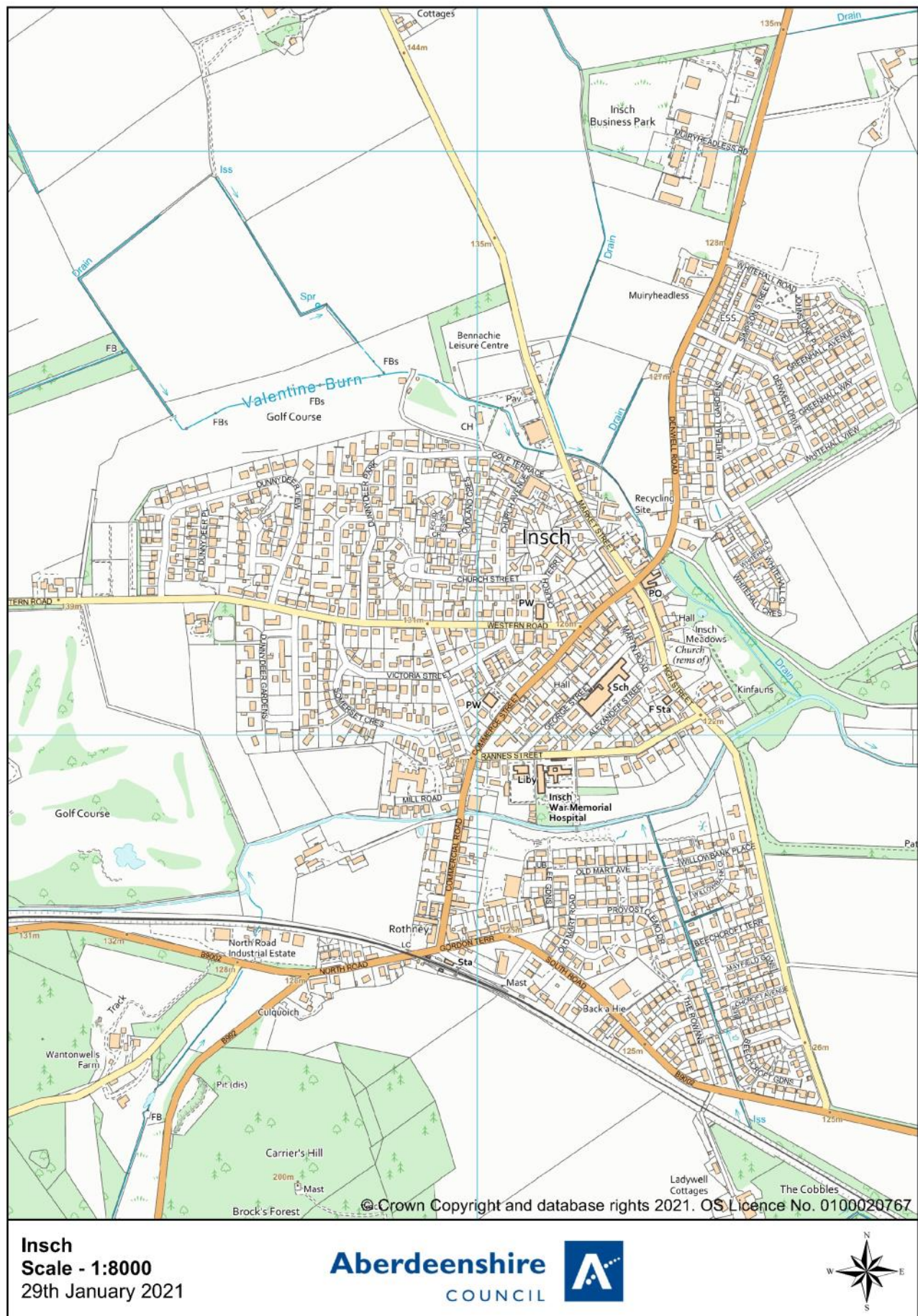




Insch Community
Action Plan
2020-2025



As ye can see this is the 2nd edition o yer Community Action Plan. This is the result o the various engagements we did, to see fit ye like, dinnae like and fit ye wint tae be different in yer village

Inschy toon is growin a' the time, and that means that folk wint tae bide here, so the amenities and facilities need tae keep pace.

Empowerment is the word the noo. It's about fowk gettin back tae dein things in their community for the benefit o their community.

