

Strategic Plan 2019 - 2025



Thurso
Community Development Trust

October 2019

THURSO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST

OSCR
Scottish Charity Regulator
www.oscr.org.uk

**Registered
SCIO
SC049082**

Registered Office:

TCDT Office, Thurso Youth Club, Millbank
Road, Thurso, Caithness, KW14 8PS

Contact: info@thursocdt.co.uk

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Executive Summary

A Plan for Thurso

Thurso Community Development Trust formed in early 2018 with the objective of sustainable community led development for Thurso based on identified community needs and aspirations. This Strategic Plan sets out the direction the Trust will take over the next 5 years to achieve this. The plan is based around extensive consultation of the Thurso community and reflects the identified needs and aspirations of the residents of Thurso.

Our Vision

“Our vision is for Thurso is a community here all members and sections of the community are encouraged to think big and contribute to active involvement in local decision making. An ambitious, creative, healthy, active, empowered and environmentally sustainable place rooted in kindness with a thriving local economy and community facilities which create an extraordinary and secure legacy for future generations.”

Strategic Themes

Over the past 18 months Thurso Community Development Trust have consulted extensively within the Thurso community. That work has now been consolidated with efforts concentrated into five strategic threads.

Community – a strong, cohesive Thurso Community

Social – tackling social issues including isolation

Economic – creating opportunities and sustainability

Environmental – addressing climate change locally

Placemaking – celebrating and improving place

Our Values

The values of Thurso Community Development Trust underpin our vision for Thurso. **Community led, Collaborative, Transparent & Professional, Inclusive, Kind, Environmentally Responsible, Sustainable and Kind.**

Priority Projects

Community

Establish Thurso Community Development Trust as an Anchor Organisation for Thurso where volunteers and community groups are supported and promoted.

Social

Conduct feasibility to establish a Community Hub in Thurso where activities and services are established to reduce social isolation and tackle social issues.

Economic

Work in partnership to enhance and support Tourism Development in Thurso including redevelopment of Thurso Harbour. Explore shared ownership Renewables investment for community benefit.

Environment

Build on the success of the Trust’s Thurso Grows project identifying projects which extend and enhance existing activity and investigating projects for a low carbon Thurso.

Placemaking

Working in partnership to regenerate Thurso Town Centre and create events and activities which celebrate Thurso’s culture and identity.

Monitoring & Evaluation

To support the delivery of this Strategic Plan 2019 – 20, Thurso Community Development Trust will monitor its progress, ensuring that its priorities remain valid and relevant. Regular progress reporting will be provided to Members via our electronic newsletter and printed literature available to the wider community. We will report at regular Member’s Meetings and our Annual General Meeting marking progress of delivery against our key strategic threads. This is intended to be a working document which will be reviewed and assessed as we work through priorities.

Forward

Welcome to the first Strategic Plan for Thurso Community Development Trust. This Plan is the result of a significant body of work carried out by the Trust in firstly gaining the trust, views and aspirations of the Thurso Community. The Trust have now translating these views into feasible and realistic projects, events and initiatives which can be developed which meet the need all of us in the Thurso Community have, to make Thurso a better place to live, work and visit for all.

Both myself and the Board of the Trust dedicate our time, skills and efforts to Thurso as we feel passionately that while Thurso has many challenges facing it both now and in the future by working together we can make improve our community.

We have been very fortunate in Thurso to have had relatively secure economic progress in the past 60 or so years due to employment opportunities at Dounreay. In comparison to other Highland towns, we have positively thrived. There are barely a voluntary organisation, club or society that has not benefited from the generosity of Dounreay funding over the years. Those times are changing and as a Community we need to start acting now to secure our own future.

To do this we need to set our own direction of travel and look to both our own skills of determination and opportunities in funding from further afield to strengthen our community.

The work of Community Development Trusts across Scotland working to regenerate, reinvigorate and develop their communities is incredible. Over the last 18 months have had the opportunity to meet many via the Development Trust Association Scotland network and witnessed the scale of ambition across the sector. There is no reason that is not possible here in Thurso.

To do this we need to be forward thinking, brave, bold and ambitious. If we are and seize the opportunities to achieve the vision set out in this Strategic Plan 2019 – 2020 there is no reason we will not achieve them. This vision is the culmination of you, our community's views and aspirations. Together we can make Thurso a better place to live work and visit for all.



Helen Allan
Chairperson – Thurso Community Development Trust



Introduction

“Somebody needs to do something about Thurso, that has been the cry heard for many years. That somebody is us and as a community we can set the priorities needed for us.”

Community-led Development for Thurso

In comparison with many Highland towns and settlements, Thurso has been very fortunate in the opportunities afforded to it. A main settlement in the Northern Highlands, a gateway to the Orkney Islands and generally well provided for in terms of employment and access to most services. Thurso has supermarkets, a post office, banks, a swimming pool, a cinema, North Highland College, we have 3 Primary Schools, a High School and housing is available. Social Housing has either a no to a low waiting list and house prices are generally affordable.

Consultation has revealed that Thurso is a community who while geographic distance has not changed, people feel less and less connected. Thurso has experienced for decades youth out migration. Centralisation of services and local government mean that for much healthcare the community needs to travel to Inverness and this is also where Local Government, Highland Council is based. The main employer is closing down, Dounreay is in the process of being decommissioned. Highland Council forecasts a 21% decrease in the population of Caithness by 2041.

Working with focus groups of just over 100 young people aged 11 years plus in the Thurso community in March 2018, it was found that when asked what they wanted to do in the future for employment, all responded that they felt moving from Thurso was their only option in the future.

The frequent cry to be heard in Thurso is that “someone needs to do something” Thurso Community Development Trust formed to be that someone. To engage with our community, identify their needs and create a plan which would achieve this, working with our community to make this a reality.

Strategic Plan 2019 - 2025

Why a Strategic Plan now?

Over the last 18 months Thurso Community Development Trust have conducted widespread community consultation. Commencing in March 2018 the Trust conducted widespread consultation using the Place Standard and gathered 1,180 responses. Since then the Discover Thurso Tourism project has narrowed community plans on Tourism Development for Thurso. Aspiring Communities funding has enabled reaching community members who find it more difficult to engage, assisting them to speak out about the issues impacting them. This information has now been collated to form a cohesive plan which will take the Trust through the next 5 years which is truly community led and wholly shaped by the views and identified needs of the Thurso Community.

Why until 2025?

Through the hard work and commitment of Thurso Community Development Trust Board, volunteers, staff and wider community in the past 18 months while gathering the community’s views we have already demonstrated success in securing and delivering projects for the Thurso Community.

Thurso Community Development Trust are ambitious, forward thinking and seize identified opportunities which will benefit our community. Therefore, we see an initial 5-year plan as setting the direction and activities for the Trust which gives our community ownership of Thurso Community Development Trust’s journey yet also enables us to adapt quickly in the future to changing community needs, aspirations, funding and legislative trends.

Thurso Community Development Trust

Forming the Trust

2017 saw various changes to the landscape of community groups in Thurso with Thurso Town Improvements Association taking steps forward to modernise their objectives and activities. A social media campaign, Pay it Forward Thurso had brought forward the ideals of community action rather than committees. Organising beach cleans, community action days on Thurso Riverside and a Community Christmas meal alongside random acts of kindness aimed at increasing community action and cohesion. As with any activity which brings Thurso folk together, the cry of “Someone needs to do something about Thurso” was heard. This prompted discussion on how we as a community could do more to develop our town given anticipated economic challenges such as the run-down of Dounreay and cuts to local authority budgets.

After research into successes made by other communities a public meeting was held in December 2017 with speakers from Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust under SSE funded ‘Project Inspire’ to consider interest in forming a Development Trust for Thurso. Following the meeting a group of 13 people came forward to form an initial steering group in January 2018 assisted by a voluntary Development Officer.

Within a year of initially forming Thurso Community Development Trust became a registered Charity in the form of a two-tier Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) with a membership and Board. We also applied successfully to become members of Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS) and wish to acknowledge through this strategic plan the support and advice supplied to us in this early journey by DTAS.

Community Led

Thurso Community Development Trust is truly community-led. Our Board of Trustees voluntarily commit their time to the Trust and all live locally having joined the Trust with the sole aim of making Thurso a better place to live, work and visit for us all. We operate a membership of the Trust which is free of charge to join and gives members a say in our decisions including selecting the Board of Trustees. Our aims, objective, values, mission, projects and activities have completely been formed by the views of our Thurso Community via the process of community engagement and consultation.

426 Members

9 Board Members

Over 2,000 Community Consultation Responses



Board Members, Members and Volunteers pictured at Thurso Community Development Trust's Thurso's Got Talent event in June 2019.

What is a Development Trust?

A development trust is a community-owned and led organisation, working to combine community-led action with an enterprising approach to address and tackle local needs and issues. This means we have an ethos of being a social enterprise and being business like in our approach. This means that the Trust:

- Is owned, led and managed by the local community.
- Aims to address a range of economic, social and environmental issues in the Thurso area.
- Is an independent organisation but seeks to work collaboratively with other private, public and third sector organization to achieve objectives that deliver mutual benefits.
- Aims to be sustainable by generating income through enterprising projects, owning and managing community assets.
- Will reinvest all trading surpluses into the organisation and where possible the wider community with the aim of furthering long-term community benefits.

Why a Development Trust for Thurso?

Several conditions locally, regionally and nationally aligned which have led to the formation of a Development Trust for Thurso, including:

- Thurso Town Charrettes held in 2013 identified the need for a 'Team Thurso' to take forward various development initiatives identified during the widespread community consultation which eventually formed the Caithness and Sutherland Local Area Plan (CaSPlan). No 'Team Thurso' was formed at this time. Thurso Community Development Trust have taken the title of 'Team Thurso' and seek to be an anchor organisation for Thurso.
- Dounreay, our largest employer is in the process of being decommissioned with closure of the site anticipated in the mid 2030's. While much very

productive work surrounds economic development in Caithness forming a Development Trust for Thurso enables us to complement this with a community led approach to Thurso development. Many communities do not have the opportunity to proactively determine their future in the face of significant economic changes, via a Trust we have this opportunity.

- Local Authority budget restrictions from Highland Council have meant that less community assets can be managed by Highland Council and opportunities arise for community organisations to take these over and manage them sustainably.
- Nationally the Community Empowerment Scotland Act 2015 enables communities to have both a greater say and take action over issues locally and have a greater voice in community planning. It also encompasses elements of the Land Reform Act 2016 which enables communities to purchase land and buildings enabling sustainable development.
- Development Trusts are fantastic! Over Scotland there are currently 240 Development Trusts with 70 awaiting membership of DTAS.

Development Trust v's Community Council

We are often asked what is the difference? Both very much have their place in communities. The basic difference is that Development Trust's are proactive, whereas Community Councils are reactive.

A Community Council is the first tier of local government, has a say in planning, licensing and other local decisions. However, they cannot own assets. That is where a Development Trust comes in, we don't feed directly to local government but we will make the views of our community heard when needed, we can also operate as business with a trading arm and own assets.

We work closely with Thurso Community Council in addressing the needs of the community and feel we need strong Community Council and other third sector groups working in partnership. Together we can all be stronger for Thurso.

Our Vision

“Our vision is for Thurso is a community here all members and sections of the community are encouraged to think big and contribute to active involvement in local decision making. An ambitious, creative, healthy, active, empowered and environmentally sustainable place rooted in kindness with a thriving local economy and community facilities which create an extraordinary and secure legacy for future generations.”

“We want to make Thurso a better place to live, work and visit for all both now and for future generations. Creating a sustainable legacy of community action and kindness.”

