

- Develop a sustainable energy generation project
- Develop an energy saving project for Barrhill homes
- Develop a sustainable energy project for community buildings

### Theme 3 - Homes and housing

There is a lack of housing opportunity in and around the village - particularly for people with limited means and those not able to bring any equity from their existing housing situation. A key factor in the drive for local sustainability is the widely shared local understanding of the need to create more housing opportunities if the community is to both provide for local people and attract new people and their energy to Barrhill.

- Develop affordable homes for rent and for purchase



## **Theme 4 - Improving the Look of Barrhill**

There is a generally shared view that Barrhill is looking rather run down, with neglected derelict areas, too much litter and dog mess left lying and a lack of community pride in the village environment. Some specific sites are particularly in need of revitalisation and clear plans are being prepared for small-scale improvements. It is not yet clear whether the village centre will be designated a Conservation Area and some residents are wary of the implications of this should it be put in place.

### **Main Priorities**

- Encourage businesses to improve the appearance of their premises
- Improve the waste ground at the bridge in Main Street
- Set up a planting scheme for the village
- Regular roadside litter picking on approaches to village

## **Theme 5 - Local Economic Development**

Barrhill earns its living in a wide variety of ways - from visitors and tourists, from its environment, from the landscape, from farming the land, from construction, from public services, from retail, hospitality and general services - from being employed and from self employment - people commute out and some travel in. The community's objective of greater sustainability in the future - allied to the high cost of travel and the distance from major centres - has led to the conclusion that an increased level of support for local enterprise is necessary. As a consequence, the village infrastructure needs to be strengthened and developed to provide more opportunity.

### **Main Priorities**

- Re-opening the public toilets - predominantly for visitors
- Encourage and support businesses - both new and existing ones
- Encourage tourism
- Improve opportunities for jobs and access to jobs

## **Theme 6 - Roads, Traffic, Transport and the Village Infrastructure**

The A714 runs through the heart of the village, connecting Girvan and the A77 to Newton Stewart and the A75 trunk road. The forest timber is being felled and the frequent transit of HGVs and other traffic through the village is seen as a threat to personal safety and the general environment alike. The campaign for slower traffic has already been set up and will continue until proper support is offered for measures to reclaim the village spaces for pedestrians and cyclists.

The lack of car parks affects both safety and convenience. There are two main locations where parking needs have been identified - a village centre site to serve the hall and the school and some provision at the station.

In addition, there are issues about poor co-ordination of the bus timetables and the lack of any public transport connection to the station.

### **Main Priorities**

- Build a car park at the station
- Slow traffic down through the village
- Create a car park between the school and the Memorial Hall
- Campaign for public transport timetables to be better coordinated
- Provide transport connection between the station and the village

<b>Theme 7 - Walking, paths and trails</b>
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Barrhill's potential as a fine village set in good walking country needs to be supported by developments on the ground. A good network of paths providing decent access to the countryside will serve residents, visitors and tourists alike. The focus is on two aspects of local tourism development - the need to serve existing visitors better by linking the caravan sites to the village and the opportunity to route the proposed Carrick Way Long Distance Path through the village.

With the happy coincidence of its location in the hills and its station, Barrhill has significant potential as a hub for outdoor recreation in south west Scotland. These developments will not only bring small-scale economic benefits but will also go towards improving the health of the community.

### **Main Priorities**

- Create an off-road path from the caravan sites to the village
- Make sure the Carrick Way is routed through the village
- Improve the path to the Martyrs' Tomb
- Create a path through Lennie Wood

## ACTION

*Action steps will be tackled in the next 12 months but may take some time to achieve. These steps include suggestions made in the surveys, stakeholder interviews, and community event.*

### THEME 1 – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Priority 1 - Set up more activities for young people

##### Main actions

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##### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

#### Priority 2 - Set up a refurbishing project for the Memorial Hall

##### Main actions

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##### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

#### Priority 3 - Create a modern play park for the children

##### Main actions

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##### Action By

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#### Priority 4 - Set up a community newsletter to complement the local website

##### Main actions

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##### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

#### Priority 5 - Improve Arnsheen Park

##### Main actions

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Action By  
xxxxxxxxxx

## THEME 2 – ENERGY CONSERVATION AND GENERATION

### Priority 1 - Develop a sustainable energy generation project

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

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### Priority 2 - Develop an energy saving project for Barrhill homes

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

### Priority 3 - Develop a sustainable energy project for community buildings

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

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**THEME 3 - HOMES AND HOUSING**

**Priority 1 - Develop affordable homes for rent and for purchase**

Main actions

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Action By

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**THEME 4 - IMPROVING THE LOOK OF BARRHILL**

