Kildrummy, Lumsden & Towie Community Action Plan June 2013

Introduction

Community Action Plan

The Past



Lumsden Main Street.



River Don



Kildrummy turbines.

The rural communities of Kildrummy, Towie and Lumsden are part of the scenic area of Upper Donside in the Marr Area of Aberdeenshire, bordering on the Cairngorms National Park to the west, with the River Don winding its way through. The three parishes extend over an area of more than 66 square miles and are sparely populated with the biggest centre being Lumsden village with a population of 344 (2009 estimate). The larger centres that these communities relate to for services and retail are Alford, seven miles to the east and Huntly, ten miles to the north, and further afield to Inverurie, Westhill and Aberdeen. The economy of the area is predominantly land based, orientated around the estates, although tourism is also of importance with the area having Kildrummy Castle, a fine example of a 13th century castle and other attractions. Some residents commute out with the area for work.

The rationale for considering the three communities together for the purpose of a community action plan is twofold. Firstly; a key motivating factor for preparing an action plan was the construction of the Kildrummy wind farm and the prospect of community benefit funding from the developer which will be distributed to all three of these communities. The wind farm developer financially supported the creation of the action plan on the basis that it would help to inform the subsequent distribution of the fund. Secondly; although the communities are distinct, they do share a range of facilities and services.

The aim of this community action plan is to encourage and enable the economic, social and environmental development of Kildrummy, Lumsden and Towie, to support sustainability and help them continue to develop. The focus of this community action plan, and the issues identified in it, are broader than those that may be supported with the community benefit fund. The benefits of preparing a community action plan are:

- to enable people to say what they want for their communities - now and in the future
- to encourage people to think about what they value and want to protect
- to publicise and seek support for local groups and projects
- to evidence community needs to generate support from agencies and funding bodies
- to prepare a plan for short, medium and long-term needs and aspirations
- to provide a focus and a framework to encourage people to work together to contribute to the development of their communities -TO MAKETHINGS HAPPEN!

The Past

Lumsden is the most recently established of the three communities, being founded around 1825 by Harry Leith Lumsden of Auchindoir on what was then a barren moor. By 1840 the population was 243 and by 1881 had reached 519. This contrasts with the population of the whole parish of Auchindoir and Kearn for that period of over 1,500. The 2009 population of the village (344) reflects a decline to levels seen before 1861. The current population of the whole parish is estimated to be around 600.

Kildrummy and Towie are now referred to as small hamlets, although they were previously much more populous, especially in the 19th century. The population census of 1911 identified that the two parishes, in the whole of the county of Aberdeen, with the greatest decrease in population over the preceding decade were Towie and Kildrummy (22.6% and 20.7% respectively) at a time when the overall numbers in the county were rising. Again, between 1921 and 1931 Kildrummy recorded the greatest decrease in the county with a further reduction of 20.4%. Kildrummy School in 1881 had an average attendance of 98 children and served a population in the parish of 656. Kildrummy at that time also had a bank, an inn, two churches and a post office at Mossat. The school closed in 2003. The current population of Kildrummy parish is around 170. Towie Church was built in 1803, using stones from an older

church building positioned close by. Towie, in the late 19th century, had two churches and a post office and a school with an average attendance of 84, serving a population of around 800. Biannual fairs were held at the Glenkindie Arms Inn. The church is one of a group of buildings, including until recently, the ruin of Towie Castle, built in the early seventeenth century, the only trace of which is a cairn on the spot and a plaque on the churchyard wall. The current population of Towie parish is around 300.

In earlier times this area was central to the history and politics of Scotland. Kildrummy Castle, built in the 13th century, was a seat of the kings of Scotland, and in 1306 was besieged and captured by Edward I of England. Early in the 14th century it passed to the Lords Erskine, Earls of Mar; served then as the administrative capital of both Mar and Garioch districts; but suffered decline and much damage during Cromwell's wars in the 17th century. A hatching-place of the rebellion of 1715, it was forfeited by John, Earl of Mar in the following year, and from 1731 belonged to the Gordons of Wardhouse. It is now managed by Historic Scotland and is a significant tourist destination.

Community Action Plan



Kildrummy Kirk.



Kildrummy Castle



Towie Kirk.





