

A stylized illustration in blue and red ink on a textured, light-colored background. On the left, a large, leafy tree stands in front of a row of buildings with red outlines. To its right, a smaller tree is also in front of buildings. Further right, another small tree is visible. On the far right, a tall, classical-style column stands on a base, topped with a statue of a horse and rider. The background features more buildings and trees, all rendered in a simple, sketchy style.

Thornhill Place Plan

A Village for all Generations
2026 to 2036



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Foreword

Old School Thornhill Development Trust is proud to have worked alongside Thornhill Community Council and local partners to create this Place Plan. It reflects the voices, ideas, and aspirations of people across our community.

As a community-owned organisation, our role is to bring people together, connecting groups, supporting local initiatives, and creating opportunities that make Thornhill a vibrant, inclusive place for everyone. Through our Strategic Plan and the actions set out here, we will work across the whole community to help deliver this vision, ensuring that Thornhill continues to thrive for generations to come.

This is a plan for all of us. We invite everyone, residents, businesses, and community groups, to join us in turning these ideas into reality. Together, we can protect what we value most and build a future that reflects the strength and spirit of Thornhill.

Heather Carnochan, OST Chair

This Place Plan belongs to all of us. It has been shaped by the voices and aspirations of Thornhill residents, from our youngest primary school children to our longest-standing residents. Through surveys, drop-in events, walks around the village, and countless conversations, hundreds of people have contributed their ideas about what makes Thornhill special and how we can make it even better.

Looking ahead to the next decade, this Place Plan charts a course that respects our heritage while embracing positive change. It is ambitious yet achievable, built on practical actions that our community can deliver together. It recognises that Thornhill already has so much to celebrate, our thriving local businesses, engaged community groups, excellent school, and beautiful natural surroundings.

It also acknowledges where we need to improve: better facilities for our young people, more affordable and good-quality housing for local families, safer walking and cycling routes, and enhanced amenities that serve everyone.

Adam Zdravkovic, Thornhill Community Council Chair



1. Introduction

Thornhill, in Dumfries and Galloway, is a village known for being vibrant, friendly, and attractive. From its tree-lined streets and historic buildings to its engaging community spirit, Thornhill is a place people are proud to call home. This Local Place Plan is our collective vision for the future - shaped by the voices of residents, businesses, children, young people, and community groups. Thornhill Place Plan sets out what matters most to our community and what we want to protect, improve, and develop. It's a practical tool to guide local action and influence decision-making at regional level.

What is a Local Place Plan?

Local Place Plans are a new way for communities in Scotland to shape the future of their area. They allow local people to:

- Develop a shared vision for their place
- Identify priorities for land use, development, and infrastructure
- Influence planning in Dumfries and Galloway Council by informing the next Local Development Plan (LDP3)
- Strengthen community-led action and collaboration, including providing evidence for funding

Who We Are

Thornhill Community Council worked with OST Development Trust to prepare this Local Place Plan. It has been funded by Thornhill Community Council and Dumfries and Galloway Council. We commissioned local social enterprise Sleeping Giants to lead the engagement and draft the Plan. A steering group made up of members of Thornhill Community Council and OST has overseen the process, including taking a leading role in developing the Actions and deciding on content to include in this report.

Our Engagement Approach

It was important to us that our Local Place Plan was based on the ideas, concerns, and aspirations of the people of Thornhill. Between November 2024 and July 2025, we worked hard to gather the views of as many local people as possible.

In the early stages, we raised awareness of what a Place Plan is and asked community members their thoughts on how to reach and engage with different sections of the community.

Based on what local people told us, we offered a range of ways for people to have their say, including:

- Paper and online surveys for residents, businesses, landowners, and community groups
- Four drop-in engagement events, run at different times and in different venues, including an interactive walk around the village
- Discussions with representatives of local organisations, including Thornhill Community Centre, Morton Thistle Juniors, Buccleuch Estate, and Thornhill Rotary Club
- Engagement sessions with local primary and secondary school children, with tools adapted for each age group

These opportunities were widely advertised both online and through more traditional methods, including delivering information and paper surveys to every household in the village.

The views collected were written up in a report, which was used by the steering group to develop draft themes and actions for the Place Plan.

Local people were then invited to consider and give further feedback on these themes and actions during a community action planning event held in July 2025. A range of “thematic experts” were also invited to speak and answer questions on issues such as housing and transport. At this event, local residents were also invited to identify sites that might be suitable for development, or conversely, which they wanted to be protected.

Community Engagement at a Glance



245 people

completed a community survey



12 community groups

shared their views through a targeted survey or discussion



+



11 businesses and landowners

shared their views through a targeted survey or discussion



185 children and young people

(P5 to S6) from Wallace Hall took part in engagement sessions in school



14 residents

took part in drop-in engagement events



24 residents

responded to formal consultation on draft Place Plan



25 people

took part in a community action planning event

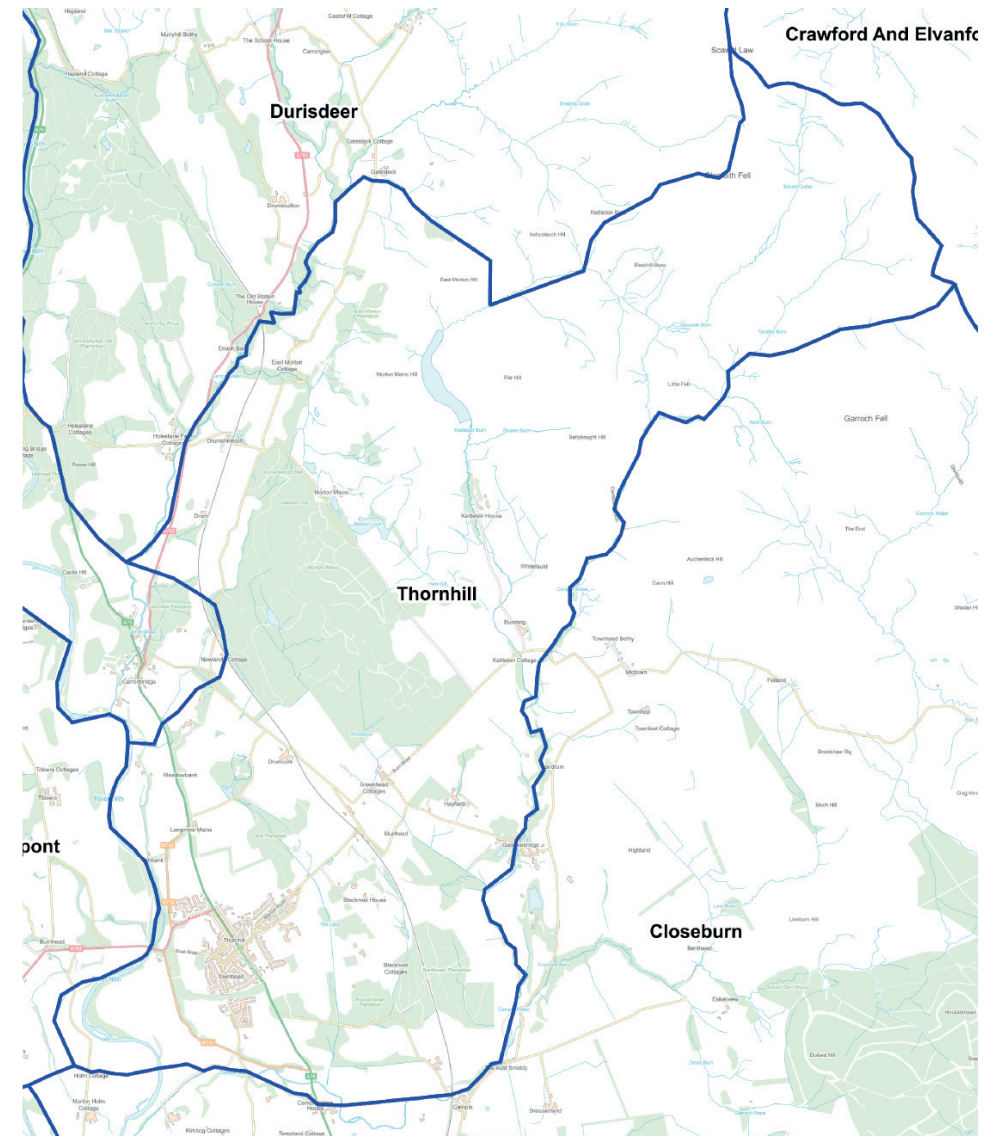
2. Overview of Thornhill

Thornhill is a community with a strong identity, deep heritage, and a shared sense of belonging. Nestled in mid-Nithsdale, Thornhill has long served as a hub for surrounding rural areas, offering essential services, social spaces, and a welcoming atmosphere.

