

EAST WEMYSS AND MACDUFF COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN



2019-2024



Contents

3 Preface

4 Introduction

5 Our Community Now

6 Our Community Now cont'd

7 A Shared Vision

8 Our Likes / Quotes

9 Our Dislikes / Quotes

10 From Our Kids' Perspective

11 Theme 1: Facilities And Activities

12 Theme 2: Amenities

13 Theme 3: Roads And Transport

14 Theme 4: Environment And Heritage

15 Early Action / Fife Community Plan

16 Making It Happen



Preface

The village of East Wemyss initially grew up around Macduff Castle which is known as the original seat of the Wemyss family. Their ancestor Macduff, the famous Thane of Fife, is said to have erected some sort of structure (probably of wood) on the site back in the eleventh century, although nothing now survives from that date.

The oldest remains are thought to date from the 12th century when stone became the material of choice for castle building. The castle shares its scheduled monument listing with the nearby Wemyss Caves which have an even longer history being especially famous for their ancient Pictish carvings dating to around 500 CE or possibly even earlier.

The Pits are believed to be descendants of the original inhabitants of this area. The word 'wemyss' actually derives from the Gaelic 'uamh' meaning 'cave', so the Wemyss family and villages are all ultimately named in honour of these enigmatic features of the coastline. The oldest church in the village is St Mary's by the Sea, built in 1528. It is a listed building but now in private hands.

With the village situated by the sea, fishing has been a local activity from earliest times, but due to the lack of harbour it has never been a commercial enterprise, limited instead to small boats. There was once quite a significant weaving industry. As early as the twelfth century, Wemyss families were known for the quality of their work. Originally there were looms in almost every home, but the industrial age brought economies of scale with establishments such as Johnston's Linen Factory which finally closed its doors in 2003.

Coal mining was the major industry in the area from at least as early as the fifteenth century, though the operation was comparatively small-scale before the twentieth century. Locally, the two most important pits were probably the Rosie and the Michael Colliery.

The disaster in which nine men lost their lives in 1967 finally brought about the closure of the Michael pit. The rise of the coal industry caused the population of the village to reach its peak around the time of the 1911 census, but numbers declined along with the coal industry in the latter half of the 20th century.

The local rail network was once extensive as it served the coal industry, but has not operated at all since 1970. There were trams running between Leven and Kirkcaldy from 1906 to 1932 when competition from buses put them out of business.

East Wemyss is today served by a number of bus routes going as far as Edinburgh in one direction and St Andrews in the other. The village has changed much over the years, but still retains its unique character.



Introduction

Coalfields Community Futures

The Coalfields Community Futures Programme is an approach to local community planning and sustainable community development that aims to encourage active citizenship and build local democracy. It enables communities to devise a community action plan which makes a case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen. The process builds on existing processes of community action research to identify local needs and priorities, using residents as co-researchers. We work with local residents and groups to develop a common sense of purpose and assist them to produce a deliverable community action plan.

To support the action planning process the community receive a Participatory Budget which is available to local constituted community or voluntary groups.

This budget enables the community to fund small projects that are identified by the community through the results of the household surveys, stakeholder interviews and the Community Open Event.

East Wemyss and Macduff Community Action Plan

The plan summarises community views and information about:

- Our community now
- Our shared Vision for East Wemyss & Macduff

- Priority themes and actions
- Making the links to Community Planning

The Steering Group brought together representatives from East Wemyss & Macduff Community Council, The Wemyss Improvement Group, East Wemyss Primary School PTA, East Wemyss Bowling and Recreation Club, Save Wemyss Ancient Caves Society and East Wemyss Community Club.

Thank you to everyone who took part in helping East Wemyss & Macduff plan for a bright future!

140 Household surveys were returned representing the views of over 350 residents.

135 people attended the Community Futures Open Event.



Our Community Now

Background

This Profile has been produced to give an insight into the East Wemyss and Macduff area. It is part of a wider Coalfields Community Futures process being delivered by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust across Scotland's coalfield communities to assist them to reflect on what is good, what could be improved and how to go forward.

Location

The village of East Wemyss & Macduff is on the east coast of Fife, midway between Kirkcaldy and Leven, the nearest large towns, both being about five miles away.

Population

The total population of East Wemyss & Macduff is 2,045 with a working age population of 1,340.