Our Charitable Objective

Thurso Community Development Trust seeks to benefit the community of Thurso as defined as the Thurso Primary School Catchment area. This area encompasses the town and the immediate surrounding areas and can be found listed by postcode in our Constitution.

Our Charitable aim encompasses a wide range of objectives and is stated within our Constitution as;

The advancement of community development (including the advancement of urban regeneration) principally within the Community;

This gives us a wide remit within our charitable objectives to be responsive over time to the needs of the Thurso community. Our current strategic objectives are in response to community consultation carried out throughout 2018 – 2019 giving the Thurso Community a voice in their aspirations for Thurso now and into the future and centre around the strategic themes below.

Strategic Themes

- **Community**
- **Social**
- **Economic**
- **Environment**
- **Placemaking**

Our Strategic Objectives

1. To proactively engage with the Thurso Community empowering them to take part in local decision and giving them a voice in Thurso community-led aspirations
2. To connect our Thurso Community encouraging joint partnerships between community, third sector and statutory organisations acting as an anchor organisation where the Thurso Communities voice is heard and Thurso organisations are assisted in reaching their potential.
3. To take a place-based approach to designing, developing and delivering facilities and services in Thurso with ambition matching community aspirations and identified community needs.
4. To develop projects which improve the lives of the Thurso Community socially, physically and emotionally and treat our community with kindness and compassion.
5. To create opportunities and diversification in our local economy so it strengthens and thrives. Acting with enterprise to ensure continued financial sustainability for our community.
6. To care for our environment encouraging a low carbon town with reduced emissions and environmental responsibility.

Strategic Themes – The Details

While Thurso Community Development Trust are ambitious for the future we recognise the need to prioritise our activities yet still set a strategic vision for the Thurso our community has identified via consultation they aspire to.

Community

Developing a strong community who are engaged in local decisions and where community voices are heard. Encouraging the community to become involved from sharing their voice to active participation in community events, activities and groups. Promoting and celebrating community events from all groups. An anchor organisation for Thurso which works in partnership and offers peer support to organisations and the community.

Social

Tackling social isolation in the Thurso Community by delivering community facilities, events, activities and projects that bring people together and supply opportunities to learn and develop. Ensuring that all who live within Thurso feel included, treated with kindness and are empowered to share their voice. Developing initiatives where the Thurso Community are happy, healthy and have a shared sense of wellbeing.

Economic

Developing, facilitating and working in partnership with local business and organisations to diversify and strengthen the Thurso economy. Attracting and enabling businesses and organisations to flourish. Sourcing funding and investment for the benefit of the Thurso Community. Acting with enterprise at the core of projects to ensure continued sustainability of initiatives and provide income to benefit the Thurso Community.

Environmental

Developing projects, initiatives and activities which locally address the current Climate Emergency. Reducing dangerous emissions and promoting Thurso as a low carbon town. Alongside measures to mitigate against Climate Change locally, contributing to adaptation measures within the Thurso Community. Promotion and activities which protect and enhance our greenspaces and marine environment.

Placemaking

Capitalising on Thurso's unique assets, aspiration, potential and people to deliver projects in our public spaces, events and activities that promote Thurso's health, happiness, wellbeing and sense of place. Celebrating through projects, events and activities our culture both historic and contemporary to create a shared sense of identity rooted in place. Recognising and appreciating the diversity in our community along with our similarities and promoting inclusion for all.

Our Values

Community

We are community focused in all that we do. Our projects are built on the views of our community and responsive to identified community needs.

Collaborative

We will work with the Thurso Community, fellow third sector, voluntary and statutory organisations collaboratively providing the Thurso Community with a voice and supporting organisations and community members.

Transparent & Professional

We are fully transparent in all our activities, consultations and projects. We set a standard in professionalism in our activities.

Inclusive

We seek to include all member of the Thurso Community and seek to ensure that inequalities are reduced. We want all members of the Thurso Community to feel empowered, included, resilient and safe.

Kind

Kindness matters, we want to see a Thurso Community that is the kindest in Scotland. Which values all of those living and visiting Thurso and where people are supported to realise their potential.

Environmental

We build environmental considerations into all activities and lead by example in forward thinking environmental plans.

Sustainable

We seek through our projects, activities and initiatives to become a sustainable organisation with a focus on enterprise to reduce reliance on grant funding.



Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) illustrated above applies to all of Scotland, from individuals to voluntary organisations through to Government. The NPF reflects the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the illustration below condenses these. As an organisation working within Scotland and seeking to create a Thurso which is better for all, we have reflected the values and outcomes of both within this strategic plan and embedded within the Trust.

Our values stem directly from it and be embrace and embed in all our actions creating a community which is inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe where the Thurso community are treated with kindness and compassion.

The Thurso Community Development Trust Strategic Plan 2019-2025 seeks to address and evidence each of the NPF outcomes in our projects, activities and events. To make the Thurso community thrive we must be bold and brave. These values, outcomes and goals reflect the Thurso our Community aspires to.



About Thurso and its Community

Geography



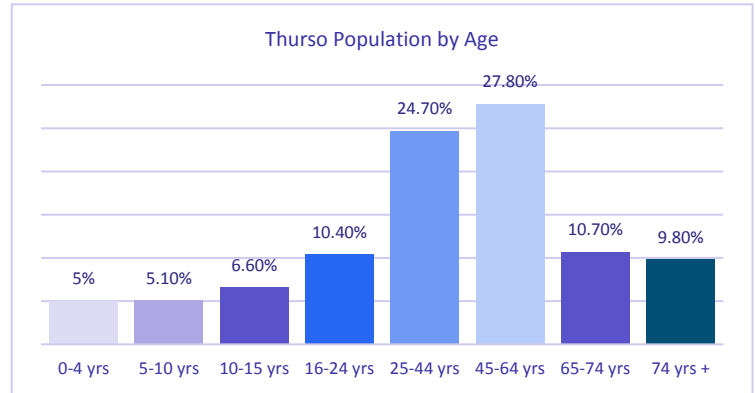
Thurso is the most northerly town on the UK mainland and situated on the North Coast of Scotland. The town is characterised by a large bay area which sweeps from Thurso East to the port of Scrabster, west of the town. The bay area overlooks the Orkney Islands and the headlands of Holborn Head to the West and Dunnet Head to the East. Dunnet Head is the most northerly point of the UK mainland.

Thurso is classified as being *a very remote small town*. While the town in comparison to other Highland Region settlements could be considered of significant size, distance to travel to the main population settlement of Inverness is 120 miles over the A9 road route. Surrounding Thurso are smaller settlements of Halkirk, Castletown, Murkle and Reay. The nearest neighbouring town is Wick to the East around 19 miles away.

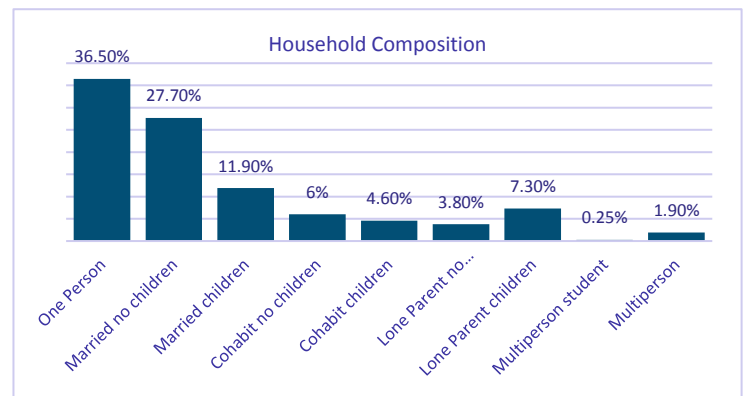
The town has varying age of housing development around a main town centre. The oldest part of the town surrounds the Harbour and Town centre with a famous grid system of housing being developed in the 1800's stemming from this. Increases in population mainly due to the Dounreay Nuclear Establishment being sited near the town saw housing estates being added at Pennyland and Mount Vernon. Council Housing estates were added to the west of Thurso and in Springpark.

Population

Thurso population according to 2011 census is 9,074. Mid-year estimates by National Records of Scotland estimating from 2011 to 2016 give a population for Thurso & Scrabster of 7850. Population estimates illustrate a steady decrease in population (-384 or 4.9%).



Thurso has an increasingly aging population with 48.3% of the population aged 45+ years. This shows a strength in that there are significant numbers of retired people who could become involved in community activities, however demonstrates a significant weakness as increasingly we become reliant on services and do not have younger economically active people to support the town. Current population projections show a drop in population across Caithness of 21% by 2041.



Thurso has a significantly higher than the Scottish average of homes with no children, likely a result of youth out migration. We have a higher than average number of one person households.



Identity

Thurso is a town with a strong Norse identity akin to the rest of Caithness. Our Caithness flag is representative of Norse Culture. Thurso was known to have been at one time a Norse Trading post. The derivative of the town name having been Thorsaa and widely accredited as being a reference to the River Thurso as Thor's River. From Norse times the town had an important role as a port for fishing, the flagstone industry and was known as having a reputation for linen cloth and its tannery.

The 1950's and onwards saw significant changes to the town with the arrival of the Dounreay Nuclear Establishment, 9 miles from Thurso. A dramatic increase in population from approximately 3,000 pre Dounreay to 9,000 in 1971 occurred and saw 1,700 homes being built in the town. Thurso holds the title of 'Energy Town' as a result.

The town currently holds fame as being a premier cold-water surfing destination. Several National and International Surf Competitions have been held at Thurso East, believed to be one of the best cold-water surf breaks in the World. Thurso is a key location on the North Coast 500 and a gateway to the Orkney Islands with Northlink Ferry to the Isles departing from Scrabster. The town has the most northerly rail station in the UK.

Assets

During Community Consultation in 2018 the Thurso Community listed the key assets of the town as being;

- **Thurso Bay/Beach**
- **Thurso East, Castle and Surfing**
- **Thurso Riverside**
- **Independent shops in Town Centre**
- **Thurso Library**
- **The People of Thurso**

Access to Services

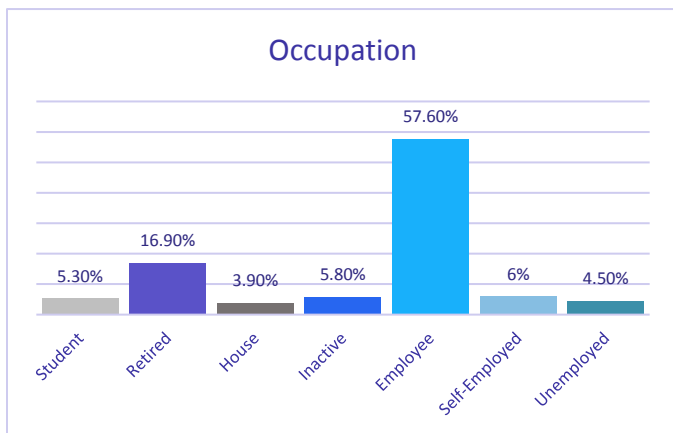
Understanding Scotland's Places Town Audit supplies statistics on the access to services for the Thurso Population, with 13 Doctors and Dentists and 1 hospital Thurso falls below the average for similar Scottish Towns in terms of population and distance to travel. A minor ailments service operates from the Town's Dunbar Hospital, currently due to staffing issues this is open on an ad hoc basis. The nearest Accident and Emergency service is located in Caithness General Hospital in Wick, 19 miles away. Frequently, people in the Thurso area travel to Raigmore Hospital in Inverness for treatment including some maternity services. Current NHS Services are subject to a redesign which has had preliminary go ahead from the Scottish Government and has now entered design stages. If the NHS Redesign goes ahead, an NHS Health Hub will be created at Dunbar Hospital in Thurso.

