

# BLANE VALLEY BULLETIN

The Strathblane Community Council News Sheet

November 2018 No 67

## Inaugural Meeting of the New Community Council

The new Strathblane Community Council held its inaugural meeting on Monday November 12th. Members signed the the Constitution and the Standing Orders and were told about the new procedures for co-opting members — three vacancies remain.

The following office bearers were elected:

*Chair:* Mike McNulty *Secretary:* Grace Edmonds

*Treasurer:* Evelyn Macdougall

**The council's first full monthly meeting will be on Monday December 3rd at 7.30pm in the Village Club.**

All welcome.

## Station Road Closure

Work will begin to narrow the carriageway and widen the path over the bridge on Station Road to make it a one-way priority route on Monday November 26th.

Station Road will be closed at the bridge from 8am to 4pm from 26th November to 7th December. The road will be open between 4pm and 8am with traffic lights in operation.



## Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On

**Tuesday December 11th  
7.15pm in the Village Club**

(Donations at the door)

Mulled wine and Mince Pies  
and music led by the  
Dumbartonshire Wind Ensemble

**A big thank you for the tree  
to Edenmill Farm Shop &  
the Coop for the mince pies**

## Remembrance Day



was marked first at 6am and, despite the wet weather, there was a very large turn-out for the wreath laying ceremony at the War Memorial and, the procession through the village to Strathblane Church led by the Strathendrick Pipe Band.

(Thanks to Kay Roxby & Chris Bell  
for the photos)



## Have you considered Sponsoring an issue of the Bulletin?

**Businesses & Community Groups** can include an advertising flyer which goes to every household (free of charge when you sponsor an issue). For more details email: [contact@strathblanec.org.uk](mailto:contact@strathblanec.org.uk)

This issue of the Bulletin is sponsored by  
**The Blane Valley  
Players**

# Strathblane Community Development Trust News

## Website Update *from Alan Morris*

The Website is live right now at [www.strathblane.online](http://www.strathblane.online).

Please refer to 'Our Plans' on the website menu

It is split into **Community** and **SCDT** sections. The Community section can only be developed with community assistance over the course of time.

**HELP IS NEEDED NOW** to do research from home on local organisations etc.

This is basically information gathering, updating and passing to Alan for updating the website. It involves speaking or emailing to people and, perhaps, some telephoning. For more information contact Alan at [webmaster@strathblane.online](mailto:webmaster@strathblane.online)

**HELP WILL BE NEEDED IN FUTURE** to run parts of the website.

The **SCDT SECTION** will be developed to keep community members in touch with our activities

**IMPORTANT:** It would be very helpful if **LOCAL ORGANISATIONS** could update their details to [webmaster@strathblane.online](mailto:webmaster@strathblane.online) also with their website link if they have one. **BUSINESSES** likewise although they will get a one liner perhaps with a web link.

## Margaret Vass Elected as SCDT Chair

Following our successful and well-attended AGM at the end of August, the new Board members met in September and elected Margaret Vass as SCDT Chair. As most residents will know Margaret brings a wealth of professional and local knowledge and experience to the role at a time when the Trust has plans to build significantly on the contribution that it makes to the development of our community

(See Alastair Balfour's piece in the middle pages of this issue)

## Path Development Group Items

### Finger Posts Now Complete

Thanks to much hard work by Keith Vass and helpers we now have the complete set of planned finger posts on the paths following the old railway line from from Strathblane to Station Road Blanefield. That includes a replacement made by Keith for the post recently stolen from the Blanefield end

The aim is to help visiting walkers & cyclists especially those on the John Muir Way.



### Gary Wright Way

The Trust was happy to agree to the proposal that the new stretch of path between Station Road and the allotments entrance be named in honour of Gary Wright.

