



Whitehills Community Action Plan

Whitehills and Parish of Boyndie

Whitehills is a coastal village, two miles west of Banff. Fishing features prominently in both its historical and current economy and culture. Surrounding the village is the parish of Boyndie, which is a mix of farmland and scattered hamlets. The total population numbers just over one thousand.

The economic fortunes of this community have been mixed in recent years. In 1999 both the harbour and fishmarket ceased to be viable, due to changes within the fishing industry. Similar reorganisation, this time within health services, resulted in closure of another major employer, Ladysbridge Hospital.

Since that low point, the community has seen something of a renaissance. A number of community led ventures have added together to improve the look of the community and create employment. Perhaps the most notable of these are the award winning Leisure Marina and four-star graded Boyndie Visitor Centre. A high quality fish processing business continues to thrive in the village as does a large holiday caravan park. Adjacent to this is Blackpots Playpark, again community run, and a significant attraction for local and visiting children.

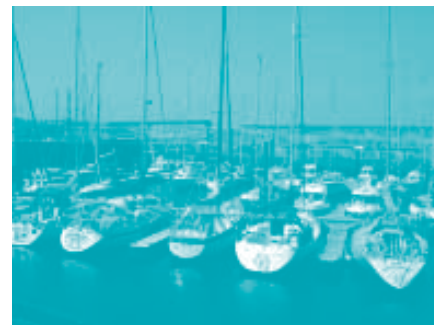
A strong Community Council has undertaken numerous small projects improving footpaths, creating picnic areas, and tidying nooks and crannies. The public toilets are reopened and run by a group of volunteers. All this combines to result in favourable comments from the increasing numbers of visitors to the village.

This community has demonstrated its ability both to resolve problems itself and work as a team with outside agencies when required. In 2003, it won the title 'Scottish Community of the Year' in a competition sponsored by Calor Gas.

A significant rise in house prices and speed of sale has been noted of late and very few properties in need of renovation remain in the village or surroundings.

A significant number of good quality new homes have been built in the past five years and a large new development is scheduled for the former Ladysbridge site.

In 2006, a windfarm was built on a former RAF site in Boyndie, which has a spin-off benefit of a community development fund, linked to the electrical generating capacity of the turbines.



Whitehills Marina.



Boyndie Visitor Centre.

Top Four Priorities in Whitehills

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

Project which could be undertaken by the community independently

Photo Archive (Theme: Community & Leisure Facilities)

There is a recognition that the identity and heritage of the Whitehills area can be preserved and enhanced by creating a **photo archive** from items contributed by residents and people with local connections. There are issues of persuading owners to part with their photographs, and of storage and display, but one solution which has been used successfully elsewhere is to create a virtual museum, displaying scanned images, on a community website (see page 5).

Projects which would involve the community in partnership

Car Park Behind St Brandon Centre (Theme : Traffic & Transport)

The community is keen to see a plot of land behind the St Brandon Centre developed as a car park for around 8 - 10 vehicles. There are issues of

access from Loch Street, but it is felt that these could be resolved by the Community Council and Aberdeenshire Council working in partnership.

Church Clock Illumination (Theme : Local Environment)

The church clock was recently restored and it is felt that it should now be highlighted by illuminating the clock face at night. This could be achieved by the Community Council in partnership with Whitehills Church.

Project which would require action by an outside agency

Pathway To Cemetery (Theme : Traffic & Transport)

Perhaps the most pressing issue in Whitehills is the need for a pathway linking the pavement which ends at the entrance to village and the cemetery $\frac{1}{2}$ mile towards Inverboyndie. The B9038 road carries fast traffic and the safety of pedestrians going to and from the cemetery is a concern. This project is included in the Area Local Plan and is due to be carried out by Aberdeenshire Transportation & Roads in 2007-2008. [T&I]

Other issues raised

Many other suggestions received support, and these are listed on pages 6 - 9.



Whitehills Cemetery.



The clock on Whitehills Parish Church.

Jobs & The Economy

This theme attracted no suggestions, reflecting the fact that it is not an issue for most local people.

Local Environment

This theme produced the second highest number of proposals, including one of those seen as a priority (see page 5). Much has already been done in previous years but there is support for such activities to continue.

Projects which could be undertaken by the community independently

- It is felt that a **floral entrance to the village** would create a good impression on visitors.
- People are keen to see the **Red Well repointed and plastered** to reflect its historic importance.
- Improvement and maintenance of **seats & picnic tables** should continue.

Projects which would involve the community in partnership

- There is a demand for the creation of a **viewpoint and car park** at the Boyndie wind farm, as a tourist facility. It is hoped that this can be done in partnership with the wind farm construction

company. *[T&I, P&ES, FR]*

- It is agreed that **Knock Head** is an iconic landmark in the Whitehills area, and that the community may wish to explore protecting it from future housing developments by submitting a declaration of interest to purchase under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 to the Scottish Executive. *[P&ES]*
- Although recent access legislation should have resolved the issue, it is still seen as important to **safeguard existing rights of way**. This will involve working with Aberdeenshire Planning & Environment. *[P&ES]*
- There is support for the idea of the Community Council encouraging **energy efficiency**, which could be done in conjunction with agencies such as SCARF. *[H&SW]*

Health

No proposals were forthcoming on this theme, suggesting that Banff, just two miles away and connected by a main bus route, provides access to enough facilities for most Whitehills inhabitants.



Downies of Whitehills - A major employer.



The Red Well.



Windfarm, Boyndie.

Crime

Crime is not a major issue in Whitehills, but two proposals were supported.

Project which would involve the community in partnership

- A **neighbourhood watch** scheme is seen as a means by which the community could help the police to maintain law and order. *[CSP]*

Project which would require action by an outside agency

- As in most small communities, there is a perception that policing by patrol car is not as effective as **foot patrols** in deterring minor crime. At the same time there is a realisation that police resource are limited and that pressure should be put on central government to increase funding for Grampian Police. *[GP]*



RedWell picnic area.



End of the pavement - B9121.

6. Traffic & Transportation		Create car park behind Brandon Centre [P&ES]	Make pathway to cemetery [T&I] Provide pavement up the Knowe [T&I] Upgrade currently unadopted roads [T&I] Improve junction of road from Boyndie & B9139 Whitehills - Portsoy coast road [T&I]
7. Crime & Community Safety		Set up neighbourhood watch scheme [CSP]	Establish foot patrols [GP]

Partner codes

Aberdeenshire Council services:

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E&R Education & Recreation
H&SW Housing & Social Work
L&A Law & Administration
P&ES Planning & Environmental Services
T&I Transportation & Infrastructure

Other agencies:

CS Communities Scotland
CSP Community Safety Partnership
GP Grampian Police
GFR Grampian Fire & Rescue Service
NHS NHS Grampian
SEG Scottish Enterprise Grampian

External agencies:

B T British Telecom
FR Falck Renewables
PI Private Investors