

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park

Pàirc Nàiseanta Loch Laomainn
is nan Tròisichean

2008 – 2011

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



LUSS & ARDEN

COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN 2008 – 2011

LUSS & ARDEN COMMUNITY FUTURES STEERING GROUP

LOCH LOMOND & THE TROSSACHS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

LUSS & ARDEN COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

The community of Luss and Arden prepared this – its second Community Action Plan with the assistance of Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Community Futures Programme.

The plan revises and replaces our initial Community Action Plan which is now out of date. Since its publication we have established our Luss and Arden Community Development Trust and have achieved some of the priorities in that Plan such as:

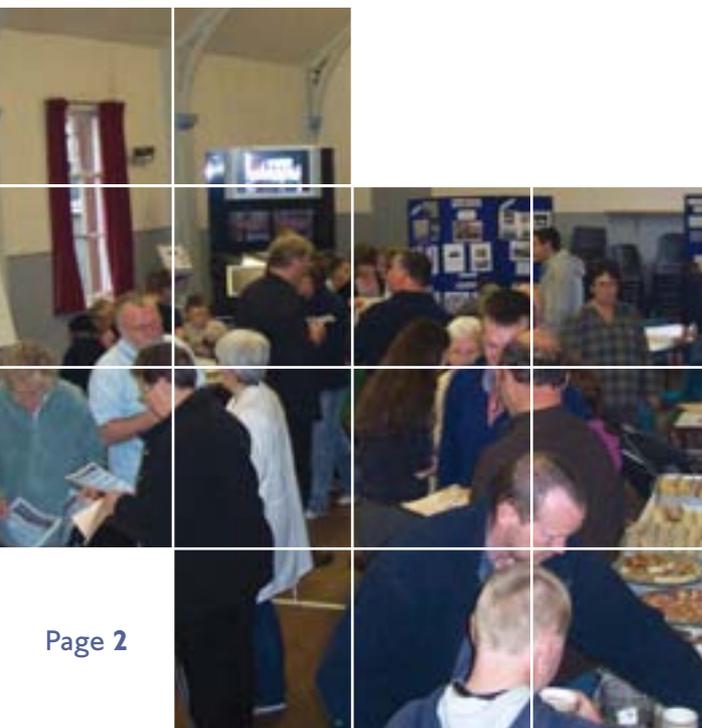
- Visitor management – introduction of a Luss-wide outdoor drinking ban enforced by an enhanced policed presence at peak times.
- Worked with Argyll and Bute Council to develop a partnership agreement to enable community leadership in developing new plans for the playpark

Some other priorities are carried forward, while a few important issues have been identified to reflect the changes in our community over the last few years.

The Plan summarises community views on

- Luss and Arden now
- the vision for its future
- the issues that matter most and
- priorities for action

The Plan makes a clear statement about the type of place Luss and Arden aims to be – and what needs to be done.



LUSS COMMUNITY FUTURES STEERING GROUP AND SUPPORT

A local Community Futures Steering Group was established by the Community Development Trust, the Community Council and the Hall and Church committees. Its members were Peter Brown, Niall Colquhoun, Rowena Ferguson, Marion McCahon, Rachel Sherrard and Iain Wragg

Liz Lloyd was our community profiler and Hannah Dinneen and Diane Davidson Kinghorn from Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority worked with the Steering Group to support the consultation process.

LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

The Plan was prepared following extensive consultation with the community over the summer of 2007. Consultation included:

- A series of interviews with different groups and individuals representing all aspects of the community
- A community views survey that went to all households
- A community profile detailing facts and figures about the community
- A Community Futures Open Day

19 INTERVIEWS WERE HELD WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF COMMUNITY GROUPS, BUSINESSES, SERVICE PROVIDERS AND DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

119 SURVEY FORMS WERE COMPLETED BY OUR 190 HOUSEHOLDS

69 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE COMMUNITY OPEN DAY



OUR COMMUNITY NOW

We have summarised below some of the views from the COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY

COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY		
WHAT WE LIKE - TOP EIGHT LIKES		% Responses
1	Beautiful unspoilt countryside	43%
2	Small and friendly local atmosphere	29%
3	Good access to local walking and cycling	22%
4	Geographic location on the bonnie banks, with access to Loch Lomond	19%
5	Peaceful, quiet environment	19%
6	Good community facilities such as church, Pilgrimage Centre, school	18%
7	Good local facilities such as local shops and fresh vegetable & fish vans	8%
8	Beautiful and historic buildings	7%

'Beautiful surroundings and breathtaking scenery'

'Community spirit is very important to residents and the neighbourly help that is available when needed.'

