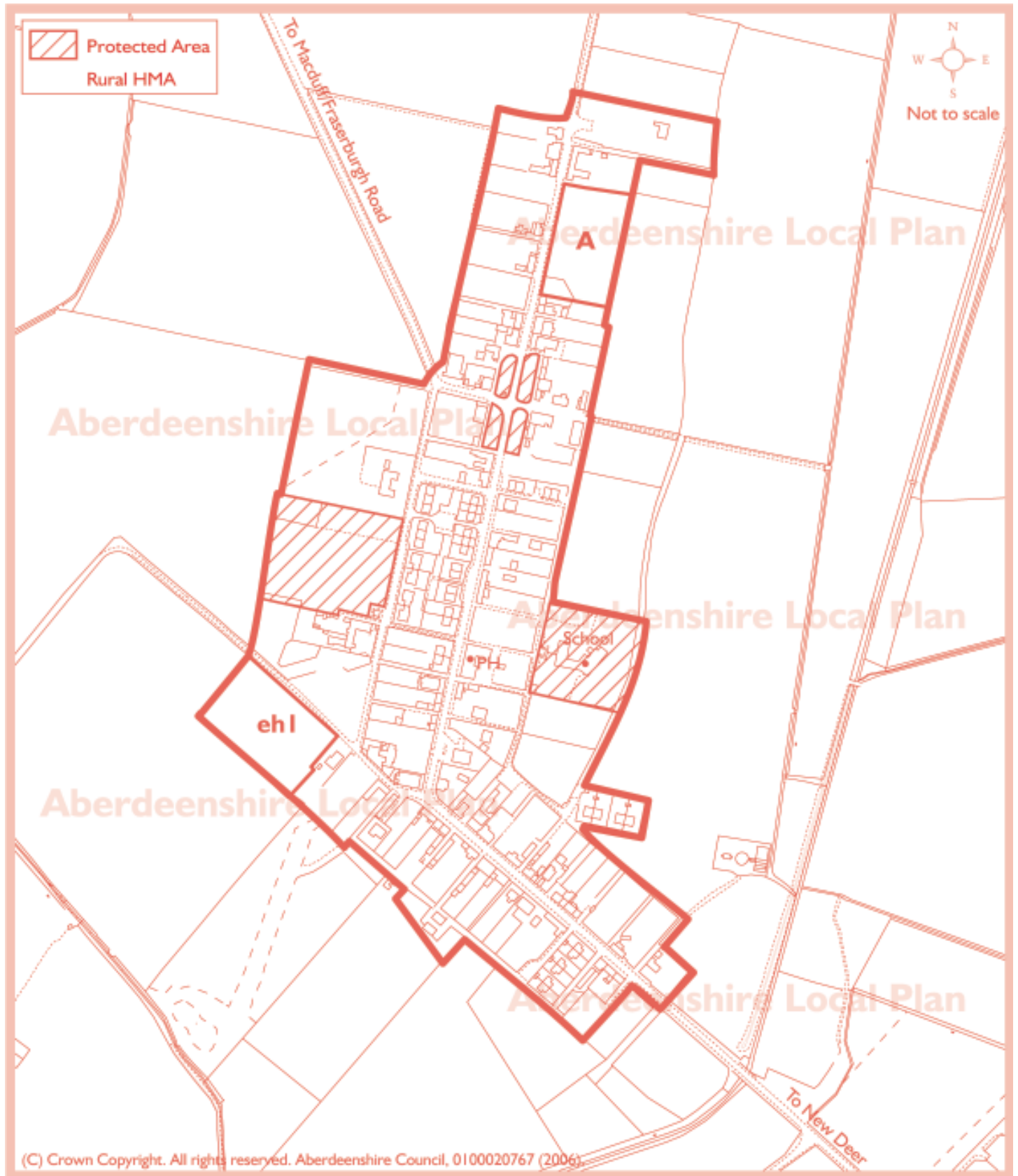


NEW BYTH

New Byth
Community
Action Plan



Origins & Development

New Byth is known as the lost village because it does not lie on a direct route to any major settlement. It lies roughly half way between Banff and Fraserburgh and two and a half miles north of Cuminestown in the parish of King Edward.

