

DALAVICH IMPROVEMENT GROUP

Community Action Plan

2016 – 2021



photo: Chrissie Sugden

Dalavich, Kilmaha, Inverinan and Lochavich

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Local People Have Their Say

This Community Action Plan has been developed through extensive consultation with the residents of the local community, visitors and holiday home owners past and present in order to gather the opinions of a wide range of people with an interest in the area through completion of a survey and interviews with local groups.

The survey included 43 questions, divided across the following headings:

- ▶ **About me**
- ▶ **Tourism & Visitors**
- ▶ **Local Employment & Training**
- ▶ **Communications & Community Spirit**
- ▶ **Local Services**
 - Improving Life
 - Shops & Access
- ▶ **Heritage & The Environment**
- ▶ **Recreation**
 - Facilities for Children
 - Facilities for Young People
 - Facilities for Young Adults
- ▶ **Health & Wellness**
 - Community Resilience



photo: J MacKinnon

Number of surveys sent out:

Launch Meeting – 42

Hand Delivered – 74

Number of surveys completed: 71

In addition, email links to an online questionnaire were sent to cabin owners by the owner of the cabin site, and some 50 past visitors and former residents were sent the same link by the Dalavich Improvement Group.

Interviews with members of the community including children, elderly residents, and business owners were conducted over a three-week period to gain a deeper understanding of the various needs and priorities of different groups.

After the survey results were compiled, a community meeting was held to determine the priorities based on seven themes highlighted by the survey. The meeting was facilitated by Community Development Staff from Argyll & Bute Council and was attended by 36 members of the community.

The Community Action Plan is based on the priorities and actions decided upon at this meeting, with members of the community taking ownership of each project alongside the Community Council, Dalavich Social Club, Dalavich Improvement Group, Argyll & Bute Council and various community groups.

This plan outlines the community's main likes and dislikes about living here and which potential projects could enhance life in the community.

Background

Dalavich Improvement Group (DIG) was incorporated in 2002 as a Scottish Charity and Company Limited by Guarantee. DIG's operating area includes the villages of Dalavich and Inverinan, and the hamlets of Kilmaha and Lochavich.

DIG's purpose is:

- ▶ To manage community land and associated assets for the benefit of the Community and the public in general.
- ▶ To provide, or assist in providing, recreational facilities, and/or organising recreational activities, which will be available to members of the Community and public at large with the object of improving the conditions of life of the Community.
- ▶ To advance community development, including rural regeneration within the Community.
- ▶ To advance environmental protection or improvement including preservation, sustainable development and conservation of the natural environment, the maintenance, improvement or provision of environmental amenities for the Community and/or the preservation of buildings or sites of architectural, historic or other importance to the Community;

DIG currently owns and manages on behalf of the community:

- ▶ A community centre
- ▶ A children's playground
- ▶ An area of foreshore including open broadleaf woodland and a boat shed
- ▶ A small village green.

The community centre houses a Social Club which includes a bar and restaurant run for the benefit of residents and visitors by Dalavich Social Club, a Laundry, an Art room, and a Bike Hire business. DIG leases the boat shed to a Boat Hire business.

DIG can currently apply to two wind farm Community Benefit Funds each year to finance improvements in the local area, and is working towards a community owned hydro which, if successful, will generate substantial regular income.

Consequently, DIG recognised the need to develop a Community Action Plan to document the community's aspirations for the next few years, and guide project development.



photo: Pam Stansbury

Our Community Now and Our Hopes for the Future

Location

The community is made up of the villages of Dalavich, Kilmaha, Lochavich and Inverinan. It is 28 miles from Oban and 105 miles from Glasgow and is situated by the shores of Loch Awe and Loch Avich near the Argyll coast.

Population

The mean age of the population is increasing. People of working age and young families tend to move away due to the remoteness, lack of facilities, and limited employment. So part of this plan will focus on attracting younger people back to the area in order to maintain the future resilience of the community.

Housing

There are approximately 80 houses in the area, around 65% of which are owner occupied, with the rest being a mix of holiday rentals, 2nd homes, and a small number of long term lets. It is hoped that by developing the area (affordable housing and employment) we can increase the proportion of young families in the community.

