



# Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030

## Our Heritage – Our Future

Midlothian's Green Gateway

March 2015

**Midlothian Moving Forward**  
Community Planning for Midlothian

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Acknowledgement.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Introduction to Damhead and District Plan: Our Community Now</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1	Damhead now	5
2.2	What do we want for Damhead?.	5
2.3	What is a Neighbourhood Plan?.	5
<b>3</b>	<b>Engaging the local community to get their views.</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>What people said about their area: Damhead and District Questionnaire</b>	<b>7</b>
4.1	Residents Comments from the Come Pin Your Hopes on Damhead and District Planning for Real/World Cafe Event	10
4.2	Local children's perspective on the future of their community	11
<b>5</b>	<b>Community Concerns and Aspirations in Damhead and District</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1	Roads, infrastructure and maintenance	11
5.1.1	People of Damhead want safe transport and travel, including roads, access, pavements.	11
5.1.2	Realignment of A701	11
5.1.3	Speed Restrictions and Weight Limits.	12
5.1.4	Junction of A702/A703/Old Pentland Road.	12
5.1.5	General state of repair of roads (surfaces and drainage), pavements and hedges	12
5.1.6	Street lighting.	12
5.1.7	Bus Stops/Shelters.	13
5.2	Community development ideas and community spirit.	13
5.2.1	Community development ideas	13
5.2.2	Community spirit	13
5.3	Environment and lands use.	14
5.3.1	Green networks.	15
5.3.2	Community food growing project	17
5.4	Looking ahead to Damhead 2030: a longer term vision	18
<b>6</b>	<b>What we'll do: Damhead and District Action Plan.</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b>	<b>22</b>

## 1. Acknowledgement

The Damhead and District Steering Group<sup>1</sup> and Community Council have prepared and presented this action plan based on local people's perspectives. A special thanks to all the residents and community members who contributed their time to share personal views and ideas.

We are grateful to Derek, Bruce and Kimberley from Midlothian Council's Communities and Community Learning and Development teams who have worked with the Community throughout this process.

<sup>1</sup> Steering Group members: Ailsa Carlisle, Stuart Clark, Joanne Gillies, Lorna Goudie, Julian and Kate Holbrook, Gordon and Kate Marshall, Helen McKay, Constance Newbould

## 2. Introduction to Damhead and District Plan<sup>1</sup>: Our Community Now

- We like it because it's home
- We like it because of the people that live here
- We like it because you can see the hills, see the sky and see the land
- We like it because when it's quiet you can hear the birds, the insects and the livestock
- We like it because you can see the seasons change
- We like it when it is sunny because you can be outside and it's clean and nice
- We like it when it rains because the air is fresh
- We like the fact we have a post box and a postman we know and who knows us
- We like it because it is rural yet close to town and services
- We like it because we can walk across the fields to local settlements and hills
- We like it because people say hello and chat
- We like it because we can pick berries along the roadside hedgerows with our children
- We like it because you can see the farming year all around, the changing fields
- We like it because you can see the livestock and the crops
- We like it because people are making a living from the land all around

- We like it because people help each other
- We like it because new small businesses are starting and provide a welcome service to the community
- We like the flowers, the trees and the fresh air
- We like the early morning light and the dark skies that make us think how lucky we are to live here in a place that still has a sense of place, a sense of community and a wonderful sense of our future
- We like the idea that we can make a difference so that we can continue to ensure that future changes to the area benefit those that live and work here.

Damhead & District is a mosaic of varying physical features in a rural setting. The city bypass forms the northern boundary, the Pentland Hills Regional Park the western side, and to the A701 corridor and Straiton in the east. Damhead and District is scattered across the A702, Old Pentland Road and A703 and is home to a very unique community with the best of both countryside and city living. It is surrounded with scenic woodland, walk ways, cycle networks and holdings that are attractive to both residents and visitors.

Many of the small-holdings in the area were set up for disabled soldiers after the First World War and named "Homes for Heroes". The small acreage of the holdings allowed them to carry out important agricultural activities such as pig-farming. The history of the Old Pentland Graveyard is attached in Appendix 1

<sup>1</sup> where report refers to Damhead, this should be taken to be Damhead and District area



# Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030



## 2.1 Damhead now

The total population of Damhead for mid-year 2010 is approximately 250 and there are now approximately 102 dwellings in Damhead. Official statistics indicate that the older population has increased within Damhead over the last ten years and the child population has decreased. However, the local perception is that the numbers of young people and children in the area has increased in recent years.

Due to the size and location of the area it shares educational establishments, doctors, dentists, churches and other amenities with neighbouring regions. The community is made up of a number of farm holdings, cottages, houses, various businesses including stables, Damhead Nursery, The Secret Herb Garden, Hillend Winter Sports Centre and a petrol station. Although with recent commercial developments the community has close access to the retail park in the Straiton area.

Over recent years we have endeavoured to strengthen the community spirit and this plan is a reflection of that. Damhead and District Community Council (DDCC) is a small group of community representatives that regularly meets to discuss and address local issues that may have relevance to Damhead and its future development. Over the years, the Damhead and District Community Council has been involved with a number of significant milestones

with regards to the future of their rural and green belt area. For instance, the preparation of a Straiton Bing Community Vision in 1998 and a major submission of comments in 2013 to Midlothian Council's Main Issues Report.

More recently, the DDCC has started to discuss national and global issues, such as climate change, land use and food security, and longer term sustainable development. This has coincided with the establishment of a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with the intent to ensure communication and consultation with the local residents.





## 2.2 What do we want for Damhead?

Our vision for Damhead and District is:

- To maintain what we have, and proactively build on the positive aspects of our local area.
- Promote the local area as a green gateway to Midlothian and the Pentland Hills.
- Maintain rural aspect of the area, open spaces and the good quality agricultural land.
- Promote and support a cohesive community, which thrives and has a strong vibrant community spirit.
- Promote a safe environment through safe and efficient transport and travel options, and the development of a more extensive green network.
- Support the development of local businesses that complement the land based resources that make up our local area.
- Celebrate and recognise the unique heritage of the local area; how this has evolved over time and how this is developing now and could develop further in the future to support Damhead and District to move towards becoming a low carbon, resilient and self-sustaining community.

We want to use this Neighbourhood Plan to drive change in the area and be a key influence on priority developments that shape our future. We therefore need to take a longer term view towards 2030, and this Plan begins that process.

## 2.3 What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Midlothian Moving Forward, the Community Planning Partnership, is committed to placing communities at the heart of community planning.

