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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strathpeffer Community Park project is under community ownership and management. It is at an advanced stage with full planning permission secured. Major drainage works are fully funded and due to be delivered in summer 2021. This will provide a firm foundation for development. Our project is 'shovel-ready' for investment.

- The proposed park will directly benefit the residents of Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon Community Council Wards.
- The community park will provide a fresh, new focus for the village and deliver important social, environmental and indirect economic benefits including activities for health and well-being, training and skills development, community food production and enhanced environmental improvement and providing an additional low-key attraction for tourists and valuable volunteering opportunities.
- Strathpeffer is a village in Ross and Cromarty with a population of just over 1,000 people. The village grew from a Victorian spa-town and is still a popular Highland tourist location. However, as the village developed, and continues to grow, there has been relatively little investment in the development of high quality green-space and recreational facilities for the local community.
- The community park project is being taken forward by Strathpeffer Residents Association (SRA), a Scottish Charitable Organisation with a board of up to nine trustees.
- The board of SRA has broad and relevant experience including finance, project planning and management, social media and risk assessments (see website for a full list of trustees) and has undergone training in good governance. SRA has a membership of 208, 192 of which are from the SRA's defined area of benefit.
- The project has evolved from public demand and has overwhelming community support. There has been extensive community consultation to assess support including 4 public meetings, a community survey, an open day and canvassing local schools. In addition, SRA has held a number of well-attended volunteer days to begin tidying up the site.
- A feasibility study in 2015 identified ample amenity space locally but which is of low quality and with negligible provision for positive use and activities within those spaces. In addition, a review of the surrounding area showed few sites providing equipped play and no community growing areas. There is easy access to the countryside, but this primarily provides for walkers and mountain bikes on more demanding trails. The project is also a good fit with national and regional policies and strategies.
- SRA will progress the project in a phased approach to take account of community capacity. This will also safeguard the long-term sustainability of the project and ensure assets are delivered at every stage.
- The SRA successfully delivered all of its main 2019-2021 Business Plan objectives and has a proven record of successful local and large grant fundraising and management. They will build on this experience to target large capital grants along with volunteer-led outcomes supported by local fundraising activity. The total capital cost to deliver the park is c. £500,000.
- The community park will not generate direct revenue, however, there are important benefits to owning and developing this asset. These include securing savings to the public purse by having a local facility which increases community physical and mental well-being and reduces the impact on the environment by providing locally-based facilities.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 The project

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

Following the successful Community Asset Transfer of 1.84 hectares of land into public ownership, the Strathpeffer Residents' Association (SRA) represents our community to deliver a multipurpose community facility that will support local residents, the local economy, and visitors to the area. This '**Strathpeffer Community Park**' project will revitalise and transform a semi-derelict area of Public Open Space, increasing our connectivity and post-COVID pandemic resilience. It has evolved from public demand and is overwhelmingly supported by the local community.

The project is located in the spa town of Strathpeffer and situated between the primary school and surrounding residential areas. At present the land is part overgrown scrub and un-maintained grassland, with areas of wet ground and mature trees. There is a small poor-quality play area on the site, most of which was removed prior to community ownership because it had reached the end of its usable life (Figure 1). There is currently limited public access due to vegetation and lack of access paths, particularly for those who cannot tackle steep steps or uneven ground.



*Figure 1. Left: Aerial view of the western part of the site showing waterlogged field and unmanaged scrub. Right: The existing play park with most of the equipment removed due to safety failures/end of life. This is the only play park for over 100 children.*

Under community ownership the park will be developed and managed by volunteers and directly benefit residents of Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconnon community council wards. It will provide a fresh new focus for our community and a gateway for important social, economic and environmental benefits. These include, active and passive recreation; activities for health and wellbeing, training and skill development, community food production; enhanced biodiversity and will contribute to our urgent move towards a low-carbon future by promoting active travel and reduced vehicle journeys to distant amenities.

Located adjacent to a new housing development, and other areas zoned for future housing, the park has the potential to improve the amenity provision, and attractiveness of the local area, encouraging new residents, and supporting the sale of new houses. In addition the value of surrounding property will increase.

Local businesses, such as hotels, B&Bs, gift shops and cafes, will benefit from an increase in regional/domestic tourists and local visitors, particularly those businesses that have been

adversely affected by the change in long-distance tourism due to the COVID19 pandemic. High quality green-space, exciting children’s play facilities and cycling opportunities will particularly attract families with children. See a flavour of the many letters of support from local businesses in [Appendix III](#).

This business plan covers the period 2021 to 2024 and updates our previous plan (2019-2021). Our plans are based on the findings of an feasibility study conducted in 2015 and subsequent community engagement. This study included extensive community consultation and provided a solid baseline for a wide range of long-term green-regeneration opportunities. However, as a community, we recognised the need to adopt a sustainable and phased approach with the following immediate priorities:

1. Community ownership from the Highland Council
2. Drainage works to reclaim waterlogged areas.
3. An inclusive play area for all ages and abilities, addressing the lack of play investment and provision in the area.
4. An improved path network including an all-ability safe route to school, linking the more recent housing developments to the school and wider village services. Re-routing main pedestrian traffic away from the busy main road.
5. Local traffic free cycle facilities through a cycle-zone, including all-weather pump track and entry-level cycle skills area.
6. Resources for the local primary school supporting education in nature, food provenance and environmental responsibility.
7. A food growing hub serving existing local initiatives and groups enabling future education, health and community inclusion projects.
8. Improved appearance of an area of wasteland in the centre of a village that depends on its image to support the important local tourism industry.

These priorities resulted in the submission and approval of planning permission for the following phase I development (Figure 2).

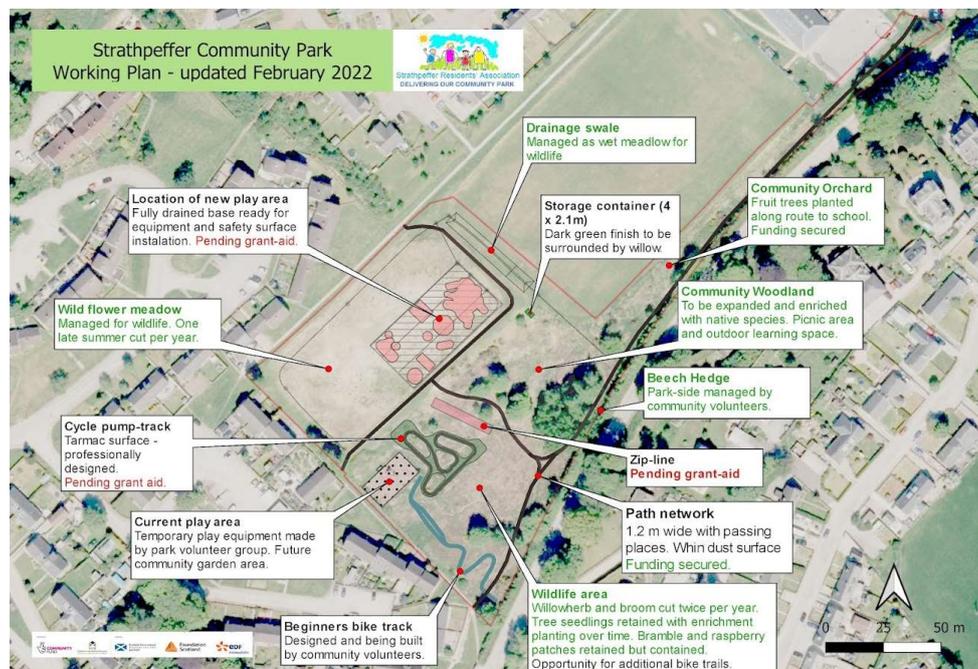


Figure 2. Park plan ([link to larger online version](#) - PDF or see APPENDIX IV: Park Plan).