Tourism

Next to the village of Dalavich is a cabin park containing some 71 cabins, of which 5 are owner occupied, 15 are 2nd homes, and the remainder are rented out as holiday lets. There are also a number of independent tourist accommodation providers in the area. The peak holiday season is Easter to the end of October. Visitors, including fishermen, families, cyclists, and walkers, regularly return to the area. The area's popularity with visitors is largely due to the ability to access the natural beauty of the area, wildlife, walking/cycling routes and water activities.

Facilities and Employment

The Shop, Social Club, Restaurant and Boat Hire facilities provide some local employment. During the winter the frequency with which these facilities are open reduces significantly.

We hope to attract more small businesses to the area to increase work opportunities, which may in turn encourage more people to move to the village.

Education

Due to the falling roll in the area, the school in Dalavich Village was closed in 1997. A children's club runs throughout the year, with a focus on the summer months, when there is a vast increase in young visitors. In order to encourage young families to the area, we would like to update and build upon the facilities available to them, including the completion of a play area outside the Community Centre. There is also a move to increase access to the Community Centre for use as an indoor play area during the day.

Transport and Services

This is a rural community with limited public transport, health care and recycling services. We seek to improve the schedule of these services to make them more accessible to residents. The poor road condition makes driving hazardous, particularly in bad weather and the condition is worsened by the use of heavy haulage vehicles. An improvement in the road condition will increase the safety of residents and encourage tourists to visit this beautiful rural area. We also seek to increase the provision of Broadband and phone services, which will in turn assist existing and new businesses to thrive in this rural community.

Environment and Heritage

The community is set within the hills of the Argyll forest with access to a multitude of walking trails, through beautiful scenery including rivers, waterfalls, Loch Awe and Loch Avich. There exists an abundance of flora and fauna including red squirrels, deer, pine martens and various birds of prey that attract visitors all year round.

The area has been settled since the later prehistoric period, with the built heritage including crannogs, hut circles, medieval castles, early Christian foundations, and later rural settlements.

photo: John MacKinnon



Community Views Survey

This section contains a flavour of the comments received in answer to the questions **“What do you like about the area?”** and **“What do you dislike about the area?”** The words highlighted in bold occurred many times in the responses.

Likes

Community, peace and quiet, remoteness, nature, beauty, friends, privacy, friendliness, community atmosphere, facilities, wildlife, location, not too developed, clean air, relaxation, variety of walks.

“ *The beauty and seeming remoteness of the village but also its friendliness and facilities.*

*Friendly people.
Lively community
who get things done.
Beautiful area.*

*Unspoilt natural beauty,
sense of community
and self-containment.*

*The beautiful scenery, the many walks and
excursions nearby, and the warm people!*

*Right size of community, people's friendliness,
good services, willingness of others to help.*

*Living in a beautiful part of the countryside,
surrounded by the woodland and loch and
hills, and going for walks and not seeing
anyone else. Having no light pollution.*

”

Dislikes

Poor road, midges, weather, litter on road and loch side, lack of trades people and employment, no fresh produce, poor transport and broadband access, lack of communication in community, lack of facilities.

“ *The shoreline needs improving
and we need a new jetty.*

*Parts of the village seemed to have
gathered rubbish - a good clear
out and tidy up would be good.*

Challenge to get fresh produce.

*Need to be more proactive
regarding littering and
recycling opportunities.*

*Lack of work opportunities and
the state of the road to get here.*

*Lack of consistent facilities. The shop and
community centre should be open all day, everyday.*

*We need something to encourage young people, families
and middle aged to come here; difficulties are transport,
education and local employment.*

”



photo: Carol Thomas



photo: Pam Stansbury

Our Vision for the Future

Our community seeks to protect its history, culture and environment whilst developing sustainable sources of employment.

photo: Pam Stansbury



photo: John MacKinnon

Our vision is of a community and environment which:

- ▶ Encourages community spirit and participation
- ▶ Supports local businesses and services
- ▶ Values and conserves it's local cultural and natural heritage
- ▶ Involves the community in running the community
- ▶ Provides local employment opportunities
- ▶ Attracts new businesses
- ▶ Addresses fuel poverty
- ▶ Improves our carbon footprint

Main Themes and Priorities

All projects in this section are viewed by the community as important. Current Projects are projects that will be started over the next 12 months. Future Projects are unlikely to start within the next 12 months and will be progressed by community groups who will take ownership of them in the future. In some instances community champions have already stepped forward to lead future projects.

