

Strathy North Wind Farm



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT

To identify potential Legacy Projects
suitable for funding through the
SSE Strathy North Wind Farm
Community Benefit Fund.



Data collected and analysed by:



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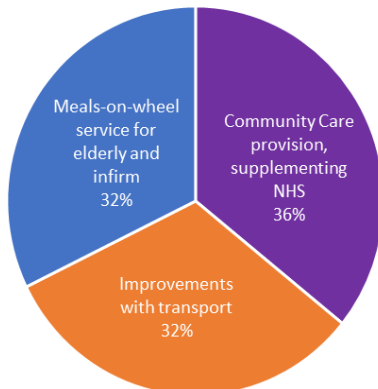
1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Community Consultation took place between March and October 2018, with a good response to the surveys and events. Overall the three areas were quite similar in their votes, although local issues, such as the play park in Melvich, were only voted for by people in the area affected. We also found the age of respondents did influence choices, with working-families prioritising child-care over care for the elderly, and vice versa, although this was not exclusive.

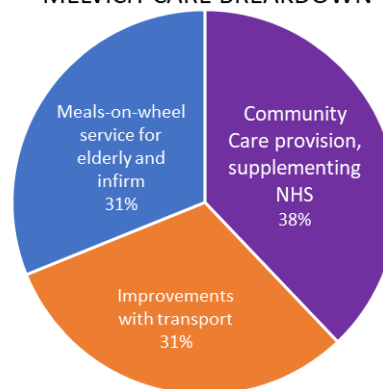
The responses to the most popular projects is shown on the line graph on page 3. In summary, the highest vote was for upgrading the halls. It was felt by most that the capital expenditure would bring additional benefits to the communities, such as community cafés and meals-on-wheels services being run from the newly-updated buildings and the income generated from tourists would help offset the costs.

The next highest priority was care for the elderly and infirm, with many people recognising the difficulties within the NHS service and feeling a need to intervene. Care in the home was seen as an all-encompassing service that would provide a befriending section, so that the socially isolated and housebound have someone to talk to, through to a full care package if the NHS are not able to meet the individual's needs. The meals-on-wheels service was a popular idea, so that people were able to eat traditional Scottish food at home again. Access to transport was highlighted by many, with help needed by all ages, not only the elderly. This covered essentials, such as taking the elderly shopping and attending hospital appointments, through to availability in the evenings for travel to social evenings, from a whist night to a cèilidh. The pie charts below show the percentage breakdown for care in each community council area.

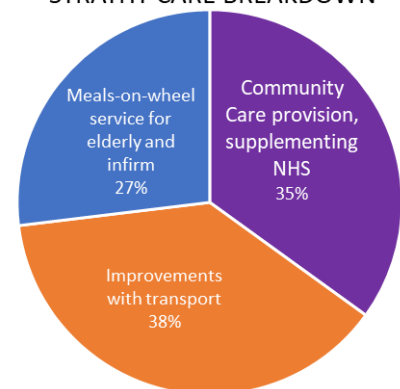
BETTYHILL CARE BREAKDOWN



MELVICH CARE BREAKDOWN



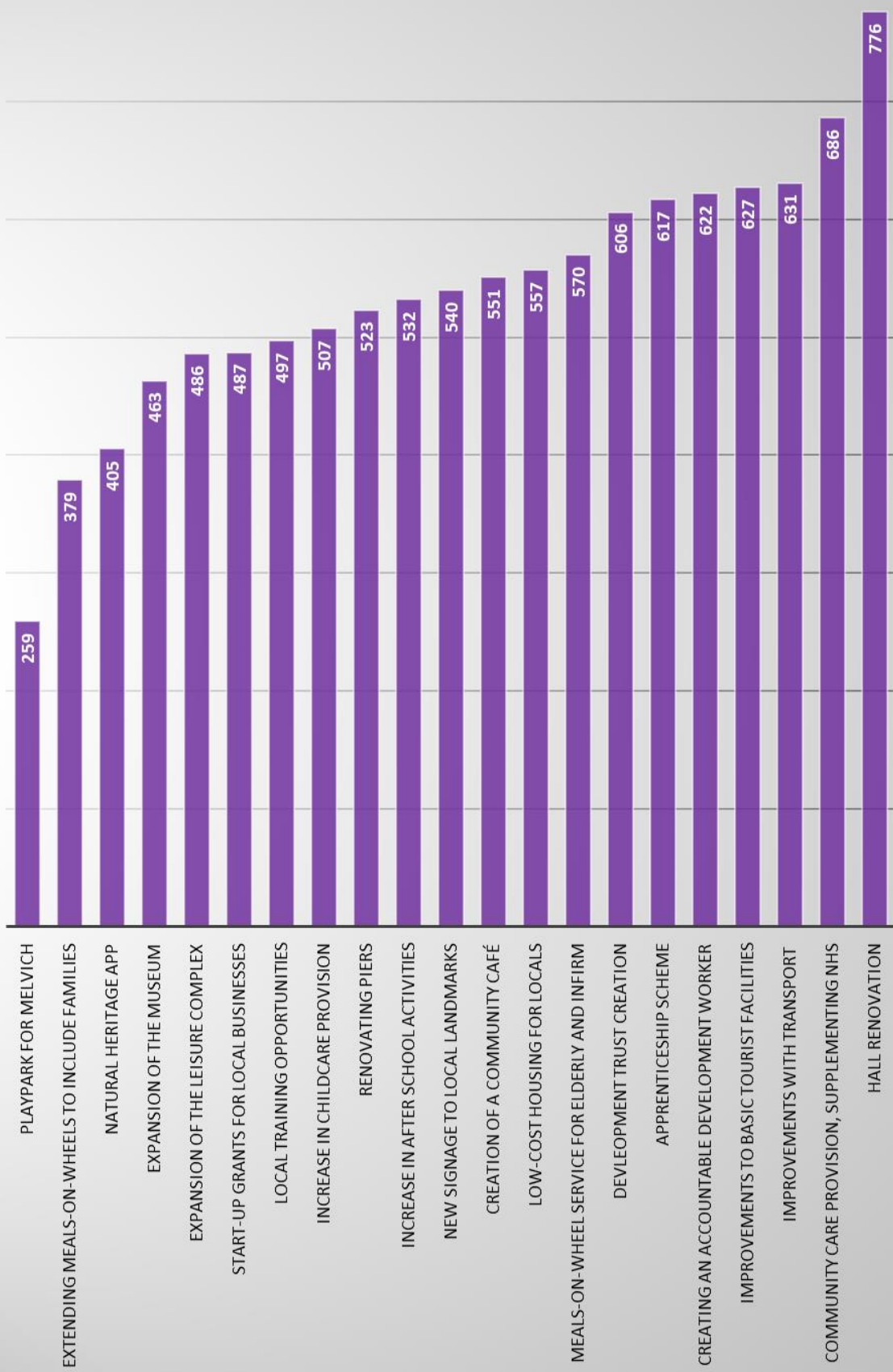
STRATHY CARE BREAKDOWN



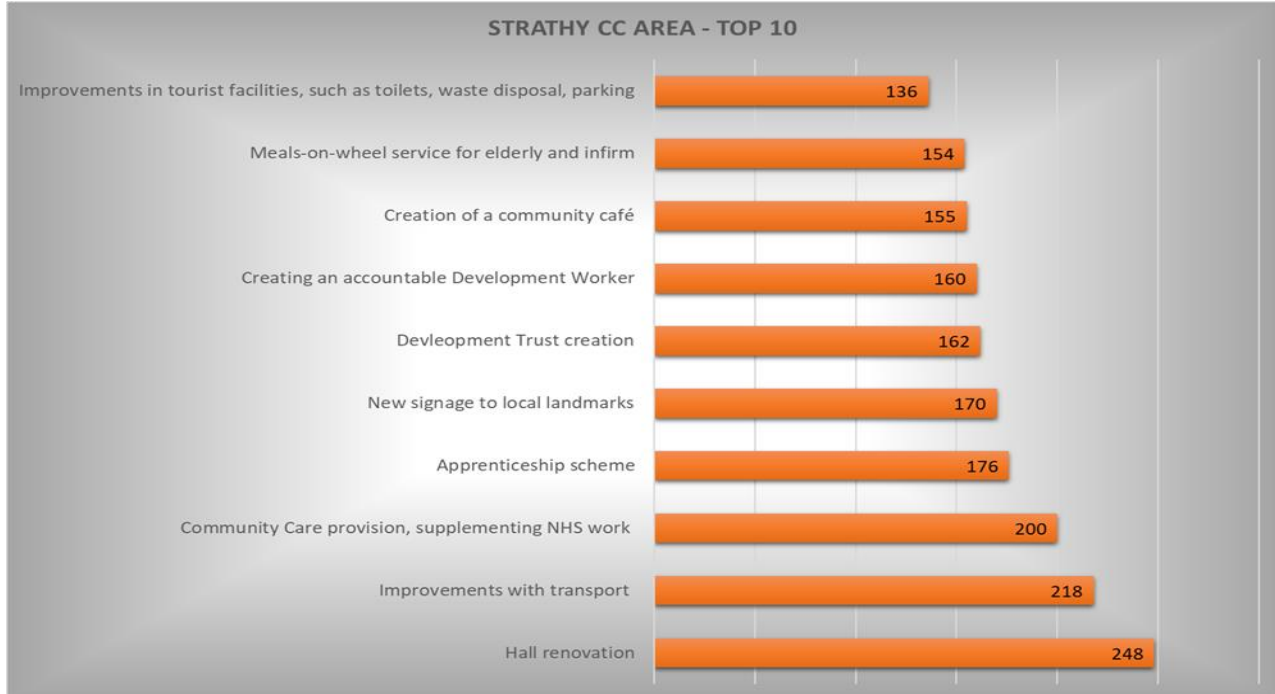
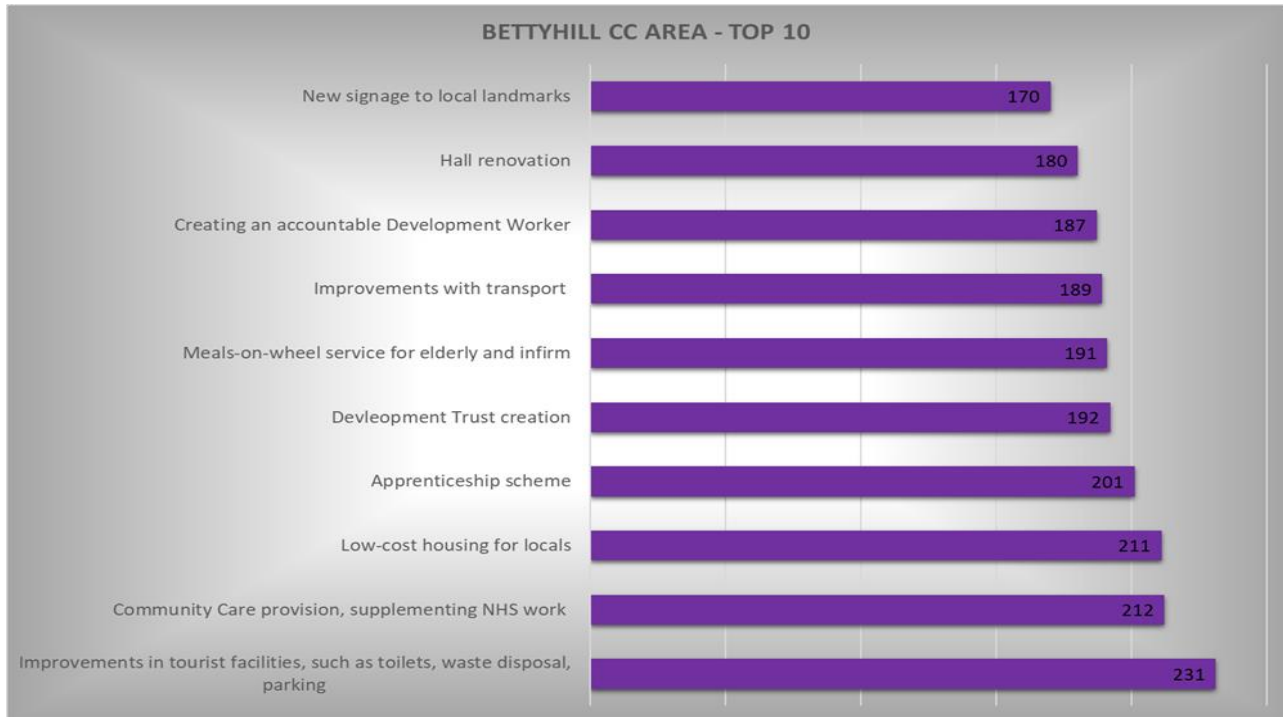
Key: **BLUE segment**
PURPLE segment
ORANGE segment

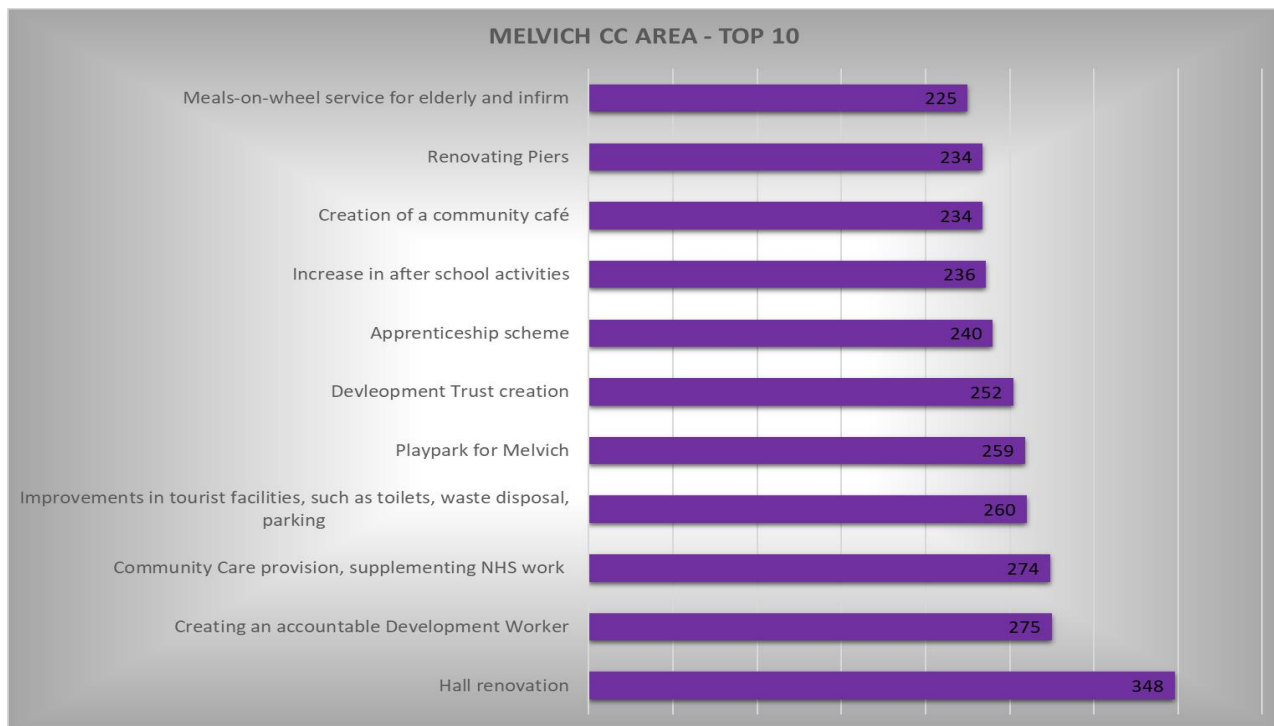
Meals on wheels for the elderly and infirm
 Community care provision, supplementing the NHS
 Improvements to community transport

Total votes across all three community council areas



Analysis was also completed for each community council area and the next three charts show the top ten legacy project requested in each area:





The results for the top 20 answers are shown in the appendices. Further items which were popular¹ but did not make the top 20 were:

- **Creating community industries**
- **Creating a Visitor Centre in Bettyhill**
- **Better access to the beaches**
- **Creating a Village Officer post**

¹ As these were ideas pitched at events, they have not been assessed by all residents.

This report has been compiled for the Strathy North Wind Farm Community Panel, to ascertain community engagement in creating legacy projects from the SSE Strathy North Community Benefit Fund.

A Likert-type questionnaire was sent to residents within the community council areas with each question having five answers which were scored in the Likert method, being Strongly Agree (5 points), Agree (4 points), Neutral (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). Some people skipped questions and these were scored as neutral answers.

At each Community Consultation Event, attendees were asked to rank their top three choices and these were scored 5 points (strongly agree) with the remainder of unranked comments scoring 4 points (agree).

The work was to be undertaken over four months but engagement in this consultation was quite slow initially. People advised that they did not know what to do with the money but seeds were sown and, as time went on, people considered the options and talked to friends, then deciding that they wanted to engage in the process. We continued to collect data into early October.

3.1 PREPARATION

Initial fact-finding meetings were held with Councillor Linda Munro and community representatives, to identify the challenges experienced locally and their opinions on what the possible high-priority issues could be.

We ascertained that these requirements naturally fell into four categories, which formed the basis of our initial questioning; they were Help at Home, Local Regeneration, Tourism and the creation of a Development Trust. A further section was created for Other Ideas, so that we could capture any further information. These became the survey categories, which were also used on the events as ‘talking points’ for each table. The Other ideas category and talking at the events did create some innovative ideas but due to the haphazard nature of the ideas, we have included them all in the appendices.

40% of the community completed surveys, which is a high outcome and resulted in a lot of information being collected. Much of this data is shown in the appendices.

3.2 SURVEYS

3.2a Background

To capture as many community members as possible, it had been agreed that surveys would be sent out to all homes within the catchment area. In addition, an electronic survey was to be opened, with identical questions to the paper version, in the hope that it would entice younger residents to engage. Surveys would also be left in local shops, to capture any households that may not have received a postal copy.

Initially there was an issue with the Post Office and we were not able to send all of the envelopes out as intended. We are grateful for the help of Councillor Linda Munro, who intervened on our behalf, allowing us to send out the questionnaires to relevant households, rather than the alternative, which was



Community Consultation

How would you spend over four million pounds?



The SSE Strathy North Wind Farm is expected to generate community funds of **£4.8 million** over its lifetime.

The panel of community representatives who award this money, are now looking at identifying potential long-term projects and they are asking for your help.

What would be important to you?

Care at home? Low-cost housing?
Jobs? Childcare? Apprenticeships?

Please take part in this survey and help shape decisions about your community's future.

using the Post Office, but this included households outside of the Fund boundaries.

