



COALFIELDS  
COMMUNITY  
FUTURES

Community Action Plan  
2015 - 2020

# GOREBRIDGE



# Foreword

Gorebridge sits on a hill and is surrounded by some of the most stunning and beautiful countryside you could ever imagine. Wide open skies, with views to the Pentland and Moorfoot Hills in the distance – often pre-warning of snow, rain and sometimes even sunshine. Gore Glen with the Gore river running through, is an unspoilt area where many local people go to enjoy the countryside. There is a designated Conservation Area with a current programme of restoration and renovation work being undertaken to improve the Main Street area with its historic examples of Victorian buildings in particular.

Gorebridge has a proud sporting past, with Arniston Rangers Junior Football Club being one of the first football clubs in Scotland, founded around 1878. It has a relatively undiscovered history – Gorebridge was one of the first Gunpowder Works in Scotland; Newbyres Castle was sited here and it has close historic links to Arniston House and the Dundas family as well as the Dewar family, latterly of Vogrie House.

The main cultural heritage of the people of Gorebridge is the 'Pits', as Gorebridge has been mined for many hundreds of years, by both private and Nationalised Coal Mining Companies. The closure of the last mines in Midlothian saw an economic decline in the community – without employment people were worse off and had to travel to find work. Shops shut and there was an air of sadness, as if the village had lost its heart. However, Gorebridge folk are warm, resilient and hardy – they come from a long line of proud, hardworking miners. The times are changing. Gorebridge has, or will see an increase of 40% in its

population. There is a larger than average number of children under 14. This will pose challenges but also opportunities. There is a train station opening, part of the Tweedbank line, in September 2015 and Gorebridge has now become a destination rather than a place of departure.



Improved sporting facilities, green play areas, maintenance of existing facilities – Library and Leisure Centre and the completion of the new community building will be invaluable assets to the residents here. The promotion of businesses and local opportunities for people to gain skilled trade type apprenticeship schemes will also be important to the future.

There are very good primary schools here, but keeping youngsters off the street by improving youth clubs and activities for them should be seen as one of our priorities, as well as ensuring that our older and less able residents are looked after.

Looking backwards – caring and restoring our cultural/ environmental heritage, whilst looking forward to the future, with improved recreational, sporting and educational opportunities will be the key to making Gorebridge a better place to work and enjoy. Embracing new people into our Gorebridge family, making them feel part of this growing and vibrant community will also improve our future by giving us common goals to work towards.

Thanks go to all the community members who worked together to help gather the views of local people that shaped this Action Plan.

Ellen Scott

# Coalfields Community Futures

The Coalfields Community Futures Programme is an approach to local community planning and sustainable community development that aims to encourage active citizenship and build local democracy. It enables communities to devise a community action plan which makes a case for the things that the community thinks are important and wishes to make happen.

The process builds on existing processes of community action research to identify local needs and priorities, using residents as co-researchers. We work with local residents and groups to develop a common sense of purpose and assist them to produce a deliverable community action plan.

To support the action planning process the community receive a Participatory Budget which is available to local constituted community or voluntary groups.

This budget enables the community to fund small projects that are identified by the community through the results of the household surveys, stakeholder interviews and the Open Event.

Projects funded through the Participatory Budget are highlighted under the Actions and Priorities in this document.



150 people attended the  
Community Open Day

15 stakeholder interviews

158 surveys were completed

## Introduction

The Coalfields Regeneration Trust has been working with a committed local steering group to deliver the Coalfields Community Futures programme in Gorebridge. This group is made up from representatives of the Gorebridge Community Council, Gorebridge Community Cares, Grandparents Parenting, Arniston Improvement Trust, OAP Carpet Bowling, Gorebridge CARS Scheme, Gorebridge Parish Church, Arniston Rangers Youth Club, St David's Gorebridge Brass Band, Midlothian Council, Gorebridge History Group, Birkenside Partnership and the Gorebridge Community Development Trust.

In September 2014 the Steering Group came together with the purpose of creating an action plan that will focus the efforts of Gorebridge over the next five years. The process has been in depth, with a community survey being delivered by the steering group members to the whole village with many words of encouragement to people that this is something worth investing time in.