Community Centre

The Community Centre was purchased from the Forestry Commission in 2003 and is owned and run by the community. It is a large wooden building comprising:

- ▶ the Social Club (bar)
- ▶ a privately managed restaurant
- ▶ a large hall
- ▶ three additional rooms that can be used as therapy rooms or for local group meetings
- ▶ and a children's playroom that includes various games.

General access to the hall is currently limited to the opening times of the Social Club bar and restaurant, which is four nights a week from April to October and two nights per week during the winter months. The hall can be hired for private functions.

While there was no specific question in the survey about the Community Centre, it was raised as an issue in terms of the limited access, lack of social activities and deteriorating facilities. The Community Centre is currently an under-utilised resource and our aim is to encourage wider usage.



photo: John MacKimon

Current Projects:

- ▶ Refurbishment and enlargement of the restaurant kitchen
 - Led by: **Dalavich Social Club and Community/Business Owner Brian Saxby**
Already underway and nearing completion
- ▶ Quizzes, live music and a Kids Club day have been planned for the beginning of the holiday season.
 - Led by: **Dalavich Social Club Committee and Kids Club**
Already underway
- ▶ Non-slip and well-lit footpath created from village.
 - Led by: **Dalavich Social Club**
Initial planning underway

Future Projects:

- ▶ Community Hall and facilities updated, including:
 - Redecoration of therapy rooms.
 - Badminton court lines repainted.
 - Redesign of entrance to make better use of space.
 - Review approach to the bar to give easier access
- ▶ Hire Activity Coordinator for Summer months
- ▶ Hire a Day Time Hall Supervisor

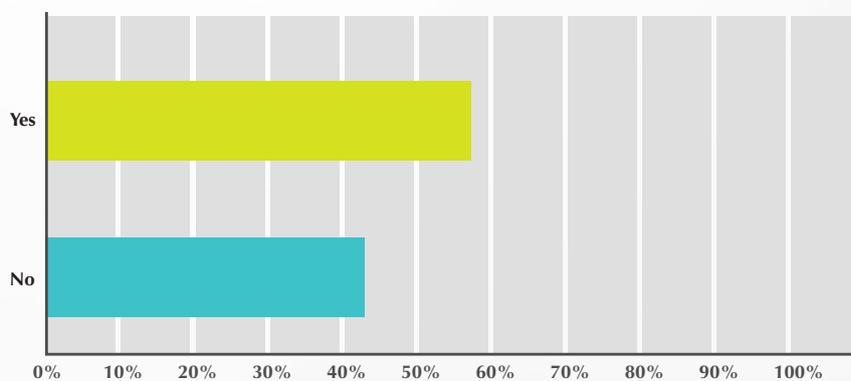
Infrastructure and Services

Limited broadband services, the poor condition of the main road from Taynuilt, improving transport links and the creation of affordable housing options for young families were highlighted as important long term priorities.

As access to the Community Centre is limited, the village shop provides a welcome space for people to socialise during the day. As well as stocking essential grocery items, there is a licensed café which offers light meals and off licence sales. A Post Office service is also available 3 days a week. During winter the shop is open 4 days a week and from April to October 6 days a week. Staffing is sometimes problematic due to the aging population of the village. Some respondents expressed a desire for more access in the winter months, and for fresh produce to be available. It was also noted that the path and shop entrance are sometimes flooded due to poor road drainage.

