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Douglas and Glespin

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2024 – 2029

# Community Action Plan



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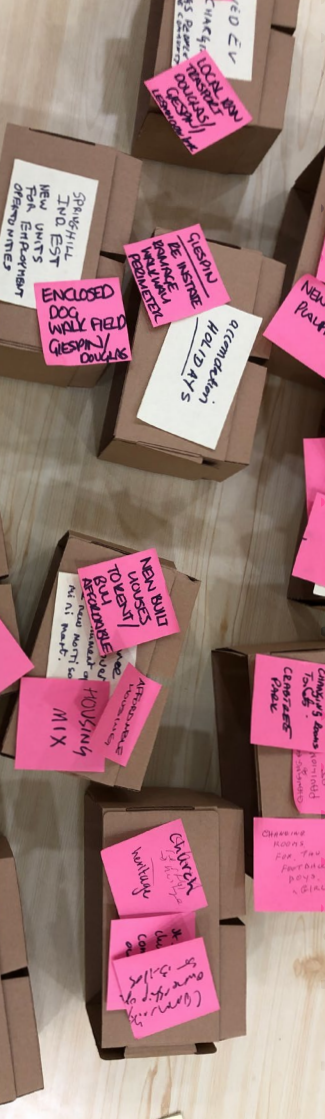
# What is a community action plan?

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A Community Action Plan sets out the priorities and initiatives that local people want to see happening in their area. It is the result of a community coming together to identify its needs, understand its ambition and agree positive action to be taken which will make the area a better place to live, work, play and visit.

This is the second Community Action Plan for our area. The first, produced in 2016, included neighbouring community Coalburn. This plan was commissioned by Douglas and Glespin Community Council on behalf of the community and covers a 5 year period from 2024 – 2029. The development of this Community Action Plan was supported by the Hagshaw Trust.





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# Preparing this Plan

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**This second Action Plan is the result of extensive community engagement and research carried out over a four-month period between October 2023 and February 2024. The process involved:**

- A community survey available online and from St. Bride's Community Centre and Glespin Community Hall.
- An Open Public Meeting at St. Bride's Community Centre and a stall at the annual Christmas Fayre.
- A series of interviews and group work with a range of community groups, activists, local businesses and primary school children.
- Interviews with public sector representatives and service providers.
- Preparation of a community profile detailing facts and figures about our community and the assets we already have in our village.
- An analysis of future initiatives and developments.
- Feedback on the draft of the final themes, priorities, and actions.

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# Preparing this Plan

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**214**

survey responses on behalf of 621 people.



**23**

interviews with groups, businesses, service providers and community activists.



**35**

people attended the open event.



**20**

pupils from Douglas Primary School took part in an afternoon workshop.



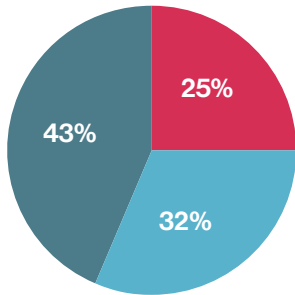
**150**

people attended the Christmas Fayre where people could share their ideas.

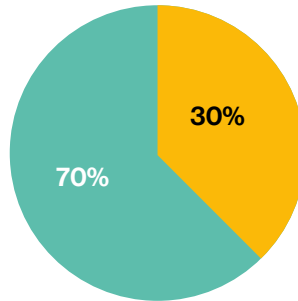
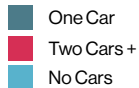
***Thanks to everyone who took part.***

## The Challenges

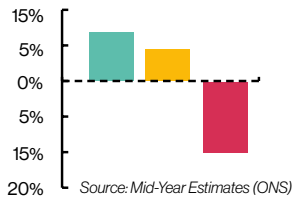
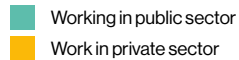
Data for our village shows that:



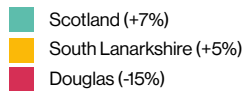
### Car Ownership



### Employment



### Population Decline (2001 to present)



## The Challenges

Data for our village shows that:

### **Population:**

There are 1,748 people living in Douglas and Glespin. The population of the area has dropped significantly over the past 20 years and is 15% lower than 2001. Positively, over 80% of respondents to the survey said they expect to live in the area in 10 years' time.

### **Housing:**

There are currently around 800 houses in Douglas and Glespin. Around 50 houses are empty and in need of renovation. 47.5% of houses are privately owned and nearly 41% are socially rented (compared to the national average of 24.3%).

**Economy:** Douglas and Glespin have a slightly lower working aged population than the national average. Over 70% of people work in the public sector. Over 21% of people living in the Douglas and Glespin area claim Universal Credit, which is above the national average of 13.9%. 8.5% of 18-24-year-olds are claiming unemployment benefit which is double the national average.

