

Callander Community Building

One of the responsibilities of a Community Council is to engage with community building. Whilst this could mean many things that would fall under the general sense of enhancing the inter-connectedness of a community, it does carry a very particular weight in the very unusual circumstances that we now face. We see enormous uncertainties ahead. No-one knows for sure how next year will be as the tail-end (hopefully) of pandemic restrictions are phased out, as Brexit kicks in, and as future government spending policy emerges.

Our community has found new ways of working together during the past 12 months and has faced the acute issues of the pandemic with characteristic community spirit. Many individuals have contributed to this and the town has been fortunate in the strong leadership that has emerged from many sections of the community.

We have also seen some really distressing changes over the same time scale. Lost businesses, stalled developments, and a marked change for the worse in our experience of some features of the behaviour of our visitors.

Some of our community have found the last year very difficult because of their personal situation and will have very significant fears for the future. It is probable that two groups have been particularly affected in their personal lives: the elderly and our young people for both of whom isolation has a strong meaning.

The purpose of this document is to kick-start a renewed, energetic and directed campaign of community building over the months ahead as we emerge into the post-pandemic world. There are no solutions proposed – those will need to come through discussion and positive engagement with the community.

The Community Council needs to stimulate an optimism and cohesiveness as we look ahead. Happily for us, doing this will overlap with the LPP process and we will find some synergy. I list some questions for us to answer – I hope that we can agree a positive answer in each case.

1. Can we agree what our community is?

It is everyone within our area, but it is also a set of communal and individual activities and interactions. This needs to be organized just enough to ensure that nothing gets left out of sight. Who gets left out of our thinking? In the appendix I show the sort of thing I have in mind.

2. Can we empower further our community?

So much energy would be released if the community grass-roots felt that it had the power to identify and deliver the facilities that it wishes. The allotments group is an example of this. Let's let all community members think that their own idea can be explored and perhaps supported in that way.

3. Can we bring our community together more often?

The real treasure behind the St Kessogs plan is a venue for the community to come together. For some the building itself matters, but for many the coming together will be the value of it. It will work best if it is all designed around recognizing and enjoying the wide diversity in our community. It could be a place for young and old to meet and support each other.

Appendix

Some of the parts of our community and how we hear from them:

Sports/Exercise	We could ask McLaren Leisure Centre to find ways of speaking to us for all the various sporting and physical exercise groups
Arts, Culture, Heritage	We can see whether there is enough enthusiasm to form an umbrella organization to speak to us on behalf of the various arts, culture and heritage activities. These are currently a large set of different organizations (my starting list just from memory has CAOS, the pipe band, highland dancers, the film society, Callander Brass, Callander Chorale, Callander Heritage Society, U3A).
Health and Well-being	How do we ensure that we have contact with these? There are many beyond the NHS.
Business	We can hear from businesses through CE
??	Where do gardening and enjoying the natural world fit into this?
Age-groups	CYP speaks for the young, who speaks for the elderly in our community?

There will be others. Can we complete this table?