

Isle of Whithorn Local Place Plan

2025-2035



Photograph Alan McGhie 2021

Foreword

The Isle of Whithorn is a picturesque, isolated harbour village 22 miles south of Newton Stewart in Dumfries and Galloway, at the southern most tip of the Machars Peninsula.

Part of the Southwest Coast 300, and on The Whithorn Way, our village is a perfect destination for walkers, cyclists, leisure angling, leisure boating, heritage and wildlife enthusiasts. Our busy tidal working harbour is home to several fishing boats and pleasure crafts, and accommodates Wigtown Bay Sailing Club, Newton Stewart Sub Aqua Club, and Wigtown Bay Coastal Rowing Club.

The Isle of Whithorn, known locally as the Isle, was once the designation of an island attached to the mainland by a causeway (map circa 1685). Shown now as Isle Head on maps, it is affectionately referred to as The Cairn. The Cairn is home to the ruins of St Ninians' Chapel, the historical local landing site of St Ninian, who is said to have brought Christianity to Scotland. It is also home to the ruins of an iron age fort, making it a place of special heritage interest. The Cairn is also shorthand for the iconic white tower, atop the ruins of the iron Age fort, which houses equipment to guarantee safe navigation in and out of the harbour.

In 1796, the causeway was filled, houses built on it and Isle head was joined to the mainland. By the 1850s the village was a boom area, with 500 residents in relatively few houses, with a very busy harbour and shipping yard, master mariners, seamstresses, schools, churches, shops, and extended families. Now we have approximately 270 residents.

Challenges for the village reflect the challenges across rural Dumfries and Galloway, including lack of employment outside seasonal tourism and farming. A remote rural location with public transport limited to buses, with narrow roads.

The village has always consisted of a blend of second homes and full-time residents, with a reliance on the harbour, boat building, fishing and tourism from the sea to provide jobs and income. However, long gone are the Oyster fleets from the south of England, after the Oyster beds were fished out, and the Countess of Galloway ferrying between the Isle, Liverpool and the Isle of Man. The Isle is still home to boat building thanks to Wigtown Bay Coastal Rowing Club who keep the tradition alive with their home-built skiffs, and we still have a few commercial fishing boats in the harbour.

With the migration of younger families leaving the village in search of employment and to be closer to amenities, and an older population retiring into the village, the demographic balance is towards the 55+ age group.



Our village feels isolated. This isolation is regarded as a bonus to some but with an aging population the isolation is an issue. Covid and the immediate aftermath means that some residents are still recovering a sense of safety, stability and wellbeing.

Tourism is welcomed for sustainability for the village, but concerns remain about how to effectively manage it locally to preserve the character of the village.

This is why our local place plan is important. Our rural location, protected geology, peaceful setting and stunning coastline is precious to our village. The Local Place Plan will help us influence the future of our community, while ensuring its long-term sustainability.



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Introduction

The Isle of Whithorn Local Place Plan is produced by the Isle of Whithorn Community Council in consultation with Isle of Whithorn residents, businesses and charities.

Our Local Place Plan has been created under the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019, to support the Isle of Whithorn having a more direct role in shaping its future over the next ten years.

It is our proposal to Dumfries and Galloway Council about the development or use of land in the area that our Community Council represents. We have taken the opportunity to identify land and buildings that we consider to be of particular significance.

Consultation has taken place over a fourteen-month period with open meetings, leaflets, and questionnaires delivered door to door and a suggestion box in St Ninians Hall.

Our Local Place Plan is produced having regard to Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 3 currently under development and the themes it

has identified under the National Planning Framework 4 – Sustainable Places, Liveable Places and Productive Places.

Dumfries and Galloway's Local Development Plan 3 is anticipated to be adopted 2028 and will cover a ten-year period. An Evidence Report is prepared by collecting important information about the region and is then used to inform the Proposed Plan which is then consulted on. This process helps ensure the adopted plan is effective and benefits people and their communities. Further information on the process can be found here: [Local Development Plan 3 \(LDP3\) | Dumfries and Galloway Council](#)

Assets Opportunities Needs and Challenges



Isle of Whithorn
Community Council
Ward Area

Map downloaded from D&G
Website 19.7.25

The Isle of Whithorn

The Isle of Whithorn is a harbour village situated at the southern end of the Machars Peninsula in Dumfries and Galloway, three miles south of the neighbouring town of Whithorn.

There are approximately 270 residents, forming a mixed community of families, active retirees, and those requiring additional support and care. The village has a pub, a brewery, a church, a bowling club, and a community hall home to the community shop and tearoom, two children's play areas, a community growing space, and a sports field. The nearest primary school is in Whithorn, and the nearest high school is the Douglas Ewart High School, 22 miles away in Newton Stewart.

Medical Services are provided by the GP Practice and Pharmacy in Whithorn. The closest hospital accepting A&E patients is in Stranraer 43 miles

away, however, if your emergency is life threatening, or you need midwifery care, the nearest provision is Dumfries Hospital 79 miles away. There is veterinary provision for large and small animals in Whithorn and Wigtown, 11 miles away.

