

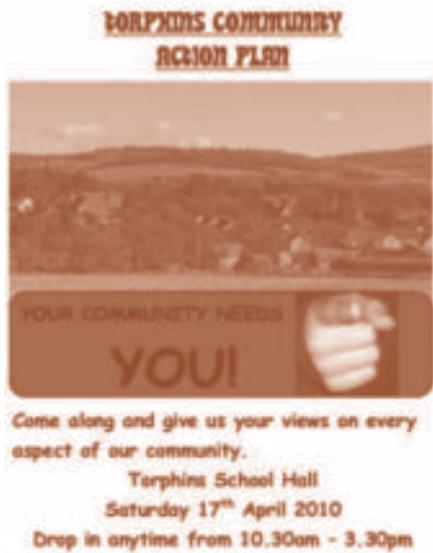


# Torphins

## Community Action Plan



Youth Views Event.



TCAP Poster.



TCAP Planning Event.

## Introduction

Welcome to Torphins Community Action Plan. This is the first Community Action Plan that the community of Torphins has developed.

The Torphins Community Council (TCC) is pleased to publish this document which is the result of the whole community becoming involved and active in the sharing, discussion and finally agreeing how they will work together to achieve the outcomes that they would like for their community. This document highlights issues that the community sees as being worthy of preserving, sustaining or developing. It is inevitable that some of the aspirations will not be deliverable in the immediate future, however all the views that were expressed have been included in the 'raw data' which can be found on the [www.Torphins.org.uk](http://www.Torphins.org.uk) website, community planning page.

The community is now able to use the data collected to inform their discussions regarding the priorities for community action planning.

## The Village

Torphins is a pleasant rural village in the Marr Area of Aberdeenshire. It is part of Royal Deeside and lies twenty miles west of Aberdeen, and six miles west of Banchory. The village has a population of over

1,200, approximately one third of the adults working locally and about half commuting to Aberdeen on a daily basis.

Although Torphins is one of the larger villages in Deeside, it retains a pleasant, quiet country atmosphere. It can be accessed from Aberdeen by car driving along the A980 or by bus either directly from Aberdeen or via Banchory.

Located in the heart of Deeside, surrounded by beautiful countryside, the community has immediate easy access to Estate lands, Forestry Commission managed woodlands, local Core Paths, a section of the old Deeside railway line, a number of rights of ways and minor country roads. These routes are used by a large number of people for a variety of recreational purposes.

The village has many facilities; a home baker, a post office, a pharmacy and gift shop, a general grocer, pottery/crafts and coffee studio, a hairdresser, a car dealership, a doctor's surgery that is part of a larger health centre, a vet's surgery, a private nursery with afterschool care facilities and several nursing and care homes. In addition there is a wide range businesses and services based in the village including landscaping and gardening services, builders, electricians, plumbers architects and alternative health therapists.

There are recreational facilities including a park with a football pitch, mini ramp and pavilion, a nine hole golf course, two tennis courts, a bowling green, and in years of a deep enough frost a curling rink. Aboyne which is to be found eight miles to the west, along the Dee Valley, hosts the local community centre with a swimming pool, gymnasium, rock wall, crèche facilities, a number of adult education classes and a theatre or cinema.

Torphins has a primary school which includes a nursery. When the children are ready to transfer to secondary school they are bussed on a daily basis to Aboyne Academy although a number of young people choose to travel by bus to Banchory Academy.

The village has a hotel, 'The Learney Arms', as well as its own 19th century village hall and a very pretty Church of Scotland church, of Germanic design, which is part of the parish of Mid Deeside.

The village has a wide range of clubs and societies that cater for all ages and interests. Further details of these groups, including contact details, can be found in the annually reviewed 'Torphins Directory'.

The village has a number of annual events. The Torphins Gala, held in the local park, coincides with the start of the

autumn school term. Also held in August, the Torphins Horticultural and Industrial Society host its Flower Show. In December the TCC organises carol singing, with refreshments, around the Christmas tree outside the Learney hall.

### Aims

The purpose of this Action Plan is to summarise the aspirations of the people of Torphins as expressed through the recent consultation. From this process the areas for action have been developed and are listed below. The TCC and the Community Action Planning Steering Group will encourage and support the community, through a number of working groups, to address these issues.

### Recent Achievements

The Community Council meets regularly. It has worked consistently to achieve changes that the community would like to see. Concerns about transport links, road safety, environmental issues, community safety and local planning and development issues have been raised and addressed.

Among the recent successes have been the amending of speed limits on the main thoroughfares, the installation of speed monitoring equipment on both the western and eastern boundaries of the village, the



*Mid Deeside Church.*



*Victorian Fountain.*



*Learney House.*



Red Squirrel.