The survey was simple, what do you like, what don't you like, what would you like to see happen in your community and what is your vision for the future? The surveys were then collected and analysed to see what key themes were emerging and what was the vision of the people for the future?

Many thanks go to the steering group members who carried out the interviews and to the stakeholders who gave up their time to be interviewed. This Action Plan documents what these emerging themes are and identifies priorities for action. This is a mandate for action that has come from the people who live here, and it will be up to the people to work together with agencies and partners to take it forward and make their vision a reality.

# Our Community Now

## Background

This Profile has been produced to give an insight into the Gorebridge area. It is part of a wider Community Futures process being delivered by The Coalfields Regeneration Trust across Scotland's coalfield communities to assist them reflect on what is good and what could be improved and how.

Gorebridge is a post town and former mining village in Midlothian. The village takes its name from the bridge across the River Gore which flows into the South Esk. In 1794, Scotland's first Gunpowder Mill started operations on the banks of the Gore Water. There were a number of small coal mines in the area but in the mid 19th century the much deeper Emily Pit was opened. Gorebridge expanded to house the miners and the main street housed many shops and local traders.

## Population

The population resident in the area from the 2001 census was 5,777. The population has grown considerably since then and is more likely to be in the region of 7 – 8,000. The population is younger than the overall picture for Scotland with the median age for males being 34 for Gorebridge compared to 37 for Scotland and 35 for females compared to 39. The youngest age groups predominate up to 16 years. However population projections to 2028 suggest the number of people aged 65yrs+ will increase significantly, with just over half of those individuals being over 75 years old.

## Housing

The average number of people per household is higher than Scotland but the average number of rooms is lower. This suggests there may be a mismatch between house size and occupancy. The % of housing which is detached is almost a third less than Scotland as a whole while the semi detached houses are almost a 1/3 again more than those in Scotland. There are fewer flats.

Home ownership rates are 10% lower than Scotland and public and social rented higher. The % of housing rented from the local authority is

more than twice that of Scotland. Melville Housing has historically been the largest provider of social housing in the area with Midlothian Council having a smaller proportion. There are plans for more than 3000 houses in and around Gorebridge over the next 5 – 10 years.

## Health

The average age of people with good health or people with a limiting long term illness roughly equates to Scotland as a whole those who are economically inactive and permanently sick / disabled is slightly more than that of Scotland as a whole. In addition there are more households with one or more carers in residence (19.3% compared to 16.8%).

Stakeholder interviews and the community survey highlighted the pressure the growth in population is putting on the primary care medical centre in terms of waiting times for appointments. There are plans to extend the centre but the population of the town is still growing.

## Employment and Economy

The average age of a person who is unemployed is 31.8 compared to 35 for Scotland as a whole. Youth unemployment is high, running almost 7% above the national figure of 27.8%. Unemployment among the age group 50+ is conversely well below the national rate.



# Our Community Now

There are less people engaged in manufacturing and more in construction and the financial sector. There are fewer managers, senior officials and professional people and more people involved in elementary occupations. These are cleaning offices and other buildings, washing windows, delivering messages or goods, product-sorting, packing by hand and freight handling. The stakeholder interviews highlighted the lack of retail outlets in the town and in particular a supermarket.



## Education and Training

The % of households where no one aged 16–74 has qualifications or is in full-time education is higher than Scotland as a whole and the % of 16–18 year olds who are in full-time education is much lower than for Scotland.

This educational attainment level is underlined by the discrepancy between the % of the population with no qualification being 7% higher in Gorebridge than in Scotland. The area outcores Scotland markedly for the number of people with low level qualifications and is outscored itself, again markedly, by Scotland as the level of qualification increases.

From individual stakeholder interviews one of the most frequent needs identified was that for a secondary education school in Gorebridge.

## Social and Community

Gorebridge now boasts a range of groups that have grown with the village, however the lack of facilities is beginning to hinder and limit groups' ambitions and aspirations. From the community survey and the stakeholder interviews the community spirit and the surrounding environment were ranked highly. Transport came next mainly due to the expected impact of the new rail line and road network.