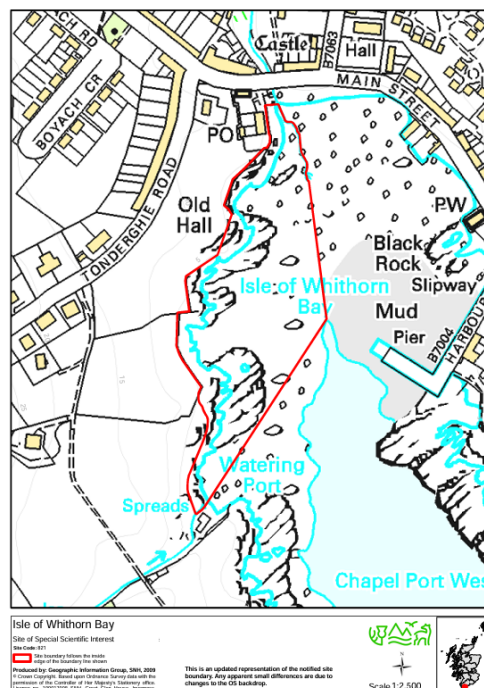
Public transport is vital for all school age children, the retired elderly and those who do not have access to a car. During the consultation period for this Local Place Plan the provision of public transport bus services for the Isle of Whithorn and the Machars has come into question, with Stagecoach no longer wanting to provide the service. A clear outcome of this Local Place Plan is that the service available currently is valued and vital to the community, despite some commentary about the infrequency of the service to Stranraer as a main employment location.

Grocery deliveries from supermarkets in Stranraer and Ayr are frequent in the village, as is the use of Food Train, who deliver to the older generation or those unable to get to the shops themselves, and deliveries from local shops particularly Galloways. A fresh fish supply van has recently returned to the village, selling direct to the public.

The majority of the Isle of Whithorn is within a conservation area, with part of the Isle of Whithorn Bay designated as a site of special scientific interest for geology. There are heritage sites on Isle Head; the remains of an iron age fort, rig and furrow ground works and the ruins of St Ninians Chapel.

Isle of Whithorn Bay
Site of Special Scientific
Interest

Downloaded from D&G
website 19.7.25



The Isle of Whithorn is dominated by the harbour, which has approximately 40 moorings, with visitor berths and commercial fishing boats.

Housing consists of owner occupied, holiday homes, private rental, social housing, and holiday lets.

Hospitality provides key employment for the village, with The Steam Packet Inn, and St Ninians Tearoom as the largest single employers, and Five Kingdoms brewery. Most of the other employment is in farming, microbusinesses such as sole traders or family run companies, carers, and professionals working from home or commuting.

Burrowhead Holiday village, B&B and holiday let provision in the village, and local farms, provide accommodation for tourists, attracted by the location, promoted by the Southwest Coast 300, Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere, Dark Skies and The Whithorn Way.

Community Consultation and Engagement

Appointed by the Isle of Whithorn Community Council as associate members, volunteers Andrea Deschamps and Vikki Reay-Martin have consulted with and produced the Local Place Plan on behalf of those in the Isle of Whithorn Community Council Ward.

The initial consultation meetings, advertised via local press and door to door leaflets, were held on 7th February 2024. There were afternoon and evening sessions to give the greatest opportunity for attendance, twenty-four villagers attended the events and shared their views. Themes emerged from these first sessions and have remained prominent throughout.

From these initial meetings in February a consultation questionnaire was drawn up and delivered to all local properties in May 2024. Twenty completed questionnaires were returned. Two further consultation meetings were held later in May 2024, again with twenty residents attending. We promoted the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan Consultation Roadshow, held in Whithorn, and extended an invitation to the council to hold the roadshow in the Isle too.

It emerged from the meetings that the Harbour and Isle of Whithorn Bay prompted further direct consultation with harbour users, specifically Wigtown Bay Sailing Club, Newton Stewart Sub Aqua Club, and Wigtown Bay Coastal Rowing Club, harbour users, and the Harbour Master. We created a specific questionnaire and sent it to users to canvas their opinions. We received a limited response of fewer than ten replies from this consultation. We sought the views of the youngest residents in the village through the Isle of Whithorn Youth Group, asking them what they liked about the village, and what they would change.

From all the information gathered we pulled together a final draft Local Place Plan, and questionnaire and ensured a copy was delivered to all homes and businesses in the Isle of Whithorn Community Council Ward area. An envelope and stamp were provided to facilitate easy return. Of 263 draft Local Place Plans and questionnaires delivered, we received eighty-nine responses by 11th May 2025.

Not all questions were responded to, so any data arising from the questionnaires has been based on the numbers of responses received for that question, for example with regards to infrastructure, road speed and safety 82 people responded to the question 'Do we need a 20mph speed limit?' and of those responses 57 said yes; so 69.5% of people have replied that we do need a 20mph speed limit in the village. At least 75 people responded to every question, from those replies we received, so there were no themes that failed to provoke a meaningful response.

These responses, combined with the earlier consultation emerging themes, form our community views for our Local Place Plan and our Community Action Plan. The final document was presented to the Isle of Whithorn Community Council on 24th July 2025, then shared with ward officers, local councillors and the harbour master in advance of submitting to Dumfries and Galloway Council. The Isle of Whithorn Local Place Plan has been produced in compliance with Dumfries and Galloway LPP Registration Requirements.

