



Hello!

Your opportunity to shape your community

A new community-led plan is being prepared for the Ardgour Community Council area, from Kingairloch through Clovullin and Treslaig to the south side of Loch Eil: **Ardgour Communities Together**.

Once finished later in 2023, the plan will be our community's agenda for the future: to guide how we spend community funds, influence public services and investment, and steer future planning policy.

The starting point for the plan is to understand what we as a community want for the future - through a simple survey that was delivered to every household in May.

Purposes of today

1. To see the survey results.

The results are a fascinating insight into what we as a community think is important. And they could be the foundation of the plan.

Do you think there any surprises?
Is anything missing?

2. To explore emerging priorities.

Some future priorities emerge from the survey.

Do you think they are the right things to focus on?

How should we start to tackle them?



	435 estimated population
	169 survey responses
	35% of residents responded
	4 local schools involved

What's next?

Using feedback from these events, a draft plan will follow in the summer for you to review.

www.ardgourcommunities.together.net has updates and more information.

You can also sign up there for email updates.



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About the survey

In May 2023, a survey was delivered to each of the approximately 200 households in the Community Council area. As well as door-to-door delivery, the survey was shared by social media, posters, email, word of mouth, schools and www.ArdgourCommunitiesTogether.net.

The survey could be completed online or on paper, and dropped off at local collection boxes or submitted by post. It was made clear that all responses would be treated confidentially.

People were encouraged to complete the survey individually rather than by household.

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169 people responded to the survey. Of these, 157 lived in the Community Council area all or most of the time, in comparison to an estimated population of 435.¹ That means 35% of the estimated population completed the survey, which is a good proportion for a community survey like this.

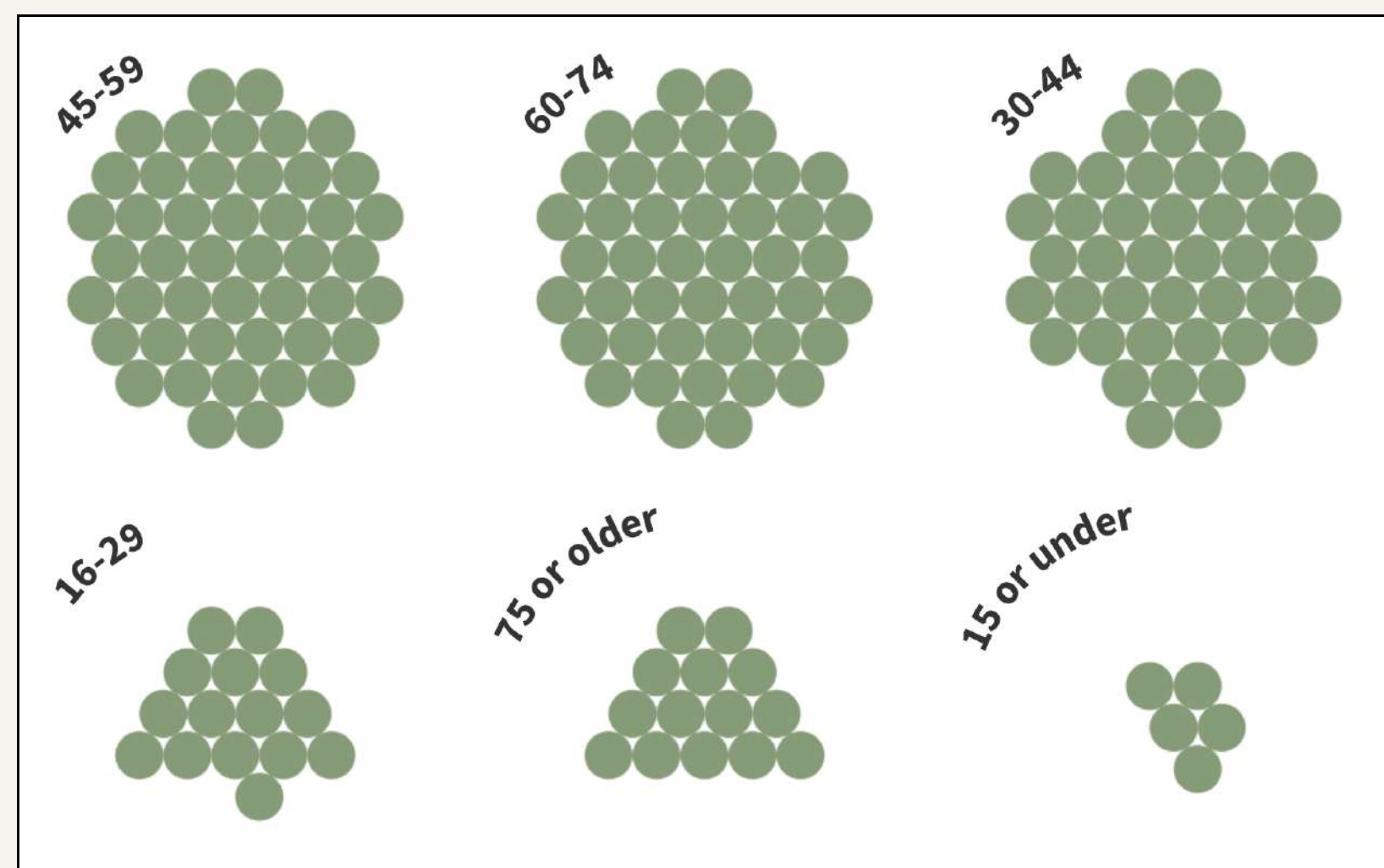
The graphics on this sheet describe who responded to the survey. Each green dot represents one person.

Responses to the survey questions are shown on subsequent sheets.

Engagement is also taking place with local schools, community groups and businesses.