Q25 Do you think access to shops and facilities needs improving?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 6



Current Projects:

- ▶ Improve transport links by requesting a smaller bus for the Oban service as this would help reduce damage to the road.
 - Led by: **DIG to pass on to Elaine Robertson via the Community Council**
- ▶ Improve the condition of the road to Taynuilt to make it safe for locals and tourists. Pot holes and verges need repair.
 - Led by: **Mark Potter Irwin to pass on to Community Council**

Future Projects:

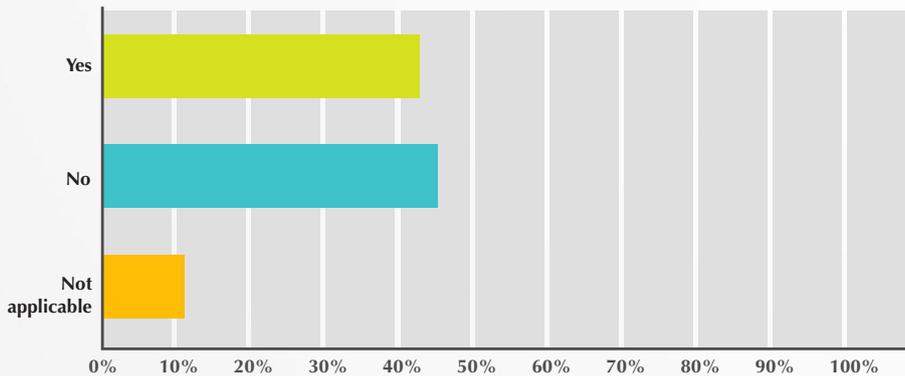
- ▶ Investigate community broadband and mobile schemes
- ▶ Investigate the option of a community car share (possibly electric vehicle) to assist with the mobility to Oban and other areas.
- ▶ Investigate ways to fund affordable housing for young families to encourage working age people to live in the area.
- ▶ Look into selling surplus fruit and vegetables locally.
 - Led by: **Gardening Club**

Communication/Community Spirit

Communication within the community is achieved through notice boards, mail drops, a Facebook page and word of mouth. However, many people feel that communication could be improved, especially with regards to the promotion of social events and updates on local projects. The Dalavich Improvement Group (DIG) and Dalavich Social Club (DSC) meet regularly, but joint meetings, clearly defined goals and better communication of those goals and projects would help with community spirit and encourage more community members to get involved.

Q17 Do you feel well informed about what is happening in the community?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 5



Current Projects:

- ▶ The Community Action Plan survey and subsequent meetings initiated the process of improving communication, improving community spirit and involving the wider community in different projects.
 - *Led by: DIG and Argyll and Bute Council*
- ▶ DIG and DSC to set up quarterly meetings to facilitate communication and progress community projects.
 - *Led by: DIG Chairperson and DSC Chairperson*
Initial meeting held
- ▶ Contact and skills directory of local area to be compiled to facilitate community communication.
 - *Led by: Community Member (Dave Watson)*
- ▶ Regular newsletter updating the community on local projects and social events.
 - *Led by: Community Member (Anna Dougall)*
Issue 1 published

Future Projects:

- ▶ Create a community website including information on accommodation, local services and facilities, social events and key contact information.
 - *Led by: Community Members (Jo Allan and Jeff Kingsbury-Smith)*
- ▶ Increase in regular social events
 - *Led by: DSC and Local Special Interest Groups*