Facilities and services scored highest in the things people did not like. It is important to note that it is the lack of facilities for children which was commented on most frequently.

## Community Action Plan: Considerations

We have an increasing population which has a large number of children and young people. The long term projection is for a disproportionate increase in the elderly population. This places a range of pressures on health and education services.

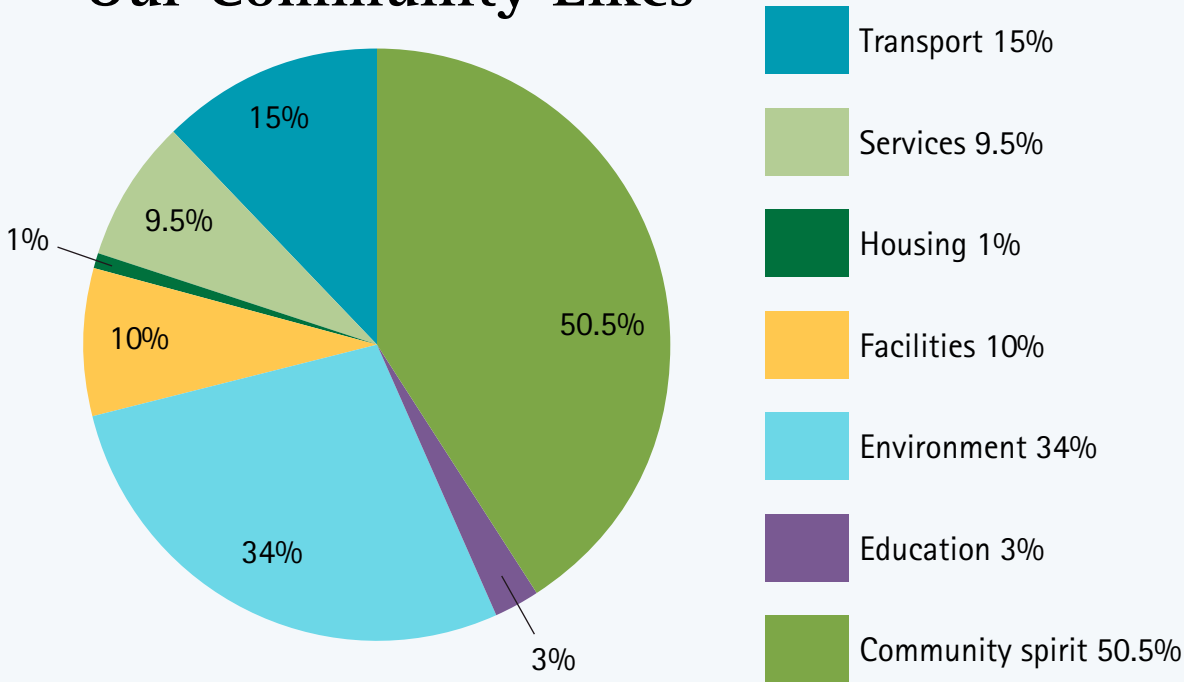
The main mismatch with respect to housing is a mismatch between the size of houses and household size. There are not enough houses with more rooms. These may be rectified with the new housing developments planned.

The main challenge for health services in the medium term is the number of children and young people. In the longer term future the increasing elderly population will necessitate a different emphasis.

Youth unemployment is a concern. There are also low levels of people in higher paid jobs. The need to improve the levels of qualification through education and training in the area is quite apparent. This has been evidenced on the employment profile that shows fewer managerial, professional and technical workers and higher youth unemployment. The increasing younger aged population adds to the perceived need for a high school.

The population and other future projections may mean radical change in the nature and volume of service demand. Of particular note in this context are services and facilities for children.

# Our Community Likes



"Semi-rural, stunning views, relatively peaceful, good bus service to Dalkeith and Edinburgh Trains are coming!"