Thurso has 3 Primary Schools and a High School. Current school rolls show 762 children in Primary Education and 802 in secondary education. Again, this is less than average of similar towns based on population illustrating less families and young people in the Town. North Highland College offers further and higher educational facilities and is part of the University of the Highlands and Islands network.

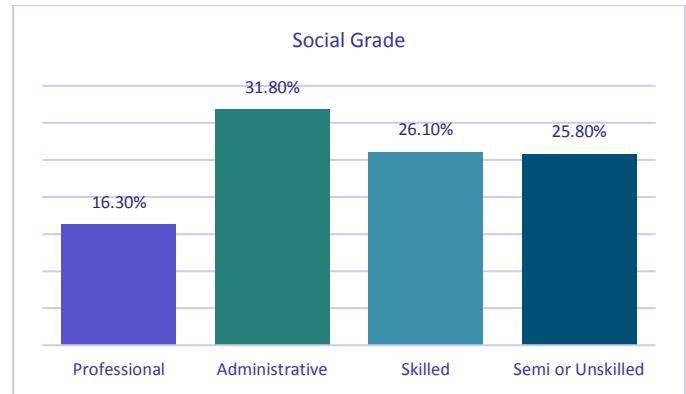
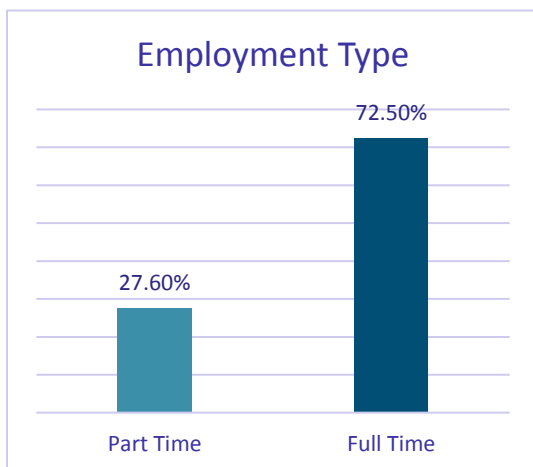
The car is dominant in Thurso. Stagecoach operate a bus service within Thurso offering a town loop, this runs 3 times daily during weekdays only. Bus services are available to destinations throughout Caithness but these are generally infrequent to more rural areas and no weekend service. Public transport South is available via bus and train. Scotrail offer 4 daily trains Monday – Saturday to Inverness, one on a Sunday.

Employment

2011 Census Data reveals that at that time 70.2% of the Thurso population were economically active with a significantly larger population employed rather than self-employed. Anecdotally via community consultation and stakeholder engagement in comparison with other Highland or *remote rural* settlements there is an underachievement in entrepreneurship in Thurso.



Of those employed approximately a quarter are employed on a part-time basis. Consultation reveals that much of the positions in hospitality and tourism remain seasonal and are frequently zero hours contracts. Although at 72.5% of those employed in full time employment economically the forecast is healthy, yet at a total estimate of 3,000 jobs available in Thurso this is less than other towns of similar population size.



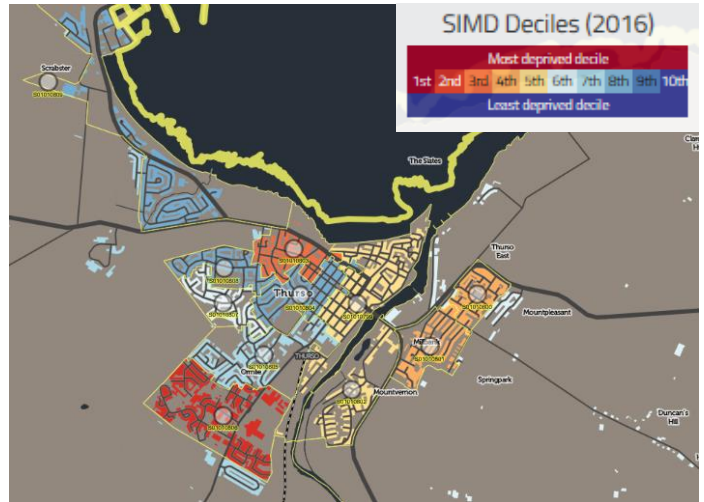
Compared to other areas in the Highlands, Thurso has a higher share of employment in mining, quarrying and utilities, professional, scientific and technical, and public administration and defence. This is in no doubt to be largely in part due to the Dounreay Nuclear Establishment remaining even during decommissioning as the largest employer in the county. This employment is through both direct and supply chain employment. Due largely to Dounreay there is a significant engineering legacy in Thurso and Caithness which has enabled local businesses to be created to meet the needs and contracts available during the decommissioning process.

Anecdotally is said that Caithness has more engineers per head of population than any other area of the UK. We can't completely verify this statement but it is clear that Dounreay holds a substantial legacy for Thurso and the wider Caithness area in terms of socio economics and skills development. A serious risk to Thurso are the long term job losses as Dounreay is decommissioned, forecast to be currently the mid 2030's.

The town does have a lower share of employment in manufacturing, wholesale and retail, transport and storage, health and social work, and arts, entertainment, recreation and other services than the rest of Highland Region. This may be in part to the reliance of employment via the Dounreay direct and indirect supply chain. Community consultation reveals that the town is much underdeveloped in terms of tourism, retail and creative industries offering for employment.

Inequalities

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is the Scottish Government’s official tool for identifying small area concentrations of multiple deprivation across all of Scotland. The SIMD provides a relative ranking for 6,976 small areas (datazones) across Scotland from the most deprived (ranked 1) to the least deprived in Scotland (ranked 6,976). The last publication of the SIMD was in 2016. Areas are ranked by decile. An area in decile 1 would be among the most deprived in Scotland, 10 among the lowest. While the SIMD does not fully illustrate inequalities, it does provide an indication of where they may occur and measures are made on issues such as housing, income, health and educational attainment levels.



Thurso SIMD Map illustrating areas by decile ranking.

Remote Rural Classification

Thurso is not only impacted by inequalities, we are also within categories classifying urban and rural Scotland considered to be a Very Remote Small Town. While we have a population of 7,850 our drive time to the largest area of population (Inverness) is 2.5-3 hours. The classification Very Remote Small Town identifies as a drive time of 60 minutes.

This impacts on our everyday life. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation report that people in rural areas spend 10-20% more of their time on everyday tasks in comparison to urban areas. Rural facts published by the Scottish Government illustrate that fuel poverty in rural areas are around doubled compared to other areas. Research by the Scottish Rural College indicates that in rural areas the feeling of remoteness is increasing. Consultation in Thurso reinforces this with people feeling increasingly disconnected due to centralization of services.

Datazone/Area	SIMD Rank	SIMD Decile
Thurso High & Low Ormlie	986	2
Thurso Mount Vernon	3421	5
Thurso Pennyland South	4481	7
Thurso Springpark	2498	4
Thurso Central	2843	5
Thurso Pennyland Central	3619	6
Thurso Mountpleasant	2503	4
Thurso Central West	5413	8
Thurso Pennyland North	5022	8
Thurso North West	1897	3
Scrabster	5568	8

Thurso, including Scrabster consists of 11 datazones which have very wide differences between them. For example, as can be seen in the chart below, the area around Thurso High and Ormlie are within the 20% of most deprived areas of Scotland whereas other areas of the town are amongst the least deprived in Scotland.

What are the impact of inequalities?

In 2015/16 the top 10% of the population in Scotland had 38% more income than the bottom 40% combined. The impact of inequalities is not just about struggling to make ends meet. People who are living with inequalities are amongst the most likely to experience poor health, least likely to take part in civic activities and have lower levels of educational attainment. It is very simply that climbing the mountain that is life is considerably harder, requires more effort and even then you may not reach the top.



“We need more people to get involved to make a better future for Thurso. The people who are doing something are doing an amazing job but more of us need to get involved and make a change. We need young people to have a voice and make a change in Thurso for ourselves”.

Community Consultation Respondent

Community Activity

While Thurso does have a number of clubs, activities, voluntary and third sector organisations, the town is known for having a high degree of community apathy. Community consultation has further reinforced this opinion with it being stated throughout either an overreliance on the local authority or other statutory agencies to be responsible for changes in the town or frequently quoted that it is a small group of community stalwarts who can be found volunteering or taking direct action. Note, these group listings are not exhaustive.

Sports Groups

Thurso has a number of sports groups including Tennis Club, Caithness Rugby Club have their home in the town, Thurso Swimming Club, various football teams and the town hosts Caithness 7's football. Sports clubs vary between being Thurso only to a Caithness club having a home in the town. A successful Park Run is organised weekly at Thurso Riverside.

Young People

Girl Guides, Scouts and Boys Brigade are active in the town. Thurso Youth Club has recently become increasingly active as a provider of youth activities. A Youth Development Officer is employed by HighLife Highland however activity is only school based.

Arts, Music & Radio

Craft activities for adults are run from Messy Nessy Play Centre, a private business enterprise. Caithness Artists run an annual exhibition. Thurso Camera Club meet regularly. Caithness FM broadcast from Thurso. A community radio station, they take over the Moray Firth Radio frequency in the evenings.

Older People

A Walking Group meets weekly which is very active and has approximately 40-50 people attending. As above Ormlie Community Association operate a small group for crafting and exercise.

Heritage

Thurso Heritage Society are active in the town and maintain a large photographic collection. Caithness Horizons Museum & Art Gallery is currently closed awaiting reopening under a new operator.

Community Action

Thurso Town Improvements Association traditionally ran the Thurso Gala annual celebration and fundraised for town improvements such as a Youth Shelter in the town centre. They have recently gone into abeyance. Thurso Rotary Club are very proactive in the town and complete projects such as paths at Thurso Riverside and recently developed a club rooms for North Shore Surf Club.

Third Sector

Ormlie Community Association operate from a building on the Ormlie Estate. Caithness Citizens Advice have an active base in Thurso. Stepping Stones are part of Caithness Mental Health Support and operate a centre on Thurso Riverside.

Community Facilities

Royal British Legion have function room where some community activities are held for a hire charge. Other community facilities are mainly uniformed group or sports groups halls.

Local Government

Thurso Community Council serves the town, in August 2019 it fell into abeyance. Four Highland Councillors are assigned to Thurso and North West Caithness.

Community Consultation

March 2018 – What Thurso Said

In March 2018, we ran widespread community consultation through public meetings, focus groups and online survey. We used the *Place Standard* method of survey accredited by the Scottish Government. The survey method invites a community to rank their place against 14 different themes. It breaks new ground in focusing on the important connection between the physical and social environments and how this affects our health and sense of well-being.

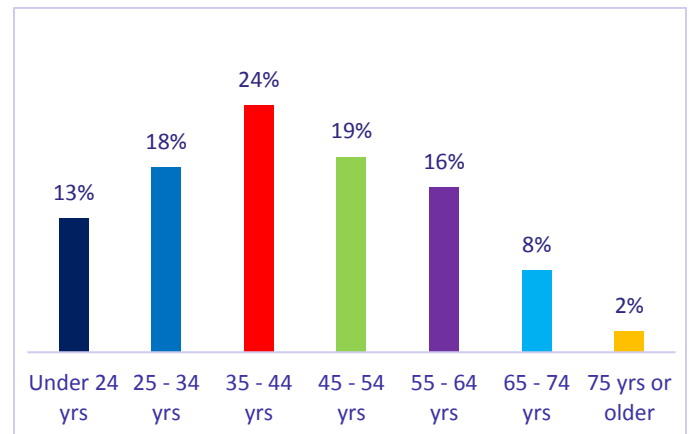
In total 1,180 people provided valid responses and made 7,045 comments. Of these responses 60 were made at public engagement community consultation events and the rest gathered from online responses. The level of engagement and quality responses received was wholly unexpected. Around 19% of the Thurso population submitted responses. It is therefore felt that these results indicate a significant community engagement exercise and there is substantial interest in turning these opinions and the aim of Thurso Community Development Trust into action.