Since the last CAP, it's been great to see a couple o the sights in the village bein turned aboot intae thrivin businesses –

- The Station Hotel – now revamped and up and running, making it a welcome sight to the village as folk get off the train*
- The old Council depot, wis a sight that fowk winted sorted oot. Great to see that it's noo housing twa thrivin businesses – GRC Aquatech and Pure Bathroom*
- The BLC, it's hid it's troubles, bit it chavs on, and is noo dein a lot mair different things – a result o fit ye asked for*

Inschy toon like mony across the Shire can be driven by the locals, 'em that kens fits they wint. Volunteers are fit maks a community, bit there is aywis a need for mair volunteers tae mak the projects happen.

Wi the start o a new decade, we need tae chav on wi the Actions in this plan, bit that needs the fowk o Insch tae come forrit and be pairt o it. I'm sure that within the actions at the ein o this book that there is something tae interest a fowks, young and auld??

Mine, athoot the fowk o Insch deciding tae take 'is document forrit it'll simply be the usual comments – Nithing iver happens in Insch.

Your Insch, Your ideas, Your Action Plan

ICAN – believe that 'is means each an' ivery aine o ye





Insch Connections Museum



*Dunnideer Hill Fort
Summertime*



Insch toward Bennachie

The name "Insch" is first mentioned in the 12th Century and is considered to be of Celtic origin to signify an island.

Insch is at the heart of Garioch in Aberdeenshire and is sheltered by hills, Bennachie, Carrier's Hill, Christ Kirk's Hill and Dunnydeer to the South and West and Foudland Hill to the North.

Standing 406 feet above sea level, Insch, historically, was the area bordered by the Shevlock Burn to the West and South, the Valentine Burn to the North and The Mill Burn to the South.

The lands of Insch belonged to David, Earl of Huntingdon. As a thank you for the safe return of his brother from a Crusade, he founded Lindores Abbey in Fife and gave his land of the Garioch for its upkeep. Duty was paid in corn and flour. The last feu was paid in 1967.

In 1565, Insch was created a Barony by Mary Queen of Scots.

Ownership of the lands of the Garioch has passed to various lairds. The Leith Hays of Leith Hall possessed the lands of Insch.

In the 1700's changes in agriculture transformed the countryside, creating bigger farms, forcing people and their skills into villages. With this increase in population, more houses were built and the village spread out from the church and market, formerly in Market Street. The railway came in 1854 and this changed Insch dramatically.

Insch became a bustling village with dozens of shops including a grocery store, bakers, watchmakers and

jewellers, saddlers, boot and shoe shop, tailors, milliners and dressmakers plus a gasworks, sawmill, threshing mill and electric power station.

There have been some changes since the last action plan, but there still are two churches, (the Parish and Episcopalian), two convenience stores, one of which houses a Post Office counter now, rather than the full Post Office service Insch formerly had, chemist, bank – although this has dropped to a part time service one day a week, DIY Shop, bakers, health centre including doctor's surgery, veterinary surgery, upholstery shop, a hotel, an Indian restaurant, chip shop, Chinese take away, florist/gift shop, hairdressers, an accountants firm, a community hospital that offers palliative care and a minor injuries unit, a library, podiatrist, and day nurseries. There is also now a zero waste and refillables store, and one of the hotels which had been closed for many years has recently reopened. The sale of the former council depot site and the redevelopment by local firm GRC Aquatech and Pure Bathrooms has been a welcome addition to the community..

There are various places to meet including the Community Centre which hosts clubs like the pre-school club, Scouts and Brownies and Guides and the Institute which has the Bowling Club attached to it. The Parish Church Hall is used as a meeting place for the Caring and Pensioners Club plus yoga, drama and country dancing. There is also the purpose built Bennachie Leisure Centre with an all-weather pitch. There is also a football pitch, a golf course, a skate park, a playground and a boxing club.

Things we like about Insch

(as given by various members of the community of different ages at the start of the project)

- The train station (although disabled access still an issue which is currently under consultation)
- Dunnydeer hill and lots of outdoor walks
- We have shops, a school and community spaces.
- The churches
- Lots of houses
- Very friendly
- Carriages/the Station hotel has been redeveloped

What could be better?

(as given by various members of the community of different ages at the start of the project)

- Trying to keep people talking as the community grows so quickly
- The depot site (this was renovated during the course of the engagements)
- Knowing what is the future is for Insch Hospital
- We need very sheltered housing
- Lack of a butcher
- Concerns over the size of the school being able to cope as the village keeps growing
- The skate park needs upgraded
- People need to pick up after their dogs!