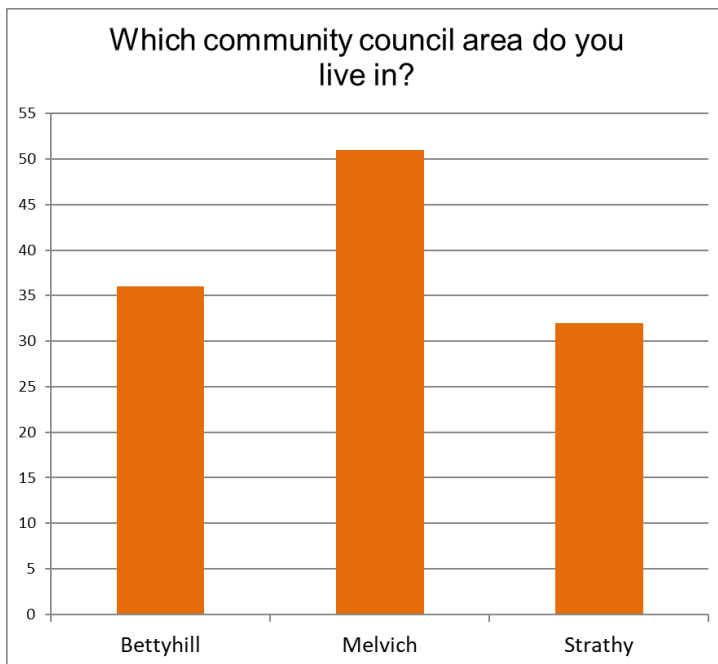
The survey design was intentionally bold, featuring local people on the front cover and inside, so that it engaged people into reading it. It also had the questions as an insert, so that they could be dropped off in the local shops whilst retaining our details, in case they needed to contact us directly.

The surveys were distributed mid-July, when the online survey also went live. Surveys were then collected on the 18th August, after the final events, and the online survey was closed at the end of the month.

Surveys continued to be posted into us until mid-September and all of these have been included in this report.

3.2b Survey Data overview

We received 122 completed paper and online surveys and detailed information is shown in the appendices. Most people did not complete all sections so all of the following results detail the abstentions. Some people preferred to talk to us, rather than complete surveys, so their preferences are detailed in Sections 3.3 and 3.4. All questions are further analysed into community council areas in the appendices.



This graph details where the survey respondents lived. Any people who ticked 'Other' as their place of residence were not included in these results.

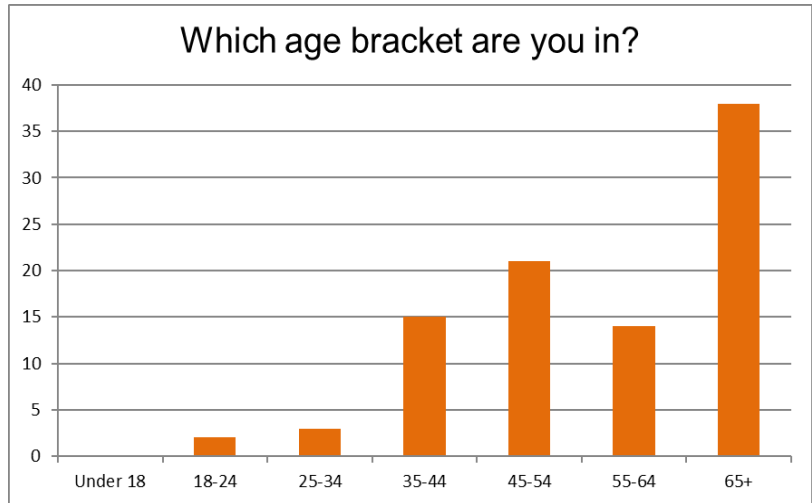
Melvich's response was the highest, with 51 surveys completed. Bettyhill had 36 and Strathy had 32.

Three people did not answer this question, so we have not been able to analyse their results against their community council area.

This graph details the 93 people who answered this question, about their age.

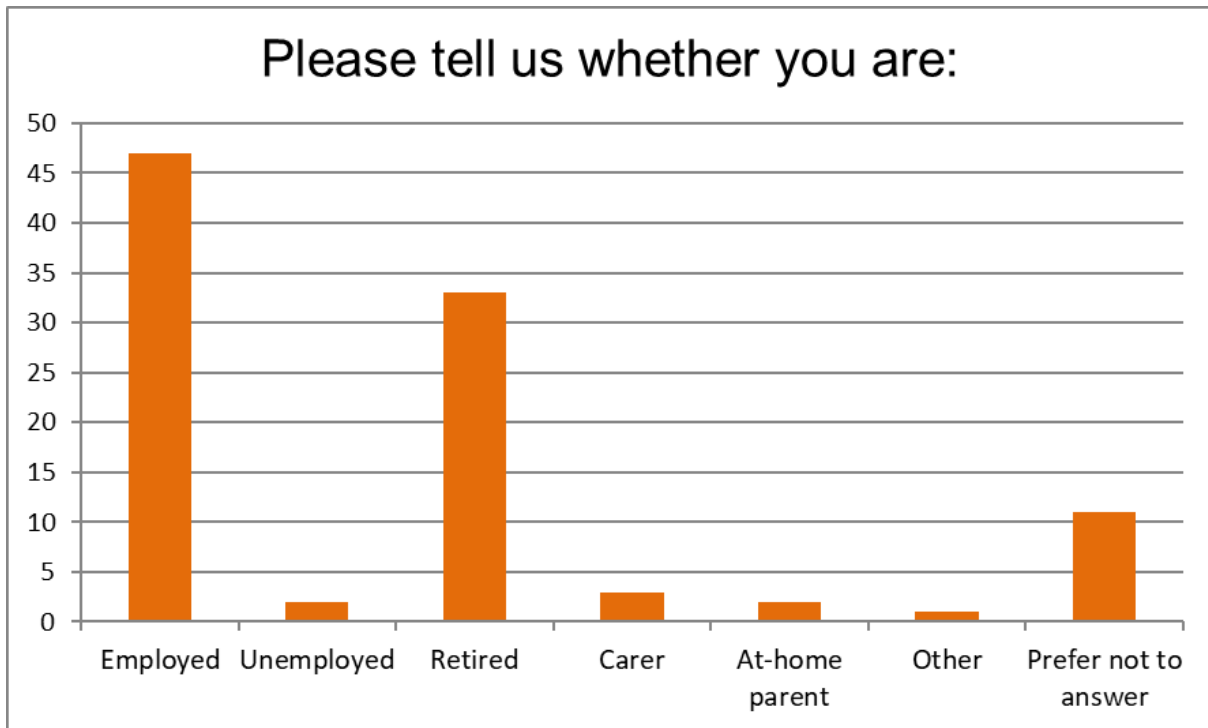
From those who did respond, 40% were aged 65 and over. 37% were classified as Middle-aged¹ (being 45 to 64).

Only 5% of the surveys were completed by people aged under 45, although families and young people did attend the events, and their views are also represented in Section 3.3.



¹ Source – Oxford English Dictionary

This graph below identifies the employment status of the respondents who gave us this information which, along with the age chart above, gives an indication of the sectors of the community who are represented in the survey's responses.

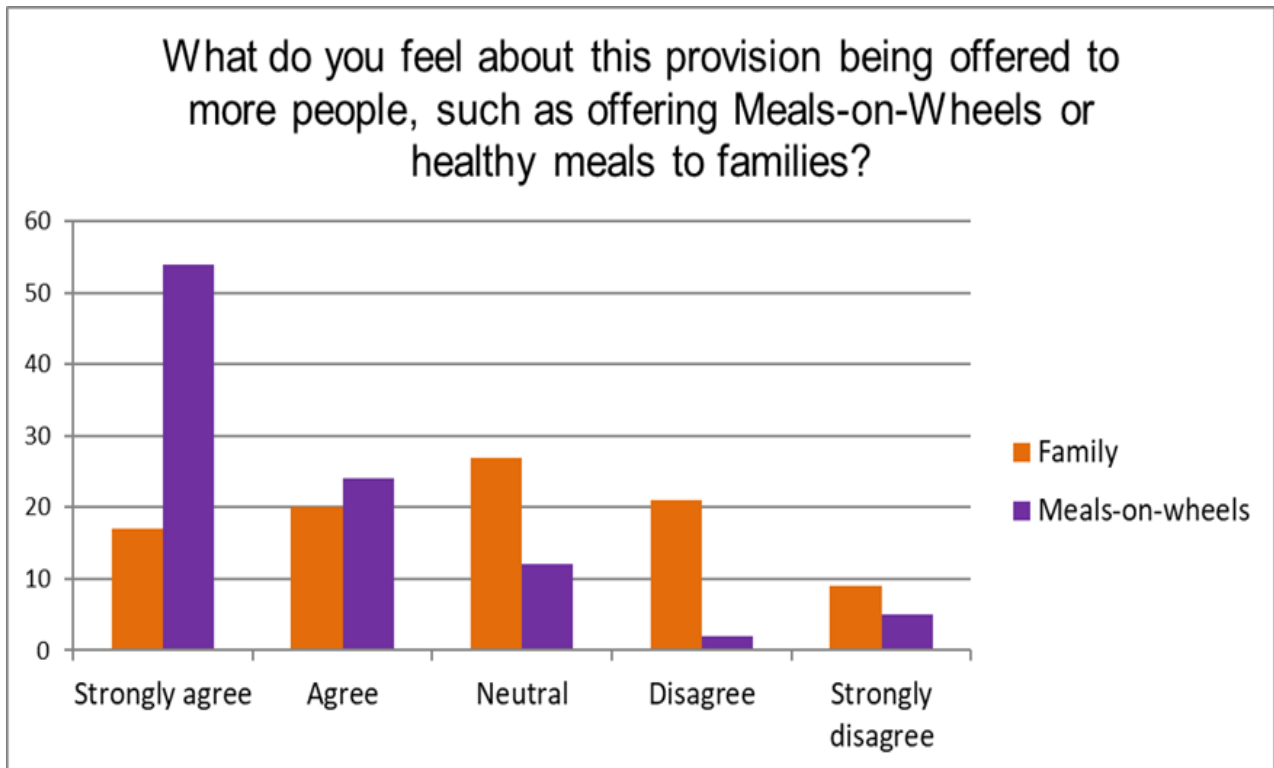


3.2c Help at Home responses

The need for help in the home was strongly supported in all three areas.

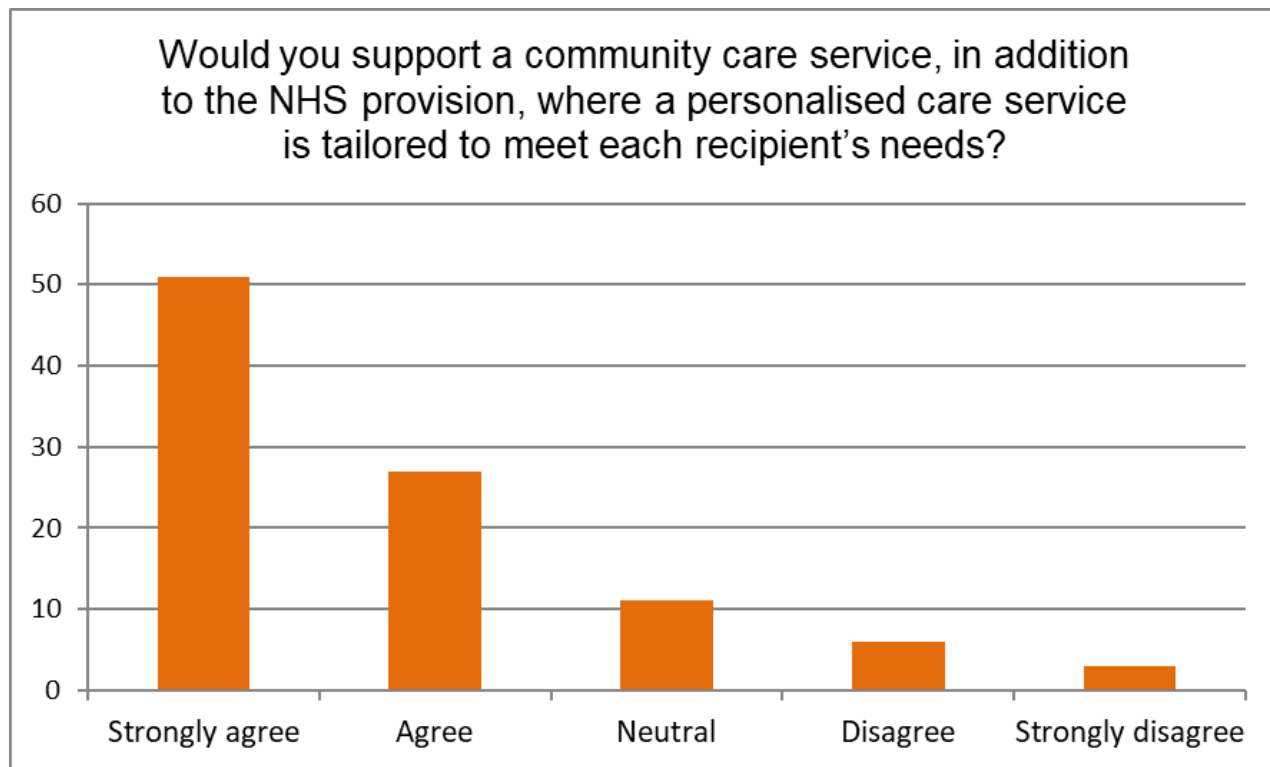
The chart below shows the number of responses on whether a 'Meals-on-Wheels' service for the elderly or infirm would be supported (purple bar). A secondary question asked whether this could be rolled out to include others in the community, such as families wanting a 'Take-away' style healthy meal, which is also shown on the chart (orange bar).

In summary, nearly 83% of respondents to this question either agreed or strongly agreed with this service for the elderly and infirm, with 18 abstaining. Only 39% agreed to this being rolled out to include families, with 15 people not voting. 7.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the 'Meals-on-Wheels' option, which increased to 32% when extending to include families.



When asked whether a community care service should be offered, in addition to the NHS provision, 14 people abstained from answering, but nearly 80% of respondents

agreed or strongly agreed, versus 9% of people who disagreed or strongly disagreed. The graph below shows how many people voted in each selection.



We then asked what additional care needs are required in the area. 36 people made comments, which are detailed fully in the appendices, but there were recurring themes. The most popular were:

DETAIL	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
Day-care facilities, day-trips and activities – concerns over the closure of Sinclair Court were prominent in these answers	1	11	4
Transport There were more comments on this in 3.2f	4	11	7
Befriending service	1	2	3

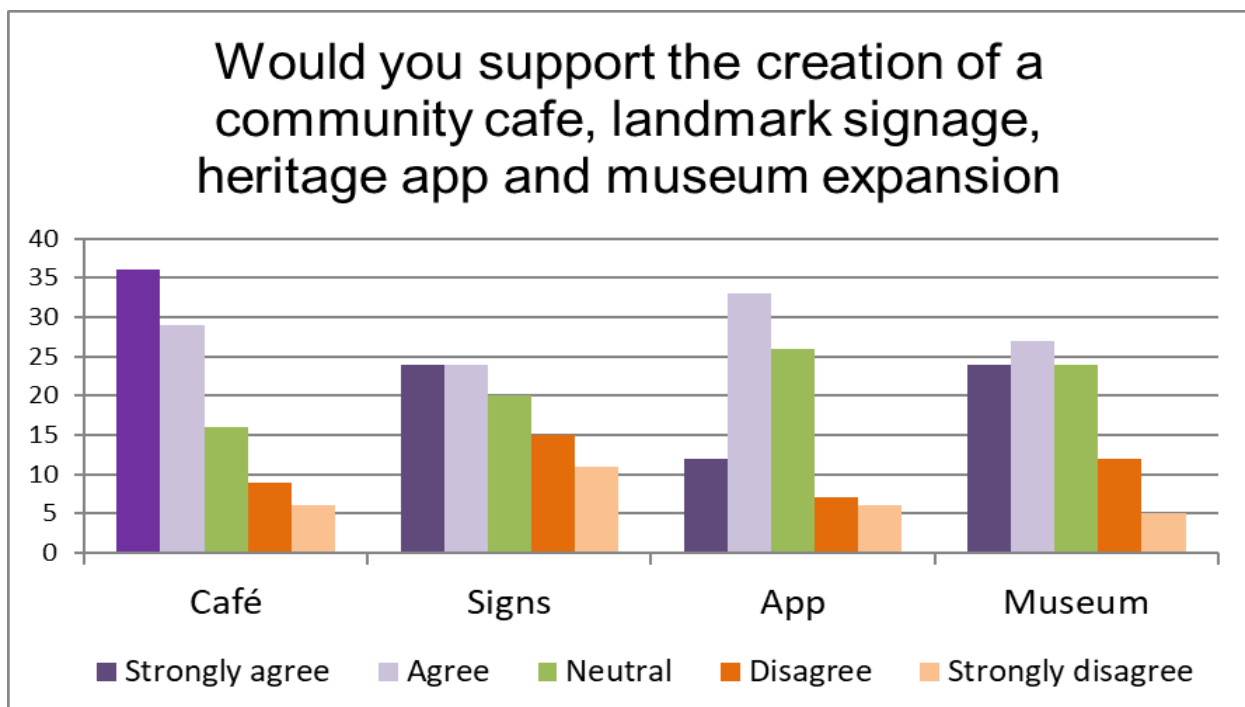
The most popular reason for disagreeing with additional care support was that the NHS should be offering these services.