Glenkindie Garage and Shop.



Kildrummy Inn.

The Present

Lumsden has a primary school, a village hall, a church, a garage and shop, a hairdressers and a pub. Clova and Kildrummy Estates are significant local landowners. Lumsden is the location of the Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW), established in 1979 with the aim of providing high quality facilities for artists to make sculpture, supported by technical and artistic expertise. SSW has hosted residencies for visual artists from all over the world but is also an important resource for the local community and runs community based arts projects involving the school and other residents.

Towie has a primary and a nursery school plus the church and a village hall. Kildrummy has an inn with rooms and a restaurant, and the Kildrummy Castle Hotel. It also has an old kirk in the ownership of the Scottish Redundant Churches Trust and managed by a local group. Mossat has an antique shop, garden centre, tea rooms and a fishery. Glenkindie has a pub and a garage, with a shop and Post Office. The estimated population of all three parishes combined is now 1070.

Results from the survey, carried out as part of the community action planning process, show that local people value greatly the beautiful countryside, peace and quiet and friendliness of the area in which they live. The communities also greatly value the safety and local schools and think that it's a great place to bring up children. The communities are active and there are many community groups, some of which are listed below, based in the area and run by local volunteers. These provide activities, social networks and support and are valued by those who use them. Other community groups based in neighbouring areas, such as the Silver Circle in Strathdon, and scouts, guides etc in Alford, also contribute activities and support for local people.

Community Groups based in Lumsden, Kildrummy and Towie include;

- Lumsden School Parent Council/ Friends of Lumsden School
- Lumsden Church
- Lumsden Quest (Children's) Group
- · Lumsden Parent and Toddlers
- Lumsden Indoor Bowling Club
- Lumsden Loons and Quines Bowling
- Lumsden Community Association
- Lumsden Over Fifties
- Lumsden Senior Citizens
- Kildrummy Church
- · Kildrummy WRI
- Glenkindie Bridge Club
- Kildrummy Gun Club
- Towie Hall Committee
- Towie Toddler Group
- Towie Indoor Bowling
- Towie Outdoor Bowling
- Towie Senior Citizens
- Towie School Parent Council
- Towie Pipe Band
- Towie Church

However, there are some major challenges. From having a relatively heavily populated land based economy in the nineteenth century, the changes to agriculture and estate management over the last century have significantly reduced the size and changed the character of these communities. This has lead to some significant impacts:

- Local services have contracted to the extent that people are more dependent on facilities out with the immediate area
- Other industries and local employment opportunities have not materialised, more people commute to work in other areas, young people leave the area to find work and levels of unemployment are high
- Some community groups struggle to maintain their viability and sufficient numbers of active volunteers to help organise them
- The primary schools at both Towie and Lumsden are well below total capacity.

The Action Planning Process

The communities' interest in developing a community action plan was generated as a result of the wind farm developer, BayWa r.e. UK (formerly RENERCO), identifying at a community liaison meeting that they were offering community benefit funding for the three areas directly affected by the development. Marr Area Partnership offered to work with the communities to develop their action plan, with the leadership and support of the Donside Community Council, who also agreed to chair the Steering Group.

The Steering Group first met in July 2012. It was facilitated by Marr Area Partnership and comprised members of Donside Community Council and other volunteers from the community, including both primary school parent councils. It was open to anyone prepared to contribute to the process. The Scottish Sculpture Workshop hosted meetings and provided other support. Aberdeenshire Council's Community Learning and Development staff provided support for youth engagement.

The Steering Group's role was to encourage and enable the involvement of local people to ensure that their needs and aspirations would be reflected in the action plan. To do this the Steering Group:

- Designed a questionnaire and delivered it to all households in the area in October 2012, also made it available in local facilities such as shops and schools, as well as an online version
- Publicised the process in order to encourage people to respond, then analysed the survey results (57 responses received)
- Attended both primary schools to seek the views of the children on what they wanted for the future of their communities
- Arranged a social event for young people (teenagers) to obtain their input and ideas

- Organised a community open day in November 2012 to feedback on the information gathered, seek ideas for community projects and enable more input (40 attended)
- prepared an outline of the themes, issues and potential areas for action
- in February 2013 for local group representatives and others interested in supporting the action planning process in order to develop further the outline actions and promote involvement in their implementation (37 attended)
- circulated it to all those who had expressed interest, gathered comments, and finalised the draft. Presented the draft plan to the **Donside Community Council**
- on 11th June 2013 where it was approved. A formal launch event is to be arranged.

