

Skirling Community Development Trust

Land Acquisition Feasibility Study & Business Plan

Final Report v2.2

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I Executive Summary

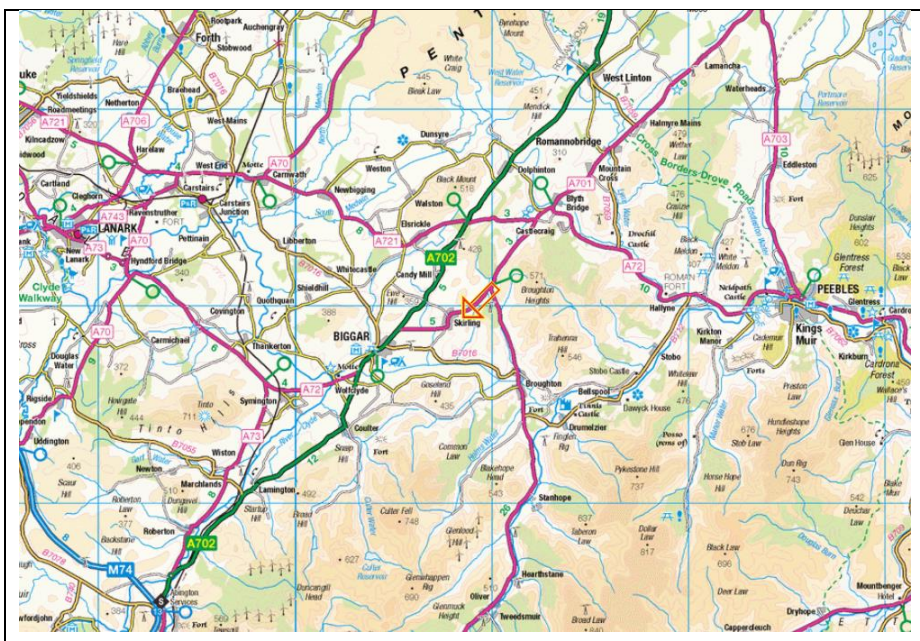
Skirling is a conservation village and community council area in the Scottish Borders, situated 4km north-east of Biggar, with a population of 191. Skirling Community Development Trust (SCDT) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), incorporated and registered on 1 October 2024. SCDT was set up to facilitate and support the delivery of the priority projects set out under the Skirling Community Action Plan (CAP) 2024-2029, and as appropriate to hold any land or assets on behalf of the village for the benefit of the local community.

The CAP, developed by local residents, sets out actions needed to ensure Skirling continues to develop and thrive as a vibrant and sustainable community. A number of these, including a play-park, community growing, composting, enhancing amenity and developing community renewables, require access to suitable land. Three separate landowners in Skirling have expressed interest in transferring ownership of certain areas of land to SCDT, which has commissioned this feasibility study and business plan to assess the viability and potential options for developing these and any other land around the village to achieve a range of long term environmental and community benefits.

The first stage report included a detailed description of the various parcels of land, an outline of the community's objectives and an options analysis, assessing the potential of the various parcels of land to deliver the range of environmental, recreational, economic, educational and heritage benefits sought by SCDT and the wider community. It also discussed the viability of acquisition and noted the costs and potential funding and income sources for acquisition, post-acquisition development projects and on-going maintenance and management.

This final report incorporates feedback on the draft report from SCDT and the local community as to the acquisition of land and preferred development options. It identifies key funders for development projects, contains a provisional business plan with detailed income and expenditure figures for five years, and outlines the likely income and expenditure for the following twenty years.

Key projects to be taken forward (in some cases subject to further discussion and prioritisation) include the acquisition of verges and the village green to safeguard their amenity, the planting of flowering trees and shrubs, the establishment of a play-park, the creation of a new path at the Castlestones corner to increase pedestrian safety, community growing and composting, and the development of the Skirling Mill Field as a wildlife and recreation area. The engagement of a part-time development officer to manage projects and the establishment of a volunteer group are required to ensure the success and sustainability of SCDT's proposals.



Map I: Location map

2 Introduction

2.1 Skirling

Skirling is a conservation village and community council area in the Scottish Borders, with a population of 191.¹

The village lies alongside the A72 Peebles-Biggar road. The D33 minor road runs north-west to join the A702 primary road which links Edinburgh and the M74, whilst the D39 runs south to join the B7016 Biggar to Broughton road.²

The Skirling Community Council area includes the village of Skirling, the small nearby settlements of Skirling Mill and Muirburn, and the surrounding farmland.³ It is included within the Tweeddale locality of Scottish Borders Council and lies at the very western edge of the Scottish Borders Council area. The nearest town, Biggar (population 2,742),⁴ which is 4km to the south-west, is in South Lanarkshire.

2.1.1 Housing

The Skirling Community Action Plan estimates that there are around 110 houses in the Skirling Community Council area. There is a relatively high level of owner occupation and a low level of private rented housing compared to the Scottish Borders. Social rented housing is on a par with the Scottish Borders, thanks to the mix of Scottish Borders Housing Association and Eildon Housing properties providing 20 houses between them.

2.1.2 Schools and education

Nursery and primary schooling is at Broughton Primary School. There are currently 40 pupils in the school (with approximately 10 of these from Skirling) and a further 15 children in the nursery. The main High School for the catchment is in Peebles. Some Skirling children go to Biggar High School which is much closer but there are no school transport arrangements as the village is outwith the Scottish Borders Council area.

2.1.3 Health

Resources and facilities in the local area include:

- GP Services in Biggar
- Cottage Hospitals at Biggar and Peebles
- Main hospitals in Melrose, Wishaw, Livingston.

2.1.4 Local economy

Important local employment sectors include Education, Health and Social Work, as well as Agriculture and Forestry, Manufacturing, Construction and Accommodation and Food Services. There are 13-15 farms in the Skirling area; most are family owned and relatively small, and many farmers have diversified through contracting businesses, visitor accommodation and forestry etc.

Previous assessments of the local economy showed that compared to Scottish Borders and Scotland there was a high rate of economically active persons in Skirling with higher rates of self-employed and part time employment and a lower rate of full-time employment. The area has been popular with people commuting as far afield as Edinburgh, with good road links and a bus service. Post-covid there is now a significant increase in people working most of the week from home in the village.

¹ 2022 census

² <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/379/list-of-public-roads>

³ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/7736/skirling>

⁴ <https://www.scotlandscensus.gov.uk/search-the-census#/explore/snapshot>

2.1.5 Public transport

Scottish Borders Council bus service #91 runs 4 times a day each way between Peebles and Biggar (Monday-Saturday only), stopping at Goatfoot and the village green.⁵

2.1.6 Climate

The nearest weather station is at Drumalbin,⁶ which is 15km to the west at a similar altitude. This averages 930mm annual rainfall and 59 days of air frost.

Annual rainfall at Drumalbin is considerably lower than at hillier sites to the south and south west: Camps Reservoir, 18km to the south at higher altitude (350m above sea level) averages 1353mm rainfall and 86 days of frost, whilst Eskdalemuir receives 1827mm of rainfall.

Forest Research's Environmental Site Classification for Forestry decision support tool indicates that sites around the village have a cool, sheltered and moist climate, and records DAMS (a measure of exposure) scores of 14 and 15 across the various sites, which is relatively low.⁷

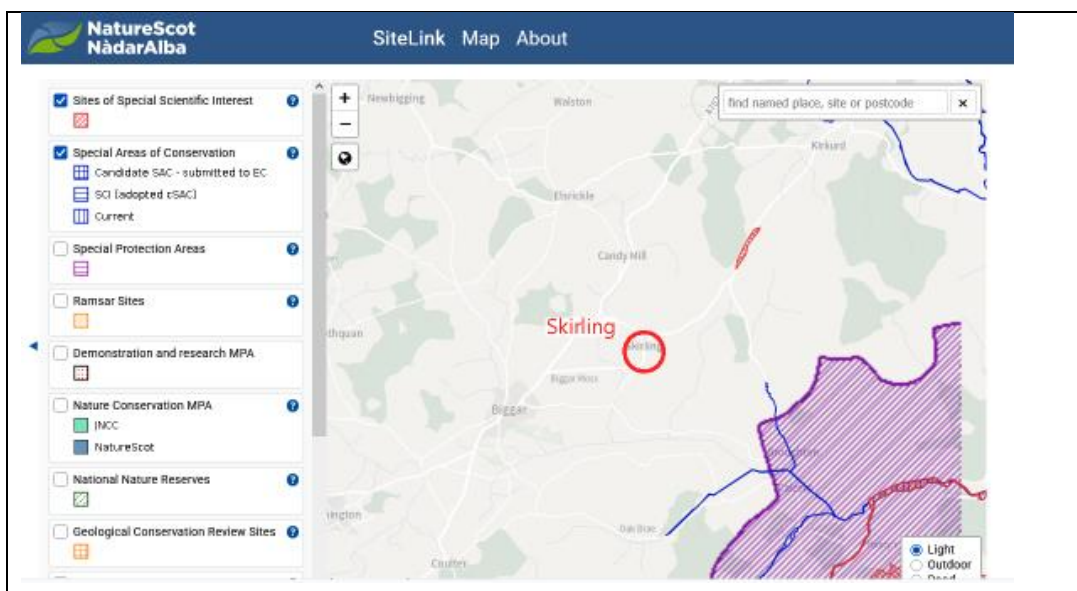
2.1.7 Fauna and flora

No formal surveys have been undertaken and no information on protected species or habitats has been provided. Roe deer are resident in Gallows Knowe Wood.

2.1.8 Environmental designations

There are no environmental designated sites covering or immediately adjacent to the village

- Mount Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest⁸ is ~3km to the north-east
- River Tweed Special Area of Conservation⁹ is ~3km to the east
- Upper Tweeddale National Scenic Area¹⁰ is to the south-east



Map 2: Environmental designations

The Tweedsmuir Uplands Special Landscape Area extends to ~2km south and south-east of the village but should not impinge on any of SCDT's likely activities.

⁵ https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/download/1340/bus_service_-_timetables

⁶ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/climate/maps-and-data/location-specific-long-term-averages/gcvk7n86b>

⁷ <http://www.forestdss.org.uk/geoforestdss/>

⁸ <https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/1203>

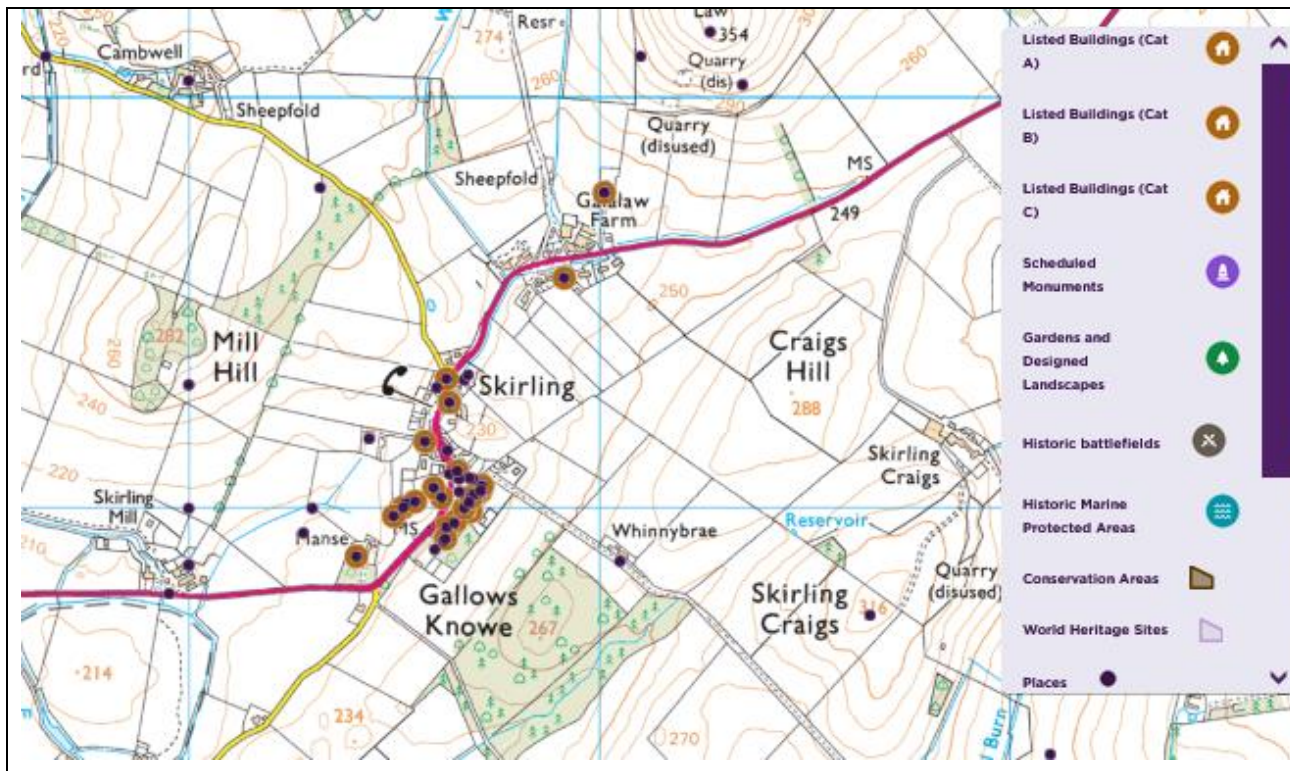
⁹ <https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/8369>

¹⁰ <https://sitelink.nature.scot/site/9157>

2.1.9 Historic environment

Historic Environment Scotland has numerous records of historic and archaeological sites in and around Skirling, as shown on the map below. A full list is included as Appendix 2.

The site of Skirling Castle, demolished and burnt in 1568, is just to the south-west of the village.



Map 3: Historic Environment Scotland records around Skirling¹¹

2.1.10 Land use

Land use around the village is primarily stock grazing: cattle and sheep. In addition to Gallows Knowe Wood there are small areas of woodland on Mill Hill to the north-west of the village.

2.1.11 Windfarms

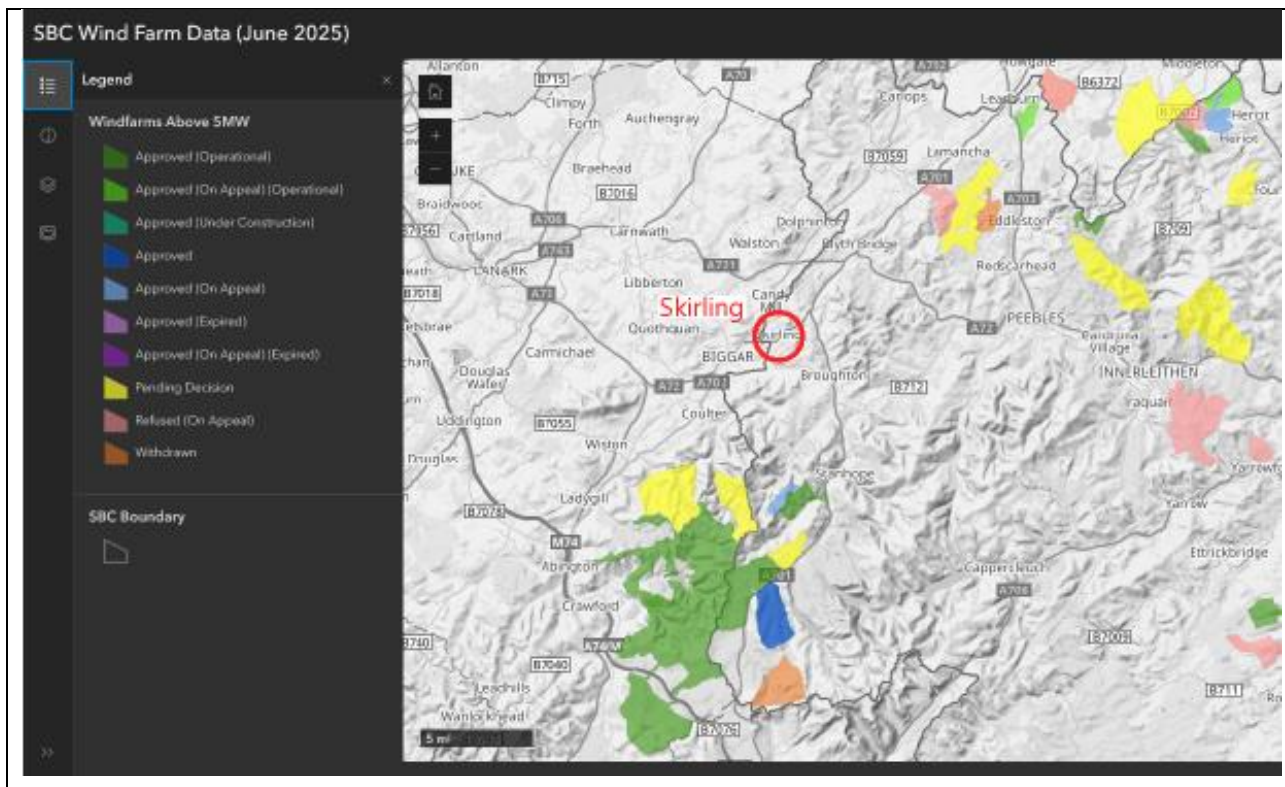
The South of Scotland has seen very substantial windfarm development in recent decades, with more sites currently in planning.

