

## Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group Strategic Plan 2022-2026

### **STONEYBURN AND BENTS FUTURE VISION GROUP SCIO SC046760**

Development Trust

Unit 3A, Stoneyburn Workshops, 4 Main Street, Stoneyburn, EH47 8BA

[www.sbfvg.com](http://www.sbfvg.com)

E-mail: [sbfvg1@gmail.com](mailto:sbfvg1@gmail.com)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/sbfvg/>

**OSCR**  
Scottish Charity Regulator  
[www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

Registered SCIO  
SC046760

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## Introduction

### **History of SBFVG**

The Future Vision Group (SBFVG), was set up in 2011 as an offshoot of the Community Council, which recognised that a community development organisation had significant advantages in trying to improve the Village. The Group's formation brought together the key organisations within the village, for example the Community Council, the Community Centre Management Committee, Stoneheap Wood, Masonic, the two primary schools, the football club, the bowling club, West Lothian Council, etc – all of whom continue to be key stakeholders within the Group. The Group then became an incorporated charity (SCIO) in 2016, then becoming a Development Trust in 2020.

### **Our Purpose**

Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group is a charity operating in Stoneyburn and Bents and the surrounding environs within West Lothian. Our aim is to advance community development and citizenship, including regeneration (both environmental and economic). The Trust believes in bringing together active members of the community to help address local issues creatively, using self-help, trading for social purposes and, where appropriate, ownership of buildings and land to bring about long lasting social, rural economic and environmental benefits – not just for our own generations, but for many more generations to come. We see ourselves as an “anchor” organisation – identifying opportunities to develop services and facilities, finding solutions to local problems and helping other organisations and initiatives succeed.

### **Strategic Plan**

The purpose of the strategic plan is to set out our aspirations for the village and the surrounding environs and how we plan to achieve these over the next five years working in partnership with community organisations and local partners, engaging with our community to help shape the delivery of our vision.

## Our Vision and Objectives

### **Our Vision**

*Stoneyburn and Bents—Living, Growing and Working for our Community*

Our vision for Stoneyburn and Bents is for a thriving, clean, attractive and healthy village—a place where people of all ages, abilities and circumstances are happy and informed, with their own part to play in the economic, environmental and social life of the village and the surrounding countryside, while celebrating our unique rural identity.

### **Objectives**

To improve facilities and provide educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages within the village.

To encourage and enhance the Village's community spirit and build pride in an attractive environment.

To create effective means for Stoneyburn and Bents residents, agencies, groups, local schools and businesses, to communicate and work collaboratively.

To create an environment that increases health and wellbeing, happiness, dignity, mutual respect, confidence and success. To encourage residents to take part in village life and help improve their communities, whilst keeping the community informed.

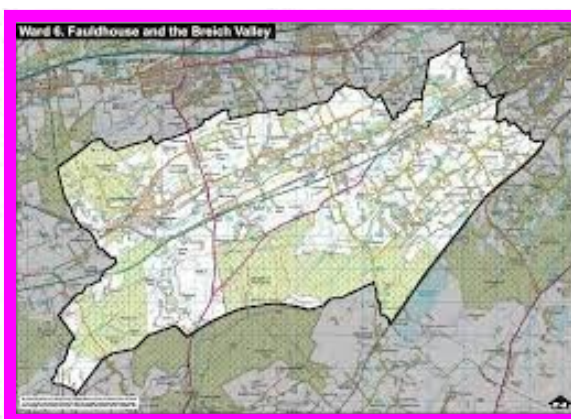
## Our Community

### **Location**

Stoneyburn and Bents is a village built on its rich coal mining history. It sits in the west of West Lothian, part of the Breich Valley. Stoneyburn and Bents were once quite separate little mining communities. However, over the years, as housing has spread, it has all but become a single village.



Stoneyburn and Bents is 7 miles southwest of Livingston in West Lothian. It is 21 miles from the centre of Edinburgh and 29 miles from the centre of Glasgow. The villages began to prosper in the 18th century with the discovery of coal. This led to an increase in the population of these villages. Today Stoneyburn and Bents has a resident population of around 1900, the Village is quite isolated, and parts are in areas of deprivation (as identified by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation). Nevertheless, it retains an excellent sense of community, and the vast majority (87%) of people rate it as a good place to live.



