



TWEEDSMUIR

COMMUNITY
ACTION PLAN
2017 – 2022

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INTRODUCTION

TWEEDSMUIR COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

This Community Action Plan summarises community views about:

- Tweedsmuir now
- the vision for the future of Tweedsmuir
- the issues that matter most to the community
- our priorities for projects and action.

The plan will be our guide for what we - as a community - try to make happen over the next 5 years.

WORKING TOGETHER

The preparation of the plan has been organised by the Tweedsmuir Community Action Planning Steering Group. It was set up by Tweedsmuir Community Council and brought together representatives from a range of local groups and interests. We have been supported in carrying out the work by the STAR Development Group.

This plan will help us to develop our joint priority projects and make representation on behalf of the community on the issues that matter most to our residents, organisations and local businesses.

LOCAL PEOPLE HAVE THEIR SAY

The Action Plan has been informed by extensive community engagement carried out over a five month period from April 2017 to July 2017.

The process involved:

- stakeholder conversations - with community organisations, schools, church, local businesses, landowners, service providers and public agencies;
- carrying out a community views survey of all households;
- preparing a community profile detailing facts and figures about the community;
- organising a Community Futures Event.

75 COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY FORMS WERE RETURNED FROM OUR 86 HOUSES

OVER 40 PEOPLE REPRESENTATIVE OF DIFFERENT INTERESTS AND ORGANISATIONS TOOK PART IN STAKEHOLDER CONVERSATIONS

43 PEOPLE ATTENDED THE COMMUNITY FUTURES EVENT

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART



OUR COMMUNITY NOW



We have summarised below the main facts and figures from the Community Profile and some of the views from the Community Views Survey. Full copies of these reports are available from the steering group on request.

TWEEDSMUIR COMMUNITY PROFILE 2017 SUMMARY

LOCATION

Tweedsmuir Community Council area is a scattered rural settlement lying on either side of the A701 between Broughton (6 miles away) and Moffat (14 miles away). There is a small cluster of houses at Tweedsmuir village itself built around the Parish Church on the banks of the Tweed. The source of the River Tweed is in the area and the River flows through it parallel to the road, to the east there are two reservoirs up in the hills that characterise the area.

LOCAL ECONOMY

Features of the local economy include:

- High rates of self employment
- A relatively high percentage of people still involved in Agriculture and Forestry compared to Scottish Borders and Scotland
- A relatively high percentage of people employed in professional, scientific, and technical activities.

POPULATION

The population is approximately 180. The population make up shows:

- A lower percentage of children and young people
- A lower percentage of pensioners
- A higher percentage of working age people.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

- Currently 11 children from Tweedsmuir attend Broughton Primary School, 2 go to Preschool, and 5 attend Peebles High School – plus a further 3 are at private schools elsewhere.
- Bananas Playgroup, a registered charity, runs the nursery at Broughton Primary School in partnership with Scottish Borders Council
- There is one childminder in Tweedsmuir.

HOUSING

There are estimated to be around 86 houses in the Tweedsmuir Community Council area. The majority of these are owner occupied with a few tied or rented houses houses.





HEALTH AND CARE

Resources and facilities include:

- The establishment of the First Response team for the area
- The availability of public defibrillators (at village crossroads and hopefully soon at the village hall)
- Local community resilience co-ordinators
- Ambulance Service in Peebles, Biggar, Dumfries
- Cottage Hospitals at Moffat and Biggar
- Main hospitals in Dumfries, Wishaw, and Newton St. Boswells
- Upper Tweed Hospital Transport Scheme with volunteer drivers
- Mountain Rescue in Moffat
- General practice services in Biggar

COMMUNITY

Community organisations:

- Tweedsmuir Community Council
- Tweedsmuir Community Company
- Tweedsmuir Village Hall committee
- Tweedsmuir Parish Church

Community events include:

- Two Scots Evenings (in January)
- Halloween Party
- Christmas Party
- New Year's Dance
- Clay Pigeon Shooting on Boxing Day
- Games of rounders in the Crook Gardens and Family BBQ's
- Upper Tweed Croquet Competition
- Newcomers Party in Broughton

ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

Some of our valued assets and opportunities include:

