

Community Groups – are they part of your life?

General

There were 35 responses to the questionnaire from people living in Alloa, Alva, Clackmannan, Coalsnaughton, Dollar, Fishcross, Muckhart, Sauchie, Tillicoultry and Tullibody.

All but two respondents have lived in Clackmannanshire for more than 4 years and most said they know a bit or a lot about community life in their community, and about the groups in their community. Most use some or most of the local facilities and services in their community.

Key Findings

Statistics for responses to the prompted questions and comments which shed light on attitudes to community are summarised below, along with Council commentary, where relevant to the Scheme for the Establishment of Community Councils.

The question and the response to prompted answers appear in the shaded box. Respondents' comments and any Council commentary are below each of the questions to which they relate.

	Attitudes to Community Groups	Comment	Council commentary
1	What do you know about community groups in your area?	<p>I know the groups and what they do 51%</p> <p>I know there are groups but not what they do 23%</p> <p>I don't know much about groups in my area 20%</p>	
1.1	Level of awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Im fairly aware of the local groups and what they do in the community • There are no community group in my area • The internet has potential to improve community communication 	Relevance to Scheme: existing provision requiring community councils to make meeting information public
2	How much would you say the people of your area are involved in your life?	<p>I have a lot of contact with a variety of people 57%</p> <p>I know my neighbours but have little contact 17%</p> <p>I hardly ever have contact with people in my area 14%</p> <p>I have social and other contact with just my neighbours 9%</p>	
2.1	Lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to working out of the area for many years 	Relevance to Scheme: existing reminder of

		my contact with a variety of people are in different settings	role community councils play in fostering community spirit
2.2	Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our town is just somewhere to live. People need to put something into the community to reap the rewards of a better community - in my opinion. • I dont have a lot of routine contact with others in my area but do have contact with a wide variety of people in my village 	
2.3	Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I participate in loads of community groups over many subject areas • There is not enough support for the groups • I am part of Parent Council which I view as community group • I am involved in a lot of community work in Tullibody. Prior to this I didn't know anyone and a lot of my friends don't 	
3	What would put you off joining a community group?	<p>Not having enough time 46%</p> <p>Not having anything to offer 6%</p> <p>Not having anything to gain 6%</p> <p>Community groups don't get things done 17%.</p>	

3.1	Being new /who's already involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They all seem to be well established and I'm unsure about joining in with a regular group • Depends on the group and who is involved 	<p>Our stance is that the criteria for becoming a community councillor are about ability to represent community interests, not about 'fitting in' with established characteristics and personalities.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme: maintain the objective eligibility criteria and the emphasis on the electorate , not the existing members, choosing their representatives.</p>
3.2	Lack of time / amount of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am heavily involved but time is differently a pressure it is like a second job - this would be less so though if more people got involved and helped share the load. • More people in the groups would make it easier • I work full time and don't have the free time to be involved • I am keen to contribute to my community but time restricted 	<p>This consultation aimed to draw out ideas for modernising practice and facilitating participation so that more people could be encouraged to fit time to volunteer into their lives.</p>
3.3	Waste of time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This has been proven with Clacks Council not paying any attention to the Alva Community Action Plan - complete waste of time and money 	<p>Community councils perform a very valuable role which sometimes yields no visible results in a community. However, we note the comment that people need to see tangible results from their collective efforts.</p>

3.4	Not applicable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing would put me off joining a community group 	<p>We are encouraged to see this sort of comment in the questionnaire responses. Community councils do benefit from the involvement of motivated and determined individuals.</p>
4	If you have ever been a member of a community group, what aspect of the group did you like the least?	<p>Too much talking and not enough action 37%</p> <p>Rules and regulations get in the way of business 3%</p> <p>It was disorganised and chaotic 14%</p> <p>Only 1 person seemed to have all the power 14%</p> <p>It was more formal than it needed to be 6%</p>	
4.1	Never-changing committee membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My experience has been that never changing committee membership puts new people off joining 	<p>While most community councils prefer to have a certain amount of continuity to keep agendas moving forward, we feel that whether membership changes or not should be in the hands of residents, not the committee.</p> <p>The regular elections which community councils undergo guarantee residents the option to change membership at least every four years.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme: no change to the election method in current Scheme.</p>

4.2	Share of workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wish we had greater numbers and just attending meeting but no further participation Seems to always be a couple of leaders left to do everything need more people to share the load. 	<p>The questionnaire does not investigate or explain why people join groups are actioned-orientated yet only one or two people in a group actually take action.</p> <p>It is up to residents to help community councils by ensuring they elect people motivated to take on administrative and campaign work involved. However, exchanging views through talking is a large part of the community council role.</p>
4.3	Lack of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some groups have people that have a lot of opinions (some outdated) a lot of talk and no action 	
4.4	Bureaucracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bureaucracy - to be honest this only happened when trying to work in partnership with the Council 	<p>The Scheme does not intend that in any dealing with bureaucratic organisations, community councils are required to create any unnecessary bureaucratic systems for themselves.</p>
4.5	Meeting duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings could be too long 	<p>Meeting duration is not dictated by the Scheme. It is under the control of the community council.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme: clarification that meeting format is chosen by the community council.</p>
5	If you are not a member of a community group, what would motivate you to join?	<p>Seeing visible action 31%</p> <p>A direct benefit (6%);</p> <p>Like-minded people 20%</p>	