Source: Mid-Year Estimates (ONS) 2016

Housing

East Wemyss & Macduff has a wide range of housing including detached, semi-detached, terraced and flats. 53% of housing is owner occupied with 36% being council/housing association tenants and 11% being rented privately. Source: Census 2011

Health & Care

To visit the doctor or the dentist requires a bus or car journey. The nearest hospitals are the Victoria Hospital located in Kirkcaldy and the Randolph Wemyss Memorial Hospital in Buckhaven. The Victoria Hospital provides a wide range of services to patients across the region including Accident & Emergency and Minor Injuries Services. The Randolph Wemyss is a community hospital; the services it provides include day care, a men's health clinic, a sexual health clinic and integrated paediatric services. At the time of the last census, 24.9% of residents were living with a limiting long-term illness. The figure for Scotland as a whole is 19.6%.

Source: Census 2011

Education and Childcare

There is a local childminder and a nursery (part of the school). East Wemyss Primary School has a breakfast club five mornings a week, 8.25am-8.55am, which provides a

breakfast for all pupils at a cost of 50p. The school children use the local dens for outdoor learning sessions. There is also a Roman Catholic primary, St Agatha's, in Leven.

Secondary education is catered for by Levenmouth Academy in Buckhaven which is a new high school. It hosts 1600 students and 170 staff. 34.5% of households with residents aged 16-74 have no one with qualifications. This is above the national average of 26.8%. Source: Census 2011

Community Activities and Facilities

The local facilities include the Bowling Club which has an entertainer on a three weekly basis, as well as dominos on a Tuesday, bingo on a Wednesday and darts on a Friday. There are Open Days for the public and for the local schools. The enclosed area next to the bowling club is also used for the kids to play in safely and is used for football, netball etc. The Central Hotel hosts domino and pool leagues as well as the Ladies over 50's group and the TWIG group meetings.

The Senior Citizens Centre in East Wemyss is available to local groups and is used by the Community Council. The Hope Café is run there weekly by the New Hope Fellowship. The Rosie Hall in Macduff is available for hire and hosts classes in dance, aerobics, metafit, yoga & pilates. There is also bingo, slimming world and a baby clinic facility.



Our community now

Every year SWACS holds a series of Open Days for visitors to the Wemyss Caves and has recently established an annual fun day primarily for local residents.

There are a number of local groups including:

East Wemyss & Macduff Community Council
The East Wemyss Allotments
The Wemyss Improvement Group (TWIG)
East Wemyss Primary School PTA
Save Wemyss Ancient Caves Society (SWACS)
East Wemyss Community Club
East Wemyss Angling Club
Tae Kwon Do

Environment

There is a good working relationship between Fife Council and TWIG, the volunteer group who look after both the local natural environment and the extensive floral enhancements throughout the community. The local laird is very happy to see the natural environment well cared for by local people and is happy to give his agreement for work in the dens to be carried out. There are strong links with the Take A Pride in Levenmouth (TAPIL) group. The groups are supported by local businesses and by residents who give both time and money to make sure that the villages look their best. Annual awards for the villages are a regular occurrence. The coastline is part of the Fife Coastal Path and also has links to the Pilgrims Way. The Wemyss Caves are the best evidence for early habitation in the area, with carvings on their walls dating back to Pictish times or even earlier. SWACS is planning for a special excavation in 2019 to research the timeline in more detail.

Traffic & Transport

The roads are said to be dangerous during the school drop-off and pick-up times with so many cars parking and then driving off with little care and attention. Speeding traffic is another concern, even though there are 20mph signs and speed bumps on the roads. Regarding public transport, the bus service is said to be quite good except that there is a restricted service after 2pm especially at the extremities of the village. Currently Bay Travel is piloting a service through the housing schemes which is proving very popular.

Community Action Plan:

Key considerations in East Wemyss and Macduff include:

- Road safety. One suggestion is to use Stop : Look : Listen signage to encourage safe use of roads by young people.
- Maintaining and building the volunteering base. Exploring ways of engaging people and increasing the level of involvement in local activities is important for the future of the community.
- Support for SWACS, with its plans for community asset transfer and development of local facilities. Building on the tourism and community action it promotes is also important.
- Issues such as access to jobs, funding constraints and local drug abuse are all major concerns that have been highlighted as part of this community survey. Serious consideration from all agencies, partners and stakeholders needs to be given on how best to address these.



A shared vision for our community

East Wemyss & Macduff

The village is a safe and friendly place to live. It is also a place where tourists and walkers want to visit and enjoy.

Ours is a village to be proud of. The village is always looking lovely with all the floral displays.

