

# **Findings from a community survey on a revitalisation scheme for Crieff**

**Dawn Griesbach  
Griesbach & Associates**

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**Griesbach & Associates**

*Social Research for Policy and Practice*

Tel: 07921 199655

Email: [d.griesbach@griesbach-research.co.uk](mailto:d.griesbach@griesbach-research.co.uk)

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Thank you to the many individuals throughout Crieff who distributed copies of the questionnaire, or who told their friends, family, neighbours and colleagues about it. The members of CUSP played an important role in distributing questionnaires in their neighbourhoods, and we would also acknowledge the support we received from the managers of Duchlage Court and Strathearn Court in distributing and collecting questionnaires from their residents.

We are grateful to the young people from Morrison's Academy, the Logos Youth Centre and Crieff High School who took part in the group discussions. Thank you to Angela McClusky from Morrison's Academy and Robert MacDonald from Logos for their help in enabling these discussions to happen.

Finally, thank you to the residents of Crieff who took the time to take part in this survey.

## **A note about terminology**

To improve readability, throughout this report the following terms will be used to refer to the different groups who took part in the Crieff Community Survey:

- **Crieff residents:** People who live in Crieff
- **Crieff locals:** People who live in the PH7 postcode area, but outside of Crieff. These are residents of neighbouring villages including Gilmerton, Monzie, Fowlis Wester, Madderty and others.
- **Non-resident workers:** These are people who do not live in the PH7 postcode area, but who work in Crieff
- **Survey respondents:** Includes people from all three groups.

## **A note about quotations in the report**

Throughout this report, quotes from respondents are used to illustrate the particular points being discussed. Each quote is followed by a number in brackets, which represents the respondent number (i.e., the respondent ID number) in the SurveyMonkey database.

## **Executive Summary**

1. This report presents the findings of a survey carried out among people who live and work in the town of Crieff, in western Perthshire. The survey was commissioned by the Crieff and Upper Strathearn Partnership (CUSP), with funding provided by Perth & Kinross Council.
2. The survey sought to obtain the views of a representative sample of the town's population about a range of issues affecting the town. It comprised twenty-three questions, including five open-ended questions, covering the following topics:
  - Colour-theming of lamp posts, railings and street furniture in the town, and new welcome signs at the entrance to the town
  - Car parking in the town centre
  - Transportation and traffic-related issues
  - Social, cultural and leisure facilities
  - Land for sale between MacRosty Park and Lady Mary's Walk
  - Improving the appearance of Crieff town centre
  - Other aspirations.
3. The aim was to get local people's views about where improvements were needed and what the priorities for action should be.

### ***Who participated in the survey?***

4. The survey was open to people over 18 who lived in Crieff or in the surrounding PH7 postcode area, and people who worked in Crieff.
5. The findings reported here are based on an analysis of 654 responses. Of these: 555 (84.9%) were from Crieff residents — comprising 11.0% of the town's population of over-18s; 62 (9.5%) were from Crieff locals and 37 (5.7%) were from non-resident workers.
6. The demographic profile of the survey sample is broadly representative of the demographic profile of the wider population of Crieff. The sample was also geographically representative in that people living in all areas of Crieff took part.
7. The views of young people under 18 were obtained through separate discussion groups carried out with young people from Morrison's Academy, Logos and Crieff High School.

### ***Colour-theming and new welcome signs***

8. The majority of respondents (71.1%) would like to have the town's street lamps and street furniture painted a co-ordinated set of colours, rather than retaining the current, uncoordinated colour scheme. Of the colour options suggested in the survey, there were marginally more respondents who preferred burgundy with gold trim over green with gold trim.
9. There was support for the creation of new welcome signs for the town. The preferred choice for the wording of the sign was, "Welcome to Crieff — Heart of

Strathearn”, and the preferred image for the sign was the Coat of Arms of the Burgh of Crieff.

### ***Car parking, traffic and transportation issues***

10. Seven out of ten respondents (71.3%) agreed with a statement that more parking was needed in Crieff. However, nearly eight in ten (78.4%) felt that a multi-storey car park should not be built in the town centre. There was no clear support either for or against a park-and-ride scheme in Crieff.
11. Two-thirds of respondents (65.4%) stated that they would prefer a change in current arrangements for parking charges, so that there is *free* parking in the King Street and Leadenflower car parks and *paid* parking in the High Street and James Square.
12. In relation to traffic and transportation-related issues, 84.2% of respondents agreed with a statement that there should be better co-ordination between local and national public transportation services, and 61.7% agreed that there should be a by-pass in Crieff to take heavy traffic out of the town centre. Six out of ten (59.8%) agreed that there should be a bus service from Crieff to the park-and-ride service in Perth (to connect with national buses), and about half (53.7%) felt that a bus and coach station should be provided in Crieff. However, there was less support for moving the bus stops from the High Street, or restoring James Square to allow traffic flow on either side (as it did historically).
13. Issues to do with traffic, parking, transportation and pedestrianisation were among the major themes arising from the open-ended questions in the survey. In general, people wanted to see better enforcement of existing parking restrictions (i.e., a reduction in parking on double-yellow lines), more frequent buses to Dunblane and Stirling, and a more frequent and extended town bus service.

### ***Social, cultural and leisure facilities***

14. Survey respondents were asked their views about whether there was a need for new or additional social, cultural and leisure facilities in Crieff. A list of ten suggestions was given in the questionnaire, and respondents were asked to indicate which three would be their top priorities. Respondents were also given space to write in other suggestions. Of the 10 facilities listed in the questionnaire, those that were considered to be the top three priorities for the town were: (i) a community centre / community hall — in the town centre; (ii) a cinema / film club; and (iii) a place to hold small concerts and gigs.
15. In the open-ended question, there were a considerable number of comments to suggest that people would like to see the library (or a branch of the library) return to the centre of town. There was also a desire for additional sporting facilities. Those mentioned most frequently were public tennis courts (ideally in MacRosty Park) and improved provision for cycling — i.e., a more extensive cycle (and mountain bike) network, more bicycle racks (especially in James Square and at the supermarkets) and a BMX track.
16. Respondents also wanted to see additional social / cultural facilities in Crieff. Suggestions mentioned most frequently were for: a performing / visual arts

centre; a nightclub / venue for dances (tea dances, ceilidhs); more activities and a space for young people to socialise; and indoor play space for families with young children (a soft play area).

### ***Purchase of land near Lady Mary's Walk***

17. Over two years ago, it came to the attention of CUSP that an area of land between the bridge at Turretbank Road and Lady Mary's Walk (along the Turret Burn) was available for sale.
18. CUSP has explored the possibility of purchasing the land (for approximately £20,000) on behalf of the town of Crieff, and having it held in trust for the town by a local community body. Therefore, CUSP included a question on this issue in the community questionnaire, first to gauge the interest of the community in purchasing the land, and to ascertain whether it might be possible to obtain the purchase price through a fundraising campaign within the town.
19. A substantial majority of respondents (79.0%) were in favour of the land being purchased and held in trust for the community, and nearly three-fifths (59.9%) indicated they would be willing to contribute to a fundraising campaign to purchase the land.

### ***Possible uses for unoccupied buildings in the town centre***

20. There are a number of large buildings in the centre of Crieff which are currently unoccupied and which are being allowed to fall into disrepair. The survey asked the people of Crieff for their views about what could be done with four of these properties: the former Drummond Arms Hotel, the former Crown Hotel, the former South Church and Old St Michael's Church Hall.
21. Regarding the Drummond Arms Hotel, respondents were asked to indicate from a list of eight suggestions, whether they would like to see the hotel used for that purpose. The preferred use for the building was as a hotel – 82.5% of respondents agreed with a statement saying the building should be used for this purpose, and over half (55.8%) agreed strongly. However, the second and third preferred uses for the hotel were as a community centre or as a museum, with just over 60% of respondents agreeing with these two suggestions.
22. Because of its historic significance, there was a suggestion that the Drummond Arms could be purchased for the town through a community buy-out scheme. This suggestion was put to the people of Crieff in the community survey. It was explained that if this happened, it would put the responsibility of maintaining the building onto the town. However, it would also ensure that the building was used for the benefit of the town. Respondents were asked whether they would be in favour of the building being purchased in this way. Forty-seven percent of respondents (46.6%) thought the hotel should be purchased for the town, but nearly a quarter (23.2%) felt it should not, and nearly a third of respondents (30.2%) were not sure.
23. In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to write in their views about possible uses for the former Crown Hotel, Old St Michael's Church Hall and the former South Church. The most common suggestions were: a community

centre / community hall; flats / housing for local residents; a youth centre / soft play space for children; space for sport (climbing wall / ice rink), games (snooker, bingo) and exercise (yoga, pilates); an arts & crafts venue with workshops, exhibition and retail space; tourist accommodation; and a museum.

24. A number of respondents referred to the unoccupied buildings in the town centre as “eyesores”, and some called for the demolition of one or more of the buildings.

### ***Improving the appearance of the town centre***

25. The survey included three further questions about possible ways of improving the town centre. These questions asked for respondents’ views about: (i) whether a façade improvement scheme was needed for selected shops in the High Street; (ii) whether trees should be planted in Commissioner Street; and (iii) whether Perth & Kinross Council should take stronger measures to compel property owners to maintain their properties to a good standard.
26. The majority of respondents (87.7%) agreed that Perth & Kinross Council should take stronger measures to compel property owners to maintain their properties to a good standard. In addition, 86.5% felt that a façade improvement scheme was needed for selected shops in the High Street. However, views were mixed (51.8% agreed) about whether trees should be planted in Commissioner Street.
27. In an open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they had other suggestions for how the town centre could be improved. The main themes in the responses focused on: the physical appearance of shops and other properties in the town; the poor state of pavements; the range of businesses in the town; the opening hours of High Street shops; a need for better signage and public information for visitors and locals alike; concerns about the appearance of James Square; a request for more trees, flowers and greenery in the town centre; concerns about the trend towards moving services to the outskirts of town; and issues to do with anti-social behaviour.

### ***Needs for additional services or businesses***

28. In another open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire, respondents were asked about what other types of businesses or services they would like to see in Crieff. The largest proportion of comments focused on the perceived needs for: (i) a supermarket; (ii) a petrol station; (iii) shops that sold affordable clothing – particularly for children / young people; and (iv) good-quality restaurants, cafés or pubs.

### ***Views from young people under 18***

29. In the discussions with young people, the groups were asked for their views about what was needed to make Crieff a better place for them. Three things were named by all three groups: (i) a cinema; (ii) a shopping centre / better provision for clothes shopping; and (iii) a McDonalds.

### ***Conclusions***

30. The final chapter of the report summarises the findings and draws conclusions about areas for priority action.



# 1 Background and context

## Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the findings of a survey carried out among people who live and work in the town of Crieff, in western Perthshire. The survey was commissioned by the Crieff and Upper Strathearn Partnership (CUSP), with funding provided by Perth & Kinross Council.
- 1.2 The purpose of the survey was to obtain the views of a representative sample of the town's population about a range of issues affecting the town, including issues to do with parking; traffic and public transportation; social, cultural and leisure facilities; and the appearance of the town centre. The aim was to get local people's views — and to obtain information about the strengths of those views — about where improvements are needed and what those improvements should be.
- 1.3 The survey was carried out by Dawn Griesbach (Griesbach & Associates) with assistance from the members of CUSP.

## What is CUSP?

- 1.4 CUSP is a partnership body comprising representatives from local community and business groups, including the Community Council, the Tourist Association, the Crieff Residents' Association, Crieff in Leaf, the Sounds of Strathearn, the Crieff Community Initiative and the Drivers' Tryst Festival. The Partnership's meetings are also regularly attended by the three Perth & Kinross councillors who represent Strathearn, representatives of the Crieff Community Campus and, periodically, by the local press.
- 1.5 CUSP aims to identify social, economic and environmental projects for the benefit of Crieff and Upper Strathearn, and to source appropriate funding for those projects.

## About Crieff

- 1.6 Crieff is located in western Perthshire, approximately 16 miles west of Perth, on the southern edge of the Scottish Highlands. The current estimated population of Crieff is 7,470. This makes it the third largest town in the Perth & Kinross Council area, after Perth (pop. 44,820) and Blairgowrie (pop. 8,310).<sup>1</sup> Other towns in Scotland of a similar size to Crieff include:
  - Peebles in the Scottish Borders (pop. 8,160)
  - Oban in Argyll & Bute (pop. 8,120)
  - Thurso in Highland (7,470)
  - Kilbirnie in North Ayrshire (pop. 7,320).

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<sup>1</sup> General Register Office for Scotland (2010) Mid-2008 populations estimates for settlements and localities in Scotland. Table 2. Available at: <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/files2/stats/population-estimates/08mye-settlements-table2.pdf>.

- 1.7 At the time of the 2001 Census, the population of Crieff was 6,579, and thus the most recent (2008) population estimate suggests that the population of the town has increased by more than 10% in seven years.
- 1.8 Forty-eight percent (47.9%) of the town's population are males and 52% are females. Table 1.1 provides information about the age structure of the town's population at the time of the 2001 Census.

**Table 1.1: Age structure of Crieff, 2001**

Age range	Percentage of population	Number of people
0-15	20.17	1,327
16-17	2.98	196
18-29	10.01	659
30-44	19.88	1,308
45-59	18.88	1,242
60-74	16.81	1,106
75+	11.26	741
<b>0-90+</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>6,579</b>

Source: 2001 Census. See <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/census/censushm/scotcen2/reports-and-data/scotcen8.html>.

### Why was a survey needed in Crieff?

- 1.9 CUSP has been engaged in discussions with Perth & Kinross Council over a three-year period about how to make Crieff a better, more attractive place to live and work.
- 1.10 In October 2009, as requested by the Council, CUSP produced a detailed report which sought to identify and list each and every local authority and Scottish Government-owned street lighting column, signpost, railing and item of street furniture in the centre of Crieff and on the three main roads leading into the town. The report also contained background information on the Partnership's proposed Crieff Revitalisation Scheme as well as photographs and maps to illustrate the points being made. This report called for the standardisation and colour-theming of these items, as part of the Scheme.
- 1.11 The Council's response to the report was to ask CUSP to seek wider community engagement, and to support this, the Council provided a small grant to allow CUSP to undertake a survey of Crieff residents. This funding paid for printing of questionnaires and contributed to the cost of hiring a locally-based researcher to develop the questionnaire and carry out analysis.
- 1.12 CUSP took a decision to use the survey to gather the views of the community about a number of topics, including parking, traffic and transportation, the need for other facilities, services and business, and issues to do with town-centre regeneration. The survey sought to: (1) identify areas in the town needing improvement; and (2) obtain the views of residents about which areas should be given priority.

## 2 Methods

- 2.1 This section briefly describes the methods used to carry out the Crieff community survey.
- 2.2 This was an anonymous, self-completion questionnaire which was administered in hard-copy and in electronic formats.<sup>2</sup>

### Contents of the questionnaire

- 2.3 A questionnaire was drafted in consultation with the members of CUSP. It included 23 questions, the majority of which required a tick-box response. The following topics were covered:
- Colour theming of the lamp posts, railings and street furniture in the town, and new welcome signs at the entrance to the town
  - Car parking in the town centre
  - Transportation and traffic-related issues
  - Social, cultural and leisure facilities
  - Land for sale between MacRosty Park and Lady Mary's Walk
  - Improving the appearance of Crieff town centre
  - Other aspirations
- 2.4 The questionnaire also included five open-ended questions which required a written (text) response. The purpose of these questions was to allow respondents to elaborate on their responses, or raise other issues which may not have been addressed in the questionnaire.
- 2.5 Finally, although the questionnaire was anonymous, respondents were asked to specify their sex, age group and (if they were a resident of Crieff) the name of the street they lived on. This information was collected to ensure that a demographically and geographically representative sample of the resident population was obtained.
- 2.6 A copy of the questionnaire is available in Annex A.

### Administration of the survey

- 2.7 The survey was administered between 27 August and 15 October 2010.
- 2.8 Two thousand (2,000) copies of the questionnaire were printed, and 1,950 of these were ultimately distributed. The survey was intended for people aged 18 and over, who live in Crieff or the surrounding PH7 postcode area, or who work in Crieff. The views of younger people (under-18s) in Crieff were gathered through three discussion groups, described below.
- 2.9 Printed questionnaires were distributed in three ways:

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<sup>2</sup> The questionnaire could be completed on-line via SurveyMonkey. See [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com).

