

community
enterprise

Community Survey Spring 2021

WAT IF

April 2021



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About This Work

Woolfords, Auchengray and Tarbrax Improvement Foundation (WAT IF?) is working to develop projects across the three villages which will improve the lives of local people. An updated Community Action Plan was produced in 2018 setting out the priorities for action under an overarching vision for the area:

“A beautiful, safe, and vibrant place with a resilient, well-connected and resourceful community, offering a great quality of life for all local people.”

The Action Plan spanned a five year period and at the point of writing, still has 2 years to run, however, given the effects of the pandemic, WAT IF? has had to refocus on delivering mitigation activities and this has stimulated new thinking about what the community may need in the months and years ahead. As a community led organisation, WAT IF? wanted to hear from residents about progress so far in terms of the Community Action Plan but also where it may need to shift focus to meet new and emerging needs. It enlisted the support of Community Enterprise in this task.

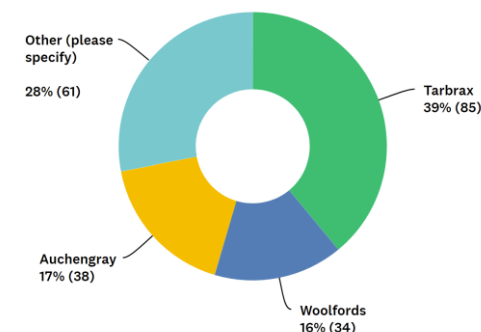
What We Did

A community survey was launched in March 2021. This was widely publicised through social media and through the community newsletter. The survey was available online and paper copies were distributed to every household. Responses were gathered in person (door to door) and through collection points across the local area.

Survey results

Snapshot of participation

A total of **221 survey responses** were submitted. There was representation from all 3 main villages as well as a good response from smaller settlements with the catchment area. This included residents from Haywood, Polkelly, Falla, Mosshat, Ampherlaw, Cobbinshaw and Carnwath. The largest number of responses was from people and families living in Tarbrax (39%) where there is the highest concentration of residents.

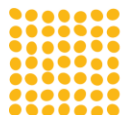


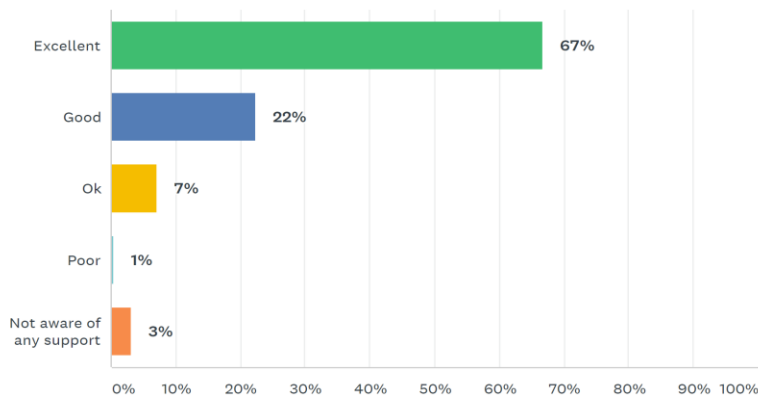
61% completed the survey as individuals and 39% on behalf of a household. Combining individual and household responses, the survey captured the views of approximately **485 people**.

It should be noted that none of the questions were mandatory. Throughout the survey, on average each question was skipped by 45 respondents.

Covid 19 response

Asked to rate WAT IF?'s community support during the pandemic, a high proportion (69%) rated it as 'excellent' and a further 22% 'good'. Only 1% rated it as 'poor'.





60 open comments were submitted. These included:

WAT IF was quick to start organising things last March to make sure that the mental health and general wellbeing of the community was taken care of.

Help, information, various types of activities and 'support' were available pretty well 24 hours a day for those who needed it and felt able to call upon it. The help appeared to be responsive rather than prescriptive. Staff and volunteers were enthusiastic and willing...

Very impressed at all that has been done & the imagination & commitment that has gone in to everything. Thank you.

I found both the larder & the facebook pages to be useful, great to know there were alternatives available in the local area, without having to go out to a large supermarket.