Currently the closest windfarm to Skirling is the 11 turbine Glenkerie site, 10km to the south of the village, with much larger Clyde windfarm (originally 152 turbines but extended to 206 in 2017) 14km to the south-south-east.

Additional schemes are currently in planning at Grayside (21 turbines, 10km south-south-west) and Cloich forest (12 turbines, 12km north east).

Whilst the proliferation of windfarms has been controversial in some quarters the associated community benefit funds delivered by some developments have proved valuable for many community projects, and are likely to be an important source of funding for the implementation of this plan.

¹¹ Screenshot from <https://www.trove.scnот/search/map>



Map 4: Windfarm developments in the Tweeddale area¹²

2.1.12 Tourism

The Scottish Borders has a well-developed tourist industry, with a wide range of attractions from hills and beaches to museums and mountain bike centres, but the growth of tourism in recent years has had limited impact in Skirling.

2.1.13 Local attractions

The nearby town of Biggar has a number of tourist attractions:

- Biggar & Upper Clydesdale Museum,¹³ run by the Biggar Museum Trust;
- Biggar Gasworks Museum¹⁴ is the only preserved gas works in Scotland;
- Biggar Puppet Theatre,¹⁵ which is run by the Purves family, is Scotland's only permanent puppet theatre;
- Biggar Corn Exchange,¹⁶ completed in 1861, is now also used as a theatre and cinema.

Biggar hosts an annual arts festival, the Biggar Little Festival¹⁷ and has traditionally held a huge bonfire at Hogmanay.¹⁸

The renowned arboretum of Dawyck Botanic Garden,¹⁹ an outpost of the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, is ~12km to the south-east.

Ian Hamilton Finlay's home and garden at Little Sparta²⁰ is approximately 12km to the north in the Pentland Hills.

¹² From <https://borders.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=78532d2c6adc4d06915d8c350efe82c6>

¹³ <https://www.biggarmuseumtrust.co.uk/>

¹⁴ <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/visit-a-place/places/biggar-gasworks-museum/>

¹⁵ <https://purvespuppets.com/>

¹⁶ <https://www.biggarcornexchange.org.uk/>

¹⁷ <https://www.biggarlittlefestival.com/>

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/BiggarBonfire>

¹⁹ <https://www.rbge.org.uk/visit/dawyck-botanic-garden/>

²⁰ <https://www.littlesparta.org.uk/ian-hamilton-finlay-his-work/>

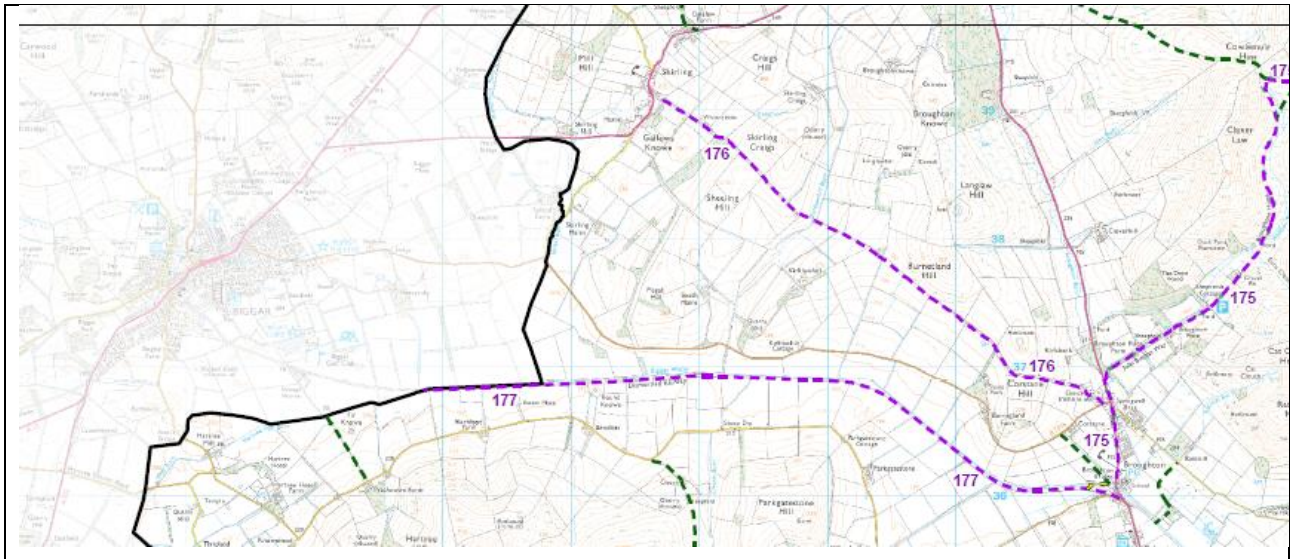
2.1.14 Outdoor recreation

Scottish Borders Council has designated the following core paths:

Core path 176 links Skirling and Broughton, running just over 4km from the north-east corner of the village green and passing along the northern approach to Gallows Knowe Wood.

Core path 175, the John Buchan Way, runs for 22km from Broughton to Peebles.²¹

Core path 177 runs along the disused railway line between Broughton and Biggar for approx. 8km, the western 2km of which is in South Lanarkshire (ref CL/3483/I).²²



Map 5: core paths²³

Scottish Borders Council maps show the Old Drove Road which runs ~2km north of Skirling to Candy Mill as a right of way, but not a core path



Map 6: Old Drove Road right of way²⁴

Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping shows a path following the southern approach to Gallows Knowe Wood. The 1:50,000 OS map, but not the 1:25,000 edition, shows this continuing to South Mains and thence to the B7016.

2.2 Regional and local demographics

²¹ <https://www.walkhighlands.co.uk/borders/john-buchan-way.shtml>

²² <https://southlanarkshire.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=ea777bba61f94767a4a801f2f1d65e8b>

²³ From map at <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/20677/broughton-area-28->

²⁴ From map at <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/20668/blyth-bridge-west-area-19->

The population of Scottish Borders was 116,900 at the 2022 Census,²⁵ an increase of 2,941 (2.6%) since 2011, compared with a 2.7% growth for Scotland.

There were 60,059 females (51.4%) and 56,262 males in Scottish Borders in 2022. This is similar to the Scottish sex distribution.

Scottish Borders has the 5th-highest proportion of over-65s of all the Council regions in Scotland. The 2022 Census recorded 30,721 people aged 65 and over in Scottish Borders. For the first time, the number of over-65s was higher than the number of children and young people aged under 25 (27,615). The NRS mid-year estimate for 2024 for the Scottish Borders population was 116,980.²⁶

The population of Scottish Borders is projected to increase to 118,723 by 2032. This is an increase of 1.6% over 10 years, which compares to a projected increase of 4.4% for Scotland as a whole.²⁷ Older age groups are projected to comprise an increasing proportion of the population.

2.2.1 Locality: Tweeddale

Tweeddale is the second largest of the five localities in the Scottish Borders, in terms of both its land area and its population. The population of Tweeddale was 21,349 at the 2022 census, an increase of 5.5% since 2011.

The main town in Tweeddale is Peebles, with a 2022 population of 9,117. Other towns and villages in Tweeddale with a population of 500 or more are Innerleithen (3,152), West Linton (1,757), Cardrona (868), Clovenfords (749) and Walkerburn (712).

2.2.2 Electoral Ward: Tweeddale West

The Tweeddale locality covers two electoral wards: Tweeddale West and Tweeddale East; Skirling is within the former ward. The 2022 census recorded a population of 10,407 for the Tweeddale West ward, a 4.2% increase on the 2011 figure.

Tweeddale West has a very similar demographic profile to the wider Scottish Borders Council area, with 0-15 year olds comprising 16.8% of the population (SBC 15.6%) whilst more than half of the population is in the 50-64 (25.5%) and 65 and over (25.1%) categories (cf. SBC 24.4% and 26.3% respectively).

2.2.3 Community Council

Data from the Scottish Borders Council²⁸ suggests that the population of the Skirling Community Council area fell slightly from 194 to 191 between 2011 and 2022. There were reductions in the numbers of both under 16s and 65 and overs.

Age group	2011	2022
0-15	40	31
16-64	117	128
65 and over	37	34
Total	194	191

Table 1: Skirling Community Council demographics

²⁵ Data from <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/council-2/research-data/6>

²⁶ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/council-area-profiles/scottish-borders/>

²⁷ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/council-area-profiles/scottish-borders/>

²⁸ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/council-2/research-data/3>

2.2.4 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a relative measure of deprivation across 6,976 small areas (called data zones). It combines seven different domains (aspects) of deprivation: income; employment; health; education, skills and training; geographic access to services; crime; and housing, which are measured using a number of indicators for each domain, which are ranked from 1 (most deprived) to 6,976 (least deprived).

Data zones in rural areas tend to cover a large land area and reflect a more mixed picture of people experiencing different levels of deprivation. This means that SIMD is less helpful at identifying the smaller pockets of deprivation found in more rural areas, compared to the larger pockets found in urban areas.²⁹

Skirling falls within Data Zone S01012248, which has a population of 803 in the 2020 iteration of SIMD. This data zone had an overall rank of 4834, putting it in the 7th decile. It scored relatively highly in most domains, notably Employment (ranked 6399 - 10th decile) and Health (6059 - 9th decile), but low in geographic access (172 - 1st decile).³⁰

2.3 Skirling Conservation Area

The village of Skirling is designated as a Conservation Area.

The Conservation Area Statement describes the village as follows:³¹

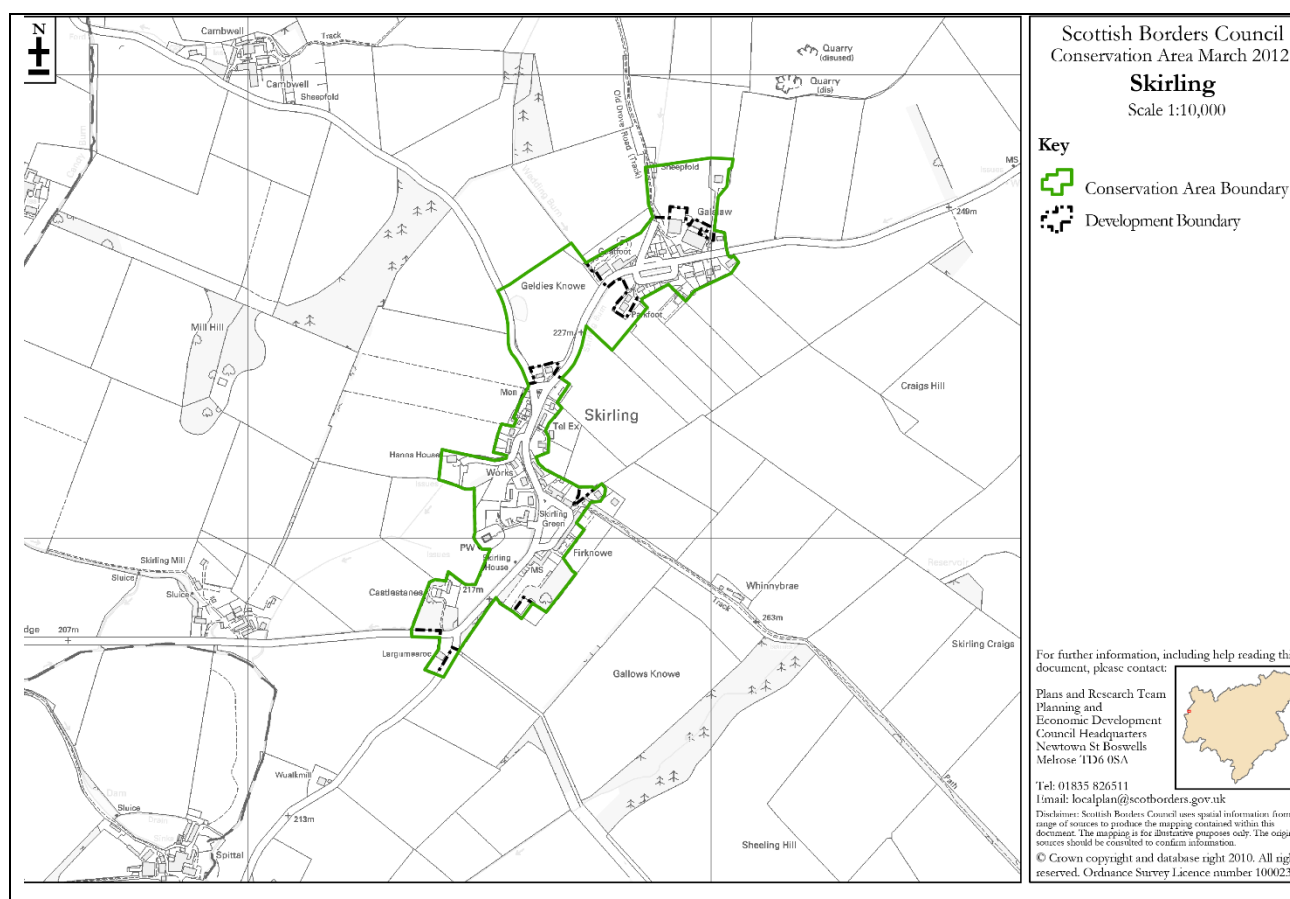
- *The village of Skirling is linear in shape and originally comprised five small farms on the valley floor next to Skirling Burn.*
- *Other buildings include farm workers cottages, two churches, a village hall and a school as well as a few other small activities such as a blacksmith and a small general store.*³²
- *Skirling Conservation Area has a distinct identity. The importance of the water source to the development of the village can be seen in the pattern of building back from the road and above the level of the burn.*
- *This is reflected in both the northern and southern parts of the village.*
- *One of the most important properties of the Conservation Area is Skirling House, built by Lord Carmichael and designed in 1905 by Ramsay Traquair.*
- *Constructed around an existing farmhouse this property has a pleasant appearance, with weather-boarded upper floor along with some attractive wrought iron work by Thomas Hadden of Edinburgh.*
- *The Arts and Crafts movement is evident throughout Skirling House – beautiful ornate wrought ironwork and decorative carvings.*
- *Properties tend to range from single to two storeys in height.*
- *Traditional building materials prevail with ochre and red coloured sandstone, harl and slate.*
- *The houses also have a number of architectural details - sash and case windows, skews, rybats, margins and quoins. These details collectively form the character of the Skirling Conservation Area.*
- *They should all be protected and any alterations or new build should seek to respect the individual buildings and the wider Conservation Area.*
- *There are 17 listed properties with the amended Skirling Conservation Area.*

²⁹ <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/1102bf85-ed49-440a-b211-da87e8d752eb/scottish-index-of-multiple-deprivation-simd-2020>

³⁰ <https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTTTT/14/-3.4558/55.6325/>

³¹ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/26011/skirling>

³² Note that this is the text of the Conservation Area Statement and some of these buildings have been converted to domestic properties.



