



Our Community, Our Future

Working groups: May 2021

Five themed public workshops were held during May 2021 to begin to flesh out practical actions for the Community Action Plan, for review by the second Community Assembly.

The working groups built on the outputs from:

- **Community survey results** in February/March with 260+ responses.
- Suggestions and 'likes' in the **Ideas Bank** (most submitted online, some on paper via the shop and PO).
- The **first Community Assembly** on 15th April - [summary here](#).

The working groups covered 5 themes:

- **Better Connections**: 4 May 7:30-9:30pm
- **Community Life**: 11 May 7:30-9:30pm
- **Organising Ourselves**: 13 May 7:30-9:30pm
- **Outdoors and Nature**: 18 May 7:30-9:30pm
- **Our Homes**: 20 May 7:30-9:30pm

Summaries of what emerged from each workshop are shown on subsequent pages of this PDF document.

For more information and video recordings of each workshop, please click on the workshop titles above.

The **agenda** for each working group was:

- The big picture
- Recap on the theme
- **What does this theme mean to you?**
- What do we already know?
- What came out of the first Community Assembly?
- What's in the Ideas Bank?
- **What solutions will create the most impact?**



Working group on Community Life Tuesday 11th May 2021

The diagrams below and right capture the main points made in discussions. The text below is a summary. Some of you may prefer to read the text, others to look at the diagrams.

Community Life: what does that mean to you? And what needs to happen to support it?

When asked what Community Life meant to them, the group said:

- Balance better lifestyles for all ages without having to go to Inverness with retaining the community's safe rural caring character.
- More opportunities to meet people, especially for those who are lonely.
- More amenities and activities for kids - otherwise the community will dwindle away.
- Doing things for ourselves, being sustainable.
- Events that bring people of all ages together.
- Create a sense of community.
- Being able to set up a home and life here after you leave school or college.

The group also reached an initial set of potential projects. In no particular order:

- Playpark
- Community centre
- Sports facility
- Place to sell local arts and crafts
- Community purchase of shop and Post Office
- Community purchase of campsite
- Combine the primary schools
- Wraparound childcare for working parents
- More activities for nursery and primary aged children
- More apprenticeships

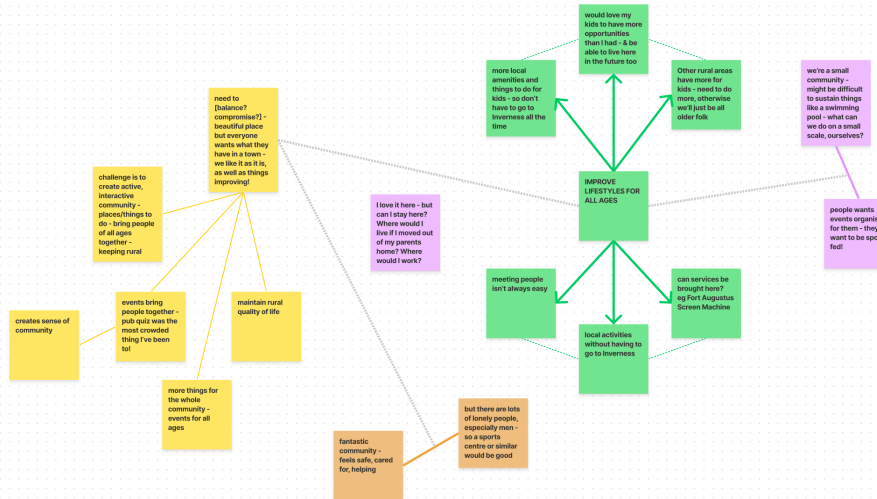
Some 'principles' were suggested too:

- Need a focus to bring people of different ages and experiences together.
- Things for young and old are important, but don't forget the middle age range - it can be difficult to meet people.
- Volunteers are stretched. Ideas will only work if people step up to do them. Maybe we need to use employed people more, and increase volunteer capacity.

Things may be missing, others may not be quite right. More planning is needed to work out how these ideas might work and what they will look like. But they are a good starting point.



What does 'Community Life' mean to you?

