



**Marr**  
**Local Community Plan**  
**2016-2019**



**Aberdeenshire**  
**Community Planning Partnership**  
Marr

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# Contents

Foreword .....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
Background.....	5
Developing the Plan - local and national context .....	8
Priority 1 Empowered and Confident Communities .....	12
Priority 2 Economically Vibrant Communities .....	14
Priority 3 Healthy, Safe and Thriving Communities .....	16
Priority 4 Connected Communities .....	18
Priority 5 Natural Heritage and Environment .....	20
Glossary and Abbreviations .....	22
Contact Us .....	23

# Foreword

Welcome to the Marr Community Plan 2016 - 2019. This plan details the priorities of the Marr Community Planning Group (MCPG) for the next 3 years. Although the plan covers a 3-year period, the priorities demand that we are working with a much longer timescale in mind.

Due to Marr's size and diversity it is important that we work together as public sector agencies, business, and community groups and organisations. This is the only way to make a real impact in a large rural area that accounts for 47% of the landmass of Aberdeenshire. If we work together to develop local priorities and projects for our communities we can directly improve quality of life in them. Rural community projects combined will play an important part in contributing to the Aberdeenshire Community Planning Partnerships Regional Outcomes and Scottish Government's National Outcomes. Our local projects not only improve quality of life in our towns, villages and settlements they also make an important contribution to the wider picture.

Priorities, outcomes and actions within the Plan have been developed from recent community engagement events (including special ward forums with a youth focus). Partnership working with local communities and our statutory partners has also been key to their development.

I hope that you will find this document interesting, easy to read and informative. After reading the Plan you may be inspired to get involved in local groups and attend the Community Ward Forums in order to share ideas and projects that you are working on for your local community.

I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of the Marr Community Plan 2016 - 2019, especially the community volunteers. As without them it would be almost impossible to tackle the issues that have been identified as being important to local communities.



If you wish to discuss any aspect potential projects please get in touch by phone, e-mail or in writing to the address at the back of the Plan.

Janelle Clark

Marr Area Manager and Chair of Marr Local Community Planning Group

© Aberdeenshire Council.



River Don at The Lords Throat © Aberdeenshire Council.

## Executive Summary

The Marr Community Plan (MCP) 2016 - 2019 brings together input from community planning partners, Elected Members and most importantly local communities, into five priorities to guide the work for the next three years.

**It has been agreed that these priorities for 2016 - 2019 will be:**

- 1) Empowered and Confident Communities
- 2) Economically Vibrant Communities
- 3) Connected Communities
- 4) Healthy, Safe and Thriving Communities
- 5) Natural Heritage and Environment

The five priorities form a framework for the MCP 2016 - 19 are as described below:

Communities in Marr are active, engaged and successful in developing and running a wide range of projects, they are **empowered and confident communities**. However, some have more capacity than others and new groups and individuals get involved all the time. They need to be equipped with knowledge, networks and support to ensure they can deal with major events and develop their resilience both socially and economically.