There has been a settlement called Thornhill on this site from at least 1665¹. However, the main streets we recognise today were built in the 18th century as a staging post between Dumfries and Glasgow. Thornhill retains its historic charm, and many locals still refer to it as the “Ducal Village,” a nod to its Queensberry Estate origins.

This chapter draws on census data and other relevant research to give a brief overview of Thornhill before we explore what the community saw as its assets and needs in chapter 3.

¹ Joan Blaeu, Atlas Maior of 1665: Scotia & Hibernia. Taschen



The Area Covered by the Thornhill Place Plan

The Thornhill Place Plan covers Morton Parish, which includes the village of Thornhill, part of Gatelawbridge, and surrounding rural land. This boundary aligns with Thornhill Community Council's remit and avoids overlap with neighbouring villages that are developing their own Place Plans. See map on previous page.

While the focus is on Morton Parish, people from nearby settlements and farms were welcomed into the engagement process, recognising Thornhill's role as a shared centre for services, shopping, and social life.

Demographics

Thornhill has a population of around 1,670 and includes a higher proportion of older residents than the regional and national average. As a result, it also has a slightly lower proportion of economically active people. This older population may also account for the higher proportion of people with a physical disability: 14% in Thornhill, compared with 10% across Scotland.

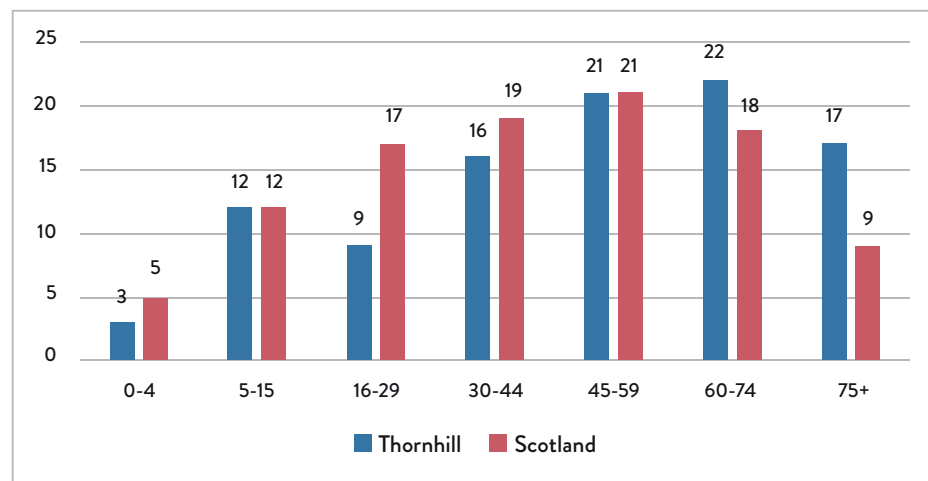
Census data also shows that Thornhill is less ethnically diverse than Scotland as a whole although it has a higher proportion of people from other parts of the UK.

While the proportion of young people aged 16 to 29 is much lower in Thornhill than in the rest of Scotland, the proportion of those aged 30 to 44 is quite similar. This is likely due to people who grew up in the area returning, or people moving into the area, particularly around the time of starting a family.

Table 1. Overview of demographics from 2022 Census

			
Place	Total population	% who are economically active	% over 65 years
Thornhill	1,673	47%	31%
Dumfries & Galloway	145,895	54%	27%
Scotland	5,436,000	57%	20%

Graph 1. Age of people in Thornhill and Scotland, 2022 Census data

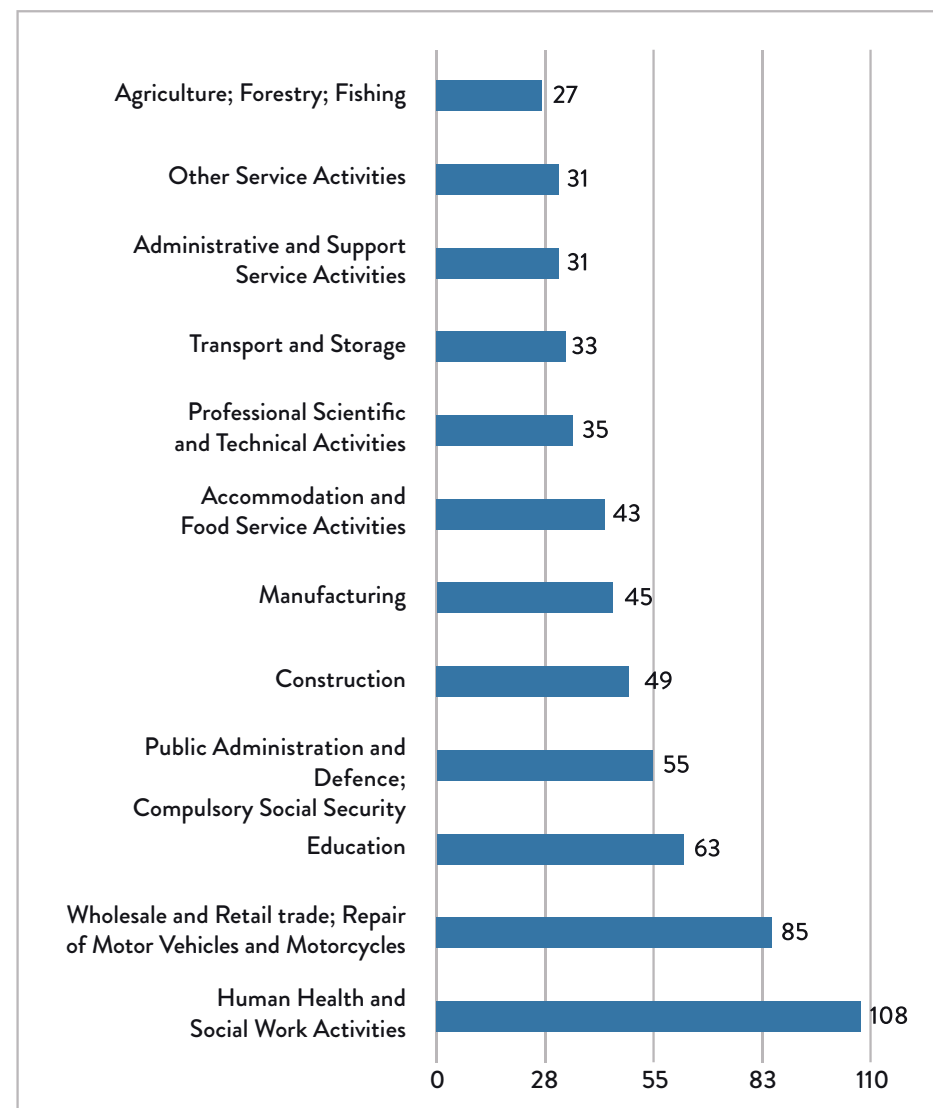


Economy and Employment

Many residents work in health and social care, retail, and education. Over half need to drive to work, but a growing proportion (27%) now work mainly from home. This mix of traditional employment and remote working reflects Thornhill's evolving economy.