Map 7: Skirling Conservation Area³³

2.4 Skirling Community Action Plan

The Skirling Community Action Plan (CAP) 2024-2029³⁴ was developed by the residents of Skirling and the surrounding area. The Plan was informed by extensive community engagement carried out between May and September 2023. This involved:

- stakeholder conversations - with community organisations, volunteers, residents, church, local businesses, landowners, service providers and public agencies;
- carrying out a community views survey of all households;
- preparing a community profile detailing facts and figures about the community;
- organising a Community Futures Event.

The preparation of the plan was organised by the Skirling Community Action Planning Steering Group which was supported in carrying out the work by the STAR Development Group.³⁵

It was set up by Skirling Community Council, with support and involvement from representatives from a range of local groups and interests. Funding was provided by SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund.³⁶

The Community Action Plan summarised community views with respect to:

- Skirling now, and how it is changing;
- The vision for the future of Skirling;
- The issues that matter most to the community;
- Priorities for projects and actions.

³³ https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/downloads/file/1095/skirling_conservation_area

³⁴ https://skirlingvillage.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Skirling_CAP_FINAL_web.pdf

³⁵ <https://stardevelopmentgroup.org/>

³⁶ <https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/community-fund-locations/great-britain/clyde-borders/>

The community survey recorded strongly positive opinions with respect to Community spirit, Village character and feel, and Environment and countryside; whilst the strongest negative aspect was Traffic and roads. Categories such as Access to services, Community events, Activities and facilities and Local amenities generated more mixed opinions, with some positives but also concerns with respect to the lack of a pub, school, shop or post office, the limited bus service to Biggar (and elsewhere) and the poor internet and mobile service.

The CAP's "Vision for future" is:

- Remain as a small, peaceful, and safe community
- A thriving and mixed age population
- Well connected to surrounding towns and villages
- Continue to be a community with a heart
- Greener and carbon neutral

The Plan sets out the actions needed to ensure Skirling continues to develop and thrive as a vibrant and sustainable community. These are gathered under five themes:

- 1) Safe Skirling: traffic, roads and pavements
- 2) Well-connected Skirling: improving access
- 3) Skirling community life:
- 4) Skirling environment and heritage
- 5) Sustainable and resilient Skirling

Each theme contains a number of priorities and actions. Those which are relevant to this study are discussed in detail in chapter 4 below, whilst the full list is presented in Appendix 4.

Actions are intended to be taken forward by local community groups working together with interested volunteers, other Community Councils, relevant Community Groups, local Councillors and Council Officers (Scottish Borders Council and South Lanarkshire Council). The Community Council agreed to organise a Community Action Plan Annual Review meeting to report back to the Community on the progress of the plan, to see what has been achieved and what more needs to be done.

2.4.1 New community body

Several of the actions described in the CAP require access to land. The CAP identified a need for a new organisation to purchase land or buildings and to develop, manage and raise funding for community projects, and noted that work was underway to establish a Community Development Trust to fill this role and work alongside the community council.

Three separate landowners in Skirling have expressed interest in transferring ownership of specific parcels of land to the community, and there are several other plots of land in and around the village which have been identified for potential purchase to help deliver the objectives of the CAP. The individual areas are listed and described in more detail in chapter 3.

2.5 Skirling Community Development Trust

Skirling Community Development Trust (SCDT) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, SC053682 incorporated and registered on 1 October 2024.³⁷

SCDT was set up principally to facilitate and support the achievement of the priority projects set out under the Skirling Community Action Plan (CAP) 2024-2029, and as appropriate to hold any

³⁷ <https://www.oscr.org.uk/about-charities/search-the-register/charity-details?number=SC053682>

land or assets on behalf of the village for the benefit of the Skirling Community Council area inhabitants.

It is also intended to have a small Community Fund to support social inclusion and the relief of circumstances of poverty within the Skirling Community Council area.

2.5.1 Community area, membership & directors

Membership is of SCDT open to any individual aged 16 or over who

- (a) are resident in the Community;
- (b) are entitled to vote at a local government election in a polling district that includes the Community or part of it; and
- (c) support the Purposes.

Groups and individuals who support the Trust's purposes who are not or no longer residing in the Skirling Community Council area may become associates of the organisation. Associates may attend and speak at member meetings but may not participate in such meetings for voting or quorum purposes.

SCDT is governed by a board of up to 7 trustees, of whom up to 5 can be elected by the members and up to 2 who may be co-opted by the board, one to represent each of Skirling Community Council and Skirling Village Hall.

Employees of SCDT may not become trustees.

SCDT currently has 58 members and 7 trustees.³⁸

2.5.2 Charitable purposes

The Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005³⁹ sets out the charity test,⁴⁰ which requires that a charity:

- must have only charitable purposes.
- must not use its assets for non-charitable purposes, and
- must provide public benefit.

The SCDT constitution defines the organisation's purposes as follows,:

The Organisation's main purpose is consistent with furthering the achievement of sustainable development. The Organisation's Purposes are:

- *the prevention or relief of poverty;*
- *the advancement of citizenship or community development.*

Given the range of future potential activities of the Trust, in particular the possibility of developing a play area and managing greenspace and/or woodland, consideration might be given to adding two further purposes:

- the provision of recreational facilities, or the organisation of recreational activities;⁴¹
- the advancement of environmental protection or improvement.⁴²

³⁸ Brief biographies of Trustees are presented in Appendix I

³⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2005/10/contents>

⁴⁰ <https://www.oscr.org.uk/becoming-a-charity/meeting-the-charity-test-guidance/>

⁴¹ <https://www.oscr.org.uk/becoming-a-charity/meeting-the-charity-test-guidance/i-the-provision-of-recreational-facilities-or-the-organisation-of-recreational-activities/>

⁴² <https://www.oscr.org.uk/becoming-a-charity/meeting-the-charity-test-guidance/m-the-advancement-of-environmental-protection-or-improvement/>

2.5.3 Staffing and communication

SCDT has engaged a co-ordinator who works two days per week as an independent contractor (rather than an employee). The role is funded by SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund. The remit of the role is to help with the efficient administration of the trust, implement the CAP and engage the local community by increasing its membership and promoting its presence in Skirling.

SCDT does not currently have its own website; regular progress updates and minutes of meetings are posted on a dedicated page on the Skirling Community website.⁴³

2.6 Feasibility Study remit and outline

SCDT has commissioned Jon Hollingdale to produce a comprehensive feasibility study and business plan for community ownership and management of the various parcels of land.

The initial Draft Report was intended to:

- assist the Trustees in assessing the benefit to the community of acquiring the various parcels of land;
- help SCDT to assess the viability and potential options for developing the land to achieve a range of long term environmental and community benefits;
- identify any other areas of land within the community area which may also be suitable in context of the aims and aspirations of the Skirling Community Action Plan;
- assess the risks associated with community ownership and management of the asset(s) and recommend mitigation;
- review the available funding and outline the costs of running and managing the asset(s) and opportunities to generate income from the asset(s).

This Final Report incorporates feedback from consultation with Skirling Community Development Trust and the community, and:

- describes the preferred option(s) for asset acquisition and development, some of which require additional discussion before they can proceed;
- contains a full financial model for the first five years which incorporates capital and revenue costs and ongoing maintenance and development costs for the various projects.
- outlines likely costs for the following 20 years.

A two-page summary of the Final Report has been prepared for the purpose of informing the public and members of the Trust.

2.7 National and regional policy

Community ownership and management of land and built assets is supported by various national and regional policies.

2.7.1 Community ownership and the National Performance Framework

Community ownership of land and built assets has been encouraged in Scotland by a range of policy initiatives and legislation, and is recognised in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework,⁴⁴ which includes "Increasing the number of land and built assets in community ownership" as an indicator to measure progress against the national outcome "We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe".

⁴³ <https://skirlingvillage.co.uk/community/>

⁴⁴ <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

Legislation including the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003,⁴⁵ the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015⁴⁶ and the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016⁴⁷ has introduced a suite of community rights to buy land and other assets; these have been underpinned by the Scottish Land Fund, which has an annual budget of £10 million to provide technical assistance to community bodies and support capital costs (and some revenue costs) of community acquisitions.

Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives eligible community bodies the right to make requests in relation to purchase, lease or other rights over land owned or managed by Scottish public authorities.

In addition to the formal mechanisms for community acquisition, there is encouragement and support for negotiated purchases from landowners outwith the formal mechanisms.

2.7.2 Scottish Borders Local Development Plan

The Scottish Borders Local Development Plan (LDP2) was adopted on 22 August 2024.⁴⁸

The Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out land use proposals and planning policies intended to guide development and inform planning decisions within the Scottish Borders.

The Delivery Programme 2024 sets out how Scottish Borders Council (SBC) proposes to implement the adopted Scottish Borders Local Development Plan 2024 (LDP).

The main aims of the LDP are gathered under three headings:

Communities

- Provide adequate land for mainstream and affordable housing;
- Build sustainable communities which are attractive and distinctive;
- Create places to live in accordance with good place-making and design principles;
- Encourage better connectivity by transport and improve digital networks.

Growing Economy

- Provide an adequate range of sites and premises for business/industrial uses;
- Promote economic development opportunities along the railway corridor;
- Promote the regeneration of town centres to make them vibrant and viable focal points within our communities;
- Maximise and promote the Scottish Borders' tourism potential and build a strong visitor economy;
- Ensure the delivery of adequate infrastructure to satisfactorily serve developments.

Sustainability

- Protect and enhance the built and natural environment;
- Promote development of brownfield sites;
- Make provision for waste management;
- Deliver climate change mitigation while ensuring climate change adaptation;
- Protect key greenspaces within built up areas;
- Encourage better connectivity;
- Extend and improve green network opportunities and links.

⁴⁵ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/2/contents>

⁴⁶ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2015/6/contents>

⁴⁷ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2016/18/contents>

⁴⁸ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/plans-guidance/local-development-plan>

2.7.3 Local Settlement Profile for Skirling

The local settlement profile for Skirling⁴⁹ notes the conservation area status and identifies three key greenspace areas for safeguarding: the village green and two areas of roadside verge: the war memorial triangle and the verge at Howes Brae at the northern end of the village.

Two key policies for Skirling are EP9 (conservation areas) and EPII (protection of greenspace): these are reproduced in Appendix 3.

2.7.4 Local Place Plan

A Local Place Plan (LPP) is a community-led plan which allows community bodies to propose ideas and priorities for the development and use of land in their local area. These plans are intended to:

- reflect local aspirations;
- influence the Local Development Plan (LDP) prepared by planning authorities;
- support community-led regeneration and place-making.

Once registered with the local planning authority, LPPs must be considered during the preparation of the LDP.

In July 2025 SBC issued a formal invitation to communities to create a LPP. For LPPs to be taken into consideration during the development of the next Local Development Plan, LPPs need to be submitted for registration by 30 September 2027.

Consideration might be given as to whether the achievement of the objectives of the Skirling CAP could be advanced by converting and/or developing it into an LPP in time for it to be taken into consideration during the development of the next Local Development Plan.⁵⁰

2.7.5 Scotland's Forestry Strategy 2019–2029

Scotland's Forestry Strategy⁵¹ presents a long-term framework for the expansion and sustainable management of Scotland's forests and woodland. There are three objectives for the current period:

- Increase the contribution of forests and woodlands to Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- Improve the resilience of Scotland's forests and woodlands and increase their contribution to a healthy and high quality environment;
- Increase the use of Scotland's forest and woodland resources to enable more people to improve their health, well-being and life chances.

The Strategy has 6 priorities, including:

- Enhancing the environmental benefits provided by forests and woodlands, which includes identifying and managing the cultural and historic value associated with forests and woodlands;
- Engaging more people, communities and businesses in the creation, management and use of forests and woodlands, which includes increasing the use of forests and woodlands to improve people's health and well-being, and supporting the provision of appropriate education and skills training to encourage wider participation in forest- and woodland-related employment.

2.7.6 Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy

The Scottish Borders Woodland Strategy,⁵² published in 2005, is designed to

⁴⁹ Local Development Plan pp502/3

⁵⁰ As with the CAP, this process might be initiated by the Community Council

⁵¹ <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forestry-strategy>

⁵² <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/directory-record/7447/scottish-borders-woodland-strategy->

- provide a planning tool and policy guidance for Scottish Borders Council for use in conjunction with its New Way Forward Structure Plan;
- provide a framework policy document for the development of forestry in Scottish Borders that will be widely supported and will help secure financial resources to deliver the Strategy's vision/to provide a regional expression of the Scottish Forestry Strategy, and
- assist the Forestry Commission⁵³ in considering the suitability of applications for Grant assistance for planting and management of woodlands.

2.7.7 Community growing

The Scottish Government and Local Authorities offer significant policy support for community growing initiatives:

The Scottish Government's local food strategy "Local Food for Everyone: Our Journey" was published in 2024.⁵⁴ The first of three pillars is "Connecting people with local food", which includes "Greater opportunities for growing food within our local communities and local areas", with "Making land available and providing support for local community growing" identified as one of the actions to deliver this objective.

The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 places a number of duties on local authorities in relation to allotments and includes the requirement to prepare a Food Growing Strategy, whilst National Planning Framework 4 is clear that local development plans should include opportunities for community food growing and allotments.

The Scottish Borders Council's Community Food Strategy 2026-2030⁵⁵ recognises the multiple benefits, including health, environmental, economic, social, educational and food security, offered by community growing, and aims to support and facilitate anyone who wants to get growing, through existing growing opportunities and new approaches to growing.