"Sense of community is improving, investment in the town"

"I like the way that the Gorebridge Parish church has brought together the community with the setting up of the Tuesday recycling sale and coffee mornings"

"Location, nice walks, friendly people, getting a train service soon, countryside and community spirit"

## Midlothian Community Planning Partnership Making the Links

Midlothian Community Planning Partnership working to improve six national priorities:

Gorebridge Action Plan Themes and Priorities that work to support these national outcomes:

Economic recovery and growth

Village Environment  
Local Services

Employment

Sports, Recreation and Learning

Early years

Community Facilities and Activities

Safer and stronger communities and reducing offending

Community Facilities and Activities  
Sports, Recreation and Learning

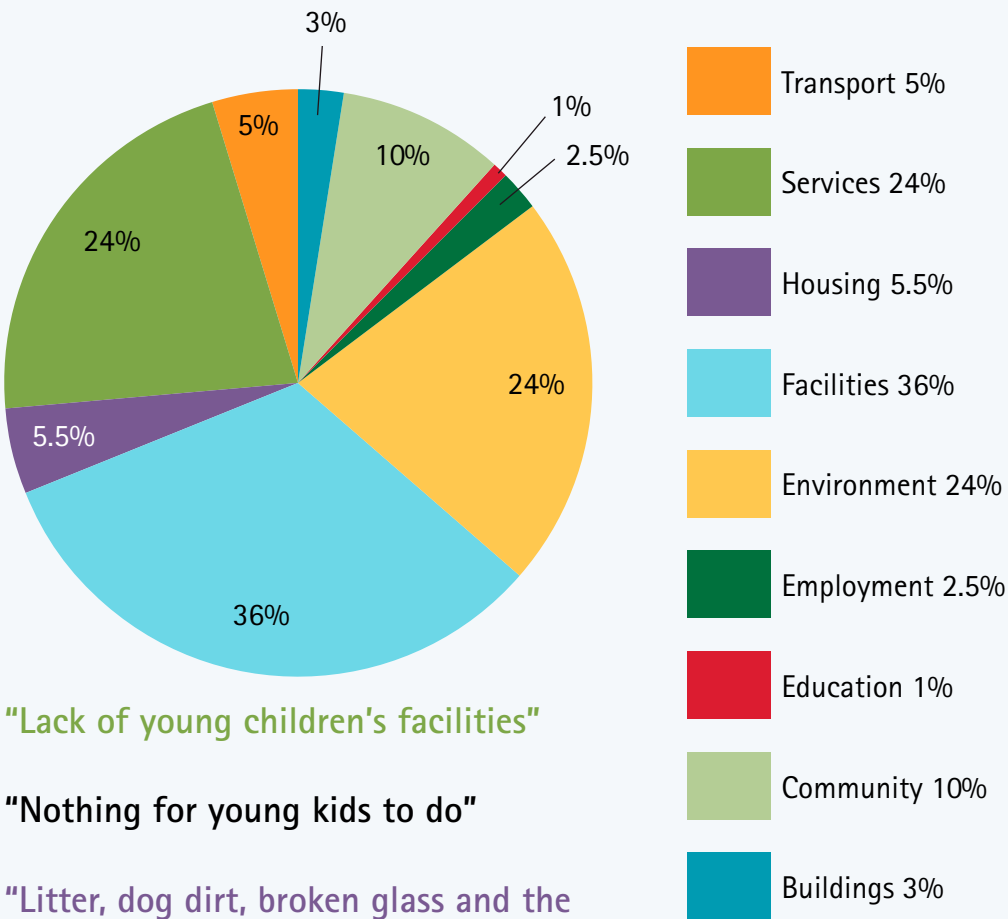
Health inequalities and physical activity and

Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage  
Community Facilities and Activities

Outcomes for older people

Community Facilities and Activities

# Our Community Dislikes



"Lack of young children's facilities"

"Nothing for young kids to do"

"Litter, dog dirt, broken glass and the condition of the main road (past the tip). Number of boarded up business. The lack of additional services in proportion to the expanding population. From shops to schools, doctors and even bus services."

"We have nothing for young kids to do except one play park, neither do we have anything for the older kids!"