Bridge at the Health Centre and Hospital



Insch Station



GRC Aquatech Improvements to the old depot site



Community Events

The Inside Insch Project, History:

In February 2013, the Garioch Local Community Planning Group organised a meeting to discuss the idea of a community consultation. From this meeting, many events happened locally, with over 550 people giving views, and over 2000 comments! This formed the Insch Inside initial action plan.

In 2017, the community in Insch came forward and asked for a review of their action plan as nearly all of the actions had been completed, and the community felt it was time for next steps.

From the previous action plan, the main concerns were...

the closure of the Carriages Hotel and its impact on the village

the road safety issue at the Costcutter junction

the state of the old depot in the centre of the village.

Two of these issues have now been addressed, and the community continue to work on possible solutions to the outstanding issue of road traffic at the junction (Costcutter has now changed ownership and is a McColls)

Insch Community Action Plan, the update:

Working with a group of folk from ICAN and the community, it was felt that we should use other techniques this time around, as the model of Insch had been done through the Planning for Real® process, and that we should have more community based conversations this time around, and utilise new techniques like the Place Standard (NHS Scotland, Scottish Government and Architecture & Design Scotland)

The community hosted a number of events, from drop in coffee and chat sessions at the local tea room prior to it changing hands, to events at Bennachie Leisure Centre, and making the most of other opportunities to gather feedback like the community cinema nights, and other events. There was also a community safety day where Community Planning Partners from Aberdeenshire Council, NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Network Rail, The British Transport Police, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, The Garioch and North Marr Community Safety Group and the Garioch Partnership all came together to address some of the worries that were identified through the earlier community conversations.



What Could be Better?



What do We Love?

Crime and Community Safety:

Road Safety Issues

Traffic speed in several locations throughout the village was identified as an ongoing problem, with emphasis around South Road and Denwell Road. Parking was identified as an issue in the centre of Insch, across from JG Ross' bakery shop, outside the chemist and all along Commerce Street from the Rannes Street junction towards the town centre, with issues still on Alexander Street at school times. Many people said they still felt there was a need for improvements for pedestrian safety, particularly to help alleviate the situation at school drop off and pick up, as many respondents said they would walk if it were safer to cross, with issues identified at the McColls/Chemist crossing, and at Rannes Street crossing onto Alexander Street at the junction for the health centre and visibility on Commerce Street towards the Co-op with so much parking congestion.

Community Safety issues

Insch is a very safe community in which to live and work. The community wishes to ensure this remains the case. There was also a concern for unregistered door to door sales of services which the village seems to have been a target for over the summer months.

There was also more awareness of internet and phone "phishing" scams happening where predominantly elderly people were being targeted by fraudsters. Increased awareness and publicity around this was at the community safety event, and will be an ongoing campaign.

Environment:

Green Spaces

Insch is fortunate in having, The Meadows within the village. It is a very well used and loved space. The local community felt that more could be done to use it better, and that they highlighted this is something for ICAN to work on going forward. The Meadows management plan is currently undergoing a review process and should be published early 2020.

Allotments and community composting

The requests for allotments has had some movement, but it is taking a long time to get established. A site has now been identified, but due to the time taken to progress this, any current planning permission would be lapsed. ICAN are currently working on this with the solicitors for the agreement with the various landowners, and will keep trying to progress this project.

Recycling Centre

There were lots of concerns at the possible loss of the recycling centre with numerous people saying it's a well-used facility, and is accessible to people without relying on cars. People really liked the centre being in the middle of Insch and easy to get to, with helpful staff which encourages people to recycle and to dispose of other waste in a sensible and environmentally aware manner. The site has been saved, with a change to the hours its open, and continues to be a well-used service.



Insch High Street



Insch Meadows



Recycling Facilities at the Golf Club



Bennachie Leisure Centre



Insch Hospital



Cycle Lockers at Insch Station

Environment (cont.)

Dog fouling

The issue of dog fouling was of concern to many, with some areas of the village more prone than others. This is still an ongoing issue from the previous action plan, and despite interventions like the greener dog walking project, it continues to be an area of concern.

Health and wellbeing:

Health information

A number of community members felt there was a lack of easily accessible information on health services in and around Insch. There is now more information available, with notices and information shared at Bennachie Leisure Centre, and the community centre.

Access to clinics

Access to optician and dentistry services is still highlighted as being difficult, especially for those who rely on public transport. The issue of an aging population and growth of the village meant many more people are struggling to access these.

The future of Insch Hospital

A well-established support group, The Friends of Insch Hospital and Community, is continuing on taking forward its own plan for the hospital in Insch and is working NHS Grampian. They continue to hold the annual summer "Strawberry Fayre" which draws a large support and brings together many groups within the community.