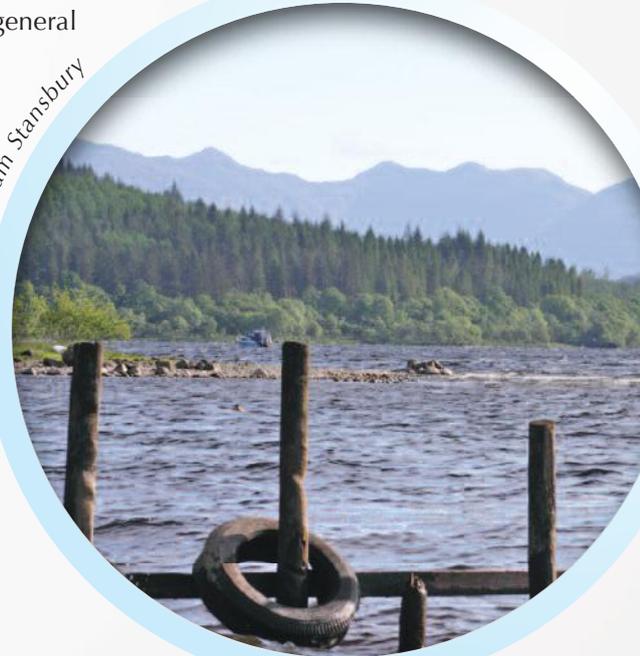
Local Environment

Preservation and maintenance of the natural environment is important and enhances the rural nature of the area. Outstanding projects, such as renewing the jetty and fixing the drainage on the village green were mentioned in the survey by many people, but lack of funds and an active group to progress them has delayed their completion. Litter and dog fouling are an ongoing concern that was highlighted in the survey. Better signage and designated trails for tourists would help encourage more visitors to the area. A lack of recycling facilities was also highlighted, as was the general tidiness of the village.

Current Projects:

- ▶ Access to recycling facilities for Community Centre to be granted to community members.
 - *Led by: Dalavich Social Club*
Complete
- ▶ Finalise purchase of playing field outside Community Centre to acquire a valuable recreational resource for the community
 - *Led by: Dalavich Improvement Group*
Negotiations ongoing
- ▶ Dog fouling solution sought in consultation with A&B Council, including more signage and receptacles.
 - *Led by: Community Member (Brian Saxby), A&B Council*
- ▶ Build new jetty from the Dalavich foreshore to support the boat hire business and encourage more use of the foreshore and Loch Awe area.
 - *Led by: Community Members (Mark Potter-Irwin, Brian Saxby, John MacKinnon and Tam McPherson)*
- ▶ Create plan to maintain paths and trails on foreshore and surrounding area.
 - *Led by: Community Member Richard Todd and FCS*
- ▶ Create planting plan for the village and surrounding areas to improve village image.
 - *Led by: Gardening Club with external partners*
- ▶ Increase awareness and usage of litter bins and cigarette butt disposals
- ▶ Litter pick ups
 - *Led by: Community Members (Tam McPherson, Georgia Todd, Sheila Clark) Loch Awe Improvement Association (LAIA) and DSC.*
- ▶ Maintain outside space and communal space grass cutting
 - *Led by: Dalavich Improvement Group*

photo: Pam Stansbury



Future Projects:

- ▶ Manage the drainage on the village green to stop flooding near the village shop.
- ▶ Create plan for creation of a community garden, polytunnel and/or orchard.
 - *Led by: Gardening Club Members (Chrissie Sugden, Rosie Mitchell, Anna Dougall)*