This involves producing neighbourhood plans in each of Midlothian's sixteen Community Council areas. Neighbourhood Planning is about improving local communities in a way which brings together local residents with agencies in order to identify and find solutions to local issues. This plan is focused on the Damhead and District Community Council area and describes the area it represents and lists the changes, developments and improvements local residents would like to see taking place.

The Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan recognises and values the strengths of local communities and local residents, and seeks to build upon their knowledge, skills and expertise.



## Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030



### 3. Engaging the local community to get their views

To help plan and prepare this community action plan the following steps were taken allowing anyone to participate and contribute at different stages:

- We established the Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to steer the development of the community Neighbourhood Plan. The Group offered an open invitation for any local residents to join or attend meetings as they wished. Key points from the Group's discussions were reported back at every DDCC meeting.
- In April 2013, the Group devised a questionnaire to ask residents their views about living in the Damhead and District area. Four copies were sent or given to every household (102). There were 62 questionnaires completed and returned. This was a high rate of return and gave confidence to the group in terms of key messages.
- A minibus tour to visit other communities and their projects was organised by the Group. The aim was to see other groups and how they developed projects and involved their local communities in local actions. An invitation to join this trip was advertised through the DDCC minutes to the community. In all,

10 members of the Steering Group, other residents and a few visitors from neighbouring communities joined the day trip. The group returned inspired and reported back at the next DDCC meeting.

- In February 2014, a community engagement day event was held in Loanhead Primary School, with space to welcome the whole community. The event was planned by the Working Group and advertised to the community. In addition, various potential partners and local businesses were invited to join and contribute. As part of this a "Planning for Real" exercise was undertaken allowing everyone a chance to highlight issues, ideas and proposed actions. A total of 55 residents and stakeholders attended. We are grateful for input from Heather from the Red Cross and Charlie from Lothian Greenspace Trust. The event was successful and built upon all previous steps, providing the Steering Group with confirmation of key messages, a long list of potential actions and new material, which has been integrated into this plan.

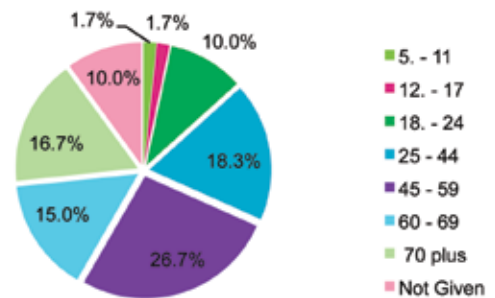
The whole process was as open and inclusive as possible to ensure that the final plan represents, as far as possible, the views, interests and aspirations of the community.

## 4. What people said about their area: Damhead and District Questionnaire

### Findings – general information

- Female/male response rate 45%/41.7%, 13/3% opted not to answer
- 21.7% of returns are parents/guardians to a child under 18yrs
- 83.3% have access to a car and 36.7% use cycling as a mode of transport.
- 53.3% have lived in Damhead for between 5 and 20 years and 38.3% of have lived there for more than 20 years. 8.4% opted not to answer. 46.7 % moved here because they were attracted to the area, and 33.3% for family reasons.

### Age Responses Rates

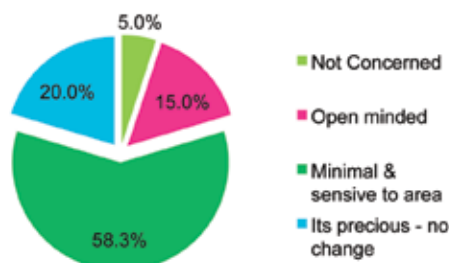


### Findings – landscape & area

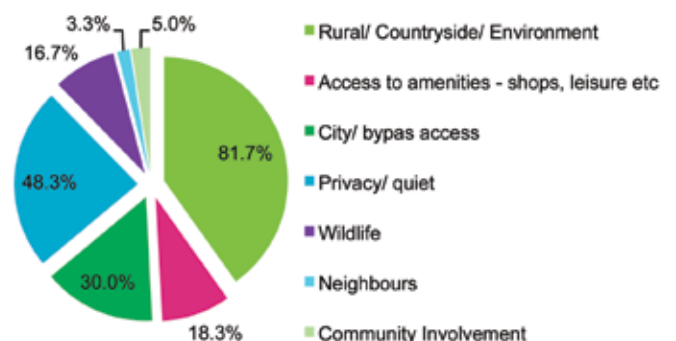
#### What do people like about living in Damhead?

There were a number of positive comments from the respondents clearly illustrating that it is a very attractive and desirable place to live. The rural landscape is greatly valued by those who live there with over 58% saying there should be minimal change to it and 20% stating that it is precious and that there should be no change at all.

#### Value the Rural Landscape

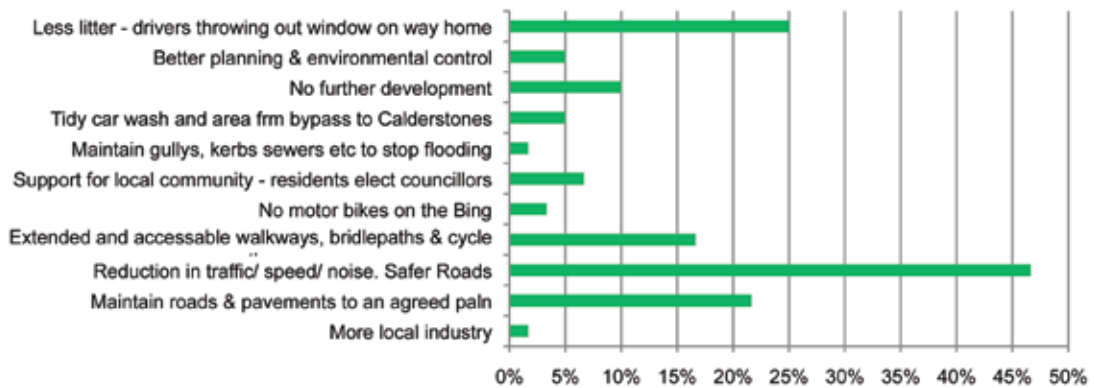


#### What do you like about Living in Damhead?



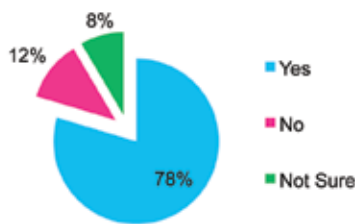
## FINDINGS – WHAT WOULD MAKE DAMHEAD A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN, WORK OR VISIT?

- As can be seen from the results road safety and traffic speed is a key concern for a lot for people with 47% indicating this is a major issue
- Litter is also becoming an issue with fly tipping and drivers throwing rubbish out of car windows the most common problems raised.
- The state of the roads and the lack of regular maintenance is also a problem, with the provision of suitable pavements, walkways, cycle paths etc also needing addressed.