'good walking facilities within easy reach'

'on the bonnie banks, with access to Loch Lomond,'

'relative isolation with the benefit of close proximity to 'civilization'

'quiet and peaceful way of life yet only a short distance to the city'

'the warm welcome you receive from the folk of the village, in its shops and tea rooms'

'I like the sense of history and the fact that the church has been here for all but fifteen hundred years'



WHAT WE DON'T LIKE - THE TOP EIGHT		% Responses
1	Litter throughout the area but in particular on the beach	18%
2	Poor maintenance of the landscape and streetscape: overgrown verges, trees and shrubs obscuring views and access, neglected sites such as the old petrol station	14%
3	Traffic issues – high volume of speeding traffic on A82 and to a lesser extent the Old Luss Road	12%
4	Parking issues: difficulties for residents parking in village due to visitors avoiding the charges in the carpark	9%
5	Poor community facilities: village hall needing renovation, visitor centre closed in the winter	8%
6	Volume of tourists, often in large groups	7%
7	Lack of support for families with children: little for young people to do, lack of upgraded playpark, lack of afterschool care and childcare provision	6%
8	Lack of affordable local needs housing	6%

'The amount of litter in the village at times, and the laybys between here and Tarbet are full of litter'

'I can't see the loch and beauty of the area for trees',

'reckless driving on the A82, and the old Luss Road i.e. overtaking on the bends', 'cars going too fast in the village'

'Having to literally fight for a parking space in the village that I pay high council tax for' 'places like the village hall which is used mainly by local people deserve upgrading and funding'

'The playpark because it doesn't have very much in it. There is not very much to do for young people in the area' (age 5-11)

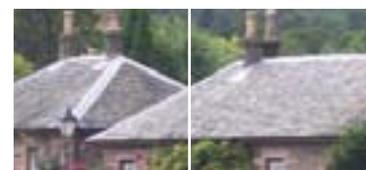
'There is little or no affordable housing and so there are few families in the village – something that will get worse and lead to problems for the school and the church'

A Junior Survey was carried out to complement the main Community Views Survey with the older classes of Luss Primary School. 9 Survey forms were completed by students and teacher.

1. WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT LUSS AND ARDEN? Most agreed with the main survey, with the top likes being:		% Responses
1	Beautiful views and scenery:	44%
2	Location on the bonnie banks with access to the loch and beach:	44%
3	Good community facilities such as pilgrimage centre, school and church:	44%
4	Good local facilities such as shop, ice-cream bar:	33%

The questions on the Survey Form were identical to the Main Survey:

2. WHAT DO YOU NOT LIKE ABOUT LUSS AND ARDEN?		% Responses
1	Litter came first again for the top dislike	44%
2	Other dislikes concerned the limited facilities at the playpark,	33%
3	vandalism,	33%
4	and having nowhere to go	22%



OUR COMMUNITY NOW

We have summarised below some of the information from the COMMUNITY PROFILE.

COMMUNITY PROFILE 2007

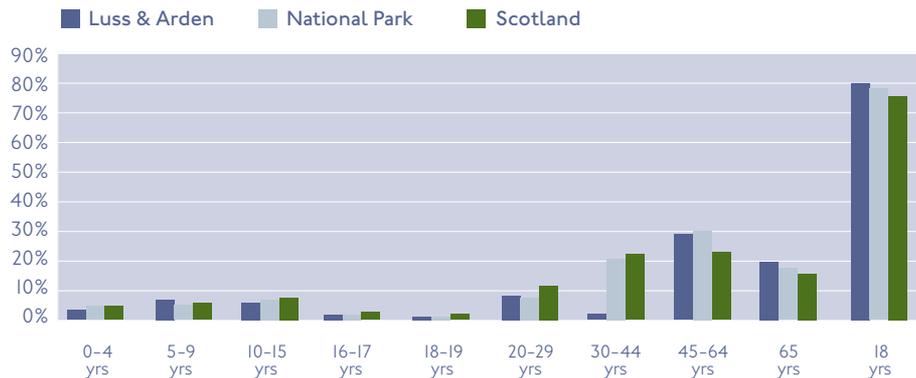
The Area

The village of Luss lies just south of the mouth of Glen Luss on the western shore of Loch Lomond. Arden is situated at the southern end of Loch Lomond in fertile agricultural land. Occupying a charming site in front of three of the finest islands on the loch and offering stunning views across to Ben Lomond, the area is renowned for its beauty and tranquillity. Luss is situated just off the A82, 8 miles from Balloch and approx 25 miles from Glasgow on the western side of the loch. Luss and Arden is an important part of the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park experience and has been described as the “Jewel in the Crown” of Loch Lomond. The area is a paradise for wildlife both on and off the loch.

Population

The population of the Luss & Arden area was in consistent decline in the years from 1801 till 1960. In the decades since 1960 these numbers have fluctuated and though they have not increased significantly the speed of their decrease has slowed. The resident population in 2001 was 450. Numbers of young people aged under 20 years are significantly below national and regional figures. The percentage of residents aged over 45 is higher than the national average, in line with other national park communities.