Torphins War Memorial.



Railway Walk.



Old Free Church.

execution of a number of traffic surveys that have recorded both the volume and speed of traffic, additional street lighting and sections of pavement and the implementation of a plan to provide enhanced Christmas lighting and decorations in the village centre. The community council adopted the red BT telephone boxes at Sundayswells and at Glasell.

In addition the TCC has instigated a programme of works to improve and enhance the appearance of the village including the renovation of the Victorian Fountain, the refurbishment of the notice boards and provision of a greater variety of flower beds and tubs. A number of these activities have been sponsored by local businesses. The Community Council is very grateful for the ongoing support both financial and 'in kind' that they receive from local businesses.

### **Development of the Action Plan**

The decision to develop an Action Plan was taken by the TCC. They set up a steering group to design and carry out a process to consult widely across the community, to record the outcomes from that consultation and then to develop an action plan which would enable the aspirations expressed to be addressed.

The steering group organised a day long consultation event and invited the whole community to participate. The event was supported by local societies and services. The event was well attended with a wide cross section of the community (over 300) attending and expressing views and opinions. However the steering group felt that the age range 13 to 25 had been under represented and that their views and opinions should be sought through a specifically organised event. Therefore a youth engagement event (Youth Vues) was organised for members of the community aged 13 – 25. This event, supported by youth workers from the Aboyne Community Centre, was well attended with almost forty young people providing a wide range of opinions and suggestions.

The local school was pro-active, encouraging pupils to think about their views and wishes for the future of their village, including environmental issues. The pupils were asked to think about the village as it is today, what they like about it and what they would like to change. They were also asked to think about the village they would like to live in as adults.

Businesses based within the village were approached and invited to participate. A list of local societies and clubs was compiled and each was invited

to contribute to the consultation process

The local Patient Participation Group from Torphins Medical Centre was active in seeking the views of the community.

The Police and Fire and Rescue Services were consulted, as were other locally based organisations.

When the action planning process was initiated the consultation on the 'Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan' was a contentious 'live' issue within the village. Following a local public meeting where the Local Development Plan was the sole agenda item, we decided to specifically exclude it from our action planning agenda.

However, a significant number of participants strongly suggested that the Local Development Plan proposed too rapid and too great a rate of development within the area.

**Outcomes from the Process**  
From the information provided and collated throughout the consultation process it is clear that the community has a vision for the village.

They like the atmosphere and environment that the village offers although they have made suggestions that could enable it to become even better.

The outcomes from both the day-long consultation and the 'Youth Vues' event made it clear that all and every future development proposed within the village should be carefully considered and undertaken with care to protect the ambiance of the village.

All the views that were expressed at the two events, along with the information gathered through the questionnaires, were recorded and sorted. The ordered information fell into a number of natural groupings or priorities.

These groupings were; 'Our Village', 'Health and Fitness', 'Youth Issues', 'Community Safety' and 'Leisure'. It was not possible to assign all the views expressed and suggestions made into the working group themes but the members of the working groups will be encouraged to extend their remit to include additional issues where they think it appropriate.

Each working group will have strong links with the Community Council but will develop an individual plan for its priority area. The groups will need to tap the wide range of skills, interests and knowledge that are to be found within the community so that the groups can achieve what the community would like. The TCC aims to engage each and every individual member of the community with



*Learney Arms Hotel.*



*Original building of the Learney Arms Hotel.*



*Former Poor Cottage.*



*The Lawn Bowling Green.*



Graveyard.



Red Phone Box.



Health Centre.



Pharmacy.

the achievement of the Community Action Plan

Not all the desired outcomes of this plan will be achieved in a short period of time. Some of the issues that we would like tackled can be resolved quickly, some will take a little longer and some are long term aims that will shape the future of the village. Long term aspirations have been included as we feel that it is important not to lose sight of the vision whilst resolving issues of the moment.

As already stated not every issue or view expressed through the consultation process has been reported in this initial plan. However, all of them have been included in the 'raw data' that can be found and viewed on the [www.Torphins.org.uk](http://www.Torphins.org.uk) website 'community planning' page.

Monitoring the progress of work to achieve the desired outcomes of the plan will be possible via the same web link. In addition the TCC has 'Community Action Planning' as a standing item on its agenda and the minutes of their monthly meetings can be viewed both on the website and on the village notice board.

The community has taken the first tentative steps towards achieving the changes that it sees as desirable. We hope that if someone has a view, opinion, worry or an idea for the

improving the village that they will let a member of the Community Council or the appropriate Working Group know about it.

### Action Plan Proposal

Establish five working groups, each to progress one of the five priority areas. (Our Village, Health and Fitness, Leisure, Community Safety, Youth Issues). Each working group will outline and detail the tasks in their area of responsibility, and then to identify both their priority and deliverability.