## Our Community

### **The Village**

The village was a thriving iron-mining and coal-mining community in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It is probably this history that influences the strong sense of belonging and community spirit that people expressed during the community consultation exercise. Today, Stoneyburn and Bents is a changing community, with new houses being built and new people moving into the area. The village is categorised as an area of deprivation. The main data zone which covers Stoneyburn is ranked within the 10-15% most deprived on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD). It drops into the 5-10% most deprived when looking at health within SIMD. Two other main data zones are within the 35% and 50% fields.

The village has a wide range of organisations and activities supported by an active community, many of whom are willing to participate in making Stoneyburn a better place to live. Community spirit and a sense of belonging to the place is evident in the village. Lots of people have lived in the village all their lives and have family living close by too.





## Our Community

### **The People**

People work locally in the few small businesses or travel out with the village. As mentioned elsewhere, the village meets many of the deprivation criteria: lack of employment, an ageing population and poor physical and mental health, are prominent features of the Village. The 2021 community survey identified issues relating to the aging population and the lack of activities for young people under 16. Action was asked for by the community, with specific emphasis on younger people (under 21) (in regards to engagement and helping them to become involved in village organisations), and older people (over 60) (many older people are suffering from a variety of issues caused by, or exacerbated by, social isolation).

### **The Environment**

The village is isolated, lying on a minor road, with limited linkage by public transport to the rest of West Lothian and beyond (our closest village lies 2.8 miles away with no direct transport links available). There is a railway, with train stations located 2 and 3 miles from the village, however, accessing these without access to a car, is extremely difficult, with no safe cycling or good quality walking paths connecting Stoneyburn and Bents to them. This also applies to our ability to travel from Stoneyburn and Bents to anywhere else in West Lothian – there are no walking or cycling paths – the only way in or out is by motorised transport.

Nevertheless, satisfaction with the village is high, with 88 % rating Stoneyburn and Bents as a good place to live. Local community activity is also high, the village supports a range of groups and organisations and the current gardening club keeps the village tidy and ensures the village planters and other areas are upkept.



## Our Community

### **SBFVG in the Community**

The SBFVG is a pro-active community organisation, which has taken on board the needs of the community and has acted to address issues raised within the community. The Group strongly believe that they can harness the resources and energy of the community, and put their village on the map.

The Group exists to support activity that improves the village, and help people who live here. The purpose of this plan is to focus, and prioritise, the activities of the Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group, working with a variety of partners, for the next five years, until the end of 2026. The plan will inform the development of the organisation, giving present and potential members, funders, supporters and stakeholders, information that will inform their dealings with the Group.

The Group came into existence in 2011 when members of the Community Council saw the need for a village 'anchor' organisation that had the structure and public support to improve life in the village. The Group then became an Incorporated Charity in 2016, followed by becoming a Development Trust in 2020.