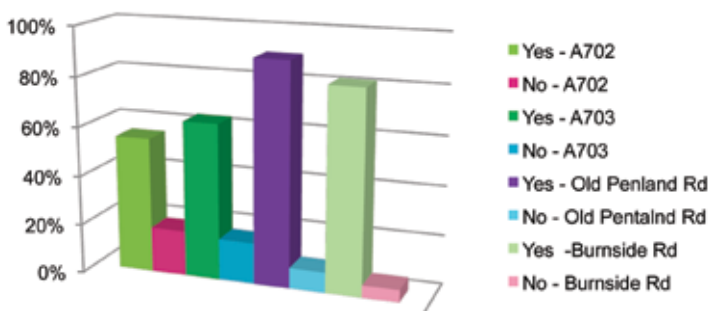
## FINDINGS – ROADS, PAVEMENTS & TRANSPORT

### Should there be a weight restriction on Old Pentland Rd?

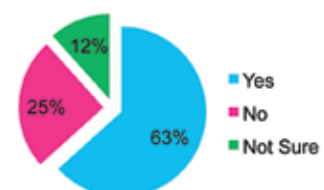


- Roads are a cause for concern for many residents, in particular the speeds that people travel through on their way to the retail park at Straiton.
- There is a desire to see safer routes for children to travel to school/bus stop. On some stretches of roads there are no pavements at all.
- Safer cycle routes would also be desirable as 37% of respondents currently use cycling as an alternative form of transport.

### Should speed restrictions be introduced on the following roads?



### Development of a network of safe paths, bridleways and cycle routes?





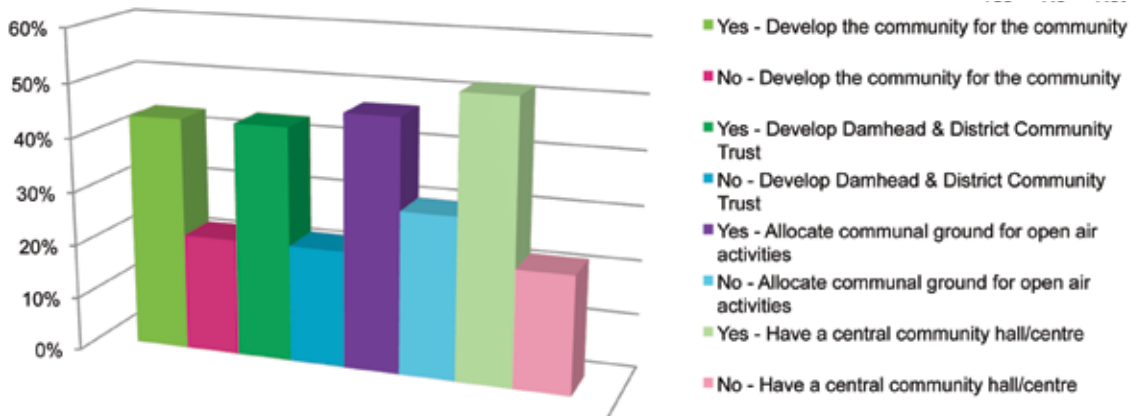
## FINDINGS – COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT

- While a relatively small community (from a population perspective) from the response rate received residents are keen to give input into the future of their community.
- The charts show how people feel about the various possibilities for developing the community as a whole.
- While the option of encouraging tourism got a fairly low response, initiatives to benefit the community as a whole and bring them together seem desirable