New Byth is a classic planned village founded in 1795 by the Duff family and has a current population of around 250. The original village consisted of a few cottages around Byth House but the new village, built to encourage the linen and wool industry, was laid out with each thatched house having a weaving shed. The population of 195 rose to 609 by 1871 then went into rapid decline as imported cotton made the looms redundant. By 1899 there were only two looms left. Whilst the village attracted shops, tradesmen and tailors it gained a respectable reputation for the quality and quantity of shoemakers.

The school was built in 1860 to replace a dame school and a chapel school and was designed to hold 180 pupils. A new primary school was built in 1939 but it closed at the beginning of this century when the school role fell to 6. The young children are now bussed to Cuminestown and the older pupils attend Turriff Academy. The largest employer in the village is Milne's bus company which also sells fuel. There is a garage in the square. The Commercial Hotel has been downgraded to a pub and the function hall has been closed.

The church hall is still used regularly by the WRI but the Church closed down and the congregation must travel to Cuminestown. The village recently lost its Post Office which was its only shop. Weekly visits by an egg van and a fish van are the only food providers. Newspapers are delivered by a resident family. The village has no doctor or dental surgery but a Dial-A-Bus service provides transport for essential services.

The village has a high proportion of senior citizen residents and because of the lack of services it is difficult to attract young families into the village.

A few new houses are being built within the village at present, mostly by families of current residents who have come to appreciate that the village may be a quiet backwater but it provides a rare and peaceful quality of life.

Community Activity

The playing field and picnic area in School Road belongs to the village. The Playing Field and Community Association has planted Millennium trees in the picnic area, a cherry blossom and Christmas tree in the Square and created flower display areas incorporating steam engines to reflect the fact that New Byth holds an annual Steam & Vintage Rally. The association has also provided a car park at the cemetery. Residents take a pride in the village and work as a community, not only to care for the flower tubs, but to actively care for each other.



An original cobbler's cottage which would have had a thatched roof.



1860 Old School.



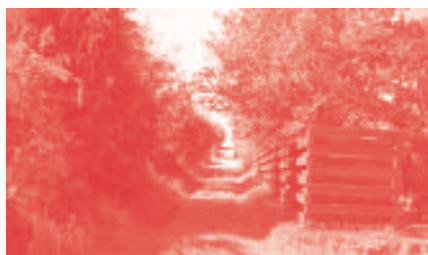
Commercial Hotel (now a pub).



Floral engine in the Square.



New Byth School opened 1939 now closed down.



Byth's neglected lanes.



Council housing in Old School Road.



Bridge Street.

The five top priorities to emerge from the consultation are outlined below:

Issues which would require action by an outside agency

Put school to new use (Theme: Community Facilities & Activity)

18% of all responses fell under this heading, including use as a community centre, a sports facility and a location for trading units. However since the original consultation Aberdeenshire Council has sold the school to a developer who is believed to be going to convert it to housing.

Provision of - or transport to - doctor or pharmacy (Theme: Health)

Transport is currently provided through Dial-a-Bus but if a room could be provided in the village for a surgery for a weekly visit by the doctor or nurse, elderly people who need treatment such as blood pressure tests would find it much more convenient.

Flashing speed limit signs (Theme: Traffic & Transportation)

The villagers would like to see flashing speed limit signs erected as they are well aware that they have been very effective in Cuminestown and New Pitsligo.

Vehicles travelling through the village, either to or from the main Fraserburgh to Banff road tend to ignore the speed limits in their urgency to join another main road.

Add Urquhart Road to the snow clearing programme (Theme: Traffic & Transportation)

This street is little used as a thoroughfare but has a number of existing and new houses in it and is currently neglected by the snowploughs. The residents can find it impossible to get onto the main street to exit the village.

More affordable housing/ council housing (Theme: Housing)

The council seems to have a preferred policy of allocating council housing to elderly people. Young residents who want to move into a house of their own yet stay within the village near their families, find it nearly impossible. Virtually all of them will have to travel to find employment but they should be encouraged to remain in the village and eventually marry and start a family. This is the only way to help regenerate the village.

