

Development Plan 2014 – 2019

1. Background

1.1 People have always actively contributed to, and been involved with the life of their local community, helping to shape the places where they live. However, recent years have seen an encouraging rise in communities themselves taking responsibility for community development and regeneration, supported by recent legislative developments such as the Community Empowerment Bill, and the 2014 Scottish referendum campaign, that have contributed to a new sense of opportunity for communities. We have been reminded that local grass-roots democracy is a powerful tool for change; that we have an opportunity to decide together what kind of community we want our children to inherit.

Here in Canonbie a large-scale Community Development appraisal, CADISPA, published in 2013, laid out many of the issues which would need to be addressed if we were serious in this intention.

1.2 For this Community, the period covered by these proposals is of critical importance. Our Government will decide whether major Coal and onshore Gas Developments, proposed for this area, can be implemented. Hundreds of local people have already made their views known by attending meetings or taking part in doorstep surveys. It is likely that we will need to fully engage with formal processes, so that we can express both our individual views, and those of our community, to Local and central Government, about what we want, in respect of this, and other issues, such as the plan to put high pressure sewage pumps in the Village playing fields.

1.3 In developing CaDRA, a clear principle was agreed at the outset. The future of this community belongs to the people who live and work here. Their views and preferences should always be at the core of decisions made by others, if they will impact on this community. No single individual, group, business, landowner or organisation has a monopoly, right or authority to determine the future of this Community.

1.4 Central to the proposals in this document, is the fact that within the last decade, we have seen the loss of a number of local businesses and services, both in the village and district. We need to protect remaining assets and amenities, and agree ways to develop and support sustainable economic activity that meets the needs of local people, increases employment opportunities, and promotes local prosperity.

For these reasons, CaDRA members voted in 2014 to seek charitable status as a SCIO, and to become a Development Trust, in order to adopt structures that most effectively support us in our aspiration to benefit this community.

1.5 CaDRA's key charitable purpose is the advancement of community development, including the advancement of rural regeneration. CaDRA intends to contribute to this process through its structure as a Development Trust, and we are committed to working in partnership with other local businesses, groups or organisations who share these objectives.

Our Constitution details key aims and objectives, and places clear responsibility on members and Trustees to act in the best interests of the Community.

1.6 Community-led regeneration requires local people to identify and prioritise local issues, identify opportunities they wish to pursue, and to decide on action. The proposals that follow are, in this respect, our starting point, and CaDRA welcome constructive comments or suggestions for other issues which local people would wish to prioritise.

CaDRA proposed priorities over the period of this plan are based on :-

- Proposals made directly to us by local people
- Suggestions and feedback from consultation activity, such as Day of the Region, 'Futures Tree' and local Scottish Rural Parliament event feedback .
- Issues identified by the Cadispa Community Appraisal in their 'Canonbie Recommendations'
- Ideas and issues identified at public meetings and discussions with local groups and organisations

2. Priorities for Activity

2.1. Children, Families and Young People

2.1.1 Consult young people, and their families about what services and activities are currently available to them and identify any issues (eg access, suitability etc.). Explore what services or facilities people would like to be developed, and prioritise these for inclusion in future plans. Link this to D&G Youth Strategy.

This is more likely to be effective if young people, and their parents and representatives engage with CaDRA's plans, and we will seek increased representation from this group, both as Trustees, and as members.

2.2 Health & Social Care

D&G Council and Health Board are at an early stage of integrating health and social care services. They have already confirmed that they struggle to reach people in dispersed rural areas. We can, and should, take this chance to influence and increase the range and nature of these services in our community, as well as considering opportunities to develop and deliver services that may create new businesses or services.

2.2.1 Vulnerable older people, and those with disabilities, in a dispersed rural area

Most predictions suggest that the need for services to older people will grow. We will consider implications of this for our Community, both from a service user, and service provider point of view, and seek to address these questions and identify potential solutions and opportunities.

CaDRA has been successful in obtaining funding from NHS Putting You First programme for a pilot project to try out a ways of offering support to this group. We propose to link this to a Community Café model, and will work with the Church and a range of other stakeholders, including service users, to develop and try out the idea. More details will be shared on the new Community Website in due course.

2.3. Sustainable Economic Development

D&Gs Councils Local Development Plan, approved in 2014, makes explicit reference to the need to support sustainable development. We need to define what that means for this area.

2.3.1. We will make contact with existing businesses, to discuss opportunities for expansion or diversification, and potential criteria for sustainable development or expansion. Ideas about potential new business opportunities will also be important.