"Lack of facilities and no high school"



## Gorebridge – Our Vision for the Future

A vibrant, safe and attractive place with opportunities for all.

Gorebridge will be accessible to all with good transport links for rail, road, pedestrians and cyclists. There will be an excellent network of local paths for walkers and cyclists, giving access to our beautiful countryside.

Our village environment will be welcoming and safe. The old and historic will be cherished and new investment and sensitive development will be welcomed.

Our natural and cultural heritage are a key part of Gorebridge's identity and will be enhanced and protected with better access for all ages and abilities. The area's rich biodiversity will be celebrated and its unique history, architecture and important historic sites and buildings will be celebrated and maintained.

Our local community will be able to access local community facilities like the Hub where we can meet together, share information and socialise. Working together we will celebrate our community spirit through a variety of different events like the gala day and make the most of our musical culture. We will embrace the needs of our young people and our older residents with a range of activities that cater for all.

Gorebridge will be a vibrant place for entrepreneurs to develop and grow new businesses. The area will be an excellent place to invest in and local employment opportunities will be encouraged together with training and education for people of all ages.





# Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

## THEME 1: Village Environment

The village environment theme is all about making the areas that make up Gorebridge as attractive, well kept and cared for as possible. We will be focusing on making the most of the opportunities that are arising from the CARS initiative, improving the quality and character of Gorebridge Main Street and the opening of the new railway that will encourage more tourism and economic revival. We recognise the need for good signage and interpretation so that both local people and visitors can make the most of what Gorebridge has to offer.

### More retail outlets including cafés

- Work with Midlothian Council to improve Gorebridge to make it more attractive to new retail businesses
- Lobby affordable retailers such as Aldi and Lidl to build a store local to Gorebridge
- Investigate feasibility of old station (Porters) becoming a key gateway building that could include a café for families, the local community and visitors to the area

### Townscape Heritage

- Work with Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme (CARS) and other partners to continue to improve the character of the village and protect historic local buildings
- Improve other areas of Gorebridge, including Gowkshill, Arniston and Birken side
- New opportunities will come in via the railway- use it and develop a Heritage Centre and Information point
- Use the old railway station (Porters) as the gateway to tourist attractions within the area; Gore Glen; Gorebridge Walks; Vogrie Country Park; Borthwick Castle; Crichton Castle; Dalhousie Castle; Arniston House and surrounding countryside
- Work with Midlothian Council to improve street lighting, especially paths and alleyways

### Notice Boards, Information Points and better signage for villages

- Erect new noticeboards in all areas that will be run by the community for the community
- Create "Gateways" to mark the entrance and exits of Gorebridge villages including Gowkshill, Birken side and Arniston

### Floral Displays

- Carry out wildflower planting in suitable places
- Work with Midlothian Council to continue to deliver floral enhancements

### Dog Fouling / Litter Campaigns

- Work with Midlothian Council to undertake a Dog Fouling Awareness campaign.
- Run a litter awareness campaign

#### *Key Partners:*

Midlothian Council  
 Midlothian Community  
 Planning Partnership  
 GADEG  
 CARS  
 Gorebridge Cares  
 Gorebridge Community  
 Development Trust  
 Gorebridge Community Council  
 Gorebridge Primary School PTA  
 Historic Scotland  
 Local community involvement

# Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

## THEME 2: Sports, Recreation and Learning

This theme encompasses much of what we see as important to help nurture and develop our young people. It's about creating safe green space with good facilities for outdoor sport and leisure, and creating fit for purpose buildings for local community activities that help bring the community together to express their creativity and community spirit. We also recognise the need for local training and apprenticeship style opportunities and will be working to identify and maximize the benefits of these.