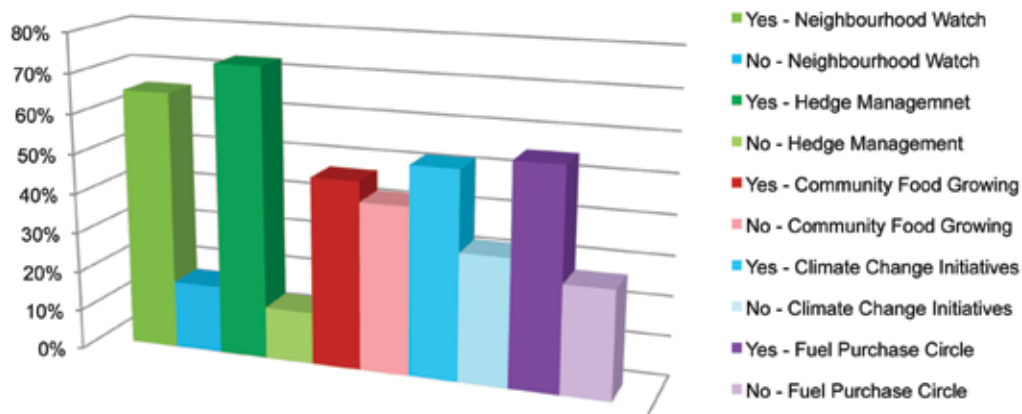
Utilise Buildings

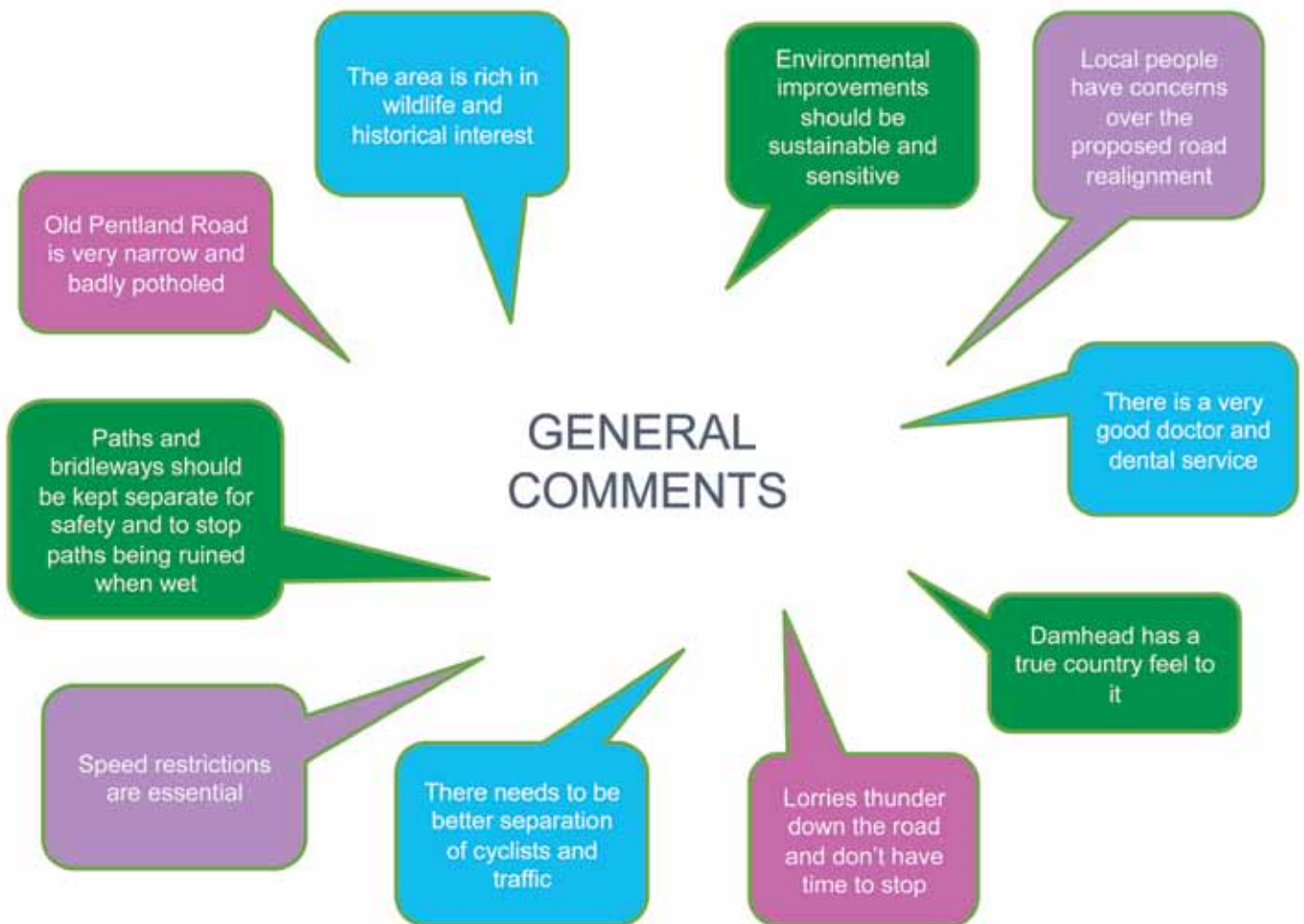


Develop Tourism



- The questionnaire highlighted a number of possible initiatives that could be entered into as a community. The responses are noted below.
- While the response is generally positive a number of respondents commented that residents should be responsible for their own hedge management, climate change initiatives and growing their own produce. For the latter there is also a concern about who would take overall responsibility for such an area, and ensure it is well kept, secure etc.
- With regards to the fuel purchase circle it would be important to ensure that all fuel types are covered





#### 4.1 Residents' Comments from the Come Pin Your Hopes on Damhead and District Planning for Real/World Cafe Event

**"I just feel I belong to somewhere now."**

**"Small changes and improvements can make a huge impact on individuals and the community"**

**"I would like to beautify Damhead taking care of its appearance by enhancing hedgerows, flower beds, tidy gardens, rebuild & fix fences, and replanting in Damhead area"**

**"I would like a community hub/space – art projects, events, a vegetable shop, craft shop, skill sharing, and job sharing in the Damhead area"**

**"I would like a community notice board at Burnside Road, with a map of the area and businesses, a project space, canvas events, openings, projects."**

**"I would like arts space / workshop / coffee shop in Damhead"**

**"Develop a Land Use Strategy for Damhead which will include food growing projects. Damhead is a rich food growing area with a food production heritage of very good quality of land".**

**"The cumulative effect of existing and proposed developments will completely change the nature of Damhead – the rural aspect will be lost. Residents strongly opposed further development and houses in this area".**

**"I worry that the green belt will decrease over time – from a green belt to green wedges to green corridors"**

## 4.2 Local children’s perspective on the future of their community

**“We need a bus shelter; no more deer; more rabbits, badgers, foxes, wolves and birds; no more rubbish dug into the ground, it kills birds; Speed cameras on the A703; more trees, grass bushes, predators and less deer; lights in the bus shelter; Do not cut down trees, plant trees; No more pollution, smoke, cars or lorries; no more plastic, no more stuff to make you beautiful, more earth ships; more train tracks more bus tracks, no more big shops”**

This is a drawing by one of the children that attended the event, and this is what he wished for the future of his community, with the image of a play park with a climbing frame, slide and grass.



## 5. Community Concerns and Aspirations in Damhead and District

### 5.1 Roads, infrastructure and maintenance

#### 5.1.1 People of Damhead want safe transport and travel, including roads, access, pavements.

Concerns arose through the community questionnaire and engagement event about the speed and amount of

traffic on local roads. In particular there are numerous accidents on the Old Pentland Road, and at the junction with the A702 and A703. In addition the pavements in the area are in a very poor state and improvements are required to ensure safe crossing options to bus stops and so on.

On the A703 the Damhead bus stop is located just after a bend and before the junction with the Burnside. High speeds makes it dangerous to stop and difficult for the bus drivers to see passengers.

The idea of a community bus system to support the growing population of elderly residents and to complement the limited public transport options available was also suggested.

The issues raised are noted below and prioritised as follows:

#### 5.1.2 Realignment of A701

There is almost universal community consensus that these proposals would be hugely detrimental to the local area. The new planning proposal to re-align the A701 would decimate Damhead by virtually dividing it in two and laying it open to even more development. It would remove a large area of Green belt and grade 2 agricultural land vital to us in realising our vision.

The proposed published realignment route of the A701 would do nothing to alleviate existing morning rush hour traffic problems on the A702, A703 and A701. In fact it fails to meet the original reasoning for realigning the A701 and indeed will potentially increase travel times from Edinburgh to the Life Sciences developments at the Bush. It has been observed over a period of time the traffic congestion on the A720 City ByPass is caused by the volume of traffic accessing this route from numerous on-ramps over a short distance i.e. Sheriffhall, Gilmerton Junction, Lasswade, Lothianburn and Dregghorn Junctions. It is the volume of westbound traffic on the A720 that causes the tailbacks on the A702, A703 and A701.



## Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030

The proposed road will stimulate conflict between developers and residents. This development requires consultation and in depth discussion, to allow a potential agreement to embrace opinions from both sides.

### 5.1.3 Speed Restrictions and Weight Limits

Speed restrictions on the A703, Old Pentland Road and Burnside Road were also a high priority for residents, who felt that a 40mph limit would be appropriate.