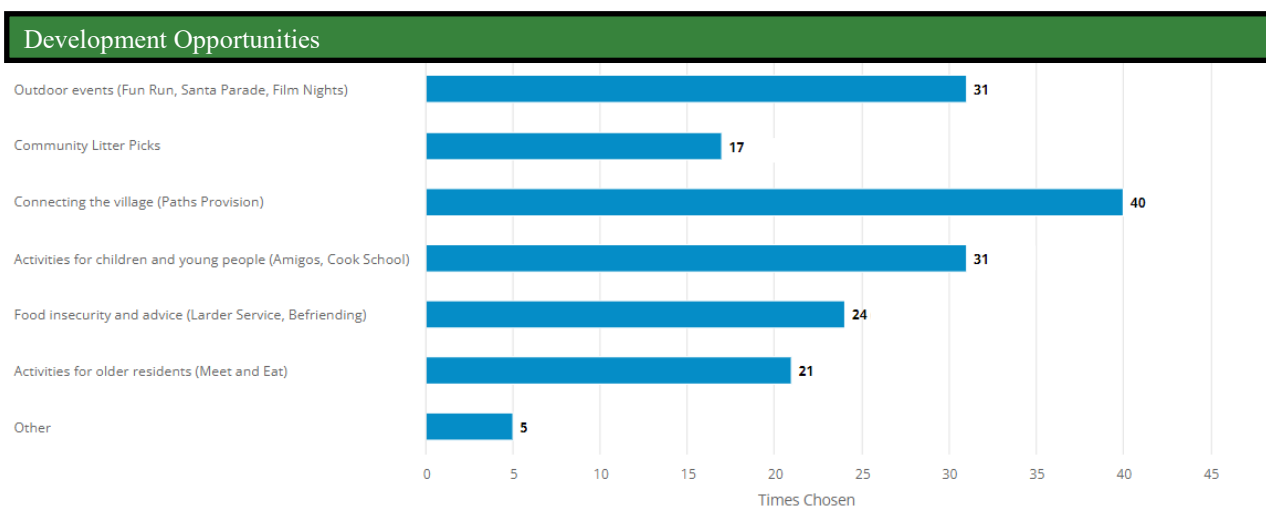
### **OUR KEY PARTNERS**

As mentioned, Stoneyburn has a range of community organisations, catering for various groups of people within the village. The Group continues to work alongside the Community Council, the Community Centre Management Committee, the bowling club, the football club, the three local churches, the Masonic, DTAS, West Lothian Food Network, West Lothian Council, Stoneheap Wood, The Woodland Trust, Paths for All, and the West Lothian Financial Inclusion Network (WLFIN), amongst others. These organisations feature in our ongoing review and consultation as our key partners. The Group works, and will continue to work, with councillors and officials of West Lothian Council, especially community regeneration, to benefit from their knowledge and expertise, to ensure our alignment with local and national priorities.



## Consultation

To inform our current strategic plan we conducted a community survey, giving a clear indication of how people in the community would like to see their community develop.



### Comments:

*"Improvement of paths and walks"*

*"More social events for all ages"*

*"Health and wellbeing activities"*

*"Access to woodland for all via paths"*

*"A community garden for all ages to engage in to encourage positive mental health"*

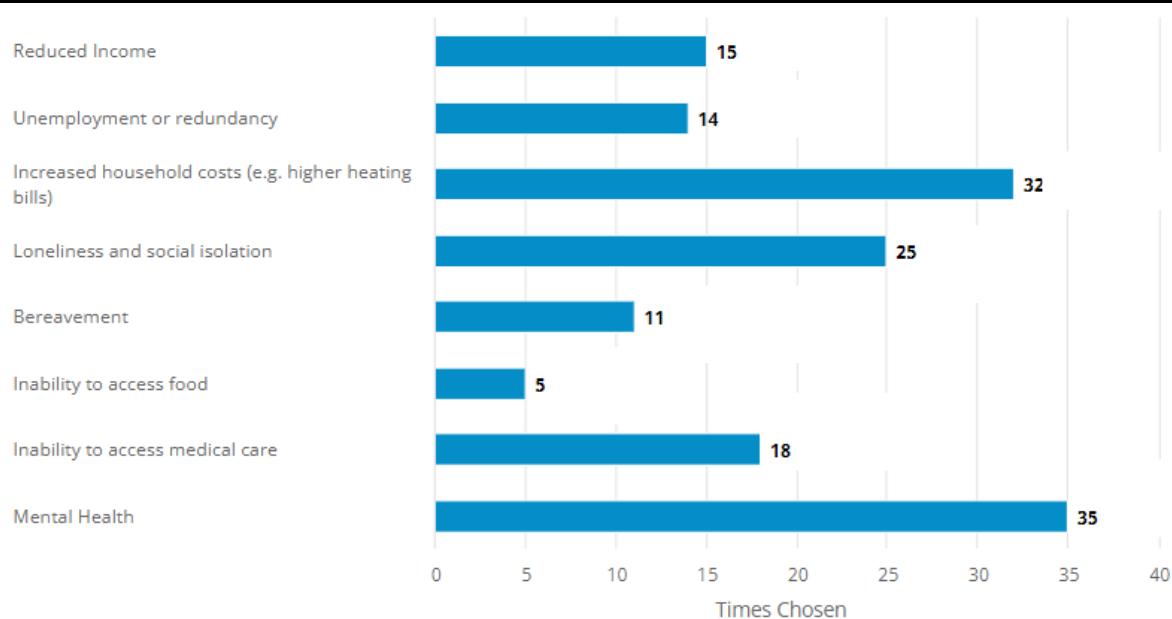
*"Mother and toddler groups"*

*"Support for social isolation"*

## Consultation

To inform our current strategic plan we conducted a community survey, giving a clear indication of the concerns of the community.

