St Cyrus Community Council and Community Action Plan Group

St Cyrus Community Action Plan (CAP)

Annual Progress Report

June 2025 – May 2026

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1. Executive Summary

This annual report summarises progress made between June 2025 and May 2026 against the 10 actions in the St Cyrus Community Action Plan. It highlights achievements, barriers, and priorities for the year ahead.

Background

The St Cyrus Community Conversation was a community-led research initiative carried out between January and May 2025. The purpose of the project was to identify local priorities, support community ambitions, and guide the enhancement of services, facilities, and the environment. The consultation engaged a wide cross-section of the community through interviews, surveys, and a photovoice exhibition, ensuring voices from all ages and backgrounds contributed to the consultation.160 people aged between 7 and 87 contributed to this consultation.

The resulting report and communities priorities because the St Cyrus Community Action Plan (CAP). 10 priorities were identified by the community during the consultation:

St Cyrus Community Action Plan
1. Enhance existing parks with upgraded equipment suitable for all age groups.
2. Revitalize community green spaces, such as the railway line and community garden, through collaborative efforts between the local community and local authorities.
3. Aberdeenshire Council should implement traffic calming measures and enforce speed zones to prioritize the safety of pedestrians and children. The installation of a pedestrian crossing along the A92 is deemed essential.
4. Improve street lighting on back roads and areas like Beach Road to enhance visibility and safety, which may also mitigate issues related to dog fouling.
5. While reopening public toilets may be unfeasible, it is important to consider facilities for both residents and visitors. The village might explore the development of a community hub for all ages utilizing existing facilities.
6. Collaborate with Aberdeenshire Council, elected representatives, and local travel forums to address the village's transport needs, ensuring bus routes connect key locations for health, employment and education.
7. Work collectively to improve walking and cycling paths around the village for safer commuting and recreational activities.
8. Promote volunteering opportunities and social initiatives to strengthen community ties and foster inclusive interactions.
9. Work with Aberdeenshire Council to support access to employability and a vibrant local economy.
10. Additional bins should be provided to address littering concerns.

Headline progress

Across the year, the community has made tangible progress on several priorities — particularly the 20mph implementation, progress towards a zebra crossing, and child-led environmental improvement activity. Work is also progressing through partnerships on paths and signage, and practical discussions have advanced around green space maintenance and transport information.

Some actions require clearer delivery routes, identified owners, and resourcing (notably the community hub/visitor facilities and the local economy/employability strand).

Key achievements

- Playpark Action Group established; active fundraising and procurement activity progressed.
- Increased safety focus: 20mph rolled out; crossing design progressed and moving into delivery stages.
- Strong child-led action on environmental issues (bins, dog fouling awareness, signage and mapping).
- Continued partnership progress on paths/active travel (audits, permissions, repairs, and funding activity).
- Community connection activities progressed (Parent Collective, first aid/CPR training, communications improvements).

Key challenges

- Funding constraints and eligibility barriers for improvements on council-owned land.
- Delivery dependencies on external teams, procurement timelines, and permissions.
- Some actions need a more defined plan (outcomes, milestones, ownership, funding route).

2. RAG Status Summary (June 2025 – May 2026)

RAG Key: 🟢 On track / delivering • 🟠 Some progress, risks or delays • 🔴 Limited progress / needs reset