### Improve parks for all!

- New Community Park at Barleyknowe Lane
- Work with the local community, Midlothian Council and others to carry out a community mapping exercise looking at green space and how it can be designed to best suit the needs of everyone
- Upgrade existing facilities and access to local greenspace

### Improvements to Vogrie Hall

- Identify needs and source suitable funding to improve Vogrie Hall for community groups and the Brass Band, to ensure the brass band tradition of mining communities is maintained

### Improvements to Scout Hall

- Identify specific needs and source suitable funding to improve the Scout Hall
- Plan a fundraising event to help kick start the project

### Improved Football/ Sporting Facilities

- Assist local football clubs with plans for improved football facilities
- Improve facilities to allow girls/women to take up this sport
- Identify possible funding streams to take this forward

### New High School

- Work with Midlothian Council to investigate the potential for a new High School

### More Training Opportunities

- Maximize local training opportunities

### Leisure Centre

- Continue to support and work with partners to develop the Leisure Centre



**Key Partners**  
Midlothian Council  
Midlothian Community Planning Partnership  
GADEG  
CARS  
Gorebridge Cares  
Gorebridge Community Development Trust  
Gorebridge Community Council  
Arniston Rangers Youth Team  
St David's Gorebridge Brass Band  
Midlothian Scouts  
Local Colleges  
Local community involvement

# Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

## THEME 3: Community Facilities and Activities

This theme is focusing on how best to support the people of Gorebridge including their physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing. It's important that people are able to express themselves creatively, have opportunities to meet and socialise, opportunities for physical play including sport and where people of all ages can come together. For this we need to have suitable places to carry out these activities. A community that has good networks and a high level of local volunteering and social interaction is a resilient community. This is what we are aiming at with our five year plan.

### Activities and facilities for children, young people and the older generation

- We will engage with the young people of Gorebridge to identify what's important to them and what type of activities they want to see happen. From this we will work with partners to source suitable project funding
- Identify what older and people living with a disability would like to do through local community engagement
- Work with partners to create activities to meet these needs

### The Hub

- Deliver community facilities and activities to meet the needs of everyone in particular children, young people and the elderly. This could include a community café; creative play space; function hall; office space and play resource for the local community

### Council Facilities

- Continue to support the local library service and work to extend the opening hours.
- Continue to support and develop its digital hub, which is particularly useful to access the Government benefit on-line portal
- Promote the Leisure Centre as a community resource to maintain health and well being

### Churches and places of worship

- Build stronger relationships between the congregations of the local places of worship and the community, so that ideas and buildings can be used to benefit everyone

### Annual Community Events

- Create a community calendar of existing community events and promote these locally
- Support and develop the tradition of the Gorebridge Gala celebrations. Establish a Community Christmas Celebration event
- Create an "Annual Community Groups' Gathering" to celebrate and promote all the local volunteering activity

#### *Key Partners*

Midlothian Council  
 Midlothian Community  
 Planning Partnership  
 GADEG  
 CARS  
 Gorebridge Cares  
 Gorebridge Community  
 Development Trust  
 Gorebridge Community Council  
 Gorebridge Gala Committee  
 Local community involvement

# Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

## THEME 4: Local Services

We are seeking a partnership approach to improve the existing service provision in Gorebridge. Our priorities include public transport, roads, parking, health, community safety, education and training. Each of these priorities need careful consideration, working together with the appropriate partners to look at what exists, reflect on what is working and maybe not working - then through dialogue identify resources and agree actions to help improve our local services for the benefit of everyone.

### Transport issues e.g. bus services

- Continue to lobby for improved bus services

### Parking in Gorebridge

- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify potential additional parking in Gorebridge Main Street and other areas of Gorebridge, e.g. Gore Glen area

### More police presence

- Work with Police Scotland to increase visible local policing in the area

### Health Services

- Create a development strategy to look at removing barriers for residents to access essential health services locally
- Extend opening hours for working people
- Extend surgery to accommodate the growth in population
- Increase Doctor provision to accommodate the growth in population
- Explore opportunities for enhanced services at local chemists

### Local Economy

- Investigate opportunities for more local companies to offer work experience for school leavers
- Investigate young apprenticeship opportunities
- Investigate local skills based training opportunities
- Approach local colleges to find out if they can provide local teaching provision to offer local trade skills based training

### New Railway Service

- Develop a tourism/economic development strategy in partnership with others to make the most of the opportunities afforded by the opening of the new rail link

