

# Colmonell Community Action Plan 2020-2025





## A word from Colmonell Community Association - Action Plan Subgroup

Welcome to the 2020-2025 Colmonell Community Action Plan! Over the last three years - thanks to a significant and sustained community effort - our village has gone from strength to strength. We have a huge range of activities in the hall, a thriving youth club, a community garden, a revamped play area, and community-owned public toilets amongst many others. We are a community endowed with significant assets including a fantastic community hall, beautiful natural environment, and an excellent primary school to mentioned just a few. Most of all we are blessed with a vibrant, welcoming, and strong community.

This plan aims to build on previous successes and create a bright future for Colmonell. During the Covid-19 crisis we saw how the community pulled together to overcome the challenges of the lockdown. One of the objectives of this action plan is to ensure that Colmonell makes a strong recovery from the impacts of the pandemic.

Our plan is ambitious, and we will work collaboratively with Colmonell and Stinchar Valley community organisations, local businesses, South Ayrshire Council, local partners, and funding organisations to deliver it. We will also need the skills, knowledge, and experience of all Colmonell community members to bring the plan to life. Please get in touch if you would like to help!

Finally, Colmonell Community Association would like to thank all those who gave up their time to take part in the initial engagement which forms the basis of this plan. We hope that the plan reflects the aspirations we have for our community.

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December 2020



## Introduction

The Colmonell 2020-2025 Community Action Plan is intended to help the community chart its course over the next five years by identifying new project opportunities and building on the previous 2017-2019 Colmonell Action Plan. It is meant as a route guide for positive change in the community. Of course, and as the Covid-19 outbreak has shown us, things change. Therefore, this action plan should not be thought of as a rigid process to follow, but as a living document and part of an ongoing process of community development.

### **The Colmonell Community Association (SCIO)**

The Colmonell Community Association is the lead body behind the development of this community action plan. The Association is an umbrella group for many of our community organisations and so is ideally positioned to lead on the development and delivery of strategic projects. For each of the projects described in this plan, we will work collaboratively with Colmonell community organisations, businesses, South Ayrshire Council, local partners, and funding organisations. We will also forge connections and relationships with other local communities in the Stinchar Valley and beyond where we have mutual interests.

### **The best laid plans of mice and men...**

We have a plan, and often plans go well. Other times they go awry! This plan is a living document that will evolve alongside our community. It is an ambitious plan so it is possible that not every aspiration will be realised. We will report progress against this plan on a six-monthly basis detailing what we have achieved, what is in progress and what has not been possible or has been postponed. Moreover, we will also report on any new projects that have been seen as opportune.

### **Process**

This plan has been prepared by Colmonell Community Association with the Support of the Scottish Community Development Centre and is based on a substantial process of community consultation during 2020. Including:

- A community engagement day which attracted ~60 participants
- Community survey which engaged with 70 members of the community
- A young people's survey which received 14 responses
- Consultation on the draft action plan with 20 members of the community, partner organisations, and with 11 young people

## **The impact of Covid-19**

Like many communities across the country Covid-19 is having a significant impact on Colmonell. We witnessed the strength and resilience of our community in dealing with the immediate effects of the pandemic. Normal community activities (including the development of this plan) were significantly disrupted, and – at the time of writing – many community activities have been suspended for months. We also anticipate that there will be significant economic and social fallout over the coming months and years. We will reassess this action plan periodically to make sure we are addressing any adverse impacts of Covid-19 whilst taking advantage of any opportunities that emerge from the reshaping of society.



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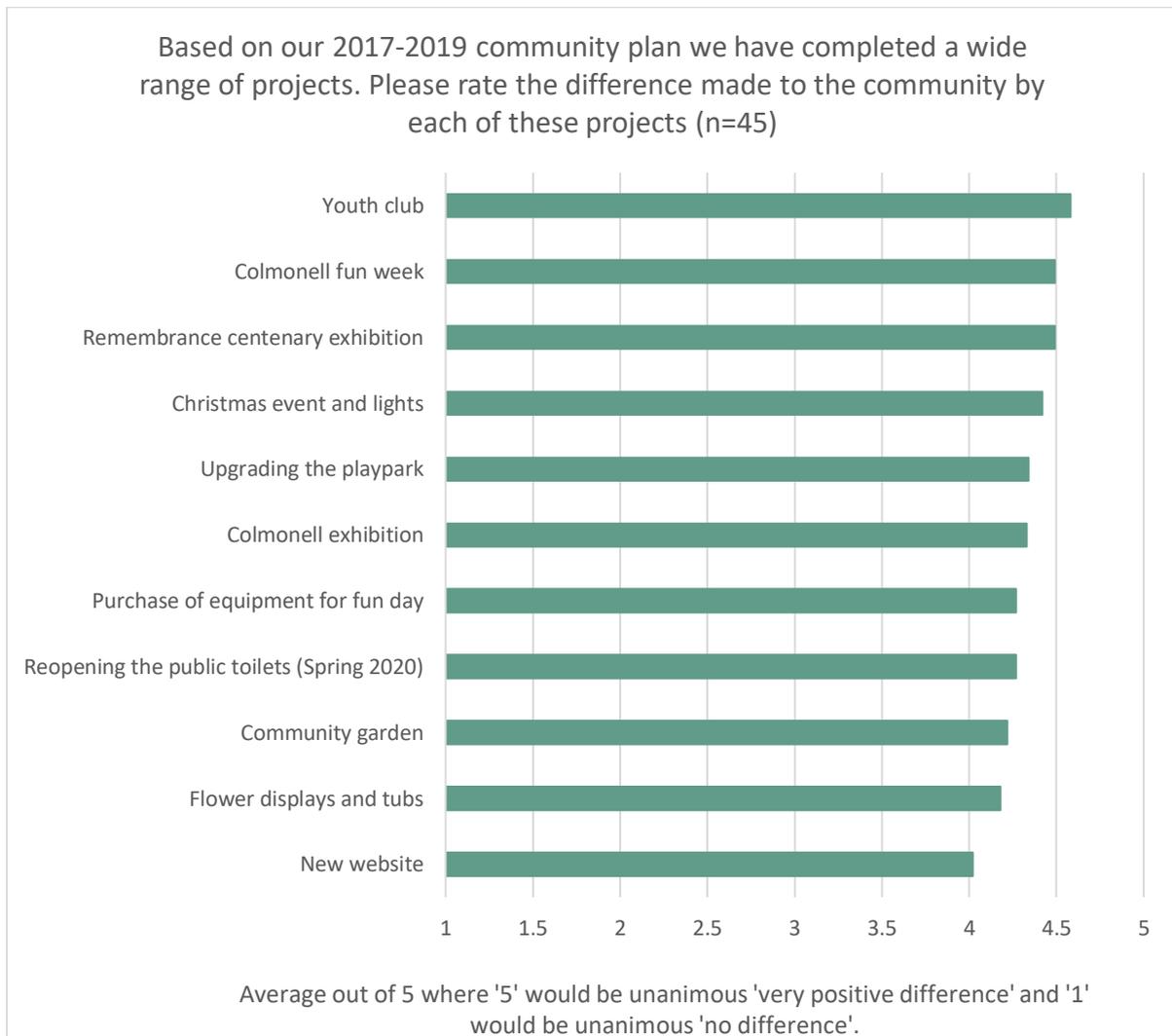
## Reflecting on the 2017-2019 community action plan