AGE OF POPULATION IN 2001



Housing

There are approximately 190 households in the area. Of this number there is an above National Park and Scotland-wide percentage (26%) of private rented housing in Luss and Arden (Luss Estates has X units) and a comparatively low percentage (45%) owner occupied housing.



Employment and the Local Economy

Traditionally a quarrying and farming area, local employment is today more reliant on the tourism industry. Local employment figures indicate that there are high numbers of self employed people in the Luss & Arden area.

Education

There has been a school on the site of the primary school since 1794. The current school in the village has a roll of 23 at present. There are no facilities for physical education at the school; the children are taken to the village hall once a week for PE and dance classes. The majority of secondary age pupils attend Hermitage Academy in Helensburgh, travelling through daily by bus.

Health

A doctor’s surgery is held in the village hall on a Wednesday. Outside these hours local people travel to the surgery in Alexandria in the Vale of Leven.

Luss services include: monthly visit from the Chiropodist, weekly visits from the Health Visitor and the services of District Nurse.

Dental services are available in Alexandria & Helensburgh.

Hospital & Acute Services

During the day the Vale of Leven hospital offers a minor A & E unit, at a distance of 11 miles. The nearest A&E services are at Paisley Royal Alexandra Hospital 25 miles away.

Community Facilities

Village Hall: The community has an ageing community hall in Luss village built in 1894. The Village Hall Committee has been set up to raise funds for the renovation the hall and has raised £200,000 to date. The hall accommodates clubs and local activities including the doctor’s surgery.

National Park Centre: The Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Centre situated at the visitor car park in Luss village.

Church: Luss village has a beautiful church with a fascinating graveyard. It is extremely popular with visitors to the area. In recent years the church itself has become a popular wedding venue with people coming from all over the world to be married there.

Pilgrimage Centre: The Pilgrimage centre opened in 2004. It provides:

- Heritage room in which to welcome the thousands of visitors who visit Luss and the Church every year.
- Touch screen computers telling the story of Luss using the voices of local people.
- Workshops offering candle making and pottery classes for locals and visitors
- Computer and video room providing broadband for local people.
- Meeting rooms for community groups



Outdoor Leisure and Recreation

There are a number of footpaths and advertised walks in the community as well as access to the Luss Hills, with cycle paths and a circular trail through Luss village. There is also a children’s play park (currently with limited facilities) in the village and a picnic area near the beach. Down by the pier there are speed boat trips and cruise boat trips with waterskiing and canoeing clubs that also use the Loch.

A new bridge has been erected over the Luss river with the help of the Royal Engineers which has created access to the Glebe.

Environment & Heritage

Agriculture: There are 11 tenanted farms in Luss and Arden; 10 of the farmers are tenants of Luss Estates and one is a tenant on the Arden Estate. 10 of the farms are hill-sheep farms, with the other a dairy farm.

Forestry: The majority of the rest of the land is under forestation, with a current plan of felling and ultimately replanting. Planting practices have changed over the years and the planting programmes carried out by Luss Estates are now much more focussed on amenity woodland with mixed planting as opposed to traditional conifer planting.

Natural History: Many of the farms rear sheep (mostly Scottish Blackface) with only one farm breeding Highland Cattle. In Loch Lomond, salmon, trout, pike, perch, powan, and eels are plentiful. There is also a wide range of raptors, the commonest being buzzards, with eagles nesting in the more remote parts. Red deer are numerous, as are roe deer although red deer face vigorous culling. Foxes are also plentiful. The Statistical Account of 1791 listed 21 ‘Quadrupeds’ including mammals such as the polecat, wildcat and pine marten. Today there are approximately 31 native and established mammal species that occur in the area.

Flora & Fauna: Loch Lomond and the surrounding countryside support a wide variety of flora and fauna. Over 500 flowering plants and ferns occur in or around Loch Lomond due, in large part, to its mild oceanic climate, the geology and topographical diversity of the area.