- Copies of the questionnaire were made available at four locations in the town: Houseproud (home hardware store) on the Perth Road; the *Strathearn Herald Office* on East High Street, the Tourist Information Office on the High Street and the public library at the Strathearn Community Campus.
  - Copies were distributed through “snowball sampling”. That is, members of CUSP gave copies to the constituencies they represented (members of the community council, Crieff in Leaf, Residents’ Association, etc.), and individuals in these groups were then asked to distribute copies in their own neighbourhoods and networks.
  - Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to every business in the High Street (including East and West High Street), James Square, Comrie Street and King Street. Sufficient copies were given to each business for every employee over the age of 18. In addition, copies were distributed to every employee of the Crieff Hydro (approximately 250 questionnaires).
- 2.10 Respondents could return their completed questionnaires in boxes specially provided at Houseproud, the *Strathearn Herald* office, the Tourist Information Centre, the library and the Crieff Hydro. In addition, the researcher (DG) collected completed questionnaires from businesses in the High Street, King Street and Comrie Street, and, in some instances, residents were able to return them to the distributor’s letterbox if that option was more convenient to them.
- 2.11 Data from the completed questionnaires was entered into a SurveyMonkey database.
- 2.12 The questionnaire was also made available on-line via SurveyMonkey, and the web address for this was printed in local newspapers, and on the paper questionnaires so that people in receipt of paper questionnaires could tell their neighbours, friends, colleagues and family members about how they could take part in the survey.
- 2.13 At the same time, the survey was publicised over several weeks through articles in the local newspapers and other publications (*The Strathearn Herald*, *The Strathallan News*, *The Crieff and Comrie Quair*) and through posters at the “polling” sites.

### **Getting the views of young people**

- 2.14 In developing the questionnaire, it was felt that only a subset of the questions would be relevant to younger people in the town. In addition, it was felt that the views of younger people would be better obtained through face-to-face discussions, rather than through a questionnaire. Therefore, the decision was taken to carry out focus group meetings with young people aged 12-18.
- 2.15 Two focus groups were held, one with young people at the Logos Youth Centre and one with students at Morrison’s Academy. In addition, an informal discussion took place with a group of students from Crieff High School during the Strathearn Community Campus Open Day held at the beginning of October.

- 2.16 Young people were asked their views about colour-theming of the town's lamp posts and street furniture, and about a possible new welcome sign for the town. In addition, they were asked their views about what was needed in the town: "If you had a magic wand, and could make Crieff a better place to live, what would you want to change?"

### **Analysis**

- 2.17 A descriptive analysis was undertaken of all survey responses. In addition, differences were explored between males and females; between Crieff residents and non-residents; and between people of different age groups. These differences are reported where they appeared to be substantial.
- 2.18 However, no statistical analysis has been undertaken, and so it is not known whether differences between different groups are statistically significant. If CUSP or Perth & Kinross Council would like to undertake further analysis of the data, for example, to determine whether differences between groups are statistically significant, the data can be made available for this. However, in our view, the purpose in undertaking this survey (i.e., to identify the views of local people about how the town should be improved, and what the priorities for this should be) would not require this additional analysis.
- 2.19 Comments to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire have been analysed qualitatively to identify main themes. However, where there were a substantial number of comments about a single issue, then we have also given information about the number of people who made those comments.
- 2.20 Data from the discussion groups with young people has been analysed descriptively, and the main themes from each group and across all groups have been identified.

### 3 Survey and focus group participants

- 3.1 This section describes the people who took part in the survey — not only those who completed a copy of the questionnaire, but also the young people who participated in group discussions.

#### Survey sample

- 3.2 Of the 1,950 printed questionnaires distributed, 545 (or 27.9%) were completed and returned. In addition, a further 179 individuals took part in the survey on-line via SurveyMonkey. Thus, a final sample of 724 was achieved.
- 3.3 The intention was to try to obtain a representative sample of the community. This was done, in part, by ensuring that the demographic profile of respondents roughly reflected the demographic profile of the adult (over 18) general population of Crieff, both in terms of sex and age group distribution.
- 3.4 Thus, a decision was taken to exclude 70 of the completed questionnaires from the main analysis. These questionnaires came from women over the age of 45, and their inclusion would have skewed the survey sample unacceptably, resulting in over-representation from older women in the town. The excluded questionnaires were the last 70 questionnaires received from women over the age of 45. They included 12 questionnaires from women aged 45-59, 19 from women aged 60-74 and 39 from women aged 75+.
- 3.5 A separate analysis was undertaken of the qualitative data (i.e., responses to the open-ended questions) from these questionnaires to ascertain the extent to which the themes arising in the excluded questionnaires corresponded to the themes arising from the main sample. As the themes emerging in these questionnaires largely mirrored those in the included questionnaires, it would seem that this approach did not introduce any bias. However, the main analysis in this report is based on **654 responses**. Of these:
- 555 (84.9%) were from Crieff residents — comprising 11.0% of the town's population of over-18s
  - 62 (9.5%) were from Crieff locals
  - 37 (5.7%) were from non-resident workers.
- 3.6 Table 3.1 on the following page shows the demographic profile of the survey respondents, and Table 3.2 provides a comparison of the demographic profile of respondents who were Crieff residents with the demographic profile of the general population of over-18s in Crieff.
- 3.7 Table 3.2 shows that in relation to both the sex and age group categories, the profile of the survey sample was within a  $\pm 5.5\%$  range of the proportions in the general population of over-18s. Therefore, we consider that the demographic profile of the survey sample is broadly representative of the demographic profile of the wider population of Crieff, although the youngest age group (18-29) were slightly under-represented.

**Table 3.1: Demographic profile of the survey sample**

		Crieff residents		Crieff locals		Non-resident workers	
		(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)	%
Total sample		555		62		37	
Sex							
	Males	255	45.9	29	46.8	17	45.9
	Females	300	54.1	33	53.2	20	54.1
Age group							
	18-29	47	8.5	7	11.3	7	18.9
	30-44	118	21.3	14	22.6	16	43.2
	45-59	164	29.5	23	37.1	9	24.3
	60-74	147	26.5	14	22.6	5	13.5
	75+	79	14.2	4	6.5	0	0.0

**Table 3.2: Comparison of the demographic profile of Crieff residents in the survey sample with the demographic profile of the general population of over-18s in Crieff**

	Survey respondents (Crieff residents only)		Population of Crieff over 18 (2001 Census)	
	(n)	%	(n)	%
Total population	555	100.0	5,056	100.0
Sex				
	Male	255	45.9	* 47.9
	Female	300	54.1	* 52.1
Age group				
	18-29	47	8.5	659 13.0
	30-44	118	21.3	1,308 25.9
	45-59	164	29.5	1,242 24.6
	60-74	147	26.5	1,106 21.9
	75+	79	14.2	741 14.7

\* Data was not available on the number and proportion of males and females in over-18 population of Crieff. The percentages shown here are for the entire population (aged 0-75+).

3.8 Survey respondents who were Crieff residents were also asked to state the name of the street they lived on. This was to ensure that the responses were geographically representative. The findings show that there were responses from individuals living in every part of Crieff. (Data not presented.)

### **Focus group participants**

3.9 Short informal discussions took place with young people from Morrison's Academy, Logos Youth Centre and the Crieff High School. The groups comprised:

- From Morrison's Academy – 12 young people (3 boys and 9 girls) aged between 15-17
- From Logos – 9 young people (3 boys and 6 girls) aged between 12-15
- From Crieff High School – 5 young people (3 boys and 2 girls) aged between 15-17.



## 4 Colour theming and new welcome signs

### Colour theming of lamp posts, railings and street furniture

4.1 There has been considerable discussion between CUSP, Perth & Kinross Council and Transport Scotland about the possibility of re-painting current local authority and government-owned lamp posts, railings and street furniture in the town centre.

4.2 It has been proposed that these items are painted a co-ordinated set of colours which, it was felt, would help to reflect the fact that the town’s residents care about its appearance. The two main colour options (burgundy with gold trim, or green with gold trim) were agreed by all parties, and one of the main purposes of the community survey was to gather the views of residents about which option they preferred. The choices given in the questionnaire were:

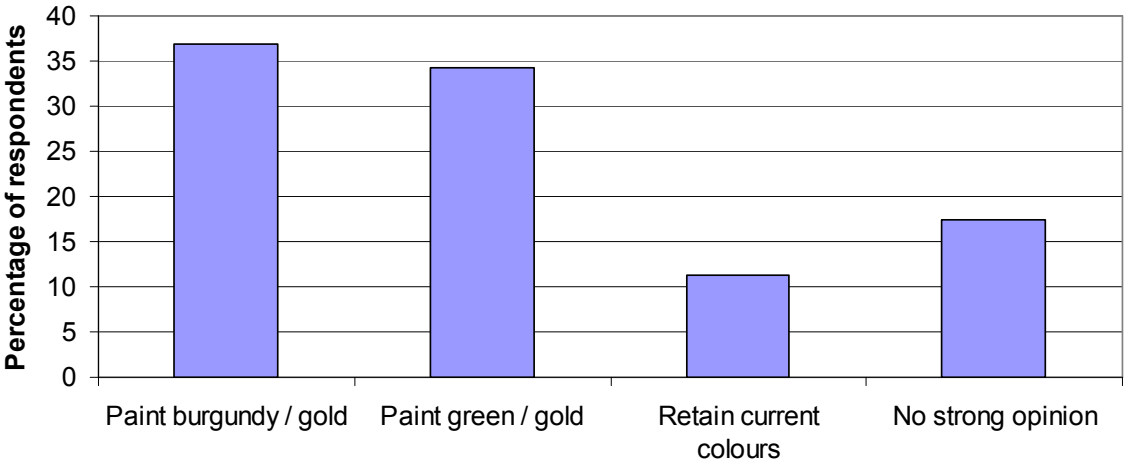
- To have lamp posts, railings and street furniture painted predominantly in burgundy, with gold trim
- To have lamp posts, railings and street furniture painted predominantly in green, with gold trim
- To have no change from the current colour scheme.

4.3 In addition, respondents were given the option of indicating that they had “no strong opinion” on the matter.

4.4 Figure 4.1 below shows the results. While there appeared to be no clear preference between burgundy with gold trim or green with gold trim, the findings nevertheless indicate that the majority of respondents (71.1% in total) would like to have the town’s street furniture painted a co-ordinated set of colours, rather than retaining the current, uncoordinated colour scheme.

4.5 The youngest and oldest respondents (aged 18-29 and 75+) were more likely than respondents in the other age groups to say that they had no strong opinion on this issue. Around 30% of 18- to 29-year-olds and a similar percentage of over-75s said this, compared to only 10-15% of other age groups.

**Figure 4.1: Preferences in relation to a town colour scheme**



4.6 A small number of individuals also wrote comments on their questionnaires about the issue of colour-theming. Two individuals felt that black, or black with gold trim would be better colours than any of those suggested. Two others commented that, since they could not be sure about the exact colours of burgundy and green proposed, it would be better to retain the current colour scheme, which is at least known. And finally, two individuals questioned the wisdom of spending money on painting lamp posts, when there were other (in their view) more serious problems needing to be addressed.

### New welcome signs

4.7 There has also been discussion within CUSP about replacing the welcome signs that currently stand at the entrance to Crieff. (The current welcome sign is shown in Figure 4.2 below.) To gauge the views of residents on this issue, two questions were included in the survey, asking survey participants their preferences in relation to: (a) possible wording of a new sign; and (b) images which could appear on the sign. The options in relation to wording were:

- Crieff welcomes you
- Crieff welcomes you — Heart of Strathearn
- Welcome to Crieff
- Welcome to Crieff — Heart of Strathearn

4.8 In addition, respondents were given the option of saying that they had “no strong opinion” on this matter.

4.9 In relation to possible images for the sign, again, a number of options were offered and respondents were asked to choose which they like best:

- The Coat of Arms of the Burgh of Crieff
- The Murray Fountain
- A cattle droving image
- Stylised tree – the current logo of the Crieff and Strathearn Tourist Association
- Earl of Strathearn
- Seasonal views of Crieff / upper Strathearn (in Spring, Summer, Autumn or Winter)
- An aerial view of Crieff / Upper Strathearn
- Some element of the local landscape (mountain, tree or river)

**Figure 4.2: Images included in the questionnaire**



Coat of Arms of the Burgh of Crieff



Stylised tree



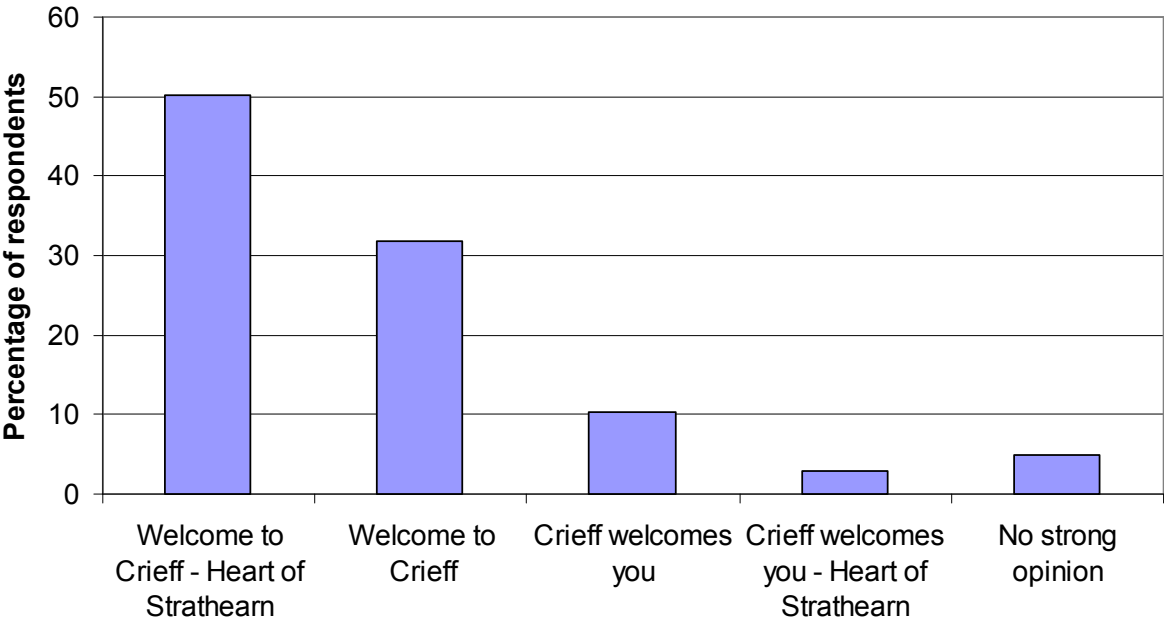
Earl of Strathearn



Current welcome sign

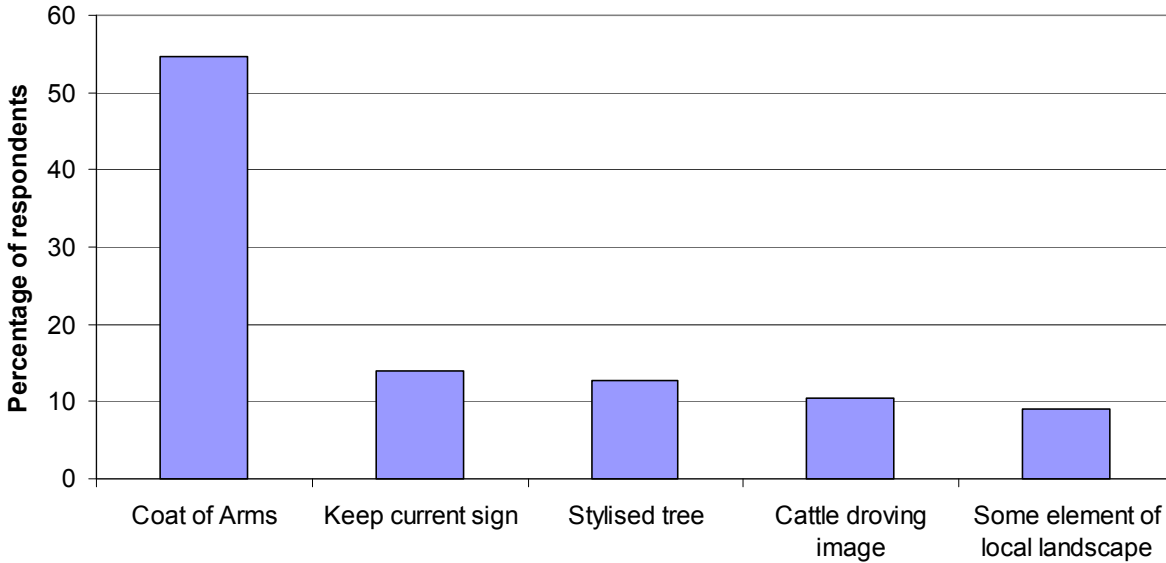
- 4.10 In addition, respondents were given the option of saying whether they would prefer to keep the current sign; whether they would rather have no images on the sign, only words; or whether they had no strong opinion on the matter.
- 4.11 Respondents were also told that they could select more than one option, since it was thought that it may be possible to incorporate more than one image into a new sign.
- 4.12 Figure 4.3 below shows the survey results in relation to the wording of the sign. The most popular choice, selected by 50.1% of respondents, was “Welcome to Crieff — Heart of Strathearn” and the second choice, selected by 31.8% of respondents was “Welcome to Crieff”.