The last community action plan 2017-2019 outlined a range of projects that would benefit the community. The following table is a summary of what the community achieved:

<b>You said</b>	<b>We did</b>
More flower displays, tubs, bulb planting, tidier verges, hanging baskets and flowerbed at toilets	Flower displays, tubs and hanging baskets throughout village. Plants donated by Girvan community garden for the flowerbed beside the toilets.
Create a community garden	Work began October 2016 with a garden celebration event with a barbecue and children's entertainment in July 2018. Several activities have taken place in the garden including school community action group, gardening club, Brownies summer barbecue, summer club children's activities 2018 & 2019, and Jamboree with barbecue for youth group, beavers, Cubs and Scouts in July 2019.
Provide public toilets	Public toilets are now community owned and intended to open Spring 2020 – delayed due to Covid-19. Now opening Spring 2021.  South Ayrshire Council has renovated the toilets prior to handing them over to the community.
Improve play facilities	We upgraded the playpark in May 2018 with the involvement of young people.
More group activities, events, classes	Youth club which has 24 members, 2 exercise groups (Zumba and Pilates), exercise equipment purchased for hall and another 16 groups or activities listed in the hall.  The Christmas lights and events have got bigger and better.
Information gathered for WWI Remembrance presented as a booklet	Remembrance centenary exhibition and display in November 2018, booklet is in the church.
More events, activities	Over the last 10 years, Colmonell fun week has more activities and entertainment throughout the week, including the football tournament, quiz, children's activities and disco, clay pigeon shoot, school bingo night and fun day. In 2018 we purchased a marquee for the fun day which is available for use by other local community groups.  Colmonell exhibition display took place in September 2017 over 2 days, showing local history of the area and replicating a similar event which had taken place in the village 40 years previously.  Various community events have been held – concerts, race nights, cheese and wine etc.

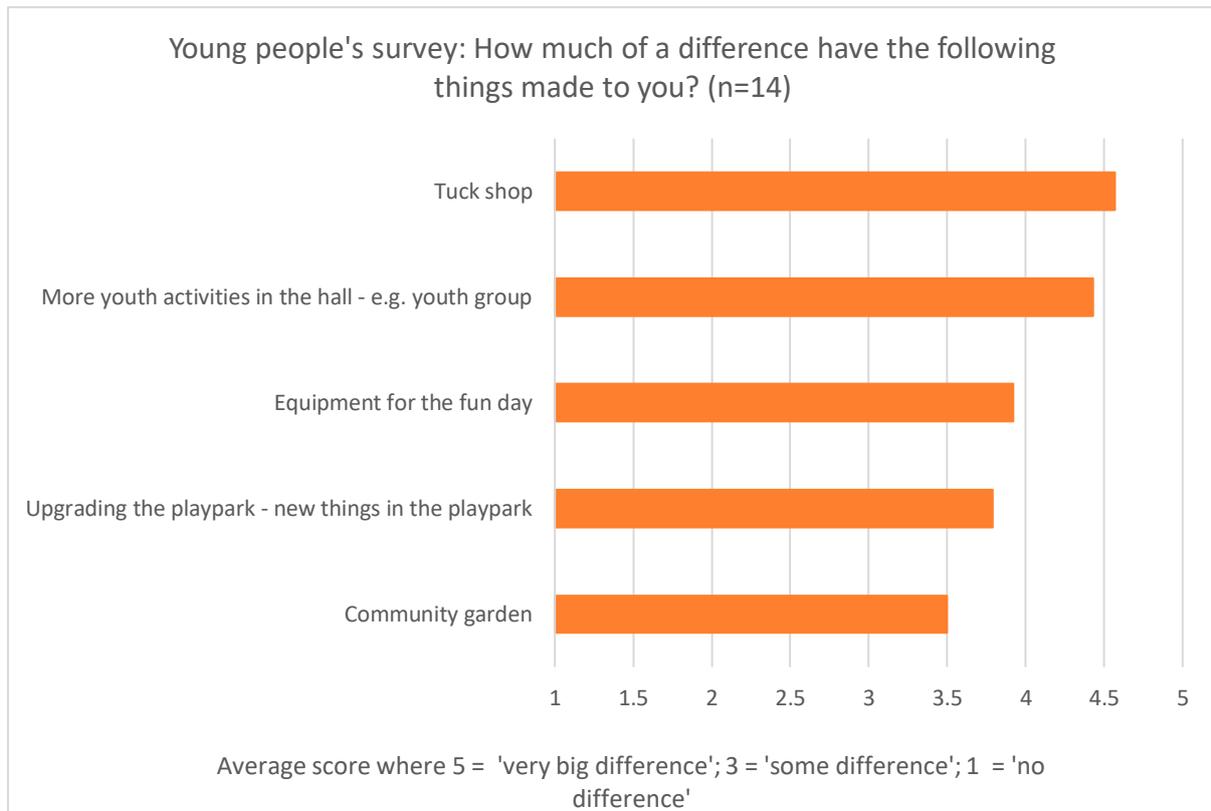
	The Boars Head has 2 domino teams, a darts team, a quiz night, and a debating club. They have also held events including a Burns supper, gin festival and music festival.
Purchase marquees/tents and equipment for Fun Day	We purchased a marquee for the fun day in 2018.
Create a new website	During 2020 the Colmonell Village website received 3821 visits from 2709 users. The most popular pages were those offering Covid-19 support, local news story, and events calendar.
Local walking maps displayed	A leaflet showing local walking routes has been updated. A booklet has also been produced with images of the river and people's thoughts and experiences of the river.
Village improvements - replace brick wall by playpark with a stone wall; replace broken fence at war memorial	Improvement work at the war memorial has taken place. The wall around the playpark has not been replaced, although a broken part of the wall at the toilets has been repaired.
Improve broadband	Broadband services have improved – superfast broadband is now available.
Buy community centre and upgrade it	There is a historical lease agreement between the original community trustees of the hall and the council. The council have committed to maintenance and running costs of the hall, and it recently had rewiring and significant upgrade.
Picnic areas	2 new picnic benches in park and in community garden.