Entrepreneurship is important to the economy of Thornhill, with 10% of people self-employed compared with 8% across Scotland.

Graph 2: Employment by industry



Source: Census 2022 (Industry – all people aged 16 and over in employment the week before the census).

The village has many thriving local businesses, including:

- Four cafés
- Two pubs, one of which is also a hotel
- Two small supermarkets, a bakery, a butcher, plus other independent shops
- Three hairdressers
- Two solicitors, both of which also operate as estate agents

Despite what looks, from the outside, like a relatively thriving economy, residents have expressed the need for more diverse retail and employment options, particularly for young people.

Housing

The building stock in Thornhill is made up of a mix of historic terraced cottages, housing association housing (rented or now privately owned), bungalows, and small newer developments. There are very few flats (6%).

Sixty-two per cent of households own their own home, while 25% of accommodation is social rented, 11% private rented, and 3% is people living rent free. These figures are similar to those for Scotland as a whole.

At the time of writing, the appeal for the proposed Wheatley development near Thornhill Medical Centre has just been rejected. This means that, unless the decision is overturned by the Scottish Government, this development will not go ahead.

Thornhill has one sheltered housing development and one nursing home.

Transport and Connectivity

Thornhill is on the A76 and is a stop on the bus route between Dumfries and Kilmarnock. It used to have a train station, but this closed in 1965. Recently, there was a campaign to bring back the railway station, but this was unsuccessful, and expansion is not currently being considered by SWESTRANS (the South West of Scotland Transport Partnership).

Thornhill Community Transport operates a local bus service and enables people to hire the bus for community events when it is not already in use.

The Penpont to Thornhill active travel path has mostly been constructed, stopping shortly before Nith Bridge. Note that, at the time of writing, there are plans to bring it over the bridge using a traffic light system. Dumfries and Galloway Council is also considering an application by KPT Development Trust to turn Boat Brae into a walking and cycling path to enable active travel all the way into Thornhill. This Place Plan cannot influence ongoing planning applications.

Land and Tourism

The village is surrounded by farmland and patches of forest, with the River Nith running to the west. The forests within walking distance of Thornhill contain a network of core paths. To the east, the Forest of Ae is part of the Seven Stanes network of mountain biking centres.

A large proportion of the land surrounding Thornhill is owned by Buccleuch and Queensberry Estate, both within and beyond the boundary of this Place Plan. The nearby Drumlanrig Castle is a major tourist attraction, with seasonal events, its own cycle trails, and a large adventure playground. The

ruins of Morton Castle are also a short drive from Thornhill.

Community Assets and Infrastructure

Thornhill has three community buildings with different forms of ownership:

- **Thornhill Community Centre** is run by a local committee but is owned by Dumfries and Galloway Council
- **OST** is community-owned and is run by OST Development Trust, which also has a wider remit as Thornhill's local development trust
- **The Friendship Club** was gifted to the community and is run by local residents as a registered charity

Thornhill also benefits from a range of other services and amenities, including:

- **Education:** Wallace Hall Academy, Primary and ELC (Early Learning Centre)
- **Public services:** Thornhill Health Centre, Thornhill Fire Station, the cemetery, Thornhill Library, public toilets, Thornhill Recycling Centre
- **Parks and greenspaces:** playparks, allotments, nearby forests with core paths (owned by Buccleuch Estate)
- **Religious congregation:** Thornhill Parish Church
- **Sport and leisure:** Thornhill Bowling Club, Thornhill Golf Course, MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area), Thornhill Squash Club, privately owned gym, privately run gym sessions, yoga, and other exercise and wellbeing classes

These assets are central to village life, but some are under pressure or in need of investment, and residents have expressed real concern about the

loss of key amenities such as the Post Office and Thornhill Community Hospital.

Note that, at the time of writing, a number of churches in the DG3 area will soon be closing. Thornhill Parish Church will remain open and serve a wider congregation.

The Place Plan identifies opportunities to improve accessibility, upgrade facilities, and make better use of existing spaces.



3. Assets, Needs and Challenges

Local people were invited to share their views about Thornhill through a range of community engagement opportunities (see pages 5 and 6 for details of how we did this).

Here is a summary of what we learned about Thornhill's assets, the challenges the village faces, and aspirations for the future.

We have kept this section short and simple. Further details on the engagement findings are in the Appendix, and a longer version of what we heard from people through the engagement can be found in Initial Report for Thornhill Place Plan².

² This can be found on the OST website: <https://www.oldschoolthornhill.com/thornhill-place-plan>

Thornhill's Main Strengths and Assets

Thornhill is widely experienced as a welcoming, safe village with a strong sense of community. Both long-standing residents and newcomers used the words “friendly”, “attractive”, “quiet”, “rural”, and “community”.

Local people particularly value and want to protect Thornhill's heritage and character, including the Cross, historic buildings, and tree-lined streets. People of all ages said they loved the surrounding countryside and woodland.

Community spirit and belonging, often nurtured through local volunteering and community venues, were important to people.

attractive
FRIENDLY
community quiet
RURAL

People also wanted to protect businesses, cafés, shops, the health centre, police presence, school, care home, library, and community events such as the Gala and Christmas Fair.

“I love the wide main street and the trees.”

“The Gala and Christmas shopping are lovely events for the community.”

“As relatively recent residents, we have been impressed by the friendly reception.”

Business owners described Thornhill as a vibrant village with loyal customers and strong passing trade. Parking and walkability were seen as key factors that support local businesses and strengthen community ties.

Children and Young People

Children and young people love Thornhill's parks, natural environment, and friendly community, but want better facilities: an **all-weather sports pitch**, a pump track (a purpose-built track for cycling and other activities on wheels), or a skate park, as well as upgrades to the playpark. A lower-cost suggestion for a skate park could be a skate space in which outdoor seating doubles up as skateboarding obstacles.

Young people asked for **more activities and events**, such as film nights and youth clubs.

Children and young people are keen to tackle **litter** and improve parking, and called for safer options for walking and cycling on the school run.

They also want to be **heard**, with more opportunities to shape decisions and contribute through volunteering.

TOP THREE ISSUES RAISED IN SURVEY



Parking



**Supporting
local businesses**



**All weather
sports pitch**

Community Spaces and Green Spaces

The **tree-lined streets**, historic buildings, and surrounding countryside are deeply valued. People want to preserve Thornhill's character and village feel.

However, people also want **better-maintained paths**, clearer signage, and more planting in the village. A potential opportunity exists for community ownership of part of the Common Belt.

Community spaces such as the Community Centre, the Friendship Club, and OST are valued, but some buildings require upgrades (for example, a lift in the Community Centre).

Concerns about **derelict buildings** on Drumlanrig Street were raised, alongside calls to improve the cleanliness of local streets and roads.

Transport and Moving Around

Parking was a key issue, with concerns about safety and illegal parking creating hazards. Hotspots include the Co-op, Drumlanrig Street, and the pharmacy. Residents suggested better enforcement, clearer signage, and potential use of the Community Centre car park.

“Awful parking in Thornhill. Reversing onto the main roads is dangerous. Access at New Street junction always blocked with cars parking too close to shops.” (community survey)

Meanwhile, businesses were wary of any changes that could mean losing parking spaces.