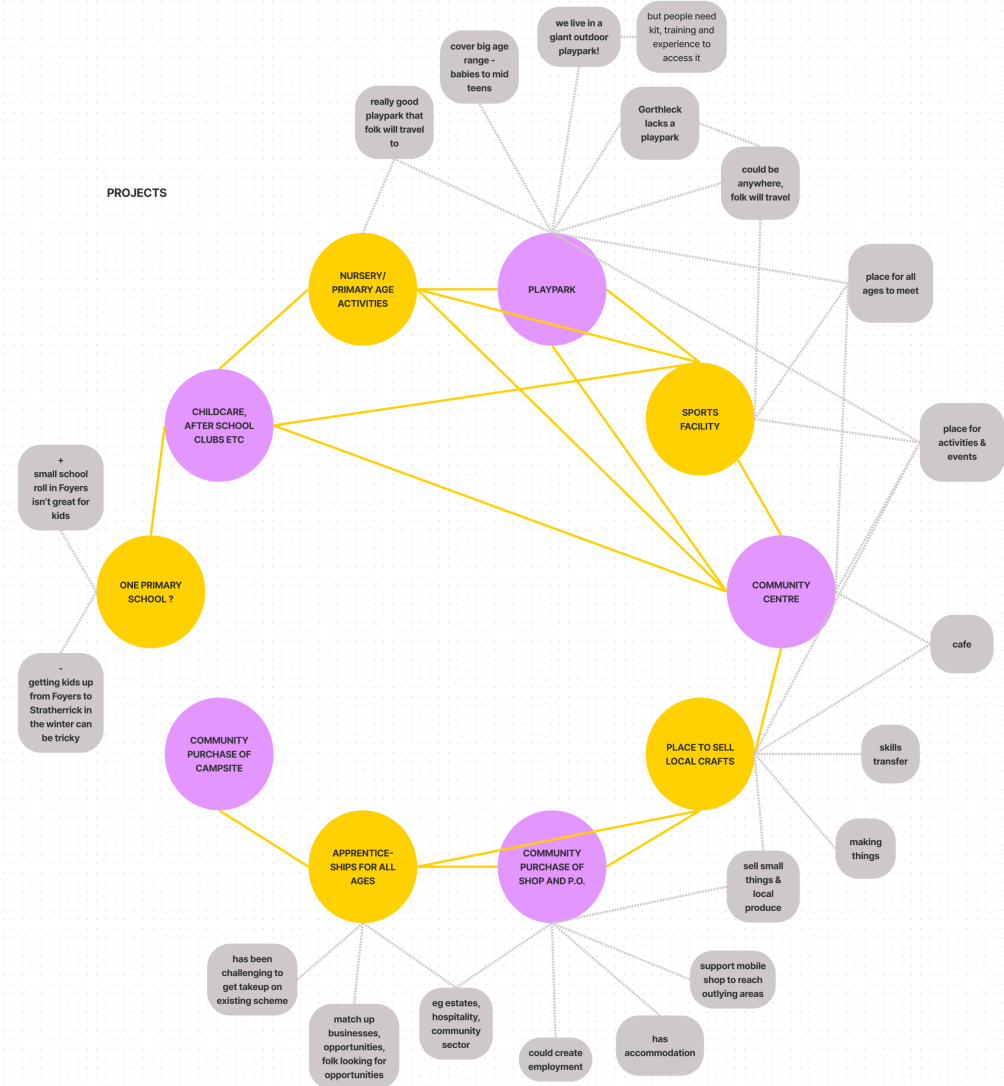


Which solutions will have the most impact on our community?

PRINCIPLES



PROJECTS





Working group on Organising Ourselves Thursday 13th May 2021

The diagrams below and right capture the main points made in discussions. The text below is a summary. Some of you may prefer to read the text, others to look at the diagrams.