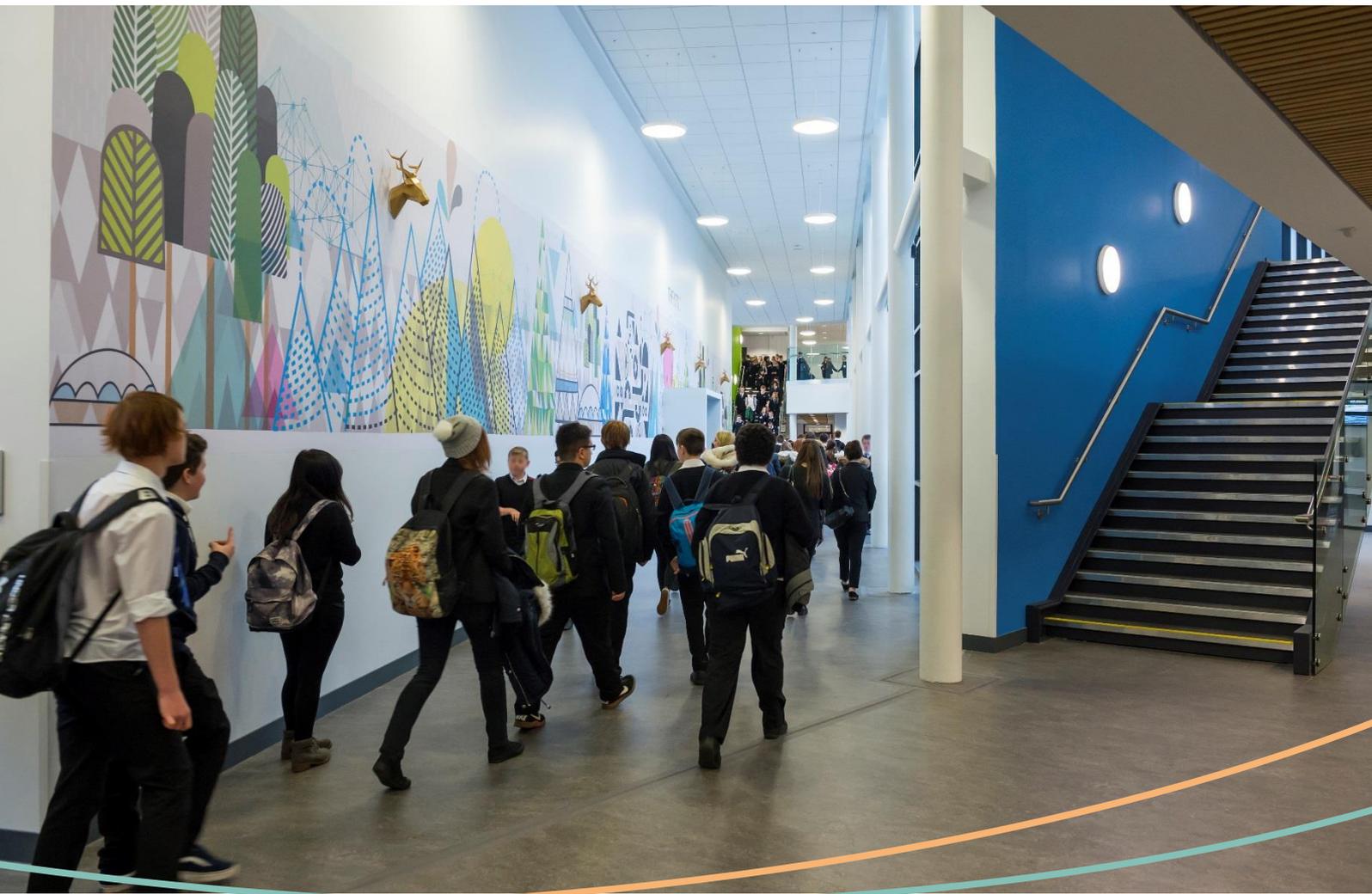
Marr's economy revolves around tourism, food and drink, forestry and agriculture. Marr's spectacular scenery, natural and national heritage and royal connections make the area, particularly Deeside, a centre for tourism. However, a number of our towns and villages need support to deal with major local issues. With support Marr's **economically vibrant communities** will sustain their vibrancy, and those that are facing challenges will join them.

The majority of Marr's **communities are healthy safe and thriving**. However Research indicates that residents in a number of data zones in Marr experience health inequalities and we do have an increasing elderly population. Supporting people to make healthy choices and engage with their community, will improve volunteering rates, health outcomes and will enable people to remain independent well into old age.

Access to employment, education, training, amenities and social activities is important to the health and wellbeing of the population and the economic sustainability of communities. For those reliant on local transport networks, either public or community, gaps in their provision can impact on the ability to access services and opportunities. Rural **communities can now be connected** in multiple ways through transport, active travel and accessible online services.