**Figure 4.3: Preferred wording of new welcome signs**



- 4.13 Respondents over 75 were more likely than other age groups to choose “Welcome to Crieff”, and in fact, the majority (54.3%) of over-75s chose this option. Interestingly, younger people aged 18-29 were *less* likely to choose “Welcome to Crieff” than other age groups. Compared to other age groups, respondents in the younger age group were also more likely to say that they had no strong opinion on this matter.
- 4.14 In relation to the possible images on the sign, the clear preference among survey respondents was the coat of arms of the Burgh of Crieff. (See Figure 4.4 below.) However, again, there were some slight differences between different age groups. While more than half of the over-30s chose this option, only about a third (36.1%) of 18- to 29-year-olds chose it. Meanwhile, the stylised tree which is the current logo of the Crieff & Strathearn Tourist Association seemed to be preferred by a larger proportion of the younger age groups than those in the older groups. So, a quarter (24.6%) of those aged 18-29 and a fifth (19.2%) of those aged 30-44 selected this option, compared to less than 10% of the over-45s.

**Figure 4.4: Preferred images on new welcome signs**



## 5 Car parking, traffic and transportation issues

5.1 This section presents findings from the survey related to car parking, traffic and transportation issues. This section also includes an analysis of comments made in the open-ended question at the end of the questionnaire (“Do you have any other suggestions for how the town centre of Crieff could be improved?”) insofar as the comments were about parking, traffic and transportation matters.

### Car parking

5.2 In relation to car parking, survey respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed (strongly or slightly), disagreed (strongly or slightly) or had no opinion about the following statements:

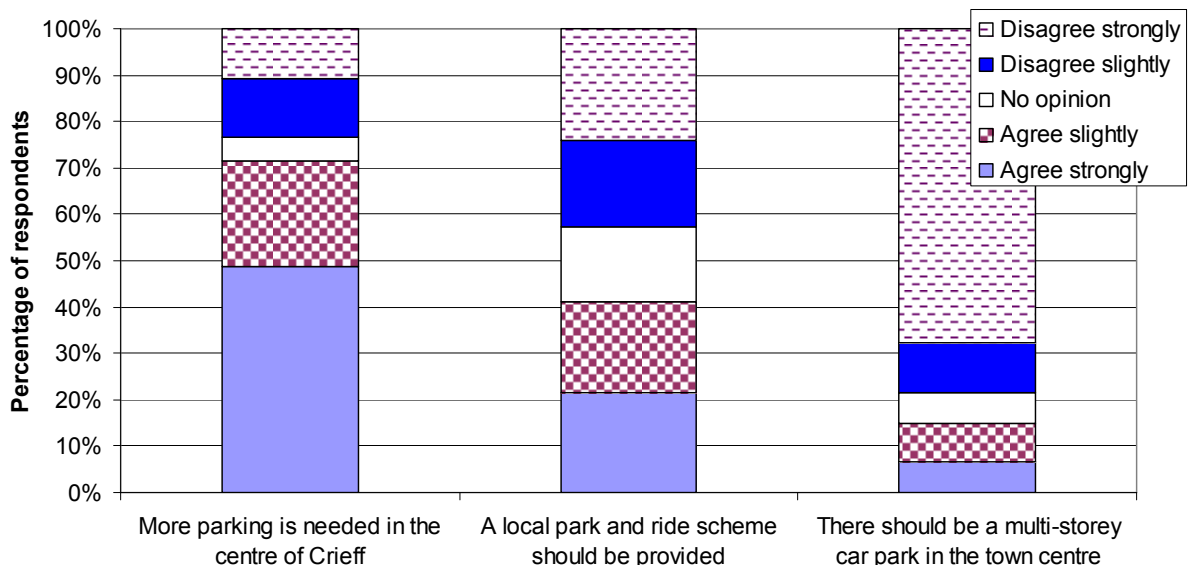
- More parking is needed in the centre of Crieff.
- A local park and ride scheme should be provided (where visitors could park on the edge of town and be driven to the centre).
- There should be a multi-storey car park in the town centre.

5.3 Figure 5.1 below shows that the strongest support was given to the statement, “More parking is needed in the centre of Crieff.” Nearly half of respondents (48.6%) agreed strongly with this statement, and a further 23% agreed slightly.

5.4 The least support was given to the statement, “There should be a multi-storey car park in the town centre.” Two-thirds of respondents (67.6%) disagreed strongly with this statement and a further 10.8% disagreed slightly.

5.5 There was no clear support either for or against a park and ride scheme in Crieff: 41.1% agreed with the statement, and 42.9% disagreed, with 16.1% stating they had no opinion on the matter.

**Figure 5.1: Responses to questions about car parking**



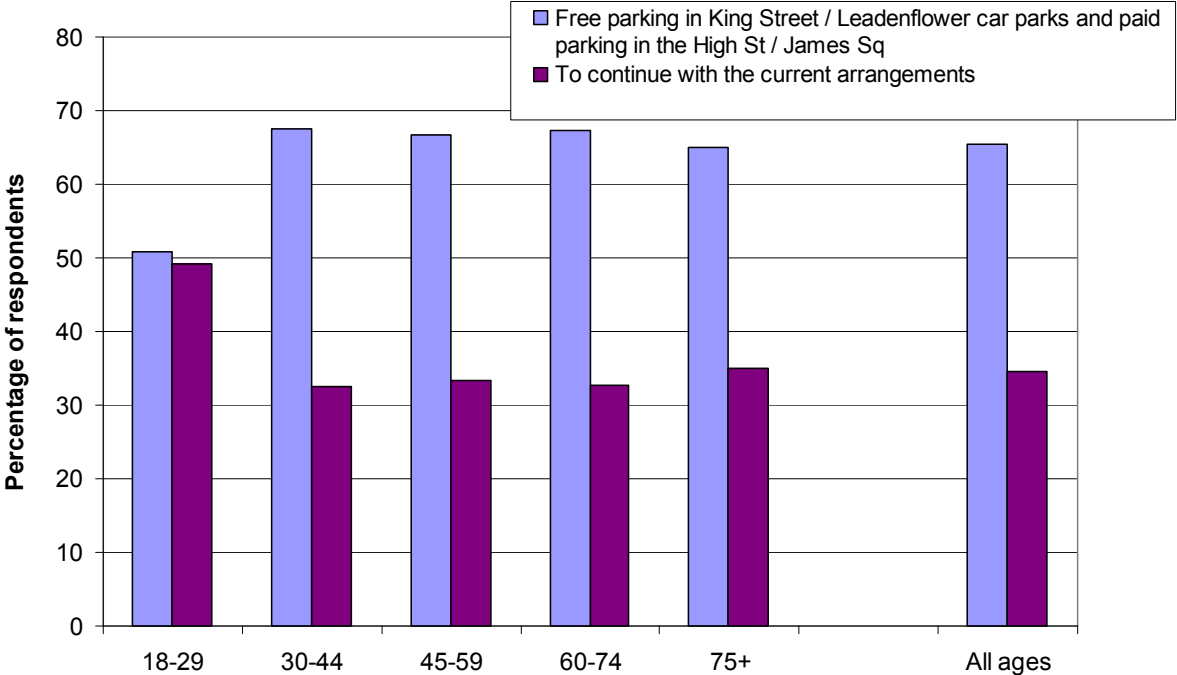
5.6 The questionnaire also included a question about parking charges in Crieff. Respondents were given two options, and were asked to indicate which they preferred:

- To have **free** parking in the King Street and Leadenflower car parks and **paid** parking in the High Street and James Square.
- To continue with the current arrangements for parking charges — i.e., **paid** parking in James Square and the King Street and Leadenflower car parks, and **free** parking in the High Street.

5.7 Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65.4%) stated that they preferred the first option: to have **free** parking in the King Street and Leadenflower car parks and **paid** parking in the High Street and James Square.

5.8 There were no major differences between the responses of males and females, between Crieff residents and non-residents and in people over 30. However, there was disagreement between 18- to 29-year-olds on this question. Half (50.9%) of the respondents in this age group preferred the first option, and half (49.1%) preferred the second option. (See Figure 5.2.)

**Figure 5.2: Preferences related to charges for car parking**



**Traffic and transportation-related issues**

5.9 Respondents were given a series of six statements related to public transport and traffic-related issues, and were asked whether they agreed (strongly or slightly), disagreed (strongly or slightly) or had no opinion on the matter. The statements were:

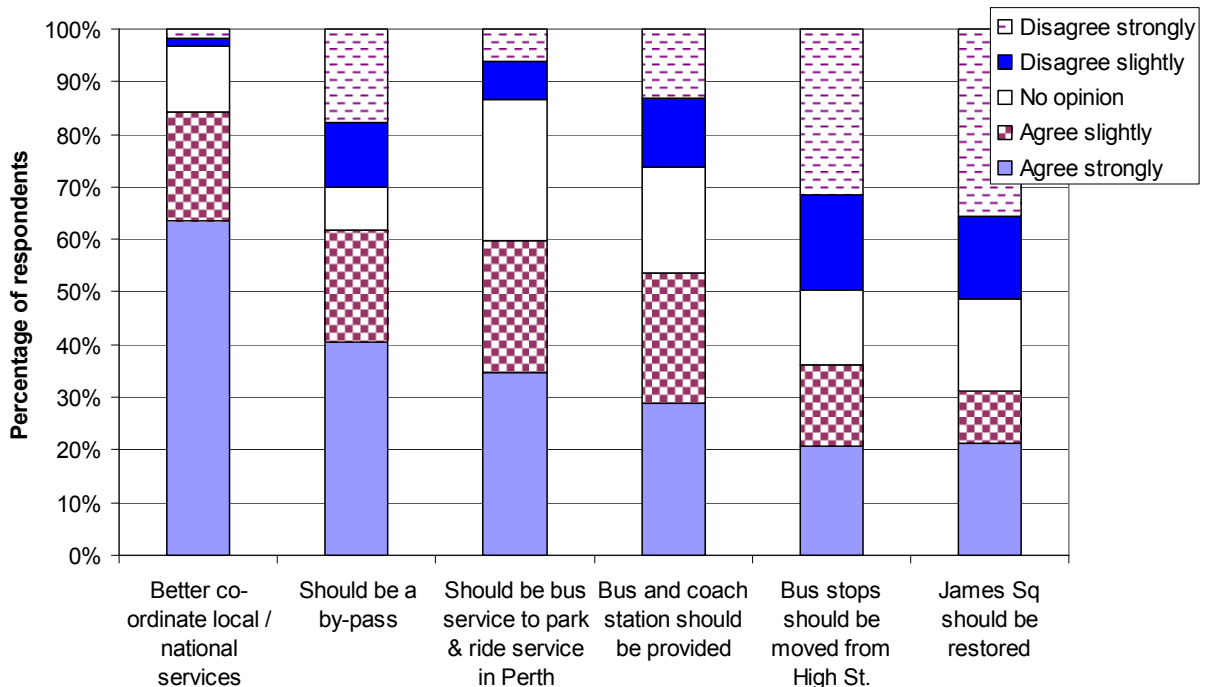
- For safety reasons, the bus stops for the local bus services should be moved from the High Street.
- A bus and coach station should be provided in Crieff.
- There should be better co-ordination of local bus services with national bus and train provision.
- There should be a bus service from Crieff to the park & ride service in Perth.<sup>3</sup>
- Heavy traffic should be taken out of the town centre through the provision of a by-pass.
- James Square should be restored to allow traffic flow on either side of the monument (as it did historically).

5.10 Figure 5.3 shows that the three statements which received strongest support from the people of Crieff were:

- There should be better co-ordination of local bus services with national bus / train provision (84.2% agreed with the statement – 63.5% agreed strongly)
- Heavy traffic should be taken out of the town centre through the provision of a by-pass (61.7% agreed – 40.6% agreed strongly)
- There should be a bus service from Crieff to the park & ride service in Perth (59.8% agreed – 34.7% agreed strongly).

5.11 In addition, just over half of respondents (53.7%) agreed that a bus and coach station should be provided in Crieff.

**Figure 5.3: Views on transportation and traffic-related issues**



<sup>3</sup> The park & ride service referred to here is the one located at Broxden. This statement was, in part, seeking views about the need for better connection with national bus services.

- 5.12 People aged over 60 were more likely to express support for a by-pass: 73.9% of 60- to 74-year-olds and 81.7% of people over 75 agreed that there should be a by-pass to take heavy traffic out of the town centre. On the other hand, just under half (49.1%) of 18- to 29-year-olds agreed with this statement. However, this group was also more likely to have “no opinion” on this subject.
- 5.13 Statements which received less support were:
- James Square should be restored to allow traffic flow on either side (51.3% disagreed with this statement — 35.6% disagreed strongly)
  - The bus stops for the local bus services should be moved from the High Street (49.7% disagreed with this statement — 31.4% disagreed strongly)
- 5.14 Crieff residents disagreed more strongly than non-residents with these two latter statements, and non-residents were more likely than residents to express no opinion on these issues.

### **Findings from the open-ended questions**

- 5.15 Issues to do with traffic, parking, transportation and pedestrianisation were among the major themes arising from the open-ended question at the end of the survey, where respondents were asked if they had any other suggestions for how the town centre of Crieff could be improved.
- 5.16 More than half the individuals who took part in the survey wrote in comments to this question (n=371, 56.7%), and of these, there were:
- 101 comments about parking or parking-related issues
  - 48 comments about traffic-related issues, including:
    - 25 comments specifically on the subject of a by-pass
    - 17 comments specifically on the subject of pedestrianisation of the town centre
  - 24 comments about public transport-related issues.

### ***Comments about parking-related issues***

- 5.17 When asked their suggestions for how the town centre could be improved, a substantial number of respondents voiced what they perceived to be a serious problem with parking on double-yellow lines in the town centre. There were calls for the current parking restrictions to be enforced and some individuals wanted to see a full-time traffic warden in Crieff. A small sample of some of the comments are included here:

*“Parking regulations should be more strictly enforced in the High Street, as there is often gridlock, caused largely by selfish motorists parking on yellow lines.” (26)*

*“PARKING!! The High Street is too congested. Need to sort that ASAP.” (49)*



*“Tighter parking controls — parking on double yellow lines is a real problem in the town.” (81)*

*“Driving through Crieff town centre at peak times is horrendous, especially due to inconsiderate and illegal parking.” (121)*

*“Traffic problems on High Street are frequently caused by illegal parking on double yellow lines, e.g., outside Valentines. Trouble is there is, more often than not, nobody to enforce the laws. Full-time traffic warden(s) required.” (241)*

*“Enforcement of current parking regulations. Currently High Street gets blocked with traffic due to cars parking where they should not. This is especially true at the bus stop at R.S. McColls and opposite Frank Thomsons. Perhaps a case for a full time traffic warden. (312)*

- 5.18 However, these views were countered by a lone voice that explained why people parked illegally in the High Street:

*The biggest problem is short-term parking on High Street while you pop into the shops. There are often no parking spaces outside Gills or McNees; you possibly only want a packet of bacon or a French stick and it's not worth paying for 60 minutes parking in King St or Leadenflower St and it's too far to walk so you end up just leaving it. (525)*

- 5.19 A sizeable minority (n=18), commented that because of the current problems, there should be *no* parking in the High Street at all, except to allow loading and unloading, while others suggested that West High Street (only) should have no parking because of the bottleneck that is frequently caused there for large vehicles and lorries.

- 5.20 At least 16 respondents re-iterated earlier comments that more parking is needed in Crieff, and three individuals felt there was a need for more parking for disabled people in the High Street.