## 2.1.2 Achievements 2019-2021

The SRA has demonstrated strong delivery success against the objectives of the previous business plan (2019-2021)

### Community ownership

In March 2019 we were awarded a grant from the Scottish Land Fund. This provided funding to complete the asset transfer from the Highland Council. It also resourced professional fundraising and project management support. After careful negotiation, and delays due to COVID19, the land was successfully transferred to community ownership in March 2021.

### Play park design competition

Based on community feedback, including consultation with local primary school children, an open tendering exercise was carried out to attract a range of exciting play park options. The winning design (Figure 3) was submitted by Sutcliffe Play, who are now our preferred supplier pending successful funding.



Figure 3. The winning inclusive children's play park design.

### Planning permission

Planning permission was obtained in March 2020, including drainage, paths, children's play-park, cycle-zone, and community food growing hub. All pre-development planning conditions have been discharged making the project **'shovel-ready'**. Our planning documents are available on the [project website](#).

### Drainage

Professional drainage plans were commissioned in support of our planning application. Grants have been awarded from the Town Centre Fund and EB Scotland, with the works completed in summer 2021.

### Path network

Funding has been secured and a contract let to deliver the majority of our all-ability path network during summer 2022

## Community orchard

We obtained funding from the Highland Council's Nature Restoration Fund which has enabled us to establish our community orchard (45 heritage apple, plum, cobnut, damson and mulberry). We also used this funding to enrich our wildflower areas and purchase a strimmer.

## Volunteer site management

The SRA have built-up a growing committed and hard-working base of volunteers who have already made significant improvements to the appearance and accessibility of the area (Figure 4).



Figure 4. The project is drawing a strong team of volunteers from across the community.

### 2.1.3 Objectives 2021-2024

The project is at an exciting point. The SRA has a proven track record of delivery and secured all the necessary foundations from which to embark on our next major fundraising phase.

Our objectives for this period are:

1. Develop major funding proposals to deliver:
  - a. Children's play park
  - b. Cycle-zone
  - c. Community orchard (planted spring 2022) ✓
  - d. Community-link path network (contract let - 2022) ✓
2. Continue to build our volunteer-base, building skills and capacity for the sustainable management of the park.
3. Continue to promote participation of all members of our community through local fundraising events, meetings, social media and press-releases.
4. Continue to work closely with the Strathpeffer Community Council, Strathpeffer Community Development Trust and a wide range of other groups within the local

area via our joint Strathpeffer Community Action Plan and developing 'Strathpeffer Together' project.

#### **2.1.4 Beyond 2024**

The initial phases of our project necessarily focus on planning, foundations and infrastructure. Our longer-term aims however are to:

5. Deliver inclusive revenue projects that improve the mental and physical health of our community e.g. through inter-generational gardening projects; cycle-skills events and training; community outdoor social events.
6. Work with the Community Centre and local Primary School to provide safe and secure outdoor learning opportunities.
7. Continue to provide local volunteer and training opportunities to improve the career prospects and wellbeing of our community.
8. Ensure park infrastructure is maintained to a high standard as an attractive sustainable community asset that attracts visitors to the local area and benefits local business.
9. Contribute to Scotland's response to the Biodiversity Emergency and Climate Change Crisis by promoting native biodiversity, local food production and green-travel e.g. through increasing cycle use and reducing car journeys.

## **2.2 The local area**

Strathpeffer is a village in Ross and Cromarty with a population of just over 1,000 people (source National Records for Scotland 2016). The village grew from a Victorian spa-town and is still a popular Highland tourist location. However, as the village developed, and continues to grow, there has been relatively little investment in the development of high quality green-space and recreational facilities for the local community.

There are 96 Affordable/Social Homes in the community area. Nearly 42% of the population are claiming Key Benefits - slightly higher than the Highland Council average of just over 40%. The 2020 SIMD figures show that one data zone in Strathpeffer is ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> out of over 6000 in Scotland for geographic access to services.

A number of new houses have been built in Strathpeffer over the past 10 years and an additional 40 houses including low-cost housing, are currently being built to west of the village. This influx of residents will continue to increase the number of children attending the local primary school, increasing the demand for open space but with limited prospect of providing new quality facilities.

The number of pupils attending Strathpeffer Primary School has increased from 156 in 2004 to 175 in 2018. An additional 33 children attend the nursery.

## **2.3 About Strathpeffer Residents' Association**

The Strathpeffer Residents' Association (SRA) was set up in 2012 following local concerns over the need to develop un-used land for the benefit of the local community. It became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC046287) in January 2016. Our governing documents, current list of Trustees and Annual Reports are available via the [SRA website](#).

There is a board of up to nine trustees and who, collectively, have broad and relevant experience including finance, project planning and management, social media and risk assessments. The board have participated in training in good governance and responded to recommendations in a board health-check. As of April 2021 the SRA has a membership of 208 of which 192 are from the SRA’s defined area of benefit. The current focus of the SRA is to oversee the development of the community park, on behalf of our community, and to ensure its safe and smooth day to day running and management.

Achievements to date include:

- Full planning permission secured;
- Production of a wide-ranging [Feasibility Study](#);
- Ongoing recruitment to the Board that represents a wide range of skills and backgrounds from the local community;
- Extensive and ongoing community consultation and engagement;
- Annual members meetings and reports to OSCR;
- Creation of a project [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page;
- Volunteer recruitment and management;
- Successful community fundraising events (Table 1);
- Proven record of national and regional funding award and delivery (Table 2);
- Awarded free access to Microsoft Office 365 suite of project management packages and secure online storage;
- Engagement with the wider Strathpeffer Village Plan and development of a good working relationship with key partners through e.g. Strathpeffer Together.

*Table 1. Local fundraising events to summer 2020 demonstrate strong community engagement as well as providing invaluable unrestricted funds.*

Event	Year	Net funds raised
Enjoyaball	2021	£176
Halloween Disco	2021	£585
MessyNess	2021	£538
Virtual Marathon	2020	£299
Sponsored Tough Mudder	2019	£140
Halloween Disco	2019	£540
Dance and BBQ	2019	£1,521
Dance	2019	£500
Dance	2019	£460
Winter Ball	2018	£1,000
Bingo Night	2018	£1,040
Dance	2018	£ 100
<b>Total</b>		<b>£6,899</b>

*Table 2. The SRA has a strong track record of securing and managing grant funding.*

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Award</b>
Big Lottery Fund	Feasibility Study	£ 9,996
Scottish Land Fund (Stage I)	Business Plan	£ 11,149
Scottish Land Fund (Stage II)	Asset Transfer	£ 43,025
Foundation Scotland EDF	Drainage Plan	£ 1,674
Foundation Scotland EDF	Drainage	£ 3,000
Town Centre Fund	Drainage	£ 28,000
EB Scotland	Drainage	£ 24,231
Pat Munro Foundation	Unrestricted	£ 250
Highland Housing Alliance	Developer contribution	£ 15,000
Place Based Investment Programme	Path network	£ 59,497
Foundation Scotland EDF	Path network	£ 3,000
Foundation Scotland EDF	Container	£ 2,558
Nature Restoration Fund	Orchard/Biodiversity	£2,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£203,880</b>

## 2.4 Community Consultation

There has been extensive consultation with the community to help assess the need and support for the project. The methods used were:

- Four public meetings;
- 750 questionnaires door to door in the local area (of which 348 were returned) highlighted the overwhelming support (97%) from local residents for improvements to the park area. The provision of exciting play equipment was a key request from the community (see results summary in [APPENDIX I](#) or the full consultation response in Appendix C of our feasibility study);
- Open day attended by 79 local people;
- Canvassing of local schools.

The community survey had a good response rate with 39% of questionnaires returned (including primary school children returns). The results showed overwhelming local support in favour of the project (97%) and clear preferences on the key priorities which are:

1. Paths and seats
2. <12 year old play
3. 12-15 year old play
4. Natural play
5. Provision for bikes
6. Provision for growing food
7. Outdoor gym
8. MUGA
9. Opportunities for public art

Subsequent consultation and engagement have demonstrated ongoing support for these priorities, e.g. Table 3. However, there is a general acknowledgement that development will have to be phased whilst keeping the final grand-plan clearly in sight. We will therefore deliver a sustainable park that delivers for all of our community and creates assets at every stage (see [Section 2](#)).