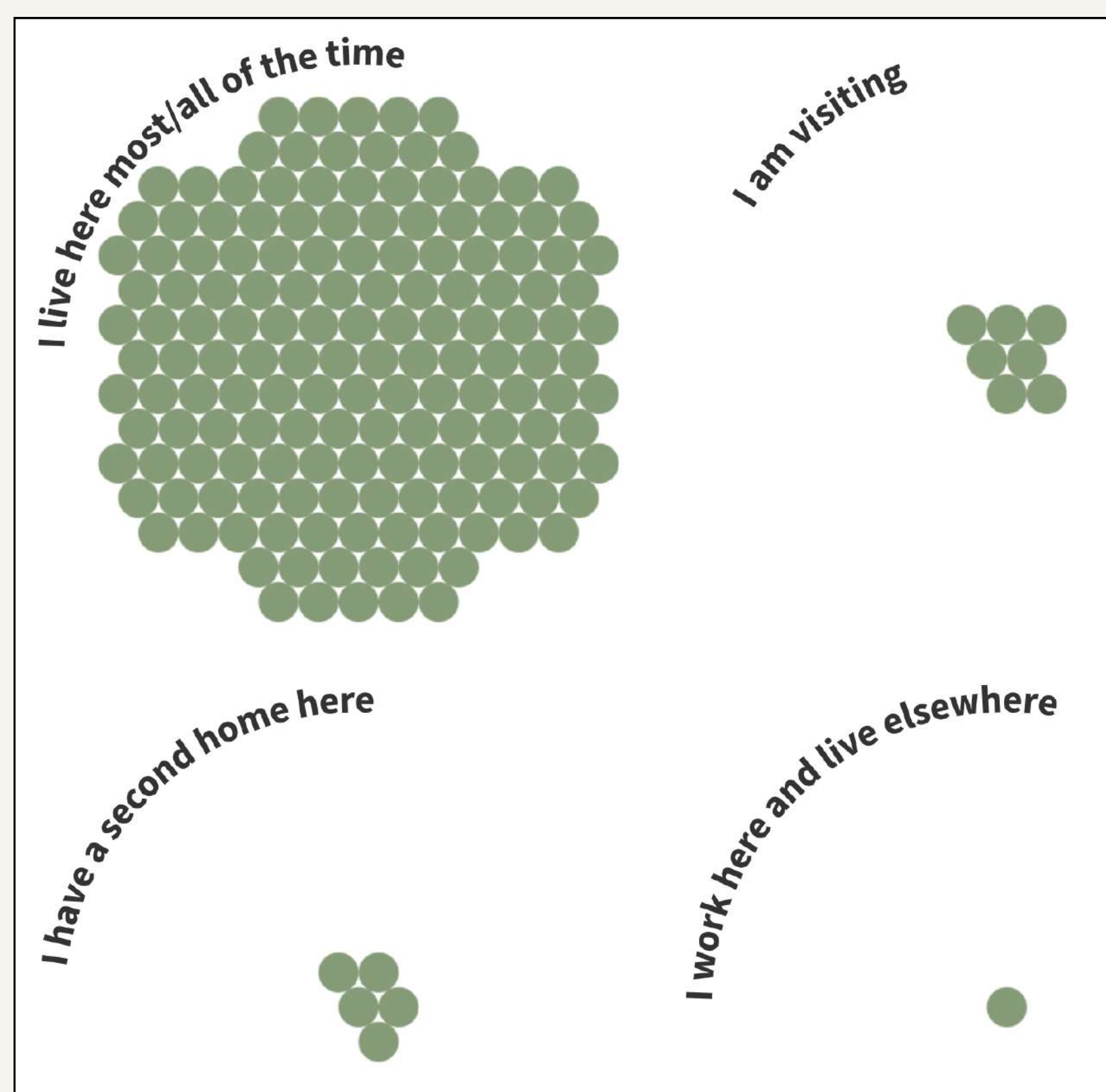
¹ Source: Highland Council mid-year population estimate 2020

below: What age are you?



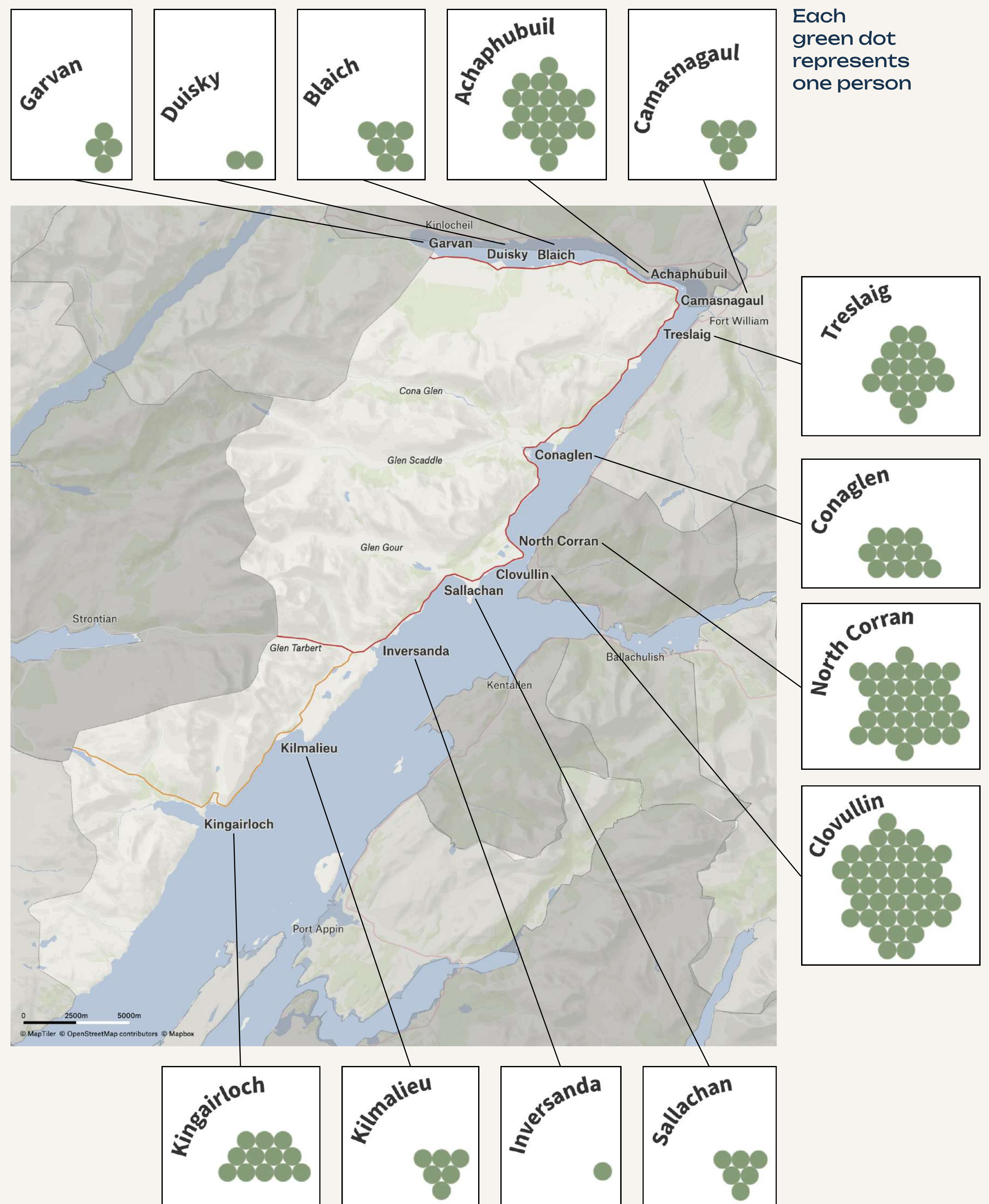
Each green dot represents one person

below: Which of these best describes you?



Each green dot represents one person

below: Where do you live, or are closest to?



Each green dot represents one person

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Our challenges

1. Availability of health & social care services

average rank **8.5**

2. Transport & connections

average rank **8.2**

3. Affordable housing

average rank **8.1**

4. Keeping local facilities & services

average rank **7.7**

5. Jobs & business opportunities

average rank **6.2**

6. Opportunities for young people

average rank **5.8**

7. Activities & things to do

average rank **5.6**

8. Energy & fuel

average rank **5.5**

9. Nature & environment

average rank **4.9**

10. Digital connectivity

average rank **4.9**

11. Climate change

av. rank **4.3**

12. Sense of community

av. rank **4.2**

13. Culture, heritage & identity

av. rank **4.1**

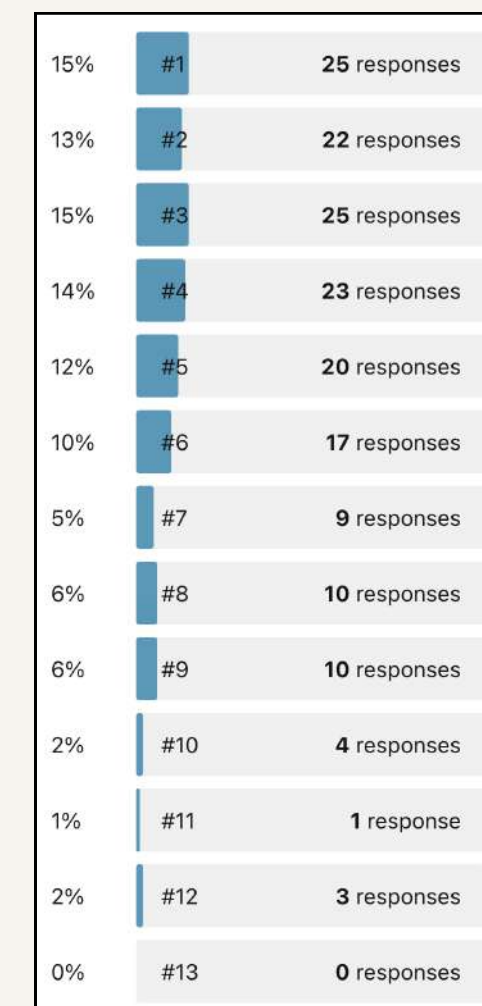


The survey asked people to rank 13 challenges the community faces, with 1 being the highest priority.