- 5.21 Also expressed, was the view that there should be *no* parking charges in Crieff, and several respondents did not reply to Question 11 in the questionnaire (about parking charges in the High Street or in the car parks), but instead wrote in that there should be free parking in the car parks *and* free parking in the High Street and James Square.

*“Parking is free in Aberfeldy. Why do we have to pay for parking in Crieff?” (139)*

*“All parking should be free. This would encourage both local people and visitors to use the town thus encouraging shops to stay open....” (447)*

- 5.22 Regarding a possible park-and-ride scheme in Crieff, a small number of individuals wrote in comments beside this question to suggest that they believed such a service would be neither beneficial nor financially viable.

### **Comments about traffic-related issues**

- 5.23 Many of the comments on traffic-related issues were linked to comments about parking. A substantial proportion of survey respondents felt strongly that in order to improve Crieff as a place to live, work and shop, it would be necessary to address the traffic problems in the centre of the town.

*“The traffic is killing Crieff — and ruining the town as a destination.” (589)*

*“The town is choked with traffic. It is only a matter of time before one or more pedestrians are killed or seriously injured by the large HGVs and PSVs that travel, often at excessive speed, on the A85 / High Street.” (1)*

- 5.24 Some individuals suggested that because of the problem of vans and lorries parking on double yellow lines when making deliveries throughout the day, delivery times should be restricted so that they took place at times when the High Street is not busy (i.e., early in the morning or in the evening).
- 5.25 There were also calls to introduce traffic calming measures in the town, not only in the High Street but in certain side streets as well. These included speed bumps, the enforcement of a 20-mph zone, the use of speed cameras and the creation of mini-roundabouts. (The latter were suggested at: Burrell Street and Milnab Street; Burrell Street and Lodge Brae; and High Street and Church Street.)
- 5.26 Respondents wanted to see more pedestrian crossings at certain points in the town, and several mentioned a need for a pedestrian crossing at West High Street near the Strathearn Gallery. Other suggested crossings were East High Street by the petrol station and on Burrell Street near Union Street). Several individuals also felt there needed to be traffic lights at the junction between the High Street and Comrie Street and at the Burrell Square junction. One individual also expressed frustration about the difficulties that there can often be in driving along Dollerie Terrace, as parking on the north side of the street effectively makes Dollerie Terrace a single-track road.

### **Comments about a by-pass**

- 5.27 Twenty-five respondents made comments about the need for a by-pass around Crieff. All of these individuals were strongly in favour of a by-pass, and felt it would make the town safer, cleaner and more attractive to shoppers and tourists. The preferred route for a by-pass would seem to be via Gallowhill and the Broich Road to Highlandman Loan and Gilmerton. Respondents recognised that building a by-pass would be expensive, but felt that it was urgently needed.
- 5.28 At least five other individuals suggested that it might be possible to introduce a one-way system in Crieff, so that there was no two-way traffic on the High Street. Such a system would allow pavements to be widened as well as greater space available for on-street parking. One individual specifically called for King Street to be made into a one-way street.

### ***Pedestrianisation of the town centre***

- 5.29 A sizeable minority of respondents (n=25), many of whom expressed favourable views about a by-pass, also strongly advocated pedestrianising the centre of Crieff. This suggestion was often made alongside a suggestion to close off the High Street to traffic altogether, or at least during day-time hours. Again, these individuals argued that the removal of traffic from the town centre would make the town more pleasant to visit and shop in. Furthermore, it would allow an outdoor café culture to blossom.

### ***Comments about public transport-related issues***

- 5.30 Finally, there were comments made in relation to public transport issues in the town. A large portion of these comments asked for better provision of public transportation, for example: more frequent bus services to Muthill, Dunblane and Stirling. The view was that this service should run at least once every hour, and that there should be better and more frequent provision in the mornings and after 7pm. (This would benefit students at Stirling University and people who commute to Stirling for work.) Respondents also wanted better co-ordination between the buses and the train service at Gleneagles, and particularly to those trains that connect with the London trains.
- 5.31 A substantial number of respondents (n=20+) also called for an improved and extended local bus service. People wanted to see a more frequent service between the town and the Community Campus (one individual suggested it should be every 10 minutes, not every 95 minutes), and others felt that the local buses should include the new housing areas at Inchbrakie, Ochilview Gardens and along the Perth Road. One individual also asked that the buses from Stirling continue through the town and drop passengers along the Perth Road.
- 5.32 A smaller number of comments focused on re-instatement of the railway / train service in Crieff itself, which would link to the services at Gleneagles / Blackford and Dunblane; and better taxi provision (including a taxi rank in the town centre).
- 5.33 Finally, a relatively small number of respondents expressed the view that moving the bus stops from the High Street would help to improve the traffic problems in Crieff.

## 6 Social, cultural and leisure facilities

6.1 The survey included three questions asking the people of Crieff what they would like to see in terms of new or additional social, cultural and / or leisure facilities.

### What social, cultural or leisure facilities would people like to see in Crieff?

6.2 The first question provided a list of possible facilities, and respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed (strongly or slightly), disagreed (strongly or slightly) or had no opinion about whether they would like these to be available in Crieff. The list contained the following:

- More cafés and restaurants
- More benches in James Square
- A cinema (or film club)
- A bowling alley
- A local Strathearn radio station
- A museum
- A place to hold small concerts or gigs
- A community centre / community hall
- A larger, more accessible (by car and foot) Tourist Information Centre
- The facility to provide temporary weather protection (i.e., a marquee-type of cover) for events held in James Square

6.3 For all but two of these, more than 40% of respondents said that they agreed strongly or slightly that there was a need for that facility. The two exceptions were:

- More cafés and restaurants: Just over half of respondents (53.3%) said that they *disagreed* that more cafés and restaurants were needed.
- A local Strathearn radio station: Nearly half of respondents (47.1%) said that they had no opinion about whether a local radio station was needed.

6.4 In relation to the question about more cafés and restaurants, it should be noted that there were a very large number of comments about the need in Crieff for *fewer* fast food and take-away businesses. At the same time, there were also a reasonably large number of comments about a need for “better-quality” eating establishments. Although a café / restaurant is not necessarily the same thing as a fast food or take-away establishment, it is possible that many respondents interpreted this question as referring to take-aways. This may partly explain why such a large proportion disagreed with the need for additional cafés / restaurants.

### Respondents' priorities

6.5 Because it was anticipated that many respondents would simply tick the boxes indicating that they would like *all* of these facilities to be available, they were also asked to choose (up to) three items from their selection(s) which they should then rank as their *top*, *second* and *third* priorities. (See Table 6.1 below.)

**Table 6.1: Question 14 in the questionnaire**

**Question 14: From the list above, which three would be your top priorities? (Only ONE tick per column, please.)**

	Top priority	2nd priority	3rd priority
More cafés and restaurants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
More benches in James Square	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A cinema (or film club)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A bowling alley	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A local Strathearn radio station	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A museum	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A place to hold small concerts or gigs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A community centre / community hall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A larger, more accessible (by car and foot) Tourist Information Centre	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The facility to provide temporary weather protection (i.e., a marquee-type of cover) for events held in James Square.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6.6 This question was misunderstood by around 10-15% of people who completed paper copies of the questionnaire. Rather than putting only one tick in each of the three columns, some respondents instead put three ticks in the first column only, i.e., they did not rank their three priorities. Furthermore, a few individuals put more than three ticks in the first column, and then also put ticks in the second and third columns so that there was a tick beside every option, rather than having ticks beside only three options.

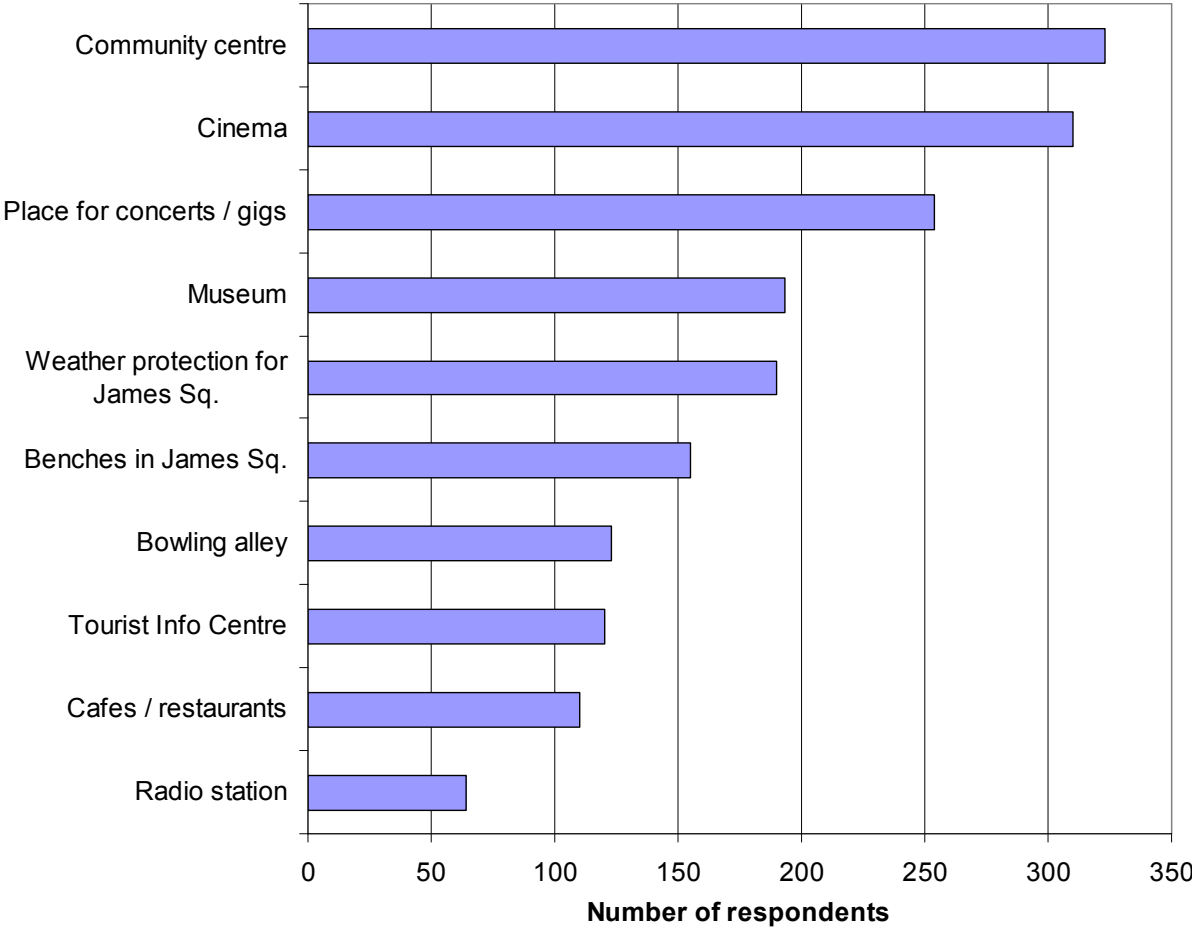
6.7 The on-line version of the questionnaire was set up in such a way that it was not possible to make this mistake, i.e., it was not possible to enter more than one tick in any one column, so respondents to the on-line questionnaire were *forced* to rank their three top priorities. Moreover, in entering data from the paper questionnaires into the on-line SurveyMonkey database, it was also not possible to enter more than one tick in any one column. Thus, at the data entry stage, the researcher (DG) had to *impute* a prioritisation for the responses to this question if the respondents themselves did not make their prioritisation clear. This was done by reading down the column and entering the first tick as the first priority, the second tick as the second priority and the third tick as the third priority.

6.8 So, for example, if an individual put three ticks in the first column beside “More benches in James Square,” “A museum” and “A community centre / community hall”, then:

- “More benches in James Square” was entered as the top priority
- “A museum” was entered as the second priority
- “A community centre / community hall” was entered as the third priority.

- 6.9 It is important to be aware of this, since it means the resulting ranking in the survey findings does not necessarily reflect the views that some people were trying to express in their answers to this question.
- 6.10 As a result, it is suggested that the *total number* of “votes” given to each facility is probably a better measure of the priority that a particular facility has for the people of Crieff. Therefore, Figure 6.1 below shows the number of respondents (out of the total 654) who voted for each facility as either their first, second or third priority. The figure shows that the top three priorities were:
  1. A community centre / community hall (n=323)
  2. A cinema / film club (n=310)
  3. A place to hold small concerts and gigs (n=254).
- 6.11 Lesser priorities were: a museum (n=193), temporary weather protection for James Square (n=190) and more benches in James Square (n=155).

**Figure 6.1: Number of individuals who selected each facility as either their first, second or third priority**



## **What other social, cultural and leisure facilities would people like to see in Crieff?**

- 6.12 Finally, the third question was an open-ended question that asked respondents what other new or additional facilities they would like to see in Crieff, which were not included in the list above. Two hundred and seventy-one (271) individuals (41.4% of respondents) wrote in responses to this question. In addition to making suggestions about new or additional facilities, a number of respondents also used this space to make additional comments on items in the list provided in the questionnaire.
- 6.13 It should be noted that some of the comments respondents made to this question did not relate to social, cultural or leisure facilities. Rather they referred to a need for additional businesses or services in the town. The analysis of these comments has been included in Section 10.
- 6.14 In relation to those comments that were about social, cultural or leisure facilities, a number of major themes could be identified.

### ***Community hall / community centre***

- 6.15 Respondents re-iterated their views that a community facility was needed in the town. This could be used for a variety of purposes, and these are discussed in more detail in Section 8 in relation to possible uses for large unoccupied buildings in the town centre. However, the important point to note here, is that many felt this facility should be *in the centre of town*:

*“I think a community centre would be most beneficial in the town centre, which could incorporate many other social / cultural events.” (73)*

*“An indoor games centre covering snooker, table tennis, etc. located in the centre of the town – not on the outskirts.” (241)*

*“Evening classes — or daytime ones. A designated building in the centre of Crieff to hold these. It could also be open in the daytime (or part of the day) to provide information, community poster space, etc. Maybe have a coffee machine.” (254)*

*“Somewhere that is available to hire out for parties or clubs on the High Street.” (263)*

*“Community centre / community hall – but must be in the centre.” (413)*

*“A more accessible community centre.” (591)*

- 6.16 At the same time, there were also comments to suggest that the availability of the new Community Campus meant that a separate community centre was not necessary.

*“I think the new Campus could provide many of the social facilities we require, but as yet is being under-used....” (70)*

*“I would like to point out that the new Strathearn Community Campus already has many of these facilities. The Campus can show films and is an ideal place to hold concerts and gigs – many have been held there already. No money should be wasted on a community hall or cinema.” (205)*

*“I feel strongly that the community facilities available in the new Strathearn Community Campus need to be better promoted – transport links with the centre of town.” (280)*

6.17 These views, although strongly felt by a minority, appeared to be at odds with over half of respondents to the survey who identified the need for a community centre / community hall as one of their top three priorities for the town.

6.18 In addition to the comments made above in relation to the Community Campus, some individuals felt that the cost of hiring space in the Community Campus was prohibitive, and others voiced dissatisfaction with the existing parking provision at the campus and the bus provision from the centre of town:

*“The new Strathearn Community Campus provides most of the facilities being suggested above: it has a cinema, it has a hall for small gigs, it has all the facilities associated with a community hall. It needs to be priced at a realistic level for Crieff, not at the current higher “city prices”.” (5)*

*“[Would like] to be able to park at the new Community Campus. There is more than ample land to be able to add extra parking spaces.” (397)*

*“Reduction [needed] in cost of using new facilities in Strathearn Campus – disgrace that they are not used more – too expensive.” (348)*

*“Regular bus / transport between town centre and community centre / library (every 30 mins?)” (542)*

*“Reduce cost of hiring amenities at Strathearn Campus to encourage more local groups, drama, concerts, youth groups, etc. to use the facilities.” (629)*

*“Parking space proximate to the new location of the library. We virtually never use it now because there is no parking space available.” (445)*

### **Public library**

6.19 At least 44 individuals made comments (in their responses to this question or the other open-ended questions elsewhere in the questionnaire) about the public library. In general, these individuals requested that the library be returned to the centre of town. The current location of the library was seen as inaccessible and inconvenient for many people, not only for people who don't have a car, but also for people who *do* have a car and can't get parked at the Community Campus.

6.20 A minority suggested that there should be a *branch* of the library in the town centre, and one individual suggested that this might be a small fiction library with computer access. A small number of respondents requested more regular



/ frequent bus services between the town centre and the Campus and others requested additional parking.