Marr's communities have made it clear to us that the **natural heritage and environment** is important to them. There are major assets in the area, the ancient archaeology currently being explored by the community in Rhynie, beautiful vistas and landscapes seen across the area, the Dee, Don and Deveron Rivers, the Cairngorms National Park of which 38% is in Marr. Projects that make the most of the Marr's natural assets have the potential to impact positively on local economies.

Climate change is already presenting challenges for our **natural heritage and environment**, built environment, infrastructure and agriculture. Changes in climate over the coming decades will impact life in our rural communities. We can work together to plan and prepare for the future, improving our quality of life, reducing our long term risks, lowering living costs and improving local economies, whilst at the same time contributing to Scotland's climate targets.



Alford Community Campus © Aberdeenshire Council.

## Background

The MCP 2016 - 19 describes the priorities for the area for the next three years. These priorities were developed in partnership with the Marr Area Committee, Community Planning Partners and community representatives, and the views of young people were included in the process. The Plan provides information on actions, which will contribute to delivering improvements in the priority areas.

The MCPG hosts quarterly forums in each of the three wards in Marr, where communities and MCPG members come together to network, share good practice, present projects and discuss local issues. This enables community groups to receive help, support and advice from MCPG members on an informal basis. It also enables the MCPG to identify issues in the various communities in Marr on an ongoing basis. The agenda for these events are set jointly by communities and partners.



### Marr Community Planning Partners

Aberdeenshire Council

Community Councils

Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action

Community Development Trusts

Garioch and North Marr Community Safety Group

Cairngorms National Park Authority

South Marr Community Safety Group

NHS Grampian

Marr Area Partnership

Police Scotland

Scottish Fire & Rescue Service

# Marr Area Overview



The population of Marr is 38,552, 14.9% of the total Aberdeenshire population of 257,740.



Marr contains 16 Community Councils, covering 3 Ward Areas



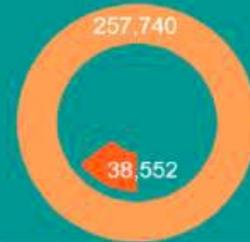
Marr has the second highest estimates of fuel poverty in Aberdeenshire



Marr residents perceive Aberdeenshire to be either a 'safe' or 'very safe' place to live



Three quarters of households have access to one or two vehicles with 13% of households having no vehicle access

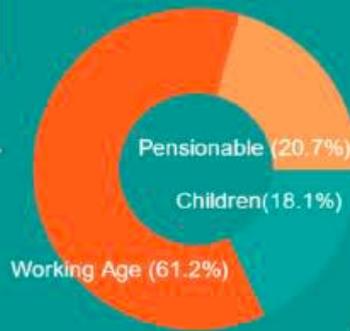


Aberdeenshire Population Marr Area Population

The total working age population in Marr has been decreasing steadily since 2010.



The number of pensionable age individuals is 20% higher than in 2002, and continues to rise.



Approximately 10% of residents travel less than 3 miles to their place of work or study, whilst over 25% travel 18 miles or more



The Marr area comprises 38% of the Cairngorms National Park, covering 174,768 hectares, of the parks 452,809 hectares



Marr contains 20 Munros, including Scotland's second highest peak, Ben Macdui, standing at 1,309m (or 4,295 ft) above sea level



Dinnet Oakwoods, Morrone Birkwood, Glen Tanar, and Muir of Dinnet, are all with Marr area, alongside 9 Special Areas of Conservation, and 3 Special Protection Areas



245km, or 152 miles of core pathways extend across Marr, including one of Scotland's Great Trails, The Deeside Way.



The Marr area attracts a higher percentage of overseas visitors than the Cairngorms National Park as a whole, with 28% of visitors coming from abroad.



Banchory Scott Skinner Square© Aberdeenshire Council.