Old Pentland Road is wholly unsuited to the speed and volume of cars and heavy goods vehicles that traverse it. The solutions proffered by residents are that a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes should apply to Old Pentland Road except for Emergency and Public Utility Vehicles. Any other vehicles over this weight requiring access to Lafarge Topmix and McKenzie Waste Transfer would enter Old Pentland Road from the A701. The associated road traffic signs to be sited at relevant locations. It was also suggested that Old Pentland Road be made One Way with access from the A701 or alternatively via the Burnside Road.

Traffic calming measures were suggested for Burnside Road especially since there are no pavements.

### 5.1.4 Junction of A702/A703/Old Pentland Road

There was intense discussion on solutions to improve safety at this junction. These ranged from full time or peak time traffic lights, to an underpass/overpass/roundabout. This problem clearly requires further exploration.

### 5.1.5 General state of repair of roads (surfaces and drainage), pavements and hedges

While the general state of the roads in the area is poor the road surfaces on Old Pentland Road and Burnside Road in particular are in need of complete resurfacing with kerbing in some parts being non-existent due to vehicles mounting the pavement. Some of the ruts and potholes present a particular danger to pedal cyclists and motorcyclists.

Maintenance could include widening of some pavements, resurfacing, weeding and drop kerbs being installed at appropriate points. In their current state, some pavements are only usable on foot with difficulty, with anyone using a mobility scooter, pushing a wheelchair, pram or buggy having to use the roadway at places, with all the inherent risks associated with road traffic.

These issues are exacerbated further by some landowners/tenants not always maintaining their hedges on a regular basis, to the extent that at some locations pavements

are impassable for pedestrians and a danger to drivers during the growing season. For example, in the spring and summer months the line of sight of drivers exiting from Old Pentland Road onto the A702 is seriously obstructed because of plant growth between Old Pentland Road and the Car Wash; the junction is already difficult to negotiate without this added danger. Residents felt that MLC should be more proactive in enforcing hedge cutting on road stretches where there are particular safety issues. Related to this, where hedge cuttings, and in particular hawthorn cuttings, are left on the road surface this can often cause punctures to car and cycle tyres and injury to domestic and wild animals. Some form of road sweeping after cutting would help to minimise the problem.

Serious accumulations of surface water occur regularly at a number of locations on Old Pentland Road. This is most prevalent between A701 and the Old School House at Old Pentland, the Graveyard entrance and the Cameron Wood and the stretch of roadway between number 36 Holding and the entrance to numbers 24 and 25 Holdings. The drains would appear to have collapsed or are blocked with silt.

Better use of road markings and signs could also be used to improve safety, e.g. on the A702 on the Edinburgh approach side of the A702 prior to the sharp left hand bend at Hillend Farm, or on Penicuik bound side of the A703 at the approach to Damhead Cottages, or to mark the concealed entrance on the A703 to Damhead Cottages. Better road signage could also include green neighbourhood signs for passing traffic and visitors to emphasise the importance in which the residents hold their community.

### 5.1.6 Street lighting

Being a rural area, with dispersed dwellings, at present there is little street lighting in Damhead other than at the A702/A703 junction and towards the retail park. Consequently residents enjoy relatively "dark skies" with all the health and recreational benefits that this brings. However, some residents expressed a desire to see some street lighting in Damhead, whilst others wanted the rural character to remain. Further discussion and mapping of the options are required. For example the possibility of carefully positioned lighting around the community (i.e. at bus-stops) could improve safety, particularly for younger and older residents. Downward pointing LED street lights are now available and can be installed with timers that do not affect the darkness of the skies, and are cheaper, more efficient and have less maintenance issues than the conventional orange lights.

### 5.1.7 Bus Stops/Shelters

A bus shelter is located on the Edinburgh bound side of the A703 near to Damhead Nursery. Residents complain that bus drivers cannot see them at the bus stop during the hours of darkness. It is requested that some form of lighting be installed with electric lighting being the preferred option although the suggestion of solar lighting is viewed as an alternative. Similarly it was requested that a shelter be erected on the Penicuik bound side of the road at Damhead Nursery (also equipped with some form of lighting) which would provide shelter for local children taking public transport to school.

Residents were also keen to explore whether there is the demand, and potential, to introduce later evening buses along the A703 route given that the last number 15 bus to Damhead leaves Edinburgh at 6pm.



## 5.2 Community development ideas and community spirit

### 5.2.1 Community development ideas

The Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has been inspired by nearby neighbours such as Howgate, Penicuik, La Mancha and Carlops establishing community facilities and renewable projects. Examples of these include funded community halls, woodlands, wind turbines and community growing spaces. There is a real opportunity for us to develop community facilities, hubs and renewable projects within the Damhead and District area due to the abundance of open space and natural resources. This could provide our community with a range of facilities, an efficient and renewable source of energy, and a source of funding which could be used to support local community ventures, such as establishing a community hub. A number of residents also mentioned The Bing, as well as potentially extending the Bridle Paths, Cycle Paths, Foot Paths to form a network connecting with Mortonhall, and via an underpass, Straiton, Hillend, Bilston, Cowslyn Path, Cameron Wood and Boghall.

Interest in a community hall was very high in the neighbourhood survey, and the Planning for Real event also demonstrated significant support for community facilities. This would include space that could be used for: community get-togethers for young and old alike; a coffee shop; an art workshop/space; information on local attractions; buying and selling local produce. There was also support to consider community ownership of a piece of land which could be managed as a local natural resource – to make walking links with other local communities and Pentland Regional Park; to provide a community resource where residents and visitors can partake in a range of outdoor activities; to establish a community farm or garden.

A first step towards establishing and funding community projects or to acquire community assets would be to explore which mechanism would most help us develop our shared objectives within the Damhead and District area. For example, this could be through establishing a development trust or charity to have oversight of community projects. Interest in land could be transferred under an asset transfer from Midlothian Council – or alternatively through Community Right to Buy legislation – to a trust or charity who would manage assets on behalf of the community.

### 5.2.2 Community spirit

Residents who responded to the Neighbourhood Plan survey and/or participated in the Planning for Real event were very positive and supportive of activities and events that bring the community together, that help make links between people and place, and which bolster community spirit. For example, there was strong support for the continuation of the annual community lunch and litter picks, and a desire to build on this through the provision of more opportunities for people to come together e.g. bus shelter cleaning. Many residents expressed concern about the litter problem in Damhead, which ranges from rubbish thrown from passing vehicles to deliberate fly



## Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030



tipping. The community has an annual “litter pick” but unsightly litter quickly builds up again.

There may also be opportunities for the Red Cross to arrange transportation to allow senior residents to attend regular events. The idea of a Community Bus system was popular, particularly amongst older residents, and could be supported by the Red Cross. It may also be possible for surrounding Community Councils to participate in a joint venture.