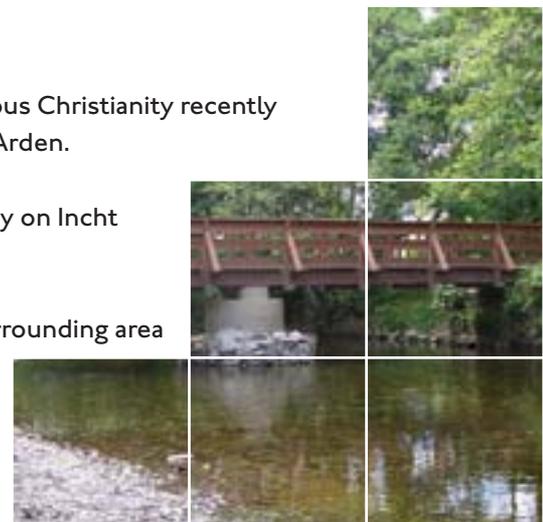
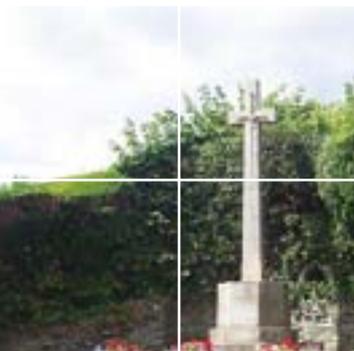
The mountains, moorlands, woodlands, waterside and wetland habitats enable some 200 species of birds to frequent the area.

Other environmental issues: The area covered by the Luss and Arden Community Council contains a number of areas set aside as SSSI’s or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The Loch Lomondside SSSI’s are designated primarily because of the presence of old sessile oak woods.

Celebrating local Heritage: Luss and Arden has a well supported Heritage group which meets on the last Tuesday of every month in the Luss Pilgrimage Centre. It is open to local people who are interested in the valuable heritage of the area and was established so that local people could bring their old photographs to be copied and local stories preserved for future generations. Regular events are held with visiting speakers throughout the year.

Some features that make Luss special include:

- Archeological evidence of 1500 years of continuous Christianity recently discovered at Bronze age settlement at Midross, Arden.
- 9th Century Viking hogback gravestone.
- Remains of the 6th Century St Kessogs monastery on Incht
- Victorian mansions throughout Arden
- Top class golf venue
- Luss has its own TV station for the village and surrounding area



OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LUSS AND ARDEN

We have amended and updated our vision statement to reflect the way in which the community has changed over the last 5 years and to take account of the hopes for the future as expressed by our residents through the Community Futures process.

LUSS AND ARDEN VISION STATEMENT

A Thriving Community...

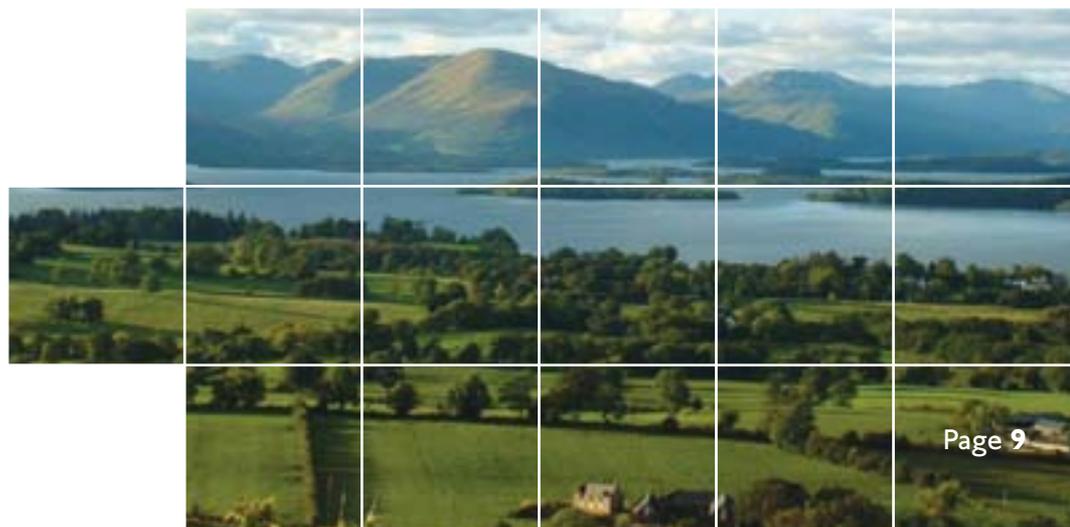
A key feature of this will be the provision of a good mix of affordable housing for people of all ages. Controlling change in this way will respect the area's rural nature and its remarkable built environment and will echo the well-held community view that more large scale developments will not be appropriate for our village or our surrounding area. Through planning and development that is sensitive to the needs of the community, and through determined consultation with the community, we will work towards our goal of being a "Thriving Community".

An active and engaged community...

Luss and Arden will have first class social and community facilities to underpin this. We therefore need to preserve, refurbish and breathe new life into our Village Hall, create wonderful learning and play spaces for the children and establish care and support services for the more fragile members of the community.

A tidy, friendly, welcoming place...

Our village will continue to be known as really good place for visitors – tidy, friendly and welcoming. To achieve this we will ensure that our environment is maintained to a very high standard.



MAIN THEMES & PRIORITIES

These are the things that the community, in partnership with a range of agencies and supporters, will aim to achieve over the next few years.