## Developing the Plan - local and national context

The information that fed into the development of this Plan was gathered between summer 2015 and spring 2016. This included:

- The development of a Marr Strategic Assessment
- A 'PESTELO' exercise to indicate issues and opportunities may affect Marr
- Discussions at Marr's community ward forums
- Questionnaires submitted to community councils and other groups
- Meetings between, MCPG, Marr Area Committee and the Marr Area Management Team (made up of senior Aberdeenshire Council employees from all services).

Common themes were drawn out of the information gathered. Through discussions with the MCPG, joint meetings and community ward forums, these common themes were developed into Priorities. These Priorities provided a framework for the Plan, Outcomes for each of these Priorities were then developed in order to focus the work of the plan.

## Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP)

The LOIP will replace the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) in April 2017. It will set out what we will do together to make Aberdeenshire a better place, including proposed improvements in key Outcomes, with timescales (similar to the existing SOA). The MCP 2016-19 details local Actions that contribute to local and national Outcomes. The tables below show how the Marr Outcomes will contribute to those of the Scottish Government.

## How the Marr Community Plan links with the Scottish Government's National Outcomes

National Outcomes	No.
• We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others	1
• We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe	2
• We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	3
• We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	4
• We have improved the life chances of children, young people and families at risk	5
• Communities and businesses benefit from a more coordinated partnership tourism campaign	6
• Communities benefit from the delivery and improved access to affordable housing	7
• Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it	8
• We live longer, healthier lives	9
• We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	10
• Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	11
• Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed	12
• We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need	13
• We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations	14
• We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production	15
• We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger	16

### Local Outcomes - Empowered and Confident Communities

Marr	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are empowered to achieve better local outcomes</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Planning is recognised as the process for getting local priorities acknowledged and actioned</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are empowered and supported to develop and deliver a vision for their local area</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities and individuals have the confidence to participate in local democratic structures</li> </ul>	4
	5

### Local Outcomes - Economically Vibrant Communities

Marr	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Town and village centres are regenerated and/or revitalised through effective partnership working</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for small-scale tourism infrastructure in communities across Marr is enhanced</li> </ul>	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are supported to identify and develop potential community based enterprises</li> </ul>	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are supported to identify and develop potential community based enterprises</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are involved in assessing the need for locally available affordable housing and/or delivering Community Based Housing</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness of funding opportunities is enhanced to support economic development + diversification e.g. LEADER, Wind farms etc.</li> </ul>	

### Local Outcomes - Healthy, Safe and Thriving Communities

Marr	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Health inequalities across Marr are improved through effective and targeted partnership working</li> </ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for positive health and wellbeing activity are supported and developed in the Community</li> </ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local groups are supported to develop initiatives that will make a difference</li> </ul>	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local groups are supported to develop initiatives that will make a difference</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local groups are supported to develop initiatives that will make a difference</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local groups are supported to develop initiatives that will make a difference</li> </ul>	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community safety across Marr is improved and a better understanding of local issues is gained</li> </ul>	12
	16

Local Outcomes - Connected Communities	
Marr	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents of Marr have access to safe, active travel options</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Towns and villages are connected with routes that can be accessed by all</li> </ul>	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents in Marr have access to reliable and/or community transport options</li> </ul>	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities in Marr receive broadband and mobile phone coverage that is reliable and cost effective</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Transport options</li> </ul>	

Local Outcomes - Natural Heritage and Environment	
Marr	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents and communities in Marr are able to take advantage of their natural surroundings in a way that supports positive, healthy lifestyles</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are supported to develop resilience plans</li> </ul>	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community projects are supported that seek to address climate change mitigation, adaption and preparedness</li> </ul>	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are supported to develop and enhance sustainable community buildings and other facilities</li> </ul>	

## Action Plan

The Marr Community Plan will be supported by an Action Plan, which is appended to this document. The Action Plan is a live document with actions updated and added throughout the life of the 3 year plan. The Action Plan including all updates can be found at [www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/Marr](http://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/Marr).