What did 'organising ourselves' mean to those who came to the discussion? Overall, suggestions included:

- Listening to the community - especially those who really matter, like those who will be most affected by changes.
- People need to feel part of local decision making.
- Local groups working in greater harmony, with less hostility in conversations - especially around the Community Trust.
- Knowing where to go if I wanted to start a club or a project.
- Overcoming the ongoing challenge of keeping people informed and updated across such a wide area and different ways of communicating, which has been especially hard during lockdown.
- Thinking about the content of communications, as well as the means of communication.
- Communications as a 2-way street - a responsibility on organisations to communicate as well as they can, and on individuals to seek out the information.
- Doing as much as we can ourselves, as individuals or groups, rather than looking to others to do it for us.

No decisions were made - it's too early in the process for that. But, having looked through the Ideas Bank and what came out of the first Community Assembly, the group reached arrived at a set of realistic potential actions. In no particular order:

- Advisory group of local folk to help the Trust, and other organisations, improve their communications.
- Regular informal public gatherings of community groups to share information, explain what they're doing to the community and support each other.
- Regular public meetings of the Community Trust, and a request to funders that full transparency is allowed.
- A small co-ordinating group from across community organisations to oversee delivery of the Community Action Plan once it has been completed.
- Community groups working together to organise themselves as the pandemic eases.
- Employ people to deliver projects rather than relying on volunteers - a suggestion which came up at the Community Life working group too.
- Transform the way that the Community Trust interacts with other community groups to provide co-ordination, collaboration and support.
- Easier access to small funding pots for community action.

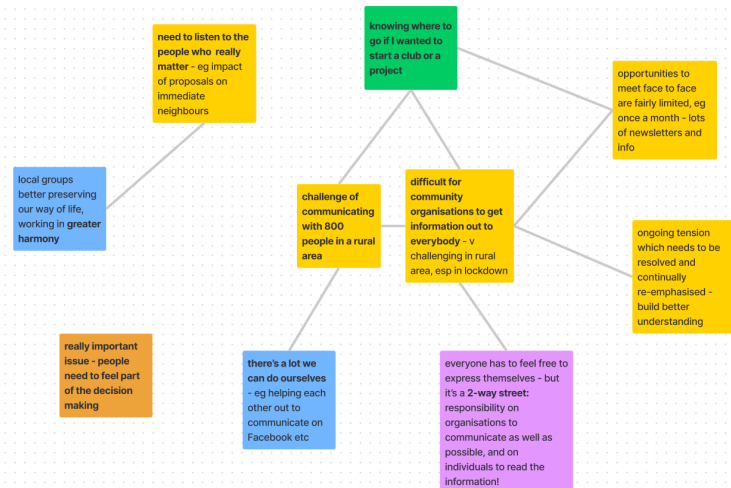
A number of gaps in the discussion were identified at the end of the meeting, including:

- How groups might engage better with the local community, as much of the discussion was about how groups engage with each other.
- How groups organise themselves coming out of COVID.
- More discussion about volunteer burnout and the role of paid staff.
- The need to expand the discussion beyond the Trust to include how everyone works together.