We asked the community what the impact of these projects has been and here is what they told us:



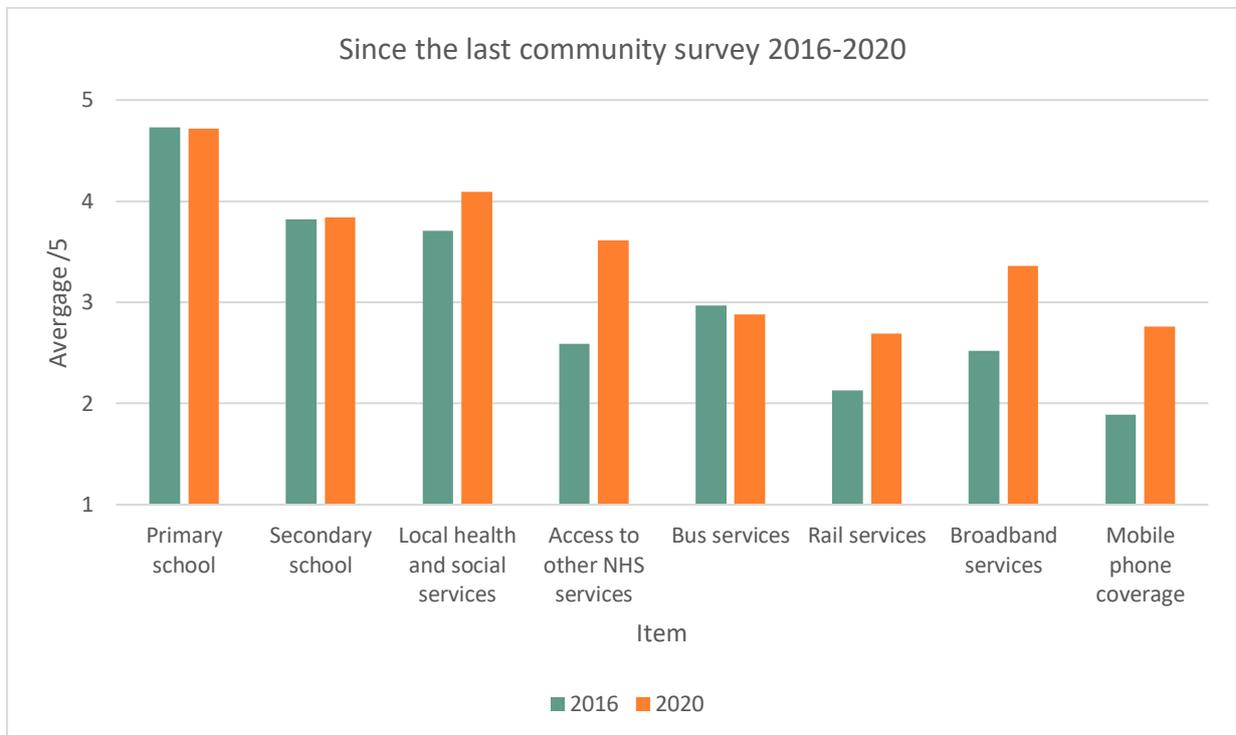
The youth club was considered to have had the greatest positive impact on the community – which suggests that even those who are not direct users of the provision see significant value in it. All developments made a positive difference and it appears that the actions taken have been highly visible and mainstream.

For young people, the results were as follows:



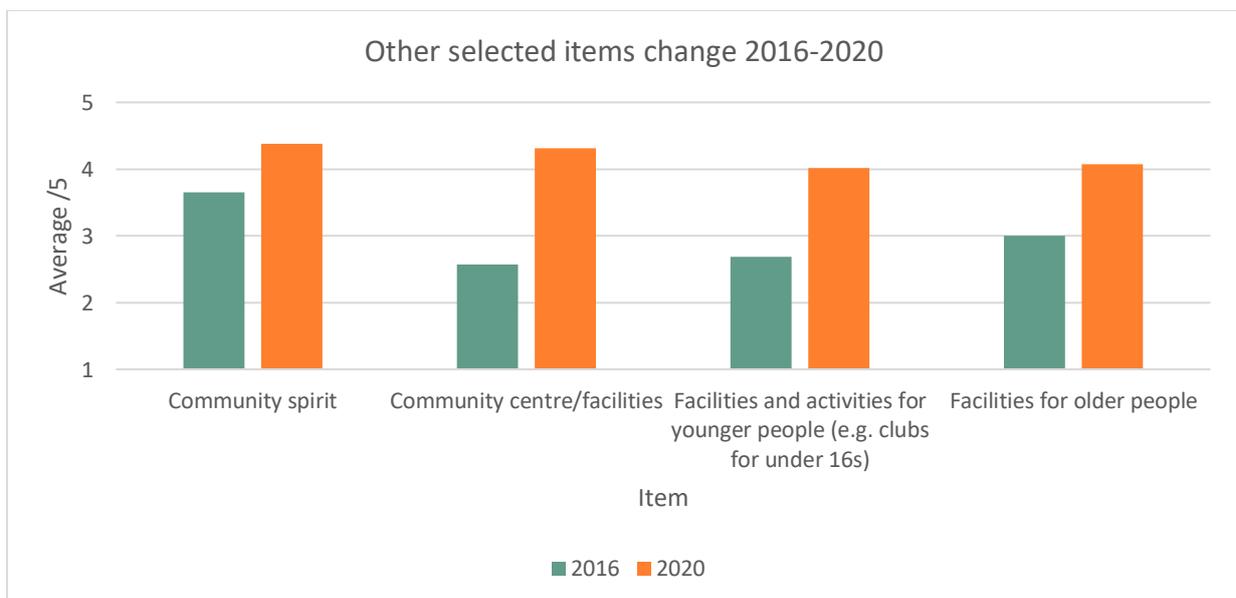
The respondents reported a positive benefit for all items with the youth group and tuck shop being recorded as making the largest difference. With regards to the youth group one commenter said: *“Youth group activities has made a big difference. It gives us stuff and we can mix with our friends.”* Other comments identified the jamboree, new school and playground, and the benches by the river for birdwatching.