The larder has been a life saver for us. Without the larder, we would have struggled to pay our mortgage.

As shielding we had no access to the larder but people were very helpful with prescription collections and delivery and food.

The community larders were an excellent way of helping others and making sure everyone had what they needed. They have always felt Covid safe and well managed.

Larders- help only a phone call or email away. Visible and clear signposting. Rapid reaction- didn't forget the kids - making things so special and safe with Santa grotto, Santa sleigh, treat van, yoga by zoom, walking group kept safe!!! Amazing response and just incredible!

Lots of support of various kinds are available. Good to see the area coming together to overcome this pandemic. Hopefully it will continue once things return to normal.

Asked about suggestions about how to improve or extend the Covid support, 85 open comments were submitted but 60% of these were 'no' or 'keep up the good work' comments.

Substantive comments included:

Provide meals directly to those who are in need of support. Create employment rather than always relying on volunteers

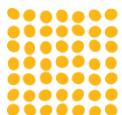
More support for young adults

Someone cooking fish & chips to order on a certain night - for collection on an agreed time? (saves travelling & cold chips if brought home from elsewhere)

Would love for the larder to stay as it's so helpful when run out of little essentials. Saves a trip to shops when don't want to go out.

Opening hours for larder, anyone on a backshift would miss opening times as would carers who work long shifts

Any kind of social events/outreach/activities in addition to the ones already in existence - it's been SUCH an isolating time, just having people to converse with is so important.



A lot of the zoom chats are during the day so not so good for people working. An evening session would be great.

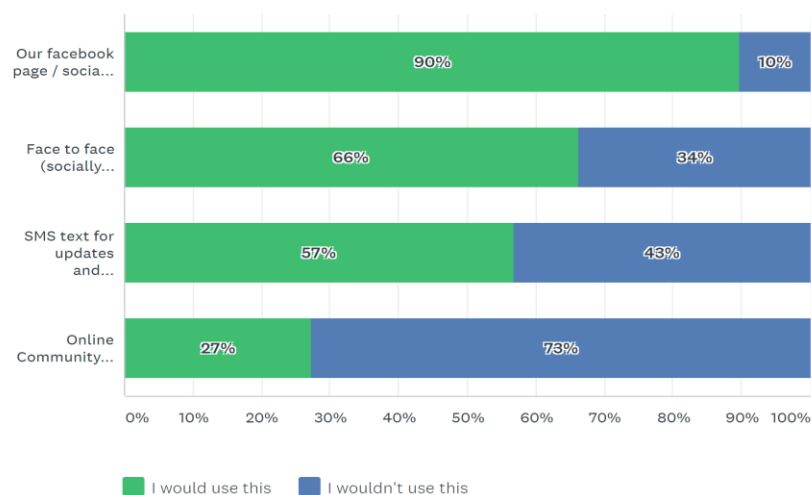
Improve communication with people who are not online or IT confident. More posters, leaflets etc?

Maybe use Zoom to hold community events, could be short calls or longer sessions, e.g. book club, session on correct posture and tips for those working from home.

There was notable support for the larders and a desire to see them continue / become a local shop in time.

Covid 19 communication

The majority of local residents preferred facebook and other social media as the main form of communication during Covid restrictions. Zoom 'community matters' sessions were the least popular option. Interestingly, face to face socially distanced communication was still popular with 66% of respondents saying they 'would use this'.



About the staff team

Respondents were asked to provide feedback on the performance of the new staff team. This was highly positive across all indicators. 80% of respondents were 'happy' with the work delivered, 79% felt they were approachable and friendly.

| | YES | NO | NO OPINION | TOTAL |
|--|------------|---------|------------|-------|
| Are we approachable / friendly? | 79% 135 | 0% 0 | 21% 35 | 170 |
| Are we easy to reach? | 73% 122 | 2% 3 | 25% 41 | 166 |
| Do you get information in a timely manner? | 76% 125 | 2% 3 | 22% 36 | 164 |
| Do you feel listened to? | 60% 99 | 2% 3 | 38% 62 | 164 |
| Are you happy with the work we deliver? | 80% 135 | 4% 6 | 17% 28 | 169 |

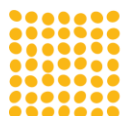
33 respondents used an open comment box to expand:

It's blown me away to see how the area has improved in the past few years, considering how it was when we moved in 14 years ago, it feels like a much better place to live now.