## Monitoring the Plan

Actions will be SMART that is they will be specific and measurable and achievable. Clear milestones and timescales will be set for all actions. A six monthly monitoring document will be shared with all Marr Community Councils. If other groups or organisations would like read the monitoring information it is available to download at [www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/marr](http://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk/marr).

## Equalities

An equalities impact assessment has been carried out on the plan against nine protected characteristics, this assessment is publically available.

If you would like a copy of this plan in a different format or if you are having trouble accessing, interpreting or reading the plan, please contact us for assistance (contact details are at the end of this document).



Huntly Hairst 2016 © Becky Sanderson, The Huntly Express

## Priority 1 Empowered and Confident Communities

*Marr's communities are successful, innovative and inclusive*

## Outcome

Marr's communities are successful, innovative and inclusive. Through community-led activity and strong partnership working, they have the confidence and capacity to tackle issues that matter to them. They are well informed and are supported to create a clear vision for their local area.

The MCPG will focus work on the following key outcomes:

- Communities are empowered to achieve better local outcomes
- Community planning is seen as the process for getting local priorities actioned
- Communities are supported to develop and deliver a vision for their area
- Communities and individuals have the confidence to participate in local democratic structures

## Why is this a priority for Marr?

Communities in Marr are active, engaged and successful in developing and running a wide range of projects, they are **empowered and confident communities**. However, some have more capacity than others and new groups and individuals get involved all the time. They need to be equipped with knowledge, networks and support to ensure they can deal with major events and develop their resilience both socially and economically.

The MCPG can contribute by providing support to ensure communities are:

- Aware of opportunities or issues resulting from legislative changes e.g. Community Empowerment Act, Land Reform Act, Data Protection etc.
- Able to contribute to strengthening local democratic structures and ensuring inclusivity e.g. MCPG, community councils, business and development groups
- Able to build local collective consensus
- Able to resolve conflict constructively and effectively
- Confident to lead on local issues, take up opportunities and lead on projects
- Able to draw in funding for projects

## What do we hope to achieve in the next three years?

Marr Key Actions:	
1)	We will work with community groups to improve representation and involvement in the community planning process
2)	We will enhance youth engagement and involvement in the community planning process
3)	We will work with communities and community councils to ensure they are equipped with the skills and resources required to operate effectively
4)	We will support communities to understand, participate and take advantage of opportunities around legislative changes
5)	We will support and empower communities to develop and deliver a vision for their local area

Actions are detailed in the Marr Community Plan 2016 -19: Action Plan



Ballater Royal Station © Aberdeenshire Council.

## Priority 2 Economically Vibrant Communities

*The economic sustainability of communities in  
Marr will be enhanced*

## Outcome

The economic sustainability of communities in Marr will be enhanced.

We will focus our work on the following key outcomes:

- Town and village centres are regenerated and/or revitalised through effective partnership working
- Support for small scale tourism infrastructure across Marr is enhanced.
- Communities are supported to identify and develop community based enterprises
- Communities are supported to develop and enhance their facilities
- Communities are involved in assessing the need for local affordable housing and/or delivering Community Based Housing opportunities.
- Awareness of funding opportunities is enhanced to support economic development and diversification e.g. LEADER, Wind farms etc.

## Why is this a priority for Marr?

Marr's economy revolves around tourism, food and drink, forestry and agriculture. Marr's spectacular scenery, natural and national heritage and royal connections make the area, particularly Deeside, a centre for tourism. However, a number of our towns and villages need support to deal with major local issues. With support Marr's **economically vibrant communities** will sustain their vibrancy, and those that are facing challenges will join them.