Born in 1984 Gary attended the local Primary School and Balfroon HS, was a cub, a scout and a footballer in local youth teams. At the end of High School he went on a World Challenge expedition to Bolivia before joining the Royal Marines, passing out in July 2003. He served with 45 Commando, based in Arbroath, and saw service in Ghana, Senegal, Norway, California and Northern Ireland. Gary lost his life in Afghanistan shortly after his 22nd birthday

Gary used this route frequently on training runs to get fit for joining the Marines as well as keeping fit when he was home. and he always planned to return to live in Blanefield. As people will have seen signs have now been erected by a work party that included Chris Haddow, who was a close friend of Gary.



**MAKING CONTACT** — use the SCC Email at [contact@strathblanecc.org.uk](mailto:contact@strathblanecc.org.uk)

(or via our website at [www.strathblanecc.org.uk](http://www.strathblanecc.org.uk) ).

### Get in touch with your Community Councillors

Julie Hutchison 770791 Marian Lever 07580539492 Philip Graves 07826 424442

Grace Edmonds 770800 Evelyn Macdougall 770757 Mike McNulty 770076

Mandy Watson 07758 100152 John Gray 771031

**Other Information Sources** — Community website: [www.strathblane.online](http://www.strathblane.online)  
Library; Noticeboards; Shops; Local weekly press; & the Facebook Strathblanefield Page.

**Current & past issues of the Bulletin can be downloaded from the website.**

### STIRLING COUNCIL

**Councillors' Surgeries** are usually at 7pm on SCC meeting nights in the Village Club

**Report faults** at [info@stirling.gov.uk](mailto:info@stirling.gov.uk) or 0845 2777000

**Join My Stirling** at [www.stirling.gov.uk](http://www.stirling.gov.uk) for updates

### Emergency Phone Numbers

Ambulance — 999 Fire — 999 NHS 24 — 111 Police — 999 [for non-emergency calls - 101]

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## **Action to Transform Community Facilities**

**Alastair Balfour** (*Convenor of SCDT's Community Property Action Group (CPAG)*).

### **What do YOU think our community most needs?**

- Affordable housing for rent?
- A new library?
- Retirement housing for our older citizens wishing to downsize from family homes?
- An upgraded or brand-new primary school?
- An all-weather playing pitch at the King George V field?
- Purpose-built offices for local businesses?
- Better facilities for the growing number of walkers passing through?
- A large community hall for bigger entertainment and social events?

.....Truth is, while we all have our personal priorities for how we'd like to see these special villages developed, we need **all** of the above. That was first made clear back in 2011 when the first Community Action Plan was created after extensive consultation. And it remains true today.

SCDT is very aware that time is passing and little has happened to tackle this formidable wish-list.....although we have devoted time, energy and scarce funds to upgrading the valley's network of walking and cycling paths and trails, acquiring and developing the bothy in the graveyard and, led by the Community Council, successfully opposing the unwanted application from Gladman for 70+ houses on a site next to the new CALA development on Campsie Road.

So, you ask, what happens next? Since the beginning of this year a small team under the SCDT's auspices has been working to develop a vision and a concept of what might be possible by way of new facilities for Strathblane and Blanefield to cater for our needs and to make us a sustainable community. We've taken as our guide that Community Action Plan priorities.

We've reviewed the 2017 HubCo report from Stirling Council which confirmed that while they hoped to replace the deteriorating library in the 2020-2021 financial year, they had no plans to replace the school. Even the various options that this report recommended for upgrading and extending the school were not accepted by the council, which repeated that sufficient funding was not presently available.

### **Community empowerment throughout Scotland**

We've also explored what other Scottish community development trusts have been doing. That's quite a lot: today over 200 community development trusts like SCDT are beavering away in seeking control over their own futures. Here's a quick summary of what's going on elsewhere:

- Abandoned churches are being converted into community centres
- Attractive, eco-friendly new affordable and retirement homes are being built
- Undeveloped council-owned land is being purchased by communities with the aid of Scottish Government grants for development to meet their property asset needs
- Hydro-electric and wind-power schemes are being built to meet local electricity needs and provide income for their communities to reinvest in other projects
- Jobs are being created for local people to work full- or part-time on developing and running community projects like walker campsites, gardens, allotments & play parks.