THEME 1 - PROVISION OF LOCAL NEEDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

There is a lack of affordable housing in Luss and Arden. We will encourage private, rented and shared ownership dwellings in a scale appropriate to this conservation village.

MAIN PRIORITY

- Development of affordable housing for local people of all ages

THEME 2 - IMPROVING COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

We will tackle the need to improve existing facilities such as the village hall and playpark and develop more activities for people of all ages.

MAIN PRIORITIES

- Improve existing village hall to meet the needs of a modern community
- Build on the good work of the Youth and Community group to complete the project.
- Develop access to social and recreation related activities for all ages

THEME 3 - LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

There is a need to improve the maintenance of trees and verges which will improve access to existing and new paths, open up views, increase safety and reduce the risk of flooding.

There is a need to build on successes such as the Glebe bridge development to continue to develop the Pilgrimage pathway and new developments such as a cyclepath along the loop road which could provide a facility for running races (like the Helensburgh 10k).

MAIN PRIORITIES

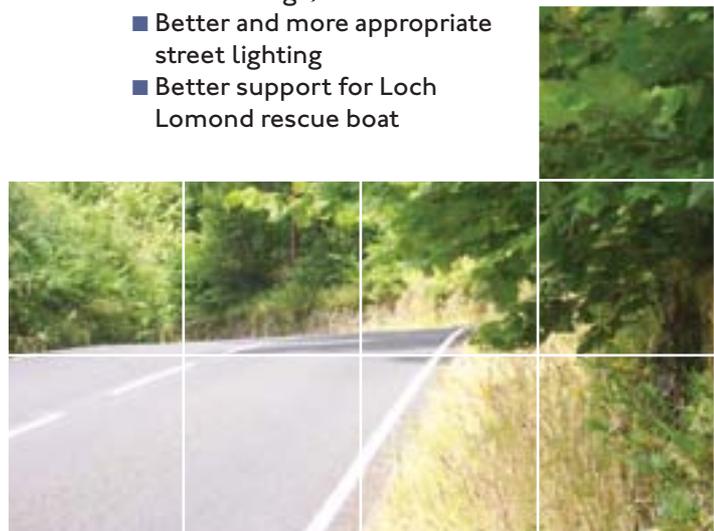
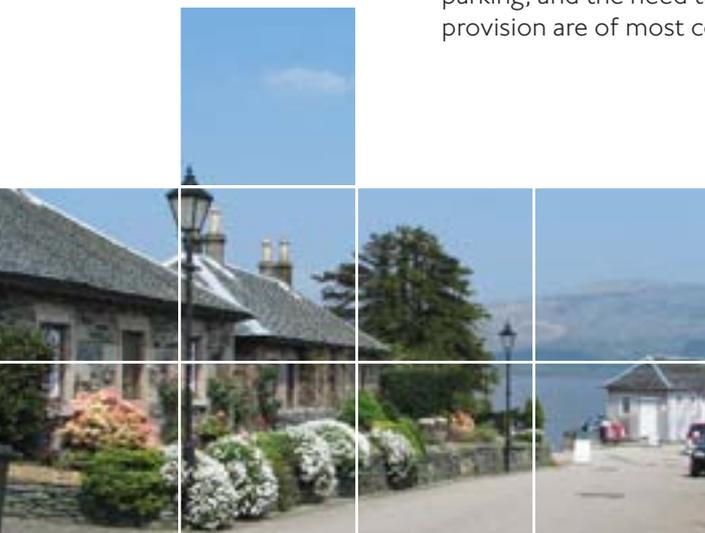
- Lobby for proper maintenance of hedges, pavements, cyclepaths and general tidy up of the area.
- Keep controlling litter
- Developing the path network
- Reduce flooding risk in the village

THEME 4 - INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

Issues such as the need for residents only parking, and the need to improve street lighting provision are of most concern to local people.

MAIN PRIORITIES

- Dedicated parking in the village for residents
- Continue the additional police cover at peak times
- Improvement to entrances to the village,
- Better and more appropriate street lighting
- Better support for Loch Lomond rescue boat