There was also support to develop community resilience through establishing a community network. This could include supporting isolated individuals during periods of extreme weather (e.g. storms, heavy snow, flooding etc.); raising awareness of local crime and threats (e.g. attempted thefts, flood warnings etc.); and supporting vulnerable individuals to share in news and information on community activities and achievements.

It was suggested that a community notice board would allow local residents, particularly those not on the internet/email, to share information and keep everyone informed of developments. Furthermore, fingerposts identifying property numbers/house names was a popular request. It appears that fingerposts have been erected at some locations and not others. Residents are often asked for directions to particular locations, and a standardisation of signage would be beneficial provided they are sited in a prominent location.

There was interest in developing a local history project to record memories, collate photographs, maps and local stories as well as information on the wide range of

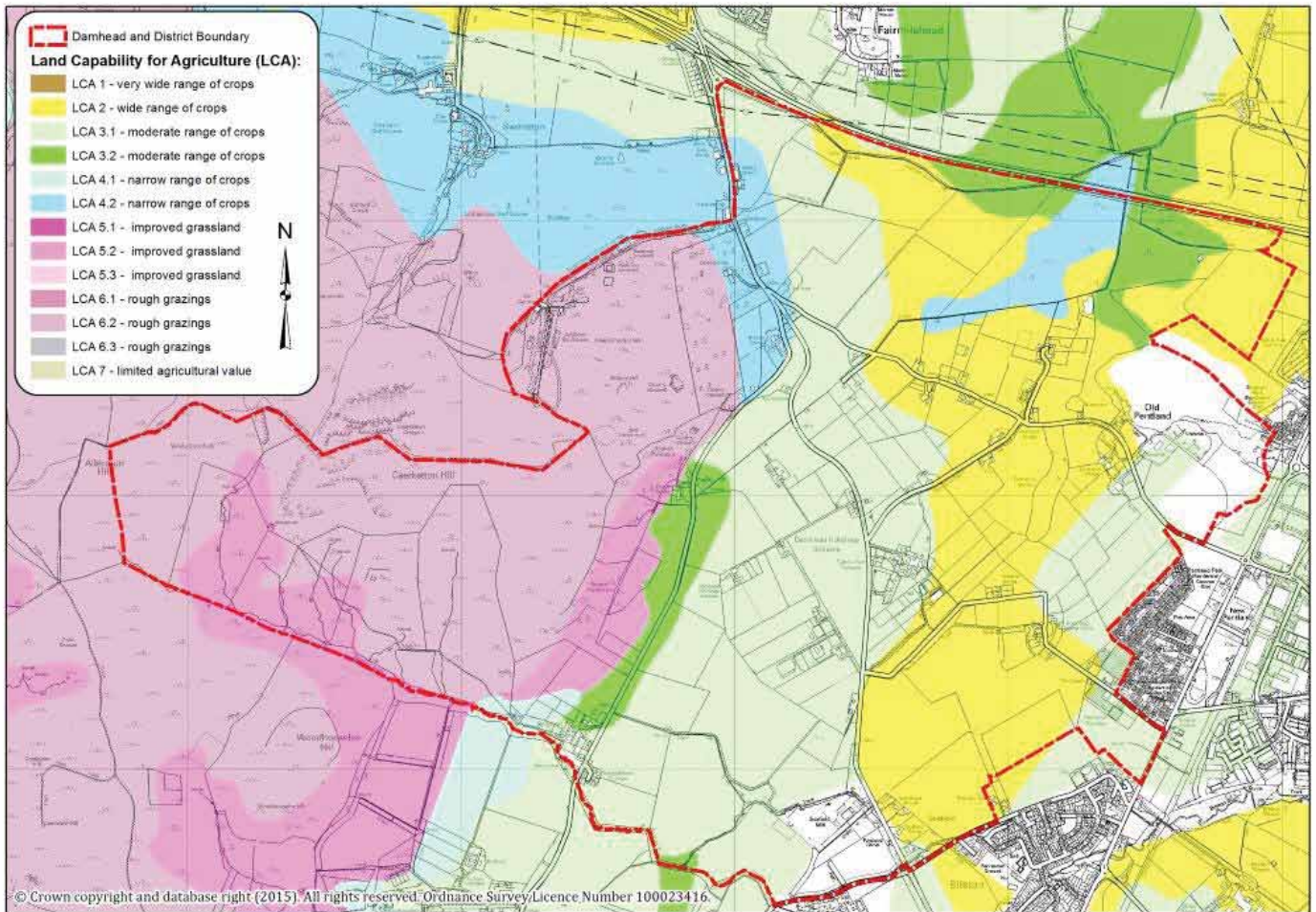
current innovative and productive activities taking place across the community. This could include, for example, the local hay festival and film; local growth of orchids; and emerging green businesses.

### 5.3 Environment and land use

Damhead & District is a rural community which despite enormous development pressure on all sides has maintained its rural character. It has strong agricultural connections at Pentlandfield (an important centre for potato breeding that led to development of some of the famous Pentland varieties), and Scotland’s Rural College (SRUC) at Boghall Farm. Much of the land is good quality agricultural land (grade 2) suitable for growing arable crops (see map), whereas the more upland areas are better suited to the rearing of livestock (e.g. Boghall Farm).

Damhead & District features significant areas of green space, in addition to the agricultural land, in the form of Erraid Wood, Cameron Wood and Straiton Bing and of course the Pentland Hills Regional Park which is partly within our District. Remnants of a neglected network of footpaths exist, and many of the roads through the community have pavements.

As the “Green Gateway to Midlothian” it is an area that is attractive to both residents and visitors, and is highly valued by residents – over 58% of questionnaire respondents said there should be minimal change to the area and a further 20% stated that it is precious and there should be no change at all.



### 5.3.1 Green networks

Residents indicated via the initial survey and the community engagement day that they wanted:

- More trees and bushes
- Small foot paths
- Better maintenance of footpath networks
- To develop new cycle paths, and enhance the existing cycle paths across the whole geographical area of Damhead

- Better wild life and woodland networks
- Strategy for hedge management to ensure optimum timing and method of cutting
- Community buy out for Cameron Wood and Straiton Bing to maintain green spaces and promote local natural resources and nature reserves.

A green network is a set of connected areas of green space and habitats such as parks, paths, hedgerows and woodlands within an urban or suburban region which provide a range of social, ecological and economic benefits such as increasing the quality of life within an area.

## Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030

The main elements of a green network in Damhead & District could include:

- **Hedges:** Most of the roads crossing Damhead & District have hedgerows – mainly hawthorn, with beech in places. These hedges are important for wildlife, and providing shelter for livestock. Currently the hedges on main roads are cut once a year. Annual cutting means no flowering as hawthorn bears its flowers and fruit on the previous year's growth. Road safety and visibility issues should determine cutting regimes along sections of roads, but on some sections and side roads, a longer cycle of cutting every 2 or 3 years would be better for wildlife, cost the Council less money and carbon, and result in fewer injured animals and cycle punctures!
- **Road verges and field margins:** In Damhead many of the footpaths use the road edges/verges and field margins and so the way these areas are managed is important. Road verges and field margins are also important for the flowering plants and wildlife they support. The way they are managed (frequency and timing of their cutting, keeping ploughing back from field edge) can greatly affect their attractiveness and value for wildlife. In general, road verges should be left uncut until plants have flowered and set seed; where this cannot be achieved for reasons of road safety/visibility then the fore verge can be cut short while the back of the verge is left to complete its flowering cycle. Uncultivated strips around the edges of some fields can be allowed to develop some wildlife interest and provide space for paths.



**Green spaces** Damhead & District is fortunate to have several green spaces within its boundary. Cameron Wood (privately owned), Erraid Wood Reserve (owned by SWT) and Straiton Bing (owned by Midlothian Council). These green spaces provide places to relax, observe nature and the landscape within the community. Access to Erraid Wood Reserve is encouraged by SWT. Currently access to both Cameron Wood and Straiton Bing is difficult.





- A food market
- Community poly-tunnels, orchards, allotments and bee-keeping as part of a move to become a (more) sustainable community



- **Footpaths:** Build on network of core paths and maintain existing/lapsed network of paths around the community – some of which were previously funded by the Green Belt Trust.

Much of the land in Damhead & District is good quality agricultural land suitable for growing arable crops. In the recent past, Damhead was an important market garden area with greenhouses supplying Edinburgh with salad vegetables etc. At the Planning for Real day, Damhead residents expressed interest in a local food growing project.

There are a number of different options that could be explored that range from a full community supported farm to community polytunnels, and a community orchard, and different funding mechanisms available for each of these.



- **Cycle paths:** Currently Damhead is not a safe place for cyclists. Many cyclists use the main roads through Damhead to commute between Edinburgh and e.g. Edinburgh Science Park at the Bush.
- **Bridleways:** Damhead is a popular area for stabling horses with several livery yards located in the area. Riding opportunities within the community are limited due to the busy main roads that cut across the area, therefore it would be advantageous to support the development of a network of bridleways linking e.g. Pentland Hills, the Bush Estate and Roslin as part of a footpath plan.



### 5.3.2 Community food growing project

As part of the community engagement day, various options were discussed such as:

- A community garden
- A community farm

### 5.4 Looking ahead to Damhead 2030: a longer term vision

Climate change is happening and the latest United Nations report (September 2013) confirms that we are likely to see a two degree increase in global warming. This will have major impacts around the world and also here in Scotland, including Damhead.

Through the community questionnaire and community engagement event, there was a significant level of interest in climate change. However, many residents felt that they did not understand what climate change meant in practical terms for Damhead; what the potential options were for Damhead over the next 20 years; or how to go about putting these options into practice. The community tour of local initiatives hugely inspired local residents as to what could be achieved in practice over the short term, as well as potential aspirations for the longer term. Our aim is to be a proactive community that wants to show local leadership and innovation in the way that it tackles climate change.



## 6. What we'll do: Damhead and District Action Plan

Local Community Theme	Key Issues	Actions Proposed	Timescales	Lead Group/Agency
<b>Planning</b>	Midlothian Local Development Plan (MLDP) does not share vision for Damhead	Lobbying to ensure that applications are properly considered within the broad themes of the Plan such as maximising agricultural land, tree preservation, traffic safety and noise pollution	Short  Medium	Damhead & District Community Council and individuals
<b>Transport</b> <b>Realignment of</b> <b>A701/A703</b>	Concern about damage to green belt and grade 2 agricultural lands	To engage with key decision makers to highlight community views	Short term	Midlothian Council Councillors  Midlothian Council Planning Department  MSPs, Damhead & District Community Council
<b>Transport</b> <b>Road Safety</b>	Speed restrictions needed on A703, Burnside Road and Old Pentland Road	Review with Key Agencies	Short term	Midlothian Council, Transport Scotland, BEAR, Community reps
<b>Transport</b> <b>Buses</b>	Poor lighting in bus shelters  Lack of a bus shelter on A703  Need for a later bus service	To meet with MC re options concerning lighting and bus shelter  To explore service options with Lothian Buses	Short term  Medium term	Midlothian Council  Damhead & District Community Council   Lothian Buses
<b>Transport</b> <b>Maintenance</b>	Ruts, potholes, lack of kerbs, hedges obstructing pavements , undermining traffic visibility	Liaise with MC re road/ pavement maintenance plans, hedge cutting etc.  Produce map of hedges overgrowing pavements and roads. Advise Council on verges which can be left uncut to encourage bio-diversity.	Short term	Midlothian Council, Scottish Water, Local Landowners   Damhead & District Community Council and/or community reps
<b>Transport</b> <b>Lighting</b>	Contention over street lighting	Further discussion and mapping of the options is required	Medium to long term	Midlothian Council  Damhead & District Community Council
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Assets and Facilities</b>	Local interest in developing community facilities	Investigate development of community facilities and projects eg development trust or charity	Short term	Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group  Damhead & District Community Council
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Assets and Facilities</b>	Local interest in community ownership of land	Register interest in relevant land eg the Straiton Bing.  Develop business case and fund raising strategy for community facilities and renewable energy sources	Short Term	Damhead & District Development Trust  Friends of the Bing Group  Damhead& District Development Trust

## Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan 2015 – 2030

Local Community Theme	Key Issues	Actions Proposed	Timescales	Lead Group/Agency
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Community spirit</b>	Local interest in events bringing community together	Arrange annual community lunch and other community events	Short term	Damhead & District Community Council
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Community spirit</b>	Concern about litter	Arrange litter picks	annual	Damhead & District Community Council
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Community spirit</b>	Recording our community	Exhibition of local history and current innovative activities in community	Medium term	Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Community resilience</b>	Local support for community resilience initiatives	Establish community network and contingency plans to aid potentially vulnerable people	Short –medium term	Damhead & District Community Council, Damhead and District Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group, Midlothian Council Adult Services Midlothian Council Contingency Planning Red Cross Damhead Climate Change Group
<b>Community Development</b> <b>Community resilience</b>		Community Noticeboards erected centrally	Short term	Damhead & District Community Council  Elected Members Midlothian Council
<b>Green network</b>	Local wish for connected areas of green space, paths, hedgerows, woodlands, cycleways and bridleways	Work with relevant partners to map and implement D&D green network to manage landscape and develop integrated pathways, bridleways and cycle ways.  Map hedgerows and verges to prioritise cutting regime  Build on network of core paths (see p17) and maintain existing/lapsed network of footpaths	Medium term	Damhead & District Community Council Landowners  Edinburgh University  Central Scotland Green Network  Scotland's Rural College (formerly SAC)
<b>Rural Land Use</b>	local identity and strategic role	Bring together relevant partners to identify and agree priorities for promoting and supporting local land use. Develop a Damhead Community Land-Use Strategy.	Medium to long term	Midlothian Council  Scottish Water  Scottish Wildlife Trust  Scottish Heritage etc  Damhead & District Community Council