The common theme here is that government – whether it's national or local – no longer has the cash to provide and protect these projects and services. In particular it often no longer has the cash to rebuild or replace ageing buildings, so less essential services like libraries, swimming pools, public toilets and community centres are run down or closed altogether. And schools like ours age away, still maintained in good condition, still delivering an excellent service to our youngest children, but no longer capable of providing a modern education experience for the next generations. and com a modern education experience for the next generations.

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The engine driving this wave of community activism is the Scottish Government's recent legislation that enables properly established bodies like SCDT to acquire run-down, closed or un-used public properties and land. Most of us will have heard of Community Right To Buy orders, by which community councils and development trusts.

The new player on this legislative block is the 2015 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act. With this measure Holyrood gave community organisations the right to request public bodies like local authorities and utility companies to transfer underused or threatened property assets so they can make better use of them. This was accompanied by the Scottish Land Fund which has £10m a year to enable such purchases to be made, often at less than market value.

### **The Strontian Case Study**

This has enabled imaginative, bold projects like the one a community development trust like SCDT recently carried out in the Highland village of Strontian, on the shores of Loch Sunart in Ardnamurchan. Last month it opened a new primary school, an attractive complex of wood-pannelled buildings, built at a cost almost £1m to provide Strontian's 30 nursery and primary pupils with a quality education in a modern, technology-enabled space.

What's this got to do with Strathblane and Blanefield? Simply, the fact that this splendid new school was built and is owned by the local community, not the council. In a case study that has deep parallels with the present situation we face about our ageing Primary, Strontian faced the refusal of cash-strapped Highland Council to replace its 1970s-era school.

What the good people of Strontian did about their problem offers a really interesting insight into how our community could take control of our own destiny buildings fit for purpose, to live in as well as to educate our youngsters. They came up with their own design for a school, and a site, and a plan. That plan involved building the school they wanted and then renting it to the council, which in turn would maintain it and provide the teachers and equipment.

And after a lot of work by Strontian's community council and development trust over two years in raising the cash, from the combination of a bank loan, a Scottish Government grant and by securing £156,000 of investment in shares in the school by local people and others who supported the project – the excited pupils moved in on October 30.

### **A Vision for Our Community?**

SCDT has worked at learning how this project was achieved. We've talked with the Scottish Land Fund to understand how we can access grants to buy Stirling Council property and land – including the school and library, for a redevelopment that meets our agreed needs. . We've met with our local MSP, Bruce Crawford, who was very supportive. Most importantly we've talked with the council about the concept of applying a Strontian-type solution to its funding problems as far as our community is concerned: in other words raising our own financial package to build a new school and library and rent them back to the council.

We're currently seeking funding to carry out a feasibility study into how we could follow the trailblazing path created by Strontian and other volunteer-run Trusts. SCDT doesn't yet have the resources that other longer-established community bodies can bring to bear on ambitious new projects. We don't have the cash or paid staff to put plans together, raise large-scale funding and tackle the multitude of challenges that big initiatives like a Strontian-style project demand.

But we have developed an exciting new vision for the future of Strathblane and Blanefield. This is based on acquiring the school and library site – and possibly other council-owned sites in the villages – and raising the finance to design and build not just a replacement school, but a community campus building that also houses facilities such as a new library, nursery provision, business space, leisure and recreation facilities including a large auditorium capable of housing bigger events than either the Edmonstone Hall or the Village Club, and a bistro-type café. We also envisage upgrading the King George V playing field with an all-weather pitch, plus modern changing facilities.

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We believe our community both needs this resource and is large enough to justify the cost....which will be substantial, probably in excess of £6 million (though we have no definite figures yet).