Drivers wanted **potholes** to be fixed. The road between Gatelawbridge and Thornhill (U479N) was highlighted as particularly in need of repair.

Pavements are uneven and too narrow, making access difficult for wheelchair users and parents with buggies. The school run on East Morton Street was a particular concern.

Cycling infrastructure is poor, leading many to be put off cycling. While the Penpont path has been a success, poor road surfaces and a lack of other separate paths make cycling elsewhere unsafe. Residents asked for more bike racks and speed reduction measures.

Overall, people were not satisfied with public transport, telling us buses were too expensive and infrequent, especially in the evenings and at weekends. Many wanted Thornhill's train station reopened to improve connectivity. In the shorter term, people wanted better connections between buses and the train station in Sanquhar.

The Local Economy and Key Amenities

Residents were proud of the **historic village centre** but want to see it flourish with more opportunities and amenities.

The closure of the **Post Office** and other services was seen as a loss. A new banking hub is welcome, but people want more shops, food options, and services.

Employment is limited locally, and poor transport makes commuting difficult. Despite the image some have of Thornhill as relatively affluent, poverty and inequalities persist.

“Very low opportunity for young generation to begin working career, very poor public transport links.”

Young people especially feel the lack of job opportunities. **Apprenticeships** are valued but limited by small business capacity. Residents suggested supporting **new enterprises**, using empty buildings, and promoting green tourism.

Thornhill’s **internet** speeds are now fast enough for many people to work from home, but this is not the case for residents in Gatelawbridge and remote areas within the parish.

Childcare was raised as a barrier to work, with calls for wraparound and holiday provision. Both parents and local businesses said they would benefit from expanded childcare options.

Housing and the Impact on Services

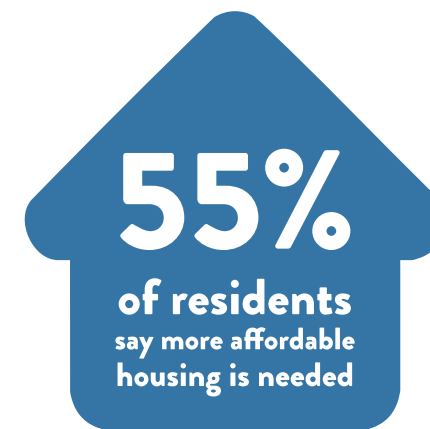
New housing provoked strong feelings, particularly around the Wheatley development, which was being considered at the time of developing the Thornhill Place Plan. People were concerned about GP and school

capacity, increased traffic, loss of green space, and a large increase in residents. While the application has been rejected, residents’ concerns highlight the importance of matching any housing growth with services and infrastructure.

There is strong support for **affordable housing**, especially for young families, older residents, and those with disabilities. Businesses told us that this is also crucial for retaining workers. Renting options are scarce, and many people know someone who has had to leave Thornhill due to a lack of suitable homes.

“People needing a bigger house, or retired living in tied cottages. Lack of renting options. With the Wheatley development, people aren’t against housing. They want housing to go to people with connections to the village.”
(community drop-in event)

Residents suggested **community-led housing**, reuse of derelict buildings, and small-scale developments close to the village centre. There was also a recognised need for **housing with care**.





Holiday lets divided opinion: some feared they reduced housing availability, while others thought the numbers were low and saw economic benefits. This needs further exploration.

Community Cohesion and Local Decision-Making

Thornhill was widely seen as **friendly and safe**, though some expressed concerns about drug use.

People wanted **more events** and activities in community spaces, including night classes, arts, and intergenerational projects. Better coordination between venues was suggested to maximise use, and some called for better communication of existing events and activities.

“Unless you know people, it’s hard to find out until it’s too late. I think it’s more word of mouth.”

Some older residents said they missed out when only online communication methods were used to advertise what is going on.

Community groups highlighted the need for help with **volunteer recruitment**, support for unconstituted groups, and funding advice.

People had mixed views on **influencing decisions**. Some felt able to contribute, while others did not feel involved or thought consultations were tokenistic. Children and young people especially want more of a say.

4. Actions

We have developed a range of practical, realistic actions to improve Thornhill and protect the things we all value. These were discussed and refined through the Action Planning Day and through feedback received online.

Some of the Actions are already underway, while others have not yet started. All were developed in response to community need.

All content in this report has been written with regard to key planning policies, including:

- The National Planning Framework
- The Local Development Plan (see Chapter 5, where we suggest updates for LDP3)

The Actions have been organised under five themes and are guided by our Vision.





OUR VISION FOR THORNHILL

In 10 years' time we want Thornhill to be ...

- a thriving and sustainable village that has retained its heritage
- a place where people of all ages feel safe and that they belong
- surrounded by natural spaces
- characterised by local independent shops, local services and facilities
- accessible and well served by public transport
- an attractive place for people to live and visit
- a community that values its youth and provides opportunities

THORNHILL PLACE PLAN'S STRATEGIC THEMES

1. A Village for All Generations

Thornhill should be a place where people of all ages feel valued, safe and included. We want better sports facilities, more youth activities, and opportunities for people to connect, learn, and contribute.

2. Protecting our Buildings and Natural Spaces

From our lime trees and historic buildings to the forests and green spaces that surround us, Thornhill's identity is worth protecting. We want to care for our environment, restore derelict buildings, and celebrate our heritage.

3. Connected and Accessible Thornhill

We want a village where everyone can move around safely and easily – whether by public transport, walking, wheeling, cycling or driving. This means tackling parking issues, improving pavements, and making active travel safe for people of all ages.

4. A Thriving Local Economy

We want to support local businesses, attract new enterprises, and create good jobs – especially for young people. That means better childcare, more apprenticeships, and making sure our shops and amenities meet community needs.

5. Homes and Services for All

Thornhill needs housing that works for its people – affordable, accessible, and in keeping with the village's scale. Any growth must be matched by investment in services like health, education, and care, so that no one is left behind.



KEY

Timescale	
*	Actionable immediately
**	Less than 3 years
***	Long term planning required

Costs	
£	Minimal cost
££	Medium cost, locally funded
£££	High cost, external funding required

Theme 1. A Village for All Generations		
Proposed Actions	Estimated Timescale / costs	Possible Partners (lead partner in bold)
1.1 Build an all-weather, multi-purpose sports facility (see map on p.35) Work with Wallace Hall to develop an all-weather, multi-purpose sports facility for Thornhill. This would become home to Morton Thistle Juniors football team, but would be usable for other purposes such as rugby, athletics, walking football and by other football teams in the DG3 area.	*** £££	Morton Thistle Juniors Wallace Hall D+G Council (Education Dept) Amey Thornhill Community Council Scottish Football Association Parent Council
1.2 Improve the playpark (see map on p.35) Raise funds to upgrade Thornhill's main playpark, fixing what is there and adding facilities that would make it more accessible and more suitable for older children and young people (e.g. a climbing wall, ground level trampolines, a sheltered seating area). Make sure that children, young people and parents are involved at every step of the development process.	*** £££	Thornhill Community Council OST Development Trust Dumfries and Galloway Council Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up) Wallace Hall Parent Council Thornhill Playgroup