Local Community Theme	Key Issues	Actions Proposed	Timescales	Lead Group/Agency
<b>Community Food</b>	Local residents expressed interest in food growing project	Explore options for Damhead food project in support of the Edinburgh Food Belt	Short to medium term	Climate Challenge Fund Damhead & District Community Council Edinburgh Sustainable Food City Initiative (Edible Edinburgh) Damhead & District Development Trust Other Community Groups (Edinburgh and Lothians)
<b>Vision 2030 Climate Action</b>	To develop a vision of what a low carbon and climate resilient Damhead in 2030 could look like and ensure that future action plans help lead towards this	Set up a Damhead Climate Change Group to hold a series of community conversations and events to explore the implications of climate change for our community and to identify priorities for the short and long term.	Short term	Damhead Climate Change Group  Midlothian Climate Change Groups
<b>Vision 2030 Energy efficiency</b>	Local interest in improving energy efficiency of housing stock	To seek free advice on how to improve household energy efficiency and identify what measures are available to reduce energy and costs. To hold a meeting and invite speakers/advisors.	Medium term	Damhead Climate Change Group  Damhead & District Development Trust Energy Savings Trust Home Energy Scotland
<b>Vision 2030 Heating</b>	To source cleaner, greener, cheaper fuel	To establish a fuel purchasing group to both reduce costs and seek carbon savings, e.g. for oil, gas, wood, etc.	Short term	Damhead Climate Change Group Damhead & District Community Council Damhead & District Development Trust
<b>Vision 2030 Flooding risk</b>	Impacts from extreme weather and changing climate	To examine how land use change can either reduce or aggravate flood potential or soil erosion.	Medium term	Damhead Climate Change Group Damhead & District Community Council Landowners / Managers
<b>Vision 2030 Local businesses</b>	Moving towards climate neutral Damhead	To work with local businesses towards the Damhead and District climate goals.	Medium to long term	Damhead Climate Change Group Damhead & District Community Council Damhead & District Development Trust
<b>Vision 2030 Viable bus service</b>	Maintain sustainable bus service	Encourage increased use of buses, and modal shift from car to bus for commuters, residents and visitors	medium to long term	Damhead & District Community Council Edinburgh Science Park Lothian Buses Damhead Climate Change Group

### 7. Appendix 1

#### History of Damhead

King Malcolm in the 12th century created the Barony of Pentland, over which our community council extends, and bestowed the lands and title on St. Clair of Roslin. In the manner of the time, the baron would endow a church for the villagers of Pentland, an area now known as Old Pentland. Following Reformation of the church came the rise of the Covenanters who signed a “Solemn League and Covenant” to worship and govern their church in their own way. Some of the most active Covenanters lived in the village of Pentland. It was here that the first Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland was established under the ministry of James Renwick who was later hanged in the Grassmarket for his beliefs. Nothing remains of that original building. Covenanter gatherings, known as Conventicles, worshipped at places in the Pentland Hills for safety. The Battle of Rullion Green saw the slaughter and demise of the Covenanters of Pentland. Rather than any one church faction admitting to any form of worship there, Pentland Kirk “fell between stools”. In 1647 it is recorded that the villagers of Pentland would go to Lasswade Church. Pentland Kirk building fell into disuse and disrepair and became no more than a comment on old maps. Its foundations were recently the subject of an archaeological dig confirming its existence and age from

pottery shards discovered. Some of the tombstones from ancient times are still there and the gravestones carved in the manner of the Crusaders are stored in the Watch House. The tombstones of some notable Covenanters have been removed to Roslin Chapel and to Huntly House Museum in the Canongate, but their graves remain in Old Pentland Kirkyard.

The Barony had fallen into disuse and the lands were purchased in 1633 by a member of the Gibsone family who still own some stretches of land and the Graveyard to this day. The Watch House was erected as a shelter for those guarding the recently buried, from grave robbers seeking fresh bodies for the Anatomists. There was one case of grave robbing from the graveyard recorded in a newspaper of 1742.

After centuries of disrepair, Old Pentland Conservation Group restored and repaired much of the damage and this interesting site can be visited and its peace and tranquility enjoyed.







# Old Pentland Kirkyard

**Lost Church and Ancient Kirkyard**  
 No evidence remains above the ground of the 13<sup>th</sup> century church which once existed here but, the position of the Mausoleum and the lack of gravestones in one particular part of the site might indicate where it once stood.



A 13th century crusader returns to Old Pentland

It served as the parish church in the area until Roslyn Chapel was built in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century. The barony of Pentland was granted to the St Clairs of Roslin by King Malcolm in the 11th century. It was bought by the Gibsons family in 1633. The Gibson Trust still retains ownership of the Kirkyard.



## The Arnold Stones

If you look inside the Watch House you will see two stones believed to date from the 13<sup>th</sup> /14<sup>th</sup> century, which may be associated with knights of from this period. Nearby the Knight Templars had their headquarters at Temple.

The Fleury cross head, calvary cross base and cross may indeed represent the symbols for a crusading knight, though we may never know for sure. Discovered by Thomas Arnold in 1856 they were later found as copes stones in the perimeter wall to the left of the watch house.

## The Watch House and Resurrections

The Watch House was constructed to provide shelter for the family to watch over the grave until the body was of no use to the 'Anatomists'

In 1742, the "Caledonian Mercury" reported on one of the first cases of grave robbing! A child's body had been taken from this Kirkyard. John Gordon, hoped to be paid for the body by the Anatomists, but he was caught after he tried to enter through the city gates of Edinburgh carrying the body. He was brought to justice both by the law and an angry mob.







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Körler için kabartma yazılar, kaset ve büyük nüshalar da dahil olmak üzere, istenilen bilgileri sağlamak ve tercüme etmekten memnuniyet duyarız.

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