**Priority 1 - Encourage businesses to improve the appearance of their premises**

Main actions

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Action By

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**Priority 2 - Improve the waste ground at the bridge in Main Street**

Main actions

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Action By

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**Priority 3 - Set up a planting scheme for the village**

Main actions

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Action By

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**Priority 4 - Regular roadside litter picking on approaches to village**

Main actions

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Action By

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## THEME 5 - LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Priority 1 - Re-opening the public toilets - predominantly for visitors

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

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### Priority 2 - Encourage and support businesses - both new and existing ones

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

### Priority 3 - Encourage tourism

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

### Priority 4 - Improve opportunities for jobs and access to jobs

#### Main actions

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#### Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**THEME 6 - ROADS, TRAFFIC, TRANSPORT AND VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Priority 1 - Build a car park at the station**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 2 - Slow traffic down through the village**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 3 - Create a car park between the school and the Memorial Hall**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 4 - Campaign for public transport timetables to be better co-ordinated**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 5 - Provide transport connection between the station and the village**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx



**THEME 7 - WALKING, PATHS AND TRAILS**

**Priority 1 - Create an off-road path from the caravan sites to the village**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 2 - Make sure the Carrick Way is routed through the village**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 3 - Improve the path to the Martyrs' Tomb**

Main actions

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Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

**Priority 4 - Create a path through Lennie Wood**

Main actions

- 

Action By

xxxxxxxxxxx

## REVITALISING BARRHILL - AND THE BIGGER PICTURE

*Barrhill Community Futures* is a community led approach to regeneration and community planning. Our work in putting together this Plan has been supported by South Ayrshire Council, Force9 Energy, Scottish Power Renewables, the National Lottery through the Big Lottery Fund's Awards for All programme and the South Ayrshire Community Planning Partnership.

Throughout the work we have constantly connected with our partners - both individuals and organisations - South Ayrshire Council, Forestry Commission Scotland, Ailsa Horizons, the Energy Agency at Auchencruive, our councillors, MSP and MP, Scottish Power Renewables, and our neighbouring village communities in South Carrick. We are grateful to all of them for their continuing interest and involvement.

As we move to turn our Plan into Action we will continue to work with a range of agency partners that share our aims and aspirations.

It is therefore encouraging to see how our own bottom-up plan fits closely with the regeneration aims of South Ayrshire Council and the Scottish Government.

<b>BARRHILL COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN THEMES</b>	<b>SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF ITS COMMUNITIES</b>	<b>SOUTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL'S LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES</b>	<b>NATIONAL PRIORITIES</b>
Improving the Look of Barrhill	Clean Attractive and sustainable	Maintaining and enhancing through a sustainable approach, the high environmental quality of the area	Building Strong, Safe and Attractive Communities
Roads, Traffic, Transport and the Village Infrastructure			
Energy conservation and generation			
Local Economic Development	Prosperous, Learning and Achieving	A strong and diverse local economy	Getting People Back into Work
			Raising Educational Achievement
Walking, paths and trails	Ambitious, forward looking and responsive	Meeting the needs and aspirations of South Ayrshire for housing, jobs, education and leisure	Improving Health
Homes and Housing Energy			Engaging Young People
Community Facilities and Activities			Healthy, Safe and Caring

## BARRHILL COMMUNITY FUTURES

**BDA LOGO ??????**

**Making it Happen**

This Action Plan has been prepared by the Barrhill Community Futures Steering Group. It is hoped that the Plan will continue to be 'owned' by a partnership of local organisations working together. A number of Working Groups have been established to progress these priority projects and actions:

Working Group	Contact person	Contact details
Barrhill Energy Working Group	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
Barrhill Walks and Trails Working Group	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
Barrhill Housing Opportunities Working Group	xxxxxx	xxxxxx
Other ?????? e.g. Barrhill Environmental Improvements Group	xxxxxx	xxxxxx

Please make contact if you are interested in becoming involved.

It is also recommended that existing organisations such as the Community Council and the Community Association take a lead role in areas where they are already active.

**Village Forum idea as well here ??????? How real is that ??????**

The Steering Group is exploring what is involved in setting up a successor body to the Barrhill Development Association as a charitable community company or similar body able to raise funds for the projects identified and to cement the partnership work within an incorporated organisation.

For more information about the Barrhill Community Futures project, please contact the Secretary of the Barrhill Development Association - XXXXXX on xxxxxxxx email XXXXXX



Community Futures Programmes of local community planning and community engagement are designed and supported by the STAR Development Group.

For further information contact Alan Tuffs

email: [alan.tuffs@btinternet.com](mailto:alan.tuffs@btinternet.com) or [www.stardevelopmentgroup.org](http://www.stardevelopmentgroup.org)

[Acknowledgement to Awards for All, Wind Farms and CPP \(This may be necessary on the front\)](#)