		<p>No formal joining process 9%</p> <p>Clear rules and operating parameters 17%</p>	
5.1	Invitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I would join if there was a recruitment drive when it was appropriate to welcome new members 	<p>Community councils undergo a recruitment drive, in the form of regular elections, at least once every four years. We are asking residents to comment on how this suits them in Stage 2 of the consultation.</p>
5.2	Volunteering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I volunteer when and where I am able 	<p>There is no limit to the number of volunteers community councils can recruit or the amount of time volunteers give.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme: content does not include provision for volunteers in an effort not to confuse the definition of a community councillor. Stage 2 consultation is a chance for the public to comment on how helpful provisions in the Scheme for volunteers would be.</p>
5.3	Focus of activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe Alva community group to be a very pro active group in many ways , however, some neighbourhoods are somewhat neglected and would benefit attention by the group. 	<p>Respondents' comments show that how much work a community council can do depends on how many people are prepared to take the work on.</p> <p>We note that it is important that community councils understand what is important to residents.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme: proposal for a proportion of meeting time to be set aside specifically for ascertaining residents' views.</p>

6	<p>Under what circumstances would you be happy for a community group to represent you?</p>	<p>If they tell me who they are and what they're doing 54%</p> <p>If I have a say in who they are and what they do 49%</p> <p>If they have strict rules about who they are and what they do 34%</p> <p>If nothing they do commits me to do anything 9%</p> <p>Under no circumstances 14%</p>	
6.1	<p>Integrity & capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful group needs to contain people who genuinely have their community at heart as opposed to their own agenda, and be capable of carrying out business in a professional and respectable manner. • It sort of says it - they should represent the interest of the community not just their members • If they have open and transparent consultation with the community before decisions are made that affect the community • Democracy in action 	<p>We believe the provisions of the existing Scheme give residents the say in who represents them and the power to remove people they feel are not suitable. Stage 2 of the consultation seeks residents' views on this.</p>
6.2	<p>Shared values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on whether or not I agree with their ethos 	

7	What sort of group does your area need?	<p>A group which organises social events 29%</p> <p>A representative group 29%</p> <p>A hobby group 25%</p> <p>A youth club 23%</p> <p>A group for older people 23%</p> <p>A campaign group 20%</p>	
7.1	Connected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have a number of groups but they seem fractured • An umbrella group to co-ordinate the existing com groups, foster cross group support, diary events, share resources etc • I personally think all towns/communities to have a dedicated development officer to help manage the more localised service link with council/councillors and build up community resilience 	<p>The Scheme contains confirmation that community councils are a recognised link with the Council. Community councils may broaden their scope as they see fit, including linking community groups and communities, as long as they continue to fulfil their official function. .</p>
7.2	Challenges the Council / defends community interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some one to challenge the Council as the community council doesn't - waste of time • Think Community council is a good group but needs to be more prominent in community, and the benefits /voice they SN bring for local 	<p>The Council does not always take the action community councils want to see but community councils do challenge Council decisions, plans and policy. This work is not always visible to the wider community but Council decision-making does use the community intelligence</p>

		communities	community councils provide.
7.3	Recreational / hobby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a 'recreational' group for older kids to meet up, 'chill' together, play pool, watch netflix, etc.; • Knitting, art, music, 	Community councils do not usually organise recreational/hobby activities but often help others do so. As long as the community support is there, professional support for people who wish to establish new groups is available.
7.4	Existing provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we have all the aforementioned groups in Tillicoutry • I don't know what is already there so I can't comment on what is needed 	
8	How should a proper community group go about its business?	<p>It should work flexibly to respond to changing needs 86%</p> <p>It should have a written purpose and rules 69%</p> <p>It should be able to do what it thinks best within reason 46%</p> <p>It should not have to have rules 3%</p>	
8.1	Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be all inclusive, and fun. • enrich the community and strive to be inclusive • Encourage all members of the community to join and participate 	<p>Community councils cannot behave like membership organisations, such as Sports or Hobby Clubs who decide who takes part.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme: proposed provision specifically encouraging active participation.</p>

8.2	<p>Open to change</p> <p>Democratic</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be open and transparent, and not be a dictatorship. Too many groups have one main person who doesn't allow change 	<p>Guidance provided to community councils aims to help them operate to high democratic standards which should prevent domination by one individual. It is up to the community council and the people they represent to apply it and insist on democratic practice.</p> <p>Relevance to Scheme : maintain current regular election method whereby all community councillors stand down at the end of a term of office, giving residents the chance to re-elect them or not</p>
8.3	<p>Responsive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A proper community group should be aware of any changing issues within the neighbourhood they represent and respond accordingly 	<p>Relevance to Scheme: proposal for a proportion of meeting time to be set aside specifically for ascertaining residents' views.</p>