Based on this information each group will develop a detailed action plan. Progress against the plan will be reported back to the CAP steering group and Community Council.

### Our Village

The consultation evidenced that the community likes its village, its environment and the ambiance that it offers to them. What is clear is that the issues this working group is asked to consider will have the overall aim of developing and improving the village whilst retaining the character and atmosphere prevailing. However, the community has concerns that the village needs to adapt to meet the needs of the current younger members of the community as they grow into adulthood.

There are concerns regarding the availability of appropriate housing for young people, for older people to 'downsize' to and of sheltered housing.

Provision of litter bins conveniently located causes concern (this term includes those bins that are available for the disposal of 'dog waste').

Many people consider that the appearance of the centre of the village is spoilt by the recycling bins.

The fabric of some of the infrastructure and street furniture and/or decoration was also noted as being in need of improvement.

These and other issues will be tackled by the working group, which will aim to;

- Increase the number of or relocate litter bins around the village.
- Approach the relevant parties to see if the recycling bins can be situated away from the centre of the village.

- Encourage work to improve the appearance of the centre of the village. Including concerns around the following
  - ♦ the old school house,
  - ♦ the recycling bins,
  - ♦ litter,
  - ♦ the use and maintenance of the grassed area.
- Completing the restoration work to the Victorian fountain.
- Increase the number of flower tubs and beds around the village.
- Encourage the improvement of village infrastructure including shop fascias.
- Encourage cooperation between organisations within the village to improve communication and 'feel good factor'.
- Considering how to encourage and foster better communication and relationships within the village. Including the possible development of a
  - ♦ sounding board/notice board/web blog or other alternatives.
- Consider solutions to the parking and other traffic related issues.
- Research the possibility of introducing a green or garden waste collection service.



*Carols Round The Tree.*



*The recycling point in the village centre.*



*Beltie Burn In Winter.*



*Torphins Village School.*



Torphins Gala Marquee.



Learney Avenue.



Early Years Equipment.



Torphins Flower Show.

## Health and Fitness

The village has an active 'Walking to Health Group' and a 'Patients Participation Group' based at the local Health Centre. We hope these groups will be closely associated with the Community Action Plan working group.

A large group of people signed a petition to register concern about difficulty in accessing some of the walks around the village. The level of usage that some paths experience has resulted in erosion that has led to large wet areas and in some parts the total erosion of the pathway.

A number of people would like to be able to make more use of their bikes and they would welcome specific routes through the woods and surrounding countryside that would offer a variety of challenges for all abilities to use and enjoy.

The major concern expressed to the Patient Participation Group was how to ensure that the quality of service provided by the local medical practice can be maintained. A number of suggestions for possible development were made and these will be considered by both the Patient Participation Group and the relevant Working Group

The following are among the issues to be considered by this group.

- Upgrading of the entrance to and exit from local walks.
- Improvement of disabled access around the village.
- The maintenance, upgrading or reinstatement of local pathways.
- Discussion with the Community Learning Team at Aboyne regarding the possible provision or access to additional Adult learning opportunities (to include keep fit).
- How to encourage a greater uptake of CPR training.
- Explore the development of a cycle track.

## Leisure

The information gathered by the consultation contained many references to the park and its facilities. The park, which incorporates part of the old Deeside railway line, has an area of ground that is left natural while the rest of the park is cut and maintained. It has a football pitch, a selection of play equipment suitable for a range of ages, an area of tarmac with one basket ball net and a mini ramp.

The pavilion has changing facilities and showers but has fallen into disrepair. The park is well used by the football club for all ages but the pitch suffers from poor drainage, which often results in the football club having to travel out of the village in order to be able to play competitive matches. The community would like to see a range of improvements to the park.

The village has one of the largest groups of Cub Scouts on Deeside. We also have Brownies, Guides and Rainbows. However these groups find it difficult to identify a venue to meet and storage of their equipment is difficult with ad hoc areas being sought and utilised. The success of these groups has resulted in their significant need for a dedicated base for meeting and for storage of their belongings

The park's facilities, equipment and environment described briefly above were the subject of much comment, some of it is seen as outdated, some as inappropriate or inadequate while some is seen as a good base for development.

This Community Action Planning group will be asked to

- Seek support to improve the drainage of the park including the football pitch area.

- Respond to the request for greater leisure facilities (basket ball court, mini ramp).
- Work to encourage and support the ongoing work to upgrade the pavilion.
- Consider the viability and possibility of developing a scout/guide hut.
- Explore the possibility of increasing the variety of equipment available within the park.