Community Action Plan

Collated all of the information and Facilitated a stakeholders meeting Developed the draft action plan,



Open Day Poster.



Stakeholders meeting



Lumsden Village Hall.

Areas for Action





Lumsden Shop



Towie Hall

Areas for Action

The actions proposed by the communities have been grouped into themes and are summarised in the table at the end of this plan. The most significant of these, and those for which potential solutions are achievable, are described in more detail below. These reflect the current situation when the action plan was developed, but will be supplemented by further actions as these are identified over time. Community action planning is a dynamic and progressive process that will reflect the priorities of the communities as they evolve. It is also dependent on the involvement and energy of the community to enable actions to be achieved.

Theme I - Community Services and Facilities

A number of people said that Lumsden Hall could be better used and they would like to see more activities and events to bring people together eg. mobile cinema, reading groups, music clubs, Pilates classes, social activities for older residents . Some comments were received that a community worker or hall manager could be employed to help address these concerns and work alongside the existing groups. At the stakeholders meeting in February 2013 a small group of volunteers agreed to help organise an Open Day in Lumsden to gauge interest in organising events, and also to garner more support for Lumsden Community Association (LCA) which manages the Hall on behalf of the community. Towie Hall is also used by community groups and is a valued asset (some need for additional maintenance work was noted).

Closure of the Lumsden shop is a real concern and many are keen to see it reopen, either as a shop or other community facility. More generally, concern was expressed about the viability of other shops, garages and hotels in the three areas and the impact of future closures on the sustainability of the communities. It is appreciated that support for, and use of these facilities is critical to

their survival and any closures impact on the community as a whole. The potential for community ownership was suggested by some respondents. While this has been done in other communities in Scotland, it would be a major project, requiring dedicated and committed local effort. Support for such community initiatives is readily available from Marr Area Partnership and Aberdeenshire Council economic development advisers.

Some people identified the need to set up a local food project or community garden growing facility eg. with communal polytunnel.

Other concerns expressed, and to be addressed by Donside Community Council with Aberdeenshire Council officers include; improvements to waste recycling, maintenance of public toilets and lack of snow clearance of pavements due to parked cars.

Quick Wins

At stakeholders meeting volunteers agreed to organise Open Day in Lumsden Hall to explore interest in putting on local events, also to expand membership of LCA

Short Term

- Improve collection and situation of recycling bins
- Address public toilet maintenance concerns
- Address car parking issues on the main road in Lumsden

Medium Term

- Potential for employing a community worker to support community development
- Potential for employing a hall caretaker in Lumsden
- Explore potential for community involvement in running local facilities eg. shop, café or pub.

Theme 2 - Adult Learning, **Employment and Training**

When asked whether adult learning in the area could be improved, a number of people raised the need for local adult education classes, eg. computer skills for older residents.

Lack of local employment opportunities, the need to support small business start-ups, to provide local training schemes/apprenticeships and the need for small business units locally, were raised frequently. Addressing this would enhance job opportunities for local people, more people would move to the area and the availability of local services would increase. This issue could be addressed by working with estates and other local employers with support from economic development agencies. There are also clear links with promoting tourism in the area (see Theme 3).

Short Term

- Explore demand for adult learning classes eg, computer training
- Identify sources of advice and support in relation to creating local employment, training and supporting local business start ups and publicise. Engage with local estates and other employers (Volunteers needed to work with support agencies) Medium Term
- Explore solutions to enable people to access adult learning classes.