A large number of responses reflected the opinion that no one in Thurso felt that they had been asked what they wanted for the town for a significant period, if at all. Supplemented by responses who referred to the Thurso Town Charrettes in 2013 where they felt the information contributed by them had not been acted upon. However, we are keen to stress that at the time of the final feedback of information from the Town Charrettes a request had been made by the Highland Council Development Team for a 'Team Thurso' to take forward community plans. No 'Team Thurso' became apparent at that time. We feel that Thurso Community Development are that 'Team Thurso' and with the town behind us we can deliver on the wishes of our community.

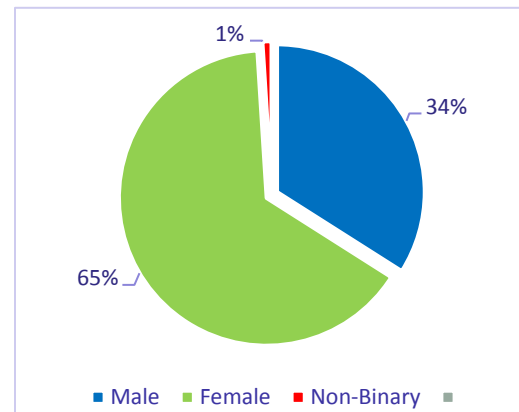
Who took part?

Thurso Population (2011 Census)	Child Population (HIE Area Profile)	Adult Population (Population – Child)	Number of Responses	Response Rate % of Adult Population
7,933	1,603	6,330	1,180	18.6%

Age of Respondents

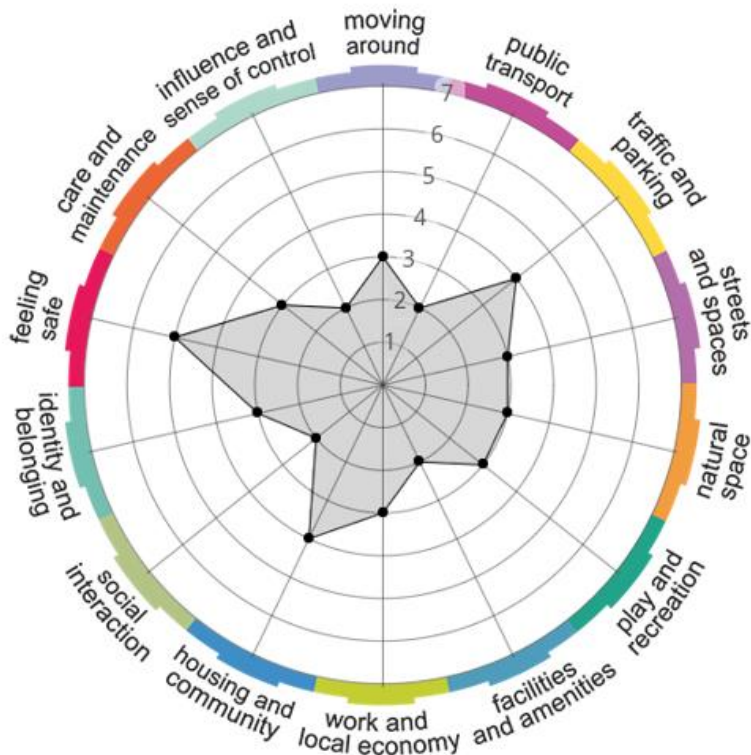


Respondents by Gender



We were very successful in capturing the views of younger people, we owe this success due to the focus groups involving young people and the use of social media for the online survey. More women than men completed the survey. We find this echoes typical statistics relating to social media usage which finds more women prevalent as active users particularly in the age group 25 – 44 years.

Place Standard Map



Summary

Moving around Rating 3.14	Work and local economy Rating 2.95
Public transport Rating 2.12	Housing and community Rating 3.14
Traffic and parking Rating 4.23	Social contact Rating 2.56
Streets and spaces Rating 3.05	Identity and belonging Rating 3.25
Natural space Rating 3.32	Feeling safe Rating 5.27
Play and recreation Rating 3.22	Care and maintenance Rating 3.31
Facilities and amenities Rating 3.25	Influence and sense of control Rating 2.01

For Thurso Community Development Trust to create a Plan which conserves and improves the town appropriate to needs of the community it was felt vital to use a survey method which:

1. Establishes what people think about Thurso
2. Gives the Thurso Community the chance to say what should be improved
3. Identify how best to make improvements

The Place Standard was jointly developed by NHS Health Scotland, Architecture and Design Scotland and the Scottish Government. The tool is intended to enable the physical, social and environmental quality of a place to be evaluated and initiate positive conversations on how it can be improved.

The Place Standard Survey asks respondents to rank how they feel about each of the 14 elements, give a score from 1-7 with 1 meaning significant room for improvement to 7, no improvements needed. Comments are invited throughout to give positive responses to ratings.

The Place Standard Map above shows *all* Thurso Community Responses taken together in an average ranking. This map demonstrates how good Thurso is thought of by the Thurso Community. The larger the grey area, the less improvements need to be made. As can be analysed from above, the community felt that Thurso is in much need of improvement across virtually all elements. The following demonstrates a selection of comments of the lowest scoring elements. The full report is available from www.thursocdt.co.uk.

Influence and Sense of Control – 2.01

“I feel and hear that no one is heard in Thurso. Decision making and benefits seem to be shifting to Wick with all agendas impacting Inverness. Feeling of being forgotten about and cut off is ripe.”

Public Transport – 2.12

“I rarely use public transport as I think seems more convenient to use my car. Maybe that in itself shows that

the perception is that local public transport would not be convenient.”

Social Contact – 2.56

“I feel much of the social space has been lost - no town hall, no dedicated sports halls for groups to rent, few indoor community spaces (country communities fare better as most have a community / village hall). Yes you can ask to use the Legion, a hotel meeting room, or similar but no actual community-owned & run places I can think of”

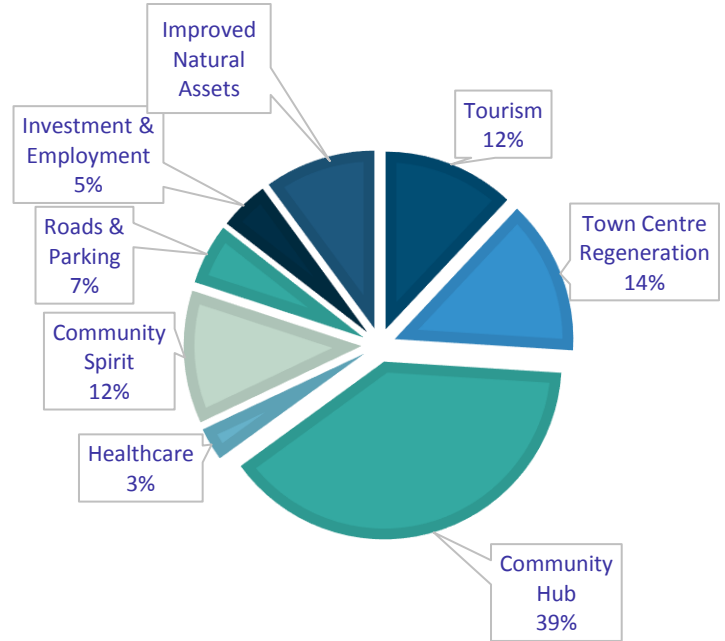
“There are a few small organisations that do bring people together. Loneliness is a terrible affliction that lowers self esteem and confidence making it difficult to interact after a while. We need to help the town by helping these people and give them good community facilities to meet.”

These represented the lowest scoring elements of the Place Standard Survey however. The remainder on average sit similarly and are interlinked. For example, the Thurso Community feel that we have a number of assets in the town such as Thurso Beach/Harbour, the Riverside and the Town Centre with our pedestrianised shopping area. However, many of these assets are beginning to look grey or unloved and in need of maintenance. Similarly recognised in this way were spaces for children to play. Mentioned significantly throughout the report were the fantastic play sites in rural areas and that many town based families travel to these rather than use the equipment in play spaces in town.

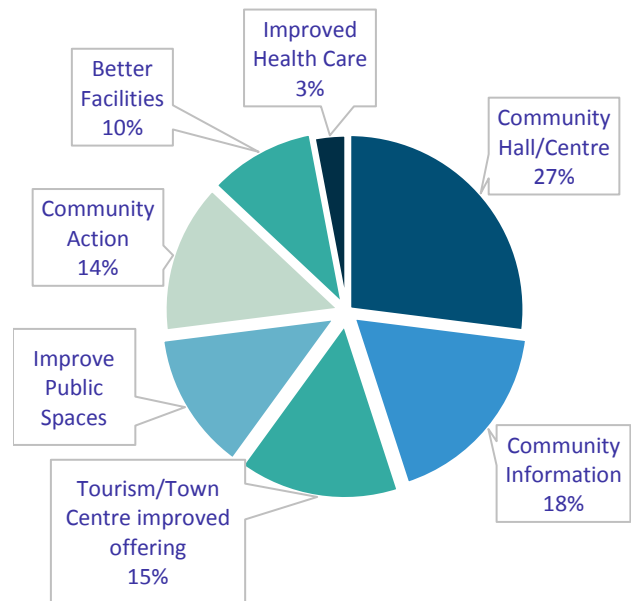
Of concern throughout was the impact on the local economy of Dounreay being decommissioned and fears not so much for current employment but what was there in the future to retain young people in the town.

Community facilities, activities to combat social isolation and promote a sense of identity and community within Thurso was a common thread and priority throughout.

Priorities



Actions



Opinions on priorities and actions throughout reflected a need for greater activities and improved facilities which help to bring the community together. In terms of socio-economic development tourism and the town centre were high on priorities for the majority of respondents.

Aspiring Communities Consultation

We realised very early on that although a phenomenal number of the Thurso Community had shared their views in March 2018, this was likely to be people who are already engaged on some level in what is happening in the town and the community. Working in partnership with Caithness Voluntary Group and with Scottish Government Aspiring Communities funding a Thurso Development Officer has been employed to reach those experiencing inequalities and consult specifically with members of the community who have quieter voices.

Community Identity and Spirit

Key Issues

Community apathy present in Thurso
 Information on groups/activities difficult to find
 No focal point in the community
 We lack a community centre
 We don't have events that bring us together

Solutions

Community focal point
 A large event like Kirkwall Ba
 Activities to bring the community together
 A sense of having a say in what happens in the town.

Facilities, Services & Amenities

Key Issues

Need for a Community Centre/hub
 Lack of activities for young people
 Playparks are all becoming an issue
 Very few facilities for groups to use, either oversubscribed or too expensive to rent

Solutions

Community hub, community centre
 Parks, multifunctional spaces, quality spaces
 Increased capacity and information sharing

Work & Local Economy

Key Issues

Lack of opportunity in long term, diverse employment reducing greatly in area
 Emphasis on tourism when tourism is often seasonal and unsociable hours.
 Childcare is expensive and difficult to find.
 Assistance to start own businesses.