1.3 Supporting increased culture, leisure and learning Expand opportunities for culture, leisure and learning provision by: • Supporting local people to run activities and classes in existing community venues • Supporting local venues to work together to develop and deliver a more comprehensive programme of safe and inclusive activities for local young people, based on what they want and need. This could include youth clubs, film screenings, for example.	** £	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council Thornhill Community Centre The Friendship Club Sports clubs and gyms
1.4 Intergenerational projects Building on existing initiatives, develop more safe and appropriate opportunities for different generations to work together on volunteer-led projects and activities which benefit the local community and foster community pride. See 2.3 as an example.	** £	OST Development Trust Wallace Hall Thornhill Community Council Thornhill Community Centre The Friendship Club
1.5 Supporting leisure events that bring people together Explore ways to bring the community together at events including: • Continuing to run and support Thornhill Gala which, as our largest annual event in Thornhill, is much valued by the community • Developing ideas for smaller events in summer including community barbeque or games of rounders	** ££	Thornhill Community Council Thornhill Gala Committee OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Centre The Friendship Club Sports clubs and gyms
1.6 Support a culture of volunteering by people of all ages Support voluntary groups that organise community activities to recruit and train volunteers by: • Creating a volunteering portal on Thornhill Community Council's website • Helping groups to access training and PVGs (Protecting Vulnerable Groups scheme) • Consider running a joint celebration of volunteering • Finding ways to improve and expand opportunities for young people to develop skills and experience through volunteering with local organisations	** £	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council Voluntary groups in Thornhill

1.7 Build pump track or skate park (see map on p.35) Further engage with local children and young people to agree whether a pump track or skate park is most wanted, identify land for its location and raise funds to build it. May require a new organisation to lead.	*** £££	Thornhill Community Council OST Development Trust Wallace Hall (if using part of grounds or nearby)
1.8 Maintain and expand sports facilities and activities for all ages Look into ways to improve access to sports facilities, including: • Investigating viability of reopening the unused tennis courts for use by young people and others in the community or redeveloping this area for a different purpose • Find ways to encourage new and younger members into existing sports clubs and facilities to ensure they remain viable	* £	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council D+G Council Sport and Leisure Sports clubs
1.9 Improved community safety Work with Police Scotland to address any concerns of community safety and maintain a good relationship between community organisations and local police officers.	* £	Thornhill Community Council Police Scotland Wallace Hall Academy
1.10 Creative project to increase community pride Bring groups and community members together to run a project which celebrates the Thornhill community. This might take the form of a photography or storytelling project.	* £	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council

Theme 2. Protecting our Buildings and Natural Spaces

Proposed Actions	Estimated Timescale / costs	Possible Partners (lead partner in bold)
2.1 Improve our community buildings (see map on p.35) Support local organisations to make improvements to their buildings, with a focus on accessibility and sustainability. This could include: • Helping organisations improve their access (e.g. Community Centre to raise funds for a lift) • Helping local organisations reduce carbon footprint and improve comfort with cost-efficient heating and lighting systems. • General renovations make community buildings and land around them appealing to all age groups e.g. with planting, benches, etc.	** ££	The Friendship Club Thornhill Community Centre Sports clubs Accessibility Working Group (when set up)
2.2 Develop a strategy to deal with derelict buildings Work with the Local Authority ³ and property owners to address the issue of derelict buildings in Thornhill and to create a local strategy to both improve their appearance, and to bring them back into productive use for the benefit of the local community. This strategy should consider community buy-out of derelict buildings.	** ££	Thornhill Community Council OST Development Trust
2.3 Combat littering Find ways for the local community to come together to clean up litter and prevent littering. This could include: • Supporting the on-going efforts of Thornhill Improvement Group to remove litter from our streets • A large annual or biannual litter pick involving Wallace Hall which would help remove litter but also discourage littering among children and young people	** £	Thornhill Improvement Group Wallace Hall OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council

³ Dumfries and Galloway Council's Vacant and Derelict Land Property Strategy may be useful: <https://www.dumfriesandgalloway.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-07/VDLVacant-and-Derelict-Land-Property-Strategy-March-2023-%28003%29.pdf>

2.4 Improve access to forests Develop a plan to improve access to forests around Thornhill through: • Better promotion of existing green space surrounding the village • Working with Buccleuch Estate on maintaining core paths and adding signs	** ££	Thornhill Community Council Buccleuch Estate
2.5 Community action to protect our lime trees Raise awareness of the risk to Thornhill's iconic lime trees from tarmac being used around them in some areas. Supporting a group to form to identify and mitigate against any risks to the trees and work collaboratively on solutions.	** ££	Thornhill Community Council Buccleuch Estate D+G Council Amey Local property owners
2.6 Assess whether to bring forests under community ownership In partnership with the local community and key partners, assess the benefits, risks and community appetite of bringing forested areas around Thornhill (currently owned by Buccleuch Estate) into community ownership.	** £	Thornhill Community Council OST Development Trust Buccleuch Estate

Theme 3. Connected and Accessible Thornhill

Proposed Actions	Estimated Timescale / costs	Possible Partners (lead partner in bold)
3.1 Active travel infrastructure improved (see map on p. 35) Enable people to walk, wheel (with a mobility scooter or wheelchair) and cycle by continuing to work on the recommendations from the Dauner Aboot Thornhill consultation report, and respond to any new evidence from the community. Key recommendations include: • Reducing traffic speed through measures such as speed indication device (but not additional speed bumps) • Improving pavements and adding dropped kerbs • Installing bike stand • Bring Penpont to Thornhill shared use path into the village	Depends on which subaction	Thornhill Active Travel Group OST Development Trust D&G Council Amey Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up)
3.2 Parking improved Continue to engage with the local community to develop and prioritise solutions which address Thornhill's parking issues to make it safer for all and so parking works for both people and local businesses. This could include: • Asking Police to run an enforcement campaign to reduce illegal parking and for on-going support with this issue • Asking Dumfries and Galloway Council to advise on improved parking choices • Campaign for parking bays to be repainted • A community-led campaign on parking • Assessing the benefits and risks of signage to encourage drivers to use the Community Centre car park	** £	Thornhill Active Travel Group OST Development Trust D&G Council Amey Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up)

3.3 Involving the community in any proposed changes Continue to engage with the local community, to make sure plans relating to active travel remain community-led. This should include developing a communication plan and running community discussions on key issues including how to make walking and cycling to the school safer (for example by developing a new road to connect the school to the A75 or creating a drop-off point on Drumlanrig Street)	* £	Thornhill Active Travel Group OST Development Trust Parent Council Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up)
3.4 Accessibility improved (see map on p.35) An Accessibility Working Group should be set up to take the lead on making Thornhill's pavements and buildings more accessible. This could include: • Requesting that Dumfries and Galloway Council undertake an Access Audit for the village to help create a plan (for example on pavements, paths, parking and transport, access to services and businesses) • Grassroots organising to work with residents and land-owners who own older sections of pavement to see whether they want help making them more accessible for wheelchair users • Adding more benches for those with mobility issues at locations suggested by the local community (for example, half-way up Boat Brae; between Gill Road Triangle and junction with Drumlanrig Street; and an additional bench on Drumlanrig Street).	** ££	Thornhill Community Council Thornhill Active Travel Group OST Development Trust Buccleuch Estate D&G Council Amey Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up)
3.5 Improve public transport Explore ways to improve public transport. This could include: • Supporting Thornhill Community Transport and making sure its services are widely known about and reflect community need • Lobbying to improve local bus transport including making sure journeys join up • Consider expanding community transport offer to include volunteers taking people to hospital appointments • In the longer term, reviving the campaign to re-open Thornhill Railway Station	Depends on which subaction	Thornhill Community Council OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Transport