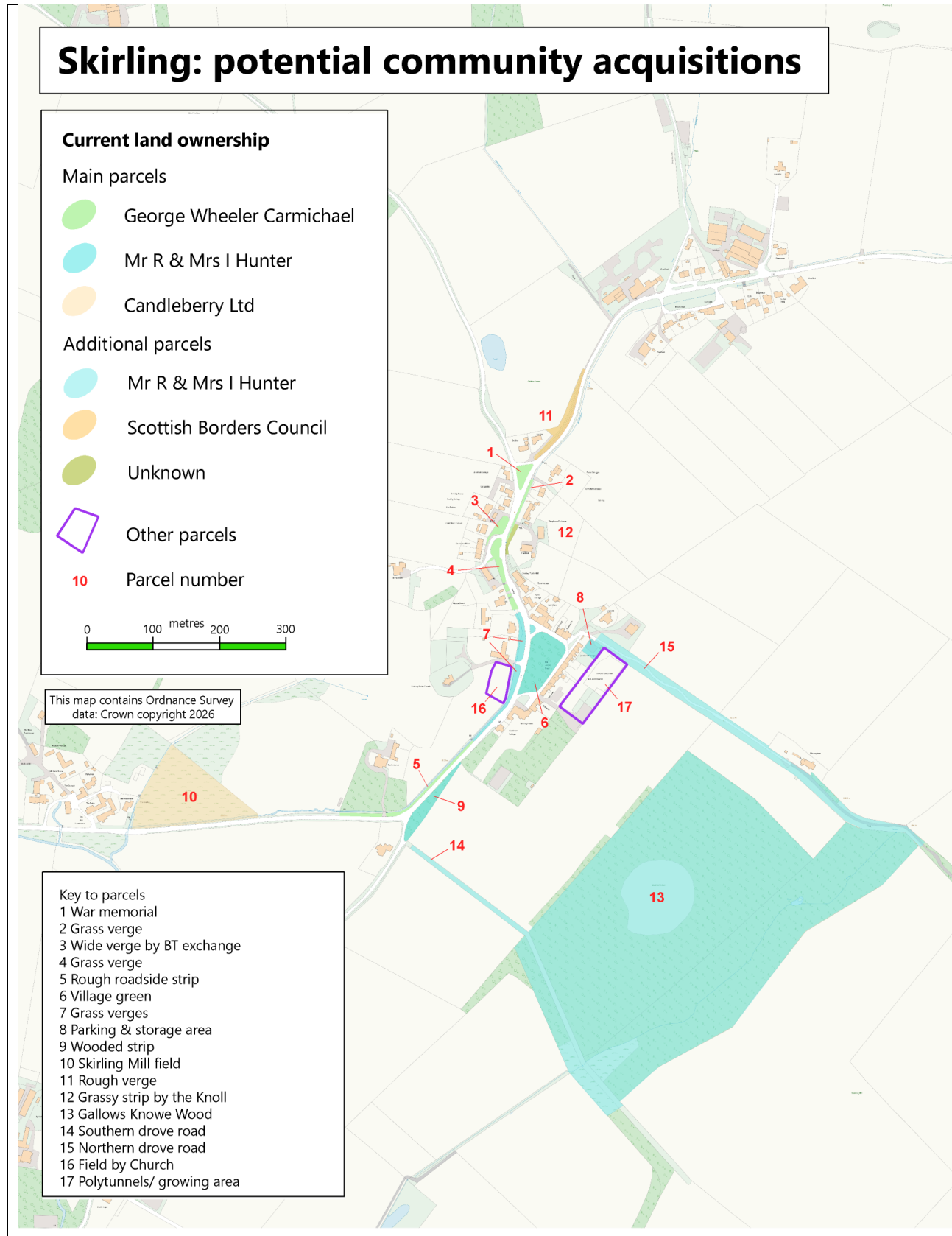
⁵³ Now Scottish Forestry

⁵⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-food-everyone-journey/>

⁵⁵ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/parks-outdoors/community-food-growing>

3 Potential Acquisition Sites

Three separate landowners in Skirling have expressed interest in transferring ownership of certain areas of land to the Skirling Community Development Trust (SCDT). Collectively these comprise a total of ten parcels of land in and around Skirling village, whilst a further seven parcels have been identified as potential areas for community activity. These seventeen parcels are shown on Map 8.



Map 8: potential acquisition sites

The majority of parcels are not listed on the modern map-based Land Register and in some cases the precise boundaries of parcels is unclear. The mapping above and text descriptions below are based on the author's understanding of the situation; detailed scrutiny of title deeds will be required to confirm parcel boundaries and extent prior to any acquisition by SCDT.

3.1 Land belonging to George Wheeler Carmichael

This package comprises five parcels of land adjacent to the A72, three which are relatively narrow roadside verges. The primary development interest is the potential for a play-park in parcel #3. It is understood that these five parcels come as a single package; they would be gifted but a contribution to legal fees would be expected.

3.1.1 Parcel #1: Triangular area with the Village War Memorial

This parcel of land comprises a roughly triangular area of grass at the north end of the central part of the village, on which stands the Village War Memorial. The total area⁵⁶ is ~550m². This area is recognised as a key greenspace area for safeguarding in the Local Development Plan.

The parcel is surrounded by public roads, with the A72 to the south east and the D33 minor road to Cambwell to the west and north. There is a pavement alongside the A72, but not along the other two sides of the site.

The War Memorial, designed by Sir Robert Lorimer,⁵⁷ has a wide stone plinth with a paved surround, which supports a column topped with a cross. It is understood to be owned by Scottish Borders Council, and appears to be in good condition. There is an iron and wooden bench by the memorial, which is flanked by two well maintained shrubberies and there is a cluster of three planters in each corner of the site. The grass in this parcel is mown by the Council. There are two streetlights on the pavement and overhead lines cross the site just north of the memorial.

There is very little development potential at this parcel given its location at the road junction. The main liabilities are the maintenance of the war memorial and the care of the surrounding ground, which are currently carried out by Scottish Borders Council.



War Memorial parcel from the north.



War Memorial from the south-east.

3.1.2 Parcel #2: Burn-banks in front of Scravellyn Cottages, Kirkcroft and the Knoll

This parcel (area ~330m²) comprises a linear strip along the east side of A72, with the northern tip opposite to parcel 1 and the southern tip adjacent to parcel #4. There is no pavement. It is assumed

⁵⁶ Parcel dimensions are based on OS mapping unless stated otherwise. For all parcels alongside the A72 the areas quoted include pavements where they exist but not the roadway.

⁵⁷ <https://www.warmemorialsonline.org.uk/memorial/177076>

that the eastern boundary is the centre line of the burn. It is understood that the grass is cut by the Council.

The parcel runs in front of four properties: Scravellyn Cottages, Kirkcroft and the Knoll, and is crossed by two driveways. There is a road sign in front of Kirkcroft and a wooden rail fence at the southern end of the parcel which protects the burn where it passes under the road.

At the southern end of the parcel the burn turns sharply westwards to pass under the road (the culvert appears to be curved); this promotes turbulence and is an obvious chokepoint for debris, which could cause flooding into the road, affecting properties downstream, especially on the east side of the road. It is unclear why the culvert wasn't routed diagonally under the road to maintain a straight line flow, but rectifying this would require significant investment.

There is minimal development potential in this parcel, unless it is considered desirable to construct a pavement along this side of the road.

	
Parcel #2 from the south. ⁵⁸ Note wooden fence above burn / culvert entrance.	Parcel #2 from the north. ⁵⁹ Note abundant summer vegetation in the burn.

3.1.3 Parcel #3: Land by the telephone exchange and Carmichael Bank

This parcel of land (area ~480m²) comprises an area of grass on the west side of A72 and north and west of the minor D35 road of Carmichael Bank. The northern section is a wider, roughly rectangular block (approx. 30m long by 10-15m wide) between the BT telephone exchange and the northern part of Lennoxlove Cottage, to the west, and the A72.

The parcel continues southwards beyond the driveway for Lennoxlove Cottage as a narrow strip in front of the southern part of Lennoxlove Cottage and Number 4 Carmichael Bank, with a wooden rail fence between the two. The boundary with Lennoxlove Cottage is a dense beech hedge ~2m high, whilst that with Number 4 Carmichael Bank is a lower (~1m) stone wall fronted by a narrow flower bed. There are a number of beech trees on the rough bank that forms the boundary with the telephone exchange (presumed to be part of the BT property) which overhang the northern part of the area at ~2-2.5m.

There is a streetlight at north end of the pavement, a water hydrant adjacent to the pavement at the S end and a street sign for Carmichael Bank. There is an electrical (telephone?) cabinet at the north-west corner of the site and a group of planters in the south-east corner of the grass. Current management liabilities are limited to mowing the grass, which is understood to currently be carried out by the council.

This parcel has been identified as a potential site of a play-park. A pre-application enquiry to Scottish Borders Council received a cautiously positive response and a potential design and layout has been produced by Sovereign Design Play Systems Ltd (see section 4.2.2).

⁵⁸ Image from Google Street View

⁵⁹ Image from Google Street View



3.1.4 Parcel #4: Verge and burn-banks by Carmichael Bank, Hannah Church and Kirklea

This parcel comprises a wide grassy verge and burn-banks to the west of the A72 between Carmichael Bank and the access road to Skirling Kirk. The parcel covers ~ 950m².

It is understood that the parcel covers both side of the burn. The western boundary is demarcated by various hedges which are assumed to be sited on neighbouring properties.

The burn emerges from the culvert under the A72 in the northern portion of the parcel ~3m from the road, beneath a short length of wooden fencing, and turns south (left) to flow approximately parallel to the road.

There is a very short length of pavement, a street sign for Carmichael Bank and a concrete marker post at the north end of the parcel and a road sign at the southern tip. There is one streetlight on the pavement, and two further streetlights on the grass in front of the old church.

There are two telephone poles on grass adjacent to A72 and one more on the small portion S of Carmichael Bank, with various telephone lines crossing the parcel. Power lines cross at the north part of the parcel.

The grass is interrupted by three driveways leading to neighbouring domestic properties. There is a small tree at the north end of the parcel and a willow tree on the west side of the burn outside Kirklea. There is significant summer vegetation in the burn. It is understood that the grass is cut by the Council.

The potential to construct a pavement along this section of verge (and parcel #7, to the south), to fill the pavement gap along the west side of the A72, has been discussed, but was not taken forward (see section 4.1.1). Otherwise, there is minimal development potential in this parcel.



	
Looking south from the north end of the parcel.	Looking south at the southern part of the parcel.

3.1.5 Parcel #5: Roadside strip by Castlestones

This parcel comprises a narrow verge and burn-bank to the west and north of the A72 at the south end of the village. Total area is $\sim 960\text{m}^2$. A pavement runs along the full length ($\sim 250\text{m}$) of the parcel – it is tarred for most of this length but changes to bound gravel at the south-western end.

The northern section is bounded by a field with a post and wire fence, the southern portion by the grounds of Castlestones House. The driveway to Castlestones House crosses the parcel, this has low stone walls to either side. The northern section was formerly crossed by footbridges: bearers can still be seen but planking has disappeared/been removed.

The burn is deeply incised in the northern section, and runs close to the pavement ($\sim 1\text{m}$) here. It sits slightly further back from the road outside Castlestones House where there is a narrow strip of grass beside the pavement. It is understood that centre of the burn forms the western boundary of the parcel, in which case most but not all of the trees are outwith the parcel. The burn is culverted at the Castlestones corner for $\sim 30\text{m}$, so the boundary is undemarcated along this section.

There are intermittent trees and shrubs, some mature (including ash and sycamore) within this area, the majority are on the western bank, i.e. outwith the parcel, but there are some on the eastern bank which could prove to be liabilities. There is one telephone pole above culverted section and there are road signs (20mph countdown) on the verge. There is no development potential in this parcel.

	
Looking south from north end of parcel: note drop to burn and trees on west side.⁶⁰	North-east end of culvert on Castlestones corner, mature ash on west side of burn.⁶¹

⁶⁰ It is understood that trees on the west side of the burn are not within the parcel

⁶¹ It is understood that trees on the west side of the burn are not within the parcel

	
Looking west along south-west part of parcel: burn further back from road.	Entrance to Castlestanes House.⁶²

3.2 Land belonging to Mr B and Mrs I Hunter

This package comprises four parcels, including the village green, a small area used for parking and storage and two roadside verges. It is understood that these areas would be gifted but that a contribution to legal fees might be expected.

3.2.1 Parcel #6: The village green

The village green occupies a prominent position in the centre of the village on the east side of the A72. Historically the venue of the Skirling Horse Fair, it is now used for events such as the Skirling Green Christian Aid Car Boot Sale.

The green is an irregular quadrilateral with rounded corners, approximately 95m long, 55m at the widest part (near the north end), narrowing to ~25m at the south. The area of the green itself is ~3,715m², the parcel also includes a small triangular area of grass to the northwest covering ~85m². The A72 lies to the west, with the other three sides formed by the D38 Skirling Green road. Housing abuts the road on the north and east sides, whilst to the south a separate grassy area (not part of the parcel) lies in front of Skirling House. There are no pavements around the green.

There are ten mature and over-mature lime trees and several younger trees scattered across the Green. A tree safety survey covering the village green and parcel #7 was commissioned by the current owner in November 2023, with an aerial survey in November 2024, and remedial work was carried out. Whilst any immediate issues should have been addressed, regular inspections will be required, given the high profile location. Some of the trees show evidence of mower damage and might benefit from physical protection, and some may be approaching the end of their lifespan and will require replacement.

There are various elements of utility infrastructure around the green, including poles and overhead lines, a water hydrant, manhole covers and a grit bin. A water main and electricity services run under the south-eastern edge of the green. There are two park benches and two picnic benches in a cluster in the middle of the grass, which, whilst cut by the Council, is not manicured.

Physically the green could accommodate a number of the developments suggested in the Community Action Plan, including a play-park, a covered shelter, interpretation, etc., and it would be possible to add a pavement alongside the A72 (or around the remainder of the green), but it is unclear the extent to which any of these would meet approval. Development potential is limited by conservation area status, the need to accommodate existing activities and community concerns as to the

⁶² Image from Google Street View

appropriateness of development. The green is recognised as a key greenspace area for safeguarding in the Local Development Plan.

	
Looking south from the north-eastern corner of the village green.⁶³	Looking south from the north-western corner of the village green.⁶⁴
	
Benches and picnics tables on the village green.	Looking north from the south tip of the green.

3.2.2 Parcel #7: Verges opposite village green

This parcel lies on the west side of the A72, in the gap between parcels #4 and #5 discussed above. It comprises two sections separated by the D37 minor road to Skirling church. The total area is ~1,845m².

The northern section is 75m long and between 8-11m wide, with the burn running close to domestic property boundaries (stone wall ~1.2m high) and containing significant summer vegetation. There is a known erosion issue here, with some ground settlement into the burn, which is eroding near boundary walls. There is no pavement along the northern section. There are overhead lines and a mature sycamore tree outside the Old Schoolhouse and manhole covers near the northern tip.

The southern section is ~145m long, with the western boundary with the neighbouring field formed by a hedge and stock fence. The northern part of this section is roughly triangular and grassy, narrowing from ~12m wide at the Kirk road to ~6m wide the southern end of the Village Green, at which point a pavement begins. There is a mature lime tree on the grass ~20m south of the Kirk road. Seven ash trees were felled in 2024 following the tree survey which covered this parcel and the village green. There is a telegraph pole just south of the Kirk Road, and planters on the grass either side of the Kirk road. It is understood that the grass is cut by the Council.

The potential to construct a pavement along this section of verge (and parcel #4, to the north), to fill the gap in pavement gap along the west side of the A72 between Carmichael Bank and the south

⁶³ Image from Google Street View

⁶⁴ Image from Google Street View

of the village green, has been discussed previously, but was not taken forward (see section 4.1.1). There is minimal other development potential in this parcel.



Looking north at northern section of verge from the road to the church.



Looking south at southern section of verge from the road to the church.

3.2.3 Parcel #8: Carpark area behind Loanfoot Cottages

This parcel comprises a roughly square area (~555m²) on the east side of the village behind Loanfoot Cottages and the village green, accessed from the Skirling green road via the lower section of the northern drove road. This short section is in separate ownership over which there is a right of access.

The central part of the site is a hardstanding with a compacted, unbound stone surface, with grassy banks, with some trees, around the perimeter. There is parking for 6-8 vehicles on the hardstanding, it is unclear how many bays are typically occupied by local residents. The parcel holds one medium sized shed in the eastern corner, and three smaller sheds to the north-west; these are understood to be storage sheds for Resilient Skirling's community equipment, including floodgates, fete tables and gazebos.

This potentially useful utility space is outwith the Skirling Conservation Area. There is limited scope to add more parking space but if SCDT or other community organisations are intending to host more events (e.g. on the village green) then it is a potential storage site for materials.



The car park from the northern drove road.



Storage sheds.