### **Health:**

We have more people living with life limiting illnesses and people claiming Attendance Allowance (15.5%) and Personal Independence Payments (15.1%) compared to the average in Scotland.

### **Transportation:**

Nearly 32% of people don't own a car. Public transport is limited and services have been cut in recent years.

***“Due to lack of public transport I feel I may need to move when kids start further education/ work”***

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# The Opportunities

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**Community Assets** - For a small area, we have a high number of well established voluntary groups delivering activities for people of all ages. These can struggle for volunteers but nevertheless provide a good foundation to build on. We also have a good range of facilities such as St. Bride's Community Centre, Douglas West Community Woodland, and Glespin Community Hall among others which are important locally and offer development potential.

**History and Heritage** - People are proud of the long and rich history of the area and want this to be promoted and recognised more widely. The local history is seen as an underused asset that could be used to unite the community and bring in more visitors to boost the local economy.

**Renewable Energy and Industry Hub** - New developments, such as Connexus and the expansion of windfarms, are evolving the area into a renewable energy 'hub'. There is also an opportunity to build long term economic

and educational partnerships with renewable energy companies and industry to create local opportunities.

**Scenery and landscape** - We have an abundance of green space. The landscape in the Clyde Valley has the potential for recreational opportunities that could bring multiple benefits to our area, including jobs. There is scope to improve links to the Clyde Walkway and the Southern Upland Way and develop adventure tourism by improving pathways for walking and cycling, mountain biking.

**Community Benefit Funds** - Douglas and Glespin benefit from significant funding from windfarm developments and these are expanding. With the right approach and investment in the right projects, this funding could have a significant impact on long term regeneration.



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# What you said

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## Rating different aspects of local life:

The best aspects: **footpaths, walks  
and green spaces**

*“Lovely places to walk.”*

*“Friendly and safe.”*

*“Children play freely outdoors.”*

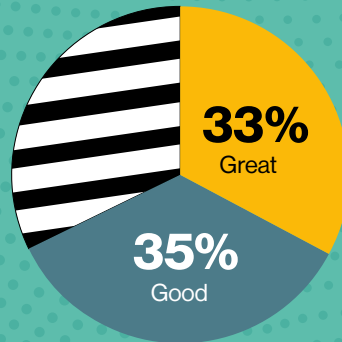
The worst aspect: **Public transport**

*“Transport is horrendous”*

*“Young people can’t get jobs  
because there are no buses...  
leading us to move elsewhere.”*

## Survey rating Douglas and Glespin as a place to live:

33% said Douglas is a Great place to live and  
35% said it’s Good.





## What you like

- ✓ Countryside & scenery
- ✓ People and Community
- ✓ Walks
- ✓ Peace and quiet
- ✓ Heritage
- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Location

***“People are friendly & there is a sense of collectiveness.”***

***“I feel safe and happy to raise children here.”***

*- local residents*

## What you don't like

- ✗ Poor public transport
- ✗ Lack of jobs
- ✗ The availability / quality of housing
- ✗ Not enough for children and young people
- ✗ State and safety of roads, traffic and paths
- ✗ The amount of litter and dog fouling
- ✗ The need for new leisure facilities
- ✗ Not enough for visitors

***“Nothing for young ones to do.”***

***“There's lots of broken stuff about.”***

*- local residents*

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# Key messages

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**More action please!** - People are frustrated at the lack of progress to tackle some persistent issues: 'We're being left behind' and 'things are going backwards'. People want to see real progress on the things that matter to them. The Douglas Arms, public transport and creating local job opportunities were identified as key areas for change.

**Let's get strategic** - Short term projects are easier to deliver but unlikely to bring long term change. We need to work better within the community and better with external partners. Taking a more strategic and collaborative approach and developing joint plans could bring about better use of and more investment which could have a bigger impact.

**Invest in what we have** - We have fantastic groups and clubs that need support and important community and historic spaces that need protecting and investment. Improvements to the Crabtree Pavilion for example, working with St Bride's to extend opening times, improving the Village Hall in Glespin with renewables,

**Community conversations were diverse with lots of different issues raised and suggestions put forward. Reviewing all of these, there were some common thoughts which are useful to highlight.**

supporting the work of Douglasdale REAL Group to develop the woodland, or building on the existing community directory douglaslanarkshire.scot are all examples of how we can build on what's already here.

**People Power** - SLC no longer has the resources to deliver the services we've grown used to. We need to become more self sufficient if we are to meet local needs. Encouraging more local activism through volunteering will help but there is a need for our own dedicated development staff (eg funded through windfarm money) to help to fill the gaps and drive change.