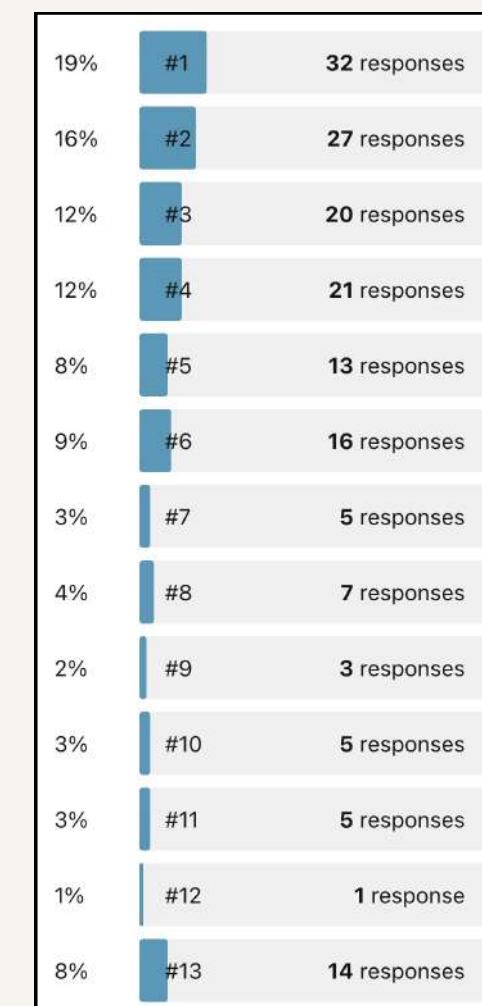
On the left, each challenge is shown in the order of priority based on all 169 responses.

The graphs below show the spread of responses for each challenge.

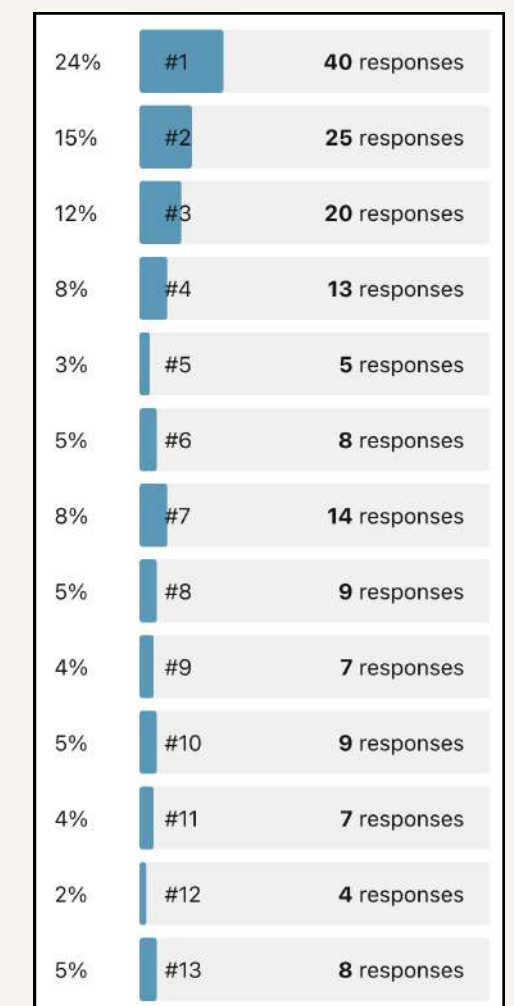
1. Availability of health & social care services