### ***A desire for additional sporting facilities***

6.21 Respondents suggested that they would like to see additional facilities in the town for sports, games and outdoor activities. Those mentioned most frequently were:

- **Improved provision for cycling:** More extensive cycle network (and mountain biking network) in and around Crieff, and more provision for bicycles in the form of bicycle racks (particularly at the supermarkets and in or near James Square). Some respondents wanted to see a cycle path between Crieff and Comrie, which carried on to St Fillans and Lochearnhead. There were also calls for a BMX track (or an upgraded BMX park) and some individuals voiced interest in establishing a cycle club in Crieff. Others wanted to see cycle paths between the town centre and the Community Campus.
- **Tennis courts:** A substantial number of respondents wanted to see free, public tennis courts in the town. Some acknowledged that there were tennis courts available at the Hydro, but nevertheless wanted to see additional courts elsewhere in the town. Several made reference to the old tennis courts in MacRosty Park and suggested that this may be a good place to put new courts. Others suggested that tennis courts should have been, or still should be, built into the Community Campus.
- **Swimming:** There was a view that the swimming facilities available at the Community Campus were inadequate for members of the public. In particular, respondents had the opinion that there was not sufficient time available for public swimming, and there were calls to have the swimming pools open longer and more frequently for members of the public. There was a suggestion that the current arrangements favour access to the pool by schoolchildren at the expense of the public. There was also one request for a larger pool, and another individual wanted to see provision for outdoor swimming.
- **Walking / mountaineering / climbing:** There were suggestions that one of Crieff's most valuable assets was its easy access to good walks in the surrounding countryside. Some respondents felt that more could be made of this through, for example: developing improved river walks, repairing footpaths, the creation of a town hillwalking club, and better guidance about walks in the area. One individual wanted to see better access paths to the public parks, particularly around Milnab and Turretbank, and there was a suggestion to create a new small park on the east side of Crieff with walks / trails from the Stewart Milne development.<sup>4</sup> Others wanted to see a climbing wall in the town, and there were suggestions that one of the large empty buildings in the town centre could be used for this purpose.

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<sup>4</sup> This may refer to the development at Strathearn View.

- **Ice rink:** A small number of respondents suggested that an ice rink be built in Crieff. This could be used for ice hockey and curling, among other things.

6.22 Five (5) individuals also wanted to see a new Highland Games Park. One of these said that this would include “*a multi-purpose park for sports, football and other events*”. However, other respondents suggested that more could be done with the existing Market Park, for example, in creating an outdoor leisure centre, or in using it for concerts / plays in summer.

### ***A desire for additional social / cultural facilities***

6.23 Respondents suggested they would like to see the following new or additional social / leisure facilities:

- **Performing and visual arts centre:** A number of individuals re-iterated a need for a venue for theatre, cinema and musical performances. Several individuals referred to similar facilities in Dunkeld (Birnam Institute), Pitlochry and Comrie (White Church). Similar comments were made by others in response to the open-ended questions elsewhere in the questionnaire.
- **Nightclub or venue for dances:** A number of respondents (particularly those under 30) wanted to see a nightclub in Crieff. At the same time, other respondents suggested: “*a weekly ceilidh in James Square in the summer*”, “*Scottish dinner dance at least once a month*”, “*regular tea dances*”, “*a weekly event (a dance?) for the young people*”.
- **Events / activities for young people:** A major theme arising in response to this question and other open-ended questions elsewhere in the questionnaire was in relation to a perceived need for more and better provision for young people. At least 24 respondents in their comments on the need for additional / new social facilities said the town needed “*more things for kids to do*”. Some people suggested specific activities such as go-karting, bowling, snooker, pool, and a weekly disco or dance. Others suggested a youth café, or a youth club. The main need, however, was perceived to be for a space for young people to just ‘hang out’ and socialise.
- **Greater provision for families / young children:** Respondents also wanted to see additional facilities for families and young children. Suggestions included a facility like Noah’s Ark in Perth or Landmark, which provided an indoor play area for children, and “*something for families with children to do in the wet weather*”. There were also numerous requests for a family-friendly restaurant or pub, and individuals referred to The Maltings in Perth or Weatherspoons as examples of the sort of establishment that was needed.
- **Museum:** Some respondents re-iterated the need for a museum in the town, which could present the local history of Crieff, and which could highlight key buildings and facts about the town. Others suggested this could incorporate a genealogy centre and a reading room.

- 6.24 A few respondents commented that there is a need for better information about what is going on in the town and the suggestion was made that there should be a community website:

*“Crieff website promoting the town and would be the definitive source for what's on. I miss so much, most of it seems to be word of mouth. It should also include the various Crieff town sports club matches and competitions to encourage more support for the town's athletes.” (286)*

*“Provide better information to the public about events going on around Crieff — use the notice board and don't rely on everyone reading the local newspapers.... I think Crieff should have its own dedicated website, and community group. I was very surprised when I moved here that I had to hunt through bits on different websites. Comrie really puts us to shame on that front!” (55)*

- 6.25 And related to this, a few other respondents suggested that it would be worthwhile to form some community groups to take forward ideas about development of the town, or to have a group to better manage the town's existing facilities:

*“A community events group whose members are voted in by the community representing ALL demographic groups in the community. Although I have said a community centre/hall would be my number 1 priority, maybe with better community groups in place better, more innovative use could be made of existing facilities in the town, for example hotels, restaurants, community campus, open spaces, the Square.....” (427)*

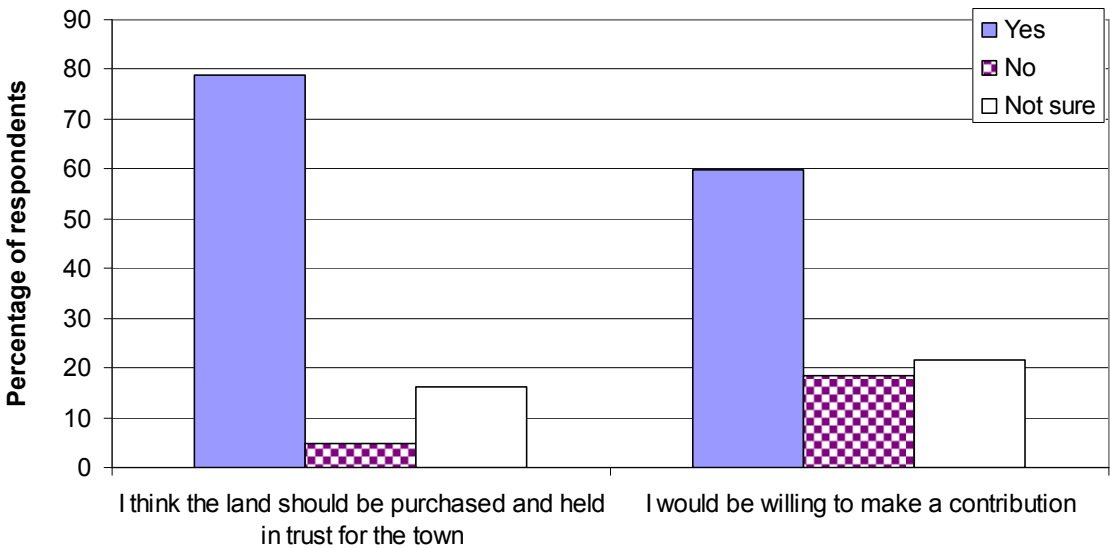
*“Group meetings for residents in a hall on possible development / hopes for Crieff. Monthly paper letter giving people a real feel of participation. And growing with the town.” (457)*

*“Management team to run facilities already in place.” (642)*

## 7 Purchase of land near Lady Mary’s Walk

- 7.1 Over two years ago, it came to the attention of CUSP that an area of land between the bridge at Turretbank Road and Lady Mary’s Walk (along the Turret Burn) was available for sale.
- 7.2 The land is regularly used by large numbers of Crieff residents and visitors to the town for recreational purposes (walking, dog-walking, running, etc.), and there was concern that if the land was purchased by a developer, that access could become difficult in the future — although it was recognised that access could not be prevented entirely because the path along the Turret Burn was a public right-of-way.
- 7.3 Nevertheless, CUSP has explored the possibility of purchasing the land on behalf of the town of Crieff, and having it held in trust for the town by a local community body. This would enable the path to be repaired and maintained, and the former railway bridge supports (currently derelict and in a dangerous state) made safe. Furthermore, it is likely that grant funding would be available for this.
- 7.4 However, in order to pursue this, approximately £20,000 would need to be raised to make the purchase possible. Therefore, CUSP included a question on this issue in the community questionnaire in order to gauge the interest of the community in purchasing the land, and to ascertain whether it might be possible to obtain the purchase price through a fundraising campaign within the town.
- 7.5 Figure 7.1 shows that a substantial majority (79.0%) of survey respondents were in favour of having the land purchased and held in trust for the community. Very few were opposed to the idea, although 16.1% were not sure. Furthermore, nearly three-fifths (59.9%) of respondents indicated that they would be willing to contribute to a fundraising campaign to purchase the land.

**Figure 7.1: Community views about the land near Lady Mary’s Walk**



- 7.6 Younger people between 18-29 were more likely than those in other age groups to say that they were not sure that the land should be purchased. People between 18-29 were also less likely than others to say that they would be willing to make a financial contribution to the purchase of the land. Only one-third (32.8%) of 18- to 29-year-olds said they would be willing to contribute, compared to around 60-70% of other age groups.
- 7.7 There were no differences in the responses to this question between Crieff residents and Crieff locals. Eighty percent of both groups said they thought the land should be purchased, and approximately three-fifths of both groups said they would make a contribution to the purchase. However, only around half (54.3%) of non-resident workers said they thought the land should be purchased, and only one-fifth (21.2%) of this group said they would make a contribution.

## 8 Possible uses for unoccupied buildings in the town centre

- 8.1 There are a number of substantial buildings in the centre of Crieff which are currently unoccupied and which are being allowed to fall into disrepair. These include:
- The former Drummond Arms Hotel (James Square), owned by Artto Hotel in Glasgow<sup>5</sup>
  - The former Crown Hotel (East High Street), owned by Newhouse Developments Ltd, Tibbermore
  - The former South Church (Comrie Street / Coldwells Road), owned by Mr Byrne, Cumbernauld.
  - Old St Michael's Church Hall (Church Street), owned by the Hall Trustees
  - The former Strathearn Hotel (Commissioner Street), owned by Kilt and Kelt Hotels Ltd, London.
  - The former public library (Comrie Street), owned by Perth & Kinross Council.
- 8.2 As far as it has been possible to determine, none of these properties is currently for sale apart from the former South Church, which has been advertised for sale by Future Property Auctions at a guide price of £94,000.<sup>6</sup>
- 8.3 The community survey asked the people of Crieff for their views about what could be done with four of these properties: the former Drummond Arms, the former Crown Hotel, the former South Church and Old St Michael's Church Hall. This section presents an analysis of the responses.

### Uses for the Drummond Arms Hotel

- 8.4 Three questions were asked about the Drummond Arms Hotel. In the first question, survey participants were presented with a list of eight possible uses for the building. These were: a hotel, flats, shops / boutique stores, art gallery, museum, multi-storey car park, tourist information centre and community centre. People were then asked to indicate whether they agreed (strongly or slightly), disagreed (strongly or slightly) or had no opinion about whether the building should be used for that purpose.
- 8.5 Figure 8.1 shows the results. The preferred use for the building was as a hotel: 82.5% of respondents agreed with this option and over half (55.8%) agreed strongly. However, the second and third preferred uses for the hotel were as a community centre or as a museum, with just over 60% of respondents agreeing with these two suggestions.

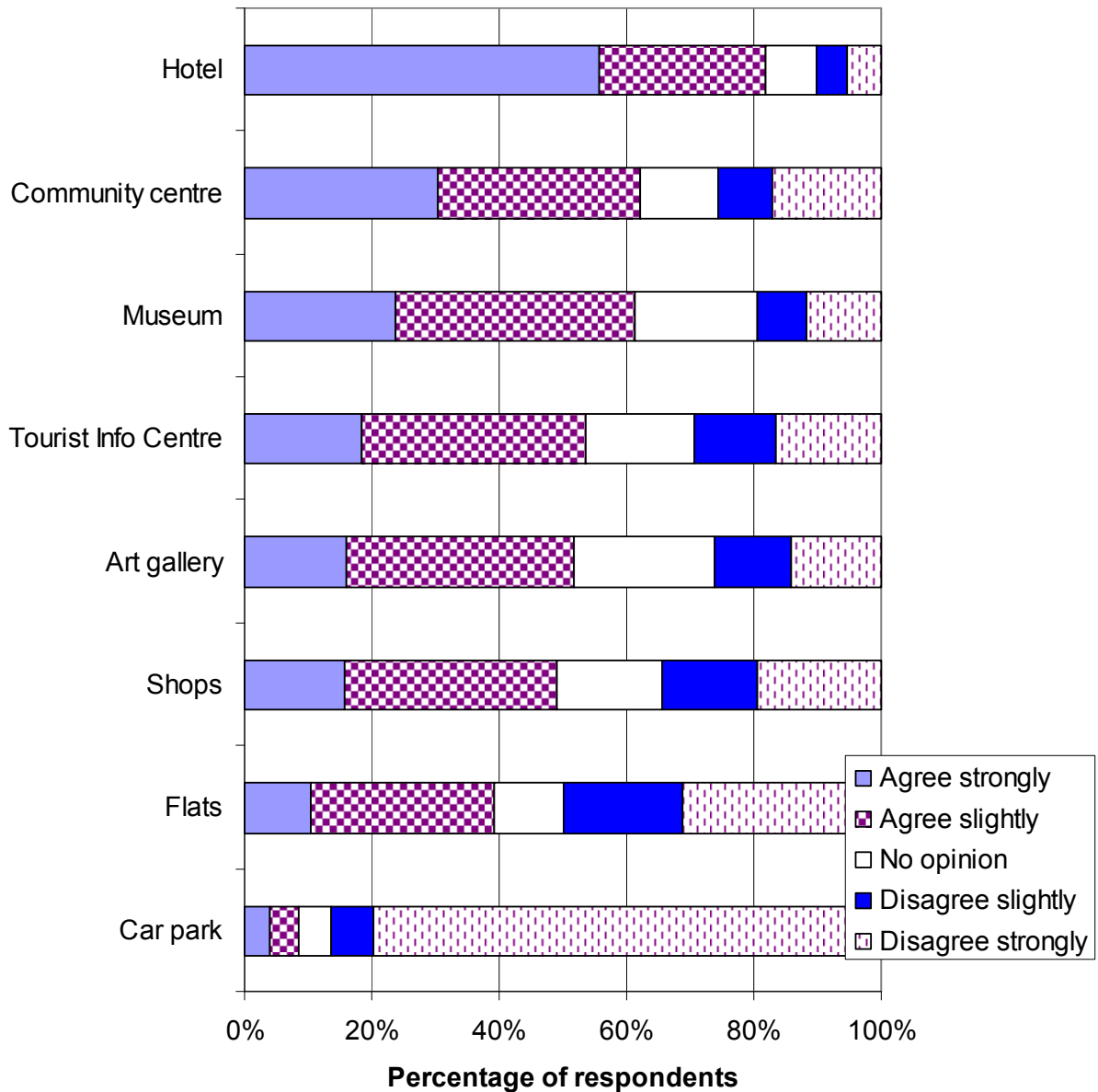
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<sup>5</sup> Details of the owners of these properties have been obtained from the Scottish Assessors Association website, which contains an up-to-date list of all rateable properties in Scotland, the rateable value of the property, the name of the property's owner and their contact details.

<sup>6</sup> See <http://www.findaproperty.com/searchresults.aspx?edid=04&salerent=0&areaid=6971>

8.6 The option least preferred among respondents was to have the building used as a multi-storey car park. Eighty percent (79.8%) disagreed strongly with this suggestion. Moreover half (49.8%) disagreed with the building being used for flats.

**Figure 8.1: Possible uses for the Drummond Arms Hotel**



8.7 In an open-ended question, respondents were asked whether they had any other suggestions for how the Drummond Arms Hotel could be used for the benefit of Crieff. One hundred and ninety-nine (199) respondents (30.4% of the survey sample) made comments in response to this question, and an analysis of these comments is presented here.

