

Applecross Community Company Survey Summary Report 2018



1. Introduction

This summary report highlights the key findings of a survey carried out by Applecross Community Company (ACC) in Spring/Summer 2018. 153 valid responses were received.

The survey is a step towards developing a 5-year plan for the Applecross Community Company – a plan which is to be based on community identified priorities and ideas.

The survey's primary objectives were to develop Applecross Community Company's understanding of community aspirations and to identify ways to take these ideas forward.

The information gathered will be used to build on the Community Vision developed by the Applecross Trust – Estate Plan Consultation Working Group (<https://applecrossforum.org/community-vision/>). Copies of the survey, this summary, and the full report are downloadable from www.scdc.org.uk/applecross.

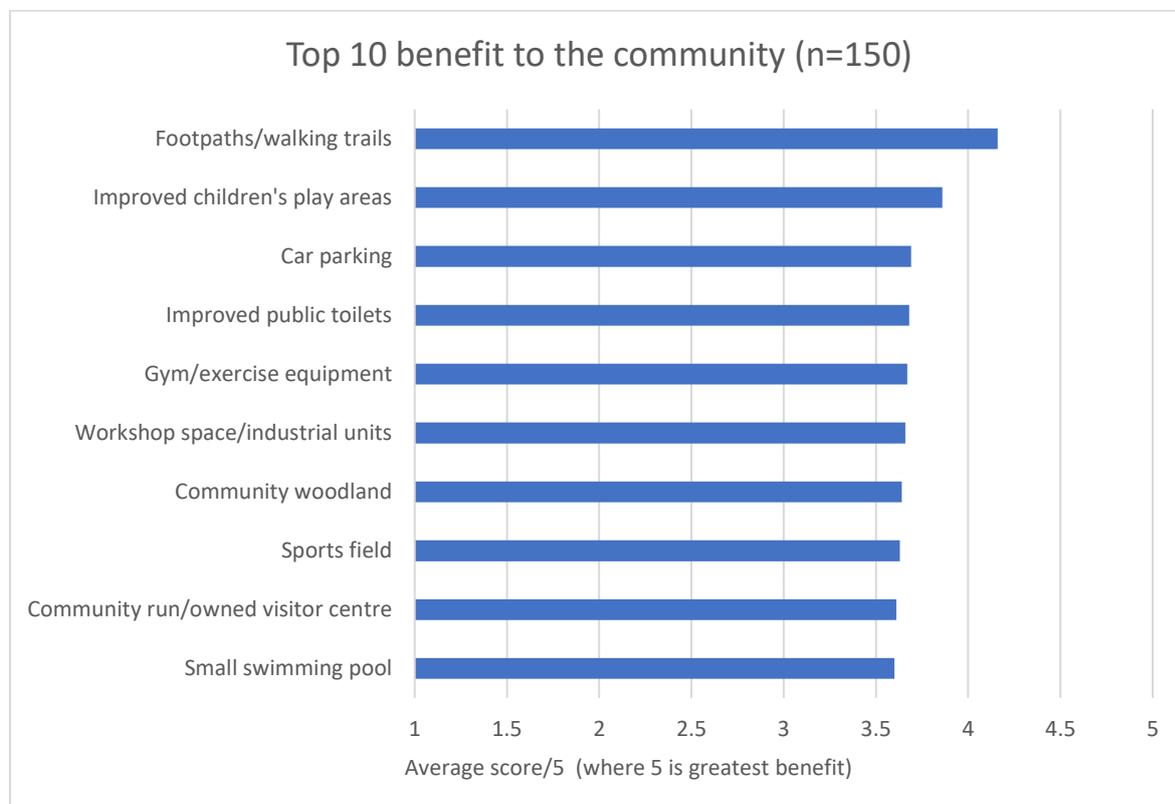
2. Key points

- Respondents identified the following as their **top 10 community benefits**:
 1. Footpaths/walking trails
 2. Improved children's play areas
 3. Car parking
 4. Improved public toilets
 5. Gym/exercise equipment
 6. Workshop space/industrial units
 7. Community woodland
 8. Sports field
 9. Community run/owned visitor centre
 10. Small swimming pool
- **Caring** – both giving and receiving – appears to be an increasingly important feature of community life in Applecross.
- **Applecross has a high level of self-employment and multiple job holding** (both employed and self-employed). Unemployment is low.
- **Housing is a key issue**. It is both an acute need and could be essential in achieving other social, cultural and economic objectives.
- **Many crofters** are, or are interested in, diversifying and developing their businesses.
- **Facilities** for individual sports, spaces for community organisations and general social spaces were regarded positively in Applecross. However, facilities and spaces for younger people were relatively poorly rated.
- **Applecross Community Company** should improve communication and openness. It should also better highlight its achievements and demonstrate its successes.

3. Summary of responses

Community priorities

Respondents identified the following as their top 10 community benefits:



However, although there was a clear pattern of preference, there appeared to be no 'clear winner(s)'. Few options received less than a neutral response overall – and then only just, (small scale cinema, office and desk space, new school premises, community cafe/catering space).

Broadband

Broadband is an essential resource for the community. Those running businesses emphasised the importance of a reliable connection. The community was supportive of AppleNet but reliability was identified as an issue.

Work and employment

A third of respondents were self-employed on the Applecross peninsula. A small, but not insignificant, number combine self-employment and employed, whilst others combine multiple self-employed positions. Under and unemployment was low.

Most of those who are self-employed work in tourism related activities. Beyond this, those who are self-employed work in a wide range of fields. Access to improved internet, capital and skilled labour were identified as priorities for growing businesses.