- The River Tweed – for fishing and swimming – and proposals for participation in a Landscape Partnership Scheme 'Connecting the Tweed'
- The Talla and Fruid Reservoirs
- Talla and Gameshope – The Borders Forest Trust land and native woodland restoration of an upland sheep farm
- The Jubilee Road as a circular walk that had stunning views now the trees had been cleared
- The Thief's Road – old drove road
- The wildlife e.g. deer, badgers, ospreys, red squirrels, otters, bird life
- The use of the area for through road cycles (Ride to the Sun, Tour of the Borders and cycle club outings) and the C2C Scotland Cycle Route linking the Solway with the Firth
- The recognition by SNH of the area to the east as a Scottish Wildland Area (one of only two south of the Central Belt) and of potential Dark Skies designation
- The area being more recognized as the 'Southern Highlands' with Broadlaw the highest hill in the Borders
- Interesting heritage linked to: The Crook Inn (a C-listed building and on the Historic Scotland 'Buildings at Risk' Register); Tweedsmuir Kirk (a B listed building) and Kirkyard; the Covenanters: Standing Stone; Oliver Castle; the building of the reservoirs and railway; John Buchan (Lord Tweedsmuir).

OUR COMMUNITY NOW / LIKES

COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY

LIKES	% OF RESPONSES
ENVIRONMENT River Tweed, changing seasons, good for cycling and walking Scenery, space, air, the river / I enjoy walking from my front door and hiking up the valleys – the views from the tops are breath-taking / Proximity to wild land	68%
COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND THE PEOPLE The strong sense of community and that help and support are there if you need it / A great community, friendly, helpful and inclusive / Like living within a friendly and welcoming community / Neighbours helping each other out	55%
NATURE OF THE PLACE (PEACEFUL, QUIET, SAFE) Sense of peace and quiet, low crime / Peace and quiet – plenty of elbow room / Good place to raise a family – safe	43%
LOCATION Proximity to Edinburgh and reasonable range of service in local towns / Central in the South of Scotland / Rural setting which is both close to nature and still not that far away from urban areas – the best of both worlds	9%
HERITAGE There is a lot of history attached to the area / Interesting and diverse history	5%
COMMUNITY GROUPS, FACILITIES, ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS I really enjoy the events put on by TCC – the raft race and music festivals in particular / Forward thinking and progressive community groups / All age community events / The village hall	4%
SERVICES AND INFRASTRUCTURE Good local schools / We now have a superb 4G mobile signal (at least on O2)	3%

OUR COMMUNITY NOW / DISLIKES

COMMUNITY VIEWS SURVEY

DISLIKES	% OF RESPONSES
TRAFFIC AND ROADS Lorries through village on roads never meant to carry such loads. They are a danger to motorists and pedestrians alike / A701 too fast – no alternatives for getting about as too dangerous to walk or cycle / Poor conditions of roads particularly A701 / Shocking quality of the road along through the village and up to Fruid	57%
TRANSPORT Lack of transport links to Broughton for onward travel to Biggar and Peebles / Lack of public transport – cost of taxis after a night out / Lack of public transport – young and old depend on this / No public transport – if ability to drive is lost – must move	37%
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND UTILITIES Poor reception for mobile networks and broadband / Lack of broadband access – I run a business from home – internet is crucial / Wi fi and mobile signal are terrible	35%
REMOTENESS AND ACCESS TO SERVICES Very isolated from other communities / So far from school and friends / Length of day for children travelling to Peebles High School / Had a shop, post office, pub, petrol station, school, bus route – all have disappeared / Having an ML postcode	31%
COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND GATHERING PLACES There is no central focus or village centre / I have a sense that people do not meet casually as much as they used to and that some residents feel more isolated / Lack of local amenities – particularly the Crook Inn / Since the pub closed – community cohesion has decreased	29%
ENVIRONMENT & ACCESS Hemmed in – the road is a danger and responsible land access is at best tolerated / Impact of commercial forestry on the area / Too much tree planting / Increasing wind turbines / Wind farm threat / Limited local walks or cycling routes	26%
LOCAL ECONOMY & JOBS Lack of employment opportunities especially for the young	3%
HOUSING Houses sold for second homes	3%