This is important for the MCPG for the following reasons:

- Ballater town centre was badly affected by flooding during Storm Frank in December 2015 and Ballater Royal Station was destroyed by fire in May 2015.
- Huntly town centre has a high percentage of empty retail/business properties.
- Online shopping is transforming our lives, this impacts on our town centres.
- Community business opportunities can contribute to economic potential e.g. Victoria and Albert Halls in Ballater, Greenmyres in Huntly.
- Oil redundancies are likely to impact economically on Marr
- Lack of affordable housing impacts on the potential to fill specific work roles.

## What do we hope to achieve in the next three years?

### Marr Key Actions:

- 1) We will work with communities to develop partnership solutions for town and village centre regeneration and revitalisation
- 2) Communities will be supported to identify and develop opportunities for community based enterprises
- 3) We will support communities with funding advice as well as providing funding for inclusive/sustainable projects
- 4) We will support communities to assess the need for local affordable housing and to develop community based solutions

Actions are detailed in the Marr Community Plan 2016 -19: Action Plan



Aboyne Playpark © Sarah Brown

## Priority 3 Healthy, Safe and Thriving Communities

*Marr's population will be healthy, safe and thriving throughout life*

## Outcome

Marr's population will be healthy, safe and thriving throughout life.

We will focus our work on the following key outcomes in order to work towards this:

- Health inequalities across Marr are improved through effective and targeted partnership working
- Opportunities for positive health and wellbeing activity are supported and developed in the community
- Local groups are supported to develop initiatives that will make a difference
- Community safety across Marr is improved and a better understanding of local issues is gained

## Why is this a priority for Marr?

The majority of Marr's **communities are healthy safe and thriving**. However Research indicates that residents in a number of data zones in Marr experience health inequalities and we do have an increasing elderly population. Supporting people to make healthy choices and engage with their community, will improve volunteering rates, health outcomes and will enable people to remain independent well into old age.

This is important for the MCPG for the following reasons:

- The new local Health and Social Care Partnerships, community projects and organisations can be supported to develop strong links to work together well.
- We can work in partnership with communities to develop projects to support health and wellbeing.
- Rural road safety continues to be an issue in Marr. We will work with the Garioch and North Marr Community Safety Group, the South Marr Community Safety Group and the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Partnership, Scottish Fire Service and Police Scotland to tackle it.

## What do we hope to achieve in the next three years?

### Marr Key Actions:

- 1) We will support people to be actively engaged in local communities and feel empowered to participate to improve social connectedness, health and wellbeing
- 2) We will support initiatives that raise the profile of the impact of alcohol on individuals, families and communities across Marr
- 3) We will work with communities to identify where gaps in local H&SC provision exist and if appropriate, assist in the development of partnership led solutions
- 4) We will support initiatives that help residents of Marr live their lives in a safe and secure environment

**Actions are detailed in the Marr Community Plan 2016 -19: Action Plan**



Tarland Trails © Tony Yule Photography

## Priority 4 Connected Communities

*The connectivity of communities across Marr*

## Outcome

The connectivity of communities across Marr will be enhanced.

We will focus our work on the following key outcomes in order to work towards this:

- Residents of Marr have access to safe, active travel options
- Towns and villages are connected with routes that can be accessed by all
- Residents in Marr have access to reliable transport options including community transport
- Communities in Marr receive broadband and mobile phone coverage that is reliable and cost effective

## Why is this a priority for Marr?

Access to employment, education, training, amenities and social activities is important to the health and wellbeing of the population and the economic sustainability of communities. For those reliant on local transport networks, either public or community, gaps in their provision can impact on the ability to access services and opportunities. **Rural communities can now be connected** in multiple ways through transport, active travel and accessible online services.

This is important for the MCPG for the following reasons:

- It may be possible in certain areas for communities to improve links between communities and settlements by developing short safe active travel routes.
- Poor digital connectivity and mobile phone connections are still seen by many communities in Marr as a major problem despite a major investment and dramatically improved infrastructure.
- Where the improved digital infrastructure is in place, there is the potential for both the public sector and business to provide digital access to services. This may reduce the need to travel for certain services, whilst providing opportunities for economic development.