Theme 3 - Tourism

Although tourism is less developed than in the National Park and in Deeside, the potential for promoting the attractions of Donside is considerable and if successful would have a positive impact on local communities in terms of providing local jobs and income. It was suggested that the profile of the area as a tourist destination could be raised and existing tourist attractions could be promoted more actively and successfully if information was collated, coordinated and advertised better eg. on a web site or social media site. This would require tourism businesses to liaise and combine their effort. Although this project would require time and effort, it would have the potential to make significant improvements to the long term sustainability of these communities. Other suggestions for increasing levels of tourism to the area

include longer opening hours in pubs/ shops/hotels, better maintained toilets, marketing local produce, improving signage/access to walking and cycling paths and linking with Gordon Way, extending and improving the Sculpture Walk (both of which relate to Theme four), tourism information point, linking with other local tourist destinations (eg. Deeside), more B&B provision and promoting 'service with a smile'.

Short Term

- Bring together tourism businesses to form local tourism group (A local lead would need to be identified to take this forward) with the support Development
- Gather information on all tourist attractions and opportunities and publicise/promote
- Medium Term
- Develop tourism marketing strategy.

Theme 4 - Access and Environment

A number of people commented that access to the wonderful countryside in the area could be improved by better way marking and access features eg, stiles. There were also requests for improving/developing footpaths and cycle paths and in particular, the need to have footpaths and cycle paths linking villages so that young people can walk and cycle safely. Specific mention was made of developing path networks around Glenkindie and Towie and linking paths to Glenbuchat, as well as links from Lumsden to the Gordon Way. The potential was identified for further development of the Sculpture Walk in Lumsden. Improvements to paths and cycle tracks were also seen as a possible benefit in relation to attracting tourists and linking communities. A group of volunteers came forward at the stakeholders meeting to discuss paths and cycle tracks. They agreed to meet with the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) to explore opportunities for improvements and this is now ongoing

Community Action Plan

of Aberdeenshire Council Economic

Create a tourism information point



Kildrummy Castle poster.



Sculpture



View from Lumsden.

Areas for Action

Areas for Action



Sculpture Walk sign



Lumsden Playpark.



Towie School Playground.

Mention was also made of the desire to have a village green in Glenkindie village to act as a focal point and allow young people to hangout and older residents to socialise. The general environment was seen to be good in the villages but some comments were received about the need to smarten up Lumsden village with a lick of paint here or there and flower tubs and to tidy up litter.

Quick Wins

 At stakeholders meeting volunteers agreed to form a paths steering group and to work with COAT and take plans forward

Short Term

- Explore reinstating flower tubs/ baskets in Lumsden
- Organise litter pick in Lumsden Medium Term
- Develop signage for existing paths and publicise. Explore possibility of developing new paths.

Theme 5 - Children and Young People

There is a strong perception from both adults and the teenagers consulted that there are not many activities for that age group in the local villages and that a youth club in Lumsden would be welcomed. A steering group was established at the stakeholders meeting with the support of Alford Community Learning and Development (CLD) and planning to set up a youth club in Lumsden is under way. The newly formed Lumsden Youth Group are also looking at ways of enabling young people of Towie to be included in the youth club.

Younger primary aged children were also consulted on their views and came up with a number of different suggestions including in Lumsden more play equipment and better goal posts in park, cycle track, and youth club, and in Towie - an adventure playground, community tree house, BMX track, and bigger wildlife garden. A prioritisation exercise could be carried out at the two primary schools to establish where effort should be concentrated on improving local facilities for younger children.

Comments were also received about the lack of local pre-school places/ activities and the need for additional extracurricular activities for youngsters eg. after school clubs, sports clubs cubs.

Quick Wins

 At stakeholders meeting volunteers agreed to form a youth club steering group with the support of CLD

Short Term

- Identify priorities for additional youth facilities in villages
- Identify need for local pre-school places and after school activities.

Theme 6 - Communication

The lack of broadband, or very slow speeds experienced, is seen by many as a major limitation to the ongoing development of the area. 66% of those who responded to the survey thought their broadband speed was unsatisfactory. Improvements would help in relation to attracting businesses to the area, allowing people to work from home, as well as improving quality of life generally. Mobile phone signals were also a problem with 35% finding the signal unsatisfactory and some commented that TV (and radio) reception was poor requiring the need to pay a subscription charge in order to get a signal at all.

Information was available about the aim of Aberdeenshire Council to facilitate basic access to broadband for everyone in Aberdeenshire. The needs of people in Kildrummy, Lumsden and Towie require to be highlighted to the Council.