*Table 3. Examples of ongoing community support and consultation.*

Date	Description	Residents	Type
Apr-22	SRA membership increases	244	Support
Apr-22	Strathpeffer Community Park Facebook followers	555	Support
Apr-21	SRA membership increases	208	Support
Apr-21	Strathpeffer Community Park Facebook followers	525	Support
Apr-21	Community volunteers install tractor tyres as temporary play items for children's play.	5	Volunteer
July-20	SRA conduct virtual AGM	18	Consultation and support
2020	Community volunteers conduct socially distanced management of scrub and litter-picking.	15	Volunteer
Dec-2020	SRA joins forces with local groups to form Strathpeffer Together local partnership. Consultation on support for partnership launched.	150	Consultation and support

<b>2020</b>	SRA launch EasyFundraising page	42	Support
<b>Oct-20</b>	Community members raised funds via virtual half-marathon challenge.	48	Support
<b>2019</b>	Strathpeffer Community Park identified as a key priority in <a href="#">Strathpeffer Community Action Plan</a> consultation		Consultation
<b>2019</b>	SRA host post-games dance to promote the park project and raise funds	150	Support
<b>17-Mar-19</b>	Community willow planting and litter-pick event	24	Volunteer
<b>16-Mar-19</b>	Community dance fundraising event	60	Support
<b>21-Jan-19</b>	Neighbours of the park area attended SRA board meeting to discuss neighbour needs	7	Consultation
<b>01-Dec-18</b>	Local resident and SRA member organised a Winter Ball. Well attended by the community raising £1,000	100	Support
<b>17-Nov-18</b>	Strathpeffer Primary School 'Outdoor Ninjas' provided fresh ideas on what they would like to see in the new play park. Lists and drawings provided.	13+	Feedback
<b>22-Oct-18</b>	Members' meeting - update and opportunity to comment on priorities - all in support of proposal to focus on drainage, parks and then bike track.	30	Consultation
<b>29-Sep-18</b>	Facebook poll on drainage options	97	Consultation
<b>22-Jun-18</b>	Facebook poll on play park styles receives 102 responses with 78% in favour of a natural look/wooden.	102	Consultation
<b>03-Nov-17</b>	Focus group meeting to give the community opportunity to prioritise. It was agreed that the priorities are drainage and access, play park, shed for tools.	12	Consultation

In addition to the above we have kept our community informed of progress at all stages via [Facebook](#), email, articles in the [village newsletter](#) and in the local press ([APPENDIX II](#)).

## 2.5 Market research and assessment of need

In researching the market and making the case for need it is clear the community park project will meet some areas of unmet demand locally. 'Achieving a Sustainable Future: Regeneration Strategy' (Scottish Government) recognises that problems facing some of our most vulnerable rural communities can be as significant as deprivation in urban areas. Rural inequality impacts the local community in Strathpeffer. As previously indicated, the 2020 SIMD figures show that one datazone in Strathpeffer is ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> out of over 6000 in Scotland for geographic access to services. The provision of a new park and the proposed projects within will look to directly alleviate this. Limited access to services has a negative effect on the quality of life, and often motivates individuals and families to relocate.

An open space audit of Strathpeffer was carried out as part of the 2015 Feasibility Study. This identified ample amenity space, but which is of low quality and with negligible provision for positive use and activities within those spaces.

In addition, a review of the surrounding area showed few sites providing equipped play and no community growing areas. There is easy access to the countryside, but this primarily provides for walkers and mountain bikes on more demanding trails.

For children and younger families, for teenagers, for people with mobility issues and for many of the elderly, there is little to offer without travel out of the village, which cost money and the environment.

And while there are other playpark facilities (one in our ‘area of benefit’) none of them are in Strathpeffer and can only be accessed, by most local people, via car or public transport.

*Table 4. Other local facilities*

Location	Strengths	Weaknesses
Marybank playpark	Quiet rural location within SRA’s Area of Benefit	4 miles from Strathpeffer; access only by car; no shelter from weather; in decline with items recently removed or put out of action.
Dingwall playpark	Reasonable current facility	5 miles from Strathpeffer; poor public transport connections
Dingwall Leisure Centre	Wide variety of staffed activities offered	Charge for all activities; 5 miles from Strathpeffer, poor public transport connections.
Wyvis Natural Play Park	Recently opened	10 miles from Strathpeffer.

The community park project is also a good fit with national and regional strategies, policies and targets including the Highland Play Strategy, the Scottish Government’s strategy for physical activity and Highland Play - Play Matters. These strategies are designed to:

- Maximise opportunities for children to learn, develop and enjoy active play;
- Promoting physical activity and improving the environment to encourage activity;
- The development and maintenance of long-lasting, high quality environments to support inactive people to become active;
- To encourage safe, nurturing, active play.

Strathpeffer has a long history of tourism, from its Victorian origins, and is still recognised as a key destination. With the growth of the NC500, and overall market in the North of Scotland, improvements will ensure that the village benefits from these domestic and, eventually, international visitors stopping more often, in greater numbers, and for longer. This will translate into increased spend in local food and drink, services, and accommodation. These economic benefits have been recognised by local businesses and groups from Strathpeffer and the surrounding area with many providing letters of support ([APPENDIX III](#)).

### 3. FUNDING AND FINANCE

*In delivering the objectives of the previous business plan the SRA has already successfully secured significant funding from major grant sources (*

Table 1). Financing the [objectives of the current plan](#) will be split into two streams 1) Major capital items, 2) Volunteer-led outcomes.

#### 3.1 Major capital items

The cost of major capital items have mainly been determined by competitive tender evaluation that matched quality and cost criteria. However, the values quoted below include some contingency for unexpected costs and/or expected increases in quote value between tender exercise and contract award due to rising material and supply rates (Table 5).

Table 5. Expected cost of major capital items.

Element	Cost
Children's play park	£210,000
Safety surfaces	£ 80,000
Cycle pump track and trail	£ 80,000
Path network and linkages	£ 62,000
Drainage	£65,000
Orchard/Biodiversity	£ 3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£500,000</b>

Given the scale of investment required to deliver these items we will focus effort on major capital funds such as the Place Based Investment Fund and Sportscotland. We are also developing a community-wide partnership application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in a project called 'Strathpeffer Together'.

#### 3.2 Volunteer-led outcomes

Providing volunteering opportunities is a major objective of the Community Park project and as such our local community is one of our greatest assets. We have not attempted to evaluate the financial value of volunteer activities because the benefits extend beyond activity on the ground. However, we will rely on volunteers to deliver a number of otherwise costly ongoing activities such as vegetation management, woodland creation and path/park maintenance.

*Volunteers will also deliver lower-cost DIY elements of the park, e.g. informal cycle trails for younger riders, park furniture and signage. Tools and materials to support these initiatives will be financed through volunteer-led local fundraising for which the project has proven success (*  
Table 1).

#### 3.3 Revenue

It should be stressed that the community park will not of itself generate revenue. However, the benefits of owning and developing this asset are around securing savings to the public purse by having a local facility which increases community physical and mental well-being and reduces the impact on the environment by providing locally-based facilities. In addition, an attractive well-maintained park will help maintain and improve the image of a village, which is important for local tourism which is an important component of the local economy.