photo: John MacKinnon

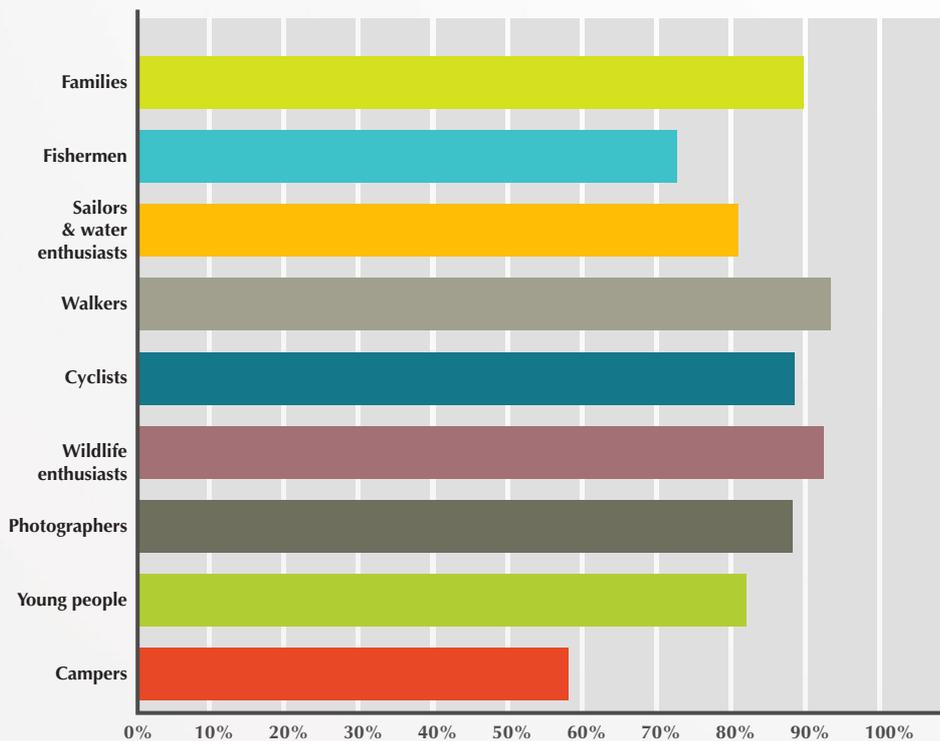


Tourism and Facilities (Activities)

Tourism currently provides significant local employment for the community, so we seek to encourage more visitors and build upon the facilities and activities available to them. Better signage, more varied coordinated activities and communication between existing businesses were highlighted within the survey and some of the action points have been covered within the other themes.

Q5 Which groups of visitors should we encourage to the area? Please tick all that apply.

Answered: 51 Skipped: 4



Current Projects:

- ▶ Research camping opportunities and create plan of resources and facilities needed to encourage this group of tourists.
 - Led by: **Anna Dougall, Dalavich Improvement Group**

Future Projects:

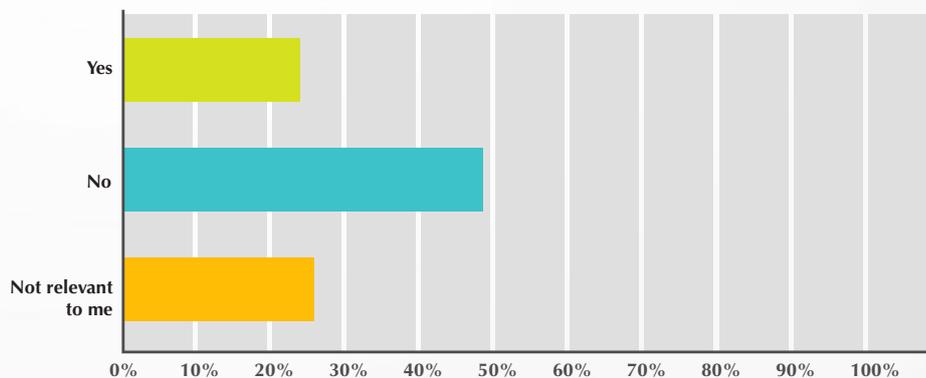
- ▶ Improve and increase tourist information signage/maps and equipment
- ▶ Investigate implementation of an outdoor adventure trail, sensory garden and more bike trails

Children and Young People

During the summer months, there is a vast increase in the number of children and young families; the survey highlighted a need to improve and build upon the number and type of activities available to them. Dalavich Kids Club is run by three members of the community, who organise special event days and regular meet ups. However, there is a lack of funds to replace equipment and organise more events. There is one playground area that is suitable for older children, but young toddlers are not able to use this equipment. The Community Centre is open in the evenings and has a children's play room that needs an upgrade and is not available during the daytime.

Q35 Thinking about children aged 0 – 12 years. Do you think there are adequate facilities for young children?