Infrastructure

A theme throughout the consultation process was the state of local roads. The timely repair of potholes and damage was an early discussion point. 96% of respondents said the road surface needed to be better maintained. Large farm vehicles accessing Tonderghie, the farms beyond, and Burrowhead, from Main Street, especially the risk they create to the corner properties, was an emerging theme at the start of consultation. This remained consistent throughout for the residents occupying the relevant properties. This was balanced in discussion with the no parking road markings and the needs of local businesses.

Early consultation identified the introduction of a 20mph speed limit in the village as a priority. Whilst it is understood that the council intends to introduce this speed limit at some point across the county for villages such as ours, 69.5% of respondents stated that we need a 20mph speed limit within the village. Some of the underpinning concerns that supported this priority were the size and number of vehicles accessing Harbour Row, and the Harbour, with a risk to those using the seating outside the Steam Packet Inn,

and the size of the buses coming into the village and turning at the junction of Main Street and Garlieston Road. The Boyach Crescent area is a popular place for children playing out of doors, and concerns have been raised about the speed of vehicles in the crescent and children's safety.

In response to an early concern that a safe crossing point was required for this junction of Main Street and Garlieston Road in the village, views were mixed with overall a marginal outcome that a safe crossing point here is not an immediate priority for most. 48% of people supported the need for a safe crossing point.

Climate Change and Nature Crisis

Most of the Isle of Whithorn is within a conservation area. This was identified as an asset from the start of the consultation process, preserving our heritage and look, however it has also been seen as a barrier to individuals, especially those suffering fuel poverty, seeking to use green energy solutions. 91% wished to retain the conservation area status of the village. An early question arose about the requirement for planning consent for the installation of solar panels on roofs within the conservation area. This question was put to villagers as part of the final consultation for this Local Place Plan. 73% of respondents said they would like to see planning laws relaxed to enable solar panels within the Isle of Whithorn conservation area without the need to obtain planning consent.



It is extremely important to residents to retain the essential nature of the Isle, its outlook and Bay. 100% of residents agreed that retaining the look and character of the village is important. It is seen as a challenge to encourage sufficient tourism and industry to the village to keep it alive and thriving in order to retain younger residents, whilst balancing the need to protect wildlife, habitat and heritage.

Climate change affecting weather and a rise in sea levels is a potential risk. The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) has identified the coastline including the Isle and to Garlieston at risk of coastal flooding. Over the extent of SEPA's first study, it identified 259 residential properties and 65 non-residential properties at risk, with potential damages costs of up to £26.1 million. In SEPA's 2022-27 forecast report, they have identified a reduced number of properties still at risk; 74 residential and 20 non-residential, with total potential damages of £14million. The revised figures have been impacted upon by the harbour concrete walls and use of flood defences.

With regards to climate change and nature crisis, the installation of electric vehicle charging points within the village is needed, with the nearest public points being in Whithorn. The protection of the SSI within the Isle of Whithorn Bay is also identified through discussion as important, however it is an asset not widely promoted. Villagers also identified an interest in becoming a Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere Community.

Sustainable Transport

There are currently regular bus services daily to Newton Stewart and Stranraer. The services are well used by school children in the village, and older residents. 81% of residents regard our bus service as enough. Those who do not would like to see more services, or a change in the size of the buses provided, to have smaller buses to better navigate the roads. No one commented that the service should be removed. The reduction or removal of service due to Stagecoach potentially withdrawing their provision have raised significant concerns about the impact on school age children and their families, in the immediate future, and the vital importance of an effective bus service for retention of families within the village and surrounds.

Early consultation identified that additional transport for the elderly is needed, with regular times for travel to Stranraer, possibly via minivan or bus.

Quality Homes

With up to 40% of the housing stock in the village being either second homes or holiday lets, concerns were raised that there is insufficient affordable housing stock available to allow younger residents and families to become owner occupiers. With no void properties in or around the village and properties for sale being snapped up as second or holiday homes, staying within the community is proving difficult.

There are some social housing properties provided by Loreburn housing and Wheatley homes, situated in Boyach Terrace and St Ninians Terrace. A review

of Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 2 (D&G LDP2) identified no sites within the Isle of Whithorn for new housing provision, however, planned provision for 80-120 properties has been identified for Whithorn, 3 miles away. The D&G LDP2 Settlement Hierarchy Technical Paper was used to help determine the settlements which would have inset maps. The Isle is listed as a village in LDP2 and any proposed development is subject to policies including policy H2: Housing in Villages. We consulted residents on this specific issue as it emerged as an early theme and remained important. 60% of respondents stated we needed new homes in the Isle of Whithorn, with 54.5% saying that these homes needed to be affordable. Comments provide additional context, with some stating that no new housing was needed in the village, but that affordable homes were necessary, and others commenting that only affordable housing should be created specifically for young families. Retention of workforce for farms and hospitality was seen as a challenge which raised additional questions about the opportunities for affordable homes. 49% of respondents stated that they would prefer ribbon development sites along the outskirts of the Isle of Whithorn on the Whithorn, Garlieston, or Tonderghie Roads. Early suggestions for a small development of houses on the green site at the entrance to Boyach Crescent triggered a specific question about that area, with only 19% of respondents concluding that this was a good area to develop.