### ***Use as a hotel or other form of tourist accommodation***

- 8.8 At least 25 respondents re-iterated that they would prefer to see the building used as a hotel. However, there were differing views about what *kind* of hotel it should be. The suggestion made most frequently (by nine respondents) was that it should become a hotel for backpackers, or a hostel, providing low-cost accommodation for travellers on a budget. Others felt the hotel should be a upmarket / boutique hotel with a function suite and other facilities for weddings and parties. Still others felt it should be a mid-priced hotel, as there were few mid-priced alternatives available in Crieff. One individual suggested that it could be revamped and rebranded as a Travel Lodge.
- 8.9 However, six individuals suggested that the building could be re-developed and used for self-catering holiday lets. One individual suggested that the owners of the Crieff Hydro could be approached to investigate whether they would have any interest in developing it for this use.
- 8.10 Respondents argued that the use of the building as a hotel or other form of tourist accommodation would attract visitors to the town. However, there was also some scepticism voiced by one respondent about the use of the building as a hotel:

*“The money required to bring the Drummond Arms up to modern requirements for a hotel may not be able to be recouped because of its size and location.” (400)*

### ***Use for accommodation for local residents***

- 8.11 A minority of respondents felt the building could be used as accommodation for local people — i.e., as flats (n=13), as sheltered flats for older people (n=3), or as affordable flats for families (n=1).
- 8.12 However, others expressed concerns about this, highlighting the building’s limited parking (n=6), and concerns about difficulties with refuse collection if every flat had its own set of wheelie bins.
- 8.13 Three respondents specifically stated they would *not* like to see the building used for flats.

### ***Use for a combination of purposes***

- 8.14 Although, as mentioned above, the majority of respondents (82.5%) wanted to see the Drummond Arms brought back into use as a hotel, a substantial number of people (at least 70) also felt that the building could serve a variety of functions. At least 10 people felt that, in addition to its use as a hotel, the building could also provide space for a museum, an expanded tourist information centre, an art gallery and a gift shop, among other things.
- 8.15 The majority of those who commented, however, did not mention a possible use for the building as a hotel. Instead, they felt that the building was well-placed to serve more of a community role or a combined role for locals and tourists. Some individuals stated that, while their preference was for the



building to be used as a hotel, if this was not possible, it would be better for Crieff if the building was used for the community, and several advocated its possible use as a community centre:

*“I think a vibrant community centre in the middle of Crieff would be perfect....” (254)*

*“Its use as a community centre is a good idea as there are rooms of varying size in the building.... It has an ideal position in the heart of the town.” (413)*

*“Strongly in favour of community use – i.e., events, concerts, meeting rooms, clubs and societies, film club, retain kitchen for coffee mornings, conferences, etc.” (529)*

8.16 At least seven respondents made reference to facilities in other towns which are used by locals and visitors alike, including the Watermill in Aberfeldy, the Birnam Institute in Dunkeld / Birnam, the White Church in Comrie. These individuals felt the Drummond Arms could be developed into something similar.

8.17 It was suggested that such a facility could provide meeting space for local groups and clubs, and also incorporate, among other things:

- A museum (n=36)
- A tourist information centre (n=32)
- A cinema or film club (n=25)
- A restaurant, café, wine bar, or “cosy pub” (n=25)
- An art gallery (n=20)
- An arts and crafts studio / workshop and exhibition space (n=16)
- A theatre or concert hall (n=15)
- Shops (n=14)
- A nightclub or venue for regular dances (n=14)
- Space for further education, training or evening classes, including exercise or music classes (n=10)
- A youth centre (n=9) or space for indoor / soft play activities for children (n=4)
- Bookshop (n=3)
- Good public toilets (n=1)

8.18 A few respondents remarked that it would be good if the building could provide a place for people (including children and young people) to go, with things to do when the weather is wet and miserable. Suggestions were made that it could include a games room (including laser tag, bingo, bridge, snooker, etc.), a climbing wall, and a bowling alley.

8.19 Ten individuals also commented that the building could be used to rehome the public library which had been moved to the community campus.

### **Other suggested uses**

8.20 Less common, but nevertheless, quite interesting suggestions about possible uses for the Drummond Arms included:

- Office space for self-employed people, or for business start-ups (n=4)

- A small shopping centre, discount clothing outlet or home store (n=3)
- Farmer's market selling local food / produce (n=3)
- A hub for outdoor activities (walking, cycling, motorcycling), offering information on routes, hire kit and medical support (n=2)
- A local history centre for Strathearn with reading room facilities (n=1)
- A Tesco Metro (n=1)
- An auction room (n=1)

8.21 A more unusual suggestion was that the building could be used as a petrol station. Four others advocated demolition (or burning the building down). In addition, despite the strong opposition to the building's use as a multi-storey car park as discussed above, two respondents commented that a multi-storey car park might be a good use for it so long as the façade was preserved. However, nine individuals specifically wrote in comments to re-iterate their strong opposition to this idea.

### **Other views about the Drummond Arms**

8.22 It is worth noting that a number of respondents made more general comments about the hotel. Some of these referred to the building's important location in the centre of the town:

*"It is a focal point of the town and that needs to be reflected in its use." (31)*

8.23 However, others expressed concern that the building is being allowed to fall into serious disrepair. Several referred to it as "an eyesore":

*"If Crieff is the 'Heart of Strathearn', then James Square is the Heart of Crieff. It is currently a disaster! The Drummond Arms Hotel development is critical to the future of the square." (72)*

*"Regardless of what happens to it, can we not get it cleaned up. It is an eyesore!" (109)*

*"Something needs to be done as a matter of urgency. The town centre looks derelict." (264)*

### **Interest in purchasing the building for the community**

8.24 Because of its historic significance, there has been some discussion within CUSP about whether the Drummond Arms Hotel should be purchased for the town of Crieff through a community buy-out scheme. This question was put to the people of Crieff in the community survey. It was explained that if this happened, it would put the responsibility of maintaining the building onto the town. However, it would also ensure that the building was used for the benefit of the town. Respondents were asked whether they would be in favour of the building being purchased in this way.

8.25 The largest proportion of responses were affirmative: 46.6% thought the hotel should be purchased for the town. However, nearly a quarter (23.2%) felt it should not, and nearly a third of respondents (30.2%) were not sure.

- 8.26 Some of the comments made in relation to the previous question (“Do you have any other suggestions for how to use the Drummond Arms Hotel for the benefit of Crieff?”) touched on the issue of a possible community buy-out. However, there was no clear consensus in these comments:

*“I believe it requires to be developed by a private body. The cost to the public purse would be more than the community could bear in the present climate.” (628)*

*“I think it would be great if the Drummond Arms could be turned over for development and use by the community.” (589)*

*“Whatever happens, make sure it is run locally.” (521)*

*“Let commercial market forces determine the building’s fate.” (214)*

- 8.27 One individual suggested that the community should purchase the hotel and then sell it for a profit, using the proceeds to pay for other town improvements.

### **Uses for other currently unoccupied buildings**

- 8.28 Finally, another open-ended question was asked, inviting people’s views about possible uses for three currently unoccupied buildings in the town centre: the former Crown Hotel, Old St Michael’s Church Hall and the former South Church. Three hundred and forty (340) respondents (52.0% of the sample) made comments in response to this question.

- 8.29 It is worth noting that, in comparing these comments with those received about the Drummond Arms Hotel, about three times as many respondents referred to these three buildings as “an eyesore”, and a substantial number of respondents advocated demolition of one or more of the buildings. For example:

- 26 individuals called for demolition of Old St Michael’s Church Hall
- 12 individuals called for demolition of the former South Church
- 9 individuals called for the demolition of the Crown Hotel
- 9 individuals called for demolition of all three buildings.

- 8.30 Suggestions were then made for how the space might be used once the buildings were removed. These suggestions included: car parking (the most popular suggestion), green space / park / outdoor seating areas, a bus station, a modern parish church, new-build flats.

- 8.31 However, the majority of comments made suggestions for how the three buildings might be used if they could be renovated. The two suggestions made most frequently were: a community centre / community hall (n=52) or flats / housing for local people (n=42). The numbers shown here do *not* include the suggestions made about individual buildings. So, for example, **in addition** to the 52 respondents who called one or more of the buildings to be used as a community centre / hall, 31 respondents wanted to see Old St Michael’s Church Hall used in this way; 14 wanted to see the former South Church used for this

purpose and 2 suggested that the former Crown Hotel could be used as a community centre / hall.

8.32 Table 8.1 provides a summary of the most commonly made suggestions about possible uses for these three buildings. It will be noted that many of these suggestions had also been made in relation to the Drummond Arms Hotel.

**Table 8.1: Numbers of respondents suggesting possible uses for Old St Michael's Church Hall, the former South Church and the former Crown Hotel**

	General suggestion for all three buildings	Old St Michael's Church Hall	South Church	Crown Hotel	Total no. of suggestions
Community centre / hall	52	31	14	2	99
Flats / housing	42	2	17	43	104
Youth club / youth centre / soft play space for children	29	—		3	32
Sporting / games / exercise space*	21	5	11	3	40
Cinema	18	3	6	1	28
Arts & crafts venue, courses, workshop, exhibition and retail space	15	—	5	—	20
Tourist accommodation, including hotel / inn, self-catering or hostel	15	—	—	16	31
Museum	12	9	12	4	37
Shops	11	1	1	4	17
Restaurant / café / pub	13	2	4	4	23
Office space for small businesses / self-employed	13	—	—	—	13
Nightclub / dance school	10	—	—	—	10
Performing arts venue (theatre / concert space)	9	3	6	—	18
Gallery / exhibition space	7	2	3	3	15
Tourist information centre	7	2	2	4	15
Indoor farmers market or other food shop (Tesco or M&S)	6	—	—	—	6
Internet café	5	—	—	—	5
Library	3	1	1	—	5

\* Specific suggestions included a bowling alley, ice rink, climbing wall, information centre for local outdoor activities, drill hall for cadets, snooker, laser tag, bingo, yoga, pilates, exercise classes, etc.

8.33 The table shows not only which suggestions were mentioned most frequently among respondents, but it also shows that some buildings were perceived by respondents as more suitable than others for certain purposes. For example, although it was suggested that the three buildings could be used for flats or for tourist accommodation (hotel, self-catering lets, hostel, etc.), it would seem that the Crown Hotel was felt to be more suitable for these purposes than Old St Michael's Church Hall or the former South Church.

8.34 Once again, several respondents made reference to the Watermill in Aberfeldy, the Birnam Arts Centre, the White Church in Comrie, and additionally, Oran Mor in Glasgow<sup>7</sup> and the House of Bruar. It was suggested that one or more of these buildings could be developed for similar purposes, which would allow them to be used by both local people and visitors alike. And in this context, it is perhaps worth noting a general comment made by one respondent:

*"The empty buildings in and around Crieff are a symptom of the implosion of the local economy which has become a monoculture focussed on seasonal money brought in by tourists." (523)*

8.35 Less commonly-mentioned suggestions for these buildings were:

- Former churches (or the land on which they stand) used for places of worship — some suggested that the current building should be demolished first
- Workshops or space to provide training / education to young people
- Auction room or antiques centre
- Public library
- Meeting space for older people
- Bookshop (n=3) – this was mentioned in combination with other uses
- Cookery school
- An outlet for E-bay sales / Freecycle.

8.36 In addition, a few individuals specifically mentioned things that they would **not** like to see the buildings used for:

- Cafés or take-aways
- Drug rehabilitation
- Charity shops (although one individual suggested one of the buildings could be used as a charity shop to support a Crieff common good fund)
- Flats / housing.

8.37 In relation to cafés, as Table 8.1 shows, a number of people advocated use of the buildings as cafes, but often in combination with other things, so for example, a venue that combines a theatre, café, shop and exhibition space.

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.oran-mor.co.uk/>.

## **General comments**

8.38 Respondents also made comments of a more general nature in relation to these unoccupied buildings. Some highlighted issues that, they felt, made it difficult to develop the buildings. These included:

- High business rates (at least eight respondents called for reduced rates to enable the buildings to be brought back to life)
- The lack of parking in the vicinity
- The need to ensure that any future development will be financially viable / profitable
- The substantial expense of redevelopment which was related to generally poor condition that the buildings were in.

8.39 There were strong feelings that the state of these buildings reflected poorly on Crieff:

*“... it makes the town look awful with so many derelict properties.” (80)*

*“They look run down and give a very poor impression of Crieff.” (245)*

*“These buildings and other poorly maintained properties are a blight on the town.” (376)*

*“To be honest, ANY use of these buildings (of which there are far too many) would be welcome. The appearance of the town would be improved no end and if valued community assets could be created at the same time, then all the better.” (427)*

*“This has become a waste in Crieff.” (633)*

8.40 There were calls for the buildings to be sold (compulsorily if necessary) for development, and that in the meantime, the owners should be compelled to maintain them in a good condition. These views are illustrated by the following comments:

*“A time schedule should be set for development and strict enforcement should be applied in respect of maintenance, etc.” (1)*

*“People are just allowed to walk away from these issues and we as a community are left with useless buildings.” (32)*

*“Until something is done, the owners must be compelled to upkeep the facades.” (127)*

*“The Council should have the legal right to insist they are maintained to a high standard by owners and no further cost to taxpayers.” (190)*

*“Auction them off if the owners are not prepared to maintain them.” (245)*

*“If a “conservation area” has any purpose, then the current owners of these buildings should be forced to maintain them — or sell them.” (534)*

8.41 It is perhaps worth noting that, in addition to the comments received on three buildings mentioned in the survey, four respondents also made comments about another unoccupied, derelict building in the town — the former Strathearn (or George) Hotel. Two individuals suggested this building should be brought back into use as a hotel and two suggested it should be demolished and the space used for car parking.

# 9 Improving the appearance of the town centre

## Three suggestions for improving the town centre

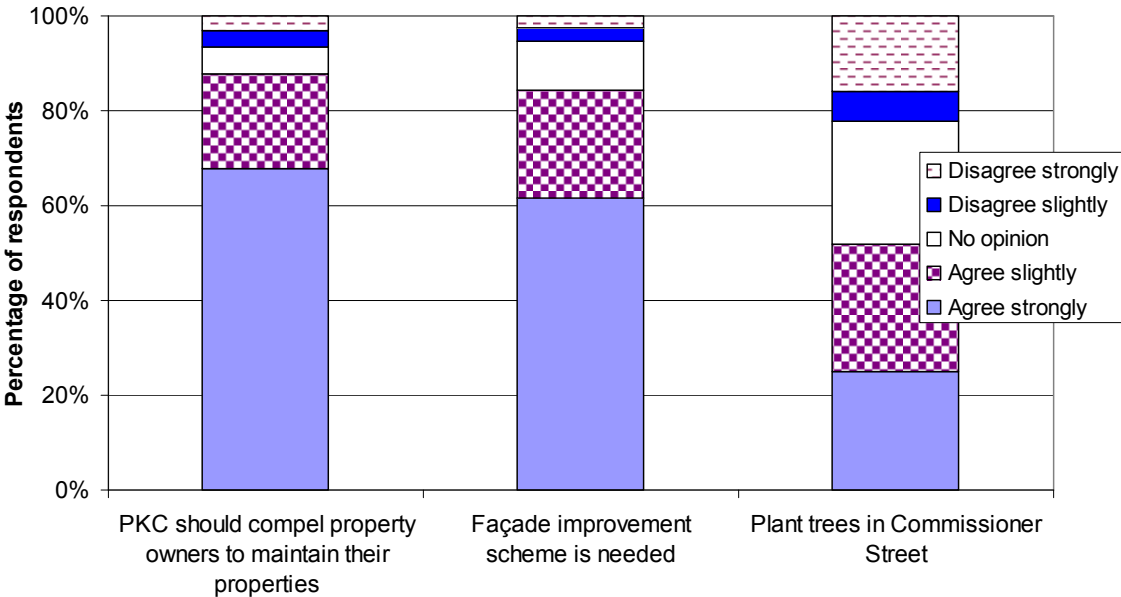
9.1 The survey included three further statements about possible ways of improving the town centre, and respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed (strongly or slightly), disagreed (strongly or slightly) or had no opinion in relation to these statements. The statements were:

- A façade improvement scheme is needed for selected shop fronts and building façades in the High Street
- Trees should be planted in Commissioner Street
- Perth & Kinross Council should take stronger measures to compel property owners to maintain their properties to a good standard (for example, through the use of statutory repair notices).

9.2 Figure 9.1 presents the findings. The table shows that the vast majority (87.7%) of respondents *agreed* that Perth & Kinross Council should take stronger measures to compel property owners to maintain their properties to a good standard and just over two-thirds (67.8%) agreed *strongly*. In addition, the majority (86.5%) agreed (61.6% agreed strongly) that a façade improvement scheme was needed for selected shop fronts and building façades in the High Street.