Solutions

Create greater quality jobs in the area
 More training for employers to value staff and see them as long-term assets
 Assistance for Business start up

Getting Around

Key Issues

Condition of roads & pavements
 Public transport links in town and to south
 Lots of good walks, however not signposted
 No safe cycle paths

Solutions

Transport initiatives for Community usage
 Cycle paths
 Better signage for walking routes
 Public transport needs huge improvements – even timetables at bus stops would help

Health and Wellbeing

Key Issues

Mental health & mental wellbeing
 Addiction Services
 Food & Fuel Poverty
 Lack of activities, opportunities for wellbeing
 Lack of social contact

Solutions

Events for people to meet – Older persons lunch
 Community led mental health activities
 Outdoor activities
 Approaches to food poverty/insecurity

Consultation

Respondents were asked what was good, bad and needed to be improved in each category. Consultation involved the following groups:

Single Parents

Young Mums

Older People

Young Men aged 18 – 25

Drop in's at Community Café & CAB

In addition to the generic questionnaire specific research was conducted on the issues of lives of Young Men in the community and Food Insecurity.



Mapping Consultation

In addition to the above a Mapping event was also held. Various sessions were held including with young people attending Thurso Youth Club and an open public event. Attendees were asked to map where existing services and facilities were in Thurso and chart on the large map where they saw issues or opportunities in Thurso.

The event enabled a different perspective on Thurso to be taken including illustrating where walks are, difficulties for those who are reliant on public transport to access the town centre and opportunities for areas of the town which are currently undeveloped and could be put to better use. Young people in particular pointed out areas of Thurso where they felt unsafe.

Discover Thurso – Tourism Consultation

Thurso Community Development Trust were successful in gaining funding from Highland LEADER and Caithness & North Sutherland Fund in late 2018 to employ a Tourism Development Officer and run the Discover Thurso project. Community led tourism consultation and destination marketing activity for the town. The Tourism Development Plan for Thurso conducted the following SWOT analysis based on consultation work of Thurso's current tourism offering and potential for the future. Further details can be found in *Thurso Tourism Development Plan*.

Strengths

- Strong Independent Business Sector
- Nature – landscapes, resources, phenomena and biodiversity
- Neolithic, Pictish, Viking, and Maritime Heritage
- Built Heritage within Thurso
- Geographical location –most northerly town, on NC500 etc.
- Outdoor Activities – walking, surfing, kayaking, swimming, fishing etc.
- High tourist traffic visiting Scottish Highlands
- Thurso Beach, Harbour and River Thurso adjacent to town centre
- Thurso and Caithness relatively 'off the beaten path'
- Safe, child-friendly environment

Weaknesses

- Fragmented and under-developed tourism provision
- Poor transportation portfolio
- Under-developed pedestrian/cycle experience and wayfinding system
- Lack of a town identity, activity providers, or luxury/high-end accommodation
- Poorly kept building facades and shopfronts
- No major tourist attraction
- Overdependence on volunteers for events
- Inconsistent/unsociable opening hours
- Fragile tourist information provision

Thurso

Opportunities

- Expand and promote amenity walks
- Business networking
- Favourable Slow and Wellness Tourism trends
- Improve waterspouts facilities and activities in collaboration with local stakeholders
- Shoulder season events potential in *Strengths*
- Scottish tourism growth and projected NC500 growth
- Colourful heritage conducive to revising local identity
- Growing number of inspiring SMEs
- Impact tourism (participative)

Threats

- Climate Emergency
- Nationwide funding uncertainty
- Dounreay associated population decline
- Opposition towards business sector collaboration
- Over-tourism and overcrowding of natural assets
- High business rates and struggling High Street
- Negative perceptions and reviews of the area
- Recruitment difficulties
- Competitive Scottish tourism market
- Coastal erosion

Achievements to Date



Tourism development for Thurso rated highly in priorities from the Thurso Community. Discover Thurso over a one-year funded project by Highland LEADER and Caithness & North Sutherland Fund has seen community led destination branding of Thurso take place and the formulation of a tourism strategy for Thurso. The project has run localization workshops aimed at increasing our local knowledge of the area for business and individuals. Social media and website launch. More details are available at www.discoverthurso.co.uk

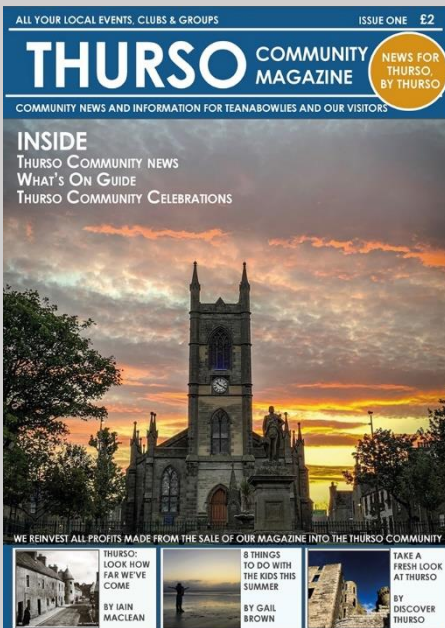


Thurso Grows

Funded by the Scottish Government Climate Challenge Fund we employ 4 staff members to run our Thurso Grows project which educates about Climate Change through local food growing and food waste reduction. We run the Thurso Grows Community Garden in Ormlie. We carried out specific consultation before our application for funding with this project addressing issues raised in the community of introducing increased activities for community wellbeing, promoting local food, adapting and educating about climate change.

Thurso Community Magazine

Launched in Summer 2019, our self-funded community magazine brings news, events and activities to all in Thurso.



Everything else...

- **Fundraising activities including a Coffee Morning, the fantastic Thurso's Got Talent and a Fashion Swap Party. All aimed at bringing people together, raising community spirit and community benefit.**
- **We signed the lease on the Harbour Toilets, currently undergoing repair as a reaction to the need for development and facilities at Thurso Harbour.**
- **Reacting to issues around food waste and food insecurity we have fundraised for a Community Fridge and are putting the final touches in action to launch in 2020.**
- **Collaborating and working with the Caithness Community Planning Partnership to address Thurso issues via our partnership Aspiring Communities project with Caithness Voluntary Group.**
- **We've worked with Sustrans to redesign the National Cycle Route marker, led town litter picks and clean ups and served lots of tea and biscuits at numerous events!**

Next 5 Years...

We now have a large amount of data gathered which reflect the views of the Thurso Community. It is our community who set the direction of our plans. Our achievements to date have all been successful thanks to the initial views and aspirations of our community along with their support when our projects have come to fruition.

While we are now in the position to set a 5-year strategic direction, as an organisation we aim to be agile and responsive and able to adapt to change. Much is uncertain in Scotland at present, the impacts of Brexit and the Climate Emergency mean uncertain times for our community. Our plan reflects where we would like to be and what we would like to achieve for our community by 2025. However, we are aware that we also need to be adaptive to changes economically, funding trends and legislation. Therefore, this plan is a working document, subject to continual monitoring and evaluation.

The Strategic Plan works around each of our 5 strategic objectives of
Community

Social

Economic

Environmental

Placemaking

There are of course crossovers between many of the objectives and the projects listed within them. Community benefits also bring social benefits and so on. However, for clarity we have presented in this method.

Strategic Thread - Community

Creating a stronger more resilient community in Thurso is core to our aims and vision for the town. Clearly through consultation we all want to see a more connected community with initiatives to promote involvement, enable all Thurso residents to share their views and which celebrates Thurso.

An example of this with a project already underway, the **Thurso Community Magazine**. The magazine is entirely self-funded, released quarterly the content reflects the activities of community groups and local interest stories to gain visibility for those groups locally. A 'What's On' Guide gives information on forthcoming events. During consultation, 18% of the Thurso Community gave as their top priority the sharing of community information. There is recognition that there are many fantastic voluntary and third sector groups working in our area it is not always easy to find up to date information on activities. Social media has been fantastic for linking organisations to the community, however, not everyone uses it and even then you need to know where to find the information. Hence the Thurso Community Magazine was launched. Over the next 5 years the Trust will look to raise the profile and readership of the magazine and seek to reinvest the profits into the Thurso community by developing community initiatives which promote information sharing and if profits allow, participatory budgeting sessions to assist Thurso community groups.

Participatory Budgeting is the process where a sum of funds is made available for community members to decide how it is spent. Events would be held where community groups are enabled to make 'pitches', the community votes to decide how the funding is allocated. Many voluntary organisations to stage small events or activities need access to small funding pots which national funders do not provide. In more rural areas micro-grants are available from Community Councils via wind farm funding. We do not have significant access to wind farm funding in Thurso, this would bridge that gap.

Anchor Organisation

“Independent community led organisations with multi-purpose functions, which provide a focal point for local communities and community organisations, and for community services. They often own and manage community assets, and support small community organisations to reach out across the community”

– Scottish Community Alliance

Community – Action Plan

Developing a strong community who are engaged in local decisions and where community voices are heard. Encouraging the community to become involved from sharing their voice to active participation in community events, activities and groups. Promoting and celebrating community events from all groups. An anchor organisation for Thurso which works in partnership and offers peer support to organisations and the community.

Project	Actions	Timing
Develop the Trust as a strong anchor organisation for the Thurso Community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increase visibility of the Trust as an Anchor Organisation.▪ Promote and develop partnerships and collaboration.▪ Identify shared opportunities for skills development within the community.▪ Promote and champion the Thurso community	Ongoing
Thurso Community Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continue to develop, deliver & produce Magazine	Ongoing
Relaunch and develop Pay it Forward Thurso to support community action activity such as regular clean ups and voluntary activity.	<p>Pay it Forward Thurso was a forerunner to the Trust and promoted community action through voluntary activity and random acts of kindness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assess capacity and forward plan, identifying objectives▪ Relaunch Pay it Forward Thurso with aim to increase community action and create regular acts of kindness▪ Continue to increase capacity and develop the initiative investigating potential rewards/awards scheme and skills development	2019 – 2020 2020 – 2021 2021 – 2025
Thurso Christmas Lights	<p>In 2018 a working group formed under the Trust to manage, fundraise and develop Thurso’s Christmas Lights activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Support Thurso Christmas Lights Group▪ Work with group to fundraise and develop Thurso Christmas Lights activity to meet current health & safety and regulatory guidance▪ Support and encourage group to become autonomous	Ongoing 2020 – 2023 2023 – 2025
Thurso Conversation Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Host and enable events which allow the Thurso Community to come together to share their views	Ongoing
Caithness Community Planning Partnership (CCPP)	<p>Community Planning Partnerships bring together community, third sector and statutory agencies to plan services based on identified community needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Continue involvement in CCPP and provide a strong voice for the Thurso Community	Ongoing
Participatory Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Investigate and develop a strategy for Participatory Budgeting sessions to offer support to Thurso Community Organisations▪ Host regular events and grow participation	2020 – 2021 2021 – 2025

Community Hub – The Drill Hall Priority Project

Social

A key aspiration within the Thurso Community identified via priority needs in consultation were facilities, events and activities that bring the community together. Social aims of Thurso Community Development Trust reflect these aspirations and are key actions which will increase community capacity, resilience and cohesion.

In consultation 39% of respondents stated the priority project for Thurso was the creation of a **Community Hub**. 27% of respondents saw this as the priority action for the community. Consultation has evidenced throughout the need for quality community space in Thurso from which a range of activities, events and initiatives can be delivered. Social isolation is prevalent in Thurso, where rural areas were frequently cited as having activities running from Village Halls, it was felt that there is nothing comparable to that in Thurso. Interestingly the Trust found that a number of respondents in the age 35-54 age bracket cited social isolation and ranges of activities being an issue, unless attending licensed premises or sports clubs it was felt that there was nowhere currently to meet and socialise with others.