### Village Concerns



### Comments:

*"Connectivity with walking/cycle paths."*

*"Better paths for cycling and walking in and around the village and connecting to other villages."*

*"Increase activities for kids"*

*"Better public transport and play areas for children"*

*"Doctor's surgery would help the village"*

*"Better appearance in public areas"*

## Main Strategies and Priorities

This section of our Strategic Plan sets out the four main development objectives and priorities that the community would like to aim for. By working in partnership with various stakeholders, organisations and supporters, the Group aim to develop these priorities.

### Objective 1

To improve facilities and provide educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages within the village.

#### Main Priorities

- Continue to develop the Amigos Programme.
- Continue to develop the Young at Heart Programme.
- Develop a Parent and Toddler Group.
- Support other local organisations to improve recreation throughout the community.
- Continue to work in partnership to develop local woodland walks.
- Continue to develop and upgrade the local environment.

### Objective 2

To encourage and enhance the Village's community spirit and build pride in an attractive environment.

#### Main Priorities

- Create and support events that bring the community together, such as the Fulshie Fun Run, the Village Santa Parade, community litter picks, and Community Film Nights.
- Continue to develop a basis of operations to ensure the most appropriate support for the community.



## Main Strategies and Priorities

### Objective 3

To create effective means for Stoneyburn and Bents residents, agencies, groups, local schools and businesses, to communicate and work collaboratively.

#### Main Priorities

- Continue to support locals schools in their fundraising activities and provide equipment hire.
- Through our Social Media channels and website, promote local groups and their activities, and provide volunteers and equipment where required.

### Objective 4

To create an environment that increases health and wellbeing, happiness, dignity, mutual respect, confidence and success. To encourage residents to take part in village life and help improve their communities, keeping the community informed.

#### Main Priorities

- Support the development of the community garden and maintain the current Gardening Project.
- Action to reduce litter, dog fouling, and fly-tipping.
- Continue to improve the look of the Main Street.
- Support and Develop the 'Blether Service' to support social isolation.
- Lobbying and searching for opportunities to secure and increase connectivity with other villages—in particular the Bents to Fauldhouse Path.

## Actions

The actions listed below will be supported by the Group, stakeholders and other partners. The stakeholders and partners could include Community Council, Community Centre Management Committee, local schools, local businesses, Stoneheap Wood, the Football Club, the Bowling Club, the Masonic, West Lothian Council, DTAS, the Woodland Trust, NETS Team, and local councillors, amongst others.

**Objective 1—** To improve facilities and provide educational and recreational opportunities for people of all ages within the village.

Priority	Actions
Continue to develop the Amigos Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call an open meeting to identify gaps in provision and any barriers.</li> <li>• Work together to develop ideas for exploration.</li> </ul>
Continue to develop the Young at Heart Programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek funding to support bi-monthly events to help support mental health and social isolation.</li> <li>• Survey attendees on events they would like to attend.</li> <li>• Use the 'Blether Service' to support communication of events.</li> </ul>
Develop a Parent and Toddler Group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call an open meeting to explore the demand and gaps in provision within the local area.</li> <li>• Identify barriers and possible constraints.</li> <li>• Seek funding to support/train volunteers.</li> </ul>
Support other local organisations to improve recreation throughout the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to support local organisations.</li> <li>• Identify ambitions, and plan for local groups and seek funding as appropriate.</li> <li>• Identify how best to tackle these needs.</li> <li>• Support organisations with any further developments.</li> </ul>
Continue to work in partnership to develop local woodland walks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths Working Group to audit current progress and identify next steps.</li> <li>• Identify a series of priorities and actions and establish a schedule of work to support the Paths Working Group.</li> <li>• Seek funding to support the connectivity of the village.</li> <li>• Work with partners and stakeholders to secure a path network and cycle routes leading from the village.</li> </ul>
Continue to develop and upgrade the local environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop ideas for short and long term improvements—benches/planters, better provision for litter.</li> <li>• Seek funding for small-scale improvements.</li> </ul>