Theme 4. A Thriving Local Economy

Proposed Actions	Estimated Timescale / costs	Possible Partners (lead partner in bold)
4.1 Enable small businesses to offer apprenticeships Find ways to better support small businesses to offer apprenticeships, e.g. awareness raising about financial incentives, better access to information and support with the paperwork.	** £	OST Development Trust D+G Council Employability Team South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) Business Gateway Skills Development Scotland (SDS) Total Access Point (TAP) Wallace Hall Academy
4.2 Setting up an industrial unit near Thornhill Set up an industrial estate near the village with high level of energy efficiency, adequate toilets, and enough units to meet demand.	** ££	Buccleuch Estate SOSE Economic Development, Dumfries and Galloway Council
4.3 Help local shops to thrive Find ways to encourage people to shop locally. This would include on-going support for our Christmas shopping event. It could also involve a campaign with local business owners to: • Encourage people living in and around Thornhill to shop local • Share information on local businesses with holiday lets so tourists are aware of all the shops and services in our village • Encourage all shops to bring in accessibility measures so that everyone can access local businesses	* £	Local businesses OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up)

4.4 Encourage and support new enterprises Support new businesses by: • Helping identify buildings that could be used as premises • Offering networking opportunities • Signposting to other types of support • Facilitate local businesses in eco-tourism development	* £	OST Development Trust South of Scotland Enterprise Business Gateway
4.5 Increase childcare provision Further investigate the feasibility (including cost, location and delivery models) of different community-led childcare options, including: • School aged, wrap-around childcare • A standalone after school club • Pre-school childcare • Childcare during the summer holidays	Depends on which subaction	Parent Council Existing local childcare providers OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council
4.6 Investigate options for full-time Post Office services Investigate the feasibility of developing a franchise Post Office or expanded Post Office services, either as part of an existing local business or as part of a community-run enterprise. ⁴	** ££	Community Council Local Councilors
4.7 Improve public toilet provision (see map on p.35) Improve access to public toilets in Thornhill. This could be done by either: • applying for funding from Scottish Government to improve the existing toilets • investigating the feasibility of developing a toilet block near the play park which would also include accessible or Changing Places facilities	* £	Community Council Accessibility Working Group (when set up) Dumfries and Galloway Council

⁴ See https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Setting-up-a-community-run-post-office_-what-you-need-to-know-1.pdf

Theme 5. Home and Services for All

Proposed Actions	Estimated Timescale / costs	Possible Partners (lead partner in bold)
5.1 Community-led approach to housing (see map on p.35) OST Development Trust to set up a Housing Strategy Group. The group would • Develop mixed-use community-led housing that would be prioritise people with local connections and key groups who struggle to obtain the right housing. The first likely site for this would be the in the former Police Station building. • Exploring housing with care options and the idea of developing a not-for-profit nursing home	*** £££	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council South of Scotland Community Housing HSC Partnership Accessibility Working Group (when it's set up)
5.2 Assessing impact of holiday lets Work to better understand the situation with holiday rentals in Thornhill and its impact on the local community, including learning what proportion of housing is holiday lets and second homes. If needed, find ways to mitigate any negative impacts.	* £	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council Scottish Community Tourism (SCOTO)
5.3 Engage to increase public services to match needs Engage with local public sector partners to ensure that local people have access to as many key public services as close to home as possible and that local services meet the needs of our growing community. Key concerns for community members include: • Access to GP and dental services • Social care, respite and intermediate care beds • Police presence • Library services • School capacity • Public transport Also maximise awareness of NHS and social care service reviews and consultations to ensure public engagement.	** £	OST Development Trust Thornhill Community Council NHS D+G Thornhill Medical Centre Health and Social Care Partnership Dumfries and Galloway Council Parent Council Wallace Hall Police Scotland



5. Asset Development Mapping

This chapter shows in map form the areas in Thornhill where people would like to see development take place and explains what they want to protect.

This is to inform Dumfries and Galloway Council's next Local Development Plan (LDP3), due to be published in 2026. It also shows in spatial terms where people would like to see grassroots community development discussed in the Actions in the previous chapter.

Housing

Housing is currently an important issue for people in Thornhill, following the recent application by Wheatley Housing Association to build 112 homes on the site near Thornhill Medical Centre. While this has been rejected, Dumfries and Galloway Council remain open to private developers building more homes, having announced a housing emergency last year. Many Thornhill residents also believe there is a need for housing (see Chapter 3).

During community engagement, people in Thornhill advocated for an **incremental** approach with smaller developments and repurposing unused buildings. People wanted good quality housing with adequate outdoor space. In contrast to some of the areas allocated for housing in LDP2 residents advocated sites that are an easier walk into the village centre and to Wallace Hall Academy to avoid adding to traffic and parking issues.

See map 2 overleaf for people's preferences for sites allocated for **small housing developments** identified during community engagement. Also see Action 5.1 in the previous chapter on taking a community-led approach to housing.

OST Development Trust is in the early stages of a feasibility study to redevelop Thornhill Police Station. The building is currently owned by Police Scotland but is expected to be declared surplus to requirements. OST plan would be community-led affordable housing with space downstairs possibly for wrap-around childcare and nursery provision. Office Space could also be offered to Police Scotland so that they can maintain a physical presence in the village.

Note that early in the community engagement, the field between Thornhill Community Centre and Coe Lane was also suggested as an ideal site for

small scale housing. We have since learned that there is Scottish Water infrastructure underneath this field which prevents building from taking place. It may be that the area to the north could be developed but this would need further exploration. Note that residents living close to the site at the south end of Drumlanrig Street expressed concerns about how an access road might be built entering this site as part of this road is sloping.

There is a very small plot next to the Community Centre which may be suitable for a few homes, and which has been labelled as a preferred site in Map 2 as 'Housing (small plot)'.

Amenity and Recreation Facility Development

Map 3 overleaf shows preferred sites for a range of potential developments. Facilities for children and young people is a major theme in this Place Plan so these are central to the suggested sites.

Morton Thistle Football club are in the early stages of developing an all-weather sports pitch. Wallace Hall have expressed that they are willing to collaborate and, along with other key partners, are now in early discussions with the football club. The site being discussed is on one of the existing Wallace Hall sports fields which suffers from poor drainage.

The rest of the features highlighted on map 3 are:

- Suggestions for locations for a pump track or skate park. These were suggestions made by young people at Wallace Hall Academy, community groups that work with young people or during the Action Planning Day.
- The main community venues are also marked up as there is an aspiration to make refurbishments.

Map 2 Preferred Sites for Housing Development



- Location of the derelict tennis courts that some would like to bring back into use or repurposing.
- Current public toilets which may be refurbished. The other preference was for new toilet facilities to be built within or close to the main playpark and Thornhill Community Centre but an exact location was not identified. Either way, people felt strongly that public toilet provision was important and needed for attracting visitors.
- Other key amenities are also included for context.

Active Travel

Map 4, on page 36 shows people's preferences for making walking safer and more accessible in key places in Thornhill, including East Morton Street – where the children, young people and parents reported the school run was unsafe – and Drumlanrig Street. Two proposals that applied to Drumlanrig Street but not a specific site were: fixing the pavement so it is more accessible; and an additional bench to be added somewhere on this street.

Bike racks were also requested outside the Community Centre; on Drumlanrig Street; and by Thornhill Medical Centre.

Note that at the time of writing, Dumfries and Galloway Council is considering an application by KPT Development Trust to turn Boat Brae into a walking and cycling path, to bring the current path into the village. However, Thornhill Place Plan cannot influence on-going planning applications.



Map 3 Development of current or new recreation sites



Map 4 Active Travel Development



Economic development

The main shopping area in Thornhill runs along the central part of Drumlanrig Street plus a short section of East Morton Street. This has been presented on map 5 overleaf.

People were satisfied that shops were in easy reach of one another and there was no call to develop a new shopping area. Our map of Thornhill's commercial centre is very similar to that in LDP2 - the only difference is that this one makes it clearer that the commercial premises in East Morton Street are included. A new Post Office (action 4.6) should ideally be located in this area as the current location of the pop-up service is not accessible for some residents.