Action	Aim	RAG	Key progress this year	Priorities next year
1	Upgrade parks/play equipment for all ages	🟠	Funding secured; fundraising and engagement progressed; procurement route clarified	Install new unit; secure add-ons; deliver inclusive fencing solution
2	Revitalise green spaces (railway line, garden)	🟠	Ownership clarified; options for supervised work team and maintenance discussions	Agree clearance scope/timeline; volunteer maintenance plan
3	Traffic calming & A92 crossing	🟢	20mph implemented; zebra crossing design progressed; moving towards delivery	Confirm milestones; communications; enforcement messaging
4	Improve lighting & tackle dog fouling	🟠	Trees/visibility issues raised; strong child-led dog fouling actions developed	Confirm lighting improvements; install signage/dispensers; monitor hotspots
5	Facilities for residents/visitors; community hub	🔴	Toilets confirmed unfeasible; initial exploration of alternatives	Define hub scope; identify building options and funding route
6	Address transport needs	🟢	Work underway on transport solutions and improving information	Publish accessible transport info; confirm pilots and measures of impact
7	Improve walking/cycling paths	🟢	Audits completed; permissions gained; repairs and funding activity	Install signage; address verge maintenance; progress funding bids
8	Promote volunteering & social connection	🔴	Parent Collective established; training delivered; comms improvement discussions	Volunteering “menu”; strengthen comms channels; widen participation
9	Support employability & local economy	🟠	Partner discussions underway; exploration of models/needs	Obtain data snapshot; choose 1–2 priority deliverables
10	Additional bins & littering	🟢	Bins progressed; child-led campaign actions developed	Implement signage/dispensers; evaluate impact; sustain behaviour change

3. Progress Against Actions

Action 1: Enhance parks with upgraded equipment for all age groups

Aim: Improve the playpark to better meet the needs of children and families, including older children and inclusive access.

Figure 1 - Signs installed in the park to raise awareness of our campaign

Figure 2 - volunteers cleaning the all weather court

What happened this year (June 2025 – May 2026)

- A Playpark Action Group was established and fundraising began, alongside liaison with Aberdeenshire Council Landscape Services.
- £30k was approved through the Scottish Government playpark renewal scheme for a new unit at St Cyrus park, with procurement activity progressing via Public Contracts Scotland and public engagement planned through Engage Aberdeenshire.
- Community fundraising reached £5,180 total raised (noting approx. £1,000 costs to be deducted for platform/printing/signage).
- Local fundraising activities continued (e.g., Easter Trail raised £760 for the playpark).
- Options for fencing and inclusive upgrades were explored, including offers of in-kind support.
- Children and families were actively engaged: every child at St Cyrus Primary voted on the multi-play options and results were shared with Landscape Services.
- Practical improvements were also made to the all-weather pitch, with volunteer support and help from Montrose Tennis Club (hand sweeping and power washing; further machine sweeping offered).

Impact so far

- High local involvement and ownership of the project.
- Clear evidence that community feedback (including children's voices) is shaping decisions.

Challenges / barriers

- Significant barriers securing external funding for accessible / all-ability equipment, including inconsistent eligibility decisions where land is council-owned; a coastal communities challenge fund application was rejected and funders often deemed play equipment on council land a statutory responsibility.
- External funding barriers where council land ownership affects eligibility and procurement/planning requirements.
- Ongoing funding pressures for local government – monies allocated for St Cyrus park fence upgrades from Aberdeenshire Council's capital budget were withdrawn in 2025/26. It is hoped this will be delivered in 2026/27's budget.

Next steps (June 2026 – May 2027)

- Obtain confirmation/update from Aberdeenshire Council on installation timescales for the funded unit and any associated fencing/works and communicate clearly to residents.
- Reset a realistic plan for additional accessible equipment (identify alternative funding models, in-kind support, phased delivery).
- Deliver the planned Community Action Day programme (30 May) and use it to widen the volunteer base.

Figure 3 - Images of the all-weather court before maintenance

Figure 4 - the court following sweeping thanks to volunteers from Montrose Tennis Club.

Action 2: Revitalise community green spaces (railway line, community garden)

Aim: Improve and maintain local green spaces through coordinated community and council effort.

What happened this year

- Early-year work focused on clarifying ownership and pathways to improvement: the old railway line was flagged as needing initial clearance.
- By May 2026, land ownership was confirmed as council-owned, and a site walk-through took place with Aberdeenshire Council's projects officer from Aberdeenshire Council's community justice department who arranged for a work team to lead the tidy up. During May 2026 an extensive clean up was carried out with litter and garden waste removed.
- Practical issues were identified (garden refuse dumping; possible encroachment/building into the corridor).