3.2d Local regeneration responses

The survey asked for details of any local services which might need improvements, such as halls, and 46 people responded to this question. The answers are fully detailed in the appendices but the most popular are noted below:

DETAIL	Number
Renovation of local halls: Melvich Strathy Bettyhill Armadale	21 9 5 2
Repairs to Piers and harbours across the area Note: This was predominantly at Portskerra, but also Port Swingo, Bettyhill	10
Play park for Melvich	9
Repairs and better road access to Port Swingo	3

The survey then included items which had been identified at the initial stakeholder meetings and they received mixed responses. The creation of a Community Café was the most popular, with 67% of respondents in agreement, 16% against and 16 abstaining. Expanding the Museum also fared well, with 55% agreeing, 18% against and 20 abstaining. Improving the signage to landmarks had 41% for, 28% against and



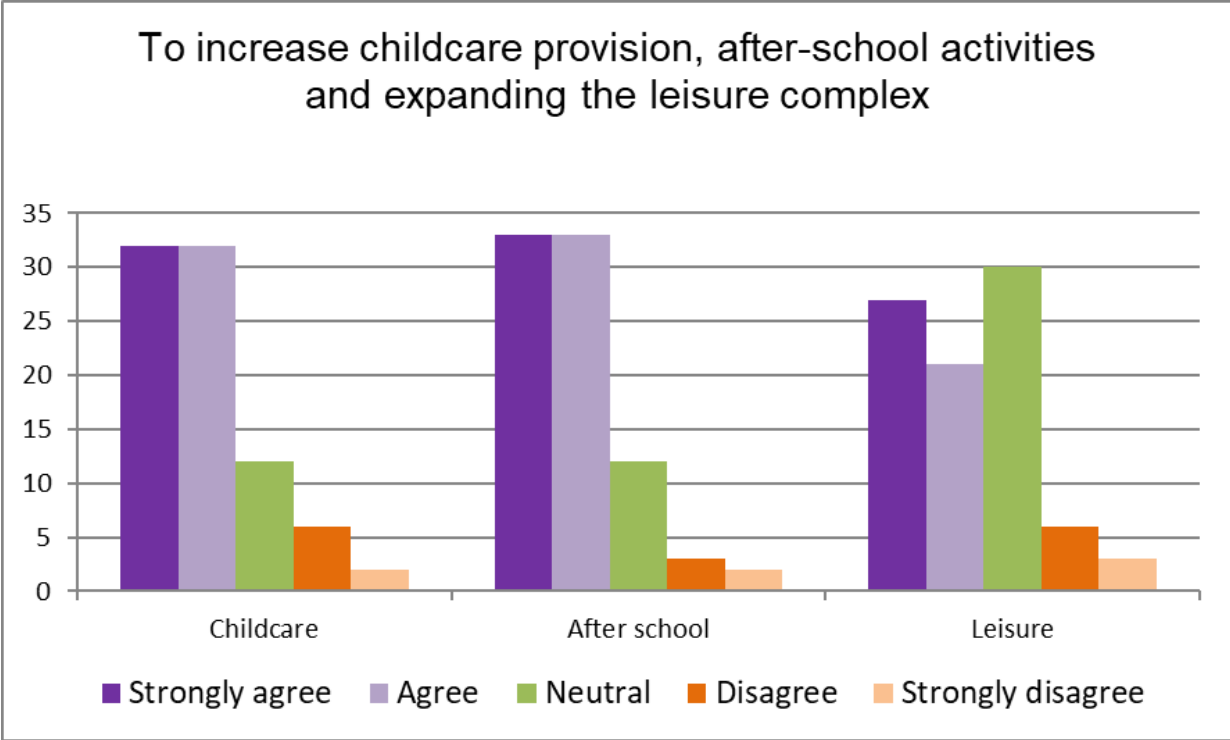
18 abstaining, with the natural heritage app having 28 people not voting, 54% in agreement and 15% against. The graph below shows the breakdown:

The final section in this category was for any other ideas for local regeneration. This elicited a wide range of ideas, some of which are quite emotive. All comments are shown in the appendices, detailed against each community council area, but some common themes to all areas were:

- Toilets – improvements/ extended opening/ motorhome waste disposal/ bins
- Footpaths and better access to beaches
- The creation of viewpoints, with signage

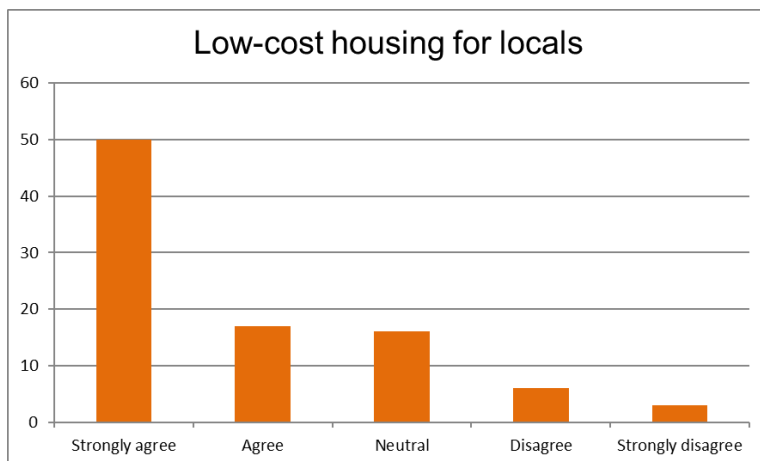
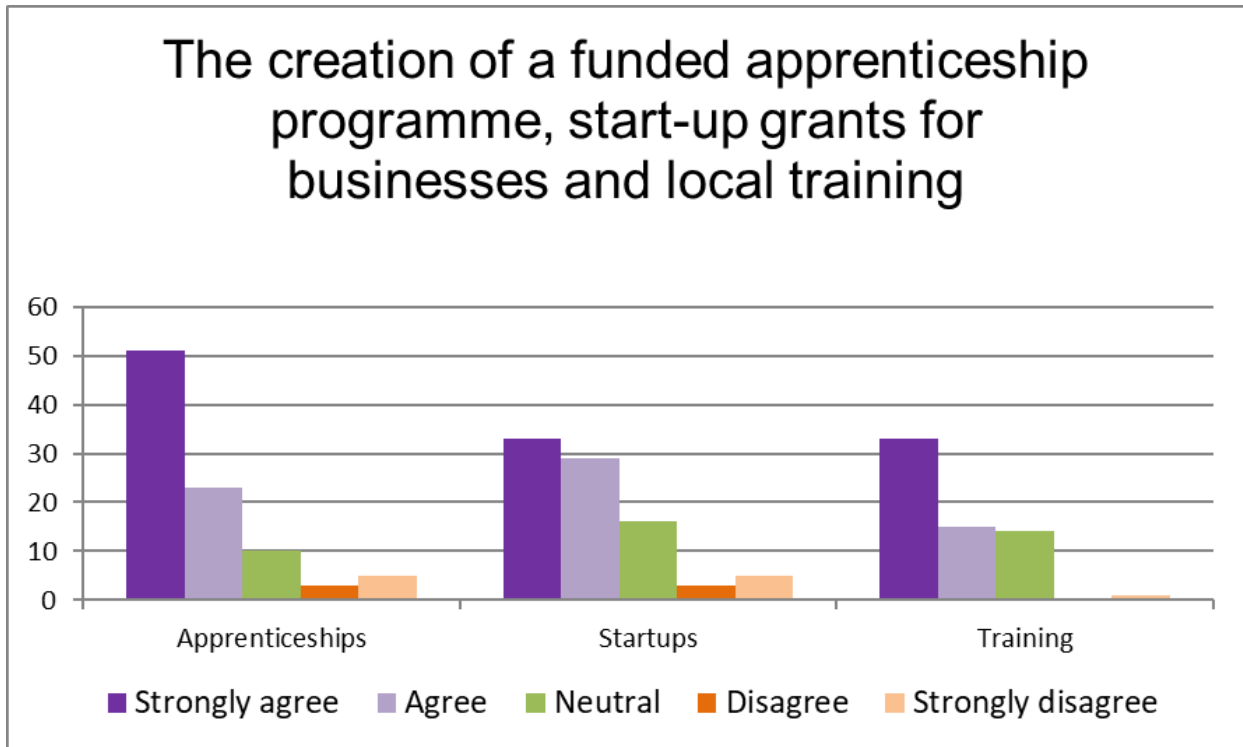
3.2e Improved local services responses

This section was designed to find shortfalls in current services for the local residents. One starting point was facilities for children and families and the graph below shows the responses:



In summary, 76% were for an increase in childcare provision, 10% against and 28 people abstained; 80% were for more after-school activities, 6% against and 29 did not vote. 55% agreed with expanding the leisure complex with 10% against and 25 people abstaining from answering. Usually younger people voted for these options.

Next was the creation of a Funded Apprenticeship Scheme, offering start-up grants to entice new businesses to form, and the creation of more local training. The graph on below shows the responses to the questions but, in summary, 80% agreed with the apprenticeship scheme, 9% disagreeing and 20 abstaining. 72% were for business start-up grants, 9% against and 26 people skipped this question. The local training was supported by 76%, with only 1 person against but 49 people abstained. The requested training is identified in the appendices.



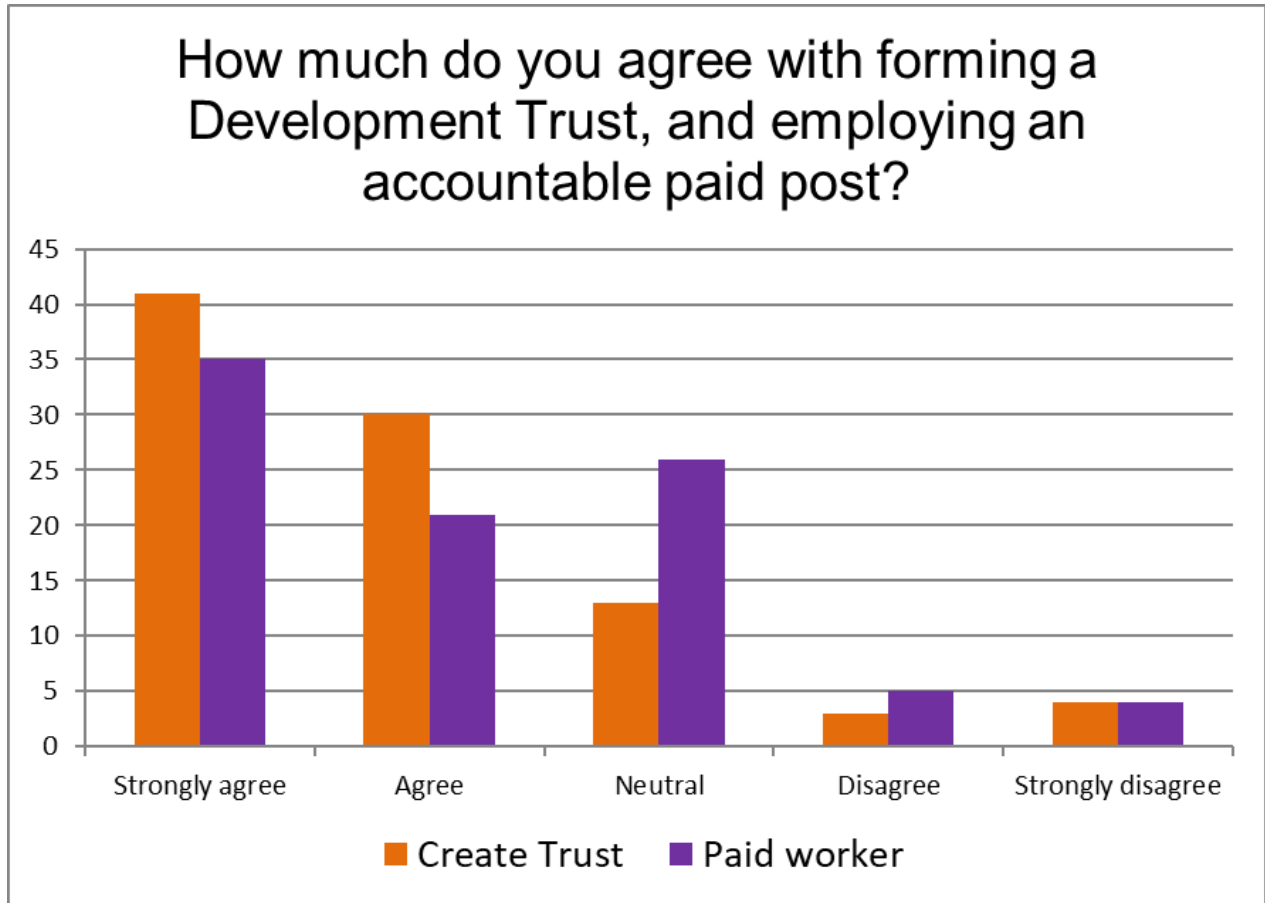
Low cost housing proved another emotive subject and there are case studies in the appendices which highlight some issues experienced by people in the area.

From the surveys alone, 73% of people were for the idea, 10% were against and 20 abstained.

There was disagreement about unused properties, over whether they were holiday homes or empty and most disagreements came from those who thought them unoccupied.

3.2e Creation of a Development Trust

Our final section of specified questioning related to creating a Development Trust. Initial stakeholders had mentioned that the quantity of money coming into the area, which would be further increased when the Strathy South wind farm came online, could warrant an organisation specifically focused on developing the area.



At the events we did find that some people were unaware of what a Trust was, but in these surveys, 21 people did not answer the question and of those that did, 78% supported the idea of creating a Trust, with 8% disagreeing.

Regarding the paid worker, again 21 abstained, with 62% agreeing to employ someone and 10% disagreeing.

3.2f Any other ideas

There were 32 responses, which encompassed a wide range of ideas from all three areas, which are fully detailed in the appendices. However, one common theme was public transport issues, which were mentioned a further 7 times (in addition to 3.2c), bringing this to a total of 16 respondents concerned about this issue.

3.3 EVENTS

3.3a Background

Four events were organised, rather than the three initially intended, as we hoped to capture younger people at Farr Edge 2000. They were also held later than originally intended, due to the lack of hall availability.

Two dates were identified, with two venues on each day, and posters (right) were circulated via social media, on noticeboards, bus shelters, the halls and the initial community members we consulted, allowing them to also circulate to key people electronically.

The events were designed to engage people in the process, promoting an open environment for people to talk about possible legacy projects and the benefits that the wind farm fund could bring to the area.

The halls were set up around small tables, to encourage people to sit together. Information was put onto each table, featuring other wind farm legacy projects, and a 'Talking points' questionnaire with conversation prompts; this followed the format of the surveys and staff used it to help get people talking.

This format worked well, with the noise level rising as community members became relaxed and animated. Some people did not want to join the groups, so we chatted to them individually, so that they could express their views and we ascertain what mattered most to them.

The final exercise at these sessions was to ask attendees to identify their top three priorities. We used this ranking system to ascertain their true priorities. For the top three priorities, we awarded 5 points (the same as a 'strongly agree' score in the surveys), for any other items they mentioned, 4 points were awarded (the 'agree' score) and as everyone was happy to tell us which community area they resided in, we were able to allocate 100% of the votes to each community council area.



Community Consultation

Calling all residents who live in Bettyhill, Strathy and Melvich Community Council Areas.

How would you spend FOUR MILLION POUNDS?



SATURDAY 21ST JULY

STRATHY HALL - SOUP & SANDWICHES LUNCH
12 noon to 2pm

BETTYHILL HALL - AFTERNOON TEA
3pm to 5pm

SATURDAY 18TH AUGUST

MELVICH HALL - SOUP & SANDWICHES LUNCH
12 noon to 2pm

FARR EDGE 2000 - FAMILY FUN EVENT
3-5pm

Come along and help shape the future. The panel who administer the SSE Strathy North Wind Farm Community Benefit Fund want to create legacy projects from the £4.5 million that should be generated over the life of the windfarm. Help us identify the greatest need for this money.

As the events are catered, **booking is essential.** 
Please contact us directly to book your place:
admin@lairglearningcentre.org.uk
or call 01549 402050 

Communities asked how to spend money

By Caroline McMorran
reporter@northern-times.co.uk

A COMMUNITY consultation has been launched to find out how north coast residents want to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds of windfarm cash.

An income stream of more than £170,000 is available annually from Scottish and Southern Energy's (SSE) Strathly North windfarm fund, which has now been fully operating for around three years.

So far around £400,000 has been disbursed to a wide variety of projects. The fund covers the entire parish of Farr and includes the three community council areas surrounding Strathly, Bettyhill and Melvich.

It is administered by a 12-strong panel chaired by SSE's community fund manager Fiona Morrison.

Two representatives from each of the three community councils sit on the panel and the remaining members are also drawn from the local communities.

Bettyhill Community Council secretary Jim Johnston, a panel member, explained the reason for the community consultation.

He said: "The is scheduled to run for a total of 25 years, therefore potential income from it will exceed £4.5 million.

"The panel is keen to see that this literal windfall is put to the best possible use with the consent and



Among those at the consultation event at Bettyhill Public Hall were, from left, Marc Farr, Tracie Denoon, Willie Mackenzie, Libby Mackay, and Tommy Mackay.

participation of their whole, widely scattered, community."

Information and a questionnaire has now been circulated to every household in the area.

And the first of a series of public meetings was held in Strathly Hall and Bettyhill Public Hall last Saturday.

Participants at Strathly enjoyed a soup and sandwich lunch and those at Bettyhill were served afternoon tea.

"The consultation events are being made possible by staff from Laing and



Strathly North has 23 turbines and started operating in 2015.

most quarter century."

The meetings continue next month with a soup and sandwich lunch at Melvich Public Hall on Saturday, August 16.

This will be followed by a family fun event at the Farr Edge in Bettyhill.

Mr Johnston said that Laing Learning Centre would collate all the information and ideas and produce a written document.

He said: "The discussions will be turned into a blueprint for the future and communities will then embark on the much more challenging task of turning the rhetoric to reality."

We would like to thank Jim Johnston for taking photos of the Bettyhill event, which he forwarded to the Northern Times, as this did engage more people.

We would also like to thank Linda Munro, as some people contacted her directly, rather than completing surveys or attending events, and she ensured that their voices were also heard.

3.3b Strathly Hall 21st July 2018 Midday to 2pm

Prior to the events on the 21st, we were advised that the date clashed with both County shows and an event in Tongue. Due to the issue of hall availability, we decided to proceed but reduced the catering to 30 instead of 50.

Twenty-two people attended the soup and sandwich lunch in Strathly Hall, and it attracted the most diverse group of residents, as all three community council areas were represented.

People were invited to sit at tables and we talked to them briefly, pointing out the literature and Talking Points form. Then we left them to eat and they worked through the forms as a group. We returned after they had eaten, to find out what they thought.

We had one full table, who stayed for the full 2 hours, becoming very enthused by the wealth of ideas discussed. Another full table had representatives from all three community council areas, so we stayed with them the entire time (as they did not know each other) to help keep the conversation flowing. This diverse group were pleased to find that their priorities were quite similar for each area.

Everyone else came in on their own or in couples, and we had one-to-one chats with them, trying to entice them to join a table but if they refused, then we worked with them to log their thoughts. Others just came in, had a brief chat and then left a survey.

All of the data collected in shown in the appendices, but the ranking of first, second and third has been compiled from this event, and it is shown on the following table:

Detail	Prioritising the options:		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Care at home, to include more carer time, help with shopping, etc	12		2
Community bus/ help with transport	2		5
Community Café		3	2
Community events	1		
Creation of jobs /apprenticeship scheme	1	3	1
DIY jobs/ handyman service		1	
Hall repairs	1	11	4
Improve Porkskerra Pier and slipway	2	2	1
Improved signage			4
Make local facilities community assets and improve	1		1
Meals-on-wheels service			1
Play park renovation		1	
Village Officer	1	1	

Some discussions were extremely passionate, such as those about the lack of NHS provision and how it is letting many residents down. It was generally understood that this was due to reduced funding, but people were angry that friends and family were receiving a poor standard of care in their own homes. Although friends and family intervene on many occasions, such as when carers did not turn up, this was not seen as the best solution; most people cited busy lives and the concern that they might not be there when they are needed. 90% of people supported offering care.