#### 4. RISK ANALYSIS

The key risks for this project, and how they can be mitigated, are set out below:

Risk	Impact on the project	How we will mitigate
Capital funding for play park not secured in 2021	Provision of a play park delayed with potential loss of community support. However, having drained the top field we will still have created a new asset for the community by providing flat open green-space for recreation and events.	Continue to raise match funding for larger funding pots. Negotiate longer spend deadlines with successful funders. Consider sub-phasing play park in line with funding (e.g. toddlers > old children's) or consider slightly smaller play park. Implement lower cost elements of wider park project and volunteer management to demonstrate progress to the community. Good communication with the community.
Project management workload exceeds volunteer SRA board capacity	Project deadlines missed, contracts unsuccessfully let, capital funds not raised.	Include consultant support where eligible. Phase project appropriately. Enlist volunteer help from the wider membership.
Long-timescale results in loss of community support	Funding applications rejected, local fundraising initiatives fail, and reduced contribution of the community to the park's development.	Progress the project as quickly as possible. Maintain good communication with the community to ensure the project fully reflects the community's ambitions and requirements.
Failure of contractors to deliver resulting in delays and/or requirement to re-tender	Project elements delayed; time-limited funding conditions not met.	Conduct professional and well-managed tendering exercises; maintain good communications with contractors and funding organisations.

## APPENDIX I: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Question or feature	Overall	Comment
Support for the project in principle	97% yes	There is overwhelming support.
<b>Should we provide:</b>		
<12 Play	90% yes	Clear majority in favour, with 58% 'must have'
12-16yr old play / activity	89% yes	Clear majority in favour, with 54% 'must have'
Provide for bikes and skateboards	87% yes	Clear majority in favour, with 39% of residents, 60% of secondary children and 84% of primary children selecting 'must have'
Dirt track (in favour of stunt bowl)	57% yes	No clear overriding preference.
Stunt bike bowl (in favour of dirt track)	53% yes	
MUGA	89% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Natural Play	89% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Should natural Play take priority over formal equipped play	37% yes 46% no	Small majority in favour of equipped play over natural play.
Outdoor Gym	87% yes	Clear majority in favour: 'must have' for: 25% adults; 82% of primary children; 59% of secondary pupils.
Ornamental Gardens	71% yes	A majority in favour but, amongst residents, 33% 'no' and only 13% 'must have'.
Sensory Garden	76% yes	A majority in favour but, amongst residents, only 17% 'must have'.
Growing food as part of the Garden?	77% yes 21% no	A majority in favour. Amongst residents 31% must have; 45% nice to have and 20% no. Of secondary pupils 37% 'no', but 61% of primary children 'must-have'.
Individual allotment plots? OR Communal Plots?	40% yes 53% no 59% yes 30% no	Small majority in favour of community / shared allotments.
Do you want a plot?		13 residents said 'yes' +38 primary children + 13 secondary pupils
Orchard as part of the Garden?	76% yes	Clear majority in favour, although only 14% residents and 7% of secondary pupils chose 'must have'
Community Shed?	79% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Outdoor meeting area/ events space?	80% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Whole site as Community Woodland?	61% no	Community as a whole is against whole site being wooded, but general support woodland on the sloping ground. Woodland popular amongst <16yr olds.
Sloping hill side as woodland?	62% yes	
Small wildlife area?	56% yes 39% no	Slight majority in favour. Amongst residents 64% in favour; primary children evenly split; secondary 67% in favour.
Path network?	91% yes	

Seating?	94% yes	
Public Toilet?	79% yes	Majority in favour of considering the feasibility of a WC, although amongst residents a significant number (34%) were against it. In discussion this was due to lack of need and / or cost and maintenance.
Public Art?	80% yes	Clear majority in favour.
<b>Safety</b>		
Do you have concerns about your safety at present?	77% no	Generally safety <b>not</b> a concern, although 33% of primary children indicated that they did feel unsafe and comments revealed concern over vandalism.
Do you have concerns about road safety at present?	71% no	Generally road safety not a concern, although 37% of primary children indicated that they did feel unsafe. Comments raised traffic speed on the main road and crossing that road as an issue.
Will you help?	56% yes 37% no	50 residents willing to help. 88% of school children want to be involved in the design. 11 secondary pupils were interested in helping/

APPENDIX II: EXAMPLE PRESS COVERAGE

# 'We deserve better'

Inspection uncovers equipment 'defects' at popular village park



Pupils from Strathpeffer Primary School said that they can no longer play on the slide and climbing frame.

**By Hector Mackenzie**  
h.mackenzie@stpp.org.uk

THE plight of fed-up children denied access to crumbling play equipment in a vibrant, rapidly-growing village has prompted a call to action over a transformational community hub project.

The scenario facing Strathpeffer is mirrored across Ross-shire as play park swings, slides and climbing frames past their best are stripped out on health and safety grounds - with no funding to replace them.

As activists behind ambitious plans for a new four-acre community parity space this week devastated child to play on, they deserve better. It now.

**How we previously reported the story.**

**Park dream moves a step closer to reality**

## Action needed at run-down park

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A spokeswoman for Highland Council said: "During our annual independent inspections, some items of play equipment were found to have defects that required a speedy response to ensure the safety of park users. Until we can fully assess the extent of the defects, and how we will deal with them, we have fenced off these items.

for our cause. We simply cannot do this without the community's support and membership is the primary way of showing your support. As you can see, the time to act is now."

In April, the SRA secured a £38,000 grant from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the site from the council. It wants to turn the overgrown site into a community space with dedicated play areas, an orchard and a bike track.

It now depends on a series of significant funding applications, in addition to its own fundraising, to make the dream a reality over the next two years. Increasing its membership - which is free of charge - is one key way to persuade funders of local demand.

Highlands and Islands MSP Maree Todd, said: "As a resident of Strathpeffer, I must congratulate the hard work and commitment that the local resident group has shown in this huge undertaking. The park itself will include gardens for all abilities, path networks, wild plants and trees, benches, as well as fun equipment such as a zip wire.

"The park will enable visitors and locals alike to relax and enjoy the beautiful area around Strathpeffer. It will attract footfall to the village, bringing with it economic benefits to local businesses. Green space investment benefits all of us now, and will also encourage healthy outdoor activity for generations to come. All power to them!"

Local councillor Ian Cockburn said: "It's a great idea. What a lot of folk don't realise is that this equipment is very expensive so people really need to pull together to get it done."

Strathpeffer's plight prompted a response from Muir of Ord community activist Mike Atkinson who said: "Here in Muir of Ord something similar has happened. We are faced with raising £10k to £20k to replace two bits of equipment or the kids go without. There is a tiny council budget available to contribute. Some big village discussions coming soon about what we (volunteers) should be responsible for." ■ To find out more about the project, see [www.strathpeffercommunitypark.org/how-you-can-help.html](http://www.strathpeffercommunitypark.org/how-you-can-help.html)



**NORTH STAR**  
Thursday, March 25 to Wednesday, March 31, 2021 £1.30 SUBSCRIPTION PRICE 99p

Heartfelt response to cruel blow Page 3

### Pupils celebrate pandemic heroes

THE last year has taught us that heroes come in all shapes and sizes, and are not restricted to blockbuster movies or comic books. It is a lesson pupils at Dingwall Primary have learned and reflected in a Red Nose Day Comic Relief fundraising effort which paid tribute to NHS staff, key workers and volunteers who have stood up to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

More pictures - page 5



Chairman of Strathpeffer Residents' Association, David Genney, celebrates the good news with local children.

Pictures: Gary Anthony

## It's playtime!

After two years of hard work, residents' association acquires land for a new park

A ROSS-SHIRE community's determination to create a transformational hub which will bring people together and dramatically improve the "unremarkable" outdoor play opportunities for children has paid off.

Years of hard work has paved the way for a community project which will lead to the creation of a play park, pump bicycle track and community garden in the historic spa village of Strathpeffer.

The effort comes in the wake of the community taking control of the iconic Strathpeffer Pavilion and significant progress on an off-road track, linking it with the county town of Dingwall.

After a two-year walk, Strathpeffer Residents' Association (SRA) has completed a community asset transfer of land and the project is set to breathe new life into a village which has been left with just a doggy see-saw and two toddler swings.