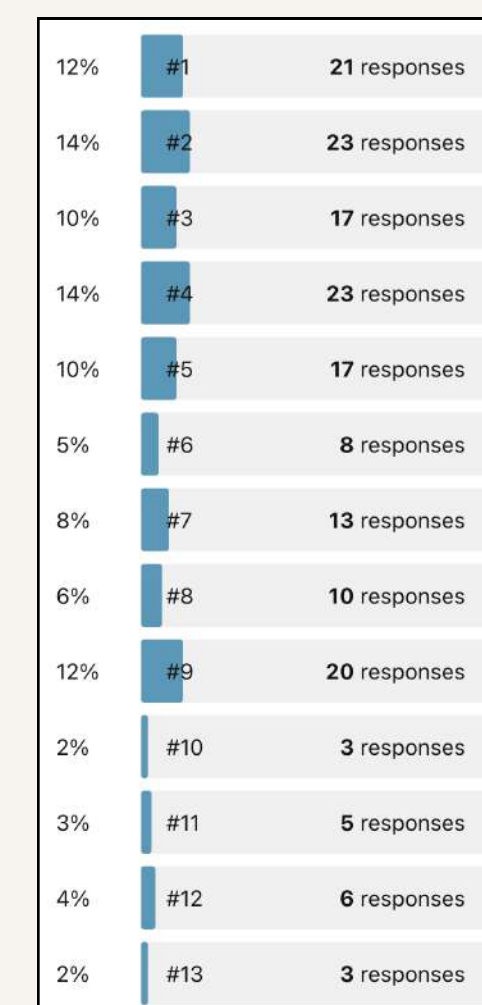
2. Transport & connections



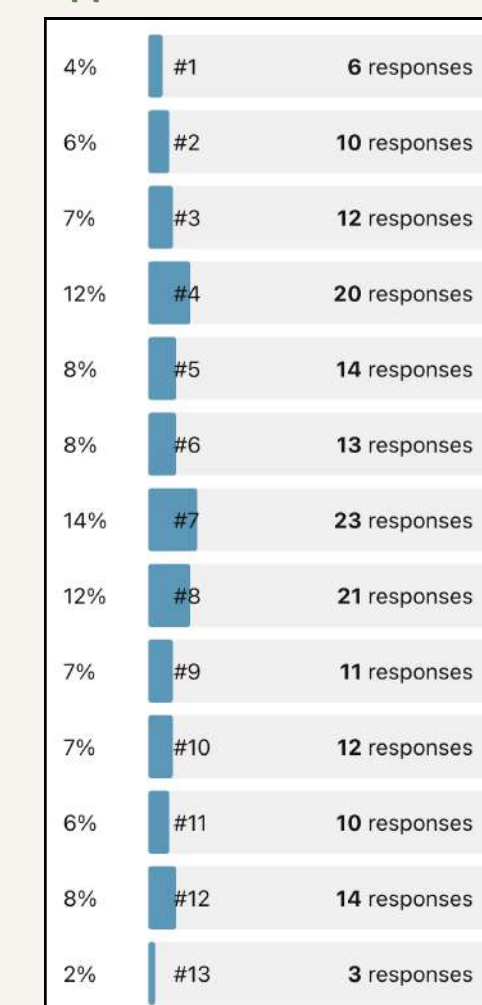
3. Affordable housing



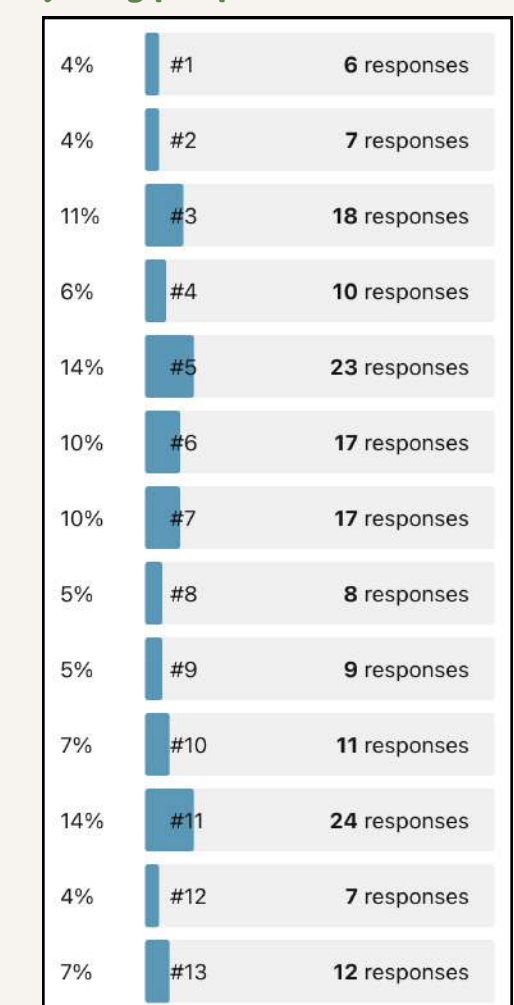
4. Keeping local facilities & services



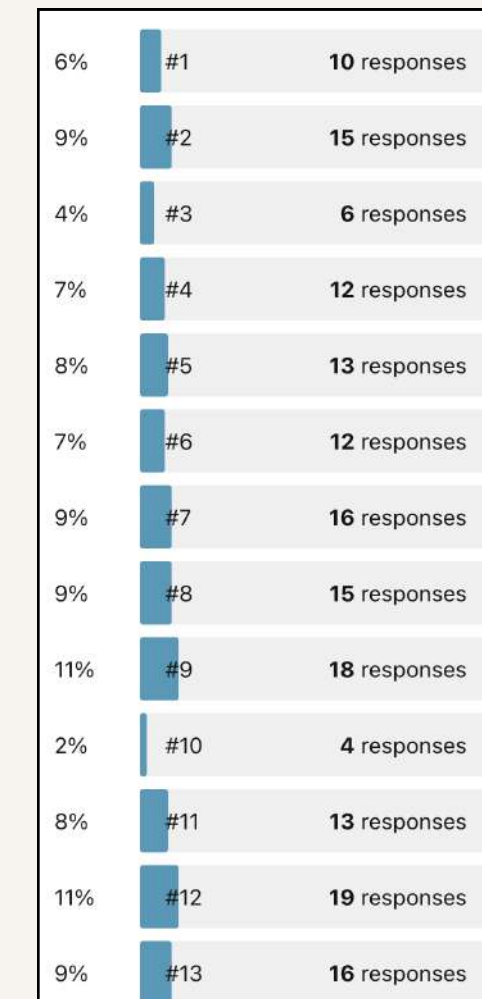
5. Jobs & business opportunities



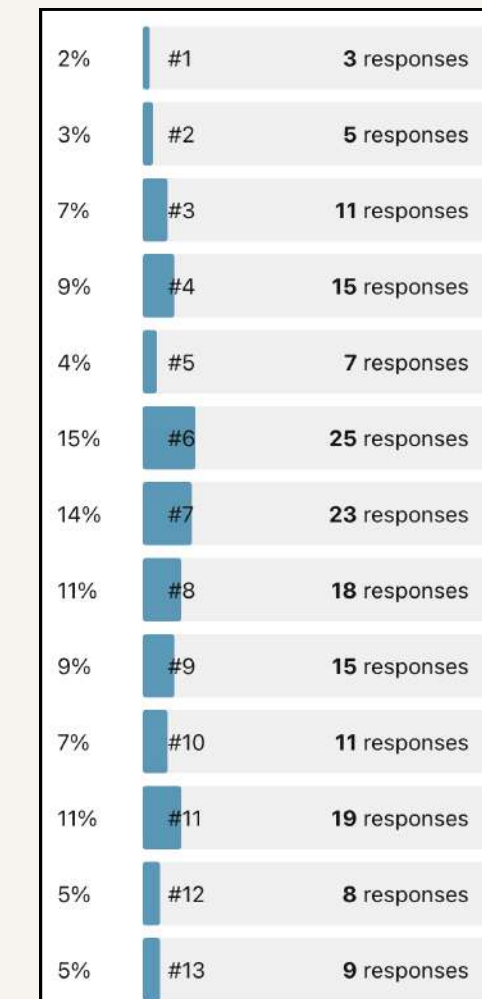
6. Opportunities for young people



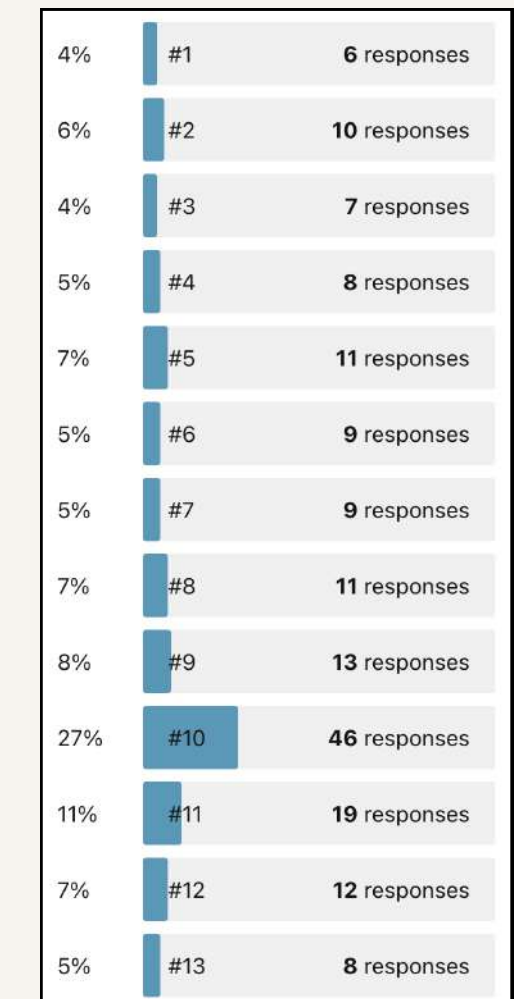
7. Activities & things to do



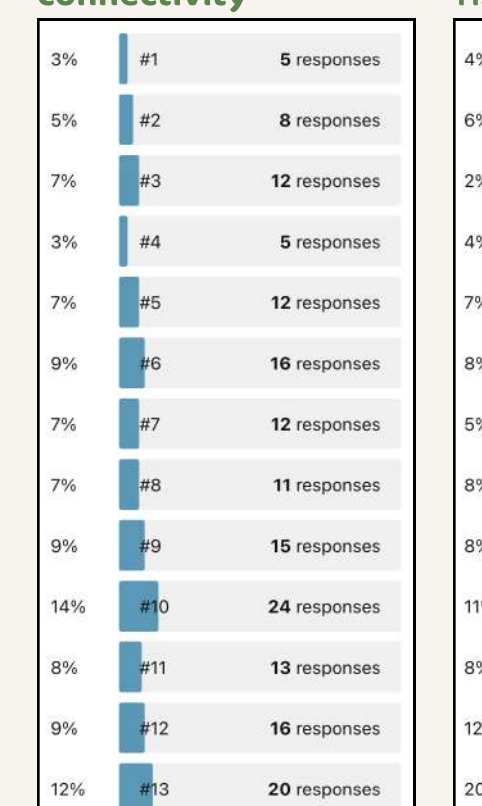
8. Energy & fuel



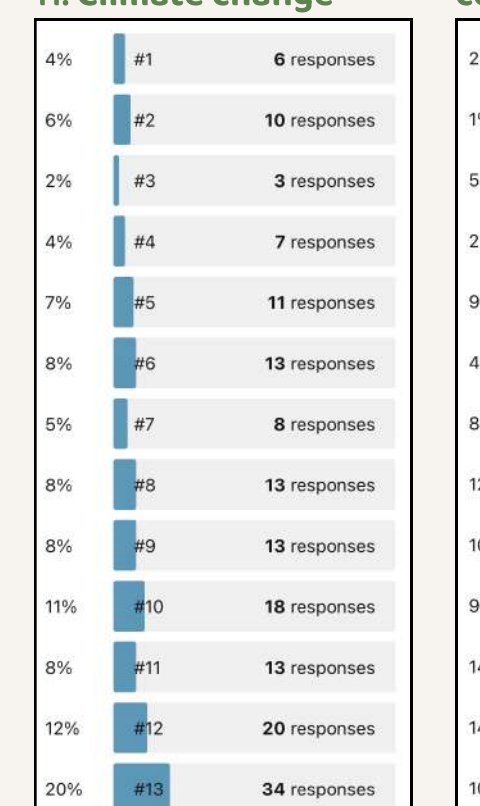
9. Nature & environment



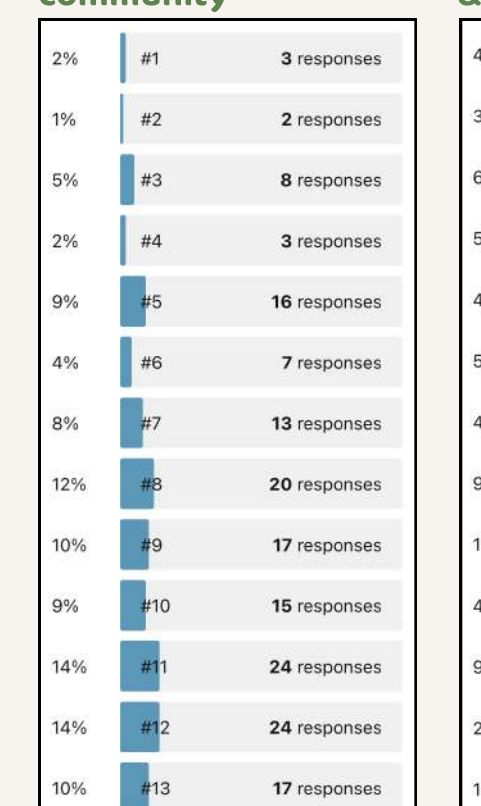
10. Digital connectivity



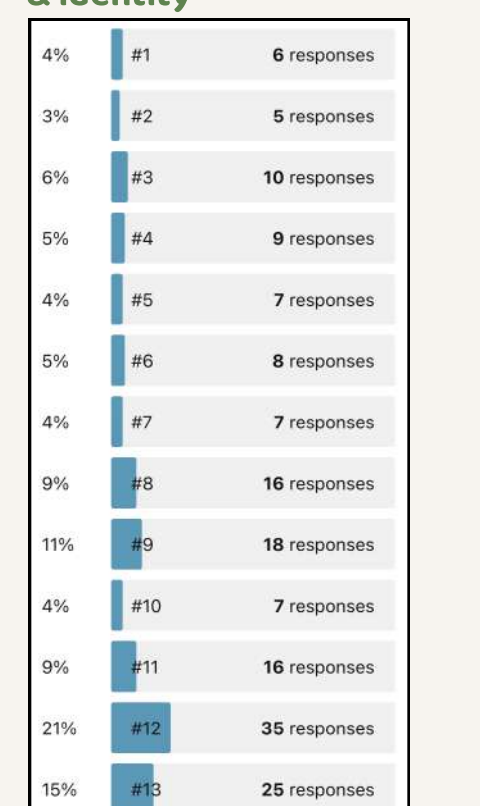
11. Climate change



12. Sense of community



13. Culture, heritage & identity



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The ferry

At the time of the survey, the Corran vehicle ferry had been suspended. The survey asked:

How does the current crisis with the ferry affect you personally, socially or in terms of work?

Here's a representative selection of responses.

ECONOMICALLY...

The local ferry fiasco has cost me personally over £2000 so far in lost revenue through cancellations, and terrible reviews of which I have never received in all my 16 years of running my holiday letting business ..until now!
[aged 45-49]

The knock-on impact of discouraging visitors and impeding deliveries is also of concern as this impacts the fragile local economy further with businesses reducing hours/ services and therefore their staffing needs.
[aged 30-44]

Impacting access to work, adds an additional 70 miles
[aged 30-44]

We run a small farm and holiday let's we have had a lot of cancellations and our bookings are way down from previous years
[aged 45-49]

It's tiresome and costing us as a family an extra £90 per week
[aged 30-44]

REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANT, WITH POTENTIAL CLIENTS OPTING FOR OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS, OR QUESTIONING OUR ABILITY TO DELIVER EFFECTIVELY
[aged 45-59]

It is a meeting place and a central point to our community, much like a pier on an island. It is a place for conversations and generally keeping the peninsula communities connected.
[aged 30-44]

My family's local business is losing customers therefore it's having a financial impact on our family, this also leads me to less working hours so it's harder for me to save and spend
[aged 16-29]

We have resorted to food delivery to try and cut down our fuel bill
[aged 30-44]

Not able to work as much as the cost of getting to and from work in fort william is draining as a mother on a low income. This is affecting me mentally and affecting my family as we can't travel to activities outwith the area Ie swimming that we would have regularly attended in Ballachulish.
[aged 16-29]

I have been unable to get feed delivered for livestock by artic lorry as they cannot go round the loch either
[aged 30-44]

SOCIALLY...