11% of respondents reported that they were interested in starting a business. Items that might support these aspirations included skills and training, workshop spaces, office space and access to equipment and machinery.

Housing

Most respondents (55%) live in owned accommodation but a significant proportion rent (37%). Just over a fifth (21%) felt that their current accommodation does not suit their current needs. Of those, most were interested in a plot for self-build or in affordable owner-occupied accommodation.

Caring

Caring, both giving and receiving, appears to be an increasingly important feature of community life in Applecross. Nearly a quarter (23%) of residents told us that they may have increased care and support needs in the next 5 years. 19% of respondents reported that they may need to give support to an adult in the near future. 7% already do.

Gaelic

Most respondents are not able to speak Gaelic (69%) and only 6% described themselves as fluent. However, 28% percent were interested in learning Gaelic and 38% wanted to see greater promotion of the language and culture of Gaelic. The comments highlight a deep passion for the language and its place in the history and culture of Applecross.

Crofting

Most crofters reported using their land for produce, personal enjoyment and livestock. Most told us that they want to develop their production of crops and livestock and develop their sites. Those who wanted a croft responded in a similar way, but a significant number hoped to develop a business not traditionally associated with crofting. Access to shared machinery and to training are ways in which respondents felt ACC could help them.

Transport and travel

Most respondents had access to one vehicle (55%) and 32% had access to two vehicles. Only 3% had no access to a vehicle. 17% indicated they would be interested in reducing the number of vehicles in their household. Improving public transport was a strongly favoured option but significant numbers were interested in car share and community car.

Recreation and community facilities

Facilities for individual sports, spaces for community organisations and general social spaces were regarded positively in Applecross. However, facilities and spaces for younger people were relatively poorly rated (nearly 40% considering them poor or very poor and only 21% ranking them good/very good). Many felt that the community hall could be used more frequently and that the space could be used more effectively.

Respondents suggested numerous ways of improving social, recreational and community life. Those most frequently mentioned related to the development of sports facilities and artistic and cultural activities and events.

Improvements for Applecross Community Company

Improved communication between ACC and the wider community was the most frequently raised point. A few noted recent improvements in this regard and a significant number expressed support for ACC staff and volunteers. A small number felt they should be more ambitious, especially with regard to land ownership, and a couple suggested that ACC should work more closely with the Applecross Trust.

Additional comments

The additional comments were dominated by concerns about poorly managed tourism and the acute issues created by the North Coast 500. Many expressed their love of living in Applecross.

There was also concern about the longer-term sustainability of the community; housing issues and funding cuts being cited.