The other feature on this map is a cluster of farm buildings to the north of Thornhill, Langmyre Mains, which Buccleuch Estate is currently developing into a commercial unit (action 4.2). The need for a commercial unit close to Thornhill was identified early on in the engagement. Through discussion with Buccleuch Estate, we learned that fortunately they were already in the early stages of redeveloping this property for this purpose.

Green spaces

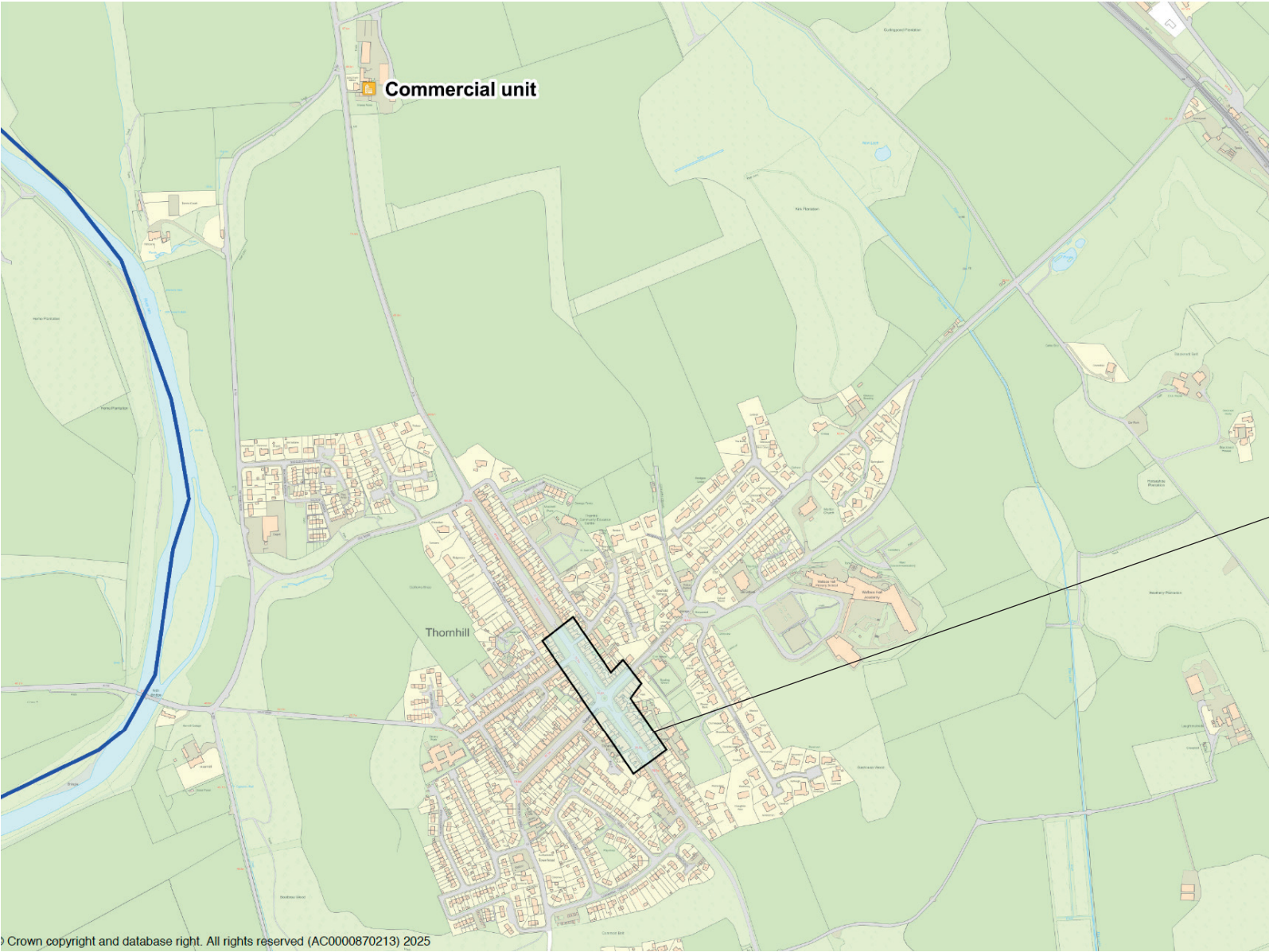
People in Thornhill appreciate our surrounding countryside and forest. Because people were satisfied overall with access to green space, we gave priority to other issues during the mapping exercises towards the end of community engagement. However, engagement at this stage did raise some points that are relevant to Local Development Plan 3.

One proposal we asked people to consider, both in the publicly shared Initial Report and during our Action Planning Day, was:

'Forested areas are valued highly but not fully protected. In the last Local Development Plan some of the forest surrounding Thornhill was zoned as 'Protected Area of Open Space' but not all. Zoning of natural areas should be expanded in Thornhill Place Plan and in the next Local Development Plan. Local groups should use their voices to object when natural space is threatened.'

Six people actively endorsed this proposal and no-one objected, showing some support for this measure. One person pointed out the importance in particular of the shelter belt surrounding the west side of Thornhill, known by many locally as the Common Belt. Further consultation work would be needed to establish exactly which areas of forest should be protected.

Map 5 Economic Development





6. Implementation of Thornhill Place Plan

The Actions and proposals for development in this Place Plan reflect real needs in Thornhill that people told us about during the engagement. However, these changes will only come about through a concerted effort from different parts of the community.

We have also identified ways of working that we believe will help bring about these actions, which we have described as ‘enablers’. These will help create the right environment for grassroots action.

Enabler 1. More participation in local decision-making

Groups with a role in local planning and decision-making in Thornhill should try to bring about more participation in local decision-making by:

- Finding ways to reach, involve, and welcome individuals and groups who participate less, and are less commonly heard
- Sharing information about how to get in touch with MPs, MSPs, and councillors, and meetings arranged twice yearly with local councillors
- Sharing information about, and supporting, local people to get involved in consultations when they arise
- Key local partners (including Wallace Hall, Parent Council, and OST Development Trust) should work together to ensure that children and young people can have more of a voice in local decision-making

We acknowledge that this can be challenging work. But we hope that in the long term, involving a wider range of people will pay off. Having larger and more diverse membership on boards and on the Community Council will help keep these organisations going; bring new energy and ideas; and make sure they represent a wide range of members of the community.

Enabler 2. Sharing information

Improve sharing of information to enable people to get involved in their community. This should include:

- Thornhill Community Council and OST annually reviewing their communication plans, with different online and offline methods to reach all age groups

Enabler 3. Collaboration rather than competition

Different organisations, businesses and individuals should work together to make the most of what we have in Thornhill. This should include:

- Our three mixed-use community venues (Community Centre, OST and Friendship Club) should meet annually, but open dialogue between these and venues such as the Bowling Club and Library are also encouraged
- Develop regular opportunities for community venues to meet about use of community space, sharing information, and joint programming where appropriate, to make sure they are not in competition
- Where there is a local need, seeing if existing local businesses or organisations want to have a role in addressing it before setting up new ventures
- Maintaining good relationships between local organisations and landowners (including Buccleuch Estate) and all statutory organisations

Enabler 4. Getting funding to the organisations that need it

For community organisations, funding is a perennial issue – both to start up new projects or facilities (e.g. Morton Thistle’s proposed all-weather pitch) but also just to keep the groups we value (e.g. Thornhill Playgroup, Thornhill Community Transport) running. Organisations should be helped with this by:

- Transparent information available on all forms of windfarm funding available to organisations and individuals in Thornhill
- Support offered to find other sources of funding where windfarm



money is not appropriate or does not cover costs (including making the most of regional services such as Third Sector D+G and Dumfries and Galloway Council)

- Responding quickly to short-term funding opportunities as they arise: the Place Plan should help local organisations be responsive to new funding sources, as it shows evidence of need across a range of issues that do not have full funding available now but may do in future

Next Steps and Review

Different organisations will take forward the different Actions in the Thornhill Place Plan. As lead partners in developing this Place Plan, Thornhill Community Council and OST Development Trust will have a particular role in supporting the Actions (particularly those which do not currently have a lead) and reviewing the overall Place Plan.