Children literally jumped for joy at the news this week, as SRA chairman David Genney said: "We are incredibly chuffed to have reached this milestone and excited to get on with the next stages of the project."

It will begin this summer



## APPENDIX III: LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES AND GROUPS



1. Ben Wyvis Cycle Club
2. Community Council
3. Contin Community Trust
4. Deli in the Square
5. Dingwall Ducklings Nursery
6. Highland Museum of Childhood
7. K9SPA
8. Little Angels Nursery
9. Mackays Hotel
10. Maree Todd MSP
11. Marybank Primary School Parent Council
12. McColls Shop
13. Museum Cafe
14. Peffery Way
15. Real Sweets Company and Pump Room
16. Red Poppy Restaurant
17. Small Planet Trading
18. Square Wheels
19. Strathpeffer Community Centre
20. Strathpeffer Parent Council
21. Strathpeffer Pavillion Steering Group
22. Strathpeffer Primary School
23. Strathpeffer Under Fives
24. The White Lodge B&B



APPENDIX IV: PARK PLAN



# Business Plan

## Strathpeffer Community Park

April 2021-2024



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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Strathpeffer Community Park project is under community ownership and management. It is at an advanced stage with full planning permission secured. Major drainage works are fully funded and due to be delivered in summer 2021. This will provide a firm foundation for development. Our project is 'shovel-ready' for investment.

- The proposed park will directly benefit the residents of Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon Community Council Wards.
- The community park will provide a fresh, new focus for the village and deliver important social, environmental and indirect economic benefits including activities for health and well-being, training and skills development, community food production and enhanced environmental improvement and providing an additional low-key attraction for tourists and valuable volunteering opportunities.
- Strathpeffer is a village in Ross and Cromarty with a population of just over 1,000 people. The village grew from a Victorian spa-town and is still a popular Highland tourist location. However, as the village developed, and continues to grow, there has been relatively little investment in the development of high quality green-space and recreational facilities for the local community.
- The community park project is being taken forward by Strathpeffer Residents Association (SRA), a Scottish Charitable Organisation with a board of up to nine trustees.
- The board of SRA has broad and relevant experience including finance, project planning and management, social media and risk assessments (see website for a full list of trustees) and has undergone training in good governance. SRA has a membership of 208, 192 of which are from the SRA's defined area of benefit.
- The project has evolved from public demand and has overwhelming community support. There has been extensive community consultation to assess support including 4 public meetings, a community survey, an open day and canvassing local schools. In addition, SRA has held a number of well-attended volunteer days to begin tidying up the site.
- A feasibility study in 2015 identified ample amenity space locally but which is of low quality and with negligible provision for positive use and activities within those spaces. In addition, a review of the surrounding area showed few sites providing equipped play and no community growing areas. There is easy access to the countryside, but this primarily provides for walkers and mountain bikes on more demanding trails. The project is also a good fit with national and regional policies and strategies.
- SRA will progress the project in a phased approach to take account of community capacity. This will also safeguard the long-term sustainability of the project and ensure assets are delivered at every stage.
- The SRA successfully delivered all of its main 2019-2021 Business Plan objectives and has a proven record of successful local and large grant fundraising and management. They will build on this experience to target large capital grants along with volunteered outcomes supported by local fundraising activity. The total capital cost to deliver the park is c. £500,000.
- The community park will not generate direct revenue, however, there are important benefits to owning and developing this asset. These include securing savings to the public purse by having a local facility which increases community physical and mental well-being and reduces the impact on the environment by providing locally-based facilities.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 The project

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

Following the successful Community Asset Transfer of 1.84 hectares of land into public ownership, the Strathpeffer Residents' Association (SRA) represents our community to deliver a multipurpose community facility that will support local residents, the local economy, and visitors to the area. This '**Strathpeffer Community Park**' project will revitalise and transform a semi-derelict area of Public Open Space, increasing our connectivity and post-COVID pandemic resilience. It has evolved from public demand and is overwhelmingly supported by the local community.

The project is located in the spa town of Strathpeffer and situated between the primary school and surrounding residential areas. At present the land is part overgrown scrub and un-maintained grassland, with areas of wet ground and mature trees. There is a small poor-quality play area on the site, most of which was removed prior to community ownership because it had reached the end of its usable life (Figure 1). There is currently limited public access due to vegetation and lack of access paths, particularly for those who cannot tackle steep steps or uneven ground.



*Figure 1. Left: Aerial view of the western part of the site showing waterlogged field and unmanaged scrub. Right: The existing play park with most of the equipment removed due to safety failures/end of life. This is the only play park for over 100 children.*

Under community ownership the park will be developed and managed by volunteers and directly benefit residents of Strathpeffer, Contin, Marybank, Scatwell and Strathconon community council wards. It will provide a fresh new focus for our community and a gateway for important social, economic and environmental benefits. These include, active and passive recreation; activities for health and wellbeing, training and skill development, community food production; enhanced biodiversity and will contribute to our urgent move towards a low-carbon future by promoting active travel and reduced vehicle journeys to distant amenities.

Located adjacent to a new housing development, and other areas zoned for future housing, the park has the potential to improve the amenity provision, and attractiveness of the local area, encouraging new residents, and supporting the sale of new houses. In addition the value of surrounding property will increase.

Local businesses, such as hotels, B&Bs, gift shops and cafes, will benefit from an increase in regional/domestic tourists and local visitors, particularly those businesses that have been

adversely affected by the change in long-distance tourism due to the COVID19 pandemic. High quality green-space, exciting children’s play facilities and cycling opportunities will particularly attract families with children. See a flavour of the many letters of support from local businesses in [Appendix III](#).

This business plan covers the period 2021 to 2024 and updates our previous plan (2019-2021). Our plans are based on the findings of an feasibility study conducted in 2015 and subsequent community engagement. This study included extensive community consultation and provided a solid baseline for a wide range of long-term green-regeneration opportunities. However, as a community, we recognised the need to adopt a sustainable and phased approach with the following immediate priorities:

1. Community ownership from the Highland Council
2. Drainage works to reclaim waterlogged areas.
3. An inclusive play area for all ages and abilities, addressing the lack of play investment and provision in the area.
4. An improved path network including an all-ability safe route to school, linking the more recent housing developments to the school and wider village services. Re-routing main pedestrian traffic away from the busy main road.
5. Local traffic free cycle facilities through a cycle-zone, including all-weather pump track and entry-level cycle skills area.
6. Resources for the local primary school supporting education in nature, food provenance and environmental responsibility.
7. A food growing hub serving existing local initiatives and groups enabling future education, health and community inclusion projects.
8. Improved appearance of an area of wasteland in the centre of a village that depends on its image to support the important local tourism industry.

These priorities resulted in the submission and approval of planning permission for the following phase I development (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Park plan ([link to larger online version](#) - PDF or see APPENDIX IV: Park Plan).

## 2.1.2 Achievements 2019-2021

The SRA has demonstrated strong delivery success against the objectives of the previous business plan (2019-2021)

### Community ownership

In March 2019 we were awarded a grant from the Scottish Land Fund. This provided funding to complete the asset transfer from the Highland Council. It also resourced professional fundraising and project management support. After careful negotiation, and delays due to COVID19, the land was successfully transferred to community ownership in March 2021.

### Play park design competition

Based on community feedback, including consultation with local primary school children, an open tendering exercise was carried out to attract a range of exciting play park options. The winning design (Figure 3) was submitted by Sutcliffe Play, who are now our preferred supplier pending successful funding.



Figure 3. The winning inclusive children's play park design.

### Planning permission

Planning permission was obtained in March 2020, including drainage, paths, children's play-park, cycle-zone, and community food growing hub. All pre-development planning conditions have been discharged making the project **'shovel-ready'**. Our planning documents are available on the [project website](#).

### Drainage

Professional drainage plans were commissioned in support of our planning application. Grants have been awarded from the Town Centre Fund and EB Scotland, with the works completed in summer 2021.