2.3.2. Tourism is already important to this area, and we see considerable scope for further growth. In discussion with the Langholm and Eskdale Visitor Network and VisitScotland, we will develop proposals for promoting our area as a visitor destination, and identify and pursue and support new business opportunities. Our local rural environment, the river, the heritage and history of the area are valuable assets. We will pursue opportunities to work together with neighbouring areas to promote local tourism which is sensitive to our area

2.3.3 Renewable energy was the subject of a recent unsuccessful Challenge Fund bid by the Association in October 2014, in partnership with another local organisation. However, a national Community Energy charity, in commenting on the application, made a number of suggestions for further potential funding opportunities which we will now pursue.

2.3.4 Community Assets and Social Enterprise

In becoming a Charity (SCIO) and Development Trust we will seek to create or acquire assets, or establish social enterprises to benefit the community, for example, where a clear need is identified:

- To protect or preserve an existing service or amenity that is under threat, and where the loss may have detrimental impact on the community
- To develop or create a service or amenity that would create new, or improve the existing range of facilities, services or amenities available to local people
- To develop or protect provisions that assist in retaining/ supporting people in our community, particularly young people, or in attracting people to relocate to our area

3. Community Development

CADISPA recommendations for Canonbie included further research into local aspirations for this Community. The formation of a new community organisation, CaDRA, was another of their main recommendations. Linked to this is, CaDRA is committed to ensuring that local people can access information, have their views sought, articulated, and taken into account by those making decisions about matters that affect us.

3.1 Day of the Region CaDRA acquired European LEADER funding, and organised this community celebration in September 2014, in partnership with a number of individuals, local groups, businesses and organisations. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive: that it was both worthwhile, and successful in promoting community cohesion, and CaDRA have committed to participation for 2015, if funding is made available.

3.2 Information Sharing: Local people need mechanisms to access relevant local information, to decide on issues. Residents also routinely need information about local services and facilities.

CaDRA have obtained funding for a Community Website 'Canonbie.org', due to go live by December 2014. This site will develop as information is contributed. CaDRA already circulate e-mail and printed news-sheets, and will develop web-based information-sharing and community consultation

3.3 Local Democracy: Engagement, Consultation and Participation: We will continue to seek opportunities to engage and consult with local residents and encourage them to actively participate in local democracy.

We will contribute to community capacity-building, by promoting volunteering, identifying appropriate training and development opportunities, supporting innovation and small scale, sustainable, local entrepreneur activity.

We have actively participated in the new Scottish Rural Parliament, explored and offered feedback on community views of key local issues, including Land Use Planning & Land Reform, and local Business & Employment.

We will pursue opportunities for other organisations to support community development and promote rural regeneration activity for our community.

4. Proposed Fossil-Fuel Developments

4.1 A range of Coal and Onshore Gas extraction proposals have been made by major developers, several in partnership with Buccleuch Estates as major landowner. Community views vary in respect of the various proposals. Unsurprisingly in the current economic climate, opportunities for real jobs or significant economic benefit need to be carefully considered. However, community concerns about public health, environmental risks, local amenity, and net economic benefit of specific proposals, need to be adequately articulated.

4.2 Having undertaken a local Household Survey of 362 local residents, in respect of the proposals, that indicated overwhelming opposition, we continue to represent local community opposition, particularly to onshore gas and opencast coal proposals. We will continue to provide information to local residents about these proposals. Key community concerns focus on whether, in the local circumstances, all or any of these activities, in very close proximity to our community, will have lasting economic/ public health/ or community detrimental impacts. Consequently we will continue to articulate local opposition to onshore gas proposals, via a subgroup, and participation in a broad alliance of affected communities and environmental groups.

4.3 CaDRA believe that local residents should be fully informed and consulted about these and any other major proposals. D&G Council, in approving the Coal Bed Methane drillsites via 'delegated powers', denied this community any opportunity, through a formal consultation process, to be made aware of the scale of the proposals, and to have our say. We have pursued a complaint to D&G Council about this, and associated matters. We continue to pursue the complaint via Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, who are currently undertaking an investigation, and will publicise their findings.

4.4 CaDRA is committed to ensure that Planning and other regulatory systems are held to account, to ensure that this community is adequately consulted on, and protected from any activity that may impact on local residents and/or the local rural environment.

5. Other Community Issues

Members are encouraged to raise issues that may be of interest or relevance to, or may impact on the wider community, and seek to have these considered by CaDRA. We will endeavour to make local people aware of other structures and mechanisms that may impact on them, such as Community Council activity, D&G Council's Single Outcome Agreement, Local Development Plan, PEDL Licences issued by DECC, etc.

We will seek appropriate mechanisms and funding sources to address this Development Plan agenda.