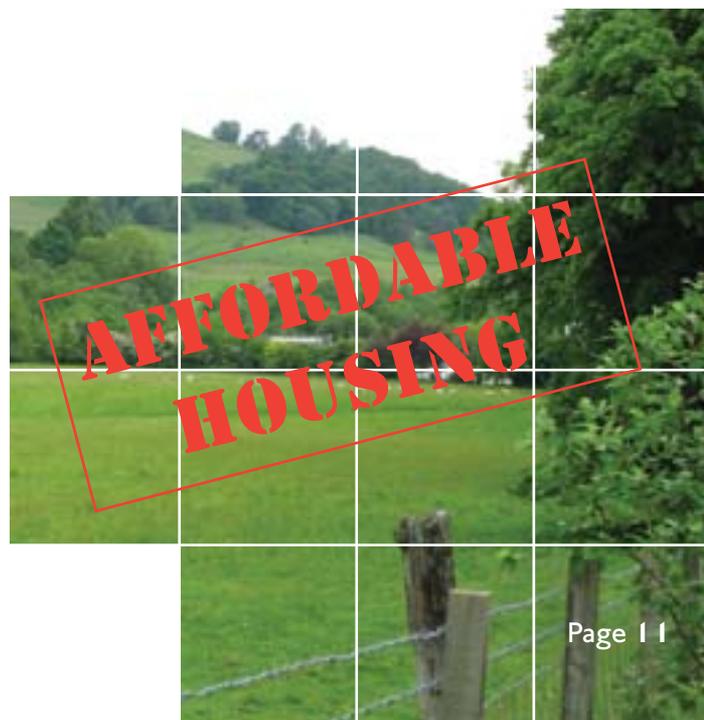
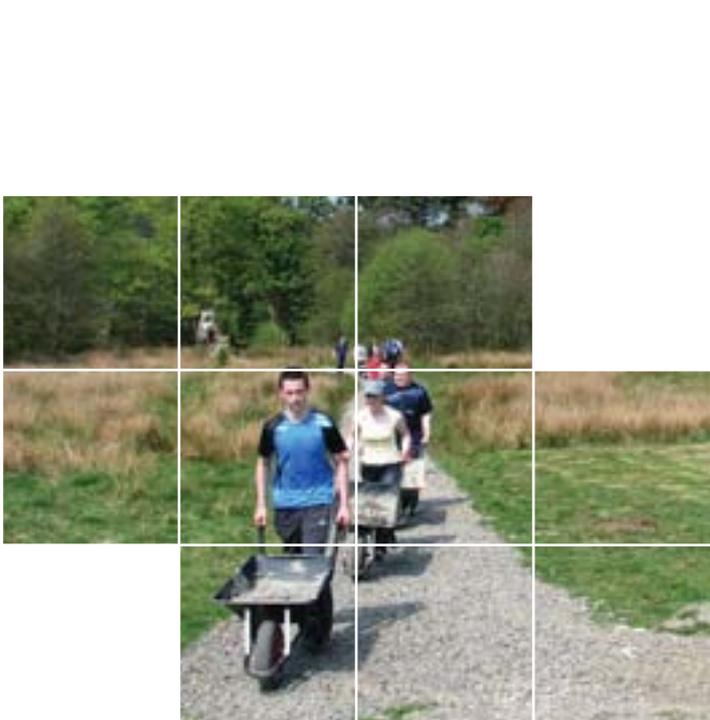
ACTION

Making progress – some of the action steps to be taken over the next 12 months:

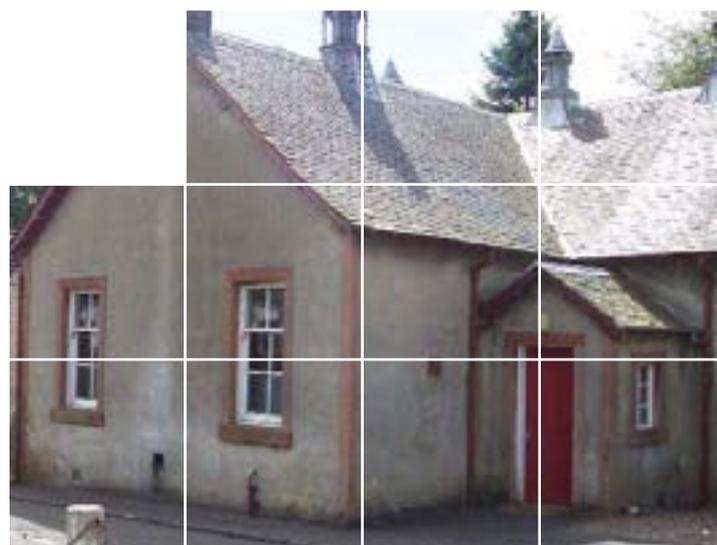
To achieve these we will strengthen our community organisations by:

- Getting more of the people who live here involved
- Improve communication

THEME 1	VISITOR MANAGEMENT
PRIORITY 1	<p>DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR LOCAL PEOPLE OF ALL AGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Ressurrect the Affordable Housing Working Group ■ Build on the work of the above group and others to influence the development of the new Local Plan ■ Contact Argyll and Bute Council to receive a copy of their new Housing Needs Survey ■ If necessary carry out an additional survey to provide the information needed. ■ Visit existing community led initiatives to learn from others' experience, e.g. Crianlarich railway cottages. ■ Investigate options that include private, rented and shared ownership ■ Identify and provide evidence for the need for sheltered housing by working with Argyll and Bute Council, and include in housing survey above. ■ Investigate options to take this forward
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, Luss and Arden Community Council, Argyll and Bute Council, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Luss Estates