### Path network

Funding has been secured and a contract let to deliver the majority of our all-ability path network during summer 2022

## Community orchard

We obtained funding from the Highland Council's Nature Restoration Fund which has enabled us to establish our community orchard (45 heritage apple, plum, cobnut, damson and mulberry). We also used this funding to enrich our wildflower areas and purchase a strimmer.

## Volunteer site management

The SRA have built-up a growing committed and hard-working base of volunteers who have already made significant improvements to the appearance and accessibility of the area (Figure 4).



Figure 4. The project is drawing a strong team of volunteers from across the community.

### 2.1.3 Objectives 2021-2024

The project is at an exciting point. The SRA has a proven track record of delivery and secured all the necessary foundations from which to embark on our next major fundraising phase.

Our objectives for this period are:

1. Develop major funding proposals to deliver:
  - a. Children's play park
  - b. Cycle-zone
  - c. Community orchard (planted spring 2022) ✓
  - d. Community-link path network (contract let - 2022) ✓
2. Continue to build our volunteer-base, building skills and capacity for the sustainable management of the park.
3. Continue to promote participation of all members of our community through local fundraising events, meetings, social media and press-releases.
4. Continue to work closely with the Strathpeffer Community Council, Strathpeffer Community Development Trust and a wide range of other groups within the local

area via our joint Strathpeffer Community Action Plan and developing 'Strathpeffer Together' project.

#### **2.1.4 Beyond 2024**

The initial phases of our project necessarily focus on planning, foundations and infrastructure. Our longer-term aims however are to:

5. Deliver inclusive revenue projects that improve the mental and physical health of our community e.g. through inter-generational gardening projects; cycle-skills events and training; community outdoor social events.
6. Work with the Community Centre and local Primary School to provide safe and secure outdoor learning opportunities.
7. Continue to provide local volunteer and training opportunities to improve the career prospects and wellbeing of our community.
8. Ensure park infrastructure is maintained to a high standard as an attractive sustainable community asset that attracts visitors to the local area and benefits local business.
9. Contribute to Scotland's response to the Biodiversity Emergency and Climate Change Crisis by promoting native biodiversity, local food production and green-travel e.g. through increasing cycle use and reducing car journeys.

## **2.2 The local area**

Strathpeffer is a village in Ross and Cromarty with a population of just over 1,000 people (source National Records for Scotland 2016). The village grew from a Victorian spa-town and is still a popular Highland tourist location. However, as the village developed, and continues to grow, there has been relatively little investment in the development of high quality green-space and recreational facilities for the local community.

There are 96 Affordable/Social Homes in the community area. Nearly 42% of the population are claiming Key Benefits - slightly higher than the Highland Council average of just over 40%. The 2020 SIMD figures show that one data zone in Strathpeffer is ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> out of over 6000 in Scotland for geographic access to services.

A number of new houses have been built in Strathpeffer over the past 10 years and an additional 40 houses including low-cost housing, are currently being built to west of the village. This influx of residents will continue to increase the number of children attending the local primary school, increasing the demand for open space but with limited prospect of providing new quality facilities.

The number of pupils attending Strathpeffer Primary School has increased from 156 in 2004 to 175 in 2018. An additional 33 children attend the nursery.

## **2.3 About Strathpeffer Residents' Association**

The Strathpeffer Residents' Association (SRA) was set up in 2012 following local concerns over the need to develop un-used land for the benefit of the local community. It became a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC046287) in January 2016. Our governing documents, current list of Trustees and Annual Reports are available via the [SRA website](#).

There is a board of up to nine trustees and who, collectively, have broad and relevant experience including finance, project planning and management, social media and risk assessments. The board have participated in training in good governance and responded to recommendations in a board health-check. As of April 2021 the SRA has a membership of 208 of which 192 are from the SRA’s defined area of benefit. The current focus of the SRA is to oversee the development of the community park, on behalf of our community, and to ensure its safe and smooth day to day running and management.

Achievements to date include:

- Full planning permission secured;
- Production of a wide-ranging [Feasibility Study](#);
- Ongoing recruitment to the Board that represents a wide range of skills and backgrounds from the local community;
- Extensive and ongoing community consultation and engagement;
- Annual members meetings and reports to OSCR;
- Creation of a project [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page;
- Volunteer recruitment and management;
- Successful community fundraising events (Table 1);
- Proven record of national and regional funding award and delivery (Table 2);
- Awarded free access to Microsoft Office 365 suite of project management packages and secure online storage;
- Engagement with the wider Strathpeffer Village Plan and development of a good working relationship with key partners through e.g. Strathpeffer Together.

*Table 1. Local fundraising events to summer 2020 demonstrate strong community engagement as well as providing invaluable unrestricted funds.*

Event	Year	Net funds raised
Enjoyaball	2021	£176
Halloween Disco	2021	£585
MessyNess	2021	£538
Virtual Marathon	2020	£299
Sponsored Tough Mudder	2019	£140
Halloween Disco	2019	£540
Dance and BBQ	2019	£1,521
Dance	2019	£500
Dance	2019	£460
Winter Ball	2018	£1,000
Bingo Night	2018	£1,040
Dance	2018	£ 100
<b>Total</b>		<b>£6,899</b>

*Table 2. The SRA has a strong track record of securing and managing grant funding.*

<b>Grant</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Award</b>
Big Lottery Fund	Feasibility Study	£ 9,996
Scottish Land Fund (Stage I)	Business Plan	£ 11,149
Scottish Land Fund (Stage II)	Asset Transfer	£ 43,025
Foundation Scotland EDF	Drainage Plan	£ 1,674
Foundation Scotland EDF	Drainage	£ 3,000
Town Centre Fund	Drainage	£ 28,000
EB Scotland	Drainage	£ 24,231
Pat Munro Foundation	Unrestricted	£ 250
Highland Housing Alliance	Developer contribution	£ 15,000
Place Based Investment Programme	Path network	£ 59,497
Foundation Scotland EDF	Path network	£ 3,000
Foundation Scotland EDF	Container	£ 2,558
Nature Restoration Fund	Orchard/Biodiversity	£2,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£203,880</b>

## 2.4 Community Consultation

There has been extensive consultation with the community to help assess the need and support for the project. The methods used were:

- Four public meetings;
- 750 questionnaires door to door in the local area (of which 348 were returned) highlighted the overwhelming support (97%) from local residents for improvements to the park area. The provision of exciting play equipment was a key request from the community (see results summary in [APPENDIX I](#) or the full consultation response in Appendix C of our feasibility study);
- Open day attended by 79 local people;
- Canvassing of local schools.

The community survey had a good response rate with 39% of questionnaires returned (including primary school children returns). The results showed overwhelming local support in favour of the project (97%) and clear preferences on the key priorities which are:

1. Paths and seats
2. <12 year old play
3. 12-15 year old play
4. Natural play
5. Provision for bikes
6. Provision for growing food
7. Outdoor gym
8. MUGA
9. Opportunities for public art

Subsequent consultation and engagement have demonstrated ongoing support for these priorities, e.g. Table 3. However, there is a general acknowledgement that development will have to be phased whilst keeping the final grand-plan clearly in sight. We will therefore deliver a sustainable park that delivers for all of our community and creates assets at every stage (see [Section 2](#)).