Thurso akin to many other areas in the Highlands has an aging population. The Trust has found frequently in consultation that activities for older people are generally either missing, linked to past employment or ad hoc. For example, there is currently no pensioners lunch in Thurso. Those experiencing social disadvantage are even more likely to be socially isolated.

Scottish Public Health Network research suggests that loneliness itself has been found to be a predictor of higher than average frequency of visits to a GP and has been associated with poorer health outcomes and higher all-cause mortality. Its effect on cardiovascular health has been likened to the equivalent of smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Poor mental health is also related to loneliness, although the association between the two may be co-related.



The Place Standard Consultation 'What Thurso Said' identified very early for the Trust the need for a Community Hub in Thurso. Our first public consultation workshop gave a resounding priority need for a Hub of some form. While at that time in early 2018 Caithness Horizons was still operating that building was very much seen as the Town Hall that we lost and that community spaces within it did not replace it.

This theme was replicated in the online survey and has been further reinforced by consultation throughout 2019 both in Tourism provision and exploring inequalities in Thurso. Previous to this, consultation through the Town Charrettes held in 2013 which led to the formation of the Caithness and Sutherland Local Area Plan (CaSPlan) identified the need for a Community Hub. In the CaSPlan two areas of Thurso are briefly mentioned. The first is the Drill Hall in Sinclair Street, the second is a new build Community Hub on the land of the Tennis Courts at Orlig Street.

While an early priority, the Trust requires public funding to make any project possible. The closure of Caithness Horizons, a large Highland Council owned property in central Thurso therefore put these plans on hold until it was understood an operator would take over. Highlife Highland are due to reopen the building as a Museum in late 2019, early 2020. The Trust are therefore now keen to progress on feasibility of the Drill Hall as a priority.

Community Hub – The Drill Hall

Why the Drill Hall and not a new building?

The current climate of funding is competitive and for large capital projects uncertain. Much mention was made of Pulteney Town People's Project in Wick throughout consultation and the aspiration of similar here in Thurso. The Trust applauds the PPP for their amazing facility and the hard work which went into securing that for Wick. However, that type of funding for a new build is more difficult to come by now. Similar to the redevelopment at Caithness Horizons, the PPP were able to access National Lottery Funding. Less of us play the National Lottery now and their funding streams and awards have changed. It is still possible, but a new build and that level of funding is significantly more challenging.

The Drill Hall may not have another use if it is not secured for the Community. Commercially with economic and population downturn it is unlikely to be bought by a commercial enterprise. As a heritage building there are increased funding streams the Trust could access for redevelopment. However, a Heritage building also presents a large number of issues. The building is in a state of deterioration, retains much of its original features, however, those original features do not create a sustainable modern building.

What is the progress to date?

The Trust were in early realisation that even to consider the Drill Hall certain criteria would need to be met such as space on the footprint of the building to install fire escapes and an accessible lift. A local architect confirmed to us this would be possible. Since then we have spoken to funders regarding a feasibility study and associated surveys and business planning. A key priority for the Trust is not just to find out how much redevelopment may cost but how much a building of this nature will cost to run in 5 years, 10 years, 20 years-time and how to make the building sustainable, energy efficient and environmentally friendly.



Funding & Feasibility

To consider the Drill Hall as a Community Hub the Trust need to take account of a variety of issues. Usage of the building and how it can be made sustainable through creation of income streams and most importantly how much redevelopment of the building may cost. It is only then that a decision can be made if it is worth pursuing. The Trust are entering this with pragmatic eyes in realisation that a Plan B for a Community Hub may need to be considered.

The Scottish Land Fund and Architectural Heritage Fund have indicated that the Trust are welcome to apply for funding to complete such feasibility studies. The aim is to submit applications to both following public procurement in January 2020. If successful community consultation and various studies would take place to determine suitable uses for the building and how redevelopment could be approached along with indicative costs. The Trust would then need to consider if this funding could be sourced.

The Trust over the past year have conducted an options appraisal of community spaces in Thurso, looking at capacity, facilities and availability. This evidence clearly suggests the need for a new space to be created. The Trust have also considered potential funding sources to redevelop the building including amongst others, Heritage Lottery Funding, Architectural Heritage Fund, Community Shares Option, Social Enterprise Funding and the Regeneration Capital Fund.

What would a Community Hub for Thurso look like?

That ultimately will be up to the Thurso Community working with the Trust and the feasibility experts if funding is awarded. There are various ideas already put forward via consultation work and projects already being run that would work in the building. The space currently within the Drill Hall with much of its original features are a large 250m² hall on the upper level with the lower level a series of rooms split in the middle with a corridor/stair to the upper floor. The spaces would lend themselves to be flexible multipurpose rooms which can host events and activities. Suggestions which link to other aims of the Trust include:

Teaching Kitchen	Field to Fork Café
Zero Waste Shop	Repair Café
Multipurpose arts/crafts/treatment/meeting room spaces	Shared workspaces
Multipurpose performance and events space	Wellbeing exercise, dance classes

Social – Action Plan

Tackling social isolation in the Thurso Community by delivering community facilities, events, activities and projects that bring people together and supply opportunities to learn and develop. Ensuring that all who live within Thurso feel included, treated with kindness and are empowered to share their voice. Developing initiatives where the Thurso Community are happy, healthy and have a shared sense of wellbeing.

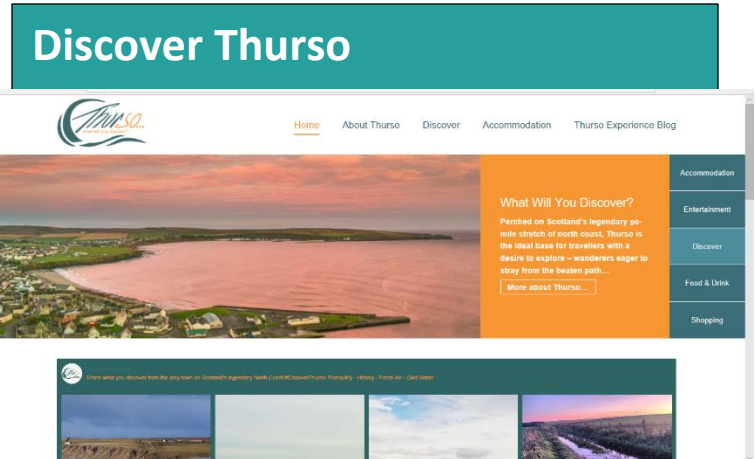
Project	Actions	Timing
Thurso Community Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Submit funding for feasibility to Scottish Land Fund & Architectural Heritage Fund ▪ Conduct feasibility study with partnered experts and community ▪ If feasibility successful submit Stage 2 application to Scottish Land Fund to support purchase of Drill Hall, secure funding for redevelopment and redevelopment takes place ▪ If unsuccessful options scope Thurso and plan alternative 	<p>Early 2020 2020</p> <p>2020 – 2025</p> <p>2020 – 2022</p>
Increase Community Activities in the Thurso area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote existing activities, events and services ▪ Conduct consultation into activities and events needed ▪ Research feasibility and funding to deliver Community Activities where gaps in provision are found ▪ Deliver Community Activities building capacity prior to Community Hub being available 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2020 – 2021</p> <p>2020 – 2021</p> <p>2021 – 2025</p>
Address issues of wellbeing, social isolation and food insecurity with dignity in Thurso through a range of services and initiatives	<p>Consultation throughout 2019 relating to food insecurity has revealed how much of a social issue this is in Thurso. Food insecurity involves a range of issues from struggling to afford food, cooking skills, social isolation where people alone do not feed themselves nutritionally balanced foods, older people living alone reliant on tinned or microwave meals which are nutritionally deficit. The Trust since inception has always aimed to introduce social functions of food, sharing food, food bringing people together, this could be developed further in Thurso.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host the Thurso Community Christmas Meal ▪ Research funding and support for Community Meals initiative ▪ Scope possibilities for initiatives such as Community Meals Service 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2020</p> <p>2020</p>

Economic

A key aim of any Community Development Trust is to take an enterprising approach to activities and projects. Trusts exist to not only be successful organisations but to see the community in which they serve thrive. Thurso Community Development Trust will create and pursue projects which bring economic sustainability and decrease reliance on grant funding to create a strong and resilient organisation with skills and experience to benefit our community. We act as a social enterprise with projects which we aim to generate profit from, with those profits reinvested back into developing Thurso and our community. Alongside this we also seek to benefit and grow local businesses, organisations and encourage enterprise and investment.

Key to this has been the identified need by the Thurso Community to capitalise on opportunities afforded to the town through tourism. Thurso is a main town on the North Coast 500 route, a key destination in Caithness and with a ferry link at Scrabster is a gateway to the Orkney islands. Tourism is a key sector in which to diversify the Thurso economy faced with the closure of Dounreay.

To address this need in 2018 the Trust were successful in securing funding from Highland LEADER and the Caithness and North Sutherland Fund for the Discover Thurso project. The thought process behind the project was that while we realised tourism development was a priority need for the town, the Trust felt that deeper investigation was required to consult the community and encourage partnership working. Literature and research from successful tourism destinations both in Scotland and abroad all track success to joint partnership working and communities pulling together to create successful activity. An example of this frequently quoted in Thurso Community consultation is Orkney, where many would like to see us aspire to in terms of success. Partnership, community led activity and entrepreneurship are the roots to successful tourism development in Orkney.



The project has three key strands:

- Develop branding for use on website, associated social media and print material.
- Localisation workshops to bring tourism community together and promote information sharing.
- A community led Tourism Development Plan for Thurso

Throughout 2019 the Trust employed a Tourism Development Officer to deliver on the project. Currently in October 2019 that post comes to an end with the delivery of the Tourism Development Plan. From this the following key strategic themes have emerged based on community led consultation for tourism in Thurso.

- Responsible Marketing
- Impactful Experiences
- Quality Delivery
- Moving Around

The full Thurso Tourism Development Plan is now available and is subject to comment from the Thurso Community which the Trust will review and implement. Key projects have emerged with for instance Town Centre Wayfinding already in progress and other projects which require further development as follows for Thurso Harbour.

Thurso Harbour



Thurso Harbour has been identified clearly in community consultation as being in need of development with panoramic views across Thurso Bay to the Orkney Islands, Dunnet and Holborn Head with Thurso Castle in the foreground and world class surfing break at Thurso East the area could be the jewel in Thurso's tourism crown. Instead the area is described as dull, grey, concrete and uninviting.

Motorhomes regularly park in the area including overnight yet there are no services or facilities in the area and therefore no economic contribution to the town. Similar areas elsewhere in Scotland along the North East Coast and West Coast have been able to maximise their tourism offering by community led developments at beach fronts and Harbours. A leading example of this is Nairn who last year were the winning town in Scotland's Towns Partnership Design competition.

The Caithness and Sutherland Local Area Plan developed as a results of the Thurso Town Charettes identified this area for development. At this time a group had secured funding and subsequently completed design work for a Thurso Watersports Centre at the Harbour. It is the Trust's understanding this group is no longer in operation. Thurso Rotary Club and Northshore Surf Club have recently completed a modern club rooms to be used by Surfers on the other side of the river. There is therefore a blank canvas to now implement community led redevelopment of Thurso Harbour.

Priority Project

Thurso Harbour Redevelopment

In July of 2019 Thurso Community Development Trust became the lease holders for the Harbour Toilets. The Trust has done this for two reasons. The first being the lack of provision for toilets in that area. It is popular with visitors to the beach both locals and tourists and we felt it was important to reopen them. Unfortunately the toilets have required more work than was originally foreseen, however the Trust is now in the process of making them the best little loos in Scotland ready to reopen in 2020.