3.2.4 Parcel #9: Verge on south side of road between Skirling House and Castlestones

This parcel comprises a small area of woodland extending for ~120m along the unpaved, south-eastern side of the A72 at the southern end of the village between Skirling House and Castlestones corner, and a further ~30m along the D39 minor road to the junction with the southern drove road. The south-east side of the wood is stock fenced and borders a field used for stock grazing. The block has an approximate area of 1,680m² and is ~18m wide at its broadest point by the A72/D39

junction, narrowing to 2-3m wide at the northern tip. There is a telephone pole, a water hydrant marker and a road sign (20 mph countdown) adjacent to the A72/D39 junction.

The woodland is not recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, but is depicted on 19th Century Ordnance Survey maps, which also mark a well. There is a range of mostly deciduous tree species of varying ages with a line of conifers at the northern end, one of which has suffered recent wind damage. There is no evidence of recent management, other than windblow clearance.

No detailed woodland survey was undertaken but it can be assumed that there is no timber value in the trees (more precisely, the marketable value will be considerably less than the cost of harvesting and extraction) and this is unlikely to change. There were no immediate high risks noted but a walkover arboricultural survey is recommended before any acquisition and there will always be residual risks of windblow damage (as demonstrated by the broken tree at the northern end of the block).

The primary interest in this parcel is to improve safety for the circular route from the village to Gallows Knowe Wood via the drove roads, particularly for those travelling anti-clockwise, as visibility at Castlestanes corner when crossing from the existing pavement on the NW side of the road is very poor. Currently some walkers avoid this section (when livestock isn't present) by cutting across the field from the polytunnels; there is an obvious "desire line" leading to the gate at the east corner of the field.



The northern tip of the parcel from across the A72. This is the potential crossing point.



Looking south at the eastern side of the parcel from the northern tip.



Looking south from across the road.



Looking north from the southern drove road.

3.3 Land belonging to Candleberry Ltd

It is understood that this land would be gifted but a contribution to legal fees would be expected.

3.3.1 Parcel #10: Triangular Field at Skirling Mill

This parcel consists of a field adjacent to the Skirling Mill development, to the south-west of the village. The field covers ~1.29ha and forms a right triangle, with the longest side to the south, bordering the A72. Much of the field is rough grassland, which does not appear to have been grazed or mown recently, whilst the north-western section is noticeably wetter and is dominated by rushes. The Skirling burn runs along the southern edge, and there is a drain along the north-west edge.

The north-eastern boundary has a newish stock fence with a stock gate, there is a post and wire fence along the southern boundary (between the burn and the roadside footpath), with fences to neighbouring properties on the southern part of the north-western boundary and no fence on the northern section. An 11kV overhead power line crosses the western corner: a strip under the lines would need to be kept clear. There is a small triangle of land to the west of the lines which is adjacent to housing and lies wet, so is unsuitable for much development.

The location outwith the Skirling Conservation Area and adjacent to the existing cluster of houses at Skirling Mill should mean that a wide range of development options is possible, although there would be a need to assess and mitigate any flood risk. One significant constraint is that there is currently no direct access to the site from the A72 as there is no bridge or culvert across the Skirling burn. There is good visibility for forming a road access here (particularly at the eastern end of the site) but this would be expensive and would only be justified if significant developments are planned. Establishing pedestrian access by means of a footbridge or culvert would be less costly but limits the scope of site development. There is a culverted entrance at the east end of the adjacent field (next to Castlestanes House), so occasional vehicle access for management purposes may be possible by arrangement with the landowner. It may also be possible to negotiate access via Skirling Mill or from the village.



The field from the south-east corner.⁶⁵



The field from the south-west corner.⁶⁶



Looking south-west across the field from the stock gate on the north-east side.



Looking west across the western, rushy section of the field.

⁶⁵ Image from Google Street View

⁶⁶ Image from Google Street View

3.4 Additional areas previously identified as possible acquisitions

A number of other parcels of land around the village have been identified which the community may consider acquiring.

3.4.1 Parcel #11: Verge north-east of Solstice

This parcel, which is understood to be owned by Scottish Borders Council, comprises a wide verge on the northwest side of the A72, north of the War Memorial and the junction with the D33 minor road. A pavement runs along the full length of the parcel. The parcel is approx. 160m long and has a total area of ~1,470m². The parcel is ~20m wide where a small triangle extends west just north of Solstice, but ~10m for most of its length. It narrows to ~3m at the northern end, where there is a decorative rockery/flower bed.

The southern-most part is separated for housing by a driveway, and is more or less flat and comprises mown grass with a planter near the southern tip. The remainder has a mown strip of ~1m adjacent to the pavement, with rougher grassland rising up a bank to a drive at the south end and to a field for the remainder of the parcel. There are a few small hawthorn trees in the central part of the parcel and a road sign (20/30mph) and a streetlight near the northern end. The grassy bank appears to be relatively fertile and well drained and would be suitable for planting a range of flowering and fruiting trees.



Looking north from the southern tip of the parcel.⁶⁷



Hawthorn trees north of Solstice.



Looking south from the northern tip of the parcel.



The rockery/flowerbed at the northern tip of the parcel.

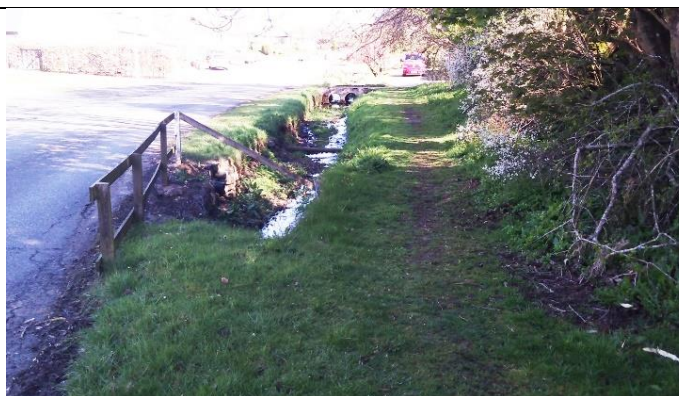
⁶⁷ Image from Google Street View

3.4.2 Parcel #12: Land adjacent to the Knoll

This parcel is immediately adjacent to Parcel #2 and comprises a strip of grass in front of the Knoll on the east side of the burn. The owner is unknown. The block is ~50m long and the total area is ~250m². It includes a short length of pavement at the southern end of the block. If it was desired to extend this pavement northward, it would be preferable to do so through this parcel initially as parcel #2 is very narrow at its southern tip.



Northern part of parcel from across the road.



Looking north from the southern tip of the parcel.

3.4.3 Parcel #13: Gallows Knowe Wood

The Gallows Knowe Wood occupies a prominent site on top of a small hill (OS 1:50,000 gives a spot height of 267m above sea level) to the south-east of the village. It is owned by Mr B and Mrs I Hunter.

The woodland comprises three main areas, as tabulated below.

Block	Area (ha)	Planted	Main Species
1	9.41	2001/2	Mixed broadleaves and conifers
2	5.20	Restocked 2013-15	Sitka spruce and mixed broadleaves
3	0.86	1900?	Beech, some Scots pine
Total	15.47		

Table 2: Gallows Knowe Wood blocks⁶⁸

Block 1 occupies the north-west section of the wood, closest to the village, and includes the highest ground. It was planted in 2001/2 under the Forestry Commission Woodland Grant Scheme.

A range of species was utilised, planted mostly in small, single species blocks. The most common appear to be ash and Douglas fir, the latter predominantly along the south-eastern side of the block. Other species present include Birch, Scots pine and larch. The Scottish Forestry map viewer gives a breakdown of 34% conifer, 66% broadleaves.

A well-made path runs diagonally through the block from access points at the western and eastern corners, with a subsidiary path linking to the southern corner. This forms part of an attractive circular walk from the village. There is a large (~0.8ha), roughly circular, open area in the middle of the plantation, which occupies the top of the hill and includes a seating area. There are smaller areas of open ground, notably along the south-eastern boundary. Most areas visited appeared well drained.

⁶⁸ Areas from Scottish Government Rural Payments and Services mapping. Land Parcel Identifiers (LPID) are: Block 1 NT/07841/38655, Block 2 NT/07988/38599, Block 3 NT/07698/38481

The trees appear in good health, although the high proportion of ash gives concern with respect to Chalara ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). The occasional tree has blown down but this is perhaps to be expected given the relatively exposed location.

The Douglas fir blocks are currently often impenetrable but sheltered access could be facilitated by some stem brashing. The Douglas fir is approaching the age for first thinning but the relatively high exposure / wind throw risk means that any intervention will have to be done very carefully, with small volumes felled by motor manual (chainsaw) methods.



Gate at western access point.



Path leading to central open area.



Seating and pillar at top of hill.



Looking west from the highest point.



Ash stand.



Scots pine stand.

	
Glade within Douglas fir stand.	Looking southwest along boundary of block 1 (to right) and block 2.

Ash and other broadleaf stands are not yet ready for thinning, but will in due course generate small volumes of firewood, or alternately, felled material could be left for deadwood habitats.

Block 2 is a linear strip of uneven width measuring approximately 500m by 100m along the SE side of the wood. It was clearfelled c. 2013 and restocked with a mix of Sitka spruce and broadleaves.

A small stream runs north-east to south-west through the block, passing through a small pond.

The main path runs through the north-west corner of this block, linking block 1 with the northern drove road. A secondary path joins the main path at the corner of block 1 and runs through block 2 to the southern drove road. A further path runs from the north-east corner.

Block 3 occupies the south-west side of the wood and is comprised mainly of mature beech, with some mature Scots pine. This block of woodland is not recorded on the Ancient Woodland Inventory, but is depicted on 19th Century Ordnance Survey maps. A rough vehicle track, the continuation of the southern drove road, runs through this block.

	
Continuation of southern drove road through block 3 from northern corner.	Small path leading into block 3 from northern corner.

The landowner has an arrangement for on-going supervision and maintenance of the wood with a local arboricultural specialist firm with the additional intention of promoting ground flora to enhance wildlife habitats.

There are no immediate apparent silvicultural or other management imperatives in the woodland. The distance from the village and the lack of road access limits the scope for development, however, under community ownership management might be expected to focus on enhancing the biodiversity value of the wood and maintenance and enhancement of public access and amenity: provision of seats and benches, additional paths (if required), and the use of woodland for community volunteering.

3.4.4 Parcel #14: Southern drove road

This parcel comprises an unbound vehicle track and grassy banks with a few large trees, leading from the D39 minor road just south of its junction with the A72 to the southern corner of Gallows Knowe Wood. The block runs for ~225m and is ~8m wide. This parcel is registered with Scottish Government Rural Payments and Services (LPID: NT/07549/38683), the registered area is 0.16ha.

The parcel is stock-fenced on the long sides, and gated at the north-west end. At the south-east corner of the parcel the track continues through Block 3 of Gallows Knowe Wood. The track forms part of the circular route from the village through Gallows Knowe Wood, although it is often bypassed by those wishing to avoid the road-crossing at Castlestanes corner.



3.4.5 Parcel #15: Northern drove road

This parcel comprises an unbound vehicle track and banks, leading from just north-east of the village green to the north-eastern corner of Gallows Knowe Wood. The parcel is 585m long and between 10 and 20m wide, with a total area of ~0.89ha. It has not been registered with Scottish Government Rural Payments and Services.

The track is a semi-bound stone road, winding and steep in places, leading to the house at Whinnybrae, after which reverts to more natural surface vehicle track. There are some very large beech trees on the banks near village and younger, scrub woodland at the eastern end. The track is designated as part of Scottish Borders Council core path 176 from Skirling to Broughton and forms part of the circular route from the village through Gallows Knowe Wood.



⁶⁹ Note that the large beech trees on the earth bank are outwith the Gallows Knowe Wood

A waymarker post and sign at the village end identifies this as a Heritage Path.⁷⁰ It reads: “Skirling Fair Drove Roads: This path to Broughton was shown on Armstrong’s 1775 map of Peeblesshire. It is believed to have been used for driving sheep and cattle to and from Skirling Fair in the 18th and 19th centuries.”

3.5 Further areas of land

The main focus of this report is the parcels of land which have been offered to SCDT, or otherwise previously identified as potential community acquisitions, however, it is possible that other plots of land around the village might be as well or better suited to delivery of CAP objectives.

3.5.1 Parcel #16: Field by Church

Skirling Parish Church lies to the west of the village, on a small hill, ~100m from the A72. The D37 minor road, maintained by Scottish Borders Council, leads to the church from a point opposite the village green, crossing the Skirling burn (and bisecting parcel #7).

There is housing to the north of this road, and a field, used for grazing, to the south, the northern portion of which is understood to be owned by Mrs Margaret Sommerville.

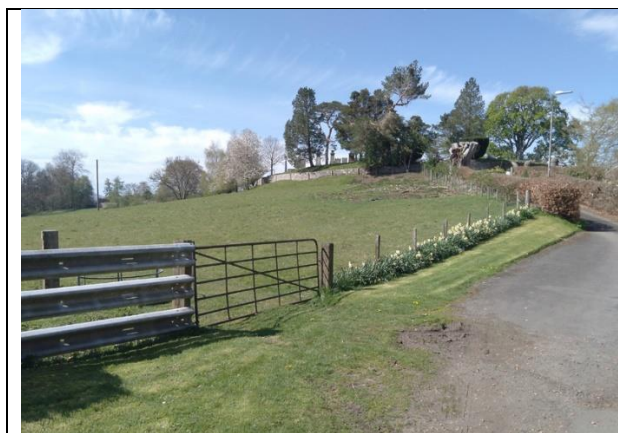
This field, which is within the Skirling Village Conservation Area, has been used in the past for parking and for the village bonfire. This plot has several advantages, notably that It is centrally located, being adjacent to the church and village green (albeit across the A72) and there is existing road access.

A section of this field could accommodate several potential activities and development projects:

- Car parking for events on the village green;
- Additional recycling facilities;
- Community composting;
- Electric vehicle charging;
- Play-park.

Well designed and sensitive development incorporating some screening would ensure that there was limited negative impact on neighbouring housing.

The field is in private ownership, so it would be possible for SCDT to register an interest through the community right to buy provisions, however this process would only be taken forward if and when the present landowner decided to sell the land. SCDT would therefore be better advised to seek a negotiated transfer of the land from the landowner, outwith the formal community right to buy mechanism.



Looking west towards the church



Looking south along the edge of the field

⁷⁰ <https://scotways.com/heritage-path/HP22/>

3.5.2 Parcel #17: Polytunnels and horticultural site

Community growing features amongst the objectives of the Skirling Community Action Plan. Whilst it would be possible to develop a growing site from scratch at one or two of the parcels identified previously, there is already a substantial horticultural growing site in the village, so if this is a theme which the Trust wishes to pursue, one option would be to negotiate to take on part or all of this site for community use.

The current site is on the eastern edge of the village, adjacent to the car parking area (parcel #8) and extends to ~0.5ha. It is not within the Skirling Conservation Area. The land is owned by the Hunters and is leased to local resident Mike Thompson. The site contains two large polytunnels, both ~22m * 9m, one of which is owned by the Hunters, the other by Mr Thompson, and an outdoor growing area. There is vehicle access via a track leading from Skirling Green, and pedestrian access from the northern drove road.



The polytunnels and outdoor growing area from the south-west.



The polytunnels and outdoor growing area from the north.

3.5.3 Other parcels

Other portions of the fields around the village might be considered for potential acquisition, including on the north and south sides of the northern drove road, and on the northern side of the southern drove road, where a strip of field is considered for acquisition to create a new path to facilitate a circular route around the village.

Whilst all of these are outwith the Conservation Area and have some merit they are generally inferior options to the field by the Parish Church, as they are further from the village and have poorer access.