We encourage children to put their ideas forward for they are the next generation.

Our community welcomes diversity, with people from all walks of life, one that is compassionate and instils a feeling of friendliness.

We are going forwards and encouraging more of the villagers to get involved in different activities, building on our great community spirit.

Ours is a community that works well together. We have respect for each other and for the environment. It is an integrated community with opportunities for all to develop their full potential.

By working together, socialising and with good communication, we will see an increase in community-based events being enjoyed by more of the community.

We want to invest in facilities that cater for all ages in the area, that are accessible and affordable.

A community that has good transport links. We are making the most of our attractive landscape and encouraging tourism to the caves and other local attractions with extensive path networks for walking and cycling.



The results from the community survey show us what the people of East Wemyss & Macduff like

What do you *like* about your community?

- 62% community spirit
- 60% local voluntary action
- 43% local environment
- 13% local amenities
- 9% the path network



What people said

"The area, the community spirit. The beach close by and the coastal path. I really appreciate what the Wemyss Cave society do in highlighting such a unique treasure. I like the history of the area and the fact that the memorials around the village share information regarding our heroes of the past."

"I especially like the kindness and caring attitude that the majority of those in the village show to each other."

"The way people are trying to make the village a better place to live and visit."

"East Wemyss is a friendly village with a very decent community who care about the things people do to improve our neighbourhood. The small TWIG group makes our village so nice and the young people don't vandalise."

"The play park for the children."

"Friendly people, near the beach and with access to the shops and chemist. The return of our local bus that services the lower and the top side of the village."

The results from the community survey show us what the people of East Wemyss & Macduff dislike

What do you **dislike** about your community?

- 29% lack of amenities
- 28% dog fouling
- 27% local services
- 14% parking / congestion
- 13% the speeding vehicles



What people said

"The litter that a very small minority leaves around and the lack of care that some of the quad bikers have. Not all but some ride too fast around the forest tracks and it is a concern."

"Owners not picking up dog litter."

"Poor street lights."

"No banks, no library, restricted bus service for north and south extremities of the village."

"It is unfortunate that, over the years, many of the village's amenities have disappeared."

"The little swing park in Macduff."



From our kids' perspective

Pupils from East Wemyss Primary School made their contribution to the East Wemyss & Macduff Coalfields Community Action Plan by completing their own questionnaire which asked pupils questions like – What things do you like to do most of all? What hobbies do you have? Are you a member of a club? What do you like about living here? What do you dislike most about living here? What would you like to see happen here in the future?



Thirty four pupils took part and the results give an insight to the thoughts and feelings of our young residents.

Their key concerns about the village include

- Litter.
- Community safety.
- Some play parks.



What they like most include

- Friends
- Community Spirit.
- The natural environment including the dens and the caves

Also of interest is that 73% of our young people are involved in a group or club of some description.

Looking to the future the three most important issues for our young people are:

- Improving amenities.
- Keeping the village looking nice with all the plants and flowers.
- Addressing the parking issue outside school.



Theme 1: Community Facilities and Activities

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Building social capital is a key aspect of creating strong, resilient communities, this theme has emerged from the community survey and it is essential that the community can work with other stakeholders, support organisations and agencies to realise these outcomes over the term of the action plan. Good quality community facilities that are fit for purpose with regular opportunities for communities to meet and share in activities and conversation, this is the glue that binds communities together.

Local activities for all ages to help bring the community together

- Promote the use of the Fife Council web link to directory of existing activities.
- Work with Fife Council Community Learning & Development Team to help find out what people want in their area.
- Work with partners to provide the necessary provision.
- Identify funding where required.

- Investigate and learn from other communities who have tackled this priority.

Set up a foodbank

- Work with appropriate agencies to help take this forward.

Potential partners

- Fife Council, Business Gateway, SWACS, Community Council, TWIG, Local Schools and Colleges, SPAR, local community. Fife Housing Group.

A defibrillator for the village

- The SPAR shop are providing a defibrillator.
- Carry out training sessions with local groups for effective use as a lifesaving instrument.

Make more of promoting local heritage

- Work together with appropriate groups and agencies to identify content, location and cost for interpretation panels.
- Explore digital platform for this.
- Seek appropriate funding.

More opportunities for creation of local jobs

- Work with Fife Council and other appropriate agencies such as Business Gateway to investigate opportunities for increasing employability initiatives locally.
- Investigate social enterprise model of enterprise.



Theme 2: Amenities

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters.