Loneliness was another issue and many felt that seeing someone for longer would help alleviate the isolation experienced by those needing care. Six people suggesting a befriending service, in addition to the caring service. Help with transport was also identified for the elderly and infirm, such as attending doctors' appointments or going shopping with someone who could support them. However, travel was brought up as an issue by all ages. It was felt that the public transport service did not meet the communities' needs, with many citing the lack of a service to return home in the evening. It was also felt that this was aiding, somewhat unnecessarily, social isolation in the area. Several people suggested that volunteers could help with this and only their mileage would need to be paid. 85% of people supported improving transport.

Another passionate subject was the withdrawal of services by the council, again due to funding cuts, and how this adversely affected residents' lives. 72% were unhappy about the standard of public conveniences and the lack of facilities for Motorhomes to empty their waste, particularly since the creation of the NC500. Once people calmed down, it transpired that most people were worried about health concerns, such as waste fouling the area and motorhome owners emptying chemical toilets everywhere; it was felt that this was a priority that should be addressed.



There was a lot of anger that the community might have to take wind farm money to pay for these upgrades, such as motorhome waste disposal points, rather than the council taking responsibility. 23% were more proactive and felt that making these new facilities into a business and expanding them, such as offering other services like car washing, could make it a viable concern in the longer term.

Another issue was the play park in Melvich, which had been condemned by the council and never re-opened, which was disappointing for youngsters in the area.

Renovating the local halls was agreed by 95%, with the most popular being the kitchen and heating issues in Strathy Hall, a complete renovation of Melvich Hall, disabled access to Bettyhill Hall, and upgrades to Armadale Hall.

32% of people were passionate about regenerating the pier at Portskerra. We had a meeting with three of the group who are keen on the renovation, and that meeting is detailed in section 3.4a.

There were mixed views about improving tourist facilities, with some wanting more, others not wanting to encourage the tourists. Improving signage proved very popular, at 64%, with many highlighting the routes to the beaches as a priority.

The Community Café was popular (68%) on many fronts, including its benefits as a community hub, with many feeling that Strathy Hall would be a good location because of its central location. The Community Café was also seen as a good place to cook the Meals-on-wheels food and it was discussed that the café, if open to tourists too, could cover staff wages and perhaps help pay for the Meals-on-wheels service in the future. Younger



people, particularly families, liked the idea of having this as a local takeaway too, and were willing to pay non-subsidised rates for the food

There was good support (88%) for the creation of a Development Trust and paid worker, but disagreement over whether it should be a local person or an outsider undertaking this role. There was also disagreement over whether there should be one per community council area, or one to cover all three. The main consensus seemed to be an impartial professional to cover all three areas.

Five people were very keen on a Village Officer, reinstating a post that was no longer funded. Two supported renovating the footbridge near Big House, and several believed it beneficial to have a central meeting point (e.g Community Café) where people could access community services, such as a handyman service, recycling, and community events, which would help bring the villages closer together.

3.3c Bettyhill Hall 21st July 2018 3pm to 5pm

22 people attended this event, although 2 people attended both, making 42 people over the whole day. They were mainly residents of Bettyhill and as it was an afternoon tea, we setup five tables with cakes, discussion notes and information about other wind farm legacy projects. As they were only eating cakes and sandwiches, we were able to sit with each table the entire time and note their comments.

We did experience some negativity about the consultation process at this session, with two people sceptical that it would work, but once people realised that they did have a voice and that their views would be relayed, everyone engaged in the process and some very innovative ideas were produced.

There were also some animated disagreements at a few tables too, but the feedback from attendees was positive and they appreciated the chance to voice their concerns and fight for the issues that concerned them most; a few people even suggested making it a regular event.

Most people stayed for the whole session, although some did only pop in and chat briefly to us. Others dropped in surveys and we talked over their responses, but if a survey was completed, we have not included their preferences in the table on the next page, which shows the scoring.

The Community Care and hot food service were generally well received here too, at 86% although several attendees voiced concern that the NHS should be providing this

care and that mismanagement within the organisation was causing the problem. However, once they had voiced their anger, it was generally agreed that both services would benefit the elderly and infirm in the community.

Detail (alphabetical order)	Prioritising the options:		
	1st	2nd	3rd
Branding Bettyhill for marketing			2
Build multipurpose building to service training, office space, day care, etc.	1	1	
Business start-up grants / creation of business hub			2
Care at home, to include more carer time, help with shopping, etc.	5	1	2
Community bus/ help with transport			2
Community Café		1	
Create Visitor Centre	1		
Creation of jobs /apprenticeship scheme/ scholarships		3	2
Development Trust creation			1
Development worker post	1	1	
DIY jobs/ handyman service			2
Expanding the museum including genealogy PR	1	1	
Footpath improvements/ bridge to beach	2		1
Hall repairs		3	
Hardship fund, to help those in need	1		
Improve parking, include coach bays	1	1	
Improved signage			1
Keep money back, in reserve, for the future		3	
Low cost housing	1		
Make local facilities community assets and improve/ community industries	2		
Meals-on-wheels service		1	1
Repair Pier		1	
Training – recreational and educational			1
Village Officer	1		

There was a lot of enthusiasm for improving services for the tourists, with Torrisdale Beach featuring in 25% of conversations. As the access from Bettyhill is difficult, most people wanted to improve the route to the beach, such as creating a bridge or footpaths. They also requested better parking, including space for coaches, and possibly creating a Visitor Centre. Better signage is also needed to the beach, with improved access to Bettyhill beach too.



One table discussed an app, which had been created by Venture North, and suggested that perhaps it should be updated or reviewed, rather than a new one created.

72% of people supported expanding the museum and felt more should be done to highlight the ancient

monuments, such as Clach An Righ or Achcoillenaborgie, which could be excavated and reconstructed. A leaflet could also be produced for the area, showing beaches, facilities, heritage etc.

Toilet-emptying facilities for camper vans was mentioned here too, with 67% agreeing that it was a problem that had to be solved. One table discussed a community buyout of the caravan park, so that improvements could be made and perhaps a motorhome waste-emptying point be sited there.

A few people highlighted the lack of disabled access into Bettyhill's hall and many supported further refurbishment and upgrading of the building.

The Community Café had mixed responses, with one table discussing the news that the museum will be taking over the Café, so it will become community-run. A lot of people asked that the opening times be extended, so that it could become more of a hub in the village, but 52% agreed with the idea.

People at this event had a lot of innovative ideas for legacy projects and their thoughts went far beyond the outline questions. The comments have been listed in the appendices, but a flavour includes:

- Creating branding for Bettyhill, particularly as so many international people visit Mackay country. It would help create an identity for the area and generate income through items being produced for the tourist market. It was also suggested that the museum explore local history further, using the information as a promotional tool to engage more international visitors.
- Creating community 'businesses' that help regenerate the area and tackle issues that cause problems to locals, whilst facilitating the creation of jobs and apprenticeships, for example, polytunnels for local food production, boat trips to the island if the pier was redeveloped.

- Lack of local employment was a popular theme and apprenticeships and business start-up grants were seen as good ideas. Further suggestions included setting up a scholarship fund, so that youngsters were supported, and creating a business hub so that smaller businesses could network and access services. A multipurpose building was also proposed, that would house small businesses, Bettyhill transport and offer other facilities, such as a kitchen, lounge, etc., for multiple uses.

Transport was also identified as an issue here, with 57% of people discussing about difficulty getting to appointments because the public transport timetable was too restrictive. One table discussed the under-used minibus and the possibility that it could supplement the public transport system, although their grant request to buy a new one had been refused and there was concern about whether it was fit for purpose. It was also discussed how more groups could use the minibus too

There were less young people at this event and although 23% of attendees did support childcare provision and after-school activities, it was not given as much priority as other events where families attended. One table did discuss the North Coast Leisure Pool and further development, to include a soft play area and full-sized games hall.



There was 83% support for the creation of a Development Trust/ paid Development worker but concerns were raised over whether Bettyhill community council should employ its own Development Worker, or whether it would be better to have one post that would service all three areas that benefit from the Fund.

3.3d Melvich Hall 18th August 2018 Midday to 2pm

We used the same setup at Melvich Hall as we had at Strathy, and 21 people attended this event. A few people had contacted us beforehand, to say that they were at Runrig and could not attend, so some went to Strathy's event and others sent in surveys.

Staff and volunteers sat at tables with people as they arrived and chatted to them as they ate their food. This event attracted the most families and young people, and their responses did reflect a different viewpoint. All responses are noted in the appendices but the votes were:

Detail (alphabetical order)	Prioritising the options:		
	1st	2nd	3rd
After-school activities			2
Care at home, to include more carer time, help with shopping, etc	2	4	1
Childcare provision		2	3
Community bus/ help with transport	1	1	5
Community Café			2
Create Tourist action group		1	
Creation of jobs /apprenticeship scheme/ scholarships	1	1	
Development worker post		6	1
Expanding the leisure complex / sports facilities	1		2
Hall repairs	14		
Improve tourist facilities, such as larger bins		2	1
Low cost housing to keep families in the area		1	
Meals-on-wheels service	1	1	1
Play park in Melvich		1	3
Repair Pier	1	1	

The idea of a Community Care company with hot food service was generally well received, with 81% people recognising that the level of care was not as they would like from the NHS. Another factor was the closure of the Care Home, which many felt was detrimental to the area, in terms of lost facilities and the building being vacated. Many thought a new use should be found for it and suggestions included a community hub, which would house the care, meals-on-wheels and DIY service.

Hall repairs were very important to 85% of the people, many also rated it as their top priority. It was felt that either a lot of renovations were needed, or a new build undertaken in a safer location (not so close to the main road), which many found the better option.



There was much support for keeping the public toilets open (72%), but they need renovating. It was felt they should be improved too, with shower facilities for tourists and surfers alike.

Camper van waste was also discussed and the need for facilities to be created to help tackle the issue.

There was also 57% support for renovating the pier at Portskerra, with stories of Prince Charles fishing at the Pier, which some felt could be a hook for tourists to stay in the area, rather than passing through. It was also recognised that the Pier would generate revenue for the area, such as offering cruises to the Island or puffins. Letters of support have been submitted by people who believe in undertaking this work, but a few were against the idea, mainly due to the ongoing costs.

86% complained about the lack of a play park in the village now, as it has been condemned, and they asked for a soft-play area too. They supported expanding the leisure complex so that families had somewhere to go during the winter months, as all ages stated that there was little to do in the colder months.

There was also a feeling that people wanted to keep, and attract, young families into the area. This included 25% of people supporting low-cost housing for locals, although some believed there was a surplus of council houses, but others wanted to buy, not rent, and were being priced out of the market by holiday home buyers.

Training, from apprenticeships to recreational, was agreed by 95% of people. Recreational courses were seen by many as something to do during the darker months, whilst also tackling social isolation; apprenticeships would be a good vehicle to retain youngsters in the area.

76% supported the community café and mentioned the pop-up café, which had been well-attended. The services by the two local hotels were discussed, as one does not serve teas and coffees and the other is only open during licencing hours, so it was felt there would definitely be a tourist market in addition to the locals using the facility, and this could help cover future costs, once it was setup.

Transport was another recurring theme, with 81% of people unhappy at the public transport service and requesting a community minibus to undertake additional trips. People who drive currently assist those who do not, particularly the elderly and infirm

who would like their own independence but have to rely on others, which it was felt was not ideal.

Generally people were very supportive of the Development Trust and a Development Officer, with 91% supporting the idea, although we heard the same discussions about whether it should be an outsider or a local, and whether the Trust should be for all three community councils or just Melvich. There was also concern that if they did not have their own Officer, then how could they ensure they received their fair share of the money.



3.3e Farr Edge 2000 18th August 2018 3pm to 5pm

The Farr Edge event only had one attendee, but we had been forewarned that the attendance was going to be low as the target age group had gone to Runrig's final concert. However, the attendee had spoken to their clients and although she did not have exact weightings against each category, she advised that the issues that mostly affected their clients were the lack of childcare provision and after-school activities for youngsters, and the need for low-cost housing and better transport links.

3.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3.4a Meeting with Portskerra volunteers

We met with Davy Hodge, Willy Grant and Hugh Mackay, representing the Portskerra Harbours Association, to discuss both the slipway and the Pier. It was felt that the slipway would be quite straightforward to complete, with volunteers helping finish the work, to help keep costs down. There has already been an increase in usage with the work completed so far. The club originally had six members but this has increased to 26, and they showed us photos of the competitions held the previous weekend (right) and how busy the slipway had been, with 30 people entering the competitions. Unfortunately it is still unsafe during high tides, but the proposed height increase will solve that problem and allow safer access.



They have also helped out other organisations which use the slipway for launching boats, such as the Dive Club and the Fishery Board. Both organisations respect the work completed and endorse further works being undertaken.

The men then took us to the Pier and showed us the extent of the deterioration and how people are still using the structure, even though it is fenced off, locked and unsound (there was a fisherman at the end of the Pier when we visited and the lock had been broken). It is a dangerous health and safety hazard and the council would be happy for it to move into community ownership.

They realised that it is a big job, starting with clearing the rubble in the water, which has been created by the Pier disintegrating. It will need to be completely renovated and pinned, with new handrails and ladders, and redressed to make it safe again but, in their opinion, the benefits far outweigh the negatives.

Currently there is restricted access to the sea, due to tides, big swells and the lack of current facilities. Conditions can be very bad at times but if the Pier was back in use again, it would provide safe harbour for boats. The men felt that it was safer for children, than the bay, and that yachts could anchor at sea and use dinghies to come inland, mooring at the Pier. Commercial boats could also take out tourists from it, and there is the potential for commercial revenue from the venture, which could cover ongoing costs (no figures have been calculated).

There is a heritage value too and they would like an information board, detailing the history of the Pier, including how it was used to bring in supplies during snow storms.

The council will never renovate the site and they are concerned about further deterioration and if it is allowed to disintegrate, they will not be able to remedy the situation and the area will house a dangerous hazard.

The volunteers are very enthusiastic and realise that a venture of this size would need to be properly project-managed and a construction team brought in to undertake the work. The volunteers are happy to be hands-on and offer support, but are realistic about how much they can do.

They also stressed how proactive they are and letters of support have been received from the Caithness Diving Club and Northern District Salmon Fishery Board backing them in their work (letters attached in the appendices). The Diving Club specifically state, 'To further enhance the safety of recovery of divers and boats, and to facilitate the use of our principal, larger boat, the Club would very much like to see the existing pier lengthened and heightened such that boats can be retrieved at any state of tide.'

3.4b Low-cost housing

At the events we became aware that many people supported low-cost housing, particularly in Bettyhill and Strathy, but we had no specific evidence of need.

We then received a call from a social worker who was acutely aware of the issue in the area. She told us about people she knew who were struggling due to this issue and was happy to ask them to contact us with case studies. Their emails are attached in the appendices but in overview, all three people had trouble with finding suitable homes and back low-cost housing, to try and tackle the problem.

3.4c Altnaharra email

We also received an email from a resident of Altnaharra, who was not able to attend the meetings but did want to express his views. Please find his email attached, along with his response to our offer to hold an event in Altnaharra.

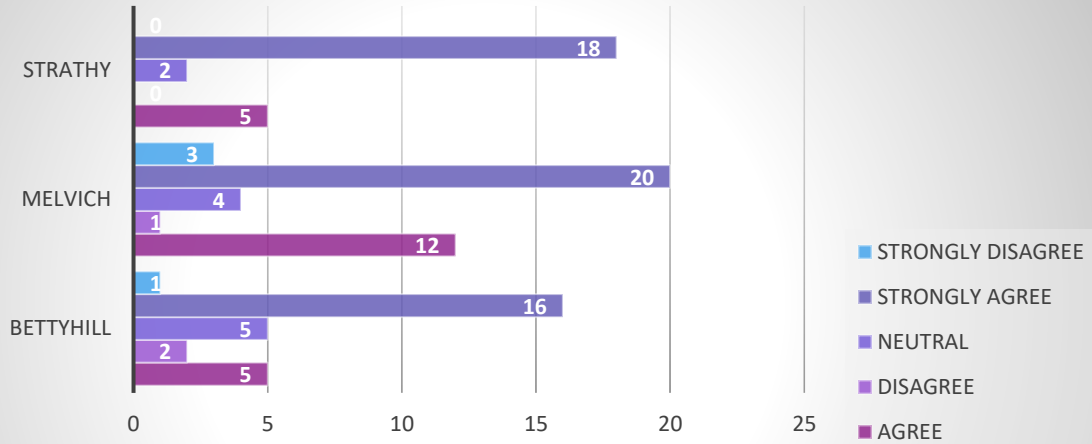
In overview, he highlighted transport issues in the area and suggested looking at other organisations, such as Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company FAGCC, as they have already been through this process.

BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL SCORES FOR THE MOST POPULAR ITEMS

QUESTIONS	Bettyhill	Melvich	Strathy	TOTAL
Meals-on-wheel service for elderly and infirm	191	225	154	570
Extending meals-on-wheels to include families	106	160	113	379
Community Care provision, supplementing NHS work	212	274	200	686
Creation of a community café	162	234	155	551
New signage to local landmarks	170	200	170	540
Natural heritage app	130	175	100	405
Expansion of the museum	158	188	117	463
Increase in childcare provision	161	223	123	507
Increase in after school activities	168	236	128	532
Apprenticeship scheme	201	240	176	617
Start-up grants for local businesses	163	191	133	487
Low-cost housing for locals	211	212	134	557
Expansion of the leisure complex	159	212	115	486
Local training opportunities	169	196	132	497
Development Trust creation	192	252	162	606
Creating an accountable Development Worker	187	275	160	622
OPEN QUESTION:				
Hall renovation	180	348	248	776
ADDITIONAL ITEMS IDENTIFIED				
Improvements with transport	189	224	218	631
Renovating Piers	148	249	126	523
Playpark for Melvich		259		259
Improvements in tourist facilities, such as toilets, waste disposal, parking	231	260	136	627

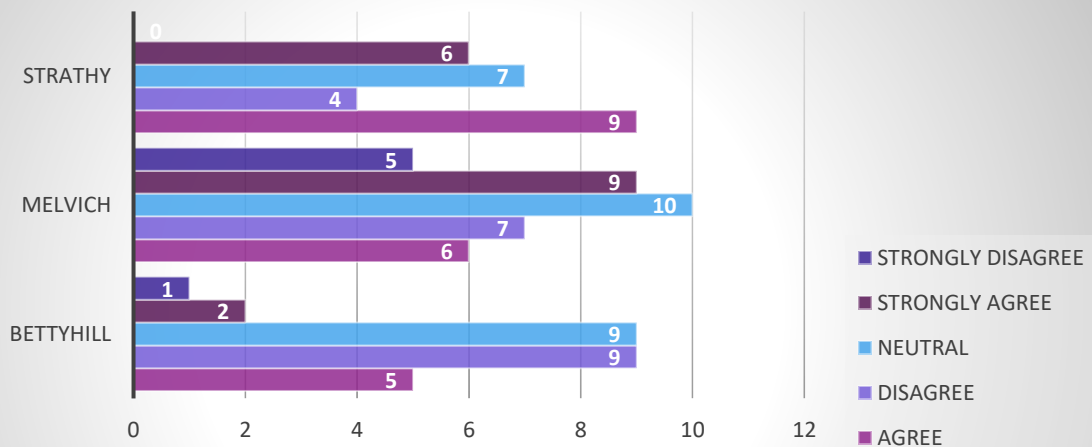
SURVEY QUESTION RESPONSES, IN COMMUNITY COUNCIL AREAS

Question 1 - Meals-on-wheels service



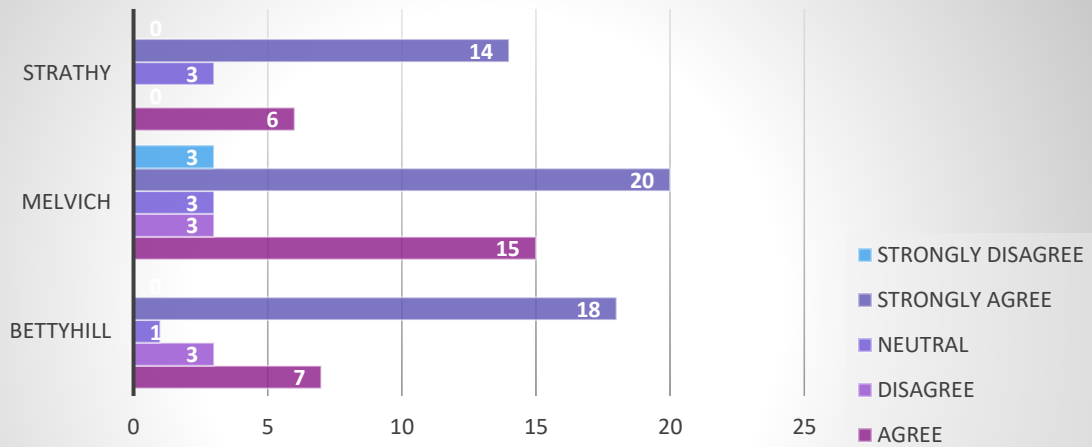
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHLY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	3	0
STRONGLY AGREE	16	20	18
NEUTRAL	5	4	2
DISAGREE	2	1	0
AGREE	5	12	5

Question 2 - Healthy meals for families



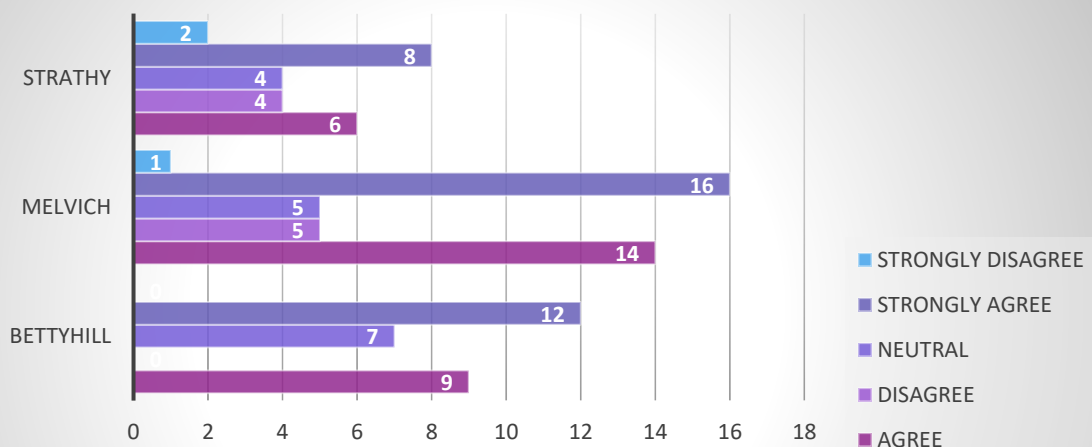
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHLY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	5	0
STRONGLY AGREE	2	9	6
NEUTRAL	9	10	7
DISAGREE	9	7	4
AGREE	5	6	9

Question 3 - Home care provision



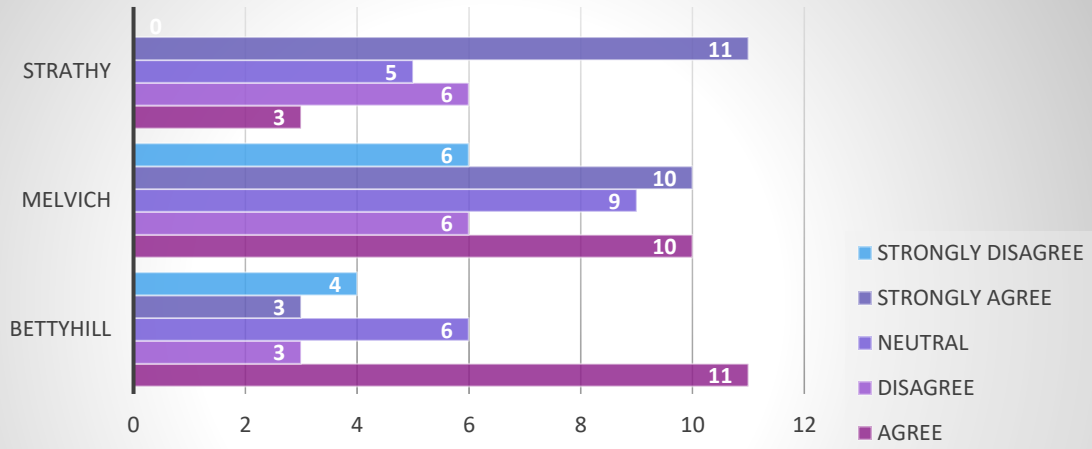
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	3	0
STRONGLY AGREE	18	20	14
NEUTRAL	1	3	3
DISAGREE	3	3	0
AGREE	7	15	6

Question 4 - Community Cafe



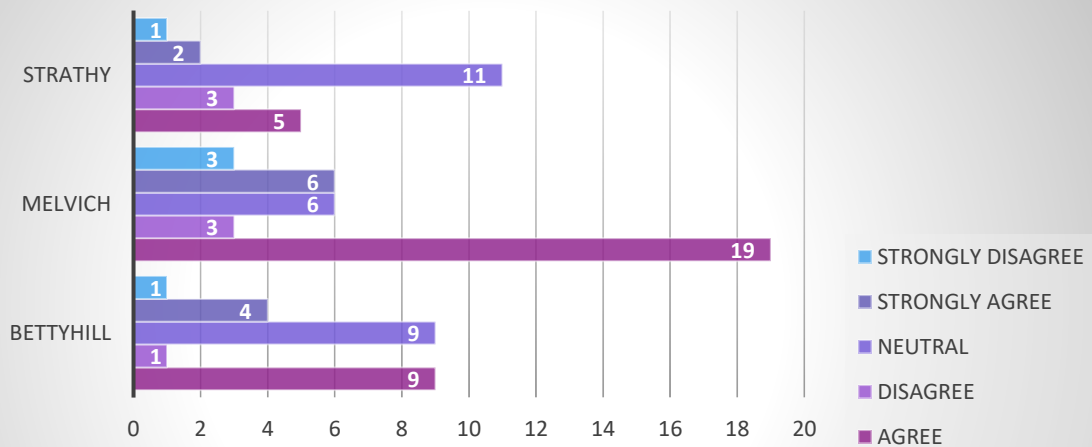
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	1	2
STRONGLY AGREE	12	16	8
NEUTRAL	7	5	4
DISAGREE	0	5	4
AGREE	9	14	6

Question 5 - Landmark signage



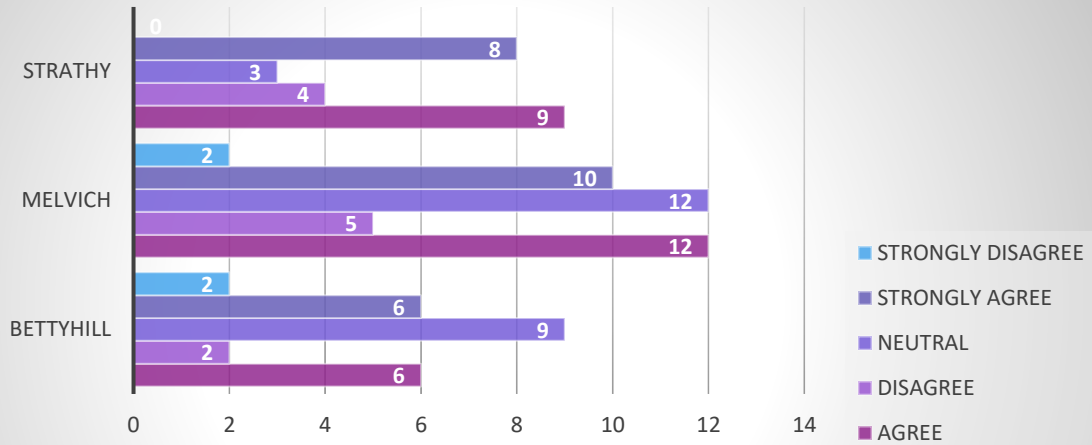
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	4	6	0
STRONGLY AGREE	3	10	11
NEUTRAL	6	9	5
DISAGREE	3	6	6
AGREE	11	10	3

Question 6 - Natural heritage app



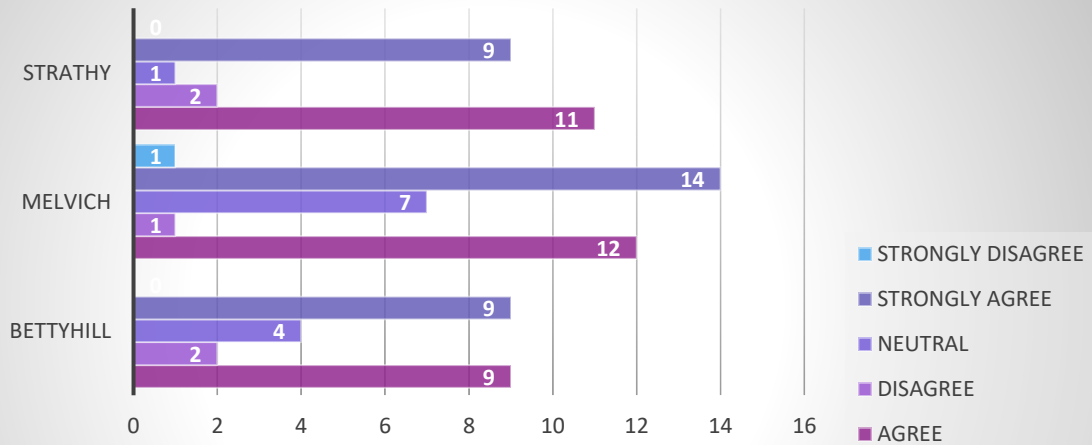
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	1	3	1
STRONGLY AGREE	4	6	2
NEUTRAL	9	6	11
DISAGREE	1	3	3
AGREE	9	19	5

Question 7 - Expand the museum



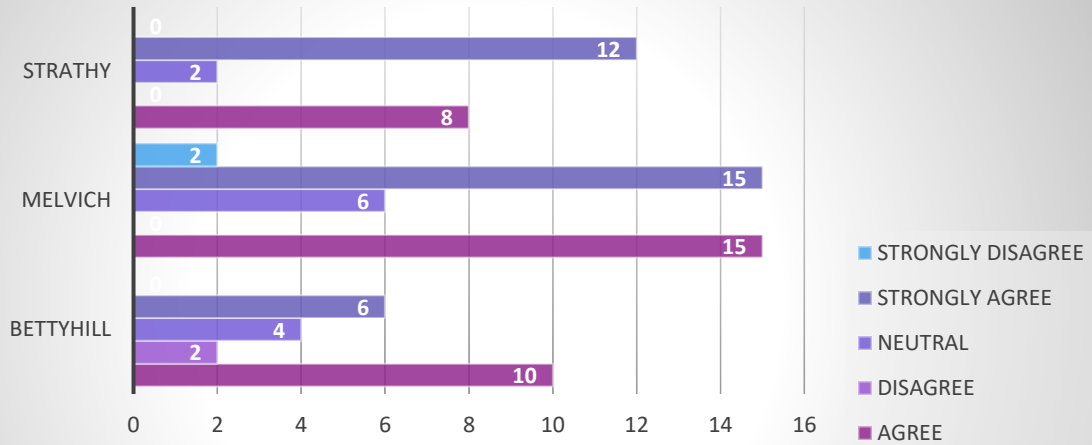
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	2	0
STRONGLY AGREE	6	10	8
NEUTRAL	9	12	3
DISAGREE	2	5	4
AGREE	6	12	9

Question 8 - Childcare provision



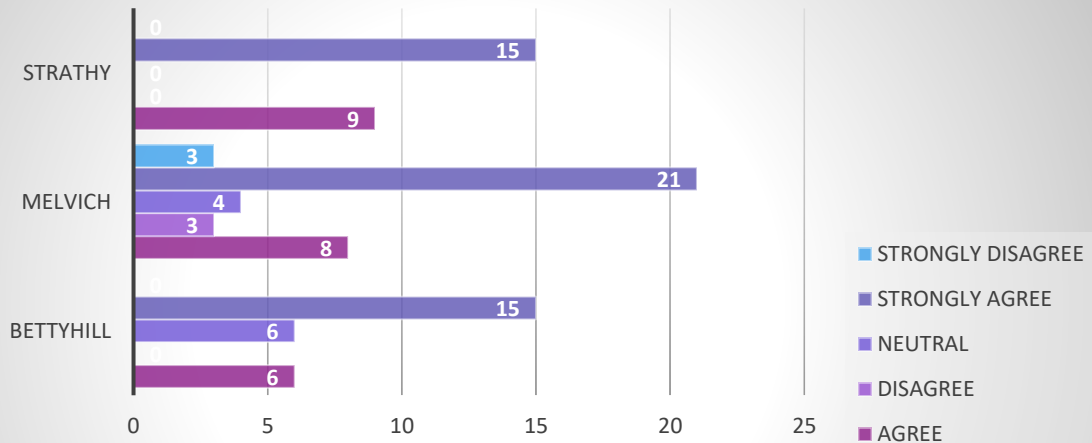
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	1	0
STRONGLY AGREE	9	14	9
NEUTRAL	4	7	1
DISAGREE	2	1	2
AGREE	9	12	11

Question 9 - After-school activities



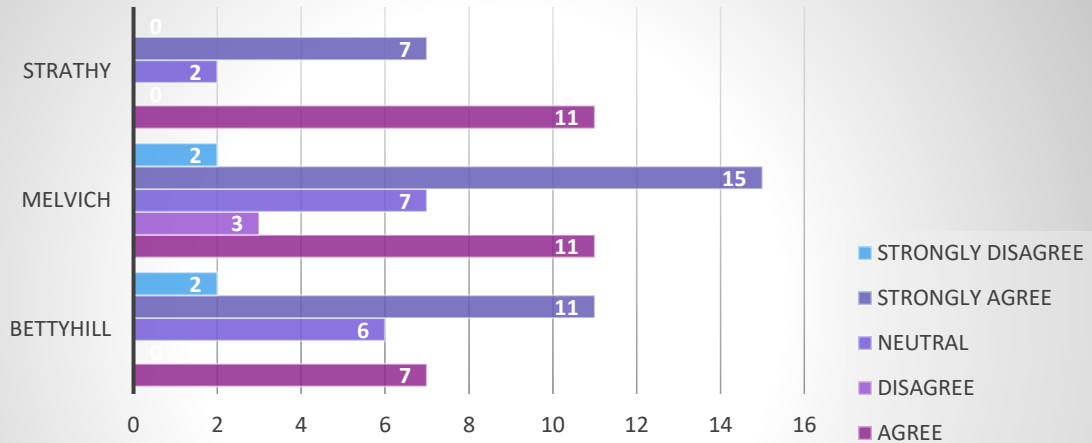
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	2	0
STRONGLY AGREE	6	15	12
NEUTRAL	4	6	2
DISAGREE	2	0	0
AGREE	10	15	8

Question 10 - Funded apprenticeship scheme



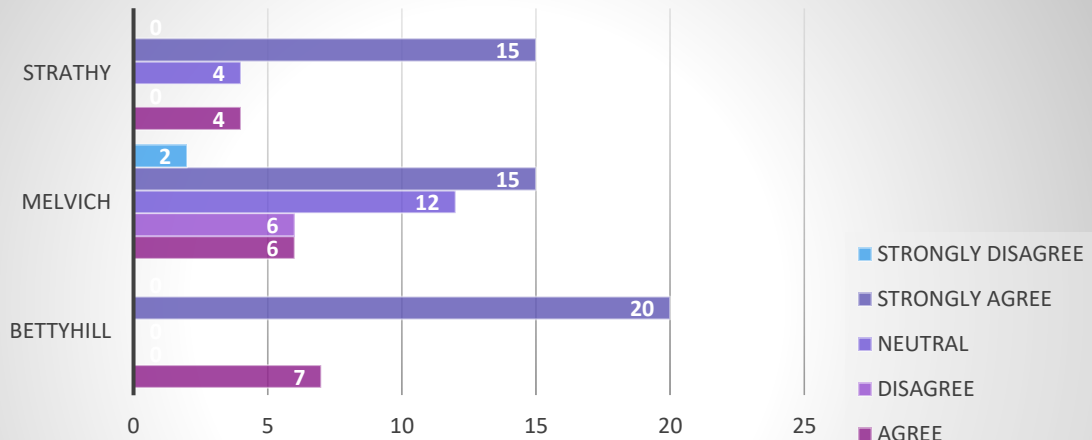
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	3	0
STRONGLY AGREE	15	21	15
NEUTRAL	6	4	0
DISAGREE	0	3	0
AGREE	6	8	9