There were some comments about the need to improve communication about the area. This would allow sharing of local information, encourage better attendance of events and generally foster improved community links. For example, village noticeboards could be improved (Lumsden) and new ones installed (Towie and Kildrummy), newsletters could be produced and possibly a community web site could be developed. A number of people thought that better communication eg. web site or social media would also be a good vehicle for local businesses/services and would attract more tourists to the area (see Theme 3 above).

Short Term

- Collate information on existing broadband access and liaise with Council officers (volunteer needed to take this forward)
- Local Donside Community Council representatives to collate information about notice boards (location, state of repair, ownership)
- Work with tourism group to pull together information on all local communications eg, web sites, newsletter, social media, in order to assess need for more or build links between existing sources (volunteer needed to take this forward) Medium Term
- Lobby Aberdeenshire Council about need to prioritise the area in relation to broadband upgrade.

Theme 7 - Transport

When asked whether public transport services were adequate, 83% of those responding to the survey said no. There were varied comments about what people wanted but they largely focussed on the limited bus service and poor/infrequent links to centres such as Alford, Huntly and Aberdeen. People also commented on the increasing costs of fuel and the impact of this on rural communities.

There is a particular impact for older people and those with no cars.

Short Term

- Raise issues with Aberdeenshire Bus Forum
- Publicise local services eg.A-2-B and Dial a Bus
- Explore car sharing scheme Medium Term
- Gauge interest in setting up a volunteer transport group

Theme 8 - Housing

Concern was expressed that one of the reasons for young people leaving the area, and the ability to attract people to

the area, in addition to the availability of jobs was the lack of affordable housing. This was also compounded by the number of empty properties for sale. It is proposed that an assessment of need should be undertaken.

Outcomes to Date

One of the most important outcomes from the community consultation was confirmation of the fact that many residents care deeply about the communities in which they live and would like to see things improve and become more sustainable for the future. They really value the peace and quiet, beautiful surroundings and friendliness of their neighbours. As a result of the community action planning process, a number of significant developments have already been started:

- Young people and adults have formed a steering group to plan a youth club in Lumsden based at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop
- A paths steering group has met with Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust to assess potential for
- Interest has been expressed by a number of people in supporting the Lumsden Community Association and the Lumsden Village Hall

The Kildrummy Lumsden and Towie Community Fund Panel ("the Local Panel") has been elected from local people and will take decisions on the distribution of funds, some of which will help to develop aspirations outlined in this action plan. This funding will be extremely significant and could help projects to attract additional funding.

The Local Panel is supported and administered by Foundation Scotland, a charitable organisation commissioned by BayWa r.e. UK Ltd, the owner of the Kildrummy Wind Farm who are providing the community benefit fund.

Community Action Plan

development of paths in the area



Road signs at Mossat



Scottish Sculpture Workshop.