Transport:

Co-ordination of Public Transport

While Insch is well served in terms of transport, being on the main railway line from Aberdeen to Inverness, and near the main A96 road, there are issues with regard to the co-ordination of public transport, frequency of service and times.

The upgrade of the Aberdeen to Inverness main railway line will be a very welcome enhancement of service. The enhanced platform does allow longer trains to stop in Insch, and the completion of the line upgrade to Inverness will bring welcome service upgrades in terms of trains and numbers of services. Disability access is still an issue for the second platform. Bus services were still listed as poor, and there was a feeling that all public transport back to the village in the evenings was inadequate.

The dualing of the A96 has caused concerns over the period of the consultation, and continues to do so, with no route yet agreed at the time of publication.

Cycle and walking routes

To tie in with the concerns over parking around the school, it was felt that safer cycling and walking routes should be prioritised within the village and surrounding.

There was also feedback that there are a huge number of attractive outdoor walks, but with no map to guide people who don't know the area. Bennachie Leisure Centre has addressed this concern by commissioning a map of walks for the reception area of the centre.

Housing:

Planning and development

Many people felt that there needed to be a wider spectrum of housing options in the village – a more sustainable mixed tenure of housing, covering flats and bungalows as well as family housing. Some respondents spoke about issues of trying to downsize within the village, and whilst not requiring supported housing, wished to see smaller options and bungalows to be able to free up larger houses and stay within the village.

There were still concerns that the community voice and wishes were often not heard by developers, and also that the influx of new development meant that the school was struggling for capacity, and had already lost a large amount of the playground to allow development of new classroom space, which has an impact on the quality of outdoor play for the children attending.

Economic development:

The future of Carriages

The building has been renovated, and renamed as the Station Hotel, and is open now. This is a very welcome development and the community are glad to see the building coming back into use.

Regeneration and sustainability

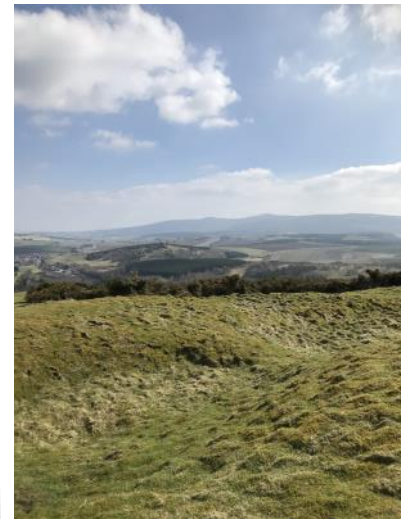
Insch is fortunate that there are not many empty shop units. The redevelopment of the old wooden unit on Commerce Street into a new shop unit for a hairdressers, Brooks into a Chinese take away, and the old carpet building into another hairdressers has been welcomed. Laines World shop was changed into a tea room and since changed hands into a zero waste and refillery store. The former butchers store is now a barbers shop. There is one shop unit empty that was the former bakehouse, and many would like to see it back in use.

Education, learning and leisure (ELL):

Parks and pitches

There were requests to improve the skate park, although no group seemed keen to step forward and drive this project.

The upgrade of play equipment at the park beside Bennachie Leisure Centre to include accessible play equipment was praised.



*Views from top of
Dunnideer Hill*



Butterfly Effect Shop



Insch Meadows Play Park



Inch Library Institute



Inch Community Centre



Bennachie Leisure Centre

Education, learning and leisure (ELL): (cont.)

Swimming pool

A small number of responses had asked for a swimming pool, due to issues with waiting list times for classes in Huntly, Alford and Inverurie. It was reiterated that it is not viable for this to happen within the village.

Education provision

There is still an issue with Inch School in terms of capacity as the village grows. Many parents were concerned about the lack of outdoor play space in the playground, and the loss of the Additional Support Needs classroom, which is now housed in a much smaller space within the school. While there is land identified for a new purpose built primary school, this does not yet feature in the Council's Capital Plan. People were very concerned about the impact on children's school experience and learning with space being at a premium.

Information released in late 2019 around the provision of the new nurse unit for Inch school has raised some concerns for parents with children attending both establishments, and also the safer walking routes to school to be addressed.

Bennachie Leisure Centre

Insch is fortunate in having a purpose built modern leisure centre, run by a charity group. There have been some sustainability issues at Bennachie Leisure Centre (BLC) due to a number of factors. The community came together to support BLC in a successful crowd funding appeal to enable it to stay open. Ongoing challenges in terms of changes to Aberdeenshire Council funding, the impact of the oil and gas downturn and local competition continue to be an issue. Some feedback was received that the work done to BLC recently made it more attractive to use.