Question 11 - Start-up grants for businesses



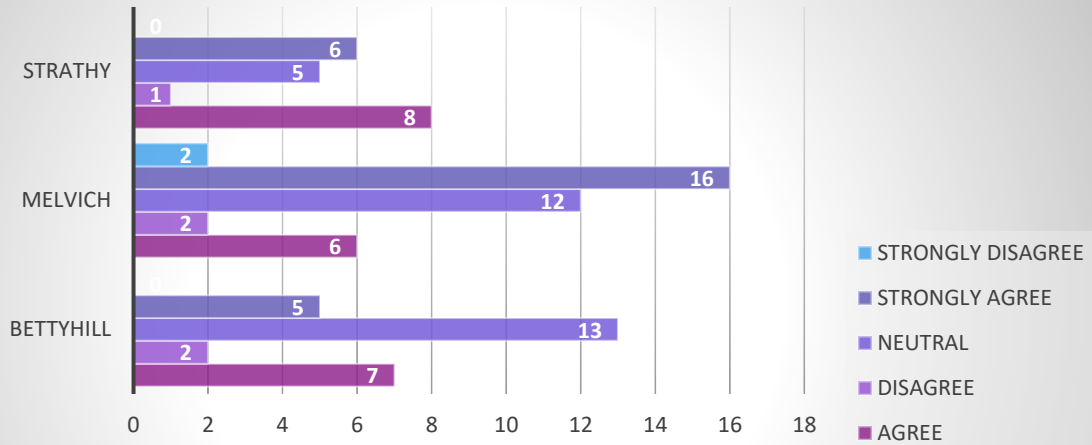
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	2	2	0
STRONGLY AGREE	11	15	7
NEUTRAL	6	7	2
DISAGREE	0	3	0
AGREE	7	11	11

Question 12 - Low-cost housing for locals



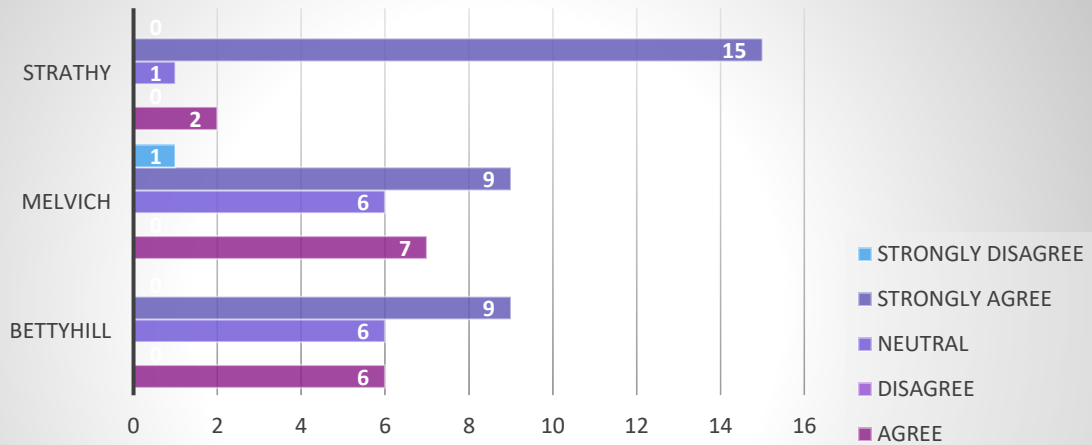
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	2	0
STRONGLY AGREE	20	15	15
NEUTRAL	0	12	4
DISAGREE	0	6	0
AGREE	7	6	4

Question 13 - Expand the leisure complex



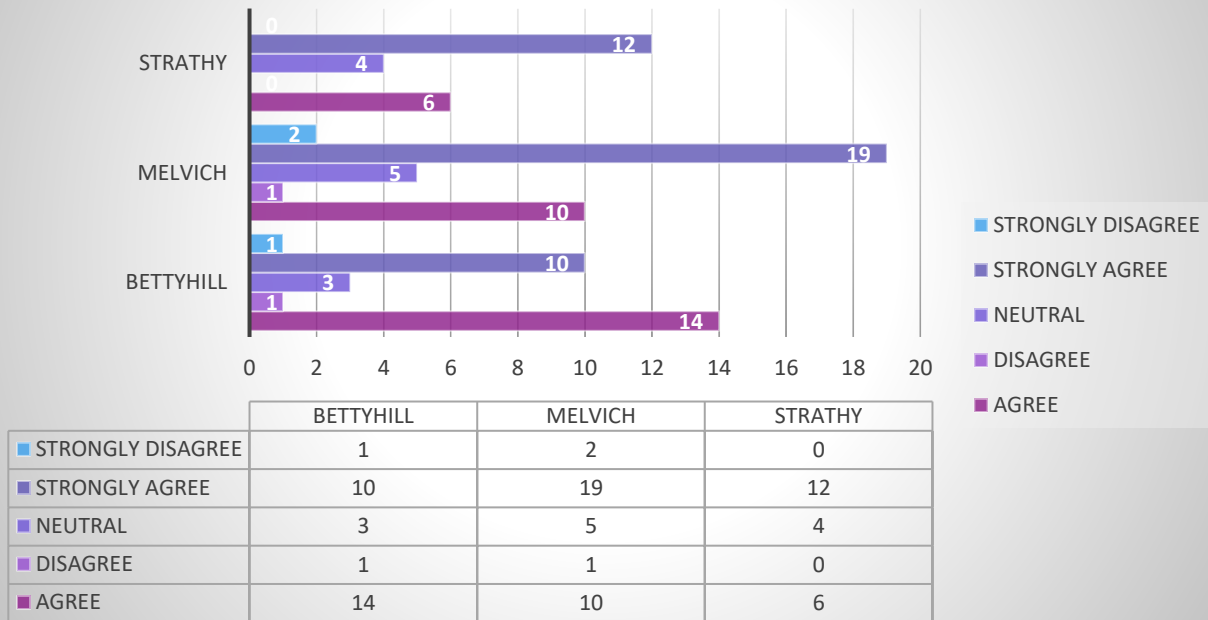
	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	2	0
STRONGLY AGREE	5	16	6
NEUTRAL	13	12	5
DISAGREE	2	2	1
AGREE	7	6	8

Question 14 - Community training opportunities

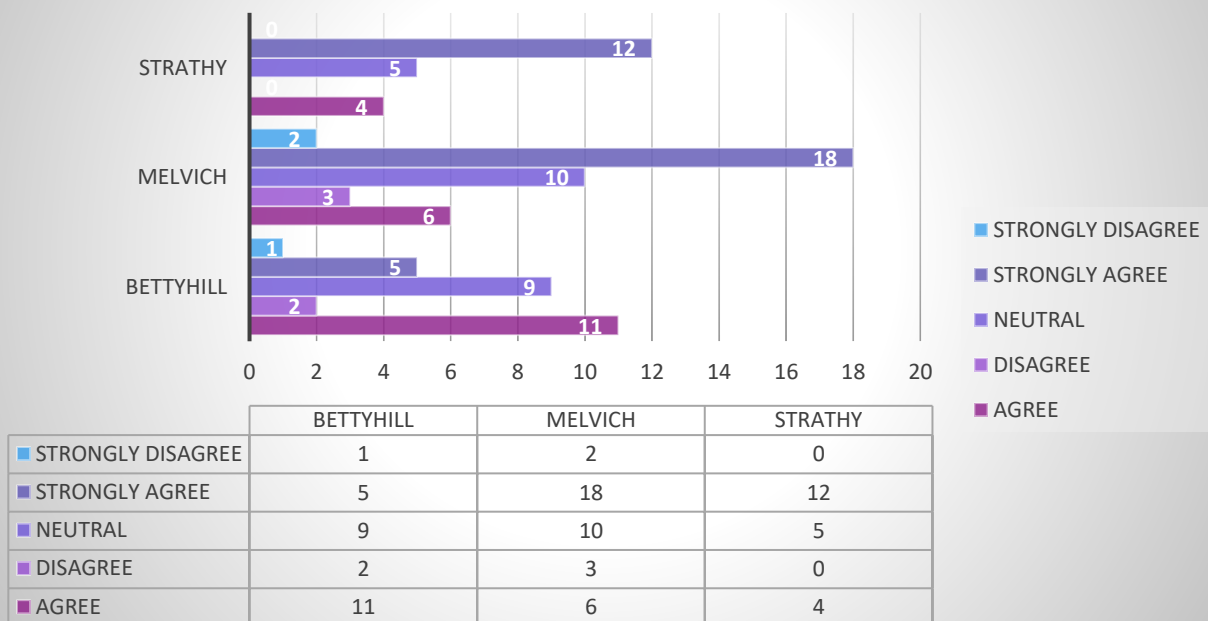


	BETTYHILL	MELVICH	STRATHY
STRONGLY DISAGREE	0	1	0
STRONGLY AGREE	9	9	15
NEUTRAL	6	6	1
DISAGREE	0	0	0
AGREE	6	7	2

Question 15 - How much would you support the creation of a Development Trust



Question 16 - How much would you support paying for a Development worker



3.2c CARE AT HOME – ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

(Each box represents one survey's responses)

BETTYHILL

Sheltered Houses
It is important that in addition to personal care services elderly and disabled people receive help in keeping their homes clean and well maintained
A service where elderly residents can have company several hours a week. Loneliness is a concern for many.
Help with shopping
Home Care
Regular public transport btw. Bettyhill and Thurso including settlements off main road like swordly, kirtomy etc
Supporting the above risks frittering away this money on services which require state funding, with minimal effect
More district nurse cover.
Day care transport

MELVICH

The NHS should be doing this
Make full use of facilities at Sinclair court
Sinclair and Callena @ Tongue-bad idea, should be closer Carers sometimes don't turn up/community rally but help needed Council run handyman service; community service
Make full use of facilities at Sinclair Court
Sinclair Court needs to stay open
We feel Sinclair Court needs to be kept open both for some resident beds and day care
I have an elderly patient with dementia and for the past 3 years have been unable to get NHS care provision because of lack of funding.
Emergency services support needed- ambulance, firebrigade, and police. I strongly agree with the retention of Sinclair Court Care Home in Melvich. It provides much needed care for people from the surrounding areas, employment for locals, and is close enough for families to visit.
Transport for elderly Days out for the elderly etc
Maybe a service could be provided to take people out on daytrips or shopping or just spend time with them at home
With the pending closure of Sinclair court in Melvich, the village will lose it day centre for the elderly. I would very much like to see the building in the centre of Melvich used as an intergenerational centre? Drop in model for elderly but open to all.

MELVICH (CONTINUED)

None, These are the Highland Council and NHS responsibility which we already pay taxes for. You would discriminate against different groups. How would people be selected to receive meals. No transparency or fairness
Care at home struggle to recruit in such a rural area so I would imagine this problem still exist. Befriending & respite within the home would be beneficial
Facility where older groups could meet to deal with loneliness and do some keep fit
Improving mobile connectivity as this facility is used by people in need of course and family contacting them.
More support in the home so elderly don't feel they have to go into a home
All Highland Council with tax already paid
Opportunities to fund projects for elderly experiencing social isolation, trips, lunchclubs, physical activities...

STRATHY

Conversation and company!
Mental Health Awareness
Weekly bus run (including through Annadale) to Thurso
Transport to allow elderly or disabled people to get to whist or bingo in the appropriate hall
Build up a befriending service Get people out more.
More care at home. Transport and assistance for people with mobility issues. Childcare provision to enable parents return to work
Free or low cost transport for people within the community to attend appointments associated with their health care/general wellbeing.
General support to enable living at home. Provide supported outings- shops, dr, hospital etc.
Carers that have more time to spend with elderly, time to chat and keep them company
Help with transport for elderly and disabled

3.2d Local regeneration responses

Local facilities – improvements suggested:

BETTYHILL

Improved disabled access to village hall
Improvements to church of Scotland - dampness, new window required and hot water facilities
Put swingo road access at Bettyhill.
Local toilet provision - don't want them closed - rethink use and management of
Better insulation and alternative heating in halls (instead of electric heating)
Disabled Access
General update where necessary
Update to parts of the hall
Melvich village Hall needs rebuilding
Bettyhill Village Hall is an increasingly well-used facility, which is overseen by a small committee. A refurbishment project was initiated, a few years ago, in order to make the hall more attractive to hirers. This has paid dividends but there is much still to be done. The kitchen, ladies' and gents' toilets, together with insulation have been completed by contractors. A maintenance and cleaning programme continues, through the efforts of the committee: outside painting, interior painting and regular cleaning by a volunteer. In order to make the building watertight and improve the external appearance the flat roof needs attention, as does the guttering. The disabled toilet is due for a refit and, by request, will include a baby-change unit. It has also been pointed out that the disabled ramp to the hall is not fit for purpose and, in fact, is a safety issue in the car park. The committee would welcome favourable consideration of these requests, which would enable them to focus on the day-to-day running of the facility. Further information can be obtained from the Chair c/o Bettyhill General Merchants, who have access to the maintenance programme and weekly log.
Toilets, but with fines/penalties for people and youths who misuse them.
Disabled access at Bettyhill swimming pool

MELVICH

football pitch needs drainage Swing park needs upgraded Hall needs upgraded
Hall in Melvich requires knocking down and rebuilt
Village Hall upgrade/new childrens play park. Renovated harbour improvements
The hall badly needs improvement - problem with mice, leaks, cleanliness. Playpark - only one item left in the area in use
Melvich hall & playpark desperately need improved/upgraded as the hub for the community
Melvich Hall- Currently the hall committee are working hard to try and raise funding to re-furbish the hall

MELVICH (CONTINUED)

<p>Infrastructure of bridge, pier and harbour New Melvich hall (eco friendly) or upgrade same size Village officer possible</p>
<p>Village Hall upgrades/new. Children's play park, more improvements</p>
<p>Melvich/Portskerra final improvements to the shore and harbour. The playground to be restored into a functional play area</p>
<p>Melvich Hall is in great need of repair</p>
<p>New village hall, Melvich</p>
<p>Strathy Hall needs up to date heating system and solution to lower ceiling to prevent heat loss</p>
<p>Melvich Hall is the poorest on the North coast - replacement or upgrade would be great</p>
<p>1. Finish upgrade of slipway & harbour repair 2 New hall- currently a corrugated iron building with wood lining, a small kitchen and toilets-outdated. Would be better to demolish old hall an build a new one in it's place. 3. New playpark</p>
<p>Melvich village hall</p>
<p>Strathy Hall - Upgrade of kitchen provision of staff toilet. New heating. Upgrade swing park at Strathy - Maybe to a new area</p>
<p>Portskerra slipway for ongoing improvements</p>
<p>Thurso scout group needs funding (local kids use), bus needs funded to take them there School trips need funded Melvich village hall needs to be replaced/rebuilt, it is not fit for purpose & refurbishment not appropriate due to the current structure & layout</p>
<p>New village hall</p>
<p>Portskerra has restarted using the new Jetty at the shore which appears to be quite successful. There is another harbour which needs work to bring back into use.</p>
<p>Playpark Old pier needs repairing New youthclub Upgrade public toilets Hall requires updating Bridge at river needs repairing</p>
<p>It would be nice for Melvich hall to be rebuilt. Recently it has been used more</p>
<p>Melvich needs a new village hall, desperately. Melvich also does not have a play park - it was taped off and condemned by council- the nearest are now Bettyhill or Reay</p>
<p>Childcare and after school activities are desperately needed and would benefit with a new hall</p>

STRATHY

More bins!
Farr Edge
New hall needed for Melvich
Strathy hall - A proper heating system is needed, ceiling needs to be lowered to retain heat.
New kitchen in Strathy Hall Armada Hall for Refurb
Armada Hall
Heating upgrade and to make better use of the facility.
Strathy hall- new kitchen and upgraded heating as system at the moment is not satisfactory
Playpark-was taken away from Steven Terrace, Strathy by council and never replaced. Much needed in the area as several children in area
Strathy Hall, thermal insulation.
Strathy Hall - thermal insulation and noise insulation

Other ideas for regenerating the area:

BETTYHILL

<p>Pathways to Farr Beach and museum to be fenced in order to prevent sheep's dirt spoiling the paths.</p> <p>Parking facility at the pier and old ice house made into a visitor attraction .</p> <p>Achanlochy clearance village to be made accessible again.</p>
<p>Social Enterprise Cafe.</p> <p>New community Bus</p> <p>Car parking and view point for upstairs viewing from Tortisdale Bay (down from Hotel)</p>
<p>Improving footpaths especially where there are extremely wet stretches/ small burns as for instance at Western approach to Torrisdale - beach from carpark</p>
<p>Capital expenditure on community facilities eg. village halls, childcare buildings, etc</p>
<p>Creative Hub. As someone who is involved with various craft activities, I would like to propose consideration of a facility for people to meet informally in a welcoming and comfortable environment. The Store premises would have provided an ideal central venue, with space and parking. The recent initiative of Clean Bees has rendered this impossible but it is worth considering. Should the premises become available, once the new laundry building is complete, I would like to propose the formation of a creative hub: this could incorporate the current café, due to open this week, as well as comfortable seating, artist/ craft/ studio/ gallery space. There is an acknowledged need for additional attractions in Bettyhill and this would satisfy visitors as well as locals. A number of artists/craftspeople live in the area and would probably welcome the formation of 'pop-up' gallery space. Locals would welcome the opportunity to meet informally in comfortable surroundings and this could also be considered by the 'knit and natter', craft group and befrienders, to name but a few.</p>
<p>More rubbish bins, and empty the damn things on a more regular basis during the tourist season.</p>
<p>Signage on how to drive single track roads</p> <p>Transport links</p> <p>More litter bins</p>
<p>Counter the Highland Councils intentions to close a lot of Public Toilets in the area, or pay for local taking over and maintenance of the toilets by local people.</p>
<p>Tour promoter to bring more people to stay longer in the area</p>
<p>Environmental clean ups/continued seasonal maintenance with appropriate implements (work no longer part of council employment)</p> <p>Minor building repairs (External and internal)</p>

MELVICH

Puffin cove pushchair friendly access and viewing platform
Combine cafe with hall
Construction of a boardwalk to make a circular walk/route possible from drowning memorial/Portskerra harbour to beach. Make good old Portskerra beach Make village "hub" when Melvich CCU closes
Tourism benefits a minority of residents on the north Coast. Things done for tourism that also benefit the locals like infrastructure are preferred e.g road improvements!
Guided walks during tourist season A local craft and food festival Motorbike rally (shetland has "simmerdim" and Aviemore has "thunder in the glen")
Information boards at view points. Seating areas
This is something that could be incorporated into a day centre facility in Sinclair court. There will be a lot of available room there, room for a community archive
Muga or all weather pitch - Improve the local walks - Marketing leaflets - More support to enable young entrants into crofting
More things for young children to do so families are encouraged to move to the area and keep community thriving
Better mountain bike trails (The Seven Stones of the North?)