A major impact as I work 12 hour day and night shifts in Fort William as a key worker
[aged 45-59]

It makes commuting to work very difficult and costly. It's not always practical to use the passenger services and so I spend 3 hours a day driving to and from my work.
[aged 30-44]

the mutual support within the community has been - as during lockdown - admirable
[aged 45-59]

Getting groceries and going to the gym are also nightmarish
[aged 45-59]

The ferry being off means we have roughly an hour and 15 mins to travel each way just to attend routine appointments
[aged 30-44]

It is annoying as I feel isolated and very restricted. Being a teenager also adds on as it means I can't socialise with my mates or have a day out. It also affects all my hobbies I do on the other side of the Loch
[aged 16-29]

SOCIALLY ISOLATING
[aged 60-74]

It means there are more cars and queues on the road when I go to ballet in Fort William. It takes longer to get to school and we can't go out cycling on our bikes
[aged 15 or under]

It's a nightmare. It makes life so much more lonely and isolated.
[aged 30-44]

Many of our children's after school activities are based in Fort William (eg. swimming lessons, ballet) and to make these work we need to take them out of school before it finishes and travel over an hour to get there
[aged 30-44]

GETTING ABOUT...

people are driving way too fast, there is going to be an accident
[aged 30-44]

A861 is busier due to the volume of traffic and not safe to walk or cycle
[aged 60-74]

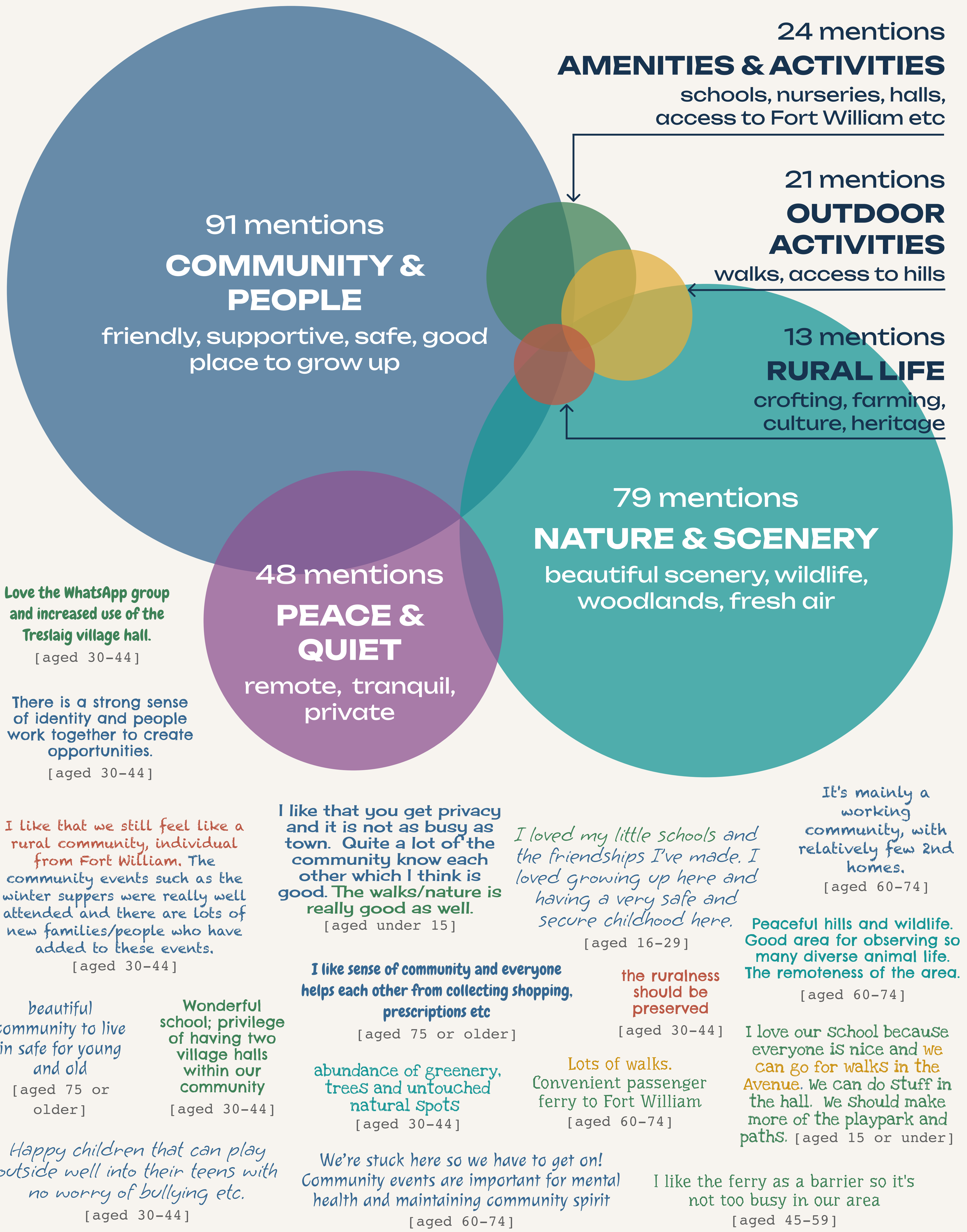
I enjoy the passenger service, if we could keep that in conjunction with a car ferry life would be sweet
[aged 45-59]

damage to roadside verges and increased the dangers of walking along the road with children/pets etc. Although there has been a speed restriction put in place in Achaphuil this has mostly been ignored
[aged 45-59]

the RIB connection to the Fort is an excellent innovation which could yet be retained and developed as a sustainable tourism and commuter option
[aged 45-59]

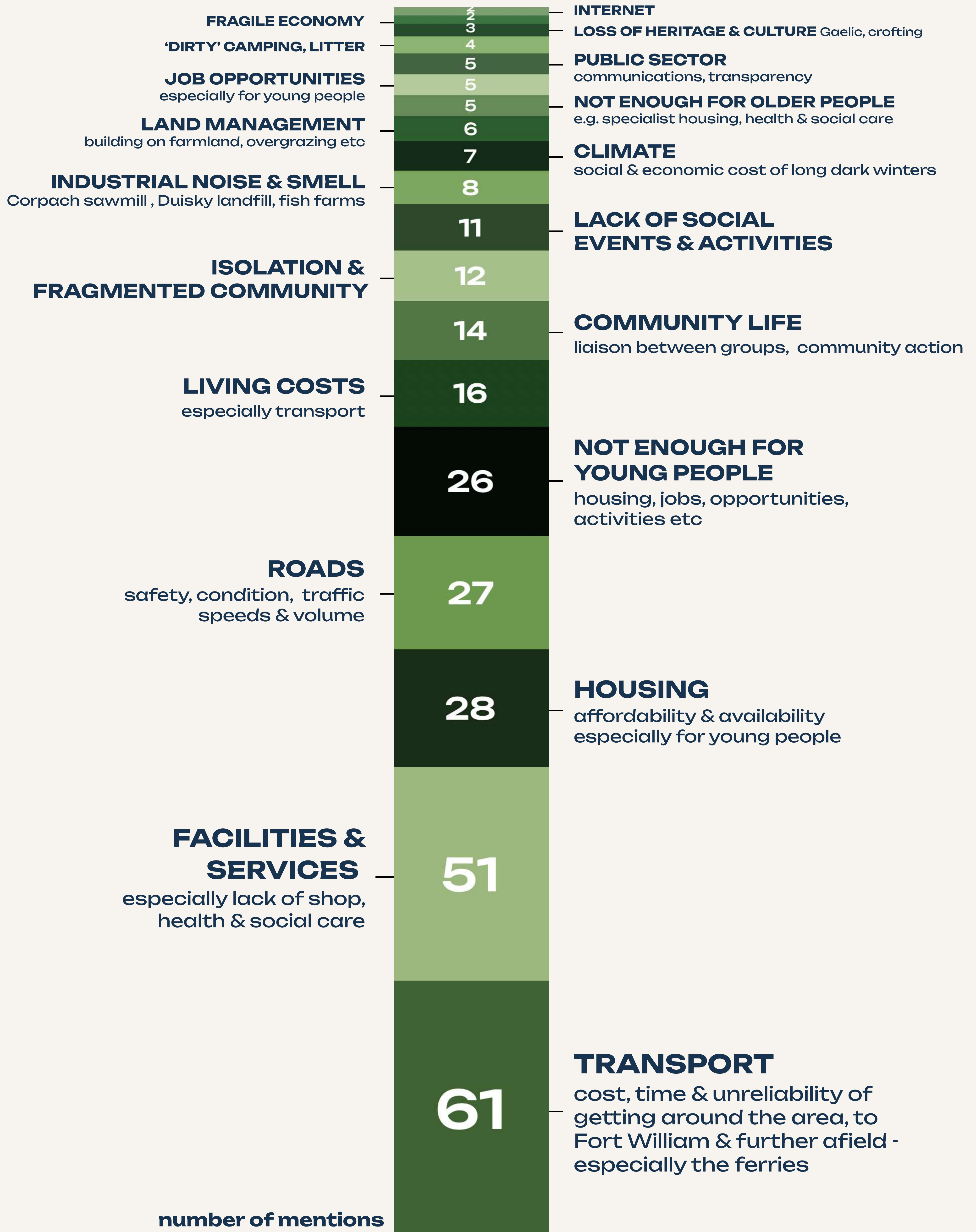
4

What do you like about our community?