Figure 6 - images taken in 2025 of the old railway line

Figure 5 - images taken in May 2026 following clean up

Impact so far

- Better clarity on what is feasible and how initial improvements could be delivered.
- Local residents have commented on social media about how much better it looked and how nice it was to be able to walk the old railway line.
- A community action day was held on the 30th May 2026 to tidy up the park and pavilion. More details can be found below.

Challenges / barriers

- Ongoing behaviour issues (dumping/encroachment) may undermine maintenance efforts.
- Capacity and sustainability: ongoing maintenance needs an agreed model.

Next steps

- Establish a basic maintenance plan (community + council)
- Establish whether a “green spaces action group / friends of” model is viable locally given volunteer capacity and appetite.
- Produce a volunteer maintenance plan involving residents and the school once safe/accessible.
- Identify any enforcement/communications needed.

Action 3: Implement traffic calming and install a pedestrian crossing on the A92

Aim: Increase pedestrian safety, especially for children and families.

What happened this year

- A 20mph zone was implemented, with signage and rollout referenced across updates.
- involving planning and discussion at Community Council.
- By May 2026, the pedestrian crossing work was underway, indicating movement beyond design/planning into delivery.

Impact so far

- Improved safety messaging and tangible progress on speed limits and infrastructure.

Challenges / barriers

- Enforcement is outside local control; delivery timescales depend on council programmes.

Next steps

- Provide a public update on crossing delivery milestones (site, dates, traffic management).
- Liaise with Police Scotland / road safety partners on pragmatic enforcement messaging (community safety focus).

Action 4: Improve street lighting / visibility and mitigate dog fouling

Aim: Improve safety and reduce environmental/health impacts through better lighting and behaviour change.

What happened this year

- The Community Council wrote to Aberdeenshire Council roads department and some branches were trimmed back; however, “no further action” was noted at that stage.
- The dog fouling/litter strand became strongly child-led through a P4/5 project:
    - Pupils identified hotspots and produced a map and request for bins.
    - Local elected members, the K&M Area Manager and community planning officers visited the school to hear first-hand about the issues and see the children’s ideas.

Figure 7 - Area Manager Tim Stephens hears from P4/5 about the issues related to littering and dog fouling in St Cyrus

    - P4/5-designed posters which were turned into metal signs using Community Planning Group funding. We have started installing these around the village.
    - Inverbervie Men’s Shed engaged with the school about turning designs into dog poo bag dispensers.

Figure 8 - Some of P4/5's work and one of their metal signs installed on Beach Road.

Impact so far

- Strong preventative/educational approach led by children, with community visibility.
- High-quality, visible, child-led behaviour change approach supported by local partners and small grants.

Figure 7 - Local decision makers meet with P4/5 with their teacher Mr Duncan.

Challenges / barriers

- Lighting improvements are less clearly evidenced and may need a refreshed action route.
- Implementation requires permissions and coordination.

Next steps

- Confirm what lighting work is planned/delivered and what remains outstanding.
- Install signage/dispensers, monitor hotspots and evaluate impact (hotspot monitoring / resident feedback).

Action 5: Facilities for residents and visitors (community hub approach)

Aim: Explore realistic facilities and the potential for a hub for all ages using existing assets.

What happened this year

- Aberdeenshire Council confirmed that public toilets will not be reopened.
- Initial exploration of alternative approaches and potential locations.
- Ecclesgreig Holiday Park signed up to take part in the Aberdeenshire “Comfort Partnership” although many residents were unaware of this.

Impact so far

- Clarity achieved on what is not feasible (reopening toilets), allowing the community to focus on alternatives.

Challenges / barriers

- No defined project plan or confirmed resources yet
- No defined hub model yet (services, building options, governance, running costs).

Next steps

- Define the “community hub” concept: what services/facilities are priority, what existing buildings could host them, and what governance/funding route is realistic.
- Identify possible venue(s), delivery partner(s), and funding route.
- Advertise the public toilets available at the holiday park.