Delivery of the CAP objectives does not generally require the acquisition of buildings, and there appears to be limited scope for such acquisitions within the village, with no evidence of derelict or underused commercial property.

4 Skirling CAP: Land-based Priorities and Actions

This chapter highlights the priorities and actions within the Skirling Village CAP⁷¹ which are relevant to this report, i.e. that community acquisition of land might help facilitate; outlines the background and current situation; and assesses the extent to which acquisition of the parcels of land identified in chapter 3 might contribute to delivering these elements of the plan.

It therefore focusses on the functional mapping of parcels of land against specific development projects to deliver the CAP, however, there may also be longer term and less tangible benefits arising from community ownership including the capacity to take advantage of future opportunities as yet unforeseen. Additionally, community acquisition of this land is a possible means of preserving the village environment and safeguarding its use for recreational, conservation and amenity purposes for the community and future generations.

Generally speaking, external funders for community asset acquisition, such as the Scottish Land Fund, seek to focus on development projects which offer clear community benefits in the short and/or medium term, and are reluctant to support projects which only seek to safeguard assets for the future. Where assets are gifted to the community, acquisition funding is less of an issue, but there is still a need to consider any on-going risks, costs and liabilities arising from taking on ownership.

4.1 Theme 1: Safe Skirling – Traffic, pavements and roads

“Skirling’s location on the A72 makes it important to slow traffic going through the village. Speeding traffic and lack of safe pavements in some parts of the village can hamper residents moving freely around their own village and can reduce their ability to connect with others and participate in community life.

Making Skirling a safer place for residents of all ages to walk or cycle in would include – village ‘gateways’, a 20 or 30mph speed limit throughout the village, and crucially new pavements that help connect up housing with the village hall and church.

Repairs to the pavement out to Skirling Mill were also highlighted.”

4.1.1 Priority 1B Village pavements and roads

Actions

- IB1 Develop plans for pavements/safe routes from the top of the village down to the village hall and church.
- IB2 Improve path out to Skirling Mill.

Background

There is no consistent pavement though the village: someone walking the length of the village will encounter four lengths of pavement requiring three road crossings (there is no formal crossing infrastructure) and the negotiation of several gaps without pavement. Similarly, there are three zones with different speed limits. If travelling through the village from the north-east (i.e. from Peebles) a 30mph zone is entered just before the first house. There is no pavement on either side of road for first 125m (covering several houses and Galalaw Farm).

There is then an 80m section of pavement on the south-east side of road, along the grassy area outside Howes Brae / Burnside. The pavement then switches to north side of road (starting adjacent to bus shelter) and runs for ~390m (with a break of ~25m outside Goatfoot) to the triangle of grass which hold the war memorial. Midway through this section the speed limit on the road becomes 20mph. South of the war memorial there is a break of ~50m without a formal pavement where the D33 minor road joins the A72 and there is parking for housing.

⁷¹ Text in italics is taken directly from the Skirling Village CAP. Appendix 4 has a full list of Themes, Priorities and Actions.

The pavement restarts at the Telephone exchange and runs for 50m (with a break for the entrance of Carmichael Bank) before crossing to the south-east side of A72, where it continues for 120m, past the Village Hall, to just before the village green. There is no pavement on either side of the road for 125m at the village green. At the south end of the village green the pavement reappears on the north-west side of the A72 and continues south for 710m to the entrance to Skirling Mill.

About 100m south of the village green the speed limit increases to 40mph, and 150m beyond the end of the pavement at Skirling Mill (and about 40m beyond the last house) the 40mph zone ends and the limit reverts to national speed limit. Most of the pavements described above are tarred and have a hard kerb, but the western-most section of ~380m to Skirling Mill is a well-bound cinder path with a narrow grass verge between road and pavement.

Update

Several of the parcels under discussion could be used for extending or creating new pavements, however, it is unclear whether there is community support for such projects.

The 2025 CAP Progress Report noted that *“In February 2024 Skirling was offered £75,000⁷² to fund a tar path from the end of the Skirling Mill path to the War Memorial. The planned route between the end of Skirling Mill Path and the end of the Green raised flooding concerns among residents. Therefore, the offer of a tar path along the Village Green for that section was declined.”* This funding was not lost, however, as it was redirected to create the new section of path running in front of Burnside Farm.

The 2025 report also noted that *“In September 2024 a further offer of tar paths has been made. The Community Council would like to request tar-surfacing from the end of the Skirling Mill Path to Kirk Brae, and from Burnside to the top of the village. Discussion with residents remain to be completed and further options are still being explored.”*

Whilst the Skirling Mill path has not been tarred, recent maintenance work to replace a manhole cover and scrape back encroaching vegetation has improved its condition.

Delivery: Parcels #4 and #7

These parcels could be used for a new pavement on the western side of the A72 between the village green and Carmichael Bank, however, funding for a similar project was declined in the face of local opposition on amenity and privacy grounds, as well as concerns that adding a kerb along the western side of road would inhibit drainage from the carriageway and exacerbate flooding of properties on the other side of the road.

Delivery: Parcel #6

It would be possible to establish a new path along the western side of village green side, or around the full extent of the green, but this might also raise concerns about appropriateness of development.

A further issue is that during events on the green such as car boot sales, vehicles access the green directly from A72, so dropped kerb sections would be needed (or it would be necessary to make other arrangements for access).

Delivery: Parcels #2 & #12

There is scope for a potential extension northwards of the existing pavement on eastern side of A72, and there is a short section here where there is no path on either side of road, but this does not appear to have been raised previously, suggesting there is little demand.

Delivery: Parcel #10

Recent maintenance of the cinder track section of Skirling Mill path means that it is currently in good order, so there is no short term imperative for an upgrade to tarmac. In the longer term the

⁷² The funds offered were from a Scottish Borders Council budget: SBC would have carried out the work.

maintenance and potential upgrading of the path are likely to be connected to any future development of field by Skirling Mill.

4.2 Theme 3: Skirling Community Life

“The Village Hall, Village Green and the Church all provide opportunities for people to come together in the community and enjoy activities and events.

Ways of developing these resources were suggested including ... creating more parking space for people using these facilities.

In addition, the creation of an outdoor play and picnic area was seen to be a valuable addition – particularly with the recent increase in the number of children and young families. A place where children can play and adults can gather to meet and socialise.

In general people enjoyed the activities and events held in the village and suggested that more would also be welcome.”

4.2.1 Priority 3A: Village Hall & Church.

Actions

- 3A1 Support ongoing plans for improvements to Village Hall and Church that will help with energy efficiency, community use, storage and parking.

Background

There is no designated public parking within the village: it is unclear (to visitors) whether parking around the village green is for residents only, and there is only a very small layby outside the Skirling Village Hall. Ad hoc parking is possible at the Church and in the informal area behind Loanfoot Cottages, but neither of these sites is obvious or signed from the A72.

The village green is used for events such as the annual Skirling Green Christian Aid Car Boot Sale, but there is potential to host a wide range of additional events. There is however limited scope for parking.

Delivery: Parcel #16

Additional parking for the Village Hall, Church and events at the village green could be created in the field in front of the Church, opposite the village green.

4.2.2 Priority 3B: Play area and picnic area

Actions

- 3B1 Agree best site and most suitable design – building on the existing plans and funding efforts
- 3B2 Work to develop the play and picnic area.

Background

There is currently no designated play area in the village. Creating a play-park has been an objective of many in the village for some years and some funds (held by the Village Hall) have been raised.

There are benches and picnic tables at the village green.

Play-park pre-application enquiry

A pre-application enquiry was submitted to Scottish Borders Council with respect to creating a new play-park on parcel #3. The enquiry comprised the text and photo below (italics).

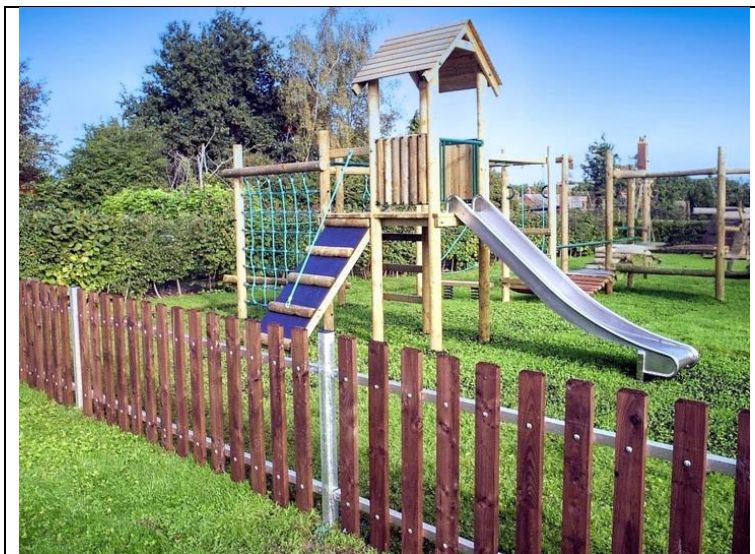
The proposed site for the play-park is a piece of land adjacent to Skirling's telephone exchange and Carmichael Bank, Skirling ML12 6HD. The proposed site (OS Grid Reference NT 07592 39240) is marked

red on the attached map. There are no buildings or structures on the current site and no indications or information to suggest that any buildings have been erected on the site.

SCDT is not aware of any planning history on the site and does not have any records of how the site has been previously used, if at all. It is believed that historically the land was retained incidentally by previous owners in the process of transferring pieces of land to others.

SCDT seeks advice on the probability of planning permission being granted for a play-park on this site, the merits of the application generally and possible obstacles to obtaining planning permission.

SCDT does not currently own the land on which the proposed site is situated; however SCDT is in the process of acquiring this land as its owner has expressed a longstanding and deep interest in gifting it to Skirling village. One of SCDT's central tasks is to facilitate the transfer of land in the village to be held in trust for the benefit of the community.



Example photo supplied with pre-application enquiry

SBC Response to pre-application enquiry

The SBC response to the pre-application enquiry was as follows:

Principle The proposed development is small scale and would help increase access to outdoor activities to a wider sector of the community. On the basis of the information submitted, the principle of this proposal sounds acceptable.

Visual impact There would be no buildings proposed although the introduction of play equipment would be a significant change from the current position. That is not to say that those elements would not be acceptable.

Neighbouring amenity There may be an impact on neighbouring amenity from noise through the introduction of a new activity. Any lighting columns associated with the new play area could similarly result in a detriment to amenity. Lighting would need to be designed to account for that and timers included in order to ensure automatic cut outs.

Road safety/parking Roads commented that the site is largely not included within the road boundary, although it is their opinion that the first 2m from the A72 carriageway and the D35-I Carmichael Bank carriageway is included within the road boundary. As a result, provided the play-park does not encroach on the public road boundary and does not interfere with visibility from Carmichael Bank, an objection is unlikely. A detailed application should show the full extents of the play-park boundary, including the line (and height) of any fences, to allow the Roads Planning Service to discern whether the proposal has any negative impact on road safety. The provision of a dedicated parking at this facility is unlikely to be a requirement.

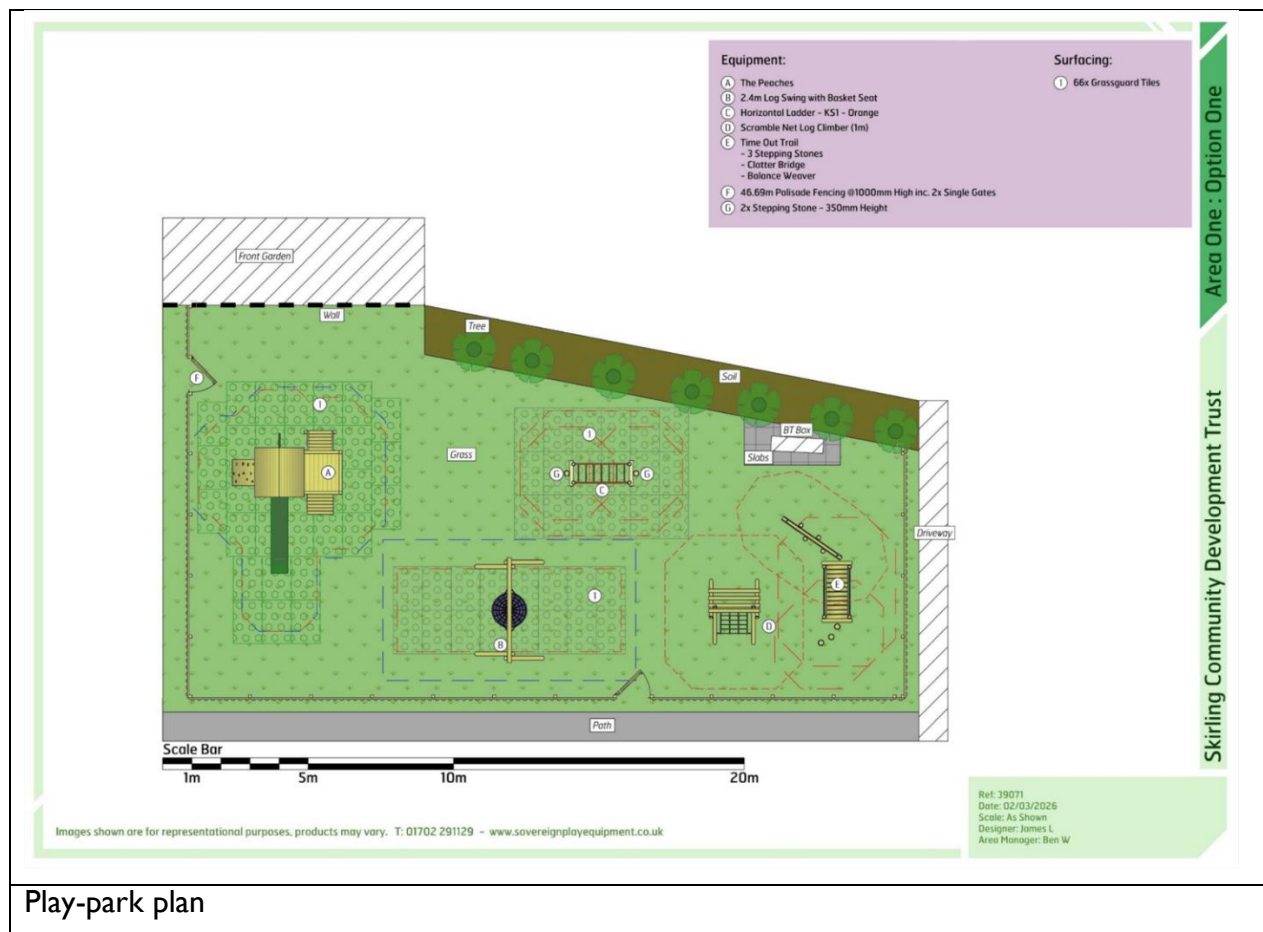
Ecology There is a requirement that proposals for local development will include appropriate and proportionate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, in accordance with national and local guidance. A condition would be imposed were permission to be granted if the information was not submitted with the application. In formulating a programme of ecological enhancements, you may wish to refer to NatureScot’s document “Developing with Nature” which is available on that organisation’s website.

Trees There are trees within the vicinity of the site. Any proposal would have to take account of those and be supported by an arboricultural impact assessment and method statement.

Public art Policy 3 I of NPF4⁷³ requires that proposals that involve a significant change to existing or the creation of new public open spaces will make provision for public art. In order to comply with this policy, as there would be a significant change to the existing public open space, there should be some public art provided. Details of that should be included in any planning application.

Design and layout proposal

Subsequent to this broadly positive response from SBC, SCDT invited Sovereign Design Play Systems Ltd to produce a costed design proposal for a play-park at this site, which was delivered in March 2026. The plan and “artist’s impression” are reproduced below.