78.5% of respondents want to limit new development in the village, with 65% also wanting to limit new development in the community council area. There is therefore opposition to any large-scale development at the Isle of Whithorn that might trigger the 5 or more units required to make provision for local housing. The redefined concept of brownfield land to include land formerly used for agriculture, forestry and previously used land, provides an opportunity for consideration of the development of agricultural sheds for housing.



Rural Homes

Living in a rural isolated community comes with limitations. Some residents within the Isle are elderly or in need of care. There are no care facilities within the Isle of Whithorn. Any care provided is within the home. If inpatient care is provided it would be in Stranraer Hospital 43 miles away or Dumfries Hospital 79 miles away. The closest council run care home is in Newton Stewart 22 miles away. This means that the most vulnerable members of our community may be a long way from home, making visiting, especially via public transport very difficult.

Mobile signal here is a challenge. Only approximately one quarter, 26%, of respondents agreed that the Isle of Whithorn is sufficiently connected for mobile phone service. Vodaphone boosters were installed some years ago, including using private buildings to accommodate the boosters. These do not appear to be functioning, with a very poor Vodaphone signal in the village. Broadband and internet provision is good in the village. We still have a working telephone box in the village near to St Ninians Hall, which is an asset for emergency use, and should be kept. The removal of landlines and replacement of internet calling is seen as a concern given that the village is susceptible to power cuts. The lack of power to the internet means that telephone calls and emergency contacts are non-existent.

Energy

Fuel poverty is a challenge within the Isle. The whole village and surrounding area has no mains gas. The community bulk buying of oil, coal, bottled or shipped gas and logs could be a possibility. Reliance on such fuels goes against Scotland's Net Zero policies. There is great potential here for community energy generation.

Business and Industry

The Isle of Whithorn Community Council ward encompasses several farms. Some have diversified providing holiday accommodation, direct milk, and produce sales. There are many holiday accommodation providers such as Burrowhead Holiday Park, providing space for touring caravans, tents, campers, and static caravans, and lodges. There are also B&Bs and self-catering holiday lets. The Steam Packet Inn is a 7 bedroom hotel, with bar and restaurant. Five Kingdoms Brewery is based in what was the old Queens Head on Main Street. St Ninians Tearoom, Community Shop and Hall are operated under the charity Isle Futures. There are commercial fishing boats that operate from the Harbour, sole traders, and microbusinesses.

Five Kingdoms Brewery are seeking to secure their long-term future within the Isle by investing in their brewery development.

Rural Development and Tourism

The challenge to balance the desire to retain the essence of the Isle of Whithorn as a remote, peaceful and quiet location with sufficient tourism to benefit the Isle economically was a repeat theme throughout the consultation process, with strong views on both sides. Not increasing new facilities for tourism but maximising and developing the existing facilities emerged as a strong theme.

St Ninians chapel on the Cairn, accessed on foot from the rear of Harbour Row or via the carpark at the end of Harbour Row is a strong tourist draw for the village, on The Whithorn Way, as is the Harbour itself. The Cairn, as the most southerly point in the Machars is also a destination for the Southwest Coast 300.

The Isle of Whithorn St Ninians Hall and tearoom, accommodation providers, Steam Packet Inn, Burrowhead Holiday Park, Five Kingdoms brewery, holiday lets, and the associated businesses provide vital employment for the village.

Preservation of SSI, and conservation area status is regarded as important to retain the village appearance, and nature.

Concerns about traffic and deterioration of roads, and insufficient infrastructure to support increased tourism were prevalent, balanced against the need for the village to thrive. Designated car parking space is sufficient at the Isle. Reinstating the disabled parking bays on Harbour Row and identifying a disabled parking bay in the Harbour Carpark has been raised.



Photographs Rosie Chilton

Place Making Design Quality

The Isle's rural setting means that the green vista surrounding the village is farmland and coast. A coastal walking path is signposted and gated

connecting Main Street to Burrowhead Holiday Park. 'All Roads lead to Whithorn' in Whithorn have created an accessible route connecting Burrowhead to St Ninians Cave and Whithorn as part of The Whithorn Way. 'All Roads' and 'The Whithorn Trust' are working towards extending the accessible path to the Isle itself. The coastal path to Burrowhead is maintained by volunteers from the Isle.

The coastal path from the Isle to Garlieston crosses farmland and is gated. Along the coastline from the rear of Isle Farm it drops to Portyerrock Bay, and is signposted along the road towards Garlieston, again leaving the road and returning to farmland. This route is not as accessible as the route from Burrowhead however it is popular with visitors and residents alike and includes views from the trig point at Stein. Portyerrock Bay houses remnants of the Mulberry Harbour workings, trialled there, and is one of the coastal dive sites for local wrecks mapped by Newton Stewart Sub Aqua Club. 99% of respondents want to retain the views from and of the coastline in the Isle of Whithorn Community Council area as they are now. This survey question had the highest number of respondents, with 89 in total.

Local Living

The nearest GP facility and Pharmacy is in Whithorn 3 miles from the Isle. There is a monthly hearing clinic held at the South Machars Community Centre in Whithorn. The nearest hospital services are at Stranraer, 43 miles away, with limited emergency provision, and at Dumfries 79 miles away for intensive care, maternity and serious conditions. Retaining GP services locally is regarded as extremely important for young children and the elderly. A suggestion for possible outreach using online consultation provision in St Ninians Hall has been made. The nearest Post Office is in Whithorn.