**Optimism and Opportunity** - Despite the challenges, there are some great opportunities particularly through tourism and green enterprise which could help to develop a new economic foundation. Access to community benefit funds mean that there is an opportunity for 'big projects' and the resources to deliver them leading to longer lasting change.



## What this led to

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As a result of all your feedback and ideas, we have developed an action plan which will help us achieve our long-term vision:

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***“ Growing and thriving historical villages that are friendly and attractive places for residents and visitors.”***

# Theme 1

## Transport, Traffic and Connectivity

**Context:** Public transport and the lack of connectivity to surrounding towns and villages is a central issue in our community. Furthermore, traffic safety, roadworks and poor active travel networks have been identified as having a major negative impact on people's enjoyment of the area. Despite our proximity to the M74, Douglas and Glespin are isolated from employment and educational opportunities, as well as surrounding services. Improving connectivity through better travel is a vital step to increasing local prospects and attracting more people into Douglas and Glespin to live, work and visit.

Priorities	Actions
Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore ways to work with existing bus service providers, such as Stagecoach X74, and continue to lobby through Community Planning Partnership to change public transport routes, connecting Douglas and Glespin to Coalburn and Lesmahagow.</li><li>• Explore opportunities to develop a community mini-bus or On Demand / Responsive Demand Transport to Coalburn and/or Lesmahagow to connect with existing bus services. A community mini-bus could also be made available for hire to groups in the area and could support those less mobile to access services and amenities.</li></ul>
Road Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Campaign to introduce traffic calming on the A70 – outside Douglas Primary School, between the Douglas Arms and the pharmacy, and at the bottom of Hillview Crescent in Glespin.</li><li>• Work with the Council to repaint the roundabout at Springhill Road, fix the wall and remove the traffic lights on Ayr Road.</li><li>• Improve channels of communication with SLC to ensure that future traffic works and road closures are communicated in advance.</li></ul>
Expand Path and Active Travel Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expand on active travel developments to connect Douglas and Glespin to the National Cycle route 74. Continue to improve the network of walking and cycling routes to surrounding villages including Coalburn and Abington.</li><li>• Maintain the path around the back of Glespin and regenerate the walk around the RAMAGE distribution yard.</li></ul>

# Theme 2

## Local Economy and Jobs

**Context:** Revitalising our local economy remains a major challenge for Douglas and Glespin. The number of local residents relying on out of work benefits is higher than the national average and household incomes lower. There is no quick fix to this and there needs to be longer term, more ambitious plans to create sustainable local jobs. With the right strategy, there are assets and opportunities, particularly from the tourism and renewable sectors that could be better used to attract new business and encourage local enterprise.

Priorities	Actions
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with partners, such as Heritage Museum and Douglas Alive to develop a heritage trail and information displays / hub, showcasing local points of interest that help tell the story of Douglas.</li><li>• Develop a tourism strategy with a focus on marketing and communications to showcase all that Douglas and Glespin have to offer. Build on existing directories and platforms such as <a href="#">insideouttowns</a> app and <a href="#">douglaslanarkshire.scot</a> .</li><li>• With the help of outside investment, create local initiatives in adventure tourism such as mountain biking, kayaking or hiking and other local attractions such as crazy golf, petting zoos or adventure play parks.</li><li>• Develop accommodation (e.g. renovation of Douglas Arms Hotel, glamping, chalets) and infrastructure (e.g. car park, public toilets, charging points) necessary for visitors.</li></ul>



# Theme 2

## Local Economy and Jobs

Priorities	Actions
Renewables and Enterprise Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the windfarms to identify employment, training and procurement opportunities for local people and local businesses and increase uptake in employability services such as Connect2Renewables.</li><li>• Build on existing plans and develop partnerships, such as Connexus West, to create training and jobs that will connect Douglas and Glespin to green enterprise opportunities.</li><li>• Explore delivery and logistics business opportunities that could stem from the proximity of the M74.</li></ul>
Training and employability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore opportunities for apprenticeships in local trades, heritage craft and tourism (e.g. green badge tour guide).</li><li>• Use community benefit funding to employ / train local people to help maintain the upkeep of Douglas and Glespin, e.g. horticulture, landscaping and basic trade.</li></ul>

# Theme 3

## Amenities, Facilities and Services

**Context:** Douglas and Glespin should be places that local people feel proud of and people want to come and visit. The streets, buildings, and amenities should be well maintained, attractive and fit for purpose. There is demand for new, affordable housing and a wider range of services and activities to support people of all ages. The natural environment is an asset that can be developed for community use to generate revenue and to attract visitors.