## Actions

**Objective 2—** To encourage and enhance the Village's community spirit and build pride in an attractive environment.

Priority	Actions
Create and support events that bring the community together, such as the Fulshie Fun Run, the Village Santa Parade, community litter picks and Community Film Nights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to support events in the local community organised by other groups.</li><li>• Support events with volunteers and equipment where required.</li><li>• Seek funding to support the 10 year anniversary of the Santa Parade.</li><li>• Visit other fun runs for best practice, and possible improvements.</li></ul>
Continue to develop a basis of operations to ensure the most appropriate support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•</li></ul>





## Actions

**Objective 3—** To create effective means for Stoneyburn and Bents residents, agencies, groups, local schools and businesses, to

Priority	Actions
Continue to support local schools in their fundraising activities and provide equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support the schools with volunteers and equipment as required.</li></ul>
Through our Social Media channels and website, promote local groups and their activities and provide volunteers and equipment where required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Through social media and our website we will support local groups to advertise activities.</li><li>• Provide equipment hire to support local activities.</li></ul>

## Actions

**Objective 4—** To create an environment that increases health and wellbeing, happiness, dignity, mutual respect, confidence and success. To encourage residents to take part in village life and help improve their communities, keeping the community informed.

Priority	Actions
Support the development of the community garden and maintain the current Gardening Project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the gardening club with materials—petrol, equipment, plants, compost as required.</li> <li>Bring together people wishing to support this project, particularly those already supporting the gardening projects.</li> <li>Seek support from those with relevant experience, including local people, WLC, local councillors and stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Action to reduce litter, dog-fouling and fly tipping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to action community litter picks.</li> <li>Continue to support the schools with litter picks with volunteers and equipment.</li> <li>Continue to liaise with WLC and NETs services.</li> </ul>
Continue to improve the look of the Main Street.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to support the gardening club with materials—petrol, equipment, plants, compost as required.</li> <li>Bring together people wishing to support this project, particularly those already supporting the gardening projects.</li> <li>Seek funding to continue the regeneration of the Main Street.</li> </ul>
Support and Develop the 'Blether Service' to support social isolation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seek funding to support the continuation of this service and expansion to better support social isolation.</li> <li>Continue to support the service through supporting and training volunteers.</li> </ul>
Lobbying and searching for opportunities to secure and increase connectivity with other villages—in particular the Bents to Fauldhouse Path.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paths Working Group to audit current progress and next steps.</li> <li>Identify a series of priorities and actions, and establish a schedule of work to support the paths working group.</li> <li>Seek funding to support the connectivity of the village.</li> <li>Work with partners and stakeholders to secure a path network, and cycle routes leading from the village.</li> </ul>

## Funding and Monitoring

### **Funding**

Stoneyburn and Bents Future Vision Group (SBVFG) receives funding from the Tormywheel Wind Farm Community Fund. This fund will help with the operation of the Trust for the next 20 years, subject to periodic review. This annual funding will be critical in supporting the Trust's core operating costs, as well as providing match funding contributions for certain projects.

A key element in delivering the outcomes of the Strategic Plan, will be the need to secure significant additional funding from a wide spectrum of public and private sources, to help bring each project to fruition.

### **Monitoring**

The monitoring of our progress over the five year period for this plan, will be critical in ensuring that our priorities are met and delivered within a reasonable timescale, whilst remaining relevant and valid to our charitable purpose.

Regular progress reporting will be provided through the Trust's Annual General Meetings, publishing of Annual Reports and on-going communication with SBVFG members, stakeholders and partnerships, in what have been achieved so far and what more needs to be done, as well as ensuring a constant review of our priorities.

