

# A COMMUNITY PLAN FOR NORTH & CENTRAL MULL



June 2016

Final Summary Report

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MULL COMMUNITY COUNCIL



**MULL & IONA**  
COMMUNITY TRUST

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## 1. WHAT IS THE PLAN ALL ABOUT

The north Mull community development work came about in response to the need to better understand the social, economic and environmental challenges islanders face now and into the future: to consider how we might encourage our children and their children to stay here and to work and live on the island.

Following consultations with local residents, development plans for the Ulva Ferry and Ross of Mull and Iona areas have already been produced and this plan therefore fills the geographical gaps, covering feedback and ideas from residents in Tobermory, Salen, Dervaig, Craignure and the Lochbuie/Croggan area.

The recommendations in the plan will be used:

- by the Trustees of the Waterfall Fund (the charity which will distribute the monies generated by the Garmony Hydro Electric Scheme) to assist the Board in deciding which projects will receive grants.
- to support external funding applications to the National Lottery and alike for new projects on the island.
- to help Mull Community Council (and other statutory bodies/campaign groups) prioritise their work.
- to provide details of the issues which need solutions from local and national governments so providing a lobbying tool to seek improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities on the island.



## 2. HOW WAS THE PLAN CREATED

The Mull and Iona Community Trust and Mull Community Council formed a Steering Group to develop and oversee the research work and produce this plan. A local project officer completed most of the work with help from a consultancy that specialises in community engagement techniques. The work included:

- 12 public café conversations events to discuss peoples' views and ideas attended by 106 residents
- Face to face/one-to-one surveys at summer events (Lifeboat Day, producers' markets and Salen Show); 113 returns
- Online and paper surveys; returned by 65 people
- Visits to schools to gather the views and ideas of young people; attended by 138 pupils
- Review and preparation of the Mull economic, social and demographic data
- A review of European, regional and national policy in relation to the community plan findings.



### 3. WHAT WE FOUND OUT

## North & Central Mull today- the good news

- The community is diverse and thriving and community spirit is highly valued by those who live here.
- There is a strong culture of 'self-help' and a wide range of social activities for residents. This is evidenced by the large number of community run organisations and social enterprises providing activities, amenities, services and facilities to islanders and visitors.
- Our natural assets (landscape, scenery and wildlife) are highly valued by those who live here.
- It is considered a safe and secure place to live and this is highly valued by islanders.
- Residents consider themselves to have better health compared to people living in other regions of Scotland.
- Educational attainment is higher compared to regional and Scottish levels.
- The introduction of Road Equivalent Tariff (RET) has meant a significant reduction in ferry costs.
- Improvements to the summer ferry timetable mean it is now possible to commute to Oban to work.
- Unemployment is low and reliance on benefits is low compared to regional and national averages.
- Two improvement projects will deliver superfast Broadband by the end of 2016.









### North & Central Mull today- the challenges

- The outward migration of young people and an aging population (the percentage of young people is lower and the percentage of older people is higher compared to the regional and national levels). There are greater costs and other challenges to delivering services for older people and the need to encourage younger, working people to stay or move to Mull so that the economy can grow.
- Average earnings per head is below the Scottish average.
- Although unemployment is low, there is a lack of job diversity, with a heavy reliance on tourism related employment, which is seasonal and tends to be low paid.
- Primary industries are still very important in terms of overall employment and output (a significantly higher percentage of overall employment is in fishing and farming compared to the regional and national averages). However the number of jobs in fishing and farming and the economic value of these industries are in decline.
- North and Central Mull is amongst the most access deprived communities in Scotland, meaning that people have to travel much further to access basic services and facilities; facilities that most other communities in Scotland take for granted. This access deprivation limits both social and economic activities and is particularly challenging for residents who are already vulnerable (older people, those with disabilities and young people).
- Removal and/or reduction in public services. With the budget cuts, increasing competition for grants and the high cost of provision in remote areas like Mull, the removal of services is a real threat to the quality of life of islanders.
- The economy is fragile as a result of the lack of employment diversity, changing population demographics, access deprivation and limited demand/markets.
- Road and visitor infrastructure (e.g. toilets, parking and viewpoints) is limited and the introduction of RET and the resulting increase in visitor numbers adds pressure to this.
- Land access, planning and development; the need to balance development with protecting Mull's natural assets for future generations.
- Lack of affordable and suitable housing is a barrier to younger, working people staying on Mull and attracting new people to Mull. It therefore negatively impacts economic development (e.g. limiting job creation/take up and business expansion).
- Poor mobile connectivity.
- Limited leisure and sports facilities (particularly all weather and indoor amenities).
- Access to training and education opportunities can be limited.
- Limited public and community transport in the most remote areas.
- No childcare facilities.
- Although community spirit is valued highly, there is a need for people to work together better over major or strategic issues. The community is good at coming together in a crisis but not to proactively plan for the future. As part of this there are opportunities for older and younger people to work together; listening to the views of and involving younger people in decision making.