9.3 Respondents’ views in relation to the planting of trees in Commissioner Street were mixed. While just over half (51.8%) agreed with this idea, a further quarter (26.1%) had no opinion on the matter, and 16.0% disagreed strongly with the idea. It is perhaps worth noting that eight respondents in the survey reported that they lived in Commissioner Street and half of these disagreed strongly that trees should be planted in the street, while one disagreed slightly.

**Figure 9.1: Preferences about other ideas for improving the town centre**





9.4 Crieff residents were more likely than Crieff locals and non-resident workers to agree *strongly* with the statement about the need for a façade improvement scheme.

### **Other suggestions for improving the town centre**

9.5 Respondents were asked (through an open-ended question) whether they had any other suggestions for how the town centre of Crieff could be improved. Respondents were asked to be as specific as possible.

9.6 More than half of respondents (n=371, 56.7%) made comments in response to this question. One of the major themes arising in these responses related to issues having to do with parking, traffic and pedestrianisation of the town centre, and these results have already been discussed in Section 5.

9.7 Other main themes related to:

- The physical appearance of shops and other properties in the town
- The poor state of pavements in the town
- The range of businesses available in the town
- The opening hours of High Street shops
- The need for better signage and public information for visitors and locals
- Concerns about the appearance of James Square
- A request for more trees, flowers and greenery in the town centre
- Concerns about the trend towards moving services to the outskirts of town
- Issues to do with anti-social behaviour.

### ***Physical appearance of shops and other properties in the town***

9.8 Out of the 371 respondents who made further suggestions for improving the town centre of Crieff, nearly one-quarter (n=85, 22.9%) made comments about the appearance of shops in the High Street, or comments about the appearance of the town in general. Virtually all of these comments expressed a need for improvement.

9.9 In relation to the appearance of shop fronts, respondents frequently called for greater consistency and harmony in the colours that shops are painted and the lettering of shop signs, and a reduction in “*garish*”, “*gaudy*”, “*tacky*” or “*plasticky*” shop fronts. People wanted shop fronts to be “*more tasteful*” and “*more attractive*”. Several individuals also commented on poor window displays, and it was suggested that Crieff might usefully invite in a consultant to advise shop-owners about how they could make their shop more attractive. One individual commented that:

*“At the moment, when driving along the High Street, Crieff appears very drab and unfriendly. Many shops seem to be living in the early 20<sup>th</sup> C. and don’t seem to appreciate that it is important to **look** appealing as well as providing good things....” (387)*

9.10 Many respondents commented that shop owners (and indeed property owners, in general, including Perth & Kinross Council) should be strongly encouraged /

forced to keep their properties maintained to a good standard. This included, keeping the building painted, replacing rotten woodwork and keeping the pavements in front of the property clean and free of obstructions (including overhanging trees and shrubs).

- 9.11 Some respondents named shops in the town which they felt were well-presented, with good window displays. These were: Frank Thomson, Gordon & Durward, McNees, Damson, Green Days and Delivino.
- 9.12 A few respondents suggested that Crieff should look to other towns which (in their view) were attractive and had well-presented shops. These included in Scotland: Stirling, Perth, Pitlochry, Callander, Dunkeld, Inverary, Melrose, Peebles, Dunblane and Muthill, and in England: Malvern and Buxton.

### ***Poor state of pavements in the town***

- 9.13 Fifty-three (53) respondents (14.3% of the 371) made comments about the pavements in the town. The majority of these comments concerned the poor state of pavements, particularly (but not limited to) those in the High Street. Respondents strongly believed that pavements needed to be repaired, maintained and kept clean and tidy, and that the current state of the pavements gave a very poor impression of the town. Several people cited a problem with weeds growing in pavements and roads. Several suggested that if shop owners could be persuaded to sweep the pavements in front of their own shops, it would significantly improve the appearance of the town, with no additional cost to the public purse.
- 9.14 There were also calls to “adopt” the unmade pavements in Connaught Terrace, Heathcote Road, Craigard Road and Knock Road which respondents suggested were “*appalling*”, “*a disgrace*”, “*dangerous*” and “*unsightly*”.
- 9.15 While most of the comments made about pavements were general in nature (i.e., pavements, in general, need to be repaired and maintained), a number of respondents also highlighted some specific problems:
- A need to clear the weeds and litter from the pavements around the new High School
  - A need to repair the pavement and road at the entrance to the hospital
  - An urgent need to repair the pavement at the bottom of Hill Street beside the Drummond Arms Hotel (several comments were received about this)
  - A need to repair the pavement on the south side of the High Street, between the Woollen Mill and the Christian bookshop.
- 9.16 Some comments also called for the pavements to be widened and for obstructions (such as sign boards) to be removed:

*“Pavements should be left clear to allow pedestrians to walk with prams, etc. safely without having to go into the road.” (2)*

*“Some of the pavements are not suitable for wheelchairs, either too narrow or difficult to manoeuvre.” (122)*

*“Widen all pavements ... so that two serious push-chairs can pass in comfort.” (165)*

*“Heavy traffic and narrow pavements detract from the tourist – and local – appeal of Crieff. How about a one way system either up or down the High Street with pavements made wider and more accessible for pedestrians / disabled / mothers with prams....” (514)*

*“The pavements are dangerously narrow. People often have to step into the street to get round slower-moving pedestrians. I have nearly been hit on two occasions by the mirrors of passing lorries over-hanging the pavements.” (589)*

### **The range of businesses available in the town**

- 9.17 Another major theme arising from the comments at the end of the questionnaire was related to the range of businesses currently available in the town. Respondents wanted to see fewer take-aways and charity shops. A few also suggested that there were too many hairdressers in the town.
- 9.18 Instead, respondents wanted to see more independent shops (not chains), and shops of higher quality — particularly around James Square.
- 9.19 People expressed concern about the number of empty shops in the town, and a few suggested that these could be disguised with decorative sheets or painted screens to make it appear like the shop was in use, rather than boarding up windows to prevent vandalism.
- 9.20 Some respondents suggested that in order to encourage new businesses in the town, and more importantly to increase the occupancy of empty shops, business rates should be reduced, or waived altogether until the business had been firmly established.

### **Opening hours of High Street shops**

- 9.21 A related theme had to do with the opening hours of shops. Eleven respondents commented that they would like to see shops in Crieff open on a Sunday. Others argued that shops should not close at lunchtime or for half-days during the week. A few respondents made a comparison to Callander which (in their view) was very busy on Sunday because the shops were open.

### **Need for better signage and public information**

- 9.22 Another recurring theme related to a perceived need for better sign-posting and public information in the town. Suggestions included:

*“Put up wall plaques identifying places in interest where significant people from the past, and present, have lived or worked.” (27)*

*“Historical tourist information boards guiding people through the Town.” (52)*

*“Detailed street map in James Square — with facilities and points of interest listed. Display info in the Square about “events” dates.” (134)*

*“Better signposting to Macrosty Park for visitors to the town — maybe a central signpost in James Square clearly indicating places of interest: distillery, Macrosty Park, Lady Mary’s Walk, Crieff Hydro etc.” (313)*

*“Placement of “You are here” type of technology for visitors to find their way around town.” (315)*

### **Concerns about the appearance of James Square**

9.23 Six respondents suggested that the Murray Fountain should be put back into working order, and one individual was concerned that the fountain is not well-maintained.

9.24 Others commented that James Square *should* be the heart of the town, but that its current state offers no encouragement to linger. As one individual said, *“It offers nothing of interest to keep you there.”* Concerns were expressed about the difficulties for children and older people of negotiating the very steep stairs at the side of the Square. Others commented that the Square seemed only to be used by *“winos”*. (See discussion below about anti-social behaviour.)

9.25 Two respondents referred to the recent exhibition held in the former library building by students at the Glasgow School of Art showing their plans for redeveloping the Square. It was suggested that these might provide a basis for improving the space and making it a central focus in the town.

### **A request for more trees and flowers in the town centre**

9.26 A considerable number of respondents commented positively about the efforts of Crieff in Leaf in providing floral displays around the town. And despite the general lack of agreement about planting trees in Commissioner Street (as discussed above), many people called for more trees and flowers around the town. Several wanted shops in the High Street to have window boxes.

### **Concerns about the trend towards moving services to the outskirts of the town**

9.27 A number of respondents felt that the trend towards moving services to the outskirts of town should be discouraged:

*“We have to strongly resist the attempt to push services and / or facilities out of the town centre which is currently the problem. The Community School should not be an excuse to strip the centre of meaning and convenience.” (104)*

*“Bring the town BACK to the town!! Terrible retrograde step taking everything down to the Campus....” (647)*

9.28 Another individual went so far as to suggest that there should be *“no more building commercially until the empty buildings are used again.” (74)*

9.29 As already mentioned, a substantial number of respondents strongly disagreed with the move of the library from the centre of town to the Community Campus, and called for it to be returned to the town centre. In addition, a number of

people expressed concerns about the adverse impact that a major supermarket might have on the town centre.

- 9.30 It should perhaps also be mentioned that there were a few comments suggesting that shops currently on the edge of town (i.e., Comrie Street, and those across from the Crieff Hotel in East High Street), should move their premises closer to the centre of town so as to fill unoccupied shops.

### **Issues to do with anti-social behaviour**

9.31 Finally, a substantial number of respondents commented on the problems of:

- Litter in the town (n=31)
- Dog fouling (n=21)
- Public drinking and loitering by “yobs”, “louts” and “unruly teenagers” in James Square (n=14)
- Graffiti and vandalism (n=4)

9.32 Respondents wanted to see more provision of bins in the centre of town, and spot fines for people who litter or allow their dogs to foul the pavements. The suggestion was made that school children should have a code of conduct at lunchtimes to encourage them not to drop litter or chewing gum.

9.33 Twenty respondents called for a greater police presence in the town, and six wanted to see more use of CCTV.

### **Other comments**

9.34 There were other comments that cannot be considered as *major* themes, in that they were mentioned by a smaller number of people, but many of these comments highlighted other needs or perceived problems in the town, or they made useful suggestions for how to improve the town. These included:

- A need to better promote and market Crieff more creatively (“*Crieff needs an identity — spa town — Victorian spa — open up wells -- and promote the water, fresh air, etc.... Sell Victorian romance.*”)
- A suggestion that the Council should take a “*common-sense*” approach in dealing with buildings in the centre of town that have fallen into a derelict state (“*While being aware of conservation status, common sense should prevail in deciding whether some buildings should be kept or replaced by \*good\* modern buildings fit for purpose.*”)
- A need to find ways of creating an income for the town (i.e., a Common Good fund) (“*A trust fund needs to be established to generate income to pay for the Christmas lights and other community projects.*”)
- The potentially positive effect of community events / community spirit (“*Promote community spirit in a manner that locals realise that the community together goes forward, not disagreeing in their own factions.*”)
- Free public toilets (“*Free public toilets — public toilets are free in Aberfeldy and Perth — why do tourists have to pay to use the toilet in Crieff?*”)

## 10 Needs for additional services or businesses

10.1 The penultimate question in the survey asked respondents about what other types of businesses or services they would like to see in Crieff. Three hundred and forty-seven (347) respondents (53.0%) wrote in suggestions. This section presents an analysis of the responses. The largest proportion of comments focused on:

- A supermarket (n=104)
- A petrol station (n=51)
- Clothing stores (n=43)
- Restaurants / cafés / pubs. (n=30+)

### Supermarket

10.2 One hundred and four (104) respondents, or 30.0% of those who responded to this question felt that Crieff needed a “proper”, “larger”, “decent”, “better-run” supermarket. (It should be noted that there were also numerous requests for a supermarket made in response to the open-ended question about the need for additional social, leisure and cultural facilities in Crieff.) The vast majority of those who wanted a supermarket made no suggestion about which brand of supermarket they wanted. However, others did:

- Tesco (n=18)
- Sainsbury’s (n=15)
- Marks & Spencer’s Food (n=12)
- Waitrose (n=6)
- Morrisons (n=4)
- Asda (n=2)
- Aldi or Lidl (n=2)

10.3 And it is perhaps worth mentioning that some individuals suggested more than one brand: i.e., Tesco or Sainbury’s, M&S or Waitrose, etc. The following gives only a small flavour of some of these comments:

*“A new supermarket, one of the major brands, i.e., M&S, Sainsbury’s, Waitrose or as a second choice Morrison’s, Asda or Tesco.” (1)*

*“Another supermarket....” (48)*

*“A new supermarket – as soon as possible!!!! We seriously need to get beyond the embarrassment of this long-delayed decision and move on.” (82)*

*“A decent supermarket selling everything down to socks....” (124)*

*“A good supermarket selling a wide range of goods.” (125)*

*“Tesco’s or Sainsbury’s superstore.” (149)*

*“A really good supermarket, selling first-class produce and offering a wide choice.” (209)*

*“Tesco / Asda” (244)*

*“High quality supermarket – Waitrose quality” (276)*

*“A new supermarket is now a must. More local people than ever are complaining about our supermarkets not carrying enough fresh goods...” (356)*

*“The supermarket we have been promised.” (489)*

10.4 Only six respondents made comments about whether the supermarket should be located in the Market Park or *not* in the Market Park.

10.5 In contrast to the overwhelming message in favour of a new supermarket in Crieff, there was a small minority of respondents who voiced concern about the possible negative impact of a supermarket on the town centre. However, there were also three individuals who suggested that a Tesco Metro or Waitrose could be located in the High Street, and other respondents made similar suggestions in response to the questions about currently unoccupied buildings in the town.

### **Petrol station**

10.6 A petrol station was the second most frequently mentioned business / service needed in Crieff. Fifty-one (51) individuals (14.7% of those who commented on this question) wanted to see a *“larger”, “better”, “safe”, “accessible” “more competitive”* petrol station — not in the centre of the town.

10.7 Respondents commented on the lack of accessibility and the hazard created by traffic queuing on the A85 for the current petrol station on East High Street. Some individuals suggested that the current petrol station could be relocated (to where Houseproud is, or to Old Halley’s Yard). However, others felt that any petrol station should be provided in tandem with a new supermarket:

*“We also need a modern petrol station with competitive prices!” (109)*

*“Another more accessible petrol station. Four petrol pumps for one town and all the traffic chaos that goes with it.” (31)*

*“Another petrol station.” (218)*

*“A petrol pump away from the busy High Street.” (261)*

*“An accessible and easy to use petrol station!” (266)*

*“Petrol garage before [there is] an accident at present one.” (442)*

*“A large supermarket such as Tesco or Sainsbury’s with a petrol station.” (480)*

## Clothing stores

10.8 Forty-three (43) respondents (12.4% of all those who commented on this question), suggested that Crieff needed more clothing stores. The majority suggested that the main need was for clothing stores for children and young people. However, there were also comments to suggest that a wider range of *affordable* clothing shops in general would be useful. Respondents referred to the type of clothing sold in Marks & Spencer, River Island, Primark or New Look. The suggestion was not necessarily that these shops should be available in Crieff, but rather shops that sold similar clothing. One individual also suggested that a designer outlet store should be available, and another wanted to see a shop selling school uniforms.

## Restaurants / cafés / pubs

10.9 Respondents wanted to see better provision of good quality restaurants, cafés and pubs in Crieff. Again, as mentioned in previous sections, there were numerous comments made that Crieff needed fewer fast food / takeaway shops. Instead, respondents suggested such things as:

*“A wine bar.” (55)*

*“Restaurants that are open in the evening.” (426)*

*“A decent, independent, \*family friendly pub\* selling pub meals!” (282)*

*“Better quality pub (family-orientated).” ( 657)*

*“A family pub like 'The Maltings' in Dunkeld Road, Perth. Great food and child friendly with great parking. Could be situated on Old Halleys Yard, Muthill Road.” (597)*

*“One or two of the cafes should stay open for tea (until 6pm)” (403)*

10.10 At the same time, there were also suggestions, particularly from younger people for: McDonald's, KFC and Starbucks. (Please see the comments made by young people under 18 in relation to McDonald's in the following section.)

## Other suggestions

10.11 Other comments to this question about a need for other businesses / services in Crieff prompted a very wide range of responses. Those mentioned frequently were:

- A bookshop (n=31)
- A shop to sell music / DVDs / games (n=20)
- Arts & crafts co-operative / workshop (which also sells supplies and has exhibition space (n=15)
- A youth café / youth club (n=10)
- An internet café / wifi zone / LAN centre (n=9)
- A (larger) outdoor store (similar to Tiso) (n=9)
- A shop selling PC supplies and IT support (n=8)



- A whole food / health food shop (n=7)
- A shoe repairer (n=6)
- A cycle shop / hire shop (n=6)
- A stationer (like W.H. Smith – some suggested this could be provided along with a bookstore) (n=6).