St Ninians Hall provides a community village shop, for basics and to enable local artists to sell their work, and St Ninians Tea Room provides a resilience hub for the community, coordinated through the Isle of Whithorn Resilience Team supported by the Community Council.



The Isle Church holds fortnightly services, and hosts the Isle of Whithorn Heritage Group SCIO exhibition, celebrating the history of the Isle. The retirement of the local minister in June 2025 is causing concern for residents regarding the potential loss of the church as a village facility. Retention of this iconic building for the community is seen as important. Of those who responded to our Community Action Plan questions prioritising which amenities were important in the Isle of Whithorn for the community to act to retain or develop, the Church received the highest number of responses, from 68 people. The church was ranked either the most important or second most important amenity for the community by 42% of respondents.

The Isle of Whithorn Coastguard, with premises located in Boyach Crescent, is an asset to the village. There is a long history of volunteering for this service within the Isle. Retention of this service for the safety of all is seen as very important, the nearest other provisions are at Kirkcudbright, and Portpatrick.

Fire Brigade services are provided by retained firefighters operating from Whithorn. Emergency service ambulance provision operates from Newton Stewart, with a small hub at Whithorn. Retention of this service is seen as important for the village. Policing is regional with a local policing presence at Community Council meetings, via report. Response policing operates from Newton Stewart. The Isle of Whithorn is a very low crime area, fortunately, with residents enjoying a good feeling of safety. There is rarely a police presence in the Isle of Whithorn.

There are three defibrillators in our village, near the Harbour at Ninians Landing, near the centre of the village at St Ninians Hall, and near Boyach Crescent at the Isle of Whithorn Bowling Club. There is no longer a First Responder group at the Isle of Whithorn. There were insufficient volunteers to sustain the provision.

There is a public phone box on Main Street near St Ninians Hall. This phone box, given the poor mobile signal in the area, and the need for emergency contact, is seen as very important for resilience and emergency provision.

The village public green spaces include The Cairn, which has a variety of bench seating and two picnic tables. There is a small children's play park on the Cairn. The other spaces are the village green outside St Ninians Hall and tearoom, with picnic tables, a small, grassed area on Main Street with 2 bench seats, and the green area in front of Boyach Crescent. The Isle of Whithorn Bowling Club as well as providing leisure and sport space maintains the bowling green and a grassed, tree lined area around the village war memorial. The site of MacWilliams' Store, next to Isle Church, has been

purchased by the Charles William Fox Fund (Charlie Fox Fund) to develop a managed small boat park and a garden with benched seating for older village residents.

The Boyach Crescent playpark, owned by D&G Council, has recently been improved and modernised due the support and energy of the Boyach Crescent Playpark group. It is a great asset, adjacent to a football pitch, and basketball hoop accessed on foot from Boyach Crescent. Further fundraising and design work is planned to make this space usable by everyone, with the addition of adult fitness equipment. A public toilet and some additional bench seating would enhance this facility for the children in the Isle.

There is bench seating provision throughout the village, and council managed waste bin provision. The two bus stops have covered provision, one outside St Ninians Hall on St Ninians Terrace and the other on Main St, next to the green opposite Boyach Crescent. There are two roundel seating pavilions in the village near to these bus stops, stone built with wooden seating and slate roofed. Parking areas are at St Ninians Hall, the Harbour and on the Cairn field.

The Isle of Whithorn Bowling Club, Wigtown Bay Sailing Club and Wigtown Bay Coastal Rowing Club have property within the village that enables engagement and activity and reduces social isolation and improves wellbeing. Newton Stewart Sub Aqua club are the only Sub Aqua club in Dumfries and Galloway to dive this coastline and are accommodated at the Isle.

The harbour is an important asset for the village, providing inexpensive mooring opportunities which empowers local people to own boats, and encourages visitors to the Isle. Retaining the harbour public toilet provision and removing the septic tank are seen as very important to protecting the environment and facilities for harbour users. The council, at the time of writing this plan, have almost completed the refurbishment of this harbour facility. Retaining and maintaining the electricity sockets, and freshwater provision for the harbour, maintaining the harbour walls and ensuring mooring costs remain at accessible levels is also important for harbour users. 95% of respondents want the Harbour to be retained as it is now, with comments from the remaining 5% that they would like to see it tidied up, and potentially the creation of a floating pontoon at the outside slipway to ease access to boats. The construction of the Isle of Whithorn Community Boatshed is regarded as an asset for the village.

Volunteering is a strong theme within the village. The Isle of Whithorn Growing Space, on land adjacent to St Ninians' Terrace Loreburn housing, is gardened by volunteers, and provides a space for very young and older residents to garden. It is planned to retain this space for a community garden moving forward, coordinated by local volunteers. Isle in Bloom volunteers grow and maintain displays around the village and have planted trees in the grassed area in front of Boyach Crescent. They are very well supported in the village and following a successful silent auction have installed durable planters to enable their work to continue.

St Ninians Hall engages volunteers in all aspects of its operation. Bought through community asset transfer by Isle Futures charity and developed in 2014 this building is a central hub in the community and important to retain. As a resilience hub, shop, meeting room, performance venue, with lighting and sound provision, activity venue, tearoom, and provision of one of the public toilet facilities in the village.