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF TWEEDSMUIR



We asked people what they hoped for their community by 2027, their vision for Tweedsmuir in 10 years time. These comments have shaped the following vision statements:

A VIBRANT HUB AT ITS HEART

Social – community – hospitality – recreation – arts and crafts – local produce – local business

WELL CONNECTED - DIGITALLY AND PHYSICALLY

Superfast broadband - transport - safe local paths networks

KEPT WHAT WE VALUE

Our community spirit and peace and quiet retained



A WELCOMING PLACE TO VISIT

Places to stop – good hospitality – good information and signposting – places to walk, cycle and spend time by the river and learn about wildlife and wildplaces.

MAIN STRATEGIES AND PRIORITIES

These are the main strategies and priorities the community and its organisations will focus on over the next 5 years – working in partnership with public agencies, landowners, local businesses, and with other third sector organisations and supporters.

THEME 1: LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

The loss of the Crook Inn has had a significant negative impact on Tweedsmuir. As well as an important social and community hub it was a source of employment and income into the local economy. It was a place where locals gathered and where visitors could stop – it was a focal point that drew people to the area. The community initiative to reinstate the Inn was the top priority in the survey and at the community event. A new Crook Inn would provide visitor facilities (including a range of accommodation), be a base for local services and businesses – as well as creating local employment opportunities and a vital social gathering place for the community.

In general the community felt that it could promote tourism by being a more ‘welcoming place’ for visitors and this should include improved facilities and infrastructure and interpretation of its environmental and heritage assets as well as developing local websites.

The area also lacks superfast broadband and this has a detrimental effect on its ability to support, retain and attract local small businesses. The Community Council is already looking at how to deliver this infrastructure improvement – and the importance of doing so was amply confirmed by the community through the Community Action Plan Process.

Main priorities:

- Develop the Crook Inn
- Superfast Broadband
- Visitor facilities, interpretation and information

THEME 2: ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

There was a strong desire to see the development of walking and cycling networks through the area. This was as much to do with making the area safe for local people and to enable them to access community facilities and neighbouring villages and services (‘functional access’) as it was to encourage visitors to enjoy and explore the area (‘recreational access’). Walking and cycling routes were aptly described as being needed to ‘help develop the area’ and needed to ‘make the most of where we live’.

Throughout the community engagement people were keen to highlight the wide range of environmental assets in the area – the River Tweed (including the source of the river), the local hills (the ‘Southern Highlands’!), and local wildlife and access to wild lands. Similarly the area was recognised locally as being rich in history – with standing stones, the Church, links with Covenanters, and the building of the reservoirs. It was thought that much more could be done to highlight these assets and preserve and promote them. The development of proposals for a Landscape Partnership for the River Tweed, the Borders Forest Trust restoration of Talla and Gameshope, and the recognition by SNH of the nearby area as one of Scotland’s Wild Lands – are all opportunities to work with in the coming years.

The survey helped to highlight a range of ideas and opportunities to make the area more sustainable in the future. Ideas included hydro and solar schemes, local produce, and increased local recycling opportunities.

Main priorities:

- Safe walking and cycling networks
- Making more of environmental and heritage assets
- Sustainability initiatives
- Village enhancement – the village crossroads



THEME 3: TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

Since the demise of the post bus and the loss of the weekend service between Dumfries and Edinburgh there is now no public transport serving Tweedsmuir. The lack of any public transport prevents young people being able to get to activities and services in other places, while at the other end of the age spectrum some older people have had to move out of the area when they are less able to drive themselves.

The community would like to explore the possibility of having their own community mini bus – not only for local use to access nearby villages and towns for activities, services and events but also as a way of bringing people into the area (e.g. a community mini bus could in the future have a role to play in bringing people in to a refurbished and reopened Crook Inn).

There is also a desire to lobby for improved public transport services in general and in particular to improve access to education (for secondary school children going to and from Peebles) and health services (for prescriptions, doctor appointments and hospitals).