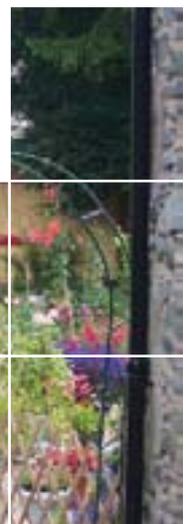
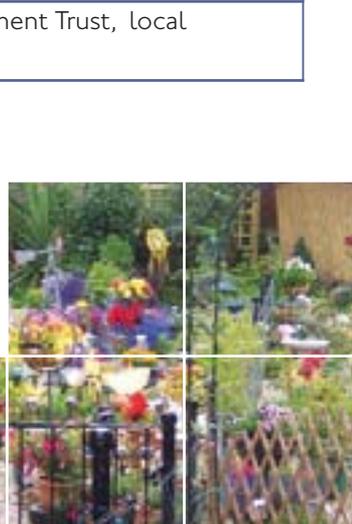
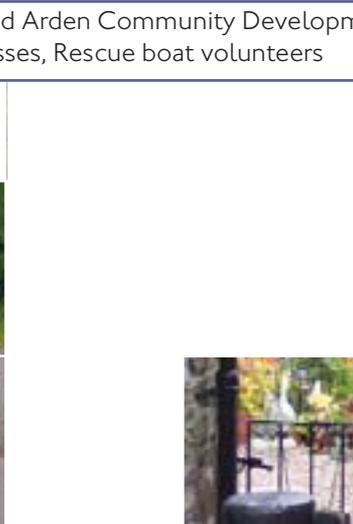
THEME 2 IMPROVING COMMUNITY FACILITIES & ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES	
PRIORITY 1	<p>IMPROVE EXISTING VILLAGE HALL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A MODERN COMMUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Work with Village Hall Committee to pursue short term (volunteer work party: painting, new curtains) and long term plans for the renovation of the Hall ■ Support local fundraising efforts
Action by	Hall Committee, Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, Luss Estates
PRIORITY 2	<p>COMPLETE UPGRADE TO LUSS PLAYPARK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Build on work to date to agree final plans, agree long term sustainability of the site and raise funds for the cost of the development
Action by	Luss & Arden Community Development Trust, Argyll & Bute Council, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Toddler Group
PRIORITY 3	<p>DEVELOP ACCESS TO SOCIAL AND RECREATION RELATED ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Carry out audit of existing facilities and activities ■ Carry out community survey to uncover gaps ■ Contact providers such as community education ■ Contact local tourism businesses to investigate possible access for residents ■ Investigate the possibility of developing cultural activities for the summer ■ Greater promotion of events through monthly newsletter and/ or flyers and posters
Action by	Luss & Arden Community Development Trust, Guild, Argyll & Bute Council, local Tourism businesses



THEME 3 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS	
PRIORITY 1	<p>LOBBY FOR PROPER MAINTENANCE OF HEDGES, PAVEMENTS, CYCLEPATHS AND GENERAL TIDY UP OF AREA</p> <p>Set up Landscape Enhancement group.</p> <p>Identify specific areas needing attention, involve all relevant parties to identify actions to make these improvements.</p>
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Council, Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Transerv
PRIORITY 2	<p>KEEP CONTROLLING LITTER & DOG MESS</p> <p>Identify litter hotspots not tackled at present</p> <p>Use litter campaign posters to raise awareness</p> <p>Investigate options for the introduction and siting of dog mess bins</p>
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, local litter Champion, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Argyll and Bute Council
PRIORITY 3	<p>DEVELOP THE PATH NETWORK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Support the completion of the Glebe Pilgrimage Pathway ■ Investigate options for widening the path network and revise leaflet
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, Pilgrimage Centre International Project, Luss Estates, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority Access Officer
PRIORITY 4	<p>REDUCE FLOODING RISK IN THE VILLAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Find out more about the plans to protect Luss from Flooding
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Council, Luss Estates, Farmers, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, SEPA, Scottish Natural Heritage