STRATHY

Fix and clean the public toilets so they are working order
Community craft shop (they have a good one in Harris) More bins for camper van rubbish
New signage to promote NC 500
Keep public toilets open & invest in more to combat the increase in tourists.
Swing park and more things for younger community
All year round hospitality facilities - including toilets and waste disposal points (Campervans in mind)
Footpath to Strathy beach also Armadale beach with picnic areas along path
Clearer signage to beach Access road to beach - Cycle/walking path for both locals/tourists as road is busy and nowhere to go walking/cycling

STRATHY (CONTINUED)

<p>Toilets/Lavatories open to the public 24/7. Places for camper vans to empty their waste tanks. To keep the land pristine and hygienic for humans and other animals. A management scheme to cope with increased traffic and avoiding nuisance to locals (e.g. Strathy Beach) if these go ahead.</p>
<p>Signage improvement if accurate. Cafes already exist e.g. Strathnaver Museum - maybe extend opening times? Improved local bus service Subsidised defibrillators in each community</p>

TRAINING REQUESTED

Recreational-vocational
Anything to boost local economy - infrastructure
Caring for the elderly
First Aid
Computer training as more and more day to day tasks require online access
All trades
Computer Literacy Hospitality and Tourism
Training in the use of the defibrillator First aid training
Traditional farming methods Running a business
Adult Evening classes.
Trades Local history and culture training
Nos 13, 14 & 17. These should work together providing skills/training and jobs for the long term benefit of the local community. Businesses wishing to benefit from start-up grants should be based in the local community and Apprenticeships and Training should be linked to requirements of local community (ie electricians/plumbers/painters/catering/Care/ joiners/ etc etc etc.
The opportunity for all people to apply for grants to fund training courses so local skills and experience can be gained to the benefit of our local community. Really keen on employed training funding and apprenticeship schemes
Computer training Job related training Grant aid for training
For people involved in community care work
Classes locally or electronic, storage of photographs, advanced computing - service industry training opportunities locally based

TRAINING REQUESTED (CONTINUED)

Groups for kids to get together to help for young people to get into employment as experience is needed for a start but need time /availability to get experience
Computer literacy Hospitality/tourism
Any that improve job prospects for local people. Also we need a transparent scheme for awarding to local businesses.
Any that would improve job opportunities for local people.
Melvich was built on fishing and the pier is now run down and not allowed to be used. More young people should be encouraged to learn the fishing trade and keep with work alive

3.2f Any further ideas

BETTYHILL
100+ years overdue. double track bridge over the Naver river
Improved public toilet facilities are vital, with showers. Additional camping site as current one is somewhat run down. Expand the local tourist information centre. Signage for Torrisdale Beach Replacement bridge to Far Beach
Bottle bank in Bettyhill centre - e.g the car park at toilets block
Proper disabled access to beach/viewpoint. Community notice board. Improved usage of community hall i.e pop-up events and craft fairs
Handyman/Grasscutting etc. For old age pensioners & disabled
Handyman, gardener to help pensioners
There used to be a volunteer driver service to take people to hospital appointments but the drivers weren't paid enough for their petrol. Could this be reinstated as it is almost impossible to get the NHS to help without going through the nasty interrogation process which precludes most applicants from getting help.
Fill Your Freezer initiative. Sponsor someone to develop a range of meals that could be available for locals and tourists, rather than a Meals on Wheels type service.
We need someone to actively trouble-shoot all of those annoying little problems, but as a whole improve everything for everyone. For example getting the council to empty overflowing roadside bins, fill in dangerous potholes promptly, ensure local toilets are fit for use etc, all the things the council once did well but now ignore unless they are prompted. We need a mid morning bus to Thurso and back in mid afternoon. Ensure that local teenagers can take part in apprenticeships in crofting, energy and land/sea use. Provide a bus service for local people to get to hospital appointments with door-to-door pick up and return. Improve the vandalised bus-stops, replacing or updating them - somebody needs to pass the message on to the schools that we cannot have nice things if the school children keep vandalising anything new. Remove many of the unnecessary road signs as they are unsightly. Remove all of the old broken down cars and farm vehicles rusting on the side of the road - sell as scrap to recoup some of the cost.
Mental health provision

BETTYHILL (CONTINUED)

I STRONGLY suggest that improved public transport opportunities are looked at. For those who don't drive and live outwith villages where social events occur it is IMPOSSIBLE to be included if these occur in the evening and at weekends. This causes me and others to be isolated socially. Dial-a-bus services have limitations and restrictions on their usage which prevent our inclusion and therefore not full members of society as a consequence, and, lonely. Stagecoach transport allows access to Thurso weekdays from 8.30 am (arrival) to 3.55 pm (departure). The Durness Bus Co allows 11.45 am to 2.25pm access to Thurso on a Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The above is acceptable to visit the town bus none of the above is acceptable for anyone seeking to socialise outwith these hours anywhere along the Thurso to Tongue roadway. As a consequence, I am someone who resides and exists in the area but cannot "Live" in the area. At the end of this survey you state that you hope I could attend the Community Events in the area during July and August in Strathy Hall, Bettyhill Hall, Melvich Hall and Farr Edge 2000. The Bettyhill and Farr Edge events are impossibilities because of transport logistics and maybe I am not quite old enough yet to enjoy the soup and Sandwich offerings to the full yet.. I'm 56.

MELVICH

Why not reduce the cost of utilities/subsidising the electric bills for locals, as the cost of electric is skyrocketing. With all this new green energy the cost should be coming down, not up! If people were paying less for their utilities they would have more money to spend on other needs in their lives

Community owned decent quality public toilets

Community owned 24hr petrol/diesel pumps

Development of a north coast coastal path

Community owned soft play facility & arts and crafts hub & badminton/fitness hall like pultneytown in Wick

Decent public toilets open

Social club for the older and younger members of the community

It would be good if money was available for ongoing maintenance of project if needed. Funding for upkeep of public toilets

School trip subsidies

Maybe look into the possibility of making strathy beach more accessible for everybody - maybe decking or viewing platform.

Low cost housing for families

Improved transport links to Thurso I.e for non drivers/ unable to drive for working hours

Park facilities in Portskerra

MELVICH (CONTINUED)

<p>SSE own a solar panel company. Every property in the area should be written to and offered free installation of solar panels or insulation regardless of property age or being means tested. This would give every person a chance to receive something from the fund and improve their comfort and be green, This would show the money is for everyone not just certain groups or people</p>
<p>Opportunities for children to go on trips & attend after school activities outwith the area. Many children attend groups in Thurso as it is not an option to attend locally. This means increased costs for parents but also increased demand for other clubs/groups.</p>
<p>Invest some of the money in local (small windfarms) to increase the revenue</p>
<p>Any development officer should be and have been living locally for a good number of years and have the respect and trust of the communities. Provide a platform for young people to form a village pride association, anyone over 35 should be a consultant, not a member</p>
<p>The only activity held at the local hall is the toddler group. It is not suitable for pre walking children as it is so filthy. The children regularly come home with splinters. No amount of cleaning will help, with the years it has been ground in - a new hall is needed. Most people book Strathy for parties etc as it is clean.</p>

STRATHY

<p>Better broadband speed. Subsidised taxi service to surgery, local taxi service</p>
<p>Repair the path along the river opposite the Strathy hall. It is a marked path to the beach but has not been maintained.</p>
<p>Strathy does not seem to have had much help from the STRATHY North Windfarm. Village officer to cover the area keeping it tidy etc...</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anything that will benefit the elderly 2. Things that are going to bring more young/families to the area 3. Make more of local landmarks
<p>Nos 19 & 20. Unable to answer as no explanation as to what a Development Trust is and who it is run by etc etc.</p>
<p>Any help to encourage people to find an income in the area</p>
<p>Communal shed Cycle/ walking path Easier access to beach Groups/ somewhere kids to have youthclub Cafe/ tearoom for locals or tourists to gather</p>

STRATHY (CONTINUED)

Wider ranging Community transport in Sutherland, especially afternoons and evenings. This can help people can get to activities if they are unable to drive there (for whatever reason). Also a bit of a relief to parents who might want a night off "unpaid taxi driving". There are local transport solutions which are good but it is obviously unviable for them to operate in evenings, could they have a little support? Development officer - good idea but I wrote neutral because I have some misgivings. The system needs to be neutral and accountable with clear, accessible communication.

More channels of communication apart from Social Media - a website and paid communication officer (even if part-time)?

Improved public transport so people can get to facilities or go out for a meal without worrying about getting a lift or taxi. That would ease pressure on families being unpaid taxi services for after school activities and help people who do not have a driving licence. Thanks to the Highland Council fare policy, taxis are extremely expensive.

4 EVENTS

4.1 STRATHY HALL COMMENTS

PERSON x 1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Supplementing NHS provision the priority, interested in care provision planning,
REGENERATION	Initiative to set up an apprenticeship scheme, as lots of skilled people in the area Like range of small and large halls, for intimate spaces and bigger events, but agrees all need some updating
TOURISM	There is an issue that more homes are becoming holiday homes and not lived in.
OTHER IDEAS	Regular community events with hot meals and a blether (like this event), as it brings everyone together, gives them a cooked meal, and helps tackle social isolation, whilst bringing the communities together.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Important
REGENERATION	More jobs need to be created, so apprenticeships and help with business start-ups is important
TOURISM	Take ownership of local facilities to improve them, with a carwash, laundry, etc., and emptying points for camper vans can empty waste,
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	It's a good idea to get a Development Officer and Trust
OTHER IDEAS	Public transport to events, as service so poor.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
REGENERATION	Strathy hall needs further refurbishment, such as the kitchen needs updating and the ceilings should be lowered so that it's warmer in colder months.
OTHER IDEAS	A Village Officer, who can help the community and keep the villages tidy, helping restore pride in the community.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
REGENERATION	The playpark needs to be renovated and should be wood instead of metal. The slipway at Portskerra needs to be finished.
OTHER IDEAS	Transport is an issue, it's not possible to get home at night, so it's more difficult to be social, and the transport is not joined up to Inverness, which is an issue. The 16-seater bus should run more frequently.

4.1 STRATHY HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x2	RESIDENTS OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	<p>More carers needed to give time to those who need it. A community handyman service, which could co-ordinate jobs that need to be done.</p> <p>Try to offer people activities so that older people are not left along in their homes</p>
REGENERATION	A number of the local halls need improvements, including energy efficiency measures. Melvich, in particular, needs a lot of work.
TOURISM	<p>Renovating Portskerra Pier, as it will bring back people to the area and help with tourism.</p> <p>Complete the slipway work to make safer for people using boats. A community café would be a welcome addition to the area and a good place for locals to meet.</p>
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	It would need to be the right people for this to work.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	<p>There should be additional care to the NHS service, covering what they do not.</p> <p>Help with basic DIY jobs should be available to all, regardless of age (payable by those who can afford it).</p>
REGENERATION	<p>Partnership working to create jobs in the area.</p> <p>Upgrades needed to the toilets, social spaces and smaller halls. Childcare provision and after-school activities are much needed in the area.</p> <p>Apprenticeships and Start-up grants are absolutely needed too. I fully agree that low-cost housing is important.</p> <p>Expanding the leisure complex and museum are also good, and the Piers would be good, as there is a growing leisure interest in them.</p>
TOURISM	I back the new signage, app and renovating Portskerra Pier
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	A great deal of public money has been spent across the area with very little benefit. Admittedly there are outstanding Development Officers but the right appointment is key.
OTHER IDEAS	My top priority would be a Village Officer

4.1 STRATHY HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Strongly agree that improved care is needed, in addition to the NHS care. Also strongly agree that help with DIY jobs is needed in the area. The meals-on-wheels would also be a very good idea
REGENERATION	Strathy Hall needs refurbishing. A new kitchen and heating – maybe lower the ceiling? Funded apprenticeships would be a good idea.
TOURISM	The community café could be linked with a meals-on-wheels service. A sign is required for Strathy beach.
PERSON x2	RESIDENTS OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	A meals-on-wheels service could be worked in conjunction with the community cafe
REGENERATION	Hall roof needs lowered. New cooker – could work as community café.
TOURISM	Community café is a good idea, but would need to find enough people. Signage for the beach, maybe a picnic area.
OTHER IDEAS	A community bus for shopping and outings. It could also be used for patient transport (by volunteers) to take people to hospital or doctors.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Carers to help with outings, shops, hairdressers, appointments, anything to them be independent.
REGENERATION	Strathy Hall needs new heating and new kitchen. Funded apprenticeships and start-up grants would be a big help. Any training, night classes.
TOURISM	Signage for beach, with picnic areas on path.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Strongly agree with improved care for elderly, where carers have more time for people. Also strongly agree with help with DIY. The meals on wheels service would be very helpful.
REGENERATION	Strathy hall needs a new kitchen heating and lower ceiling Start-up grants and funded apprenticeships would be good.
TOURISM	Strongly agree with community café, could be linked with meals-on-wheels. Signage to Strathy beach.

4.1 STRATHY HALL COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Improved care for the elderly Community minibus for everyone to benefit.
REGENERATION	Strathy Hall – cooker most important however ceiling would have to be done for heating to benefit. Apprenticeships would be good as not everyone goes to college or university.
TOURISM	Community café with meals-on-wheels service, open evenings, as shortage of eating places, themed nights Signage for Strathy beach.
PERSON x6	RESIDENTS OF STRATHY
HELP AT HOME	Care for elderly, including help with shopping and support whilst shopping Patient transport for hospital visits.
REGENERATION	Strathy village hall needs lower ceiling and heating.
TOURISM	Beach signage is needed
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Good idea but concerns about right person.
OTHER IDEAS	Community bus
PERSON x3	RESIDENTS OF STRATHY/ BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	Help with care. Help with transport – care alliance
REGENERATION	Create jobs in area, apprenticeships, etc Bigger laundry machines Improvements to halls
TOURISM	Community café, used in the evenings too
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Good idea
OTHER IDEAS	Handyman service

4.2 BETTYHILL HALL COMMENTS

PERSON x3	RESIDENTS OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	<p>Issues within the NHS mean additional care is needed. Home helps receiving training in taking blood, giving medication, etc. To keep the area clean and well-maintained, recruit a Volunteer Co-ordinator and/ or Village Officer, which could create income by the community taking over council assets and activities, such as grass-cutting.</p> <p>Meals on Wheels is a good idea. The lunch club is only one day per week, during term-time, so it would be good to extend access to food.</p>
REGENERATION	<p>Create community industries, such as polytunnels for growing, harvesting sea salt, local crafts (there are government grants to assist too).</p> <p>The Salmon station could be turned into a Visitor Centre or museum annex.</p> <p>A community buyout of the caravan site in Bettyhill, making jobs and possible apprenticeships.</p> <p>Low-cost housing is needed but there are issues with inadequate sewerage in Bettyhill.</p> <p>Apprenticeships would be good, particularly mechanical.</p> <p>Classes would be welcome, including local skills like making nets.</p>
TOURISM	<p>Facilities are needed for campervans.</p> <p>Activities are needed for children.</p> <p>Approach Aberdeen University re the old schoolhouse, to use as community building.</p> <p>In 2020 Clan Mackay will be celebrating, so plans should be made now (groups staying – accommodation, local activities, etc.), perhaps branding for Bettyhill for marketing</p> <p>Genealogy and heritage for tourists, tour guides, school tours, etc.</p>
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	<p>A good idea but it would have to be managed well.</p>
OTHER IDEAS	<p>Keep money back for the future.</p> <p>Rebuild the communities, to bring them back together again (e.g. events, community café, etc).</p> <p>Offer men's activities, such as rowing, building boats, for all ages, competitions between the villages, etc.</p>

4.2 BETTYHILL HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	The improved care, meals-on-wheels and DIY service could all be wrapped up in a single service, to extend the NHS/ HC service.
REGENERATION	Strathnaver museum needs to be expanded. Expansion of the North Coast Leisure Centre
TOURISM	New signage
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Something of this nature is crucial The question is should we go it alone in Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra or throw in our lot with the rest of the parish of Farr.
OTHER IDEAS	Long term – archaeological investigation and reconstruction. Creation of, and reprinting of, local literature. Improvement of parking at Bay points e.g. Dalcham overlooking Torrisdale Beach and at the museum, and signage
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	Strongly agree with increased care and help at home, including food service and DIY help.
REGENERATION	Agree with funded apprenticeships and start-up grants for new businesses.
TOURISM	Agree with expanding the leisure complex and museum. Also agree with new signage and the app.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	Lack of support for carers, issues with funding, means NHS service struggling to meet demand. More lunchclubs, social functions and transport for everyone, to support fulfilling lives.
REGENERATION	A learning centre for recreational and educational training, perhaps outreach for Thurso college. Scholarships or ways of encouraging people to stay in the area. Create a business hub where people can work together, structural support for businesses. More facilities for parents and children. Extend opening hours at library and other facilities. Pre-school activities and resources.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	There has to be one local organisation, non-profit making and accountable to deliver projects.

4.2 BETTYHILL HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x5	RESIDENTS OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	Social care and daycare is very important. Home helps need to have time to spend with clients, making home-cooked meals, making tea, chat time, etc. Meals on wheels an excellent idea. Also transport issues, getting people to Inverness for hospital appointments.
REGENERATION	Issue with Bettyhill hall, a ramp needed for wheelchairs. The hall also needs damp-proofing. Agree with apprenticeships and business start-up grants, and training needed in the area. Low cost housing an issue.
TOURISM	Café needs to be open longer, more of a hub. New signage is needed. Footpath needed to the beach; needs to be accessible access as currently over rocks or through dunes.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Support the idea.
OTHER IDEAS	Public facilities to be improved, such as showers for rugby team, shinty, etc. Slow down signage for up/ down hill, iron bridge, both sides. Find ways to have more local jobs, such as community ventures. Transport is an issue – ways to improve public service needed. Need to retain community members, grow the village and offer services to keep families.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	All for helping the elderly and those in need
REGENERATION	Apprenticeships and start-up grants would both benefit the area. Low cost housing needed too.
TOURISM	A licensed restaurant with outdoor area. Renovating Portskerra Pier for boat trips and fishing excursions to attract and hold visitors. An electric point to charge cars.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	A very good idea. Ideally a local person in a paid post.
OTHER IDEAS	A bridge to access Torrisdale beach, with car parking, toilets, motorhome emptying point, perhaps café?

4.2 BETTYHILL HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF BETTYHILL
REGENERATION	An apprenticeship scheme and business start-up grants are a good idea.
TOURISM	The Pier is falling apart, it needs to be repaired.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Good idea, should be local person.
OTHER IDEAS	Old Ice House (Torrisdale), could become a Visitor Centre, with help of existing museum, with gift shop. Broch – an information board is needed at cemetery.
PERSON x2	RESIDENTS OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	NHS should provide this care, but do not. Also concern if existing care homes close.
REGENERATION	Already a community bus in Bettyhill, which goes to Thurso, but it's not well-used. Perhaps use to enhance bus service. Renovate Bettyhill Pier. Infrastructure, access and signage needs to be improved. Grey water emptying points for camper vans. Disabled facilities needed, including hall. Melvich Hall is the worst hall and needs to be updated.
TOURISM	Improved parking for tourists (e.g. bays for coaches)
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Would like Development Officer, probably for Bettyhill alone. Post must be accountable and get projects completed for the area to benefit. Village Officer would be helpful.
PERSON x2	RESIDENTS OF BETTYHILL
HELP AT HOME	Is definitely needed in the area, care and help with DIY.
REGENERATION	Apprenticeships – make good on promises from years ago and have work experience and apprenticeships. Disagree with upgrades to halls, low-cost housing and expanding the leisure complex. Instead a multipurpose building should be built, with kitchen, dining room, lounge, office space, training room, and bring all organisations under one roof. Transport (Bettyhill) moves into this building too.
OTHER IDEAS	The museum should expand genealogy to entice more international visitors e.g. choose small working village or croft, based in 1800s, and make the families real with photos, dress, transport, etc. and offer promotions to those families. Hardship funding could be created for those local people who are struggling (and there are several). Conservation work – replanting trees, sensory garden.

