



A Survey of Village Halls, community venues and gathering spaces in Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park

Introduction

Our communities are at the heart of everything we do, and working together we aim to support them to impact positively on the quality of community life. The National Park area consists of 22 communities in total and the people who live and work in them are the life blood of the Park.

Background

In 2016/17 applications to the National Park Authority's (NPA) Community Grant Scheme highlighted the need for development and feasibility support to ensure the future sustainability of village halls. Ongoing Community Partnership consultation with village hall committees and scoping undertaken in 2017 by the NPA confirmed that further research was needed to assess the needs and value of these local community facilities in order to devise the most effective support within resources available.

Methods

In December 2017 the Community Partnership surveyed village hall and community venue committees across the National Park in order to gather information and build a picture of the resources and services on offer and the support they needed to remain viable.

Analysis

The following results are a snapshot of the responses received to the survey from 21 communities out of a possible 22.

It is noted that one community (Thornhill) who responded sits on the boundary of the NPA area. The community of Drymen has two separate community venues (one belonging to the Church of Scotland) and so separately responded. Kippen Reading Room, which sits outside the NPA, has indicated they would be interested in working with the Community Partnership and attending a village hall development/networking event.

Survey results remain outstanding from Buchanan Memorial Hall and Kinlochard Village Hall. Tyndrum Village Hall has now closed but has indicated they would be interested in attending a summit. The Port of Menteith Hall committee did not respond.

Question 6 asked **‘Is your hall in need of additional support?’** The results revealed:



- 20 out of 21 who responded indicated they would attend a summit/conference.
- When asked who owned their village hall:
 1. 17 responded that it was by their community;
 2. 1 (Drymen) by the Church of Scotland;
 3. Strachur Memorial Hall had a deed of trust between the local authority and the hall committee, and
 4. 1 was unsure of the advantages and what the risks would be (Strachur Memorial Hall).
- When asked what other assets did their community own and what assets were associated with their village halls revealed; 50% owned their car park; 28% a woodland; 22% a picnic area, and 11% either a disused building or open space that could be utilised.
- The top 8 of ‘other’ services and facilities that their village halls offered are:
 1. Disabled access 90%
 2. Stage 90%
 3. Accessible facilities 80%
 4. Car Park 80%
 5. Space for local clubs 75%
 6. Meeting/conference rooms 70%

7. Exhibition space 60%

8. Kitchen facilities (catering for large events i.e.: weddings) 50%

- There was a 'free' section for respondents to provide their comments:

"This is the largest public space in Perthshire, outside Perth. It is well-used but now a bit tired. We are actively seeking funding for a major re-vamp of our electrical system" - McLaren Hall, Killin

"We have agreed a lease for a 4G mast on our land to provide this asset to the community. We would like to prioritise insulation and renewable/ sustainable energy supply to our buildings (ideally both the hall and bowling pavilion) to reduce carbon footprint and minimise ongoing costs" – Aberfoyle

"We would like to have advice on how we can access funding to upgrade kitchen, toilets and install a disabled lift" – Luss

"Paths, toilets and tourism marketing in void left by Visit Scotland provide future opportunities for community involvement. However, existing responsibilities for Owning & Operating, without some relief or additional resources, opportunities for future development are limited given present capacity" – Arrochar and Tarbet Community Development Trust

"We believe that creating a Village Cinema in Balquhadder would be beneficial both to the local communities and to visitors and if funding support was available we would like to explore" – Balquhadder Village Hall Committee

Recommendation

It is recommended an event is organised to build and develop the existing capacity of the volunteers who run and manage village hall spaces.

Practical facilitated workshops and/or 'village hall health checks' will help to identify local challenges and priorities, explore solutions and, with the aid of planning tools, identify a bespoke development plan for a sustainable future.

The session will also enable people to network, share experiences, explore case studies and learn about best practice.

With the help of a mixture of experts from the public and third sectors, village halls representatives will develop knowledge, be signposted to further information and access further development support.

Community Partnership, January 2018