CDT has adopted this new vision:

- *To achieve a quality, contemporary development that will provide the cultural and social heart of our community. Our aspiration is to deliver an attractive building complex that is entirely in tune with the beautiful landscape within which our villages lie, using traditional materials and green technologies to the maximum possible extent.*
- *The school element should embrace the latest educational philosophies and techniques to offer our young children an inspiring place to learn. The library should be a calming, thoughtful space. And the public areas should encourage social interaction, recreation and participation.*
- *To achieve a sensitive, phased development of surplus land within the community for housing that meets the village's clear requirements. It is likely that a housing association model would be deployed*

It's clear that this vision can only be realized if we are able to raise finance by selling surplus land to meet the community's expressed need for affordable and retirement-style housing. It's SCDT's preference to do as other communities have done and use a housing association model to develop housing for rent rather than purchase, although we also think it possible to sell some individual sites to local folk who want to build their own home. It may also be necessary to invite a housebuilder to buy sites from us to put up houses they can sell locally. However this development happened, it would have to be under the control of the community, through SCDT and the Community Council, and to be approved by the community before a brick was laid.

Obviously this is a major and ambitious project, even on the scale of those initiatives now being pursued by other Scottish communities. It would affect the lives of most people in our twin villages – we believe, for the better. So how can this grand plan actually come to fruition? And will the community support it?

To answer those big questions, we need to commission a detailed feasibility study that will give us all an idea of what can be built where, what it might look like, how much it will cost and where can we raise that finance? Once we have the outcome of this study – it will take 4-6 months to complete - we should have a concrete project and plan on which to consult everyone.

What's next? We need to secure funds of around £25,000 to pay for this feasibility study and a quick assessment of overall viability. We've applied, so far without success, to the Scottish Land Fund for a grant, and are pursuing several approaches including to Stirling Council. SCDT itself has very little spare cash.

We're optimistic that we will gain this funding to at least start down this ambitious road, though it's likely to be into the New Year before we succeed. We believe this is a vital project to secure a good long-term future for our community, and look forwards to bringing you more information as we advance down a path that, if we get the go-ahead, will take the next three to four years.

### **Community 'Ownership' of the Project is Central**

The overarching premise is, of course, that the community will be in control of how our villages evolve. **This is a community project not an SCDT project.** As we show on the next page we have had nearly 10 years of community participation in this process and as we move to the next stage community consultation must be a central feature.

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## The Timeline

- 2008** **The Community Development Trust is established** with the overall objective of advancing community development to improve residents' quality of life in ways that are sustainable — socially, economically and environmentally. It has worked in a complementary way with the Community Council (SCC), first in creating our **Community Action Plan (CAP)**
- 2011** After nearly two years community consultation led by SCC the CAP was agreed. In it we identified seven main and interrelated priorities:
- Developing the Footpath & Cycleway network
  - Improving car parking esp. for local shops
  - **An overdue new 'community' primary school**
  - **Affordable and particular needs housing**
  - Facilities for young people
  - **Using public body assets for the community**
  - Enforcing the 30mph speed limit on the A81
- Some progress has been on each of these (especially on path development) but in every subsequent review exercise the three priorities highlighted above top the list.
- 2015** The **Community Summit** organised with the help of Stirling Council had, as participants, over 50 enthusiastic volunteers representing the full range of community organisations. The them the 'built environment' was by far the most important issue. The key theme to emerge from the Summit was the need to:
- "Work together to create a strategy to tackle the range of urgent 'built environment' requirements to meet community needs — School, Library, Village Hall, affordable housing & housing for older people. The real prospect of a new school building opens up the possibility of a co-ordinated solution to our multiple community needs – especially in the built environment. An imaginative coordinated project might combine the resources of Stirling Council with the expertise and experience available in our community in achieving that outcome."
- SCC and SCDT were asked 'open up a dialogue with Stirling Council to explore a partnership to develop the school and facilities that meet wider community needs;' and out of that came the **Hubco study**.
- 2017** Stirling Council, using the resources of Hubco (a joint partnership between public & private sector organisations aimed at developing and delivering better local services), and with the participation of SCC, SCDT, the Parent Council, School and library staff and community members representing the main community assets took part in an exercise which involved mapping what we have, listing what we might want and outlining how additional facilities might be achieved.
- The **Hubco Report** was summarised in the October 2017 Blane Valley Bulletin. A number of ways of meeting our needs were outlined, but Stirling Council made clear that their funding would be limited to a new Library and Early Years provision with some improvements in school condition.
- 2018** Since 2017 SCDT has embarked on the task of finding an alternative community-led route to achieving the facilities we need. The previous three pages describe the accelerated pace of work that has gone on so far this year.
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### Edenkiln Surgery