10.12 In addition, as already discussed in previous sections, a large proportion of the comments made in response to this question focused on issues to do with local public transportation, the need for better co-ordination of local and national transportation services, and a request for a train station in Crieff.

10.13 Some suggestions were made less frequently, but are nevertheless worth highlighting. For example, there were at least four respondents who wanted to see serviced / shared office space for self-employed people or new business start-ups. Four individuals felt Crieff needed an NHS dentist, and others suggested that there was a need for better provision of services / shops for blind or disabled people.

10.14 Finally, there was a very long list of other services / businesses that respondents wanted to see in Crieff. Many of these businesses (like some of those listed in paragraph 10.11 above) have previously operated in Crieff, but closed because they were unable to make a profit. Numerous suggestions were also made for shops that *currently* exist in Crieff, and in some cases, the respondent commented that another shop was needed to introduce competition to existing shops, or the suggestion was that better quality was needed.

10.15 One individual suggested that the difficulties for many shops in Crieff was the result of too much of a focus on tourism, rather than trying to meet the needs of the local community:

*“Crieff’s retail sector is targeted at tourists who are only present for a limited period of time, hence the mayfly nature of retail establishments in the High Street. The retail sector needs to be expanded to provide goods and services that are needed by the community.” (523)*

## 11 Views from the young people

- 11.1 This section briefly describes the main findings from discussions with three groups of young people from Morrison’s Academy, the Logos Youth Centre and Crieff High School, respectively.
- 11.2 These groups were asked for their views on possible colour-theming of lamp posts, railings and street furniture, and on the possible wording and images to be included on a new welcome sign for the town.
- 11.3 In addition, young people were asked their views about what was needed to make Crieff a better place for them: “If you had a magic wand, and could make Crieff a better place to live, what would you want to change?”

### Views on colour-theming and welcome signs

- 11.4 The findings from the three groups in relation to the survey questions on colour-theming and welcome signs are shown in Table 11.1 below.

**Table 11.1: Young people’s views on colour-theming and welcome signs**

	Morrison’s	Logos	Crieff HS	Total
	(n)	(n)	(n)	
<b>Colours</b>				
<b>Burgundy with gold trim</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>
Green with gold trim		1	3	4
Keep existing colour scheme	3			3
No strong opinion	4	1		5
None of the above (suggested alternative)		4		4
<b>Wording of signs*</b>				
Crieff welcomes you		2	—	2
Welcome to Crieff	5	1	—	6
<b>Welcome to Crieff – Heart of Strathearn</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>11</b>
No strong opinion	1	1	—	2
<b>Images</b>				
Coat of Arms	2	1	2	5
<b>Stylised tree</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
A cattle droving image		1		1
Some element of the local landscape	3			3
A seasonal view of Crieff / upper Strathearn	1	1		2
Would prefer no images, only words	1			1
Would prefer to keep current sign	3	1	2	6
No strong opinion	2			2

\*Young people from Crieff High School were not asked about the wording of the signs.

- 11.5 In relation to colour-theming and the wording of a possible new welcome sign for the town, the views expressed by these young people strengthen the views obtained from the over-18s, although interestingly, there appeared overall to be a clearer preference for burgundy with gold trim, rather than green with gold trim. On the other hand, this clear preference was not necessarily as evident within each individual group.
- 11.6 In terms of a possible image for the sign, the overall preference was for the stylised tree (which is the logo of the Crieff & Strathearn Tourist Association). However, interestingly, none of the young people at Morrison's chose this option. Note that in the main survey of over-18s, the younger age group (the 18- to 29-year-olds) also preferred the stylised tree as the image for a new welcome sign.

### **What young people would like to see in Crieff**

- 11.7 In terms of the discussion question: what would young people like to change in Crieff, there was a remarkable consistency across the groups. In particular, three things were named by all three groups:
- A cinema
  - A shopping centre / better provision for clothes shopping
  - A McDonald's.
- 11.8 Young people in all the groups were asked what was special about McDonald's, and why did they feel that a McDonald's was needed in Crieff when there were already so many other fast food shops. McDonald's was preferred because, "*The food tastes good*", (especially burgers and fries), "*It's cheap*", and "*There is room to sit in.*"
- 11.9 When asked what kinds of clothing shops they would like to have, the young people in one group wanted shops that sold clothes similar to those in New Look or Primark. Others wanted a sports clothing shop.
- 11.10 The issue of public transportation was an important one for these young people. There were requests for:
- More frequent bus services to Stirling and Perth, especially at the weekends and in the evenings
  - Extra buses after school — there were reports of people having to stand for most of the journey between Crieff and Perth, and also reports of people missing their stops because they could not get through the crush of people standing on the bus.
  - A railway in Crieff, which connected both to Dunblane and to Perth.
- 11.11 Young people also wanted Crieff to have:
- HMV (or a shop to sell music, DVDs and games)
  - Ice skating

- A bowling alley (although one group was not convinced this would be successful in Crieff)
- A musical instrument shop that also sold sheet music
- A bigger supermarket
- A stationer / bookshop (e.g., like W.H. Smith)
- More bins
- Free and clean public toilets
- Colourful bus stops (i.e., bus stops painted and maintained), and more seating at bus stops
- The equivalent of Poundland.

11.12 One group got into a further discussion about whether they felt safe at school and in the town. Members of this group said they felt very intimidated by people hanging around drinking on the street in Crieff. It was suggested that it would be helpful if there was CCTV in the town centre, and more of a police presence. Some in this group also wanted to see better lighting in the small dark streets and closes that lead off from the High Street in Crieff.

11.13 These views are based on discussion with small numbers of young people, and so cannot be considered to be representative of the wider population of young people in Crieff. However, the consistency, particularly in relation to young people views about a cinema, shopping centre, McDonald's and the need for public transportation, would indicate that these particular areas are priorities for young people of this age.

## **12 Discussion and conclusions**

- 12.1 This section attempts to draw some conclusions from the findings of the survey. In particular, the areas for priority action will be highlighted. The challenge now for CUSP will be to find a way to bring about the improvements in Crieff that people urgently would like to see.
- 12.2 However, before going on to discuss the findings and conclusions, a comment is first needed about the representativeness of the findings.
- 12.3 This survey was widely publicised in Crieff and just over six weeks was allowed for people to take part. The survey achieved a large number of responses from people who live in Crieff. In addition, there were nearly 100 responses from people who either live just outside Crieff, or who work in Crieff. Just over 10% of the town's population took part in the survey, and although this is a low response rate, there are several things that would suggest that the findings are representative of the views of the wider population:
- The demographic profile of respondents broadly reflects the demographic profile of the general population of the town (although it is accepted 18- to 29-year-olds are slightly under-represented)
  - The sample is geographically representative — residents from every part of the town are included in the sample
  - There is a great deal of consistency in the key themes identified in comments made by the respondents to open-ended questions in the survey.
- 12.4 If there is any bias in the survey sample, it will be that it likely over-represents people who have an interest in improving the state of the town, since it is these individuals who would be most likely to make the effort to take part in the survey. This is also suggested by the number of comments received to the open-ended questions in the survey. It is very unusual in self-completion questionnaires for such a large proportion (in some cases, more than half) of respondents to write in comments to open-ended questions.

### **The priorities**

#### **Painting of lamp posts and street furniture**

- 12.5 There was not a strong preference among the people of Crieff about whether to paint street furniture burgundy with gold trim or green with gold trim. A marginally higher proportion of respondents voted for burgundy, but the difference is only 2.5%. The young people's groups also voted for burgundy. However, the main message from the survey findings would seem to be that the majority of the people of Crieff (seven out of ten respondents) would like to see the town's lamp posts, railings and street furniture painted in a co-ordinated colour, rather than left in the uncoordinated haphazard colour-scheme that currently exists.

- 12.6 Should it prove to be impossible, or more expensive to choose burgundy and gold, then the work should proceed in green and gold.

### **New welcome sign**

- 12.7 There would appear to be support among the residents of Crieff for proceeding with the design of a new welcome sign. The preferred wording of this sign is: “Welcome to Crieff — Heart of Strathearn”, and the preferred image is the Coat of Arms of the Burgh of Crieff. The coat of arms received substantially more support than any other image, and so there is no need to consider incorporating a second image into the sign.

### **Parking**

- 12.8 The findings indicate that people in Crieff perceive a need for additional parking in the town centre. Seventy percent of respondents agreed with a statement that additional parking was needed, and nearly half of respondents agreed strongly.
- 12.9 In addition, sixty-five percent of survey respondents voiced a preference for having free parking in the King Street and Leadenflower car parks and paid parking in the High Street and James Square.
- 12.10 At the same time, there was clearly a very strong feeling (expressed through written comments) that current parking restrictions need to be enforced, and that the existing situation is unacceptable.
- 12.11 However, any solution to the parking problem should *not* involve the construction of a multi-storey car park. Nor should it involve reinstating James Square to allow traffic flow on either side of the Square. Furthermore, the residents of Crieff expressed ambivalence about a park and ride scheme, and this would suggest that the development of such a scheme should *not* be prioritised.

### **Traffic**

- 12.12 Over 60% of survey respondents agreed that there was a need for a by-pass around Crieff, while less than 20% of respondents disagreed strongly with this statement.
- 12.13 The comments made by respondents in relation to traffic and parking problems in Crieff do suggest that the possible creation of a by-pass should be a priority issue for CUSP. However, respondents also made other suggestions for how Crieff’s traffic problems might be addressed, including better enforcement of parking restrictions (as mentioned above), the introduction of a one-way traffic system, the creation of additional pedestrian crossings, and the introduction of restricted delivery times. These suggestions should be considered alongside the possibility of building a by-pass.

### **Public transportation**

- 12.14 There was strong support for better co-ordination between local bus services and national bus and rail services, with nearly 85% of survey respondents

agreeing with this statement. These results were re-iterated with a considerable number of comments on this same issue. In particular, there is a need for more frequent services to connect to the trains at Dunblane / Stirling and Gleneagles. There is also a need for more frequent services in the mornings (at rush hour), evenings and at weekends.

- 12.15 Although there was no question included in the questionnaire about local bus provision, there were sufficient comments on this issue to suggest that there is a need to improve the town bus service by providing a more frequent service between the town centre and the Community Campus, and to extend the service to the area around Ochilview Gardens and Inchbrakie.
- 12.16 There were calls to establish a train service in Crieff itself, and although these views came from a relatively small number of people when compared to other comments made on public transportation and traffic, it may be worth raising this issue with relevant individuals and agencies (e.g., in the first instance, the Government Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Climate Change) to explore the feasibility in the long-term of re-establishing a rail service in Crieff. The provision of a rail service to Crieff could potentially do more to transform the town than any of the other issues raised through this survey.

### **Social, cultural and leisure facilities**

- 12.17 The priorities for new or additional social, cultural and leisure facilities in Crieff would appear to be:
- A community centre / community hall – in the centre of town
  - A cinema
  - A place to hold small concerts and gigs
  - The return of the library to the town centre, or the creation of a branch in the town centre.
- 12.18 Additional sporting facilities were also requested, but these comments came from a smaller number of respondents. Those mentioned most frequently were: better cycling facilities / cycle paths, free public tennis courts and better provision for public swimming at the Community Campus.

### **Land between MacRosty Park and Lady Mary's Walk**

- 12.19 There was a great deal of support voiced through the survey for the idea of purchasing this land (at a cost of approximately £20,000, as stated in the questionnaire), and enabling it to be held in trust for the town of Crieff.
- 12.20 Furthermore, the responses to the question about whether individuals might be willing to make a contribution to the cost of purchase would seem to suggest that a community fund-raising campaign for this purpose would be successful.

### **Uses for currently unoccupied buildings, including the Drummond Arms Hotel**

- 12.21 The majority of respondents to this survey (more than 80%) expressed the preference that the Drummond Arms should continue to be used as a hotel. However, there was no clear indication about what kind of hotel it should be.

Some favoured its use for budget accommodation and some felt it should be an upmarket establishment.

- 12.22 At the same time, however, there was also considerable support for the idea of the building being redeveloped into a venue that could be used both by members of the community and visitors alike. Six out of 10 survey respondents were in favour of the building being used for a community centre, and many of the written comments made in relation to the building re-iterated this. There was relatively little support for developing the building for flats / housing, and virtually no support at all for developing it as a multi-storey car park.
- 12.23 At the present time, there would not appear to be strong support from the residents of Crieff to purchase the hotel through a community buy-out scheme. On the other hand, nearly one-third of respondents (30.2%) expressed uncertainty on this question. Given the strength of feeling about the need for a community centre in Crieff, it is possible that those who were unsure about this idea would either support or reject it if a clearer, more formal proposal were put to the town about how the hotel could be used, what the cost of renovation and maintenance would be, and whether grant funding could be available to cover all or part of these costs.
- 12.24 As previously mentioned, there is a lack of clarity about whether the Drummond Arms Hotel, and several of the other large unoccupied buildings in Crieff, are actually for sale. Therefore, the priority for CUSP in the first instance is to obtain information from the current owners about their intentions for their properties, their willingness to sell and (if possible) the sale price. If this information were publicly available, it might prompt action among members of the community in Crieff, or a buyer from elsewhere, to make an offer for the building with a view to developing it for a commercial or community use.

### **Other areas for improvement**

- 12.25 **Maintaining semi-derelict buildings:** There was very strong agreement among survey respondents that they would like to see Perth & Kinross Council take stronger measures to ensure that properties were maintained in good order. Almost 90% of respondents agreed with this statement. Several of the large, currently unoccupied buildings in the centre of Crieff are in very poor condition, but because the Council considers that they are not dangerous to members of the public, no action is taken towards keeping the buildings watertight, free from rot, and free from vegetation growing in gutters, rhones and stonework. Given the strength of opinion on this matter, this issue should be prioritised by CUSP in its future discussions with the Council.
- 12.26 **Façade improvement scheme:** There was also strong agreement about the need for a façade improvement scheme for selected shop fronts in the High Street, and comments received to open-ended questions suggest that improvement should focus in the first instance on the removal of garish, plasticky signage and the introduction of a more traditional, consistent and unified colour scheme.



- 12.27 **Trees in Commissioner Street:** About half the respondents to this survey agreed with the idea of planting trees in Commissioner Street, and just over 20% disagreed with this idea. A further 20% had no strong opinion on this matter. Given the findings on this question, we would suggest that this should *not* be a priority focus for CUSP. However, given the suggestions made by many respondents about the need for more trees, shrubs and flowers in the town centre, this may be a project that Crieff in Leaf would want to take on.
- 12.28 **Repair and on-going maintenance of pavements:** There was no specific question included in the survey about the pavements in Crieff. However, a substantial number of respondents spontaneously commented on the state of pavements, not only in the town centre, but throughout the town. It is suggested, therefore, that this issue should be prioritised by CUSP.

### **Other businesses and services**

12.29 Substantial numbers of respondents to this survey wanted to see:

- A larger supermarket – and the greatest number of respondents appeared to have no strong view about what brand of supermarket it should be, but the general opinion seems to be that a superstore (e.g., Sainsbury's, Tesco, Asda, etc.) is wanted
- A larger petrol station — not located in the town centre.

12.30 In our view, the priority for CUSP should be on helping the plans for these two particular businesses to move forward.

12.31 Respondents to the survey also suggested numerous other businesses and services they would like to see in Crieff. The most frequently-mentioned suggestions were:

- Affordable clothing – and particularly clothing for children and young people
- A greater range of affordable, but good quality restaurants / cafes — i.e., fewer takeaways / fast food
- An arts and crafts workshop / co-operative, which could also sell art / craft supplies, deliver courses to members of the community / visitors and provide exhibition space
- A whole food / health food shop
- A larger bookshop / stationery shop
- A music / DVD shop
- A larger outdoor clothing / outdoor activity store (similar to Tiso).

12.32 The focus groups with young people identified a desire for more outlets selling young people's clothing, and for a McDonald's. However, in exploring with young people what they liked about McDonald's, the need would seem to be for a young-person friendly eatery that serves inexpensive, tasty food and has space for seating.

12.33 In our view, any attempts to establish new businesses in Crieff would need to be undertaken by private individuals rather than by CUSP. However, CUSP may be in a position to encourage and help attract new businesses to the town.

**Annex A: The survey questionnaire**