Volunteers keep local groups active. The Isle of Whithorn Youth Group has been operating for over 20 years, run by volunteers. The Isle is establishing its own Men's Shed. The Isle of Whithorn Heritage Group SCIO collates and curates, information about the history of the Isle, bringing it alive for locals and visitors alike. The bowling club, sailing club, rowing club, sub aqua club, crafts and arts groups, exercise classes, beach cleans, galas, fun days, and commemoration ceremonies bring Isle people together. Without volunteers our community safety would be severely compromised.

St Ninians Hall accommodates glass recycling for the village. Wigtown Bay Coastal Rowing Club provide card, paper, plastic and can recycling for the village as well as a general waste provision, at the Cairn to discourage littering, encourage recycling and support regular litter picks and beach cleans.

Community Wealth Building

The creation of a small industrial unit site has been suggested as part of the consultation process with a view to encouraging local small business generation, on the outskirts of the village. Five Kingdoms Brewery are exploring expanding their thriving business here.



Local Place Plan Objectives

We wish to retain the unique character of the Isle of Whithorn, maximise our facilities to seek to retain young families in the Isle, and promote healthy living and wellbeing for all residents. We want to retain the emergency services, education and health provision in the local area and ensure effective transport provision for the very young, and elderly in this rural remote location. We want infrastructure sufficient to meet tourism demand. We want to promote the need for affordable owner occupier housing in the vicinity of the Isle.

We believe this will retain the essential character of our village over the next ten years and will assist in retaining families in the Isle, creating wealth, and retaining provision for those in need of care.

Local Place Plan Priorities

The Isle of Whithorn Local Place Plan has been created by the Isle of Whithorn Community Council to highlight aspects important to the local community to bring to the attention of Dumfries and Galloway Council for consideration for the Dumfries and Galloway Local Development Plan 3 (D&G LDP3)

Infrastructure – road speed and safety. Residents have asked for a 20-mph speed limit for the village, with traffic calming at the Garlieston entrance to the village, and consideration for a safe crossing point at the junction of Garlieston Rd and Main St Isle of Whithorn. Residents have asked for road surfaces to be better maintained.

Public Transport – Given the nature of the local roads, and the distances between the villages and larger towns, a request is made that for commissioning public transport the size of the buses is further considered. Having toilet provision is welcomed. Retention of public transport is regarded as vital for the children and older village residents, and for the village to continue.

Planning and conservation, the energy crisis – residents within the Isle of Whithorn conservation area have asked whether consideration could be given to relaxing the planning requirements specifically in relation to supporting the use of roof solar panels for green energy in the village, particularly as this village is not supplied with mains gas.

Quality Homes – there is a lack of affordable owner-occupied housing within the village, and this impacts on the retention of young families, as elsewhere in rural Dumfries and Galloway. Residents question whether there could be activity to identify a location for a small development of up to 5 affordable

homes within the Isle of Whithorn Community Council area. Suggested locations are on the outskirts of the village. Consideration of brownfield sites in local farms is also a suggestion. If not whether the development outlined in Local Development Plan 2 for Whithorn is to proceed.

Harbour – retention and continued maintenance of existing harbour facilities for commercial and leisure users, including harbour toilet, and parking area.

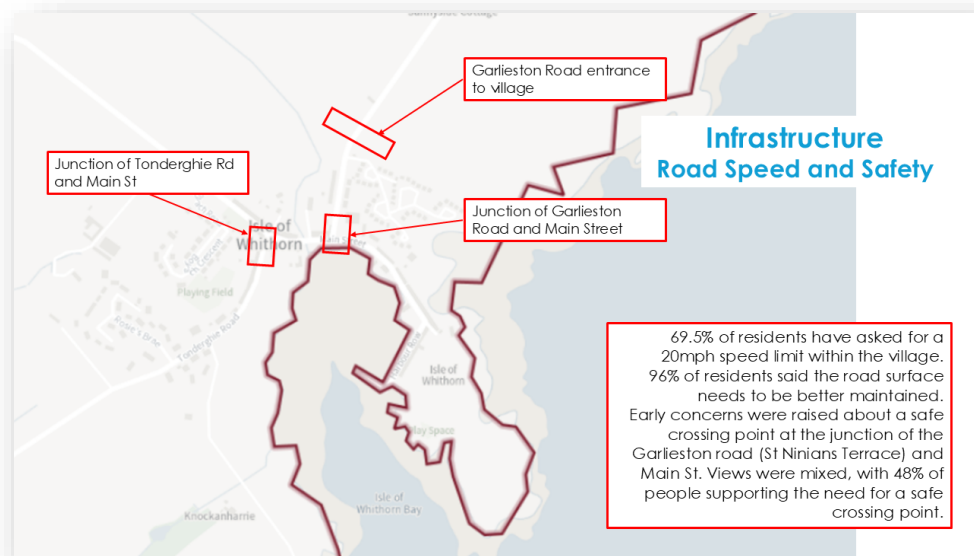
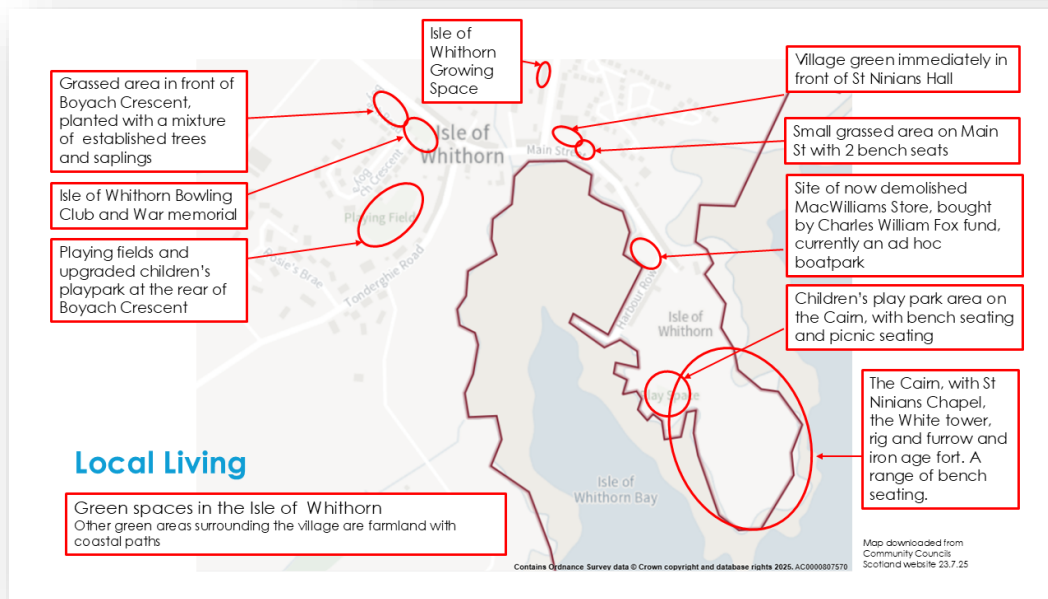
Connectivity – the Isle of Whithorn is due to transition as elsewhere to internet telephony. There are concerns about the lack of mobile reception within the village. Consideration is requested for council support to ensure continued connectivity for the village at times of emergency.