MELVICH HALL COMMENTS

PERSON x4	RESIDENTS OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	Yes, definitely needed in the area.
REGENERATION	Everyone wanted a new hall but for it to be on a new site, stating safety reasons (too close to the road). Public toilets need renovating. Larger bins for tourists, as they always overflow. The playpark needs replacing. Childcare and after-school activities are needed. Low-cost housing for local people, especially youngsters. Softplay area would be well-used and training for baby and toddler swimming class.
TOURISM	Community café would be good for regulars to come together.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Yes, but how would it work fairly – all communities together or Melvich alone?
OTHER IDEAS	Signpost for Puffin area – permissions needed from crofter.
PERSON x3	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	Yes, very important for older generation
REGENERATION	Badly need new hall. Toilets need upgrading. Childcare provision needed, after-school activities too. Apprenticeships are needed to keep youngsters in the area, although concern about how the scheme would run. Soft-play area in leisure complex would be good.
TOURISM	Community café would be good, but signage is adequate. Phone coverage is poor in the area, so would app work?
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Good idea but Melvich would need to get our share of the money.
OTHER IDEAS	Lack of bus service, improved transport needed.
PERSON x1	
HELP AT HOME	
TOURISM	
OTHER IDEAS	

MELVICH HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x4	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	Good idea.
REGENERATION	Melvich Hall upgrade, with larger kitchen, community café, fresh meals for housebound, intergenerational social events. Safe play area for the children. The road to the beach needs upgrading and signage. Regenerate Portskerra to entice visitors. Repairs to the bridge. Apprenticeships are good idea, demand for drystone walling. Play space for Primary 1 to 6 children.
TOURISM	The toilets need updating and the toilet block near camping site would benefit from showers for surfers. CCU building will be vacated, so it could become community hub with Development Officer, Craft group room, hairdressing salon, IT skills training, etc. Turn a redundant building into take-away teabar and icecreams, run with disadvantaged youngsters.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	An officer would be a good idea, although someone outwith the area would ensure no bias.
OTHER IDEAS	Transport is an issue, perhaps a dial-a-bus with disabled access as current service practically non-existent.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	Meals on wheels would be a great local service and could be run from care home kitchen (if it's closing). It could be used to make intergenerational hub, focusing on elderly.
REGENERATION	Keep jobs and generate more jobs, so apprenticeships would be a good start.
TOURISM	Tourism is key to the area, so the community café, renovating the Pier, etc, all important.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
REGENERATION	The slipway needs to be completed and the Pier needs to be renovated, and include facilities for tourists and local users. The hall probably needs rebuilding, but at the minimum needs renovating and updating heating, etc.
OTHER IDEAS	Start to take over HC responsibilities, to generate jobs and keep facilities open.

MELVICH HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	The NHS service is very poor
REGENERATION	Community café is a good idea
OTHER IDEAS	Public transport is failing community, look at improving this. Not enough help to start small businesses currently.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	Definitely back all of the care ideas, as elderly often wait a long time for help, and fresh meals a really good idea.
REGENERATION	The hall definitely needs improving. Childcare and after-school also need to be better. Low-cost housing is good. Both the museum and leisure complex need expanding. Training in the area would be helpful.
TOURISM	The community café is definitely a good idea and I imagine it would be popular. Renovating Portskerra Pier would be helpful as the fishing community is growing and very active now.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Really good idea, I back this.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
REGENERATION	Hall needs to be refurbished or rebuilt. Definitely needs a new kitchen. A swing-park for the youngsters – anything to help keep or bring young families into the area. A pop-up café is already in existence.
TOURISM	Renovating Portskerra Pier would help tourism.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Good idea to have a Development Officer.
OTHER IDEAS	Anything to keep families in the area.
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH
HELP AT HOME	The care home is closing, making this more important.
REGENERATION	Melvich hall needs big improvements.
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	This is a good idea and recruiting a Development Officer would help the area.
OTHER IDEAS	Public transport is difficult, maybe a minibus that can collect people?

MELVICH HALL COMMENTS (continued)

PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH	
HELP AT HOME	Folk should be supported to stay in their own homes as long as possible, and then have access to sheltered housing in village. Meals on wheels could be useful.	
REGENERATION	Melvich hall and facilities are very poor and need improved. Childcare and after-school activities are needed to help local working parents. Support apprenticeships although it must not be too time-consuming or difficult for businesses. Low-cost housing is supported as long as locals work in the area and they do not become absentee landlords. Increasing local facilities, such as the leisure centre, enhance the area and would be beneficial. Training and support should be available for small businesses.	
TOURISM	The community café, combined with improved village hall and soft-play area for local toddler groups would be good. Supportive of renovating Portskerra Pier, should also be looking at having pushchair-friendly access to beach.	
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	Supportive of this idea.	
OTHER IDEAS	Support resilience in local community, such as mountain rescue teams, first responders, etc.	
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH	
HELP AT HOME	Lunch clubs and afternoon clubs for the elderly. DIY help is good, there is already someone, so could they get funding?	
REGENERATION	Pop up lunches have worked well, so perhaps site a community café in hall. Hall needs to be improved, along with garden outside. Children's swing-park.	
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	A paid post for a Development Officer, who could help with projects like Portskerra Pier.	
OTHER IDEAS	Local transport, like a minibus for events and clubs.	
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH	SCORE
HELP AT HOME	The NHS should be doing this. However, is the money is used fiscally responsibly, then back things to make community healthier.	1
REGENERATION	Hall needs to be refurbished.	
TOURISM	There needs to be more money used on infrastructure, form partnerships with different strands or strategies, to aid tourism. Needs to tie in with national groups for harbour, coastal path, etc.	2

MELVICH HALL COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

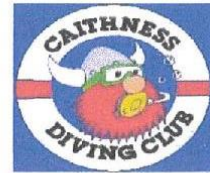
DEVELOPMENT TRUST	One Development Officer per area, not one for all three.	3
OTHER IDEAS	If Sinclair Court closes then the facilities should be used, but different activities from those in hall.	
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH	SCORE
HELP AT HOME	All care is needed in the area and the DIY service would be good for older people.	
REGENERATION	Melvich Hall needs improving. The swing-park needs to be redone. Kids have nothing to do, so after-school provision, I would suggest a wee indoor sports facility, for all-year round sports, and expanding the leisure complex. Low-cost housing is needed, as locals are being priced out of the market. Training would be very helpful. Transport is poor so a community bus and/ or subsidised taxis to the train or bus stations and shops.	3 1 2
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH	SCORE
HELP AT HOME	With Melvich CCU about to close, could care and food service operate from there? Excellent idea for DIY service	1, 2
REGENERATION	Renovate the hall as first part of regeneration. Support apprenticeships and training. Museum could expand to include heritage and archaeological unit.	
TOURISM	Community café is part of hall plans. New signage is needed to the beach. Renovating the pier, there are fewer fisherman but it will pick-up again.	
OTHER IDEAS	Transport is an issue, with poor transport links. This needs to be tackled.	3
PERSON x1	RESIDENT OF MELVICH	SCORE
HELP AT HOME	Lunch-clubs or meals on wheels. Outings for the elderly. Help with DIY is a must, although there is one now but no-one really knows where to ask for help.	3

MELVICH HALL COMMENTS (CONTINUED)

<p>REGENERATION</p>	<p>The hall and MC Unit badly need work. The bridge at the beach and road to the beach also need work. Youth clubs for primary school and higher, a nursery. DIY apprenticeships and local building too. Help for people with learning difficulties to find work. Local hall, maybe include gym, hairdressers? Classes in computer training, needlework classes.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>TOURISM</p>	<p>Wood be good to attract visitors. Need for takeaway so café could help. More signage to beach and coming into and out of village.</p>	
<p>DEVELOPMENT TRUST</p>	<p>A Development Officer is a great idea and perhaps each CC would be their deputies. This person would promote and get things done.</p>	<p>2</p>

3.4A LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR PORTSKERRA PIER AND SLIPWAY

Caithness Diving Club
c/o 21 Riverview,
Thurso,
Caithness.
KW14 7QJ



31st July 2018

Lairg & District Learning Centre,
School House,
Main Street,
Lairg.
IV27 4DD.

Ref. Portskerra Harbour Association.

Dear Sir or Madam,

Caithness Diving Club, based in Thurso, is a regular user of the facilities at Portskerra where we have been undertaking regular diving for the past 50 years.

The Association have asked me to write in support of the recent works and to express the Club's views on support of future work.

Please find the text below which the Club has compiled.

Best Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Edmunds".

Maurice Edmunds
Secretary, Caithness Diving Club.
BSAC Branch 0119.

3.4A LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR PORTSKERRA PIER AND SLIPWAY (continued)

Caithness Diving Club have been regular users of the Portskerra slipway for the past 50 years. The underwater geography and features immediately surrounding the slipway and reef are recognised by the British Sub Aqua Club as being one of the top ten shore-dive sites in the UK.

The Club dives there throughout the year, we have 20 diving members who regularly use the slipway. Portskerra is also a very safe and sheltered site where we carry out training of new divers. Prior to the undertaking of the work to elongate the slipway and create a landing pier, access for diving was very tide dependent and careful planning was required to ensure safe egress from the water, particularly for trainee and inexperienced divers.

The slipway also provides access to several world-class dive locations between Portskerra and Strathy Point but these require the launching and retrieving of diving boats. In the past, bringing trailered boats to Portskerra, together with the minimal space for parking often lead to significant congestion but the recent works to create/tidy-up the parking area at the top of the slipway has resulted in a far better situation. The club has 3 dive boats we use from the slipway and this has been mainly facilitated by the works undertaken so far. To further enhance the safety of recovery of divers and boats, and to facilitate the use of our principal, larger boat, the Club would very much like to see the existing pier lengthened and heightened such that boats can be retrieved at any state of the tide.

If the Club can provide any further information in support of this very useful and beneficial work, please contact me at mpedmunds@btinternet.com.

Maurice Edmunds
Secretary, Caithness Diving Club.

3.4A LETTERS OF SUPPORT FOR PORTSKERRA PIER AND SLIPWAY (continued)

The Northern District Salmon Fishery Board

The Firs, Berriedale, Caithness, KW7 6HD

Email: ndsfbclerk@gmail.com; Website: <http://northern.dsfb.org.uk>

2nd August 2018

Your ref:

To Whom it may Concern

Northern District Salmon Fishery Board: Support for Portskerra Harbour Association

I write on behalf of the Northern District Salmon Fishery Board to confirm our support of the Portskerra Harbour Association in their bid for funding to further improve the Portskerra slipway and harbour area.

The Northern DSFB is a frequent user of the Portskerra slipway, often launching our coastal sea patrols from this harbour to undertake deterrent and enforcement patrols of the Northern Board coastline. The improvements made to date to the slipway have greatly improved the accessibility of the slipway and the committee's plans for further improvements will allow us greater flexibility in launching coastal patrols in the future.

The Northern Board provided some financial support to the upgrade of the slipway already undertaken and we would fully support any further funding applications. The committee which oversees the Portskerra harbour improvements are very pro-active and committed to improving this important facility.

Kind regards,

Yours faithfully,



Mrs Alexa MacAuslan
Clerk, NDSFB

3.4B EMAILS HIGHLIGHTING HOUSING ISSUES

Dear Jane,

Following on from a telephone call to one of your colleagues last week, I'm emailing to highlight my view that there is a need for affordable housing in the Bettyhill area. I work as a fostering and adoption social worker covering Caithness and Sutherland, and currently live in a local authority tenancy with my young daughter. Prior to securing my current tenancy I struggled to find and sustain accommodation on a private rental basis. Part of this struggle was due to the high number of properties in the area that sit vacant due to being holiday homes, or that are let on a short term holiday basis during the season, as opposed to providing long term let opportunities for local residents.

I have been keen to purchase a property since moving into the area five years ago however have not managed to achieve this as yet, despite having a deposit saved. This is due to the scarcity of properties available on the market at any given time as well as the tendency for these to be houses and/or traditional cottages which are out often with my price range as a single person. I am also aware of at least three other families with children who have been looking for more suitable and affordable housing options, and i am sure that there are likely to be many more.

As a bit of further background; I contacted Highlands and Islands Small Community Housing Trust a few years ago in order to see whether they would be able to assist in this area. We established that they owned some land in the area, and they advised that they would seek to provide affordable housing on the site. To date this has not been successful despite a number of attempts to make the funding work; initially they sought to provide the opportunity on a self build loan fund basis, and laterally were planning to provide homes on a rent to buy scheme. I can give more details if required, but suffice to say that to date both have proven untenable due to the costs of service installation. The Housing Trust are now looking into further options, which may or may not prove successful. If it is not, I wonder whether there would be any provision for the wind farm fund to be utilised in this area. Or, even if not for this project, i am hoping to highlight that there is a need in the community for further affordable housing options.

I would also like to highlight that as a local resident and parent in Bettyhill with a vested interest in the community, I am open and willing to be involved in the wind farm fund discussions in any way I can be. I also have an interest in any future business opportunities that may present which would be of benefit to both the community as a whole and thus my own family.

Yours Faithfully,
Jacqueline Gilmour

FOLLOWING ON FROM THE EMAIL ABOVE:

Hi Jane,

Yes I would be more than willing to contact the families I am aware of and establish whether they themselves will share information with you, or whether they will allow me to do it on their behalf.

The details for the contact I have at the Housing Trust are below, I have already spoken with her about the email I was sending, and she has said that she would be very willing to hear from anyone with regard to the wind farm and any support that may be available to them,

Morven Taylor
Communities Co-Ordinator
The Highlands Small Communities Housing Trust
[7 Ardross Terrace](#)
[Inverness](#)
[IV3 5NQ](#)
[01463 233 549](#)
Morven.taylor@hscht.co.uk

Thanks very much Jane,

Jacqueline.

3.4B EMAIL FROM SOCIAL WORKER'S MOTHER

Housing Bettyhill

Hi Jane,

My daughter has asked that I contact you to advise of the housing issues we often face in our small community. Please see information below for my own experiences,

I am a sixty one year old disabled woman living in a link housing tenancy in Bettyhill. I have lived in my current tenancy since 2013. I previously owned my own two storey home also within the viallge, but had to sell it when I was forced to retire from my work on medical grounds. After selling my home I was unable to secure a suitable property for myself. I was in a position to buy a small bungalow or rent a property, but none of these were available at the time. I placed myself on the local authority waiting list whilst continuing to look for other options available to me. Due to the lack of options, I was forced to purchase a caravan on the local site, which only caters for caravans that are owned rather than rented. Whilst living there I struggled with access, and cold weather conditions in the cooler months. I lived in the caravan for just over six months, before the site closed for the end of the season, entailing that the services were shut off. Fortunately at the last minute I was able to rent a property privately before my current tenancy then became available some months later.

Thank you

Jaqueline Gilmour

Affordable Housing

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to advise of my belief that there is a need for more housing options in the Bettyhill area. I am a local business owner and run the 'Bettyhill Garage'. I currently live in a two bedroom local authority tenancy with my partner and our three children. We have lived in this tenancy for 9 years. To the best of my knowledge there are only a few three bedroom properties in the village; all of which are occupied by established families in the community.

I missed the opportunity to purchase my current home with the council's 'right to buy scheme' due to not been in a position to purchase at the time. I subsequently enquired as to whether I could do this retrospectively, with a view to then building an extension to prevent us from being overcrowded. I have recently been advised that I will not be able to purchase the house due to missing the 'cut off date', and I have also been advised that I will not be allowed to build an extension on the property whilst I am a local authority tenant.

My family and I would be very interested in any future affordable housing options that would better suit our needs, whether this be on a tenancy or home owner basis.

Regards
Anthony Solomon

3.4B CASE STUDY 3 FOR LOW COST HOUSING

Hi Jane.

I was asked by Jacqueline to send you an email highlighting the need for more affordable housing in the Bettyhill area.

I am a local Bettyhill resident and live in a two bedroomed housing association tenancy with my husband, seven year old son and four month old baby girl. I have been resident in the village all of my life. My husband works as a local postman and I work in the local care home and also with local cleaning company, clean bees. We are currently managing living in a two bedroomed property by having the baby sleep in our bedroom, however this is becoming increasingly challenging and we would hope in the near future to be able to secure a three bedroomed home for our family. We are aware that there are not any local authority three bedroomed tenancies available, nor likely to become available. We would consider renting privately however again there are no suitable options, whilst most of these types of properties are used as short term holiday lets. We would also consider purchasing a home, however this would need to be affordable for us, and most of the properties that come up for sale are out-with our budget. We have been made aware of the 'highlands small communities housing trust' plans to build two affordable properties on a 'rent to buy' basis, and have applied to be considered for one. However, I am aware that to date the housing trust have not been successful in their attempts to build due to financial constraints. I would like to advise of my belief that there is a need for more varied and suitable affordable housing options in the Bettyhill area.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Sutherland

3.4C ALTNAHARRA EMAIL

Dear Sir or Madam

As a rate payer in Altnaharra, I was sent this email with your contact details. I can't make your open meetings but would like to make a few points that I would appreciate if you could send to the right people. I have no specialist knowledge and recognise that your committee has more experience but thought it better to say something than nothing.

- as the value increases, it is important to avoid spending on lots of small things when a few larger investments might be more sustainable
- there is a danger of reinventing the wheel - there are similar organisations in existence such as Fort Augustus and Glenmoriston Community Company FAGCC (website. [Home Page](#)).

Speaking to a colleague who is involved there, it is clear that much can be learnt from others.

- what projects will generate their own income for longer than the life of the fund?

As a project, can we find a way to run a bus from Strathy and Durness to Tongue to Lairg to join the up train? Even if just the summer months it doesn't help Altnaharra having no public transport left

Good luck

Andrew

3.4C RESPONSE TO REQUEST FOR ALTNAHARRA MEETING

As an estate owner, farmer and employer I find it difficult to complete the questionnaire.... It is difficult to arrange a meeting Altnaharra as we are such a simple community. I have already shared my sadness that you can't get public transport from Tongue to Lairg/Tain via Altnaharra, the Royal Mail seem to not take parcels from Lairg's Bridge End Stores and now Tesco don't deliver even on a click and collect basis. Those would be my first three requests for a community benefit and two only require political pressure not ££