So pleased that the community are seeing benefits from the money, would still like to see more aesthetically pleasing village enhancements

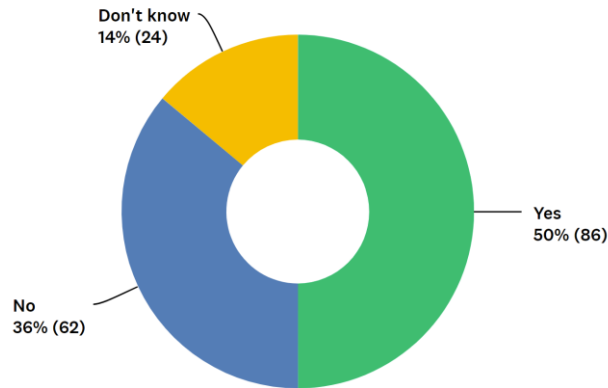
The team are awesome! Enthusiastic and Approachable. You guys are fabulous

In terms of improvements going forwards, some people are not aware who the new staff team are and don't feel particularly well informed about the changes. Some further communication of this would be beneficial as would be more visibility in the community post lockdown.



Community transport

WAT IF? runs a taxibus service and plans to extend community transport with the addition of an electric vehicle and e-bikes if there is evidence of demand. Asked if this would be of interest to them / members of their household, 86 respondents said 'yes'. 62 said 'no' and 24 'don't know'. Filtering positive responses from households, the potential customer base (from the survey alone) is around 150 individuals.



There were 49 mixed open comments, mostly supportive of these developments and a handful with a few reservations.

It's a great alternative to being a two car household where the second vehicle is only rarely needed.

Don't see the need for electric bikes? Maybe normal bikes that people can borrow to get out and about. We cannot afford bikes for our family but it would be nice to get out on some during the summer. You could buy multiple bikes for the price of an electric bike.

I'm often put off cycling as hills are my nemesis...but I'd definitely be interested in the possibility of being able to rent the use of an electric bike.

Local use of bikes would be of interest - my son and I would like to try cycling, but I cant afford the outlay of buying something he might not get into.

Taxibus service is of great interest to me. Recently had to give up my car & taxibus service enables me to get to Livingston to meet friends, attend dentist, chiropractist & hospital appointments.

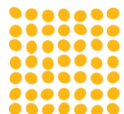
Changes and communication about changes to service is poor. Twice I've only found out about changes from the taxi company while I'm already in the car, and they seem unsure of changes too and need to double check.

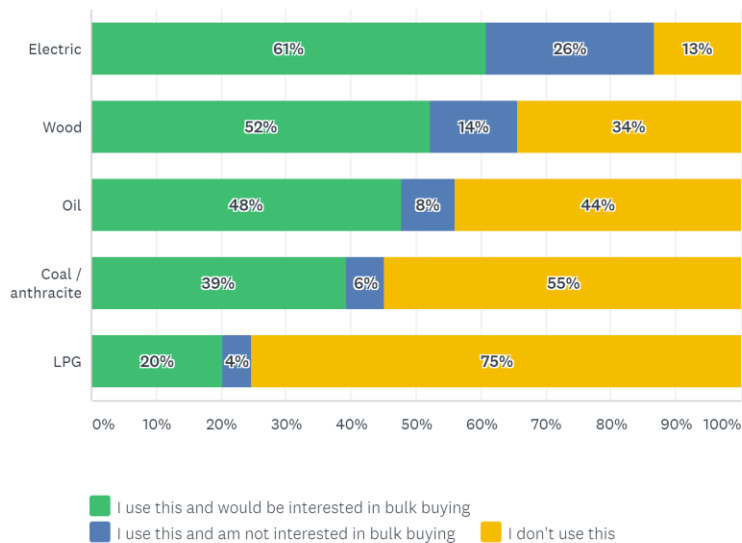
I would use these if they were based in Tarbrax. I would be willing to pay a small amount to use them.

Love the bikes idea, with child attachment would be a dream.