Priorities	Actions
Village Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get the Douglas Arms Hotel looking better and longer term, back into use. Current plans for visitor accommodation and bistro will be fully costed and if unviable, other proposals will be explored.</li><li>• Develop an improvement plan to carry out necessary repairs and renovations to local amenities including the Bike Track, the playpark in Glespin, the cemetery, as well as general village improvements.</li><li>• Secure funding to build a new changing facility and parking at Crabtree Park.</li><li>• Create a local pressure group to report faults and work with SLC to improve road and pavement surfacing and develop a strategy to tackle littering and fly tipping.</li><li>• Create a communal heart in Glespin, such as a wildlife / community garden, where people can meet. Improve the village hall and secure funds to install community green energy generators (solar panels) to provide income for the village.</li><li>• Work with St Bride's Community Centre to extend opening hours.</li><li>• Work with SLC Transport to explore the need for more EV charging points in Douglas and Glespin.</li></ul>

# Theme 3

## Village improvements

Priorities	Actions
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with Clyde Valley HA and SLC to increase occupancy rates in vacant houses and improve the standard of the housing stock.</li><li>• Explore approaches (including community owned schemes) to build new affordable housing especially two-bedroom homes which would appeal to downsizers, the younger generation and first-time buyers.</li><li>• Support the development of the community-led initiative to build eco-friendly sustainable housing in Glespin.</li></ul>
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support the Douglasdale REAL Group to develop the Douglas West Community Woodland into a natural resource and community asset that will provide volunteering activities, skill development opportunities, improve local paths and biodiversity, create sustainable jobs, and provide accommodation (e.g. eco pods, camping huts and chalets).</li></ul>

# Theme 4

## Community Cohesion

**Context:** Our 'community spirit' is one of the key reasons people enjoy living here and want to stay long term. There is a lot of positive community activity locally with a diverse range of groups and events on offer but groups can struggle to find volunteers. There is a frustration that improvements in Douglas and Glespin are happening too slowly and groups could work together more effectively. Creating a development resource (employing staff to work on behalf of the community) is vital for progress.

Priorities	Actions
Collaboration and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Improve collaboration between local groups to ensure everyone is pulling in the same direction. Develop a forum or find ways for groups to meet regularly to share updates and support one another.</li><li>• Improve and coordinate communication between groups and local businesses and community members with regular updates (including use of funding) and opportunities for community input and feedback, e.g. a community newsletter / use of <a href="#">douglaslanarkshire.scot</a> and Inside Out app.</li><li>• Using the Community Benefit Fund, employ a dedicated local development worker to bring groups together, drive activity and support the implementation of this action plan.</li></ul>
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With support from VasLan and Youth, Family and Community Learning, improve volunteering locally to increase numbers and enrich the volunteering experience.</li><li>• Continue to gather feedback from local people and groups to identify needs and additional community activities and events of interest. This could be carried out through existing groups, at existing events such as Gala Day or the Christmas Fayre or online through social media channels.</li><li>• Work with Universal Connections and other partners to work with young people to understand what social, educational or employment opportunities or initiatives would be popular. Develop some pilot activity.</li></ul>

# Theme 4

## Community Cohesion

Priorities	Actions
Community Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="323 269 860 337">• Develop additional community amenities, such as a Men's Shed, community garden or allotments that can be used by everyone in the community but particularly by older people.</li><li data-bbox="323 348 902 415">• Explore ways to maximise the use of Glespin Hall for the benefit of the community, such as using the Community Benefit Fund to pay people to deliver activities (e.g. after school childcare or tea groups).</li></ul>

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# Making it happen

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This Action Plan is for the whole community and we hope it will be useful to any individual, group or organisation working to make our area even better. Some groups are already delivering some of the projects highlighted in this Plan and others have expressed their interest to get involved. These include:

- **Douglas & Glespin Community Council**
- **Douglas Community Development Company**
- **Douglasdale REAL Group**
- **St. Bride's Community Hall**
- **Glespin Community Group**
- **Community Action Lanarkshire**
- **Healthy Valleys**
- **Douglas Primary School**
- **Connect2Renewables**
- **Universal Connections**
- **Douglas Valley Advisory Group**

We hope there will be more!

**Development work to deliver this plan will include:**

1. Finding people and groups to get involved and supporting them in their plans.
2. Developing relationships and partnerships within Douglas and Glespin, and beyond to strengthen our position.
3. Identifying and securing funding to turn plans into a reality.
4. Engaging and listening to local residents to make sure the Action Plan is delivering as intended.



# Get Involved

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We need more local people to get involved in delivering this vision for Douglas and Glespin. If you would like to find out more about what is going on in Douglas and Glespin, or how to get involved in volunteering, please contact:

*[douglascommunitycouncil@gmail.com](mailto:douglascommunitycouncil@gmail.com)*

*[www.facebook.com/DouglasCommunityCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/DouglasCommunityCouncil)*

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