The community told us that improvements have been made across many areas of life in Colmonell since the last community survey in 2016:



In comparison with the 2016 community survey improvements have been recorded in terms of access to non-local NHS services, rail services, broadband and mobile phone services.

Comparing several other measures shows other positive changes:



Significant improvements were recorded across a range of factors – most notably the community facilities/centre and activities for younger and older people. Community spirit has also seen a significant uplift. It suggests that the projects delivered have had a significant positive impact on the community.

### Projects which are ongoing

The following describes projects which are ongoing or still being progressed.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Village tidy ups	An ongoing project due to the (unfortunate) nature of the issue.
Paint/update signage (street names, litter bins, fences)	South Ayrshire Council due to replace village signs.
Dog waste bins along river	Due to this being private land this would need a contractor appointed. We are looking at new solutions. A recent newsletter highlighted the issue of dog mess and informed dog owners that poo bags are available for dog owners, free of charge, at the school.
Community shop	Not progressed 2017-2019 but see following action plan table.
Tourism projects and facilities	Coig route is coming, and new walks leaflet has been created.
Community bus to help people get to doctor's appointments	Initial funding attempt failed however we are looking again at options – see also action plan table.

### Projects which have not been progressed

The following projects were not progressed for a variety of reasons. It may be possible to re-consider some of these projects in future.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Accessible noticeboard	For the time being, we feel that the present information window is sufficient. We also produce a village newsletter a couple of times a year which goes to all houses in the village and regularly contribute to the quarterly Stinchar Valley magazine.
Purchase land behind hall	The land was sold privately so this was no longer possible.
Paint wall around playpark	This was not pursued as some people felt it would not be in keeping with the village.
Pavement to cemetery and Garnaburn junction	On hold for now as land adjacent is privately owned and would need significant work and agreement from landowner for this to take place.

## Colmonell: a current profile

For a relatively small place, Colmonell boasts a wealth of opportunities and assets including:

- A vibrant and engaged youth group.
- An integrated and cohesive community which pulls together in times of need.
- A recently upgraded community hall with a wide range of social activities for all ages.
- A pub/hotel
- A popular primary school
- Newly upgraded play area
- Community garden
- Strong community organisations who organise events and activities throughout the year
- A beautiful natural environment
- Bowling and angling clubs
- Availability of local food deliveries
- A range of high-quality self-catering accommodation options for guests and visitors
- A vibrant community that attracts and welcomes new residents. We believe that the population of Colmonell has increased slightly - this contrasts with the surrounding area where it has fallen.

However, there are also challenges:

- Concerns about the local economy – Covid-19 may have exacerbated this.
- Quality of roads
- Accessibility of local GP services
- Lack of a shop/café and limited tourism opportunities
- Some issues with dog fouling
- An aging population

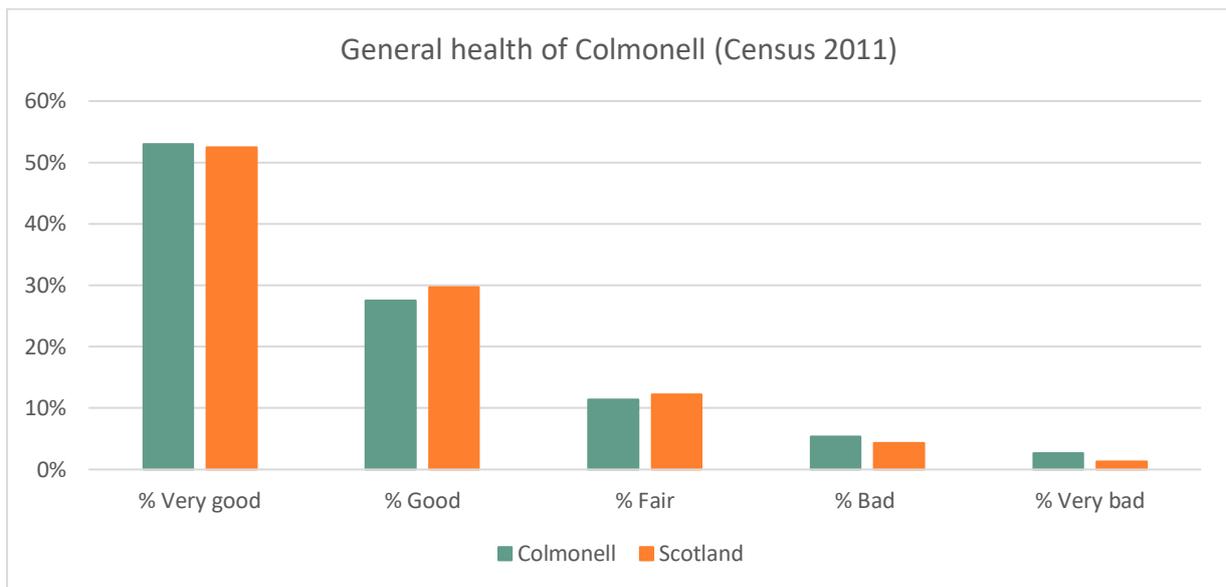
By age Colmonell has perhaps a slightly unusual age profile – with a higher proportion of those aged 5-15 and over 75 and fewer of those aged 16-44. As the census is now 9 years old, and with Colmonell being a relatively small community, it is possible that this situation has now changed.