### Community Safety

The accumulated information from the consultation profiled the perception that traffic travels too fast through the village and that cars park inappropriately and inconsiderately on pavements causing difficulty with visibility for pedestrians particularly those with limited mobility and for those pushing prams or in wheel chairs. In addition it highlighted that not all our pavements are user friendly for disabled or for those pushing prams or buggies and that where adaptations have been made that they are not always located at the most convenient spots on the road.

There are concerns about the road safety of both vulnerable adults and for pupils travelling to school from the south and east of the village. Pupil road safety was also highlighted in



*Sunrise over the Learney Halls.*



*Winter scene.*



*Cooper Lane.*



*Adding to the Graffiti Wall during Youth Vues.*



Basketball in the park.



Curling.



Youth Vues Poster.

connection with Bridge Crescent where the lack of a pavement and the narrow width of the carriageway has been raised as a concern. The youth consultation highlighted and reinforced comments made at the day long event about inter-generational communication and misunderstanding.

Fast cars with loud exhausts irritate swathes of the population. Being reported to the police at times when it is considered unfair, or when the complainer has refused or felt too intimidated to approach the young people themselves, results in both groups seeing themselves as victims. The young people asked to meet with the members of the community that found them difficult, noisy, irresponsible and/or unapproachable. The young people believe that if they can spend time with and talk to those who find them difficult, that solutions can be found.

The village has a very low level of reported crime but vandalism causes concern to everyone. Everyone must take responsibility and help to prevent and report antisocial actions and incidents. Increasingly there has been the development of a culture of underage drinking, the litter associated with it, vandalism and behaviour that is worrying to many.

This Community Action Plan working group will

- Respond to concerns, regarding traffic flow around the village suggesting solutions to problems.
- Work with other appropriate bodies (including the Parents Teachers Association and the School Forum) to address questions of pedestrian safety.
- Seek support to tackle the parking issues within the village.
- Action the development of a 'Village Watch' (neighbourhood watch) scheme.
- Seek to address Inter-generational confrontation. Organise a meeting between interested parties to promote greater understanding between residents.

### Youth Issues

An evening with the youth of the village gave a clear picture of how and why they enjoy living where they do, what they think should remain the same, and what changes they would like to see in both the immediate future and in the longer term.

The young people are clear that they like where they live and that they want to stay here into adulthood but they would like somewhere to meet safely.

They would also like improvements to local facilities, such as the public toilets upgraded and open for use into the evening.

They would like to be confident that when they are older there will be good quality smaller houses available for them to buy.

They find it difficult to make use of facilities in Aboyne, Banchory and Aberdeen because buses are expensive and do not 'tie-in' with timings of other facilities and or activities.

It is their belief that a number of the complaints levelled against them could be resolved if people spoke to them; they would like to meet with those who do find them difficult or threatening to see if issues could be resolved.

The young people were very clear that they like living in the village of Torphins and that they

are prepared to work with the TCC to improve the village.

This Community Action Plan working group will be formed to include representatives of the young people. They will work to address or find solutions to a range of issues including the following.

- Investigate possible local activities for young people (youth club).
- Investigate possible local resources for young people (youth cafe).
- Attend the Marr area bus forum to discuss appropriate transport links. Investigate ways of improving transport links to Aboyne, Banchory and Aberdeen.
- Work to reduce the tensions between the generations.
- Develop links with other working groups to address issues regarding litter etc.



*View from the 7th hole on the Golf Course.*



*The Tennis Courts.*



*Torphins Junior Football Tournament.*

This booklet is one of a series produced by Local Rural Partnerships together with the community under the banner Making It Real.

The initiative is sponsored by Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership and Shell, and run by Aberdeenshire Community Economic Development Co-ordinators Forum. The aim is to provide community action plans in an attractive, easy to read, professionally printed format.

For most communities, the content of each community plan

is based on the results of Planning for Real® exercises carried out by the communities themselves, together with any other available reports. This process ensures that the plans are truly community-led.

This information can now guide the community and Community Planning Partners in drawing up detailed action plans to implement the top priorities as well as addressing the other issues which have been identified. For each priority or issue this will involve agreeing who should be involved, what resources will be needed and

target dates for completion. It is hoped that this process will be driven by representatives of the community with support – moral, technical and financial – from the relevant partners.

It is important that this booklet is seen by all concerned as an account of the community's views at the time of the latest consultation, and that it will have to be regularly reviewed and updated. As some projects are completed, other issues will arise and take their place in future versions of the community plan.

**Thanks are due to the community of Torphins for the enthusiasm and commitment that they showed during the development of this plan and to our partners who supported us through the process.**

### MARR AREA PARTNERSHIP

Gellan Cottage • Coull • Aboyne • AB34 5JU

T: 013398 87577 • E: enquiry@marrareapartnership.org.uk • W: www.marrareapartnership.org.uk



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