Community fuel

WAT IF? is exploring the idea of collective fuel purchasing to reduce costs and tackle fuel poverty locally. Asked what fuel they use and whether they would be interested in bulk buying, the majority of people use electricity and would be interested in a local fuel purchase initiative (69%), followed by wood (52%). In weighted order:





In terms of potential market for this, in absolute numbers:

| Fuel type | Number of households interested in collective purchasing |
|-------------------|--|
| Electricity | 87 |
| Wood | 73 |
| Oil | 76 |
| Coal / anthracite | 53 |
| LPG | 28 |

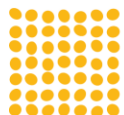
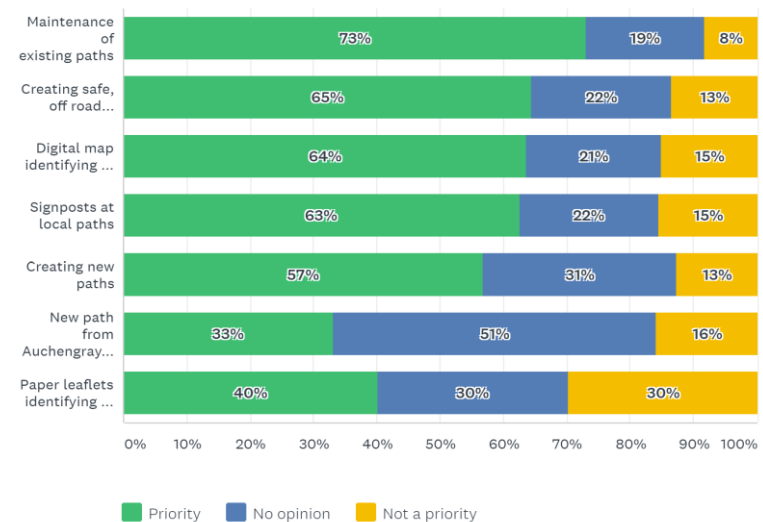
Community paths

Paths were identified as a priority in the 2018 Community Action Plan but this covers a fairly broad scope of activity. To help focus this activity, respondents were asked to identify priorities for development.

Responses have been weighted and compiled in descending order of priority. Maintenance of existing paths was the top priority, followed by creating safe, off road cycling routes, producing a digital route map and installing signposts. New paths and paper information leaflets were the least prioritised. 49 respondents left open comments. Several commented on the need to improve the Woolfords-Tarbrax path as a particular priority.

Would be nice to upgrade the path from Tarbrax to Woolfords, as it's not always passable

Paper leaflets identifying all paths- suggestion - part of newsletter



I think it is important to get the gates fixed so they close properly - safety for dogs and children

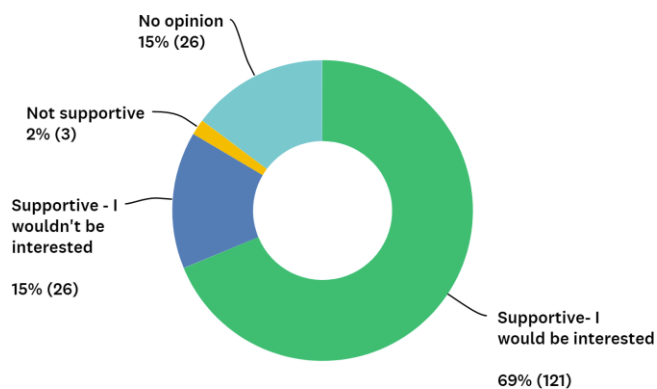
As there are numerous horse owners what about the bridal paths and rights of ways that have not been mentioned

I'd love to cycle but am afraid to do so on the roads, so paths; yes please

Would love to see the school finally achieve the dream of a path across to the wind farm, as this has been a goal for many years! I think the priority in general should be to make the most of the paths that already exist, by maintaining them, and possibly providing signs, and perhaps maps (either online or paper), rather than attempting yet more paths.