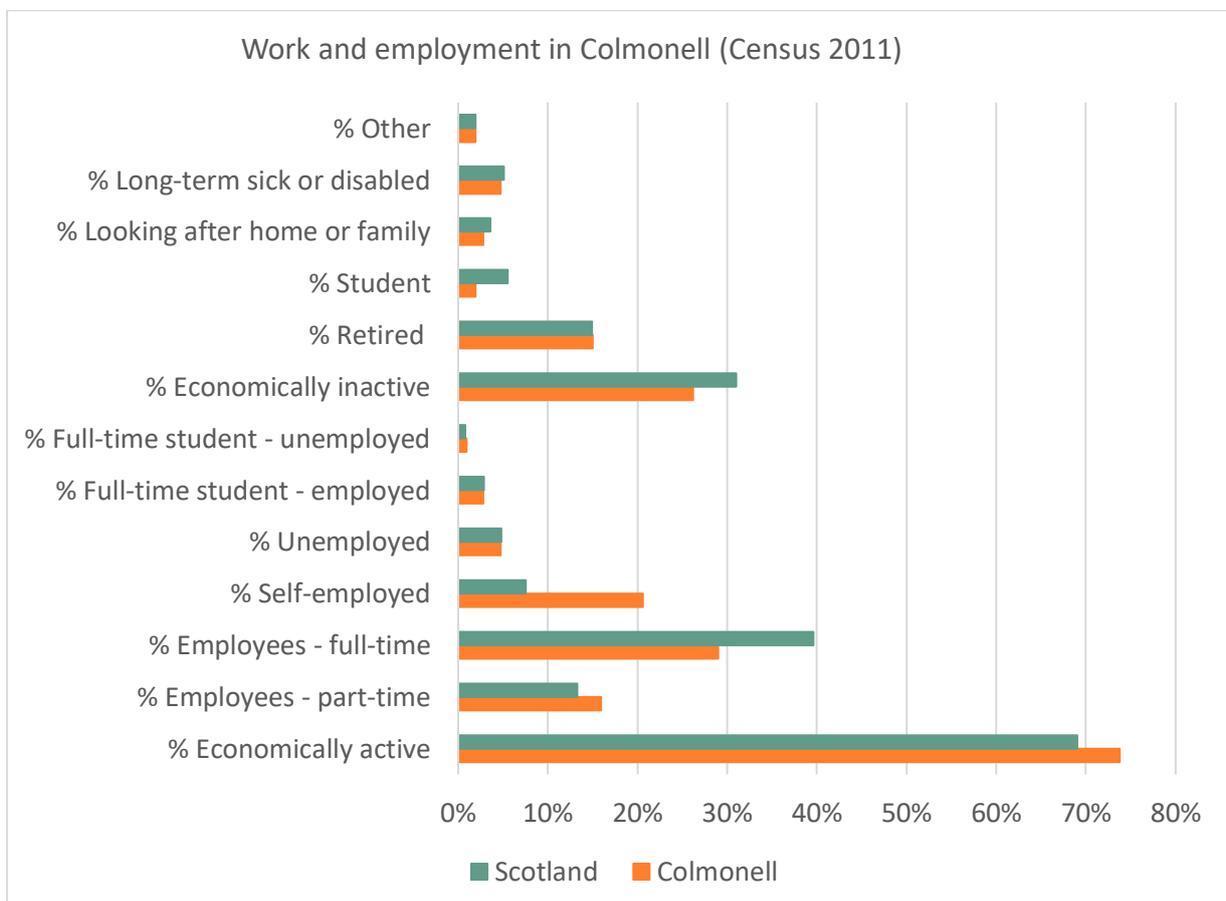
These figures are based on an area which encompasses the main built area of Colmonell. However, this does not include the surrounding areas which we would consider part of the wider community. The South Ayrshire Council 2019 estimate suggests that the datazone<sup>1</sup> in which Colmonell sits is slowly depopulating. However, based on our understanding of the local community, we believe that Colmonell is bucking the trend and attracting new residents. We estimate our community has between 200-225 members.

<sup>1</sup> <https://statistics.gov.scot/atlas/resource?uri=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fid%2Fstatistical-geography%2FS01012418&inactive=false>

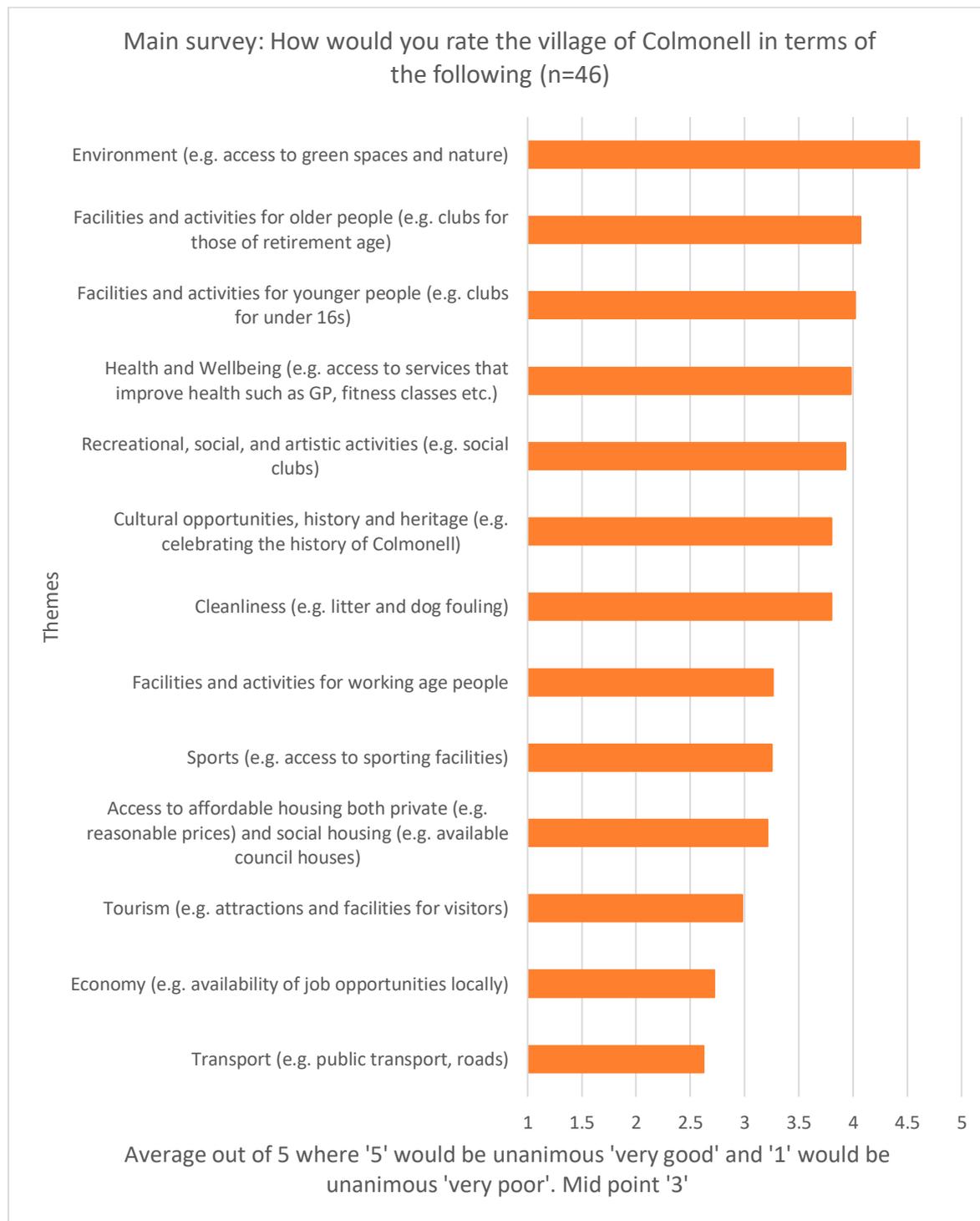
Meanwhile, the health profile of our community is similar to the national average:



As per the 2011 census, Colmonell had a slightly lower proportion of full-time employees and a slightly higher proportion of part time employees. More notably, 21% of Colmonell residents were self-employed compared to 8% in Scotland:



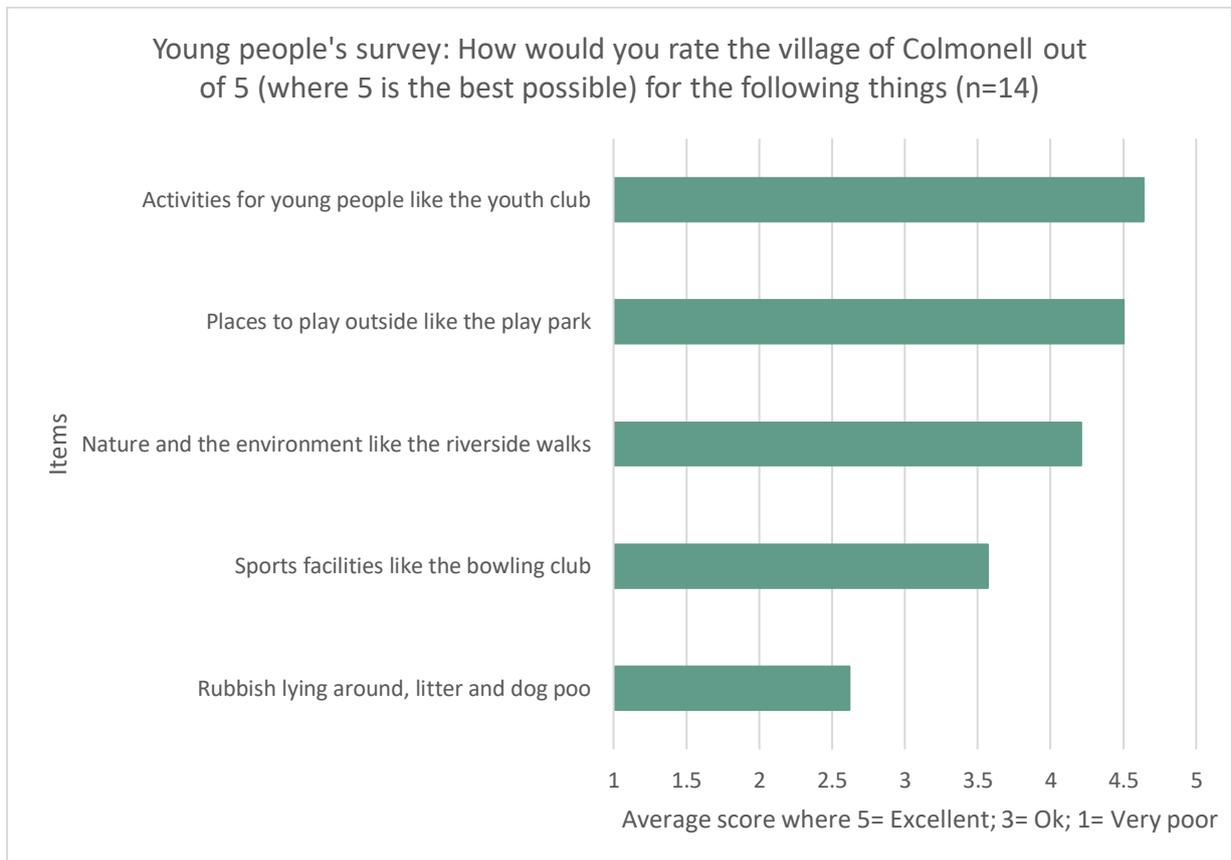
## Colmonell's community assets



Colmonell was very highly rated in terms of environment, facilities for older and younger people, health and wellbeing, and recreational opportunities.

A challenge emerges in relation to those less well-rated items such as transport, housing, and the economy. These are more challenging issues and in part beyond the direct remit of organisations in

the Colmonell community. The low rating of the local economy does clash slightly with the Census findings. This may be because the Census is nearly 10 years old in which time the situation has changed. And/or people are employed, but not in a manner they find satisfactory (e.g., hours too short, underemployed etc.). In the comments, many comments highlighted dog fouling as a problem.



Young people rated Colmonell very highly in terms of places to play, activities for young people and the environment. However, like the main survey, litter and dog fouling were identified as problems. Dog fouling was mentioned in the comments – it is likely that the central issue is dog waste rather than litter. Other comments suggested installing a litter bin in the play park whilst another noted that steps to the river were steep.

## Our 2020-2025 Community Action Plan

Building on the above information, this plan is rooted in aspirations and priorities of the Colmonell community. During 2020 we carried out a range of engagement activities including an engagement day and community surveys aimed at the general community and younger people. Links to reports, news and updates can be found here: <https://colmonellvillage.co.uk/2021/01/13/colmonell-2025/>. Out of this the Colmonell Community Association identified a range of community-led projects that were consulted in Autumn 2020. In addition, we consulted on how Covid-19 may have impacted on our community – and any changes or new projects that need to be considered.

The following two tables outline the plan. The first summarises our key themes, explains in broad brush strokes some of the things we need to do and what we hope to achieve. The second table outlines in more detail the projects we anticipate delivering to meet our objectives.