#### *Key Partners:*

Midlothian Council  
 Midlothian Community  
 Planning Partnership  
 GADEG  
 CARS  
 Gorebridge Cares  
 Gorebridge Community  
 Development Trust  
 Gorebridge Community Council  
 Transport Companies  
 Edinburgh College  
 NHS Lothian  
 Newbyres Medical Practice  
 Local community involvement

# Main Priorities identified by the Community, and a Strategy for Community Action

## THEME 5: Natural Environment and Cultural Heritage

Gorebridge is rich in both natural and cultural heritage and therefore in this theme we will work to identify what can be done to maintain, develop and celebrate the key assets that Gorebridge boasts, both past and present. From this we will ensure a bright future for Gorebridge.

### Improve and Develop Local Path Network

- Host a paths information day
- Investigate training opportunities in path creation and maintenance for local volunteers
- Carry out a mapping exercise to identify existing paths, repairs required and what new multi-user paths are needed

### Local History Archive '*Past, Present, Future*'

- Create an intergenerational heritage project to help capture the stories and the history of those who have lived and worked in Gorebridge throughout their lives

### Gunpowder works

- Build on and develop the existing feasibility study to identify what could be done to protect, maintain and develop the Gunpowder Works as a possible tourist attraction
- Secure funding for this

### Newbyres Castle

- Carry out a feasibility study on the best way to protect, maintain and develop Newbyres Castle and make it more accessible
- Secure funding for this



#### *Key Partners:*

Midlothian Council  
Midlothian Community Planning Partnership  
GADEG  
CARS  
Gorebridge Cares  
Gorebridge Community Development Trust  
Gorebridge Community Council  
Local community involvement

# Putting Gorebridge on the map

Gorebridge is a community that includes residents from Arniston, Gowkshill and Birkenside.



# Early actions identified by the Community, and supported by funding from The Coalfields Regeneration Trust

1st Midlothian Scout Group	1st Midlothian Scout Group Facility Upgrade
Gorebridge Children's Gala Day Association	New Equipment
Gorebridge Opportunities Limited	GO Drama
St David's Brass Band	Instruments for Youth Band
41st Edinburgh & Lothian's Girls Brigade	New Equipment
Gorebridge Community Cares	Notice Board
Arniston Rangers Cherokees	New Goals and Mannequins for Training
Gorebridge Primary School PTA	Anti-Dog Fouling Campaign
Gorebridge Community Development Trust	Creative Play Space and Crafternoon Tea and Parent Craft
	Gorebridge Arts Collective and Local History Archive

## Community Contacts

1st Gorebridge Scouts	Gorebridge Primary School
Arniston Miners Welfare Social Club	Grandparents Parenting Again
Arniston Rangers Junior Football Club	Kinship Carers Midlothian
Arniston Rangers Youth Football Club	Midlothian Community Learning and Development
Birkenside Community Partnership	Moorfoot Primary School
Borthwick Pipe Band	Newbyres Patient Participation Group
Recycle Cafe	St Andrew's Primary School
Gorebridge & District Environmental Group	St Margaret's Church
Gorebridge & District Local History Society	Stobhill Primary School
Gorebridge Bowling Club	United Free Church
Gorebridge Cares	St Davids Gorebridge Brass band
Gorebridge Carpet Bowls	Ageing Well Walking Group
Gorebridge Conservation Area Regeneration Scheme	1st Gorebridge Rainbows
Gorebridge Community Council	Gorebridge Brownies
Gorebridge Community Development Trust	Gorebridge Guides
Gorebridge Gala Day	Tynewater Dog Training
Gorebridge Girls Brigade	
Gorebridge Leisure Centre	
Gorebridge Library	
Gorebridge Opportunities	
Gorebridge Over 50's Group	
Gorebridge Parish Church	

For further details on any of the above  
please contact:  
Gorebridge Community Development Trust  
01875 823202  
gcdt@gorebridge.org.uk



**“Never doubt that  
a small group of  
thoughtful, committed  
citizens can change  
the world; indeed, it’s  
the only thing that  
ever has.”**

**Margaret Mead**



**the coalfields  
regeneration trust**

**Midlothian**



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