Neighbourhood improvements

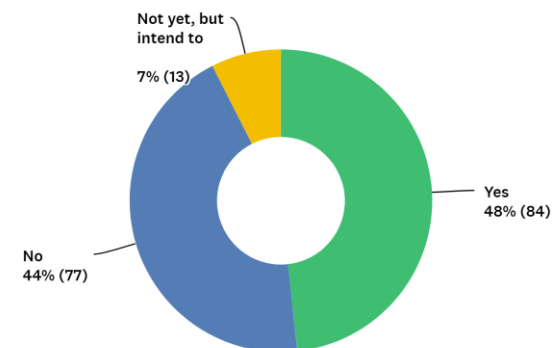
Neighbourhood improvements were identified as a priority in the 2018 CAP and WAT IF? is considering offering grants to help support these works as initiated by local residents. The survey asked if people would be interested to access these grants to help tidy their neighbourhoods:



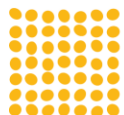
A positive majority (69%) said they would be interested (121 respondents) evidencing good demand should grants be made available. A further 15% (26) were supportive but would not be interested. Only 3 respondents were not supportive of the idea.

Community food

Since the onset of the pandemic last year, WAT IF? has operated community larders in both Woolfords and Tarbrax. Due to the potentially sensitive nature of using these, no data has been collected on who is using them. The survey asked if households were using them: 84 respondents said 'yes' and a further 13 said 'not yet, but intend to'. 62 open comments were submitted which included comments from those who donate to the larder rather than take food themselves. That number may be included in the 84 who therefore said they 'use' them.



The majority of comments were from people reporting they didn't need to use them. A sample of comments includes:



The needs of others are a priority - I am lucky and can shop

I am one of the fortunate people that have managed to maintain work. I would rather the larder be used for people that are in need of it. I do think it a brilliant resource.

If the local community don't know you, they assume you are not from the area. There were messages put on Facebook stating that it looked like people were stealing from out with which makes people feel trepidation

I don't live in the villages, I'd like to be able to, but I don't know if I can.

I thought they were like food banks for people that need them

Initially they were set up for those in need during the pandemic, and I didn't need, so didn't use. I think they're now more like a shop so may use in future, and glad they are there in case they're needed. Is it a donation system? Could there be some info outside on notice board re how it works?

Community shop

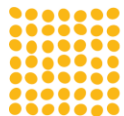
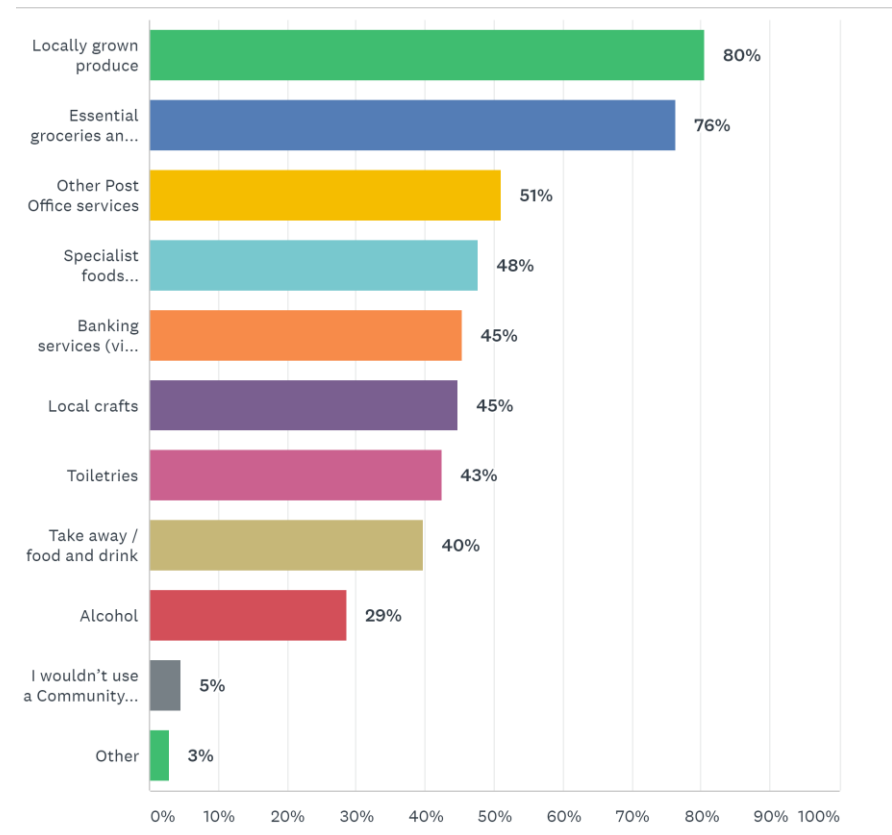
Building on from the larders, WAT IF? is considering the need to establish a community owned shop. Respondents were asked if a shop were available locally, what they would be likely to use it for. In descending order of potential usage, locally grown produce was the most likely usage (80%), followed by essential groceries and supplies, post office services also scored high for usage. Specialist foods also proved popular. Alcohol was the least likely reason to use a local shop with only 29% of survey respondents opting for this. Only 5% of survey respondents said they wouldn't use a community shop.