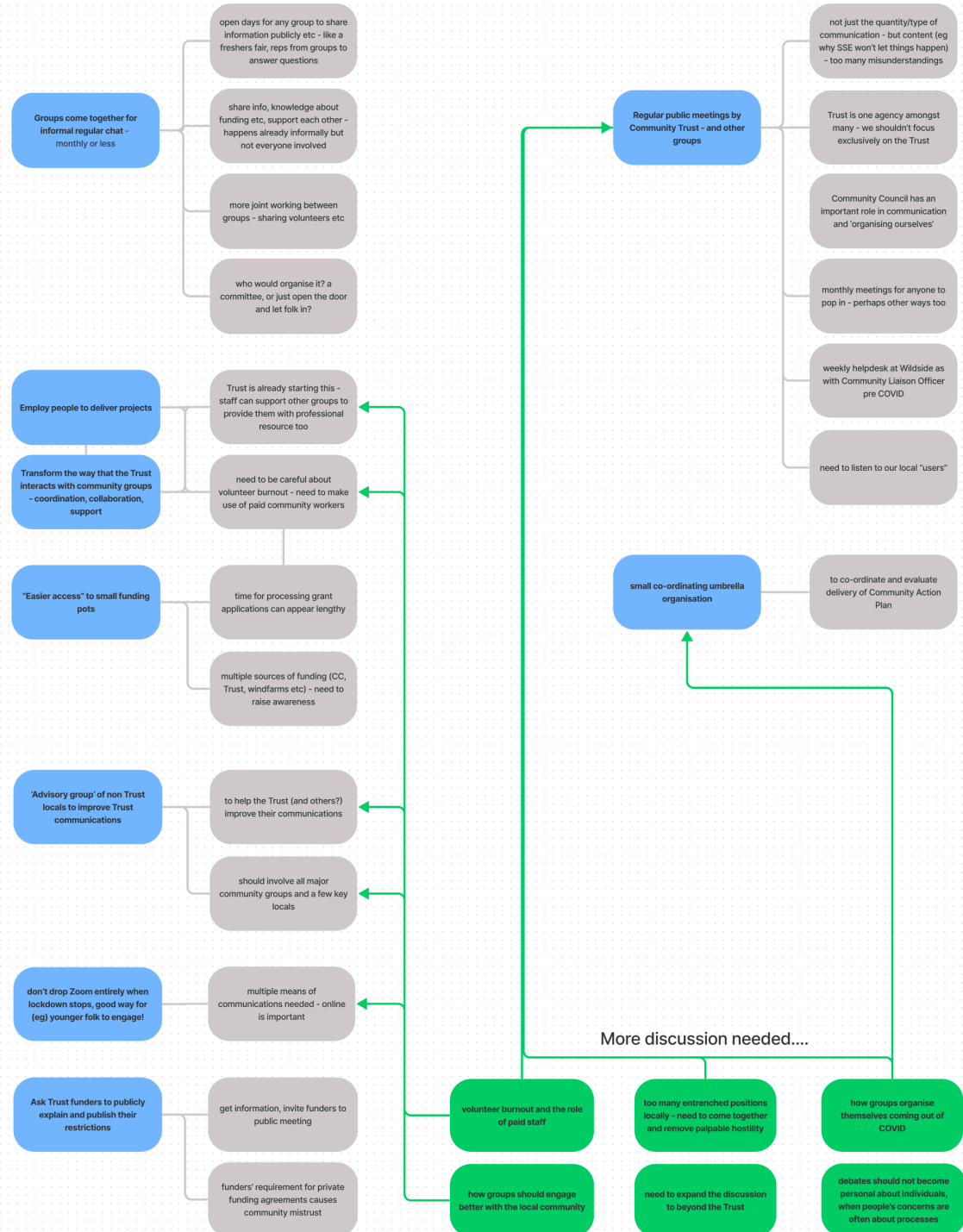
Some of these things are already starting to happen, as we heard during the workshop. Others are new ideas. There may be gaps or things to change, but they all merit further investigation at the Community Assembly before writing a first draft of the Community Action Plan.



What does 'Organising Ourselves' mean to you?



Which solutions will have the most impact on our community?



ACTIONS

- **Community-led new homes** - mixed tenure, flexible designs for families/singles and different ages
- **Local control of rental allocations** and restrictions on sale or let
- **Invest in existing homes** - occupied and derelict
- **Community-led housing management** - including communal factoring, services and maintenance
- **Help-to-buy financial support** - eg for young people or those moving out of tied housing
- **Provide support for people in their homes** - to address physical, social, financial issues
- **Directory of local tradesmen** - to help residents and businesses
- **Identify sites for new homes** - including self-build
- **Specialist (eg respite) accommodation** plus supporting facilities and carer accommodation

PRINCIPLES

- Affordable
- Focus on local people
- Be inclusive, all ages - young to old
- Small mixed development with amenities to build community
- Eco, green, innovative, local materials
- New homes should meet certain standards - space, eco, gardens and/or allotments
- Local builders/tradesmen
- Sympathetic to rural environment / landscape
- Roles for various local organisations in delivering action - eg Community Trust, BCC, Community Council

BENEFITS

- Build/support community
- Encourage younger people and families > sustainable community
- Provide good suitable accommodation for local people in need
- Support care in the community
- Local control
- Eco-friendly

POINTS FOR FUTURE DISCUSSION?

- Crofting / smallholding opportunities
- Second homes