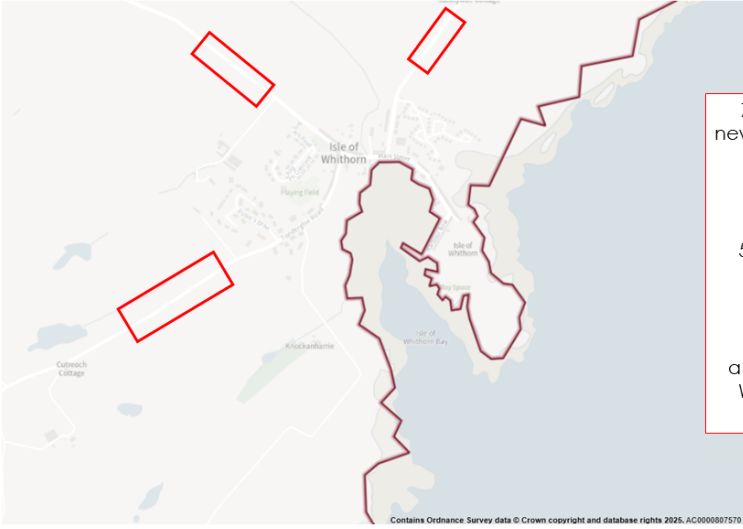
Conservation, nature, and the essence of the village – except in relation to specific mention of green energy provision to reduce fuel poverty in the village, retaining the look and character of the Isle of Whithorn is regarded as extremely important to residents. Retaining the conservation status, limiting new development, and retaining the site of special scientific interest is very important. This includes retaining the views from the coastline, and the appearance of the coastline and village.

Local Living – Schools, GP, health, pharmacy, coastguard, fire brigade, policing, emergency provision, play areas. Retention and sustaining these services locally at Whithorn, Newton Stewart, Stranraer and the Isle of Whithorn is seen as vital to ensure that families continue to regard the Isle as a good place to live, with the facilities for education, health, safety and recreation within a 3 mile, and 50-mile radius. Any erosion of these services will result in net migration from the village of younger and older residents and increase the likelihood of holiday let and second home ownership.



Local Place Plan Maps






Quality Homes

- 78.5% of respondents want to limit new development in our community council area.
- 60% of respondents stated we needed new homes in the Isle of Whithorn
- 54.5% of these respondents stated these homes needed to be affordable.
- 49% of respondents stated they would want ribbon development along the outskirts of the Isle on the Whithorn Tonderghie or Garlieston roads

Map downloaded from Community Councils Scotland website 23.7.25
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database rights 2025. AC0000007570



Harbour

- Fresh Water
- Public Toilet
- Elsan disposal
- Fresh Water
- Electricity point
- Electricity point
- Harbour Carpark
- Outer Slipway

Aerial photograph Alan McGhie 2021

Community Action Plan Objectives

Our residents and businesses have a strong commitment to the Isle and a desire to ensure local retention of assets, for community use. We are keen to retain the essential picturesque and peaceful quality of the Isle of Whithorn but make the village an attractive sustainable location to retain families.

The Community Action Plan is owned by the Community, and its creation is endorsed by the Community Council. Our consultation is the catalyst for community action and the actions are to be adopted by individuals, volunteers and community groups to ensure that the priorities for the people of the Isle are delivered.