In 'other' 33 open comments were posted which included further ideas and suggestions. Almost all comments were positive and supportive.

Plastic-free drysalter-type dispensing of a range of basics would be attractive

Please employ younger WATIF residents who can't afford to work in Biggar or West Calder, local work would be life changing

I doubt that there is the demand to support a community shop, if there is, start with essentials and test out additional products and services before committing to these, possibly some mobile services on a particular day



Chemist maybe? Or organise some sort of medicine collection

Newspapers & magazines. Postcards

Facility to weigh parcels / letters and print labels prior to posting locally

I would be allllll over this. Please find a way if you can.

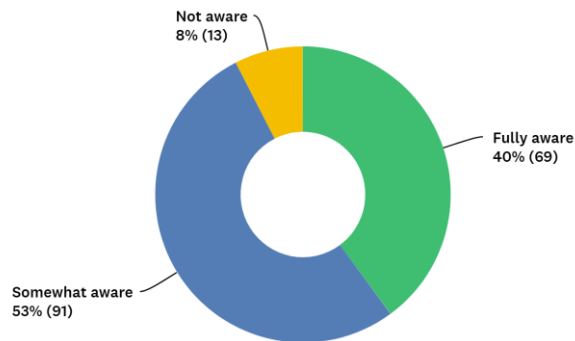
A community shop would be fantastic, not just for those who live locally, but there's a lot of cyclists pass through the area. It would give them a stop-off point too.

It would be good if it provided a few tables for a small cafe/gathering place; indoors and outdoors

Fishing permits for the loch? Essential hardware items

Community Activities

WAT IF? has been providing a range of community activities both before and during the pandemic. Asked if they were aware of these activities, the vast majority were: 40% 'fully' and a further 53% somewhat.



8% were not aware. (13 respondents). Of these 13, 7 submitted their contact details so they can be kept up to date.

122 respondents identified as not taking part in community activities. Asked why, in descending order, the reasons were;

- 'too busy' (multiple open comments)
- 'happen at inconvenient times' (34% from closed option list)
- 'nothing of interest to me' (26%)
- I have no one to go with (7%)

54 open responses were posted including;

I have been shielding

Prefer doing things on my own and with family

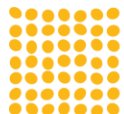
Lots of daytime weekday things I'd love to do...but work mon-fri 8-late. Can do more evenings and some weekend time. Also around being in for school home time....

Not quite sure what is available

3 small kids and no childcare

I'm not always aware they are happening till after the event as I'm not on Facebook

Asked about potential future activities after Covid restrictions are relaxed, 70 respondents posted comments. 25 of these were 'no' or 'not sure'. The remainder offered up a range of suggestions. Collating the suggestions, the following results emerged.