Taking proud ownership of the Harbour Toilet Keys.

The second reason to take the lease of the toilets was to use the building as a catalyst to further development at Thurso Harbour. Taking the lease is the first step with the potential to fully Asset Transfer from Highland Council the Toilet Building, car parks and green spaces at Thurso Harbour. Before we do that, we need to have an idea of what our Community wants for the area and what is feasible and will provide economic benefits to the wider community. The understanding the Trust currently has is that the Harbour area is reclaimed land therefore it would be difficult to develop significant building structures. Suggestions to date include Skate Park, Craft Village from repurposed shipping containers, electrical hook up points for EV and Motorhomes, waste water facilities, coffee and ice cream shacks and increased planting in the area with native grasses and hardy coastal planting.

Economic sustainability & the myth of Wind Farm Funding

While much of Caithness benefits from Wind Farm funding much of this is confined to rural and East Caithness areas. Community benefit funding generally remains in the area where the Wind Development is situated and has been made possible due to subsidies to Developers. Those subsidies have now ceased and while new developments may offer community benefit funding they are no longer obliged to. Thurso misses out somewhat as our Community Council area is confined to the town boundaries only. Unless Princes Street was to be suddenly lined with Wind Turbines, which we sincerely doubt, we need to think creatively and ambitiously as a community.

Many Community Development Trusts base their core funding and community benefit on the economic advantage of making an investment either as their own Renewable Energy scheme, managing a community benefit fund or considering shared ownership in an existing Renewables Scheme. Funding and support in the form of advice and loans are available to Development Trusts to implement this. Thurso Community Development Trust are prepared to proactively and ambitiously pursue investment in a shared ownership scheme. The Trust are currently and will continue to research and develop opportunities locally to make this investment.

Economic – Action Plan

Developing, facilitating and working in partnership with local business and organisations to diversify and strengthen the Thurso economy. Attracting and enabling businesses and organisations to flourish. Sourcing funding and investment for the benefit of the Thurso Community. Acting with enterprise at the core of projects to ensure continued sustainability of initiatives and provide income to benefit the Thurso Community.

Project	Actions	Timing
Discover Thurso	▪ Review recommendations from Tourism Development Plan	2019 -2020
	▪ Continue to content develop online content	Ongoing
	▪ Assess feasibility and funding options through ongoing business planning	2020 – 2021
	▪ Build on partnership working	2020 – 2025
	▪ Implement recommendations from Tourism Development Plan	2020 - 2025
Thurso Harbour	▪ Refurbish and reopen Harbour Toilets	2019 – 2020
	▪ Conduct consultation, feasibility and options appraisal for redevelopment opportunities at Thurso Harbour	2020 - 2021
	▪ Research funding opportunities and secure funding for redevelopments	2019 – 2021
	▪ Explore Asset Transfer of the area with Highland Council	2020 – 2021
	▪ Implement redevelopment of Thurso Harbour possibly in a staged approach	2020 - 2025
Renewables Investment	▪ Explore and research local opportunities for Renewables Investment	2019 – 2021
	▪ Research funding and legality issues surrounding Renewables Investment	2019 - 2021
	▪ Conduct feasibility, business planning and funding options securing as necessary to complete and secure Renewables Investment	2021 - 2025

Strategic Thread - Environment

Care and protection for our local environment is a core value of Thurso Community Development Trust. Sustainable Development operates around four pillars environment, economic, social and cultural with the aim as designated by the United Nations of “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” The Trust embraces this in our projects, facilities, events and activities to ensure environmental protections and responsibilities are built into all that we do while attempting to thrive economically and socially while retaining and celebrating the cultural identity of Thurso.

A Climate Emergency was declared by the Scottish Government in 2018 and nationally legislation currently aims for Scotland to have net zero emissions by 2045. Significant structural changes will need to be made to make this possible. It would be difficult to deny that climate change is happening even locally we can see and feel the impacts with seasons evolving, the weather being wetter and coastal erosion taking place. As a small organisation we may be unable to make large structural changes locally however, the Trust can facilitate, educate and introduce projects which enable our local community to make changes in day to day life that address local carbon emissions. The Trust can also work in partnership and lead by example and aspire to Thurso being a low carbon town.

One of such projects has already launched, **Thurso Grows** funded by the Scottish Government Climate Challenge Fund aims to reduce local carbon emissions by encouraging local food growing and minimising food waste. While this project seeks to mainly address environmental aspects it crosses over to many of the Trust’s other strategic themes, it brings our **Community** together and also provides **Social** benefits bringing people together, cooking and sharing food. Similar to this is our **Community Fridge** project which while addressing food waste, also assists addressing food insecurity issues.

Thurso Grows



Thurso Grows launched in April 2019 after the Trust took over the former Bee Bubble Garden in Ormlie and secured funding from the Scottish Government Climate Challenge Fund. The project has seen the garden redeveloped and workshops taking place in composting, growing and how to minimise food waste. In addition to addressing issues surrounding climate change the project has a strong community and social focus addressing food insecurity and bringing people together. While this is a new project the Trust are not complacent with it. There are already plans to extend the growing space at the Garden and also bring edible growing to Thurso Town Centre. As the project develops the Trust aims to introduce more growing projects for health and wellbeing including tackling mental health issues and research possibilities to create a much larger space with Orchard, animals and a combination of social and commercial growing. The project also has a strong fit with plans for a Community Hub. During the project and consultation the need to celebrate and promote local food production from all suppliers in Caithness has been clear along with developing essential cooking skills in the community to address food insecurity and maintain social and community skills. Therefore an automatic progression would be allowing space in a future Community Hub for a teaching kitchen and Field to Fork style eatery.

Thurso's Carbon Footprint

Key to environmental sustainability moving forward locally and nationally is reducing, reusing and recycling – creating a circular economy and reducing individual and collective carbon footprints. Thurso Community Development Trust will shortly into 2020 establish a Community Fridge in Thurso where food that would otherwise go to waste can be shared avoiding unnecessary trips to landfill. In addition to this the Trust will aim to research, pilot and develop other projects which aim to reduce our carbon footprint both individually and collectively. Possible projects and initiatives include the following:

- Tool Library
- Repair Café
- Active Travel – partnerships that include promoting cycle routes and Ebike and Electric Vehicle infrastructure
- Encouraging Zero Waste through products and adopting these measures as an organisation
- Encouraging environmental accountability in caring for our greenspaces such as Thurso Riverside

Developing projects, initiatives and activities which locally address the current Climate Emergency. Reducing dangerous emissions and promoting Thurso as a low carbon town. Alongside measures to mitigate against Climate Change locally, contributing to adaptation measures within the Thurso Community. Promotion and activities which protect and enhance our greenspaces and marine environment.

Project	Actions	Timing
Thurso Grows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend growing spaces including Town Centre ▪ Secure future Climate Challenge Funding for ongoing project development ▪ Research options for funding diversity including Green Health Funding and others ▪ Research, plan and introduce enterprise elements to decrease funding reliance ▪ Research and ascertain feasibility of extension to project including the following possibilities, Community Orchard, Community Farm, Outdoor Education space available for all 	2020 - 2021 2021 – 2020 Ongoing Ongoing 2020 - 2025
Community Fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch Community Fridge Project ▪ Maintain, develop and continue project 	2020 2020 – ongoing
Active Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore and research local opportunities for Active Travel initiatives ▪ Work with partners including local authority and Active Travel initiatives and projects to enable active travel in the Thurso Community ▪ Explore feasibility and funding for Ebike project, potentially as a pilot to ascertain future project shaping 	2019 – 2021 Ongoing 2020 - 2021
Environmental Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Embed environmental stewardship in all projects and hold environmental plan ▪ Embed Zero Waste initiatives and activities into all projects and activities setting an example for the Community ▪ Facilitate and encourage partnership working to address issues with local greenspaces and how these can be maintained and developed to ensure sustainability such as Thurso Riverside 	Ongoing Ongoing 2020 – Ongoing
Developing a reduced Thurso carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Investigate feasibility and pilot projects which aim to reduce carbon footprint 	2020 - 2025

Placemaking

The term placemaking can be used to simply refer to the process of designing public spaces in communities. However, it has a greater significance when applied to retaining the cultural identity of place. It is collaborative, community led, inspirational, dynamic and can be transformative. Put simply it is about embedding our cultural heritage into the place in which we live through designing our public spaces and celebrating the cultural identity of our place.

Thurso and the wider Caithness area have a unique cultural heritage with an ancestry rooted in Pictish and Norse Heritage. Thurso is the most northern town on the UK mainland, while we as locals may feel far removed geographically (particularly in defending our place on the mainland to courier and delivery companies) that unique identity is part of our identity and could work as an advantage to us.

Thurso – the Place

Issues surrounding placemaking lay at the heart of many of the comments received in consultation. In general the community feel that Thurso is a special place with many assets. Tangible assets of the Beach, Riverside, Thurso East, Old St Peter's Kirk, Thurso Castle and the layout of our Town Centre with the pedestrianised area gained praise. The largest asset to the town is less tangible but even more open to praise and celebration – our people. From the friendliness felt in local shops, our community taking care of each other to the people who volunteer their time for Thurso in many groups, societies and sporting activity.

However, underlying the recognition of our key assets was also a thread where a large majority made comment about general upkeep, strengthening and improving our assets and concern for the future. The Town Centre for instance is frequently described as being grey, drab and in need of care. The Community also feel that we do not celebrate Thurso enough, we are more inclined to sell the town down.

Thurso Town Centre

Respondents in Community Consultation described the town centre as being grey, dull and in need of some care and attention. Despite this many also considered the Town Centre to be a key asset. Thurso has an over 80% independent Town Centre, a claim many other towns would be fiercely jealous of. The pedestrianized precinct in particular lends itself to hosting events and activities. However, other than Christmas these are generally lacking.

Specific Town Centre reports completed prior to Scottish Government Town Centre Regeneration Funding being released and discussed at a Public Meeting suggested various ways forward for the Town Centre including a Wayfinding system as signage is demonstrated to be woeful at present and creating more social spaces in the town centre.

Thurso Community Development Trust based on this work submitted to the Town Centre Regeneration Fund for a streetscaping project. This will see an Electronic Community Noticeboard installed, wayfinding system and low level planters. The Trust has been successful in this funding bid and looks forward to completing the necessary actions required by Highland Council to complete the project in 2020.

This project will kickstart work in the Town Centre. However, the Trust does not feel that this is work that should be completed in isolation of town centre businesses and the wider community. Research on successful town centres points to that success having been due to businesses and the community working together to achieve their aims. The aim in this case being a thriving town centre where people feel invited to join community activities and where town centre businesses are economically viable. The Trust therefore intends to create a Town Centre working group to take projects forward. This would encourage events and ownership of the by the community and local businesses. Christmas Traders Day is frequently praised as being successful and events are key to success.

Festivals, Events & Activities

While commercially successful large events give many benefits to small communities, small scale events and activities can also add to placemaking activities. The Trust in 2019 partnered with Sustrans to redesign the National Cycle Route Marker at Thurso Rail Station. This project, while small has instilled a sense of place in the links to Thurso and Caithness while giving a warm welcome to the town. A key asset being our people and the marker gives the message “everyone is welcome in Thurso”.