Good quality green space is important in any community and identified as a key priority in maintaining our health and wellbeing. Other amenities such as good quality local shop provision that allows people to access fresh, affordable food and other supplies are also part of what create a healthy and sustainable community.

Make the most of local greenspace

- Upgrade and develop new playparks
- Work with appropriate organisations to carry out a community mapping exercise, looking at green space and how it can be designed to suit the needs of everyone.
- Source funding for this.

Make the most of the dens

- Host a community engagement event to explore new ideas to make the most of the dens.
- Work with Fife Council and other appropriate agencies to take ideas forward.

Toilet facilities for cemetery & coastal path

- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify key locations for toilet facilities.
- Work with Fife Coast & Countryside Trust and other appropriate agencies to take this priority forward.

Create a visitor centre & community hub

- Carry out a feasibility study and business plan to take this priority forward.
- Identify and secure funding for this.

More shops, cafés and restaurants

- Work with Fife Council and other appropriate agencies to explore new business opportunities and business models, e.g. social enterprise, community café, charity shop.

Create memorial spaces

- Map existing memorial spaces and identify areas for new memorial spaces.
- Work with Fife Council and other appropriate voluntary groups and agencies to take this priority forward.

Potential Partners

Greenspace Scotland, Fife Council, TWIG, SWACS, Fife Coast & Countryside Trust, Community Council, local community.



Theme 3: Roads and Transport

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters.

We need to work closely with Fife Council Community Planning Partnership to help alleviate the issues relating to parking, poor road conditions and traffic issues around the village and in particular the school. We also want to improve local residents' access to wider transport links.

Reduce motor cycles in park and woods

- Work with landowners to explore ways of stopping motorcyclists using parks and woodland, e.g. staggered barriers, use of natural barriers, use of appropriate signage.
- Notify police when motorcycles are in use in order to keep a formal record of this type of antisocial activity.

Improve safety on roads for children

- Work with Fife Council and other appropriate agencies to explore ways of making sure our roads are safe for our children.

A regular bus service

- Lobby the local bus service providers to see what can be done to improve the bus services both locally and to further destinations.
- Install timetables at bus stops where they are missing

Speeding traffic

- Work with Fife Council to look at enforcing a 20mph speed limit where appropriate.
- Identify priority areas and work with Fife Council to investigate traffic calming measures that are fit for purpose.

Improve parking

- Work with Fife Council to explore ways of improving the safety issues and availability of car parking in the village.

Improve lighting in the village

- Identify priority areas and lobby Fife Council to improve lighting.

Potential Partners

Local landowners, Fife Council, Bus companies, local schools, Police Scotland, local community, Community Council.



Theme 4: Village Environment and Heritage

These are the main strategies and priorities the community will work towards achieving in partnership with public agencies and other supporters

Access to the beach and good quality green space with good path networks is important for the health and well being of a community. It also relies on such key priorities as feeling safe, having adequate play and growing spaces, with people having a sense of place and a sense of pride. A community that is attractive and cared for with local people taking responsibility for their actions on a day to day basis, is essential in helping maintain a clean and tidy environment for everyone to enjoy.

Deal with the Dog Fouling!

- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify areas where bins are required as a priority.
- Work with Fife Council to ensure bins are emptied regularly.
- Work with Fife Council on a joint approach to dealing with dog fouling.

Clean up our village–Litter & Fly Tipping

- Organise and encourage participation in a Clean Up Our Community Campaign.
- Work with Fife Council to ensure a rapid response to dealing with fly tipping.

More volunteer support for local projects

- Work with appropriate agencies to host a volunteer recruitment day.
- Showcase the good work that volunteers do and highlight the benefits of volunteering.

A safer environment

- Continue to work with Police Scotland to look at increasing community policing.
- Encourage the community to report any incidents to the police or relevant authority to enhance response rate.

More projects to increase biodiversity

- Continue the good work that has already been built as part of the award-winning reputation in the Beautiful Fife Awards.
- Identify areas to sow wildflowers, install bug hotels, etc.
- Seek funding for this.
- Encourage Fife Council, local businesses, groups and residents to get involved.

Potential Partners

- Fife Council, TWIG, SWACS, Fife Coast & Countryside Trust, Police Scotland, local community, local community groups.