- **Exercise and fitness** activities(15 mentions) were the most often mentioned and in order of most frequently mentioned:
 1. Yoga
 2. Outdoor / indoor gym
 3. Dance and Zumba (including pay as you go rather than prebook)
 4. Cycling club
 5. Running club
 6. Wild water swimming

- Arts and / or crafts (5 mentions)
- Social opportunities (4 mentions): these included community barbecue / picnic / more events at the hall
- Gardening / growing (3 mentions): including a community orchard and community allotment
- Outdoor pursuits (3 mentions) including walking, foraging, map reading and orienteering

Those with 2 mentions included:

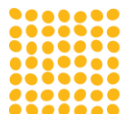
- Youth / kids (craft, sport)
- Baking
- History /ancestry including antiques
- Literary interests (community library / writing)
- Woodwork / DIY including Men's shed
- Shooting / paintballing
- Horse riding / hacks

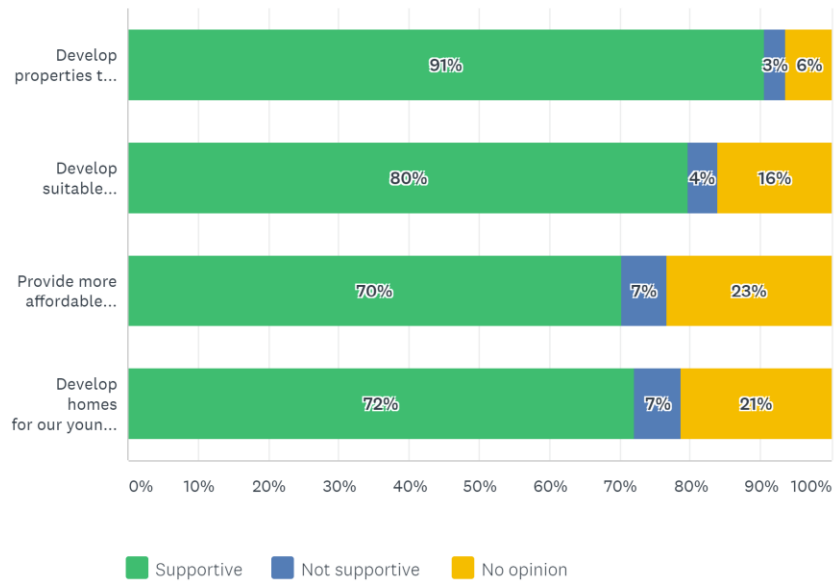
Those with only a single mention each:

- Family / parents & kids activities
- Photography
- Foot path upkeep
- Upholstery
- Pitch and putt / driving range
- Wine making
- Jetty and rowing boat on Cobbinshaw

Community Housing

The 2018 CAP identified housing a priority and WAT IF? has developed an affordable rental home locally as a result but wanted to understand where efforts should be focussed next. Respondents were most supportive of developing properties that are currently derelict (91% supportive), followed by developing housing suitable for older residents (80% supportive).





Only small numbers of residents were not supportive of developments:

We don't believe that this is a fruitful area for WAT IF, housing is very expensive and WAT IF's resources could only help a small minority

Others were much more positive:

Main priority- abandoned houses!

Offer any unused garages/spaces for sale to other residents who could use them/clear them up for use

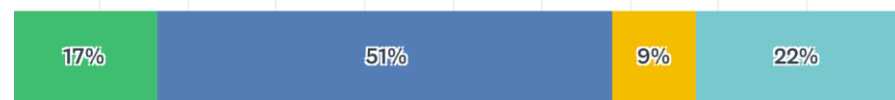
This is such an important part of keeping the community vibrant and alive - no houses no people.

Community Enterprise

Supporting local business / enterprise was identified as a priority in 2018 and to guide efforts and test demand, the survey asked respondents how supportive / interested they were in two potential initiatives: affordable storage space for rent and affordable office space to rent:



Affordable storage



17% (28 respondents) were supportive and interested in using this and a further 51% just supportive.

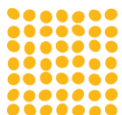
Affordable office



9% (15 respondents) were supportive and interested in using this and a further 57% just supportive.

23 open comments were submitted:

I had tried to build an office/business on the Bing and this was refused. I previously had to rent an office in Livingston as this was the nearest to me. I would love somewhere local to me.



Not business related but might be useful to have "IT Suite" with good broadband link for remote consultations eg hospital appointments where no computer available at home. Or printing labels for postage of parcels. Or sending online job applications.