5a

What do you not like about our community?



5b

What do you not like about our community?

Sustainable transport is the biggest issue we face as a rural community, as a proper well designed and linked up system can help all members of the community [aged 30-44]

TRANSPORT

Road along the lochside!! Speed and inconsideration of some motorists

[aged 60-74]

Relying on a ferry that is not fit for purpose
[aged 45-49]

Expense of the ferry when on and the inconvenience when it is off
[aged 60-74]

No ferry at Camusnagaul to accommodate emergency service shifts
[aged 16-29]

It can feel disconnected socially. It is challenging to get public transport to town especially at night and the weekends.

[aged 16-29]

there isn't as much to do. There is a play park in ardgour but what about the rest of the kids on the lochside

[aged 15 or under]

no community hub so that unless there is something organised in the hall or I go to a pub, there is nowhere to socialise or to hang out and meet people

[aged 45-59]

SERVICES & FACILITIES

Distance from shops and doctors

[aged 30-44]

All services are in town. A driving licence or supportive family are essential to keeping older people in their homes where they wish to be.

[aged 75 or older]

The village shop is a huge miss both for supplies but also as a meeting point
[aged 75 or older]

Complete lack of social care for elderly and those in need

[aged 60-74]

Very bad internet

[aged 60-74]

upset that all housing is sold outwith the locality as young locals cannot afford housing
[aged 30-44]

HOUSING

The lack of housing - both rented and to buy... We need more children at the primary school to keep staff and jobs alive
[aged 16-29]

Housing is incredibly difficult, and often is based upon who you know. We are constantly in a position of not knowing whether we will be able to continue living in the area because of unsecure housing.

[aged 30-44]

Estates selling off arable land as house plots to highest bidders
[aged 60-74]

to buy here costs more than it does to buy in Fort William, therefore both aspects pushes out younger/ growing families to live in the area as they can't afford it and there are not suitable houses available for simple family homes
[aged 30-44]

Our inability to grow. The lack of affordable housing for young folk, the costs of the ferry cripple young people ensuring young people struggle to live and work here. The opportunities for young folk to progress in business ventures without reaching constant blocks. [aged 16-29]

LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

A LOT OF LONELINESS AND ISOLATION; LACK OF TRANSPORT STOPS PEOPLE ENGAGING IN LOCAL ACTIVITIES; LACK OF CHILDCARE SUPPORT PREVENTS THE YOUNG FROM DEVELOPING LIVES

[aged 60-74]

there are very few job opportunities for young people on this side of the loch and the passenger ferry isn't available on Sundays, so as a young person looking for a part time job I am struggling.

I also feel there is not much to do here and that the village halls should be put to more use to organise activities

[aged 16-29]

It is hard to form a community over so many miles, 20 and more
[age unknown]

What saddens me is that we had much more amenities 30 years ago here than we do now. The sense of community is diminishing... We are not encouraging youths to stay in the area
[aged 30-44]

The community can often be quite difficult to become part of, as there is often a feeling of cliqueness. This can make it quite isolating for people

[aged 30-44]

COMMUNITY

small population so hard to organise group activities
[aged 60-74]

To many "community" groups all competing/ conflicting. The focus should be on what the Community does have - assets such as the village hall. [aged 30-44]

OFTEN THE SAME PEOPLE ON LOCAL DECISION MAKING GROUPS, GOOD THAT THIS IS OPEN FOR ALL OPINIONS.

[aged 45-59]

there is still an element of division between the 'old' community and the 'new' community
[aged 30-44]

Smell & large vehicles from Duisky landfill
[aged 30-44]

POLLUTION

'wild campers' that drive up onto grassy banks or into side of road to pitch up. Litter and toileting ... [e.g.] the crofters walk at the beach area and by the lifeboat.

[aged 30-44]

the noise from the sawmill across from Achaphubuil

[aged 45-59]

Loss of local heritage and Gaelic culture

[aged 60-74]

There is a lot of benefit from people moving in but certainly leaves the area with a lot less of its original culture and heritage

[aged 45-59]