There were comments on the cost of accessing the services there. The BLC board continue to receive support from Aberdeenshire Council and the Garioch Partnership to ensure a sustainable future.

Community:

Community activities

There are a number of community events in Insch e.g. the Friends of Insch Hospital has an annual Strawberry Fayre. There were some suggestions that there should be more of these activities and perhaps a gala to bring the whole community together. ICAN have been trying to establish a group to work on this. ICAN have also established an annual Christmas lights switch on event, which is well supported and popular with the community. ICAN continue to do great things with a small number of volunteers!

There are regular events like old time dancing, children's dance classes and other groups like Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Scouts, Cubs and Beavers that also are very well attended locally.

Inspiring Insch continues to meet as well.

Improved communication

Insch is a thriving community with approx. 40 community groups and a good number of community facilities. However, due to the cost and a shortage of volunteers, the community newsletter has ceased.

Development of the Community Centre

The Council-owned and managed community centre is well used during the week. People felt that more publicity about what happens there would be very welcome.

A summarised Action Plan follows. The actions in bold are the three that provoked the most comments during the consultation.



Church of Insch, Leslie, Premnay and Oyne Parish



St. Droston's Church



Jubilee Gardens Play Area

	How will this be taken forward?			By When?
Action	Independent Community Group / Private Initiative	Partnership	Outside Agencies	
Road Safety issues – traffic, speed, congestion, parking	ICAN, BCC	Police Scotland, Aberdeenshire Council,		ongoing
Community Safety Issues. Phishing scams, unlicensed traders	ICAN, BCC Community	Police Scotland, Garioch & North Marr Community Safety Group		ongoing
Green Spaces – Meadows	ICAN (with more volunteers)			2020
Allotments and community composting	ICAN			2020/21

	How will this be taken forward?			By When?
Action	Independent Community Group / Private Initiative	Partnership	Outside Agencies	
Dog Fouling	ICAN, BCC	Aberdeenshire Council Dog warden		Ongoing
Co-ordination of Public Transport	ICAN, BCC	Aberdeenshire Council		2020
Cycle and Walking Routes	ICAN, BCC	Aberdeenshire Council		2020

Action	How will this be taken forward?			By When?
	Independent Community Group / Private Initiative	Partnership	Outside Agencies	
Planning and Development of housing	BCC	Aberdeenshire Council		ongoing
Regeneration and Sustainability	Private development	Aberdeenshire Council (Economic Development), Local Businesses		ongoing
Parks & Pitches	New skate park group (ICAN) Bennachie Leisure Centre	Aberdeenshire Council ELL,		2020
Education provision			Aberdeenshire Council ELL	ongoing

	How will this be taken forward?			By When?
Action	Independent Community Group / Private Initiative	Partnership	Outside Agencies	
BLC sustainability	BLC board, users and community.	Aberdeenshire Council ELL		ongoing
Community Activities	ICAN, Friends, Parent Council, other community groups			2020
Improved Communication	ICAN, Friends, Parent Council, other community groups			Ongoing

Community Action Plan

This booklet is one of a series produced by the Local Rural Partnerships for a number of communities in Aberdeenshire.

This initiative is sponsored by Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership and run by Aberdeenshire Local Rural Partnerships. The aim is to provide community action plans in an attractive, easy to read, professionally printed format.

This information can now guide the community and Community Planning Partners in drawing up detailed action plans to implement the top priorities as well as addressing the other issues which have been identified.

For each priority or issue this will involve agreeing who should be involved, what resources will be needed and target dates for completion. It is hoped that this process will be driven by representatives of the community with support - moral, technical & financial - from the relevant Partners.

It is important that this booklet is seen by all concerned as an account of the community's views at the time of the latest consultation, and that it will have to be regularly updated. As some projects are completed, other issues will arise and take their place in future versions of the community plan.

It is recommended that this plan has a maximum life of five years.

The Inside Inch working group would like to thank the communities of Inch and its surrounding area for their enthusiastic participation in this project • the Ward 10 Councillors for their encouragement • Inch School parent council • ICAN • NHS Grampian, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service • Garioch and North Marr Community Safety Group • Aberdeenshire Council • Network Rail and the British Transport Police for attending the community safety day • the local businesses that displayed posters and attended the events
Bennachie Leisure Centre and Drop Dead Vintage Parlour for hosting events
Nom Wright for the Doric summary
and our statutory community planning partners

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