Supportive of flexible workshop spaces too for local craft businesses and services

Participation and Involvement

Respondents were asked to indicate if they were interested in being kept up to date or volunteering:

103 people said they/ their household would like to be kept informed

25 wanted to be added to WAT IF? facebook groups

12 would like to become members

11 would like to volunteer

17 indicated they have specific skills they could offer (paid or otherwise)

Of these 17, a range of skills were highlighted, a sample of which is below:

I am a medically and respiratory trained nurse and would be interested in being a local first responder if this was ever something to become available within our area.

Hoping to open farm park at haywood weekly sessions for children and parents, would happily like to involve wat if.

Expert litter pickers! Improving local surroundings

First aid delivery at all level. Eg paediatric, emergency first aid at work 3 day first aid at work , defibrillator training .experienced hill Walker

I work for the council and deal with Scottish welfare funding so I'm very familiar with the grants such as crisis grants and community care grants. I have a wide knowledge of West Lothian council

I am a qualified gardener but I have also developed many skills in construction and property maintenance over the years. I would be able to offer advice/support in the creation and maintenance of paths and also in the development of renovating derelict properties. I could also help with developing outdoor open spaces for community use.

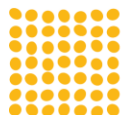
Audio consultancy / amateur radio

HCPC registered Art psychotherapist - if access funding provide individual and group therapy for all age groups

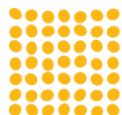
Accounting & finance skills - investment and budgeting- business cases etc.

In summary

- The survey had a very positive uptake with more than half of all residents in the area being represented through the survey.
- All 3 villages have representation, as well as a number of smaller settlements in the catchment area
- WAT IF?'s Covid 19 community support response has been rated 'excellent' by 67% of the community and 'good' by a further 22%



- In terms of continued Covid response, the larders are particularly highly appreciated: people would like to see these continue in some form
- Facebook and other social media is the most popular way to engage with local people right now, although the value of face to face (albeit socially distanced) should not be underestimated: people still enjoy the personal touch
- Feedback on the new staff team is positive: people report on being happy with progress made and that the team is approachable. There is a lack of awareness about the change in management however and people don't know who the new staff team are. Further communication on this would be beneficial
- There appears to be good support for the electric people carrier and for e-bikes with around 150 potential users within the community
- Community fuel initiative also has a good level of support. Electricity is the most commonly used fuel and unsurprisingly therefore, the one people would most like to participate in bulk buying with a potential cooperative of 87 households. This is followed by oil (76 households) and wood (73)
- People indicated that WAT IF? should focus on maintaining and repairing existing paths rather than establishing new ones, the Woolfords – Tarbrax path has been identified as a priority. Establishing cycling routes and developing a digital map were also popular
- 121 respondents were interested in accessing neighbourhood improvements grants, demonstrating a good level of demand. Only 3 respondents were not supportive of this initiative.
- 48% of respondents (84) currently use the larders although 'use' may also include people who only donate to it. Support for the initiative is high: from those who do use it but also from those who don't. There is some confusion around the 'rules' of usage which should ideally be clarified / communicated
- 80% of respondents said they would use a shop for locally grown produce, groceries and essential goods. Open comments largely pointed to good support for this with some creative and interesting suggestions for additional offerings
- Awareness of community activities locally is good overall but not excellent with a significant proportion of people only being partially aware of what was on offer
- The main reason for non participation in activities was pressure of time: people are busy and time poor. The other main reason was that activities (and communication for that matter), tended to happen at inconvenient times and didn't suit working adults
- Suggestions for more activities mostly fell into the 'fitness and wellbeing' category with interest in yoga, cycling, gym and so on although there was a plethora of other suggestions. The need to bring people back out of isolation and reconnect was cited and presents a good opportunity for community activity post lockdown
- People would most like to see derelict housing redeveloped in the area, followed by developing housing suitable for older residents
- There was a demand for enterprise space with 17% (28 respondents) interested in storage and 9% (15 respondents) interested in office provision. Those that didn't need these amenities were however generally supportive of them



- 17 people indicated they had skills (and/ or enthusiasm) that might be useful for WAT IF? projects in the future. These ranged from medical, electrical, therapeutic, business planning and administration, construction, engineering and technology.
- 97 respondents submitted their contact details evidencing a good level of interest to community development in the area. Local residents are keen to be kept informed and a positive number to get involved in initiatives.