## North & Central Mull today- the numbers that matter

More detail on the numbers below can be found in the full plan report.

 <p><b>Population</b></p>	<p>There are 2,452 people living in North Mull. 15% are children, 58% are working age adults and 27% are of pensionable age.</p> <p>Compared to Argyll &amp; Bute where 19% are children, 59% are working age adults and 22% are pensionable age.</p> <p>Compared to Scotland where 20% are children, 64% are working age adults and 17% are pensionable age.</p>	 <p><b>Education</b></p>	<p>21-22% of people have no qualifications in North &amp; Central Mull compared with 25% across Argyll &amp; Bute.<sup>1</sup></p>	 <p><b>Health</b></p>	<p>84-85% of people record being in very good or good health in North &amp; Central Mull compared with 82% across Argyll &amp; Bute.</p>
 <p><b>Economy</b></p>	<p>Average weekly earnings in Argyll &amp; Bute are £495 compared to £527 across Scotland.</p> <p>7-16% of jobs in North &amp; Central Mull are in primary industries compared to 4.9% across Argyll &amp; Bute.</p> <p>16-21% of jobs in North &amp; Central Mull are in accommodation and food compared to 9.7% across Argyll &amp; Bute.</p> <p>Unemployment is 1-3% in North and Central Mull compared to 4.1% across Argyll &amp; Bute.</p> <p>The level of benefits claimants in North and Central Mull is 9% compared to 12% across Argyll &amp; Bute.</p>	 <p><b>Housing</b></p>	<p>10% of housing stock is second or holiday homes compared with 10% across Scotland.</p> <p>14-22% of dwellings are private rented compared to 13% across Argyll &amp; Bute.</p>	 <p><b>Access to services</b></p>	<p>North &amp; Central Mull is amongst the top 1% most access deprived areas in Scotland.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Where a percentage range is given this reflects the three separate data zones for North and Central Mull. Nomis 2011 Census data and [www.statistics.gov.scot](http://www.statistics.gov.scot)

## 4. THEMES & PRIORITIES

### Overall

The table below shows the most supported projects, by importance. To help Mull Community Council easily identify the public sector responsibilities, the 'S' denotes a statutory responsibility.

Project Priority List	Total Responses	Statutory
1. Affordable housing & land	99	S
2. Road infrastructure, driver education & coping with RET	96	S
3. Better broadband	91	
4. 'Bonding' the community to work together over major or strategic issues- i.e. a common vision. Before we go forward we have to go back. Need more conversations to understand Mull better before taking specific issues forward. Need a forum to debate issues	51	
5. Job creation & sustainable jobs	41	
6. Devolved power & budget- set up a 'Mull Island Council'	41	S
7. Better sports, all weather & indoor facilities	40	
8. Better access to training & education e.g. Argyll College: hospitality, child care, local primary education and vocational	40	S
9. Protection of the landscapes, flora & fauna, biodiversity & appropriate development	36	S
10. Leisure/fun pool/water park	35	
11. Better mobile phone connectivity	32	
12. Improved public & community transport	27	S
13. Childcare	20	S
14. Tobermory infrastructure/amenity development plan- better communication between groups & improve footpaths, parking, toilets & create a funding plan	16	
15. More viewpoint parking & interpretation	13	
16. Better ferries	11	S
17. Improvements for the disabled	11	
18. Children's farm	8	
19. Facilities improvements in Salen: bus shelter, toilets, car parking, community space e.g. for workshops & craft units. Hedge around Pennygown cemetery for privacy.	6	



Tobermory

The top three most frequent themes in the Tobermory sessions were society/community and wellbeing, infrastructure and environment.

Within the themes the top five project ideas were:

- Conservation and protection planning- development has to preserve biodiversity and acknowledge the role biodiversity plays in everyday life on the islands.
- Set up a Mull Island Council with devolved powers and funding, to replace Argyll & Bute Council with proper funding for the islands.
- Improve driver education and roadside digital display at exits from the Craignure and Fishnish ferries.
- Structural community involvement- consolidate efforts working towards common goals. The Community Trust to encourage groups to combine and apply for material amounts of money, enabling large groups to have more clout and encourage greater results.
- Tobermory infrastructure/amenity development plan and better communication between groups, halls, Tobermory Harbour Association, playpark. Improve footpaths, parking, toilets and create a village funding plan.