Action 6: Transport needs (health, employment, education)

Aim: Improve transport connections and information to reduce isolation and support access.

What happened this year

- Dedicated work was underway via Community Planning: a project led by Jenny Milne to identify and implement cost-effective rural travel schemes.
- A detailed transport topic report was compiled (recommendation 6), focusing on public bus services along the A92 corridor and noting that east–west journeys often require multi-stage connections; it included service details and timetable guidance.
- The Ember bus started stopping in the village with an hourly service running at a significantly cheaper rate.
- Local advocacy continued (e.g., request for Laurencekirk–Montrose bus stops outside the academy).

Impact so far

- Evidence-led approach: mapping existing provision and identifying practical improvements rather than relying solely on perceptions. Better understanding of current services and gaps.

Challenges / barriers

- Community perception of poor transport persists even where usage is limited; behaviour change and information-sharing may be needed.
- Rural transport constraints and changing timetables.

Next steps

- Publish the transport topic report in accessible formats and distribute via newsletter/noticeboards to improve awareness.
- Confirm what transport interventions will be piloted/implemented through the Community Planning-funded work and how impact will be measured.

Action 7: Improve walking and cycling paths

Aim: Safer commuting and better recreational access; support tourism and connectivity.

What happened this year

- Work continued on the wider coastal path and route improvement agenda (Mearns Coastal Heritage Trail / Doric Way):
    - Ongoing route extension work and maintenance permissions (SSSI permission to cut gorse/grass; repairs to vandalised railings).
    - By April/May, a signage audit (Montrose to Bervie) was completed; discussions continued with councils and NatureScot on signage type and loche North East Scotland Coastal Trust ation.
    - Woodston Burn railings repaired; litter picks completed; funding sought for landslide/terracing repairs (including unsuccessful application).
- Local maintenance concerns were raised (e.g., verge from Lochside/Straton Farm to village no longer cut; council contract constraints; raised for future contract-setting).

Impact so far

- Strong delivery partnership and steady momentum on audits, permissions, and practical maintenance improvements.

Figure 8 - Volunteers working on the North East of Scotland Coastal Path

Challenges / barriers

- Reliance on external funding and multi-agency permissions; some funding bids unsuccessful.
- Existing maintenance contracts may limit verge cutting.

Next steps

- Finalise signage report and submit funding bids for sign installation.
- Agree an interim plan for verge maintenance while contract cycles are addressed.

[13. Platinum Jubilee Coastal Path Kincardineshire Update Autumn 2025]

Action 8: Volunteering and social connection

St Cyrus
NEWSLETTER
Issue 11 | April | 2026
CHARLETON FARM
Meet our farmyard friends

Aim: Strengthen community ties and inclusive participation.

What happened this year

- On behalf of the *St Cyrus Newsletter*, St Cyrus Community Council secured £2,800 from Round 5 of the Aberdeenshire Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund to fund seven issues of the *Newsletter*, ensuring free delivery to the community until the end of March 2027.

- The community council and village information board were refurbished to ensure that information was available for all, including those without social media.

- A community action day was held on the 30th May 2026 at the park. Around 100 people, both adults and children, worked hard together to clean the pavilion and collect litter around the park. The St Cyrus Bowling Club provided free trial sessions which were enjoyed and a bouncy castle and tuck shop ensured fun was had by all. St Cyrus Community Council sponsored the event – providing certificates for all those taking part in the litter pick.

Impact so far

- Continued focus on improving community information and communications with the upgrade to local noticeboards and funding for the newsletter.
- The community action day highlights what can be achieved when the community works together.

Challenges / barriers

- Concerns were raised by the community about the volume of direct selling and events outwith the village on the “whats on St Cyrus” facebook page. Information channels may not be meeting community needs (noise vs local relevance), risking missed engagement opportunities for local groups

- Many committees have found it difficult to recruit new members, suggesting that while people are willing to take part in informal activities like the village action day, they are less willing to commit to ongoing committee roles.