Community Action Plan Priorities

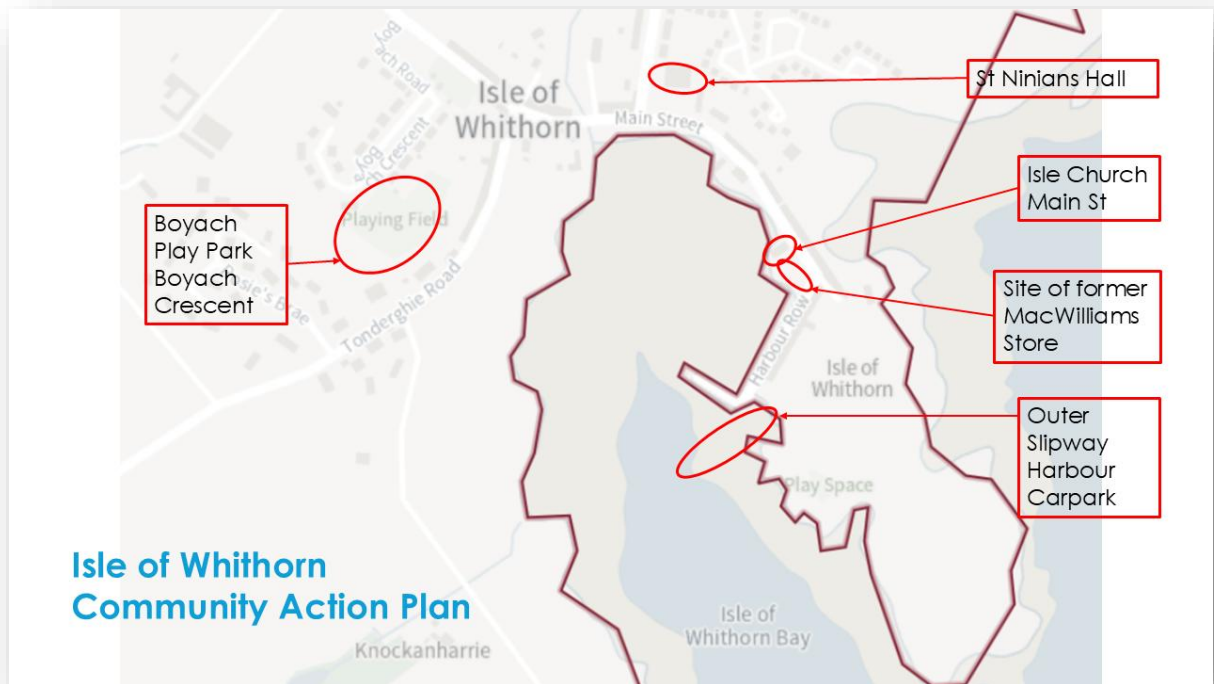
The following actions have been identified during our Local Place Consultation as being important to community members. These are not the responsibility of the Isle of Whithorn Community Council, or Dumfries and Galloway Council, but require community members to drive forward for the benefit of everyone in the Isle of Whithorn. Consultation included the opportunity for an individual or a group to take ownership of addressing the priority action. Where no group or individual has taken ownership of the priority it is hoped that they will do so during the life of this Community Action Plan.

The overall priority ranking has been calculated based on the total percentage of responses ranking the action as 1st to 3rd most important. The percentages have been adjusted to reflect the numbers of responses against the total number of responses received.

For example, 15 people ranked the creation of a boat park and garden on the site of the old MacWilliams Store as their second most important priority for the village. Only 66 out of 68 people responded to this priority, so the percentage was calculated by $66/68 \times 15 = (14.56 \text{ divided by } 68) \times 100 = 21.4\%$ rounded down to 21%.

For those actions identified as a priority for members of the village during this consultation process, this is a call to arms, to take ownership, form a group if needed, and make it happen.

Overall Priority Rank	Placing & Percentage of total votes	Location	Action	Owner
2 (56%)	1. 1% 2. 21% 3. 34% 4. 22% 5. 1% 66 from a total of 68 responses	The site of the former MacWilliams Store Adjacent to the Isle Church corner of Harbour Row and Main St	Creation of a small low maintenance garden with seating for older people in the village, and a small boat park.	Charles William Fox Fund
5 (18%)	1. 11% 2. 3% 3. 4% 4. 16% 5. 15% 48 from a total of 68 responses	Outer slipway, Harbour carpark	Widening the slipway adding a temporary floating pontoon to ease access to watersports and activities	
3 (28%)	1. 5% 2. 11% 3. 12% 4. 21% 5. 33% 62 from a total of 68 responses	Boyach Play Park, Boyach Crescent.	Adding exercise equipment for adults, public toilet, and bench seating	Boyach Play Park Group
1 (71%)	1. 7% 2. 35% 3. 29% 4. 15% 5. 13% 68 from a total of 68 responses	Isle Church Main St	Retention of this building for community use, should the church no longer be used for religious services.	
4 (26%)	1. 14% 2. 10% 3. 2% 4. 2% 5. 2% 37 from a total of 68 responses	St Ninians Hall	Retention of this building for resilience and as a warm hub and community hub	Isle Futures



Contact Details

The Isle of Whithorn Community Council can be contacted via

contact@isleofwhithorncc.org.uk

Please refer to 'IoWLPP 2025-35' in your email header, for any questions or commentary on our Local Place Plan.