People still requiring a Flu Injection please contact the surgery and make an appointment.  
The surgery will be closed on the 25/26th December and the 1/2nd January We can be contacted at 01360 770340.  
For a range of healthcare information go to the practice website at [www.edenkilnsurgery.com](http://www.edenkilnsurgery.com)  
For out of hours help contact NHS24 at 111  
We would like to wish all our patients a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

### Advent and Christmas at Strathblane Parish Church

There are several special events in Strathblane Church and Kirkrooms over the next month and we offer a warm welcome to you all to join us.

2nd December

**6.30 p.m. Advent Praise Night in the Kirkrooms**

9th December

**3.30 p.m. A Messy Church Christmas**

16th December

**11.00 a.m. Family Service**

**6.30 p.m. Service of Lessons & Carols In Church**

24th December

**4.30 Christingle Service for all.**

**11.15 Watchnight Service**

On Wednesday 19th December we plan, weather permitting of course, to go out **Carol Singing** from 6.30 p.m., so, if you would like to join us we will meet up at the Kirk Rooms and aim to sing around Netherblane and Ballewan Crescent to begin with.

#### Also, in January 2019

Friday 11th January 7.30 p.m.

That Friday Night Thing in the Kirk Rooms

Open to all S 1 pupils

**Strathblane Church Choir** warmly welcomes members of our community who love to sing! We meet at 10am in the church for a half-hour practice You are most welcome to stay for the 11am service if you wish. All choir members however are relied on to sing at special services such as Christmas, Easter etc.

In the run up to the Christmas service on 16th December we will meet every Sunday morning.

For more info contact Tamara

[tammylou2\\_uk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tammylou2_uk@yahoo.co.uk) 07968 201131.

**The Edmonstone Hall — for enquiries or bookings**  
contact David McLean on 01360770919 or  
[mclean728@btinternet.com](mailto:mclean728@btinternet.com)

### The Scout Christmas Post

For over twenty years Scouting has been helping people out over the festive season and the Strathblane Scout Post is operating again this year for all local Christmas Cards around Strathblane and Blanefield.

**Stamps at 25p can be purchased from the library, & from Beavers, Cubs & Scout leaders.**

**Post boxes will be in these places also.**

**Last collection is on Friday 14th December  
and cards will be delivered by the Cubs  
on Monday 17th December.**

All proceeds will support the running of the Beavers, Cubs and Scouts groups in Strathblane.

Thank you to our 2018 sponsor  
Cherrybank Dental Practice in Balfron.

### Strathblane Church Guild

November 28th Table Decoration

December 10th Christmas Celebration  
at 7.30pm in the Kirk Rooms

### Mini Music

is now in its second term and is proving to be great fun - for children and grown ups alike! It takes place in the Kirk Rooms every Tuesday morning from 9.30 with songs, instruments, and stories.



Theres always plenty of toast, cake and coffee in the community cafe afterwards! Because of the large numbers we have started a second class at 10am. Classes end this year on December 18th with a little Christmas Party - with prizes and presents!

**For more info please contact Tamara Armstong 07968 201131**  
Mini Music is run by Tamara on behalf of Strathblane Church.

### YOGA CLASSES

**Prenatal Yoga** Weds 7-8pm, Orchard House, Dumbrock Rd.

**Gentle/Beginners Yoga** - Fridays 11.30-12.30 at Village Club

**Contact:** Helen McGougan to book or for more information.

**Mobile:** 07766 562811 **Email:** [helen@mlhyoga.com](mailto:helen@mlhyoga.com)

**The Village Club —for enquiries & bookings:**  
check schedule at [www.villageclub1911.org](http://www.villageclub1911.org)  
email [strathblanevc@gmail.com](mailto:strathblanevc@gmail.com) or Contact  
Fiona Murray at 01360 771497 Office hours only)