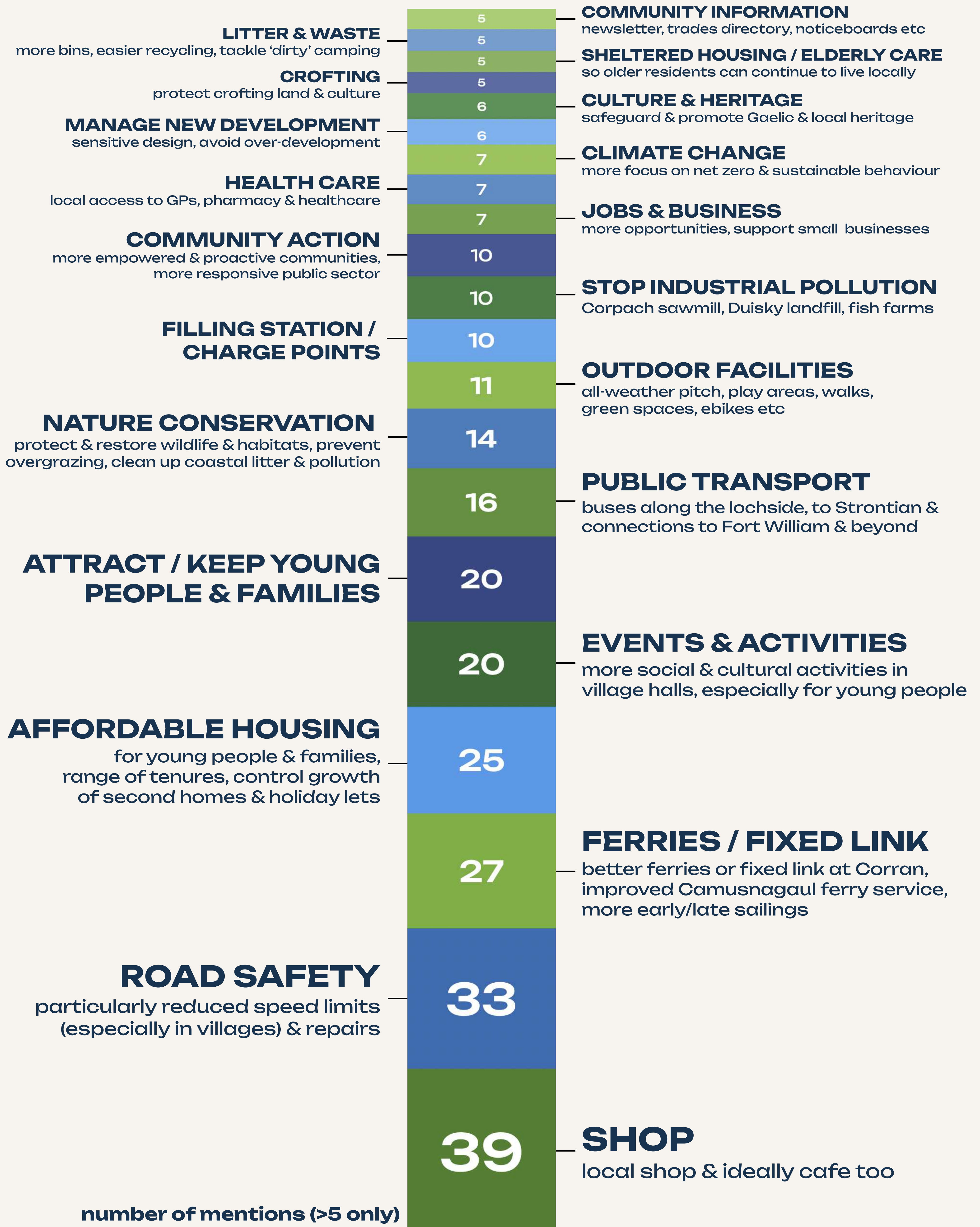
WINTER

The weather does make living here particularly challenging. The long dark days of winter, the increasingly torrid storms, extra house maintenance issues

[aged 45-59]

6a

What one thing would you like to see happen?



6b

What one thing would you like to see happen?

The infographic on the previous sheet summarised what one thing people would like to see happen in the area in the future.

Some are broad aspirations, others are specific things. An example of an aspiration would be to retain & attract families & young people; an example of a specific things would be to build affordable homes for them.

Top priorities emerging are:

- a local shop
- road improvements
- fixing the ferry situation
- affordable housing for young people & families

There are **less common suggestions** too, like tackling climate change, access to health care, protecting culture & heritage, and supporting jobs & business. These are all equally important if we are to survive and thrive as a community.

The reality is that people's suggestions & aspirations all **connect and overlap**. The diagram on the right and the quotes below demonstrate a few of those connections.

That means that there is no one magic bullet that will fix everything, be it a new bridge or an astro-turf pitch. That's why we need a **plan** that covers a range of things, and has some sense of what we're aiming to achieve - rather than simply a list of projects.

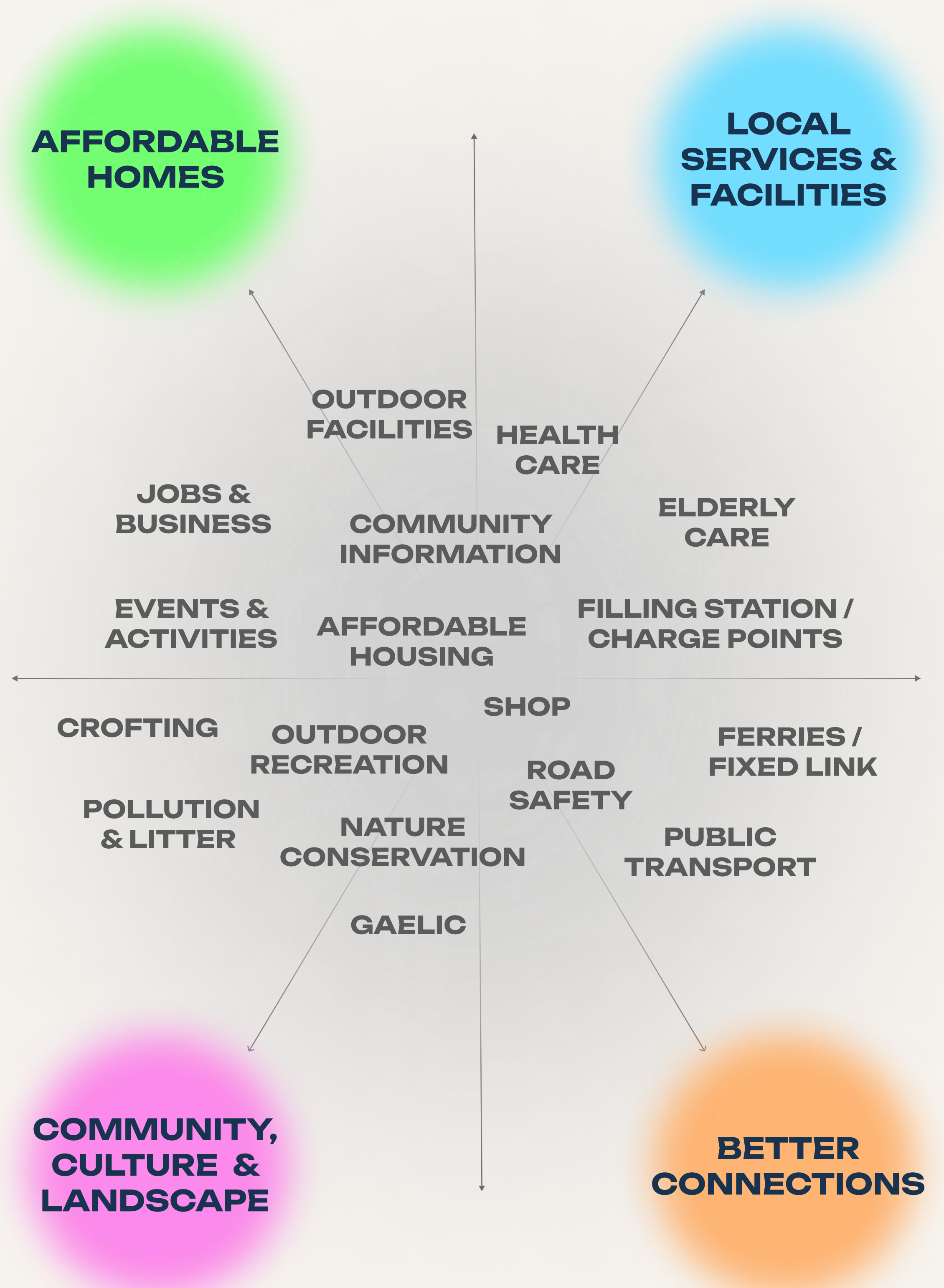
A few words on ferries...

Survey responses show that a well-connected Camasnagaul passenger ferry is vital to access work, services & opportunities in Fort William, irrespective of current difficulties at Corran.

Fixing the Corran ferry is essential in the short term.

In the longer term, the survey generated mixed views on whether it should be replaced by a bridge (or even a tunnel).

But most people sense the need for a reliable link across the loch to sustain local jobs & services and to retain & attract young people & families - both of which are vital for the future of our community.



Part-time shop perhaps for essentials to save going to town or Strontian
[aged 60-74]

Community transport covering the area for events - there is a difficulty is getting people to travel to the halls for events as they might like one or two drinks but then can't drive [aged 45-49]

The communities from Garvan to Gorsten to be remembered and included
[aged 30-44]

I think it's important we keep a lot of natural green space and not over crowding of houses while still being able to offer housing opportunities for young people
[aged 16-29]

It would be fantastic for Ardgour and the peninsula to lead the way of sustainability, i.e. geothermal community, heating, electric vehicle chargers, public transport, cycle/walk ways, community woodland [aged 45-59]

Trying to make crofting more affordable for local young families to keep local people in their community [aged 16-29]

Lots of visitors walk along and also children's play park on road but so much traffic going too fast!
[aged 45-49]

WELL, I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT INDEPENDENCE FROM THE REST OF SCOTLAND WOULD BE A GOOD THING FOR THE AREA [aged 60-74]

An increase in affordable housing and support to enable local young people to stay in the area and continue our traditions and culture
[aged 60-74]