Other issues raised

Many other suggestions received support, and these are listed on pages 5 and 6. A summarised action plan can be found on page 7. Partner and agency codes are also listed on page 7.

Community Facilities & Activity

This theme produced 23% of all suggestions, including one of the top five priorities (see page 4). Others receiving significant support were:

Projects which would involve the community in partnership

There was also demand for facilities or activities where the community would be able to work in partnership with outside agencies to provide them. The most popular suggestions were for a community centre in the school (no longer possible); a community hall as meeting place for coffee and socialising, which could be run in the village hall in partnership with the Church; and an indoor meeting place and youth club for young people where a partnership between the community and Aberdeenshire Education & Recreation could be developed.

Projects which would require action by an outside agency

The sixth priority arising from the consultation was for provision of a shop. Without a shop all villagers are compelled to travel to obtain even the most basic of necessities. If even a tiny shop could be made sustainable, possibly with community volunteer input, this would be a huge benefit to the elderly.

A popular suggestion in terms of recreational facilities was for a grass bowling green for use by all ages, which could act as an attraction for young people to remain in the village. However the cost would be well beyond the resources of the community.



Rural view from the picnic area.



Milne's bus garage.



Children's playing equipment beside the football pitch.



Shops turned into houses.



New houses being built in Urquhart Road.



Steam roller floral display in the Square.



Taking a pride in the environment.



Church Hall.

Jobs & The Economy

This theme produced few suggestions.

Local Environment

This theme produced the second highest number of proposals, with 21%.

Projects which could be undertaken by the community independently

Several of the suggested environmental projects could be undertaken by the Community Council. Two are renovation of the Square and provision of benches, including one to commemorate Mrs Whitecross.

Projects which would involve the community in partnership

As ever, action was called for on dog fouling, with individual owners best placed to solve the problem. However assistance in the form of poop scoop bins and signage could be obtained from Aberdeenshire Council.

Another proposal was to carry out a facelift for the Hall in partnership with the Church.

Projects which would require action by an outside agency

A proposal which almost reached the top five priorities

was for the village's unadopted lanes to be tidied up and maintained. This would have to be the responsibility of the estate which owns them.

Health

This theme produced only one proposal, which was one of the top five priorities (see page 4).

Housing

This theme produced 12% of proposals, of which one appears in the top five priorities (see page 4).

Traffic & Transportation

This theme produced the third highest number of proposals, with 18%. Two of them appear in the top five priorities (see page 4). Other proposals included:

Projects which would require action by an outside agency

Two other popular proposals under this theme were for more gritting in winter and for a pavement from the village to the graveyard.

Crime & Community Safety

Responses under this theme suggest there is little concern over crime or community safety.

	Independent	Partnership	Outside Agency
1. Community Facilities & Activity		Community Hall as meeting place for coffee and socialising [Church] An indoor meeting place and youth club for young people [E&R]	Provision of a shop Grass bowling green [T&I]
2. Jobs & The Economy			
3. Local Environment	Renovation of the Square Provision of benches	Dog fouling [T&I] Facelift for the Hall [Church]	Lanes to be tidied up and maintained
4. Health			Provision of- or transport to - doctor or pharmacy [NHS]
5. Housing			More affordable housing/council housing [H&SW]
6. Traffic & Transportation			Flashing speed limit signs [T&I] Add Urquhart Road to the snow clearing programme [T&I]
7. Crime & Community Safety			

Partner codes

Aberdeenshire Council services:

E&R Education & Recreation
H&SW Housing & Social Work
T&I Transportation & Infrastructure

Other agencies:

NHS NHS Grampian

This booklet is one of a series produced by Local Rural Partnerships under the banner Making It Real for a number of communities in Aberdeenshire.

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.

The content of each community plan comes from a variety of

previous ones drawn up since 1996 together with update sessions held to gather the latest snapshot of public views on what needs to be done and who could achieve it.

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 King Edward & Gamrie Community Council for organising the community meetings from which the findings in this report emerged and to Linda Muller for providing background information on the community.

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