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

## NOVEMBER

TUES 27th	11 - 12.30pm	<b>Strathblane Library Natter &amp; Needle - all needleworkers welcome</b>
TUES 27th	7 - 9pm	<b>Traditional Music Session in the Library</b> Contact Sheila on 770824 or on Facebook @ 'Strathblanefield Sessions'
THURS 29th	10.30 - 11am	<b>Book bug in the Library - Songs &amp; Rhymes for wee ones and their carers</b>

## DECEMBER

SUN 2nd	2.30pm —	<b>Strathblane Church: 2.30pm Service, Blanefield House 6.30 Advent Praise Night</b>
MON 3rd	7.30pm	<b>Strathblane Community Council</b> in the Village Club. All welcome
FRI 6th	6 - 8 pm	<b>Strathblane Primary School and Nursery Xmas Market - at the school</b>
THURS 6th	10 - 12	<b>CAB Drop-in Help &amp; Advice</b> in Strathblane Library — Last one for 2018
SUN 9th	11am -	<b>Strathblane Church: 3.30pm Christmas Messy Church, Kirk Rooms;</b>
SUN 9th	2 -4pm	<b>Traditional Acoustic Session</b> in Village Club. Contact <a href="mailto:gethom@tiscali.co.uk">gethom@tiscali.co.uk</a>
TUES 11th	11 - 12.30	<b>Strathblane Library Natter &amp; Needle</b> This is the last meeting of the Group for 2018
TUES 11th	7.15pm	<b>Christmas Tree Lights Switch-On in the Village Club</b> (See Page 1 for details)
WED 12th	7.30pm	<b>Campsie Crooners Christmas Have-a-Go Party</b> in the Village Club
FRI 14th	1.15 - 2pm	<b>Library Story &amp; Craft for Pre-Schoolers.</b> Please contact the library to book — 770737, <a href="mailto:strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk">strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk</a>
SUN 16th	11am —	<b>Strathblane Church — 11am Family Service 6.30pm Lessons and Carols</b>
TUES 18th	7.30 - 9pm	<b>Strathblane Library Book Group Christmas meeting.</b> Contact the library for further information — 770737, <a href="mailto:strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk">strathblanelibrary@stirling.gov.uk</a>
WED 21st	7.30 - 5.30	<b>Strathblane Heritage Society - James Kennedy 'Kinlochard'</b> in the Village Club
THUR 20th	10.30 - 11am	<b>Christmas Bookbug -Sparkly songs &amp; rhymes for wee ones &amp; their carers.</b> All welcome
SUN 23rd	1.30 - 5pm	<b>Electric Jam Session</b> Contact George for details (and if still on) <a href="mailto:gethom@tiscali.co.uk">gethom@tiscali.co.uk</a>
MON 24th	11am —	<b>Strathblane Church 4.30pm Christingle Service, 11.15pm Watchnight Service</b>
TUES 25th	10.30am	<b>Christmas Day Service in Strathblane Church</b>

## JANUARY

TUES 8th	11 -12.30	<b>Strathblane Library Natter &amp; Needle - all needleworkers welcome for craft, chat &amp; cake.</b>
SUN 13th	2-4pm	<b>Traditional Acoustic Session</b> in Village Club. Contact <a href="mailto:gethom@tiscali.co.uk">gethom@tiscali.co.uk</a>
WED 16th	7.30pm	<b>Heritage Society - An Evening with Anne Balfour</b> in the Village Club.
SAT 19th	10am - 12	<b>Citizens Advice Bureau Drop-in Help &amp; Advice—</b> in Strathblane Library
SAT 26th	6.15 for 7	<b>39th Annual Burns Supper, in the Edmonstone Hall</b> (See enclosed flyer for details)

The Blane Valley Bulletin is published monthly (with the exceptions of July and December) by Strathblane Community Council and distributed to all households in our community council area. It is produced and distributed by a group of volunteers led by Alan Hutton and accountable to the Community Council. Contact us at [contact@strathblanec.org.uk](mailto:contact@strathblanec.org.uk)