## What do we hope to achieve in the next three years?

Marr Key Actions:
1) We will work with communities to improve and expand locally identified active travel options. We will promote active travel as a realistic alternative to the car, e.g. for short local journeys
2) We will work with communities to assess gaps in public transport provision and where appropriate, help to develop locally led solutions
3) We will work in partnership with communities, Aberdeenshire Council, Visit Aberdeenshire and the Cairngorms Business Partnership to promote walking and cycling
4) We will work with communities to explore and assess broadband and mobile phone coverage

**Actions are detailed in the Marr Community Plan 2016 -19: Action Plan**



Corgarff view and Sculpture by Louise Gardener © Aberdeenshire Council.

## Priority 5 Natural Heritage and Environment

*Marr's natural heritage and environment will be safeguarded and nurtured with residents and communities connected to their surroundings*

## Outcome

Marr's natural heritage and environment will be safeguarded and nurtured with residents and communities connected to their surroundings.

We will focus our work on the following key outcomes in order to work towards this:

- Residents and communities in Marr are able to take advantage of their natural surroundings in a way that supports positive, healthy lifestyles
- Residents and communities across Marr are engaged in the use of land and natural heritage assets and gain the benefits arising from such activity
- Communities are supported to develop resilience plans relevant to their local area
- Community projects that seek to address climate change mitigation, adaption and preparedness are supported
- Communities are supported to develop and enhance sustainable community buildings and other facilities

## Why is this a priority for Marr?

- Marr's communities have made it clear to us that the **natural heritage and environment** is important to them. There are major assets in the area, the ancient archaeology currently being explored by the community in Rhynie, beautiful vistas and landscapes seen across the area, the Dee, Don and Deveron Rivers, the Cairngorms National Park of which 38% is in Marr. Projects that make the most of the Marr's natural assets have the potential to impact positively on local economies.
- Climate change is already presenting challenges for our **natural heritage and environment**, built environment, infrastructure and agriculture. Changes in climate over the coming decades will impact life in our rural communities. We can work together to plan and prepare for the future, improving our quality of life, reducing our long term risks, lowering living costs and improving local economies, whilst at the same time contributing to Scotland's climate targets.

## What do we hope to achieve in the next three years?

### Marr Key Actions:

- 1) We will support local communities to develop flooding and resilience plans
- 2) We will support community projects around climate change mitigation and adaption
- 3) We will work with communities to assess the significance and benefits from natural heritage and environmental assets and support them to gain the capacity and confidence to engage in discussions around their management
- 4) Communities will be supported and encouraged to engage more broadly in relation to the management of natural heritage and environmental assets

Actions are detailed in the Marr Community Plan 2016 -19: Action Plan

# Glossary and Abbreviations

MCPG - Marr Community Planning Group

AVA - Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action

MAP - Marr Area Partnership

SFRS - Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

CNPA - Cairngorms National Park Authority

H&SC - Health and Social Care (Partnership)

CLD - Community Learning and Development

G&NM CSG - Garioch and North Marr Community Safety Group

SM CSG - South Marr Community Safety Group

PESTELO - Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legislative, Organisational

HEAT - Health, Efficiency, Access, Treatment

HEEPS - Scottish Government Initiative to tackle fuel poverty and increase energy efficiency in homes

# Contact Us

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Aberdeenshire AB33 8TY  
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## Useful Websites:

[www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk](http://www.ouraberdeenshire.org.uk)

[www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk](http://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

[www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)

[www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk)

[www.nhsgrampian.org](http://www.nhsgrampian.org)

[www.marrareapartnership.org.uk](http://www.marrareapartnership.org.uk)

[www.cnpa.org.uk](http://www.cnpa.org.uk)

[www.avashire.org.uk](http://www.avashire.org.uk)

[www.aberdeenshirecommunitysafety.org.uk](http://www.aberdeenshirecommunitysafety.org.uk)





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