**Table 1: Key themes**

Theme	Description	What do we need to do?	What do we want to achieve?
Tourism	Colmonell is a picturesque village in a beautiful landscape. The rise of the staycation and the arrival of the Coig <sup>2</sup> and 'South West 300' <sup>3</sup> offer opportunities for the community to benefit. We are also part of the picturesque Stinchar Valley which has considerable tourism potential.	<p>Identify and promote Colmonell's unique visitor attractions.</p> <p>Work with local business to develop and promote their tourist offer.</p> <p>Improve and develop the tourism infrastructure, facilities and 'reasons to stop'. Also, build on our existing tourism assets (e.g. Whithorn Way, St. Colmon Parish Church) and local accommodation offer.</p>	<p>Increased number of visitors.</p> <p>Increased income for community benefit and local vendors.</p>

<sup>2</sup> <https://thecoig.com/area/shire/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.visitsouthwestscotland.com/attractions/swc300map/>

		Collaborate with the wider Stinchar Valley community to build the tourism offer and 'brand'.	
<b>Economy</b>	We will do what we can to boost the economic fortunes of our community. Whilst we cannot shape global trends and changes, we will try to create local opportunities when and where we can.	<p>Develop tourism offer as above.</p> <p>Broker support and relationships with partner agencies to support local business growth e.g. marketing, ecommerce, remote services.</p> <p>Consider the development of community enterprises to provide employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Increased income that can be used for community benefit projects.</p> <p>Increased incomes for members of the community.</p>
<b>Social activities</b>	For a small community we have a huge range of cultural, recreational, and social activities. But there is always a need to maintain what we have and to further develop new activities. Social activities are not simply 'nice to have' – they are essential for fostering community spirit and health and wellbeing.	<p>Respond to the challenges relating to Covid-19 e.g. Gazebo for outdoor activities.</p> <p>Ensure that activities meet the needs of all the community – including those at risk of isolation and loneliness.</p> <p>Support community organisations to develop activities e.g. by supporting funding applications.</p>	<p>Greater community spirit.</p> <p>Improved health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Greater community capacity and more community members involved.</p>
<b>Environment</b>	We are blessed with an incredible natural environment – we want to make it more accessible. And we are part of the wider	Develop stronger links with other Stinchar Valley communities and the	Improved/protected local environment.

	Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. We want to make sure this resource and asset is accessible to all and helps ensure our community's prosperity and wellbeing.	Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.  Develop projects that make sure our natural environment is accessible (e.g. path network).  Take advantage of our environment to achieve other objectives and make sure other projects are in tune with environmental protection – both locally and globally.	A local environment that is accessible to all.
<b>Young people</b>	Through the last community plan and by working with young people we made significant improvements to the lives of young people. We want to continue this process into the future.	Listen to the views of young people and include them in the development of Colmonell.  Continue to develop opportunities for young people through the Youth Club and other groups.  Build on our strong school-community relationship.	Young people have a great experience growing up in Colmonell.
<b>Transport and connectivity</b>	Transport and access to goods and services was also identified in the survey. These are issues we will investigate although some are beyond our gift.	Monitor the transport situation and any developing opportunities – especially for those who are classed as more vulnerable.	Improved social connectivity and community access to essential goods and services.

	In addition, it may be that some of these needs are more effectively met through currently existing informal relationships.	Develop community responses within the village e.g. lift sharing (post Covid-19).	
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**Table 2: Project detail**

Theme	Description	What do we want to achieve? What are our overall objectives?	<p><b>Specific Projects</b> (NB some projects are relevant to more than one theme and so appear more than once in shorted form)</p> <p><b>Key: the CCA identified these projects in the following categories</b></p> <p><b>Easier to do, high impact</b></p> <p><b>Harder to do, high impact</b></p> <p><b>Easier to do, lower impact</b></p>	Who will lead on taking this project forward?	The stakeholders and partners we anticipate working with to achieve our goals
<b>Tourism</b>	Colmonell is a picturesque village in a beautiful landscape. The rise of the staycation and the arrival of the Coig and ‘South West 300’ offer opportunities for the community to benefit. We are also part of the picturesque Stinchar valley which has	Increased number of visitors	<p><b>Easier to do, high impact</b></p> <p>Promote the village of Colmonell across all relevant platforms e.g. website, social media.</p>	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	South Ayrshire Council Tourism.  Visit Scotland
		Increased income for community benefit and local vendors	Promote existing accommodation offer in the village e.g. Boar’s Head, B&Bs, self-catering accommodation etc.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance  Boar’s Head	South Ayrshire Council Tourism.  Business Gateway  Visit Scotland
			Run the public toilets effectively and ensure they are well managed.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	South Ayrshire Council

	tourism potential.		<b>Harder to do, high impact</b> Community owned campsite – to bring revenue into the community and manage tourism.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	South Ayrshire Council Tourism  Business Gateway  Community Enterprise Scotland
			Investigate the development of a Colmonell history and heritage exhibition including local arts, crafts, and produce.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	South Ayrshire Council Tourism  Visit Scotland
			Work on developing and enhancing local paths for the benefit of the community and visitors.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Paths for All  Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere
			Investigate addressing food availability during the day and at weekends to encourage visitors and provision of local goods e.g. food/shop/community café.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Community Enterprise  Windfarm community funds

			<b>Easier to do, lower impact</b> Further promote the existing paths network as a resource for the community and visitors.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Stinchar Valley Magazine
			Work with Biosphere Bikes in Girvan to offer affordable bike rental and suggested routes.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance  Biosphere Bikes Girvan	
<b>Economy</b>	We will do what we can to boost the economic fortunes of our community. Whilst we cannot shape global trends and changes, we will try to create local opportunities when and where we can. We have also seen	Increased income that can be used for community benefit projects.  Increased incomes for members of the community.	<b>Easier to do, high impact</b> Broker support and connect local enterprises with business support agencies.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Business Gateway  Ayrshire Chamber of Commerce  South Ayrshire Council Enterprise
			Promote existing accommodation offer (as above).	As above	As above