*Table 3. Examples of ongoing community support and consultation.*

Date	Description	Residents	Type
Apr-22	SRA membership increases	244	Support
Apr-22	Strathpeffer Community Park Facebook followers	555	Support
Apr-21	SRA membership increases	208	Support
Apr-21	Strathpeffer Community Park Facebook followers	525	Support
Apr-21	Community volunteers install tractor tyres as temporary play items for children's play.	5	Volunteer
July-20	SRA conduct virtual AGM	18	Consultation and support
2020	Community volunteers conduct socially distanced management of scrub and litter-picking.	15	Volunteer
Dec-2020	SRA joins forces with local groups to form Strathpeffer Together local partnership. Consultation on support for partnership launched.	150	Consultation and support

<b>2020</b>	SRA launch EasyFundraising page	42	Support
<b>Oct-20</b>	Community members raised funds via virtual half-marathon challenge.	48	Support
<b>2019</b>	Strathpeffer Community Park identified as a key priority in <a href="#">Strathpeffer Community Action Plan</a> consultation		Consultation
<b>2019</b>	SRA host post-games dance to promote the park project and raise funds	150	Support
<b>17-Mar-19</b>	Community willow planting and litter-pick event	24	Volunteer
<b>16-Mar-19</b>	Community dance fundraising event	60	Support
<b>21-Jan-19</b>	Neighbours of the park area attended SRA board meeting to discuss neighbour needs	7	Consultation
<b>01-Dec-18</b>	Local resident and SRA member organised a Winter Ball. Well attended by the community raising £1,000	100	Support
<b>17-Nov-18</b>	Strathpeffer Primary School 'Outdoor Ninjas' provided fresh ideas on what they would like to see in the new play park. Lists and drawings provided.	13+	Feedback
<b>22-Oct-18</b>	Members' meeting - update and opportunity to comment on priorities - all in support of proposal to focus on drainage, parks and then bike track.	30	Consultation
<b>29-Sep-18</b>	Facebook poll on drainage options	97	Consultation
<b>22-Jun-18</b>	Facebook poll on play park styles receives 102 responses with 78% in favour of a natural look/wooden.	102	Consultation
<b>03-Nov-17</b>	Focus group meeting to give the community opportunity to prioritise. It was agreed that the priorities are drainage and access, play park, shed for tools.	12	Consultation

In addition to the above we have kept our community informed of progress at all stages via [Facebook](#), email, articles in the [village newsletter](#) and in the local press ([APPENDIX II](#)).

## 2.5 Market research and assessment of need

In researching the market and making the case for need it is clear the community park project will meet some areas of unmet demand locally. 'Achieving a Sustainable Future: Regeneration Strategy' (Scottish Government) recognises that problems facing some of our most vulnerable rural communities can be as significant as deprivation in urban areas. Rural inequality impacts the local community in Strathpeffer. As previously indicated, the 2020 SIMD figures show that one datazone in Strathpeffer is ranked 42<sup>nd</sup> out of over 6000 in Scotland for geographic access to services. The provision of a new park and the proposed projects within will look to directly alleviate this. Limited access to services has a negative effect on the quality of life, and often motivates individuals and families to relocate.

An open space audit of Strathpeffer was carried out as part of the 2015 Feasibility Study. This identified ample amenity space, but which is of low quality and with negligible provision for positive use and activities within those spaces.

In addition, a review of the surrounding area showed few sites providing equipped play and no community growing areas. There is easy access to the countryside, but this primarily provides for walkers and mountain bikes on more demanding trails.

For children and younger families, for teenagers, for people with mobility issues and for many of the elderly, there is little to offer without travel out of the village, which cost money and the environment.

And while there are other playpark facilities (one in our ‘area of benefit’) none of them are in Strathpeffer and can only be accessed, by most local people, via car or public transport.

*Table 4. Other local facilities*

Location	Strengths	Weaknesses
Marybank playpark	Quiet rural location within SRA’s Area of Benefit	4 miles from Strathpeffer; access only by car; no shelter from weather; in decline with items recently removed or put out of action.
Dingwall playpark	Reasonable current facility	5 miles from Strathpeffer; poor public transport connections
Dingwall Leisure Centre	Wide variety of staffed activities offered	Charge for all activities; 5 miles from Strathpeffer, poor public transport connections.
Wyvis Natural Play Park	Recently opened	10 miles from Strathpeffer.

The community park project is also a good fit with national and regional strategies, policies and targets including the Highland Play Strategy, the Scottish Government’s strategy for physical activity and Highland Play - Play Matters. These strategies are designed to:

- Maximise opportunities for children to learn, develop and enjoy active play;
- Promoting physical activity and improving the environment to encourage activity;
- The development and maintenance of long-lasting, high quality environments to support inactive people to become active;
- To encourage safe, nurturing, active play.

Strathpeffer has a long history of tourism, from its Victorian origins, and is still recognised as a key destination. With the growth of the NC500, and overall market in the North of Scotland, improvements will ensure that the village benefits from these domestic and, eventually, international visitors stopping more often, in greater numbers, and for longer. This will translate into increased spend in local food and drink, services, and accommodation. These economic benefits have been recognised by local businesses and groups from Strathpeffer and the surrounding area with many providing letters of support ([APPENDIX III](#)).

### 3. FUNDING AND FINANCE

*In delivering the objectives of the previous business plan the SRA has already successfully secured significant funding from major grant sources (*

Table 1). Financing the [objectives of the current plan](#) will be split into two streams 1) Major capital items, 2) Volunteer-led outcomes.

#### 3.1 Major capital items

The cost of major capital items have mainly been determined by competitive tender evaluation that matched quality and cost criteria. However, the values quoted below include some contingency for unexpected costs and/or expected increases in quote value between tender exercise and contract award due to rising material and supply rates (Table 5).

Table 5. Expected cost of major capital items.

Element	Cost
Children's play park	£210,000
Safety surfaces	£ 80,000
Cycle pump track and trail	£ 80,000
Path network and linkages	£ 62,000
Drainage	£65,000
Orchard/Biodiversity	£ 3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£500,000</b>

Given the scale of investment required to deliver these items we will focus effort on major capital funds such as the Place Based Investment Fund and Sportscotland. We are also developing a community-wide partnership application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in a project called 'Strathpeffer Together'.

#### 3.2 Volunteer-led outcomes

Providing volunteering opportunities is a major objective of the Community Park project and as such our local community is one of our greatest assets. We have not attempted to evaluate the financial value of volunteer activities because the benefits extend beyond activity on the ground. However, we will rely on volunteers to deliver a number of otherwise costly ongoing activities such as vegetation management, woodland creation and path/park maintenance.

*Volunteers will also deliver lower-cost DIY elements of the park, e.g. informal cycle trails for younger riders, park furniture and signage. Tools and materials to support these initiatives will be financed through volunteer-led local fundraising for which the project has proven success (*  
Table 1).

#### 3.3 Revenue

It should be stressed that the community park will not of itself generate revenue. However, the benefits of owning and developing this asset are around securing savings to the public purse by having a local facility which increases community physical and mental well-being and reduces the impact on the environment by providing locally-based facilities. In addition, an attractive well-maintained park will help maintain and improve the image of a village, which is important for local tourism which is an important component of the local economy.

#### 4. RISK ANALYSIS

The key risks for this project, and how they can be mitigated, are set out below:

Risk	Impact on the project	How we will mitigate
Capital funding for play park not secured in 2021	Provision of a play park delayed with potential loss of community support. However, having drained the top field we will still have created a new asset for the community by providing flat open green-space for recreation and events.	Continue to raise match funding for larger funding pots. Negotiate longer spend deadlines with successful funders. Consider sub-phasing play park in line with funding (e.g. toddlers > old children's) or consider slightly smaller play park. Implement lower cost elements of wider park project and volunteer management to demonstrate progress to the community. Good communication with the community.
Project management workload exceeds volunteer SRA board capacity	Project deadlines missed, contracts unsuccessfully let, capital funds not raised.	Include consultant support where eligible. Phase project appropriately. Enlist volunteer help from the wider membership.
Long-timescale results in loss of community support	Funding applications rejected, local fundraising initiatives fail, and reduced contribution of the community to the park's development.	Progress the project as quickly as possible. Maintain good communication with the community to ensure the project fully reflects the community's ambitions and requirements.
Failure of contractors to deliver resulting in delays and/or requirement to re-tender	Project elements delayed; time-limited funding conditions not met.	Conduct professional and well-managed tendering exercises; maintain good communications with contractors and funding organisations.