Early actions funded through Participatory Budget

The process of creating a five year action plan also included an opportunity to make the most of a Participatory Budget of £20,000. Local voluntary groups and organisations applied for funding in order to deliver soon, seen and successful projects that are aligned with the themes and priorities outlined in this action plan. Local residents were able to vote on the projects at the community open event which helped inform how the funding was allocated. The successful groups include:

East Wemyss Community Club	East Wemyss Community Club Equipment
The Wemyss Improvement Group	Environmental Enhancements
East Wemyss Community Club	East Wemyss Primary School Parent Council After School Activities
Save Wemyss Ancient Caves Society	Wemyss Caves Picnic Tables
East Wemyss Bowling Club	Re-levelling Bowling Green edges

Fife Community Plan

Fife's Community Plan 2011-2020 sets out three high level outcomes with each Community Planning Partner agreeing to work together to achieve these. We see our community action plan as an opportunity to link in with these outcomes and help make action to achieve major improvements in the quality of life for the people of East Wemyss and Macduff.

Fife Community Plan High Level Outcomes	East Wemyss & Macduff Community Action Plan Themes
Reducing Inequalities Increasing Employment Tackling Climate Change	Facilities & Activities Amenities Roads & Transport Village Environment and Heritage



Making it happen

This report summarises the findings of the Community Views Survey carried out in East Wemyss & Macduff during June - October 2018 and the Voting Day which allowed the local community to review the results of the survey, make further comment on community issues and vote on which priorities were most important to them.

The survey was carried out as part of the Coalfields Community Futures participatory process that informed the preparation of this East Wemyss & Macduff five year Community Action Plan.

The Community Action Plan contains

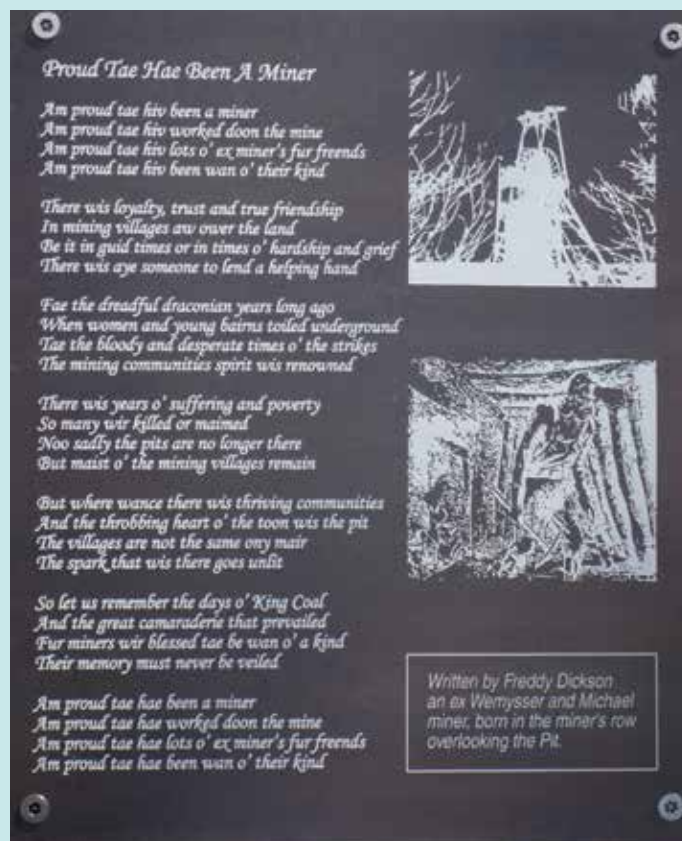
- A summary of the East Wemyss & Macduff Community profile.
- Our main Likes and Dislikes expressed in the community survey.
- The results of the pupil survey.
- Our Vision Statement for East Wemyss & Macduff
- The main themes and priorities for taking action
- The Participatory Budget projects that are helping kick start the action plan.
- Making the links between the East Wemyss & Macduff Community Action Plan outcomes and those of the Fife Community Plan.
- Information on how to get involved or be kept informed.

The East Wemyss and Macduff Community Action Plan is not just for the few but for everyone, we hope you will read it, consider its content and help toward making it work by taking action where you are, in whatever way you can. If everyone did something positive for their community every day, then what a difference that would make!

Many thanks go to all those who took their time to share their views, to the volunteers and participants who made the Voting Day a great success. Thanks go to all the members of the community who contributed the images in this community action plan.

To find out more information about the East Wemyss & Macduff Community Action Plan or to volunteer with any projects please contact; Email: swacsinfo@gmail.com

*A poem by Freddy Dickson,
an ex Wemysser and Michael
miner, born in the miner's row
overlooking the pit.*



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