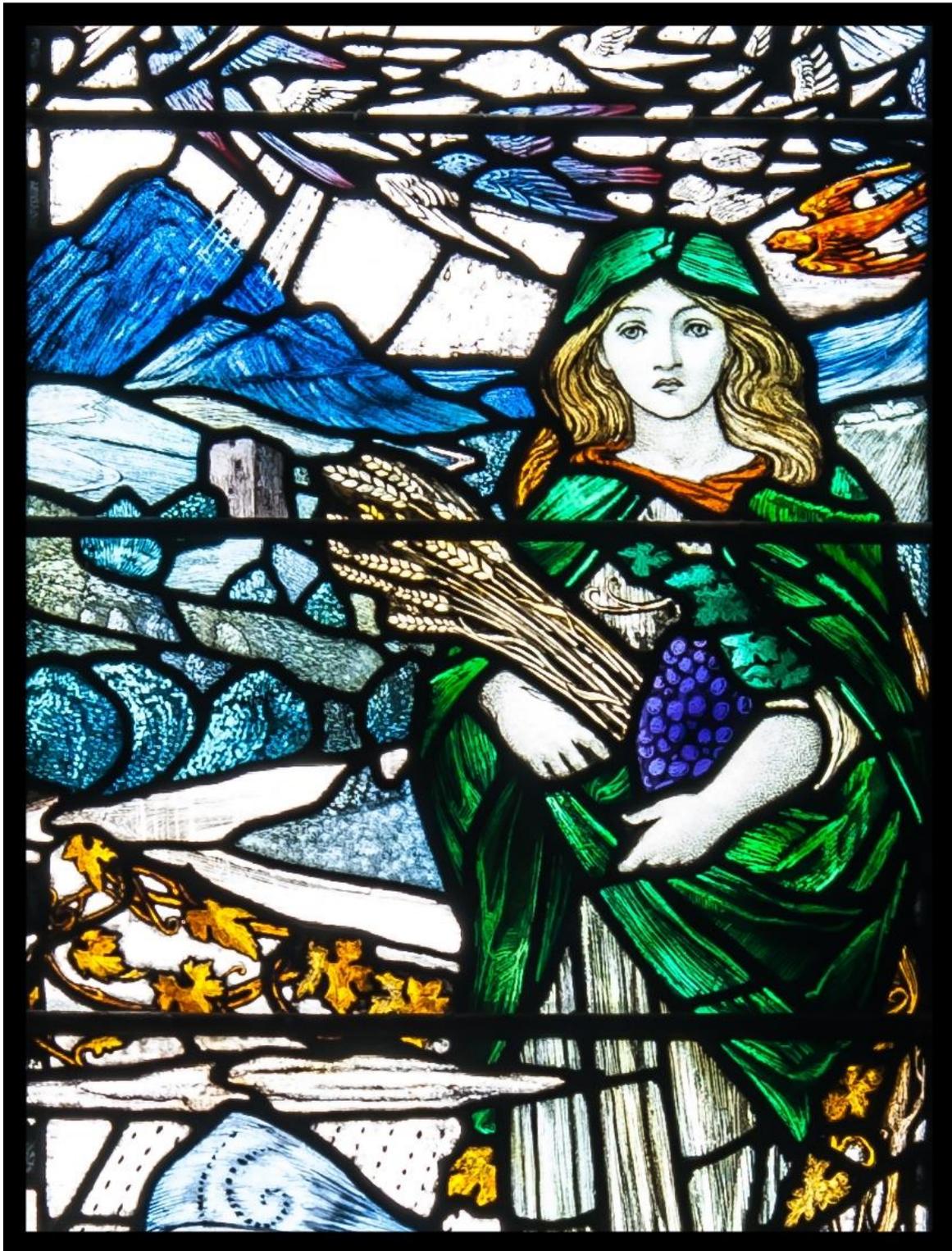
opportunities arise from Covid-19 – for example, a rise on e-commerce and remote services.	Promote tourism in Colmonell (as above).	As above	As above
	<b>Harder to do, high impact</b> Development officer/coordinator role: many communities like ours have a paid development officer role to apply for funding, manage projects and carry out other tasks. We will explore options for such a resource in Colmonell, possibly in collaboration with other communities.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance  Voluntary Action South Ayrshire  South Ayrshire Council	Development Trusts Association Scotland  Community Enterprise Scotland
	Community owned campsite – (as above).	As above	As above
	Investigate the development of a Colmonell history and heritage exhibition (as above).	As above	As above
	Investigate addressing food availability (as above).	As above	As above

<b>Social activities</b>	For a small community we have a huge range of cultural, recreational, and social activities.	Greater community spirit.  Improved health and wellbeing.  Greater community capacity and more community members involved.	<b>Easier to do, high impact</b> Outdoor gazebo to support more outdoor and socially distanced activities.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	
			We will work with others to support the development of new social activities for the community.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	
			<b>Harder to do, high impact</b> The waste ground beside of the play park is an opportunity for the community – ideas received so far include a wildlife garden, growing area, and bike track.  Young people have suggested: a nature garden; den building; fairy garden and bike track.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance  Youth Group	Primary School
			Work on developing and enhancing local paths (as above).	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere
<b>Environment</b>	We are blessed with an incredible natural environment – we want to make it more	Improved/protected local environment.	<b>Harder to do, high impact</b> Initially we had hoped to purchase the riverbank for community ownership. However, we will work with the new owner to make sure this continues to be a natural resource enjoyed by the community.	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	

	accessible. And we are part of the wider Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere.		<p><b>Easier to do, lower impact</b> Electric car charging point so that Colmonell can contribute to promote electric vehicle usage.</p>	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Energy Saving Trust.  South Ayrshire Council
			Work with Biosphere Bikes in Girvan (as above).	As above	As above
			Further promote the existing paths network (as above).	As above	As above
<b>Young people</b>	Through the last community plan and by working with young people we made significant improvements to their lives. We want to continue this process into the future.	Young people have a great experience growing up in Colmonell.	<p><b>Easier to do, high impact</b> Work with young people to identify projects and access funding – because the projects are for young people, they should shape them. Suggestions from young people so far have included: Draughts and games for the hall; a community shop - especially if it sold books, sweets, slushies and magazines. Football, basketball and rugby were identified as possible sporting activities.</p>	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in partnership with Youth Club  Primary School	South Ayrshire Council
			<p><b>Harder to do, high impact</b> Further development of the play area should that be possible in terms of maintenance, design, and insurance. Suggestions from young people include more equipment and a zip line.</p>	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in partnership with Youth Club	South Ayrshire Council  Youth Club  Primary school  Funding organisations

				Primary School	Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASA)
<b>Transport infrastructure/ signage and connectivity</b>	Transport and access to good services was also identified in the survey. These are issues we will investigate although some are beyond our gift.  In addition, it may be that some of these needs are more effectively met through currently existing informal relationships.	Improved social connectivity and community access to essential goods and services.	<b>Harder to do, high impact</b> Consider feasibility and opportunity for community transport service –including community self-help scheme (e.g. to access doctors in Ballantrae and prescription pick up service).	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	South Ayrshire Council
			<b>Easier to do, lower impact</b> Feed into statutory process on condition of roads and wider transport infrastructure	Colmonell Community Association SCIO in the first instance	Ayrshire Roads Alliance





*Stained-glass window in St Colmon Church, Colmonell. By Louis Davis.<sup>4</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.stincharvalley.co.uk/colmonell-windows.htm>



*Thanks to the pupils of Colmonell Primary school for their artworks on the theme 'the best thing about Colmonell' and to Harriet Ellis for photographs of Colmonell.*