There has been a decline in some health services over the years and the community would like to ensure these are not eroded any further. There is also concern that falling numbers of young children might affect the future of Bananas Nursery at Broughton Primary. One of the slightly aggravating issues that affects the area is that it rather bizarrely has a Motherwell Postcode! It was suggested during the consultation that it would be worth lobbying to have this changed if possible. Negative effects include higher insurance premiums for cars and houses as well as impacting on decisions about service provision.

'Our household and car insurance went up 50% when we moved 15 miles fro EH46 to ML12!'

Main priorities:

- Community Mini Bus
- Improved public transport
- Lobby for good and health and education services
- Lobby for postcode change

THEME 4: ROADS, PARKING AND TRAFFIC

The A701 is seen locally as a dangerous road – a major dislike for residents in the area – compounded by lack of safe off road walking and cycling routes. Current concerns include the growing volume and speed of traffic and in particular log lorries and other large vehicles on the small road.

Improved parking was needed to encourage people to stop in the area – and improvements mentioned included the need to make lay byes more attractive and easy to stop in, and to develop parking at the village hall and at the village crossroads.

There was also a desire to see roads improved with particular mention made of Fruid.

Main priorities:

- Traffic calming and road safety
- Improve parking
- Improve roads

THEME 5: COMMUNITY AND RECREATION

The site across from the Crook Inn was seen as a good location for sports and recreational facilities that could be used by locals and visitors alike.

There was a local demand expressed in the consultation for a football area, play facilities, a 'pump and jump' mountain bike area to practice skills on, and to improve access to swimming in the River Tweed. It was also hoped that consideration could be given to the provision of a Multi Use Games Area that could be used for football, tennis and other sports.

There was thought to be an opportunity to improve the Village Hall further (e.g. windows and car parking) and with additional volunteer support make more use of it for informal drop in activities (e.g. occasional café, pub nights). This might help provide a place for some social activities and visitor hospitality prior to the Crook Inn developments taking shape. There was a recognition that community events were important in bringing the community together – and support for them should continue so they can be sustained and grown.

Main Priorities

- Develop the Crook Inn
- Sports and recreation
- Improve village hall
- Support community events



ACTION

A guide to the first steps to be taken

THEME 1 LOCAL ECONOMY AND TOURISM

PRIORITIES	WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN
Develop the Crook Inn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support work of Tweedsmuir Community Company• Continue to develop and fund proposals for Phase 1 – to make a small but significant start (Bunkhouse and Café)• Keep developing proposals for Phase 2 and the restoration of the Inn• Support the development of land adjacent to the Inn for visitor facilities and local sports and recreation (camping, camper van site, play area, football pitch goals etc.)
Action led by	Tweedsmuir Community Company
Superfast Broadband	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the work of the Tweedsmuir Community Council sub group to deliver superfast broadband to all households.
Action led by	Tweedsmuir Community Council
Visitor facilities and interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Agree environment and heritage assets to be interpreted• Design interpretation• Agree need for visitor facilities and infrastructure in the short and long term (e.g. path networks, role of the village hall, village crossroads, lay byes, and a re-established Crook Inn)• Proposals should include plans to make the most of the River Tweed including the area's 'unique selling point' as the source of the Tweed.• Explore need to upgrade local websites
Action led by	<i>Joint working involving Tweedsmuir Community Company, Tweedsmuir Community Council, Tweedsmuir Village Hall Committee, landowners (including Borders Forest Trust), local residents with interest in environment and heritage</i>

THEME 2 ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

PRIORITIES	WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN
Walking and Cycling networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop functional paths for safe local walking and cycling e.g. between village, hall, Crook Inn, Broughton • Develop recreational path networks for locals and visitors to enjoy walking and cycling in and through the area
Develop opportunities linked to our environmental and heritage assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make more of the River Tweed (e.g. better interpretation of source of the River Tweed, better access to Carlowse Brig and the Riggs, restock upper reaches, better walking/cycling routes along the Tweed from source to sea) • More interpretation of environmental and heritage assets • More ways to experience hills, river, forests, wildlife (e.g. organised walks/cycling; education and volunteering opportunities)
Sustainability initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore ideas put forward in the community views survey • Identify some priorities and explore further with the aim of improving the carbon footprint of the community over the next 5 years.
Village enhancement at the village crossroads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement plans for the creation of an attractive village crossroads as a focal point in the village with parking and interpretation for visitors. The development could also include attractive planting, and access to the River for swimming and include a small picnic area.
Action led by	<p><i>New joint working group to look at ways of developing and interpreting environment and heritage assets in the area – and working with the proposed Landscape Partnership, Borders Forest Trust, SNH, Sustrans, Upper Tweed Railway Path Network, Tweedlove, Cycle Clubs etc.</i></p>