Next steps

- Create a simple volunteering “menu” linked to CAP actions (e.g., paths litter picks, park maintenance, green spaces upkeep) and promote through trusted channels (newsletter/noticeboards/school).
- Clarify comms approach: improve moderation/rules or create a complementary local channel for CAP/community updates.

Action 9: Employability and local economy

Aim: Support access to employability and strengthen local economic activity.

What happened this year

- CAP group discussions with council officers placed strong emphasis on economic development:
    - Economic Development support (Hilary Fleming) highlighted business/community support, data gaps, and opportunities such as networking events and partnership promotion through Visit Aberdeenshire.
    - Issues identified included limited commercial property, risks to village viability if key assets change use, and exploring models like a Community Benefit Society.
- Employability questions focused on whether there is robust evidence of issues for school leavers and whether there are higher numbers of young people not in education/training/employment; council officers were to liaise with employability teams and data sources.

Impact so far

- Strong problem diagnosis and partner connections; potential routes emerging (data, networking, community ownership models).

Challenges / barriers

- Still at discussion stage; needs prioritised deliverables and a realistic route to impact.
- This action remains “phase 2” in the plan and needs a clearer delivery programme and defined outcomes.

Next steps

- Request an employability/data snapshot for St Cyrus (young people 16+ destinations/NEET indicators) and align actions to evidenced needs.
- Identify 1–2 priority “quick win” economic actions (e.g., visitor promotion tie-ins, business support signposting, asset strategy for key premises). [

Action 10: Additional bins and reducing littering

Aim: Improve local environment through bins provision and education.

What happened this year

- The CAP records that additional bins were installed during the consultation period, and a child-led campaign was developed as a key mechanism to sustain improvement.
- P4/5 delivered substantial progress:
    - Hotspots mapped; bin request sent to environment team; metal signs printed; permissions and locations being progressed.
    - By May 2026, an additional bin was installed at the bottom of School Wynd as a result of P4/5 efforts.
    - Council waste team requested placement details and were considering feasibility (including moved bin on Beach Road).

Figure 9 - additional bin installed in April 2026

Impact so far

- Clear evidence of impact: bins added and local awareness campaign assets created by children.

Challenges / barriers

- Ongoing maintenance and behaviour change require sustained messaging.
- Implementation depends on permissions, installation coordination, and sustained maintenance/enforcement.

Next steps

- Install signs with children (photo/story for newsletter), confirm dog bag dispenser production, and agree a light-touch monitoring approach for hotspots.
- Install signage/dispensers and share progress publicly.
- Monitor hotspots and gather resident feedback.

4. Cross-cutting Themes and Learning

What helped progress

- Strong child-led participation driving real-world change (park consultation, signage campaign, bins).
- Tangible infrastructure progress on traffic calming/crossing and play equipment procurement.
- Active partnership working with Aberdeenshire Council, community planning, and third sector/path partners.
- Strong local leadership and clear action groups
- Partnership working with council teams and community planning
- Child-led engagement that created momentum and visibility

What got in the way

- External funding barriers for improvements on council-owned land (especially accessible play equipment).
- Several actions are still “phase 2” and need clearer delivery plans, owners, and measurable milestones.
- Funding restrictions and ownership/procurement barriers
- Reliance on external delivery schedules and permissions
- Capacity constraints for sustained maintenance activity

5. Priorities for 2026–27

1. Complete playpark installation and secure inclusive add-ons/fencing.
2. Confirm delivery plan for green space clearance and ongoing maintenance approach.
3. Finalise A92 crossing delivery milestones and safety communications.
4. Implement dog fouling signage/dispensers and evaluate impact.
5. Define a realistic “community hub” model and explore feasible delivery routes.
6. Publish transport information and progress any pilot transport interventions.
7. Progress signage installation and maintenance solutions for paths and verges.
8. Launch a volunteering offer linked to CAP priorities and improve communications.
9. Set 1–2 deliverable economic/employability actions based on evidence.
10. Sustain litter improvements and keep youth-led messaging visible.