Play-park plan

Key elements of the design and layout are:

- “The Peaches” (house with slide, climbing wall, etc)
- Log swing with basket
- Horizontal ladder
- Scramble net log climber
- Time-out trail with stepping stones, clatter bridge, balance beam

⁷³ National Planning Framework 4 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-4/>

- Grassguard tiles
- Palisade fencing on three sides



Play-park artist's impression

Delivery: Parcel #3

Parcel #3 has been identified as the preferred site for the play-park, a pre-application enquiry has been submitted and a design proposal received which demonstrates the potential for the site.

Once the design and layout of the play-park are agreed it will be necessary to apply for planning permission, which will entail providing details of appropriate and proportionate measures to conserve, restore and enhance biodiversity, an arboricultural impact assessment and method statement, and details of the proposed public art.

Delivery: Alternative sites

If, for whatever reason, it is not possible take forward the play-park at parcel #3, it could be delivered at other sites, although these are very much fall-back options.

- There is more space for a play-park at the village green (parcel #6) and also for any associated adult seating and public art required by Scottish Borders Council as part of the development, however there are concerns about the appropriateness of any development at the village green.
- There is plenty of space for a play-park at the Skirling Mill field (parcel #10), although the distance from the village means that this would probably not meet community requirements for an easily accessible facility.
- It would also be possible to install a play-park and any associated adult seating and public art at the Church field (parcel #16).

Picnic area

There is very limited scope to deliver a picnic area alongside the play-park at parcel #3, as the proposed design occupies almost all of the available space.

Other potential locations for a picnic area include the Church field (parcel #16), the Skirling Mill field (parcel #10) and Gallows Knowe Wood (parcel #13), although the latter two sites are some way from the village.

4.3 Theme 4: Environment and Heritage (1)

“Skirling is surrounded by lovely countryside – farmland, woodlands and rolling hills. People would like to see the access out into the countryside maintained and developed, to continue to encourage the development of ‘community woodlands’ and walks, and to look at ways of encouraging biodiversity and wildlife.

People would like to continue the good work of village enhancement and also to create opportunities for growing produce and planting fruit trees.”

4.3.1 Priority 4A: Local path networks

Actions

- 4A2 Improve existing paths e.g. to Broughton
- 4A3 Investigate how paths/routes can be expanded to link to other paths networks and places e.g., in Biggar.
- 4A4 Develop, sign and promote a circular walk for the village.

Background

The path from Skirling to Broughton via the northern drove road (parcel #15) is designated a core path (176) by Scottish Borders Council. The section covered by parcel #15 is currently in good condition.

The southern drove road could potentially provide a link to core path 177 which runs along the dismantled railway on the south side of Biggar Water. The section of southern drove road under consideration here (parcel #14) is currently in good condition. OS 1:50,000 mapping shows a path continuing to South Mains Farm and thence to the B7016 but this is not shown on larger scale maps and does not exist on the ground. A little way to the east there is a mapped rough farm track (visible on Google Street View) running from the south side of the B7016 to the north bank of Biggar Water, although there is no bridge across the stream.

There is a well-used circular route from the village to Gallows Knowe Wood via the drove roads, however, visibility at the A72 road crossing at Castlestones corner when crossing from the existing pavement on the north-west side of the road is very poor.

Delivery: Parcel #9

Parcel #9 is of interest for the development of a safer circular walking route from the village via Gallows Knowe Wood. There are two possible options for improvement:

- A) Create a new pavement (~150m) alongside the A72 and D39, allowing pedestrians to cross the A72 closer to the village where there is better visibility. This could be tarred or bound cinders: the latter might be cheaper but it is understood that SBC would likely favour the former. The road crossing could be formalised but may just need some extra “pedestrians crossing ahead” signage. Whilst viable, this option requires significant Council involvement and engagement, and it is unclear whether they would support further investment in pavement infrastructure here; it is likely also that concerns about maintenance budgets would be raised.
- B) Using the same crossing point, creating a pedestrian route running through the parcel at the northern tip and then continuing inside the field to join the southern drove road, near to where it meets the D39. This option requires buying an additional ~3m strip of the field, creation of a new stock fence to separate the path from livestock in the field, re-siting of a water trough, and path construction, which whilst costly would be much cheaper than a new pavement, and entail considerably less road disruption.

4.3.2 Priority 4B: Biodiversity and wildlife

Action

- 4B1 Involve people in study, enjoyment and enhancement of local biodiversity and wildlife.

Delivery: Parcel #10

The Skirling Mill field could be developed as a wildlife habitat and informal recreation area, with pond(s), woodland creation, including flowering and fruiting species, wildflower areas etc. Options for this site are discussed in more detail in section 4.5 below.

Delivery: Parcel #13

Gallows Knowe Wood could be acquired and managed as a community woodland with a focus on biodiversity study and enhancement alongside access and amenity. Biodiversity-focussed projects might include environmental monitoring, small scale silvicultural intervention, with some material from thinning left as dead wood, and additional planting to favour native species.

Some of the actions under priorities 4C and 4D below would also contribute to biodiversity and wildlife objectives.

4.3.3 Priority 4C: Village enhancement

Actions

- 4C1 Continue programme of village enhancement.
- 4C2 Look at how planting can be linked to productive growing.
- 4C3 Look at how planting can help with the development of 'gateways' at village limits.

Background

The 2025 Interim report states that "Planters have been ordered to place beside the speed signs at points in the village where verge width allows." It also notes that "Throughout summer 2024 various residents of Skirling identified appropriate areas for tree planting; a specific day was set aside during which said residents organised a tree-planting day, ensuring that the trees planted were protected from deer-grazing through use of plastic tree-protectors."

Delivery: Parcels #1, #2, #3, #4, #7 & #12

It would be technically possible to e.g. plant fruit trees or do some community growing on all the grassy roadside verges, but this might raise a number of concerns, not least with respect to safety.

Additional planters could be installed along verges if this was felt to be necessary / desirable.

Delivery: Parcel #6

Similarly, it would be technically possible to plant fruit trees, institute community growing, etc., on the village green, but this is unlikely to be seen as appropriate or compatible with other uses.

Delivery: Parcel #11

There is potential to plant a range of tree species, including fruit trees, along the bank in this parcel. They would be set a little back from the road, in an area where they are unlikely affect visibility or to be a distraction / safety issue for drivers.

Delivery: Parcels #14 and #15

There is considerable potential to plant a range of tree and shrub species, including flowering and fruit trees, along the banks of these two parcels.

4.3.4 Priority 4D: Community growing

Actions

- 4D1 Explore how other communities have developed community gardens and orchards and productive growing in 'gap' sites.
- 4D2 Identify and progress opportunities for community growing in Skirling

Background

"Community growing" covers a wide range of activities and projects seeking to deliver against a variety of objectives. Some community growing projects are primarily output-focussed - about provision of healthy produce - whilst others are more input-focussed – about the therapeutic value of the growing process. Similarly, some project concentrate on collective activity, others are designed to provide space for individual growers. In many cases these differences are a matter of emphasis; larger, and longer established projects, such as the Broadford Growers Hub,⁷⁴ will seek to do all of these and more.

Access and good drainage are important, but soil conditions less so as the soil can always be improved, with polytunnels and raised beds likely to use an imported growing medium.

Delivery: Parcels #10 & #17:

There is scope to take forward a wide range of community growing projects at the Skirling Mill field. There is however already a substantial horticultural facility in Skirling, comprising two polytunnels (22m * 9m) and an outdoor growing area of ~0.15ha, run by a local resident, Mike Thompson. Rather than attempt to set up an alternative site (which might cause difficulties with funders who are usually keen to avoid displacement) SCDT could seek to negotiate use of part of the existing site for community projects. This would have the added advantage of allowing use to develop gradually

The land (and one of the polytunnels) is owned by the Hunters. It would probably not be necessary to buy the land (or polytunnels) in order to take a community growing project forward.

4.4 Theme 5: Sustainable and Resilient Skirling

"Increasingly, in light of climate change, communities have to keep an eye on the future and act today to mitigate and adapt. Some of the priorities already identified will help with this e.g. encouraging more walking and cycling, local growing and encouraging biodiversity. Other priorities noted included looking after the Burn that flows through the village to reduce the danger of flooding in the future; doing more to recycle, and to look at ways of reducing dependence on fossil fuels (e.g. use of electric transport, supporting energy efficiency in homes and community buildings, and looking at opportunities for community renewables)."

4.4.1 Priority 5B: Recycling

Actions

- 5B1 Improve recycling facilities
- 5B2 Look at ways of developing community composting

Background

In the Scottish Borders Council area domestic households have a single recycling bin, collected every two weeks, which accepts the following items:⁷⁵

- aerosol cans;
- aluminium foil and foil trays;
- cardboard boxes;
- cardboard packaging – cereal boxes, kitchen and toilet roll tubes, ready meal sleeves etc.;

⁷⁴ <https://www.broadfordandstrath.org/project/growers-hub/>

⁷⁵ <https://www.scotborders.gov.uk/bins-rubbish-recycling/goes-bin-bag>

- food and drinks cans;
- food and drinks cartons – fresh juice cartons, milk cartons;
- paper – catalogues, brochures, magazines, newspapers, envelopes, leaflets, scrap paper;
- plastic bottles (all types) – drinks bottles, shampoo bottles, hand wash bottles;
- plastic tubs – margarine tubs, yogurt pots, fruit tubs;
- plastic bags and wrappers – carrier bags (no black bags), fruit and veg wrappers, bread bags, cling film, bubble wrap.

The following items can't be recycled in kerbside bin or bags:

- glass bottles and jars – these can be recycled at recycling points;
- clothing and shoes – these can be recycled at textile banks;
- polystyrene – this cannot be recycled at the present time and must go in general waste bins;
- garden waste – this can be recycled at Community Recycling Centres or composted at home.

There are three receptacles for glass recycling located beside the Village Hall, whilst the Recycle Now website⁷⁶ suggests the nearest locations for textile recycling are Bigger and Broughton.

Scottish Borders Council has seven community recycling centres for waste from domestic properties, the nearest is Eshiels community recycling centre (25km).

Community composting projects vary significantly in scale and nature, and in particular as to which waste streams (garden, food, other brown waste) are used, the methods used (piles, vessels, wormeries) and where the compost is used.⁷⁷

Delivery: Parcel #8

A textile recycling container could be located at the small car park behind Loanfoot Cottages.

Delivery: Parcel #10

The Skirling Mill field could host recycling facilities for textiles and a community composting project as part of a more comprehensive development of environmental facilities.

Delivery: Parcel #16

A textile recycling container could be located in the Church field.

Delivery: Parcel #17

Community composting also could be developed at the existing growing site, if the likely scale of the project was relatively small.

4.4.2 Priority 5C: Reducing fossil fuel use

Actions

- 5C2 Support use of Electric Vehicles
- 5C3 Explore opportunities for community renewables

Background

The development of Scotland's electric vehicle network has until recently been led by ChargePlace Scotland, owned developed by the Scottish Government, and funded in partnership with Local Authorities and other organisations, which has nearly 3,000 publicly available charge points.

However, Transport Scotland has decided to transition away from the network, with future developments being led by the private sector. Public funding through the Electric Vehicle

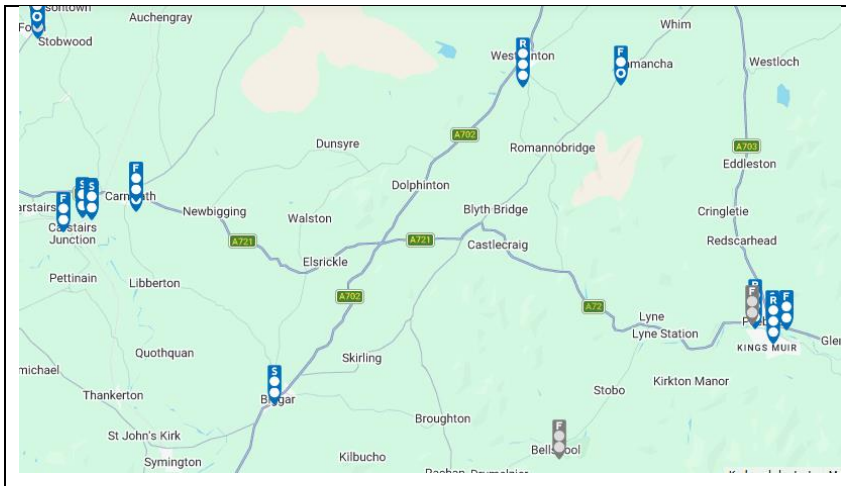
⁷⁶ <https://www.recyclenow.com/>

⁷⁷ See <https://highlandcompost.scot/decision-tree/> for a more detailed overview.

Infrastructure Fund is targeted at areas, including include more rural and island communities, where commercial investment alone is not currently viable.⁷⁸

Eight Local Authorities across the south of Scotland have jointly launched a new Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy⁷⁹ to deliver a high-quality, accessible, and sustainable public charging network across the region.

There is no public Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point in Skirling. There is a Chargeplace Scotland site in the Kirkstyle carpark at Biggar with 2 Type 2 7kW connectors, and other sites at Carnwath, West Linton, Lamancha and Peebles.



Map 9: EV charging points

Delivery: Parcel #8

It is probably technically possible to install a public EV charger in the small car park behind Loanfoot Cottages, but it does not seem a particularly suitable location, as access from A72 is not obvious and operation is typically 24/7/365 which may not be welcomed by adjacent householders.

Delivery: Parcel #10

Public EV chargers could be installed at the Skirling Mill field as part of a more comprehensive development of environmental facilities.

Community renewables - a wind turbine or solar panels - could be developed at the Skirling Mill field as part of a more comprehensive development of environmental facilities. Such a project would need considerable specialised feasibility and development work.

Delivery: Parcel #16

Public EV chargers could be installed at the Church field in association with a new car park.

⁷⁸ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/environment/electric-vehicle-infrastructure-fund/>

⁷⁹ <https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/article/86866/South-of-Scotland-Electric-Vehicle-Charging-Strategy>

4.5 The Skirling Mill field

The field by Skirling Mill has potential to host a wide range of projects delivering several of the objectives of the Skirling CAP. A key constraint is the current lack of access: some projects could be taken forward with only pedestrian access (if intermittent vehicle access through neighbouring properties can be negotiated), but larger scale developments would require the construction of road access from the A72.

A second constraint is likely to be drainage and potential flooding risk, which would need detailed assessment prior to significant development, and may require mitigation works. Ground vegetation (rushes) indicates that the western portion of the site is particularly wet, whereas the eastern part of the site appears to be relatively dry.

Inevitably any developments will be phased over time, and be dependent on availability of funding and investment capital. A long term masterplan for the development of the site should be produced, and a detailed environmental survey should be undertaken prior to any development to ensure that the existing flora and fauna is fully taken into account.

4.5.1 Pedestrian access

The field could be developed as wildlife habitat and recreation area, with pond(s), woodland creation, including flowering and fruiting species, wildflower areas etc.

Paths, benches and picnic tables could be installed, along with interpretation, a simple unserviced shelter, compost toilet, children's play equipment and installations of sculpture and environmental art.

Intermittent vehicle access through neighbouring property would be required for e.g. a digger to create the pond and to deliver materials (stone for paths) but day to day access would be by footbridge or culvert.

No local car parking is available (unless this can be arranged at Skirling Mill); the south-east corner of the parcel is ~500m from the village green which is not an excessive walk for many, but may be too far for some.

4.5.2 Vehicle access

Creating a new vehicle access, probably near the south-east corner of the site, would facilitate a much wider range of development options, including the development of a range of eco-focussed projects, including:

- Community composting
- Recycling
- Electric chargers
- Community growing

There could be more significant development of visitor services, such as a standard toilet block, a hardstanding for camper vans with grey water disposal or a seasonal campsite. Electrical power could be provided by solar panels or a wind turbine.