There is a huge importance to small projects and mid to larger events and festivals which celebrate Thurso’s cultural heritage and sense of place. The Trust will investigate feasibility of holding such events and working in partnership with others to develop these. Themed years exist in Scotland with 2020 being the Year of Coasts and Waterways and 2022 the Year of Stories. These present opportunities to develop events in Thurso. Smaller scale initiatives working in partnership create a sense of community and place, Christmas Fun Day in Thurso is an ideal example of this with the town coming together to celebrate, meet and socialise.



Placemaking – Action Plan

Capitalising on Thurso’s unique assets, aspiration, potential and people to deliver projects in our public spaces, events and activities that promote Thurso’s health, happiness, wellbeing and sense of place. Celebrating through project, events and activities our culture both historic and contemporary to create a shared sense of identity rooted in place. Recognising and appreciating the diversity in our community along with our similarities and promoting inclusion for all.

Project	Actions	Timing
Town Centre Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver Thurso town centre streetscaping project including wayfinding signage, electronic noticeboard and greenscaping ▪ Form Town Centre Working Group to investigate and implement further town centre improvements and events ▪ Work in partnership to strengthen Thurso Town Centre 	<p>2020</p> <p>2020 – ongoing</p> <p>2020 – ongoing</p>
Street/Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure funding for street art projects ▪ Work in partnership with groups/organisations to deliver 	<p>2020 – ongoing</p> <p>2020 – ongoing</p>
Festivals & Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Design and deliver event celebrating Year of Coasts & Waterways ▪ Conduct feasibility and planning to explore opportunities for festivals and events which celebrate Thurso ▪ Continue to be responsive to opportunities to celebrate place working with partnership organisations 	<p>2020 – 2021</p> <p>2021 – 2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Action Plan

Community		
Project	Actions	Timing
Develop the Trust as a strong anchor organisation for the Thurso Community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase visibility of the Trust as an Anchor Organisation. Promote and develop partnerships and collaboration. Identify shared opportunities for skills development within the community. Promote and champion the Thurso community 	Ongoing
Thurso Community Magazine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop, deliver & produce Magazine 	Ongoing
Relaunch and develop Pay it Forward Thurso to support community action activity such as regular clean ups and voluntary activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay it Forward Thurso was a forerunner to the Trust and promoted community action through voluntary activity and random acts of kindness. Assess capacity and forward plan, identifying objectives Relaunch Pay it Forward Thurso with aim to increase community action and create regular acts of kindness Continue to increase capacity and develop the initiative investigating potential rewards/awards scheme and skills development 	2019 – 2020 2020 – 2021 2021 – 2025
Thurso Christmas Lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2018 a working group formed under the Trust to manage, fundraise and develop Thurso's Christmas Lights activity. Support Thurso Christmas Lights Group Work with group to fundraise and develop Thurso Christmas Lights activity to meet current health & safety and regulatory guidance Support and encourage group to become autonomous 	Ongoing 2020 – 2023 2023 – 2025
Thurso Conversation Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host and enable events which allow the Thurso Community to come together to share their views 	Ongoing
Caithness Community Planning Partnership (CCPP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Planning Partnerships bring together community, third sector and statutory agencies to plan services based on identified community needs. Continue involvement in CCPP and provide a strong voice for the Thurso Community 	Ongoing
Participatory Budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate and develop a strategy for Participatory Budgeting sessions to offer support to Thurso Community Organisations Host regular events and grow participation 	2020 – 2021 2021 – 2025

Social		
Project	Actions	Timing
Thurso Community Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit funding for feasibility to Scottish Land Fund & Architectural Heritage Fund Conduct feasibility study with partnered experts and community If feasibility successful submit Stage 2 application to Scottish Land Fund to support purchase of Drill Hall, secure funding for redevelopment and redevelopment takes place If unsuccessful options scope Thurso and plan alternative 	Early 2020 2020 2020 – 2025 2020 – 2022
Increase Community Activities in the Thurso area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote existing activities, events and services Conduct consultation into activities and events needed Research feasibility and funding to deliver Community Activities where gaps in provision are found Deliver Community Activities building capacity prior to Community Hub being available 	Ongoing 2020 – 2021 2020 – 2021 2021 – 2025
Address issues of wellbeing, social isolation and food insecurity with dignity in Thurso through a range of services and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation throughout 2019 relating to food insecurity has revealed how much of a social issue this is in Thurso. Food insecurity involves a range of issues from struggling to afford food, cooking skills, social isolation where people alone do not feed themselves nutritionally balanced foods, older people living alone reliant on tinned or microwave meals which are nutritionally deficit. The Trust since inception has always aimed to introduce social functions of food, sharing food, food bringing people together, this could be developed further in Thurso. Host the Thurso Community Christmas Meal Research funding and support for Community Meals initiative Scope possibilities for initiatives such as Community Meals Service 	Ongoing 2020 2020

Economic		
Project	Actions	Timing
Discover Thurso	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review recommendations from Tourism Development Plan Continue to content develop online content Assess feasibility and funding options through ongoing business planning Build on partnership working Implement recommendations from Tourism Development Plan 	2019 -2020 Ongoing 2020 – 2021 2020 – 2025 2020 - 2025
Thurso Harbour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refurbish and reopen Harbour Toilets Conduct consultation, feasibility and options appraisal for redevelopment opportunities at Thurso Harbour Research funding opportunities and secure funding for redevelopments Explore Asset Transfer of the area with Highland Council Implement redevelopment of Thurso Harbour possibly in a staged approach 	2019 – 2020 2020 - 2021 2019 – 2021 2020 – 2021 2020 - 2025
Renewables Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and research local opportunities for Renewables Investment Research funding and legality issues surrounding Renewables Investment Conduct feasibility, business planning and funding options securing as necessary to complete and secure Renewables Investment 	2019 – 2021 2019 - 2021 2021 - 2025

Environment		
Project	Actions	Timing
Thurso Grows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend growing spaces including Town Centre Secure future Climate Challenge Funding for ongoing project development Research options for funding diversity including Green Health Funding and others Research, plan and introduce enterprise elements to decrease funding reliance Research and ascertain feasibility of extension to project including the following possibilities, Community Orchard, Community Farm, Outdoor Education space available for all 	2020 - 2021 2021 – 2020 Ongoing Ongoing 2020 - 2025
Community Fridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Community Fridge Project Maintain, develop and continue project 	2020 2020 – ongoing
Active Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore and research local opportunities for Active Travel initiatives Work with partners including local authority and Active Travel initiatives and projects to enable active travel in the Thurso Community Explore feasibility and funding for Ebike project, potentially as a pilot to ascertain future project shaping 	2019 – 2021 Ongoing 2020 - 2021
Environmental Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embed environmental stewardship in all projects and hold environmental plan Embed Zero Waste initiatives and activities into all projects and activities setting an example for the Community Facilitate and encourage partnership working to address issues with local greenspaces and how these can be maintained and developed to ensure sustainability such as Thurso Riverside 	Ongoing Ongoing 2020 – Ongoing
Developing a reduced Thurso carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate feasibility and pilot projects which aim to reduce carbon footprint 	2020 - 2025

Place making		
Project	Actions	Timing
Town Centre Regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver Thurso town centre streetscaping project including wayfinding signage, electronic noticeboard and greenscaping Form Town Centre Working Group to investigate and implement further town centre improvements and events Work in partnership to strengthen Thurso Town Centre 	2020 2020 – ongoing 2020 – ongoing
Street/Public Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for street art projects Work in partnership with groups/organisations to deliver 	2020 – ongoing 2020 – ongoing
Festivals & Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver event celebrating Year of Coasts & Waterways Conduct feasibility and planning to explore opportunities for festivals and events which celebrate Thurso Continue to be responsive to opportunities to celebrate place working with partnership organisations 	2020 – 2021 2021 – 2025 Ongoing

Funding Strategy

The following exemplify possible funding streams that could be accessed by Thurso Community Development Trust. The list is not exhaustive by any means and merely demonstrates possibilities that exist. Fundraising is highly competitive, evidence based and funding streams may open and close at short notice or remain closed for indeterminate timings. Criteria and eligibility may also change, this means that as an organisation the Trust needs to remain agile, prepared and ready to capitalise on funding opportunities. The future of much funding for rural development is uncertain due to Brexit and what will replace current EU funding opportunities.

Strategic Thread/Project	Possible Funding Streams
Community	
General	Scottish Government Investing in Communities Scottish Government Aspiring Communities The Robertson Trust Community Jobs Support Co-op Community Funding
Voluntary Activity	Local funding Community Streams such as Dounreay Communities Fund and Community Benefit Funding available to Thurso
Thurso Christmas Lights	Crowdfunding, Tesco Bags of Help, Fundraising activity
Social	
Community Hub	Scottish Land Fund Architectural Heritage Fund National Lottery Heritage Fund Lotteries Community Funding Scottish Government Regeneration Capital Funding Community Shares Option
Community Activities including Food insecurity issues	Robertson Trust Lotteries Community Funding People's Postcode Lottery Funding Various small project funding
Economic	
Thurso Harbour	Caithness & North Sutherland Fund SSE Sustainable Development Fund Coastal Communities
Renewables Investment	CARES Social Enterprise Loan Funding
Environment	
Thurso Grows	Climate Challenge Funding Green Health Funding Community Growing Funding
Active Travel	Sustrans Energy Saving Trust
Placemaking	
Town Centre	Town Centre Regeneration Funding
Street Art	Sustrans, Creative Scotland, small project funding
Events	Event Scotland, FLAG, small project funding

Monitoring & Evaluation

This strategic plan is intended to be a working document requiring continual monitoring, evaluation and engagement. Thurso Community Development Trust will use the Strategic Plan as a basis for planning, developing and assessing feasibility of projects. Reporting to the Board shall consist of reporting against strategic threads. Member's Meetings and Annual General Meetings of the Trust shall report against the strategic objectives contained within this plan. The Trust acknowledges that the Strategic Plan is ambitious however with the support of the Thurso Community and the necessary skills and experience available feel it is achievable.

Stakeholders

Thurso Community Development Trust has in its first twenty months created an environment of being transparent in its activities including regular newsletters to Members. The Trust shall always ensure that its Membership and the wider Thurso Community are the key stakeholder in its activities but will where needed and to build capacity in the Thurso Community work in partnership with other stakeholders. Key potential stakeholders who the Trust either have a relationship with or will seek to build such relationships with throughout the duration of the plan include the following.

Development Trust Association Scotland
Scottish Government
Keep Scotland Beautiful
Sustrans
Scottish Community Alliance
Scottish Communities Climate Action Network
Highland Third Sector Interface
Highland Council
Highlands & Islands Enterprise
Caithness Community Planning Partnership
Caithness Voluntary Group
Caithness Chamber of Commerce
Thurso Town Improvements Association

Thurso Youth Club
Ormlie Community Association
Ripples
HighLife Highland
Thurso Town Centre Business
Thurso Business Community
Thurso & Caithness Voluntary and Third Sector Organisations

Feedback

Thurso Community Development Trust does not operate alone, we exist for our members and our community. We therefore invite any comments or feedback you would like to share with us on our Strategic Plan 2020 – 2025.

You can supply feedback to the Trust Board in a variety of ways.

Via our website:

<http://www.thursocdt.co.uk>

By Contacting us via social media:

<http://www.facebook.com/thursocdt>

<http://www.twitter.com/thursocdt>

Or via direct email to:

info@thursocdt.co.uk

Thank you for taking the time to consider Thurso Community Development Trust's vision for Thurso based on the views of our Community. We fully appreciate and understand the challenges ahead in delivering our ambitious plans for Thurso however, believe that by working together for a stronger, more resilient Thurso we can together make Thurso a better place to live work and visit for all.

Thurso Community Development Trust
2019