This will involve:

- An initial meeting between OST Development Trust, Thornhill Community Council, a staff member from Dumfries and Galloway Council Place Plan Team, other local groups, and members of the public to agree on Short Life Working Groups for key Actions
- Each Working Group will develop its own measures of success, timeframe, and (where required) potential sources of funding
- Annual review by Thornhill Community Council, OST Development Trust, and interested groups and members of the public.



A Plan for Everyone

We hope that this vision of this Local Place Plan speaks to people in Thornhill and that you will want to be a part of bringing it to life.

Everyone in Thornhill is invited to use this Place Plan in whatever way would be useful to you. Our hope is that it will provide evidence of need so that any groups or individuals who are thinking about setting up a new initiative have an idea of what people's priorities are for the village. The Thornhill Place Plan can provide evidence for funding applications and point out potential partners for collaboration.

If you need support or have any questions about the Thornhill Place Plan, you can get in touch in these ways:

- Emailing Thornhillcc@outlook.com or hello@oldschoolthornhill.com
- Writing to Thornhill Community Council, Old School Thornhill, Station Road, Thornhill, DG3 5DF

Appendix 1 Summary of Place Standard Tool Responses and Other Priority Issues

The Place Standard Tool⁵ was used to explore local people's views of different aspects of life in Thornhill. The tool helps to gather views about a range of physical and social elements of a place. Organisations developing Local Place Plans across Dumfries and Galloway have been asked by Dumfries and Galloway Council to use this tool so that there is comparable data across communities. Children and young people were asked to take part using an adapted version of the tool.

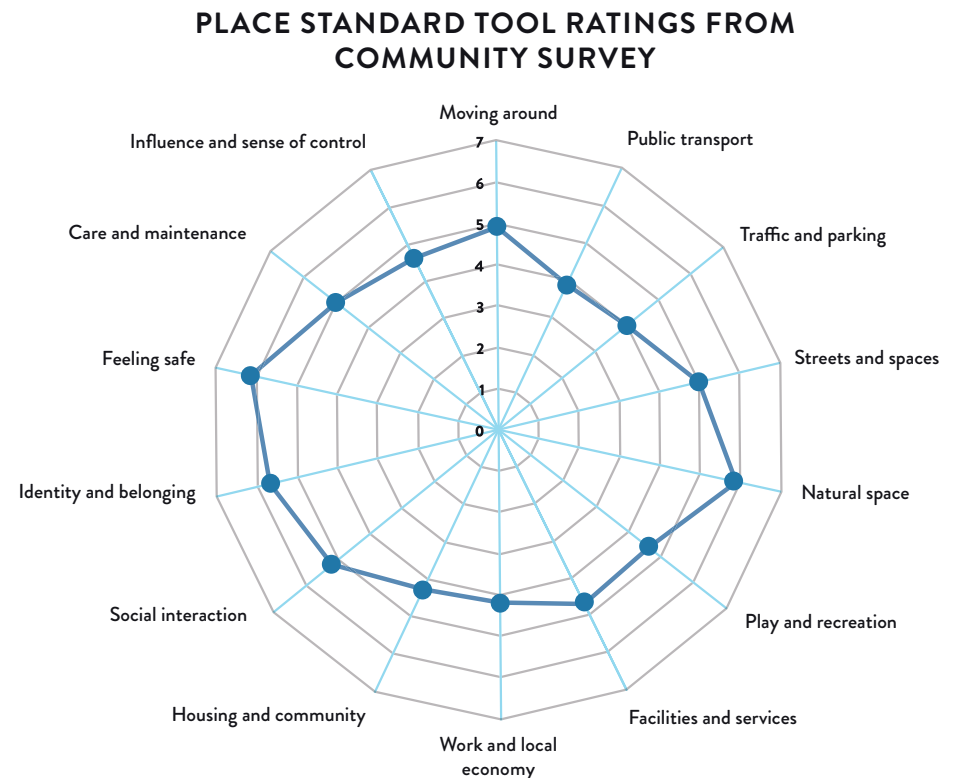
⁵ <https://scotlandstowns.org/place-standard-tool/>

The Place Standard Tool shows that people responding to the Community Survey were most satisfied with:

- Feeling safe
- Identity and belonging
- Natural space

People in the community survey were least satisfied with:

- Public transport
- Traffic and parking
- Work and local economy



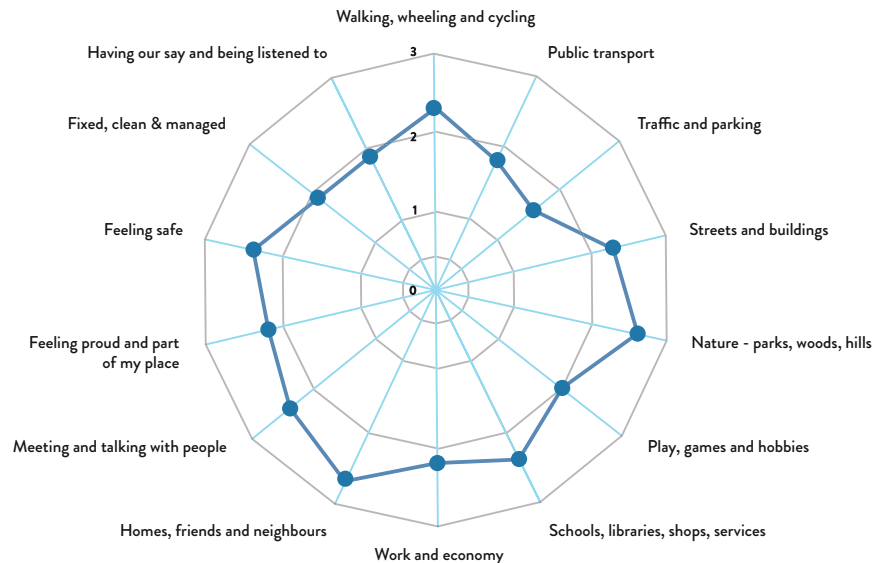
Using the adapted version of the Place Standard Tool, children and young people told us they were most satisfied with:

- Homes, friends and neighbours
- Nature – parks, woods, hills
- Feeling safe (joint 3rd)
- Meeting and talking with people (joint 3rd)
- Schools, libraries, shops, services (joint 3rd)

For children and young people, the issues they were least satisfied with were:

- Traffic and parking
- Public transport
- Fixed, clean & managed (joint 3rd)
- Having our say and being listened to (joint 3rd)

PLACE STANDARD TOOL RATINGS FROM CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SURVEY



The issues which were most frequently mentioned in the survey when people were invited to answer in their own words were (in order):

- Parking
- Supporting local businesses
- All weather sports pitch
- Improvements to playparks and activities for children and young people
- Condition of pavements
- Affordable housing
- Concerns about proposed housing development
- Public transport
- Improved banking / Post Office service
- Safe travel to school
- Walking and cycling infrastructure

All of these issues have been included in Chapter 3 in a more readable style but are shared here for transparency. What people told us through other aspects of the engagement has also informed the priorities in this report. For further details of these please see Initial Report for Thornhill Place Plan, which can be found on [OST's website](#).





Photography by Laura Sparrow | Design by Jamie Stryker