View from Towie

Action Plan Summary

Theme	Issues	Community Lead/ Agency Support	Short Term Actions	Medium Term Actions
 Community Services and Facilities 	Lumsden Hall not used to full potential. Need volunteers for hall committee.	Lumsden Community Ass. (LCA)/Marr Area Partnership (MAP)	Seek support for and expand membership of LCA	Explore need and potential employing community development worler or hall manager
	Activities and events: Not enough going on locally, need more things to bring community together	LCA/MAP	Encourage local groups to develop activities and events	Explore need and potential for employing community development worker or hall manager
	Build on Scottish Sculpture Workshop (SSW) support for community projects	SSW/MAP	Identify potential community arts and growing projects	Obtain funding for projects
	Closure of Lumsden shop and potential loss of shops, hotels, garages and services	Local volunteers /Aberdeenshire Council (AC),MAP	Identify potential courses of action and community lead	Explore potential for community involvement
	Waste recycling: most only in Lumsden and Alford; Lumsden bins often full.	Donside Community Council (DCC)/ AC	Discuss with AC about improving service and siting recycling bins	
	State of public toilets in Lumsden	DCC/AC	Discuss maintenance problems with AC	
	Lumsden pavements often not cleared of snow due to cars parked on pavements	DCC/AC /Grampian Police	Discuss with AC and Police about parking regime in village	
Adult Learning, Employment and Training	Adult education classes: None available locally	Local volunteers/Community Learning and Development (CLD)	Explore demand for classes eg, computer training	Explore solutions to enable people to access classes
	Lack of employment opportunities locally. Need for more small business units locally.	Local volunteers/AC Economic Development	Identify sources of advice and support and publicise. Engage with local estates and other employers	Explore options for supporting local business start-up and employment/ employability skiils
3. Tourism	Promote tourism: Raise profile of the area as a tourist destination	Local volunteers/AC Economic Development	Bring together tourism businesses to form local tourism group Gather information on all tourist attractions and opportunities and publicise	Develop marketing strategy to promote tourism in the area
4. Access and Environment	Improve/develop footpaths and cycle paths and access to countryside:	Paths steering group/Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT)	Set up working group, collate information about existing paths. Identify sources of support.	Develop signage for existing paths. Publicise. Explore possibility of developing new paths.
	Lumsden village could be made to look more attractive	LCA/DCC/AC	Explore reinstating flower tubs and baskets	
	Lumsden untidy with litter	School Parent Council/Keep Scotland Beautiful	Organise litter pick	
5. Children and Young People	Pre-school: No nursery in Lumsden, limited pre-school activities,	Local volunteers/AC	Identify need for nursery places and pre-school	Explore alternative provision for pre- school activities
	Support local schools - inc extra- curricular activities for children eg. sports	School Parent Councils	ldentify needs	Arrange funding and organise

5. Children and Young People (Cont)	Younger children want additional	School Parent Councils/AC	Identify priorities	Plan and fundraise to achieve priorities
	Youth club and other activities for teenagers:	Youth club steering group/CLD	Set up Lumsden youth club at Scottish Sculpture Workshop	Enable young people from Towie to be involved in the youth club
6. Communication	Broadband: Low speed in villages and no access in some outlying areas	DCC/Community Planning Officer:AC	Obtain existing information on coverage/speeds	Lobby Aberdeenshire Council to prioritise area for broadband upgrades
	Notice boards: Problems with notice boards limit effective communication	DCC/AC	Assess location, state of repair and ownership of all notice boards in communities	Research costs of repair or replacements and install in all communities.
	Newsletter/ Website/ Facebook: Improved sharing of local information, for groups, activities, businesses and tourism.	Local volunteers	Identify community volunteers to co-ordinate Identify all existing newsletters, web sites and social media sites	Assess need for additional newsletter/ web sites/social media or build links between existing sources;
7. Transport	Integrated public transport needed eg. more frequent buses; buses at weekend;	DCC	Raise issues with Aberdeenshire Bus Forum. Publicise local services eg.A-2-B Dial a Bus	
	Older people or those with no cars find it difficult to go shopping	Local volunteers	Explore car share scheme, hosted on community web site	Gauge interest in setting up volunteer transport group.
8. Housing	Lack of affordable housing for young people: significant number of empty properties for sale.	Aberdeenshire Council Housing Dept., Rural Housing Service	ldentify need	

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NB. It should be noted that these were the actions identified from the action planning process, and that priorities will change over time; also as short term actions are achieved and the plan is reviewed.
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Partners who may help to deliver the above:

Donside Community Council Scottish Sculpture Workshop Aberdeenshire Council Services Other Community Planning Partners Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust Marr Area Partnership Estates and Other Businesses This booklet is one of a series produced by Local Rural Partnerships for a number of communities in Aberdeenshire.

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

This information can now guide the community and Community Planning Partners in drawing up detailed action plans to implement the top priorities as well as addressing the other issues which have been identified. For each priority or issue this will involve agreeing who should be involved, what resources will be needed and target dates for completion. It is hoped that this process will be driven by representatives of the community with support - moral, technical and financial - from the relevant Partners.

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

We recommend that this Plan has a maximum life of three years.

Queries about the community benefit fund, the Local Panel or associated grant applications should be directed to; Rachel Searle-Mbullu, Head of Community Investment Foundation Scotland Phone; 0141 341 4961 or Email; rachel@foundation scotland.org.uk Website; www.foundation scotland.org.uk

Thanks are due to all the individuals and organisations who contributed to the development of Kildrummy, Lumsden & Towie's first Community Action Plan.

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Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnership

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