THEME 3 TRANSPORT AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

PRIORITIES	WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN
A community minibus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how other communities have funded and operate community mini buses • Undertake community mini bus feasibility study for Tweedsmuir • If feasibility study positive, raise funds for bus
Improve public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and lobby for improvements to the existing public transport services (this should include looking at the potential for Demand Responsive Transport, improving the service to and from Peebles for High School.)
Maintaining and improving health and education services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying for the maintenance and improvement to existing Health Services • Trying to secure the future of Bananas Nursery in Broughton
Lobby for change to ML post code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for change to postcode
<i>Action led by</i>	<i>Tweedsmuir Community Council</i>





THEME 4 ROADS, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

PRIORITIES	WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN
Traffic Calming and Road safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community proposals and agree priorities for traffic calming and road safety • Make representation on these proposals and lobby for their implementation • Proposals should take account of the need to reduce negative impact of log lorries, speeding on the A701 and local small roads, safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians, including safe access to bus stops and the school pick up point.
Improve Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement proposals for improved parking (including litter bins) e.g. improved lay byes, more parking at the village hall and village crossroads.
Improve roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobby for improvements to the A701 and smaller roads in the area • Improvements to the A701 should include road surfaces, road markings and white lines.
<i>Action led by</i>	<i>Tweedsmuir Community Council – working with Village Hall Committee, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, Scottish Borders Council, logging contractors.</i>

THEME 5 COMMUNITY AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

PRIORITIES	WHAT ACTION SHOULD BE TAKEN
Develop play and sports facilities at the Crook Inn and elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support plans for more recreational facilities on the land adjacent to the Crook Inn • Work with young people to develop sports facilities (e.g. pump and jump track, football pitch, swimming area) • Encourage and support recreation for all ages and abilities
Village hall developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the village hall committee to implement improvements e.g. car parking, windows, improved water supply, renewable energy to reduce costs. • Look at ways of increasing use of the hall including for informal drop in activities (café, pub, Sky TV) for locals and visitors (particularly as an interim measure before the Crook Inn developments start to take place).
Support community events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to organise and support community events • Look at ways of expanding events in the future
<i>Action led by</i>	<i>Joint working between Tweedsmuir Community Company and Tweedsmuir Village Hall Committee involving young people and other volunteers interested in sports, recreation, community facilities and events.</i>

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The priorities in this action plan will be taken forward by our local community groups working together with our public, private and third sector partners.

If you would like to get involved or for further information please contact:

Tweedsmuir Community Council

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Address: Polmood Lodge, Tweedsmuir,
Biggar, ML12 6QN
E-mail: parkerpolmood@gmail.com
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KEEPING THE ACTION PLAN UP TO DATE:

We will organise a Community Action plan Annual Review meeting once a year to report back to the Community on how the plan is progressing and to see what has been achieved and what more needs to be done.

Tweedsmuir Community Council website:
<http://tweedsmuircommunitycouncil.org.uk>



COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

2017 – 2022

This Community Action Plan sets out the priorities for the development of Tweedsmuir over the next 5 years as determined by the community through an extensive process of community engagement carried out over a four month period from April – July 2017.

The Plan contains

- A summary of our Community Profile
- Our main likes and dislikes as identified in our Community Views Survey
- Our Vision Statement for the future of Tweedsmuir
- The main themes and priorities for action
- Information on how you can stay in touch and get involved.

The Plan is for the whole community and is jointly owned by all the organisations and individuals that took part in its preparation. We will be working together to ensure its implementation over the next 5 years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Tweedsmuir Community Action Plan Steering Group would like to thank:

All the local people and organisations that took part in developing this Community Action Plan
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STAR Development Group for working with us to prepare this Community Action Plan