THEME 4 INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES	
PRIORITY 1	<p>DEDICATED PARKING IN THE VILLAGE FOR RESIDENTS</p> <p>Investigate progress with West Loch Lomond Four Villages Destination Framework</p> <p>Discuss options and investigate innovative solutions with Luss Estates and Argyll & Bute Council</p> <p>Lobby for the car parking charges recently brought in to be raised for the benefit of local community fundraising for projects.</p>
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Council , Luss Estates, Argyll and Bute Council, Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire
PRIORITY 2	<p>CONTINUE THE ADDITIONAL POLICE COVER AT PEAK TIMES</p> <p>Continue to liaise with Police through feedback and monitoring to build on their success and increase their presence</p>
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Council
PRIORITY 3	<p>IMPROVEMENTS TO ENTRANCES TO THE VILLAGE</p> <p>Lobby National Park to arrange the removal of the brown sign at the south entrance of the A82 and replace with 'not suitable for large vehicles' sign</p> <p>Introduce signs to slow traffic at Arden House entrance and north entrance to Luss village</p>
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Council , Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority, Transerv
PRIORITY 4	<p>BETTER AND MORE APPROPRIATE STREET LIGHTING</p> <p>Liaise with Luss Estates, Argyll and Bute Council and Transerve, in particular concerning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the north end of the old road at Millburn Cottages at Aldochlay
Action by	Luss and Arden Community Council, Luss Estates, Argyll and Bute Council, Transerv
PRIORITY 5	<p>BETTER SUPPORT FOR LOCH LOMOND RESCUE BOAT</p> <p>Widen support to include loch users as well as residents, e.g. introduce information boards at the waterfront etc.</p> <p>Provide support through charity boxes in retail and hospitality outlets</p>
	Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, local businesses, Rescue boat volunteers



MAKING IT HAPPEN

The Luss and Arden Community Development Trust, Luss and Arden Community Council and the Hall Committee will take a joint lead in driving this action plan forward on behalf of the community.

We will be establishing a number of new Action Groups in addition to supporting existing groups to speed up progress on some of our Priorities.

New Action Groups being set up are:

Landscape Enhancement Group to tidy up the village and wider improvements to the area

Contact

Parks and Play Group to take the Playpark project forward

Contact: Fiona MacEachern, tel: 01436 860590

Social & Recreation activities Group to improve communication across the area

Contact: Rachel Sherrard, tel: 01436 860240

Existing groups to be supported:

Village Hall Committee

Contact: Arthur Etchell, tel: 01389 850666

Affordable Housing Group

Contact: Iain Wragg, tel: 01436 860246

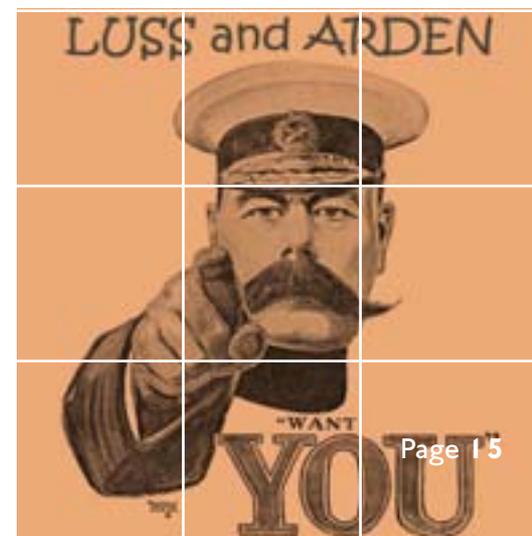
The Community Development Trust and the Community Council will also work closely with the relevant agencies to develop our local economy, improve community safety and make Luss and Arden safer places and improve our roads, pavements and traffic management.

If you have read this and would like to take part in one of the new Action Groups get in touch with the contacts above or to add your weight to the Trust or Community Council please contact:

Community Trust Contact: Eilidh O'Neil, email: luss1@fsmail.net

Community Council Contact: Tom Carruthers, tel: 01436 860275

We need you! The only way we can achieve these projects is through more local volunteers...





COMMUNITY FUTURES PROGRAMME

Luss and Arden have been supported in the preparation of their new Community Action Plan by the National Park's Community Futures Programme.

Through the Community Futures Programme, all communities in the Park prepared their first Community Action Plans between 2001 and 2003. These Action Plans assisted communities to identify and develop their priorities for projects and actions. They also helped communities to clearly represent their main needs and aspirations and to influence the preparation of the National Park Plan.

Communities have also been assisted to develop local and area based organisations and 20 Community Development Trusts have been established as well as 4 Area Networks.

The Community Futures Programme is supporting all 21 communities in the National Park area to revise and renew their Community Action Plans.

In revising their Community Action Plans, communities are continuing to shape and influence their own development by:

- Updating facts and figures and views about their community
- Developing a clear set of priorities for their community over the next 3 – 5 years
- Ensuring that there is a strong community mandate for projects and actions
- Offering opportunities for new people to be involved and new ideas to flourish
- Enabling informed community input to the National Park Local Plan

For more information contact:

Lesley Campbell

Rural & Community Support Manager

TEL: 01389 722600

email: Lesley.campbell@lochlomond-trossachs.org



Community Futures Programmes of local community planning and community engagement are designed and supported by the Small Town and Rural Development Group. www.stardevelopmentgroup.org