<sup>2</sup> This priority list refers to the café conversations held in each village and does not include the survey data as respondents were not asked to identify where they live as part of the surveys

## Craignure

The top three most frequent themes in the Craignure sessions were infrastructure, amenities and services; society/community and wellbeing.

Within the themes the top three most popular project ideas were:

- More affordable housing
- Childcare
- More viewpoints, parking and island information/interpretation

## Salen

The top five most frequent themes in the Salen sessions were society/community and wellbeing, infrastructure and transport.

Within the themes the most popular project ideas were:

- How can we 'bond' the community to work together over major or strategic issues- i.e. create a common vision. Before we go forward we have to look back. Need more conversations to understand Mull better before taking specific issues forward. Need a forum to debate issues.
- Improve facilities in Salen: bus shelter, toilets, car parking for the shop and visitors, community space e.g. for workshops and craft units. Hedge around Pennygown cemetery for privacy from the main road.
- Protection of the landscape, flora and fauna.
- More affordable housing and land, particularly for families within Salen, Craignure and Dervaig catchment areas.
- More control of private house building- strategic land use context for each development; not piecemeal.



Dervaig

The top three most frequent themes in the Dervaig sessions were society/community and wellbeing, amenities and services and healthcare provision.

Within the themes the most favored project ideas were:

- Respecting the past to inform the future, 'the community spiral'.
- Better broadband.
- Better mobile connectivity.
- Improved public and community transport.
- Job creation beyond tourism.
- Encourage the 'Living Wage' across Mull businesses.
- Improvements for those who are disabled.
- Childcare.
- Improve access to land.
- Better access to training and education- particularly Argyll College - hospitality, child care, primary education and vocational courses.

All comments, project ideas and further details from the café conversations, surveys and school events can be found in the full community plan report, which is available on request from the Community Trust.



which would provide great benefit for islanders and strongly support wider national and regional policy outcomes.

## 5. OBSERVATIONS ON THE FINDINGS

- A range of people with different backgrounds and ages have contributed to this plan, representing around 37% of the total population of north and central Mull.
- The overall results do not fully reflect the online survey findings with regards the statutory priorities. 65 people completed the online survey and these results showed that Mull Community Council should also be focusing on health service related issues as a priority. Overall, the health services theme didn't come across as a top priority during the café conversation discussions and face-to-face surveys.
- It is noted that the majority of those who commented on road infrastructure wanted upgrades to the existing single track roads (better surface maintenance, wider and more passing places and improved signage) rather than double track. However given the relatively small number of people who commented, conclusions should not be drawn from this. The polarising nature of this issue (strong opinions for and against double track roads) meant that the subject was often avoided as part of the café conversation discussions. In addition roads are an island wide issue and as this consultation did not cover the whole of Mull, the report is not fully representative.
- With or without a plan developed by local people, life on the islands will continue to change. By thinking about what islanders want for the future and taking action now, the community can take some control and influence that future; rather than waiting for changes to take place without any local design or influence. The successful community-led projects which were 'born out' of the previous community plans are proof that when local people get together, discuss their ideas and agree a plan, beneficial change does happen.
- With the new income stream provided by Garmony Hydro and the potential for further external grant funding, there are projects in this plan
- New developments should protect and enhance what people feel is good about life here now. 'The community/local people' is valued most, followed by our natural assets (biodiversity and landscapes). However with change in population demographics, the 'fabric' and functioning of the community is directly threatened. For example, the economy can't grow without working people and their families; school rolls cannot be maintained; tax revenues fall; there aren't enough people to take up jobs and run/provide services and businesses. There is a strong argument therefore that projects which help retain and attract younger people should take priority i.e. job creation, housing, childcare, improving access to services/facilities and social integration/community 'bonding'.
- Related to this is the need to preserve and maintain the services and facilities already available on Mull. With the public sector budget constraints and increasing competitiveness for grant funding, there is a real risk that our island services are degraded. Indeed there is already evidence of this with regards the upkeep of some local village halls and the removal of Mull's public library service. This consideration was also raised as part of the café conversation discussions (although it did not emerge as a top priority). We perhaps have a tendency to take for granted what we currently have but these facilities and services may not always be available and therefore consideration should be given to what and how to preserve these for future generations.
- Although the 'statutory issues' have been highlighted separately in the overall result section, this does not mean they have to be the sole responsibility of the public bodies. Examples of communities working together with the public sector to tackle, 'statutory issues' are now common across the UK. Therefore they should be viewed as potential areas for community involvement too. Childcare, broadband, and affordable housing are three examples of statutory areas which have involved innovative partnerships between public and community organisations.