## APPENDIX I: COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS FROM THE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Question or feature	Overall	Comment
Support for the project in principle	97% yes	There is overwhelming support.
<b>Should we provide:</b>		
<12 Play	90% yes	Clear majority in favour, with 58% 'must have'
12-16yr old play / activity	89% yes	Clear majority in favour, with 54% 'must have'
Provide for bikes and skateboards	87% yes	Clear majority in favour, with 39% of residents, 60% of secondary children and 84% of primary children selecting 'must have'
Dirt track (in favour of stunt bowl)	57% yes	No clear overriding preference.
Stunt bike bowl (in favour of dirt track)	53% yes	
MUGA	89% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Natural Play	89% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Should natural Play take priority over formal equipped play	37% yes 46% no	Small majority in favour of equipped play over natural play.
Outdoor Gym	87% yes	Clear majority in favour: 'must have' for: 25% adults; 82% of primary children; 59% of secondary pupils.
Ornamental Gardens	71% yes	A majority in favour but, amongst residents, 33% 'no' and only 13% 'must have'.
Sensory Garden	76% yes	A majority in favour but, amongst residents, only 17% 'must have'.
Growing food as part of the Garden?	77% yes 21% no	A majority in favour. Amongst residents 31% must have; 45% nice to have and 20% no. Of secondary pupils 37% 'no', but 61% of primary children 'must-have'.
Individual allotment plots? OR Communal Plots?	40% yes 53% no 59% yes 30% no	Small majority in favour of community / shared allotments.
Do you want a plot?		13 residents said 'yes' +38 primary children + 13 secondary pupils
Orchard as part of the Garden?	76% yes	Clear majority in favour, although only 14% residents and 7% of secondary pupils chose 'must have'
Community Shed?	79% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Outdoor meeting area/ events space?	80% yes	Clear majority in favour.
Whole site as Community Woodland?	61% no	Community as a whole is against whole site being wooded, but general support woodland on the sloping ground. Woodland popular amongst <16yr olds.
Sloping hill side as woodland?	62% yes	
Small wildlife area?	56% yes 39% no	Slight majority in favour. Amongst residents 64% in favour; primary children evenly split; secondary 67% in favour.
Path network?	91% yes	

Seating?	94% yes	
Public Toilet?	79% yes	Majority in favour of considering the feasibility of a WC, although amongst residents a significant number (34%) were against it. In discussion this was due to lack of need and / or cost and maintenance.
Public Art?	80% yes	Clear majority in favour.
<b>Safety</b>		
Do you have concerns about your safety at present?	77% no	Generally safety <b>not</b> a concern, although 33% of primary children indicated that they did feel unsafe and comments revealed concern over vandalism.
Do you have concerns about road safety at present?	71% no	Generally road safety not a concern, although 37% of primary children indicated that they did feel unsafe. Comments raised traffic speed on the main road and crossing that road as an issue.
Will you help?	56% yes 37% no	50 residents willing to help. 88% of school children want to be involved in the design. 11 secondary pupils were interested in helping/

APPENDIX II: EXAMPLE PRESS COVERAGE

# 'We deserve better'

Inspection uncovers equipment 'defects' at popular village park



Pupils from Strathpeffer Primary School said that they can no longer play on the slide and climbing frame.

**By Hector Mackenzie**  
h.mackenzie@stpp.org.uk

THE plight of fed-up children denied access to crumbling play equipment in a vibrant, rapidly-growing village has prompted a call to action over a transformational community hub project.

The scenario facing Strathpeffer is mirrored across Ross-shire as play park swings, slides and climbing frames past their best are stripped out on health and safety grounds - with

community parity space this week devastated child to play on, they deserve better. It now.

no funding to replace them. As activists behind ambitious plans for a new four-acre

**How we previously reported the story.**

**Park dream moves a step closer to reality**



**NORTH STAR**

Thursday, March 25 to Wednesday, March 31, 2021

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Heartfelt response to cruel blow Page 3

## Pupils celebrate pandemic heroes

THE last year has taught us that heroes come in all shapes and sizes, and are not restricted to blockbuster movies or comic books. It is a lesson pupils at Dingwall Primary have learned and reflected in a Red Nose Day Comic Relief fundraising effort which paid tribute to NHS staff, key workers and volunteers who have stood up to the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic.

More pictures - page 5



Chairman of Strathpeffer Residents' Association, David Genney, celebrates the good news with local children.

Pictures: Gary Anthony

## It's playtime!

After two years of hard work, residents' association acquires land for a new park

A ROSS-SHIRE community's determination to create a transformational hub which will bring people together and dramatically improve the "unremarkable" outdoor play opportunities for children has paid off. Years of hard work has paved the way for a community project which will lead to the creation of a play park, pump bicycle track and community garden in the historic spa village of Strathpeffer.

The effort comes in the wake of the community taking control of the iconic Strathpeffer Pavilion and significant progress on an off-road track, linking it with the county town of Dingwall.

After a two-year walk, Strathpeffer Residents' Association (SRA) has completed a community asset transfer of land and the project is set to breathe new life into a village which has been left with just a doggy see-saw and two toddler swings.

Children literally jumped for joy at the news this week, as SRA chairman David Genney said: "We are incredibly chuffed to have reached this milestone and excited to get on with the next stages of the project."

It will begin this summer

Superheroes was the theme of this year's Red Nose Day. Here, P7A stars take a bow.

Pictures: Gary Anthony

## Action needed at run-down park

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A spokeswoman for Highland Council said: "During our annual independent inspections, some items of play equipment were found to have defects that required a speedy response to ensure the safety of park users. Until we can fully assess the extent of the defects, and how we will deal with them, we have fenced off these items."

for our cause. We simply cannot do this without the community's support and membership is the primary way of showing your support. As you can see, the time to act is now."

In April, the SRA secured a £38,000 grant from the Scottish Land Fund to purchase the site from the council. It wants to turn the overgrown site into a community space with dedicated play areas, an orchard and a bike track.

"The park will enable visitors and locals alike to relax and enjoy the beautiful area around Strathpeffer. It will attract footfall to the village, bringing with it economic benefits to local businesses. Green space investment benefits all of us now, and will also encourage healthy outdoor activity for generations to come. All power to them!"

Local councillor Ian Cockburn said: "It's a great idea. What a lot of folk don't realise is that this equipment is very expensive so people really need to pull together to get it done."

Strathpeffer's plight prompted a response from Muir of Ord community activist Mike Atkinson who said: "Here in Muir of Ord something similar has happened. We are faced with raising £10k to £20k to replace two bits of equipment or the kids go without. There is a tiny council budget available to contribute. Some big village discussions coming soon about what we (volunteers) should be responsible for."

To find out more about the project, see [www.strathpeffercommunitypark.org/how-you-can-help.html](http://www.strathpeffercommunitypark.org/how-you-can-help.html)

This plot of land is set to be transformed into a new play park, bike track and community garden.

with essential drainage work on a neglected area of land at Ord Terrace.

TURN TO PAGE 1

## APPENDIX III: LETTERS OF SUPPORT FROM LOCAL BUSINESSES AND GROUPS



1. Ben Wyvis Cycle Club
2. Community Council
3. Contin Community Trust
4. Deli in the Square
5. Dingwall Ducklings Nursery
6. Highland Museum of Childhood
7. K9SPA
8. Little Angels Nursery
9. Mackays Hotel
10. Maree Todd MSP
11. Marybank Primary School Parent Council
12. McColls Shop
13. Museum Cafe
14. Peffery Way
15. Real Sweets Company and Pump Room
16. Red Poppy Restaurant
17. Small Planet Trading
18. Square Wheels
19. Strathpeffer Community Centre
20. Strathpeffer Parent Council
21. Strathpeffer Pavillion Steering Group
22. Strathpeffer Primary School
23. Strathpeffer Under Fives
24. The White Lodge B&B



APPENDIX IV: PARK PLAN