Answered: 57 Skipped: 8



Current Projects:

- ▶ More regular Kids Club events during school holidays
 - Led by: **Kids Club leaders (Georgia Todd, Donna Saxby)**
- ▶ Research viability of creating an indoor play area in the Community Centre
 - Led by: **Kids Club, Dalavich Improvement Club and Dalavich Social Club**
- ▶ Source funding for toddler play park
 - Led by: **Dalavich Improvement Group, Community Member Gill Stolton**
- ▶ Investigate purchase of Bouncy Castle for use in hall and for hire to generate funds.
 - Led by: **Kids Club (Georgia Todd) and Dalavich Social Club**

Future Projects:

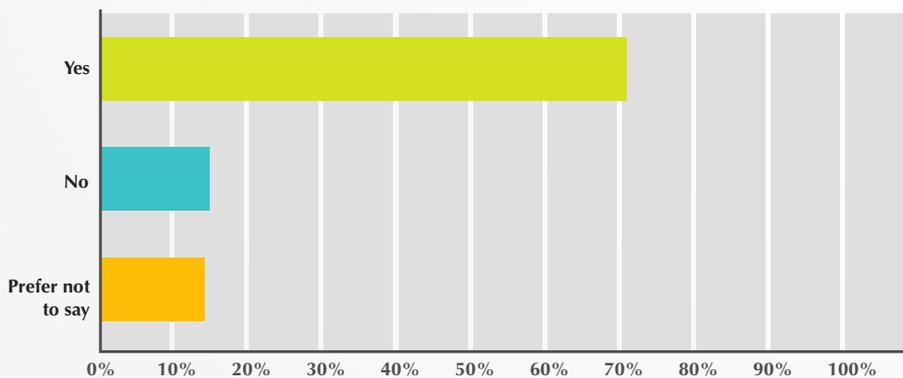
- ▶ Hire activities Coordinator to organize children's activities.
- ▶ Investigate new advertising avenues to encourage scout groups and outdoor adventure groups to use the area
- ▶ Investigate cost and viability of games and activities suggested by children

Employment and Opportunity

Overwhelmingly, local residents would like to develop more varied work opportunities and attract small businesses to the area. At present there are no local full time jobs available, so attracting young families or working age people to the area is problematic. This is a long-term goal, working in tandem with our desire to create more affordable housing to attract a younger demographic. We also seek to improve the communication between the existing businesses to enable them to work together.

Q10 Would you like to see more work opportunities available locally?

Answered: 61 Skipped: 4



Current Projects:

▶ Develop a Community Owned Hydro Scheme

The primary objective of the Hydro project is to generate renewable electricity from the River Avich and to use the income derived for the benefit of the local community. A Community Benefits Company (BENCOM), registered as Awesome Energy (Dalriada), will manage the electricity generation and delivery of surplus funds to DIG for distribution to community projects. In addition, the project will ensure that a clear mandate for fund allocation is established, guided by this Community Action Plan. This will ensure that the Board is equipped to manage fund allocation on the scale envisaged. The project will also look into creating an educational resource based around both the old and new Hydro Schemes, enabling visitors, residents and local schools to learn about the benefits of such schemes. The proposed Hydro Scheme may create a lower cost operating environment and enable the development of new work opportunities.

- Led by: **Dalavich Improvement Group**

▶ Creation of a community business association to facilitate cooperation between existing businesses. Regular planning meetings initiated with all existing businesses.

- Led by: **John Fleming, Libby Foy, Sheila Saxby, other business owners**

Future Projects :

- ▶ Regularly review the needs of the community and research ways in which we can attract more businesses to the area.

If you would like to get involved in any of the projects listed in this plan please contact DIG, DSC or the named community member who has taken the lead on the project.

The Community Action Plan will be reviewed quarterly to assess progress against current projects. There will be a formal annual review to update and refresh the plan in light of changing circumstances and community opinion.

Acknowledgements

The Community Action Plan could not have been developed without the Financial Support of both



**Argyll & Bute Community Council
in the form of a Third Sector Grant.**



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**Community Development Team,
particularly Laura MacDonald & her team**



**particularly Iona Hodge
our local Development Officer**

Everyone who completed a survey.

All the people who took an active part in the discussion groups.

Dalavich Kids Club for getting the views of our younger people.

Sam Welsby for setting up, distributing, collecting, and collating the surveys
and then collating the data for this report.

DIG Board members for their reviews and proofing of the final report.



photo: Mark Potter-Irwin

**Dalavich Improvement Group,
c/o The Post Office, Dalavich, PA351HN**