The field could potentially, if flood risk could be mitigated, host larger scale built developments, including a heritage/visitor centre with retail facilities, affordable housing, workshop space, or light industrial units, although it should be stressed that these sorts of developments are not currently identified as objectives in the Skirling CAP.

5 Summary analysis

5.1 Summary by site

The table below summarises the potential for the various parcels of land to contribute to development projects to deliver elements of the Skirling CAP. It does not cover the potential longer term and less tangible benefits arising from community ownership including the capacity to take advantage of future opportunities and of safeguarding its use for recreational, conservation and amenity purposes for the community and future generations.

#	Site	Skirling CAP project development
1	War memorial	No apparent development value.
2	Grass verge	Possible additional pavement, little development value otherwise.
3	Wide verge by BT exchange	Identified as preferred site for play-park.
4	Grass verge	Possible additional pavement, little development value otherwise.
5	Rough roadside verge	No apparent development value.
6	Village green	Event hosting, other potential limited if community want to keep village green unchanged.
7	Grass verges	Possible additional pavement, little development value otherwise.
8	Parking & storage area	Useful space for parking, storage, recycling, EV charging (but not space for all)
9	Wooded strip	Potential to facilitate safer route for circular walk via Gallows Knowe Wood.
10	Skirling Mill field	Wide range of potential projects: wildlife habitats, recreation, community growing, play-park, EV charging, recycling, composting, plus potential income generation initiatives.
11	Rough verge	Village gateway enhancement: flowering and fruiting trees, could be taken forward by agreement with SBC.
12	Grassy strip	Possible additional pavement, little development value otherwise.
13	Gallows Knowe Wood	Range of possible environmental and amenity projects.
14	Southern drove road	Useful for securing access to Gallows Knowe Wood (largely depends on intentions in wood). Potential for additional tree planting / habitat enrichment along boundary banks.
15	Northern drove road	Useful for securing access to Gallows Knowe Wood (largely depends on intentions in wood). Potential for additional tree planting / habitat enrichment along boundary banks.
16	Field by Church	Potential for parking, plus possible EV charging, recycling, composting, play-park.
17	Polytunnels/ growing area	Potential for community growing and composting projects.

Table 3: Summary analysis of scope to deliver Skirling CAP by parcels.

5.2 Summary by project

5.2.1 Safeguarding village amenity

Acquiring parcels #1-7 and #11-12 would safeguard these areas for recreational, conservation and amenity purposes for the community and future generations, and give the community the capacity to take advantage of any future opportunities arising.

5.2.2 Village enhancement

Fruit trees and other flowering shrubs could be planted along the grassy banks of parcels #11, #14 and #15.

There may also be some limited scope for additional planting (or planters) on various other roadside parcels, including #1, #2, #3, #4, #6 and #7.

5.2.3 Pavements

Acquiring parcels #4 and #7 would facilitate the construction of a continuous pavement along the western side of the A72, whilst parcels #2 and #12 would fill a gap in pavement provision on the eastern side of the A72. However, it appears that there is considerable local opposition to such developments and unless there is a consensus within the village it does not seem worth pursuing.

5.2.4 Play-park

Parcel #3 has been identified as the preferred location for a play-park and a pre-application to the Council submitted. A design proposal has been produced by Sovereign Design Play Systems Ltd which demonstrates how the site could be utilised.

The next step will be to agree the desired design and layout of the play-park and then, if the proposal is to proceed, to submit an application for planning permission to Scottish Borders Council.

If parcel #3 does not prove a feasible site the most likely alternative is parcel #16, in front of the church. The Skirling Mill field (parcel #10) has plenty of space but is probably too far from the village, and there may be opposition to siting a play-park on the village green (parcel #6).

5.2.5 Circular route

As per section 4.3.1 above, there are two options for a new path to facilitate a safe circular route from the village through Gallows Knowe Wood, both involving parcel #9. Unless the Council are willing to fund a pavement alongside the road, option B, running along the field, is likely to be cheaper and will be more attractive for pedestrians.

5.2.6 Parking

Additional parking (e.g. for events on the village green) could be provided at parcel #16, the field in front of the church.

There is very little scope to increase the number of parking spaces at the existing small car park behind Loanfoot Cottages (parcel #8)

5.2.7 EV charging, recycling

These two items could be sited together or separately at several sites. Perhaps the most suitable is the Church field (parcel #16), where they could be combined with a new parking area.

There would be plenty of space at Skirling Mill field (parcel #10) although this is some way out from the village.

They could possibly be located on the village green (parcel #6), but this would bring concerns about inappropriate development or in the car-park behind Loanfoot Cottages (parcel #8), but there is very little space here.

5.2.8 Community composting

Potential sites for a community composting project include the Skirling Mill field (parcel #10) and the existing growing site in the village (parcel #17) if community growing is taken forward here, with their relative suitability likely dependent on the nature and scale of the project.

5.2.9 Community growing

It would be possible to develop a community growing project at Skirling Mill field (parcel #10) although if a community growing project is desired then first option should be to discuss / negotiate with the existing growing site in the village (parcel #17).

5.2.10 Biodiversity and wildlife

Environmental enhancements could be taken forward at several sites; unlike, say, the play-park or provision of EV chargers, this is not a decision about selecting the single “best” site.

The greatest scope for biodiversity enhancement is at the Skirling Mill field (parcel #10), which could be developed as a wildlife habitat and informal recreation area, with pond(s), woodland creation, including flowering and fruiting species, wildflower areas etc.

Gallows Knowe Wood, already a haven for wildlife, could be managed with a continuing focus on biodiversity enhancement alongside access and amenity.

5.2.11 Skirling Mill field access

The Skirling Mill field is not currently directly accessible from the A72: some projects could be taken forward with only pedestrian access, but more significant developments require the construction of road access from the A72.

6 Community consultation

6.1 Introduction

A questionnaire was developed and circulated to all households in the community area, with additional copies available in hard copy or electronic format from the Community Co-ordinator. A 6 page summary document was also circulated, incorporating a brief introduction to the land acquisition project and feasibility study, summaries by site and project,⁸⁰ the plan and artist's impression of the play-park, and a map showing the various parcels of land discussed. The full feasibility study was made available for download from the SCDT webpage on the Skirling Village website.

The consultation ran from 18 April to 11 May 2026. The SCDT AGM was held in the Village Hall on 25 April and included a presentation on the feasibility study and a "question and answer" session.

53 responses were received, representing ~28% of the total population of 191. The majority of responses were posted in the box at the Village Hall, with a few submitted online or emailed to the Community Co-ordinator. Just over half (27) of respondents identified as members of SCDT.

6.2 Summary results

The results of the community consultation are summarised in the table below.⁸¹ The most popular responses are highlighted. Not all respondents answered all questions. Where respondents assigned a split priority (e.g. "medium/high") this has been scored with half a point in each category. Respondents were not asked to assign a priority for the Skirling Mill Field ideas.

Project	Yes	No	High	Medium	Low
Safeguarding amenity	40	12	18.5	16.5	4
Flowering trees & shrubs	44	9	12.5	18	10.5
Pavements	24	29	12.5	8.5	2
Castlestanes corner path	31	21	13	14	4
Play-park	26	25	11	13.5	1.5
Parking	24	28	6	9.5	4.5
EV Charging	20	31	4	10.5	5.5
Community composting	39	14	6	14.5	17.5
Community growing	31	21	2	9.5	16.5
Skirling Mill Field - wildlife	43	10	n/a	n/a	n/a
Skirling Mill Field - recreation	30	21	n/a	n/a	n/a
Skirling Mill Field - tourism	4	47	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gallows Knowe Wood	36	14	11	17	8

Table 4: Summary of consultation responses with most popular responses highlighted

6.3 Analysis

6.3.1 Safeguarding amenity

There was a strong positive response to this question (40 Yes, 12 No), with almost half of those saying yes assigning a high priority.

⁸⁰ Taken from chapter 5 of the Feasibility study

⁸¹ Full results are contained in Appendix 5

A couple of respondents were in favour of acquiring the village green but not the verges, whilst one favoured acquiring the verges but not the green.

Comments were generally positive, although several respondents mentioned potential liabilities and the need to meet maintenance and insurance costs.

6.3.2 Fruit trees and flowering shrubs

There was a strong positive response to this question (44 Yes, 9 No), with the largest group of those saying yes assigning a medium priority.

Comments were generally enthusiastic, although a couple of respondents voiced concerns about fallen fruit, leaves, etc. and the need to consider maintenance costs.

6.3.3 Pavements

There was a small negative response to this question (24 Yes, 29 No), although half of those who said yes assigned this a high priority.

A variety of sites were suggested as needing new paths, with the Galalaw end of the village and the area around and adjacent to the village green mentioned by multiple respondents.

6.3.4 Castlestones corner path

There was a moderate positive response to this question (31 Yes, 20 No), with most of those saying yes assigning a high (13) or medium (14) priority.

Many respondents highlighted the need to improve pedestrian safety when crossing the road here.

6.3.5 Play-park

There was a very marginal positive response to this question (26 Yes, 25 No), with a further 2 respondents saying yes to a play-park but no to the location. Just over half of those saying yes assigned this a medium priority, with most of the rest assigning it as high.

Many comments supported the development of a play-park, although a considerable number of respondents questioned the suitability of the site and a few questioned the need.

6.3.6 Parking

There was a small negative response to this question (24 Yes, 28 No), with the largest group of those saying yes assigning a medium priority.

There was a wide range of comments, with some respondents seeing a need for parking provision, and others considering it unnecessary.

6.3.7 EV charging

There was a moderate negative response to this question (20 Yes, 31 No), with just over half of those saying yes assigning a medium priority.

The need for public EV charging was questioned by several respondents, whilst others noted the potential to generate income.

6.3.8 Community composting

There was a strong positive response to this question (39 Yes, 14 No), although the largest group of those saying yes assigned this a low priority.

Several comments highlighted the lack of collection from Scottish Borders Council, with a couple of respondents noting the need for maintenance of any facility.

6.3.9 Community growing

There was a moderate positive response to this question (31 Yes, 21 No), with more than half of those saying yes assigning this a low priority.

Several comments were supportive, but questioned the level of demand. Only 3 respondents said they would be interested in their own growing space.

6.3.10 Skirling Mill Field

There was a strong positive response (43 Yes, 10 No) to wildlife habitats at the Skirling Mill field, a moderately positive response (30 Yes, 21 No) to recreation and amenity, and a very strong negative response (4 Yes, 47 No) to developing tourist facilities.

Comments covered a wide range of topics, with several respondents noting the wet and currently inaccessible nature of the site, with others suggesting it as a potential venue for a play-park.

6.3.11 Gallows Knowe Wood

There was a fairly strong positive response to this question (36 Yes, 14 No), with the largest group of those saying yes assigning this a medium priority.

Many comments were supportive although the maintenance costs were noted and a few respondents questioned the need to acquire the site.

6.3.12 Volunteering

26 respondents answered yes to this question, which is a very positive response, although some noted that their time would be limited.

6.3.13 Any other comments

This question elicited a wide range of comments, with some respondents reiterating points made previously and others thanking SCDT for its hard work. The lack of proposals affecting the Galalaw end of the village was noted and queried, whilst some respondents emphasised that they did not wish to see the character of the village affected by development.

6.4 Board response

The SCDT Board of Trustees considered the feasibility study, the discussion at the Trust's AGM, and the results of the community consultation, and produced the following response.

This Trust response addresses each project individually taking into account the report analysis and cross-referencing each project with its corresponding question in the Questionnaire in brackets. The response treats projects under two headings: firstly, those which the Trust does not intend to take forward as part of the five year Land Acquisition business plan based on the community feedback, and second those which it does propose to take forward from the Land Acquisition business plan and as part of SCDT's overall forward plan for 2026/2027.

The Trust also noted that as it is now understood that parcel #16 is not available, it should be excluded from consideration as a location for future development projects in the business plan.

6.4.1 Projects to be excluded from the five year business plan

EV Charging (Q7), Skirling Mill Tourism (Q10) and Parking (Q6): the Report shows that a majority of respondents voted against these projects. Taking into account the specific nature of these projects, it was agreed that the number of votes against was sufficient to justify discounting them as lacking community support. These projects will not be taken forward.

Acquisition of Gallows Knowe Wood (Q11): whilst acknowledging a majority of respondents favoured this acquisition, the Trust also recognised the scope of this project, including the time and resources required to properly implement it. The Trust notes that the wood is held by a private landowner who has no plans to change its current use by the community. The Trust therefore concluded this project is beyond the remit of the current five year business plan but remains to be pursued thereafter. This project will not be taken forward in the current five year business plan. It is to be emphasised this is a decision on the time frame for implementing the project, not on the merits or the viability of community support for it.

6.4.2 Projects to be included in the five year business plan

Safeguarding Amenity (Q1): This covers the protection, conservation and maintenance of land parcels beside the main road below and through the village. A majority of respondents having voted in favour of this project, the Trust wishes to take it forward; however the level and allocation of costs and liabilities, and maintenance remain to be discussed and determined, including willingness to volunteer and thoughts about fund raising. Similarly specific decisions will require to be made regarding which parcels of land the Trust should acquire on the community's behalf, and the conditions involved, which it is assumed the final land acquisition report and business plan will provide guidance and information on.

Planting of Fruit Trees and Shrubs (Q2): The Trust recognises the popularity of this project among respondents and agrees in principle to take it forward, noting that there are pertinent issues to be determined include the location of the planting and any associated questions regarding suitability and viability of possible sites. Questions regarding allocation for responsibility and resources for maintenance also require to be determined.

Pavements (Q3): Although a majority of respondents voted against this project in relation to the lower part of the village, the Trust noted that many respondents had commented about a lack of pavements at the Galalaw end of the village and safety concerns; indeed some felt that the Galalaw end of the village has been overlooked generally. This project merits further consideration and should be carefully taken forward, and probably in consultation with the Community Council.

Castlestanes Path (Q4): The Trust acknowledges support for this project and therefore agrees to take it forward. The specific route which any path would take remains to be determined. The Trust is aware that different views have been expressed as to the possible route, and would therefore seek views as to options, permissions, costs and on what basis.

Play-park (Q5): The Trust agrees to take this project forward in principle, with the caveat that although a slim majority voted for it, respondents drew attention to the location and some raised concern about its proximity to the roadside and associated safety issues. Therefore whilst acknowledging its community support, the Trust anticipates that further engagement and discussion will be required concerning its location. In particular, the Trust would be keen to hear from families who have an interest in the village providing a play-park.

Community Composting and Growing (Q8 and Q9): Respondents voted in favour of these projects but assigned a low priority to them. The Trust agrees to take it forward noting that it could provide volunteering and employment opportunities, offering a basis for improved amenity and further engagement with the village.

Skirling Mill Wildlife Area and Recreation Area (Q10): Noting the positive response to these projects the Trust agrees to take them forward. However it is also noted that the precise details of these projects – how and exactly where they are to be carried out – remains to be discussed and determined as does ownership and willingness to sell or transfer the field to the Trust.

7 Development Plan

This chapter outlines a provisional development plan to take forward the projects listed in section 6.4.2 above, with the exception of the Skirling Mill Field, which is covered in the following chapter.

Some but not all of these projects will require land acquisition, and some need further discussion and development before they can be taken forward. Where this is the case, the respective sections below highlight the main decisions to be made.

Community capacity, both in terms of trustee/staff time and volunteer resource, may be a significant constraint, limiting the number of projects that SCDT can take forward simultaneously. The development and financial plans envisage all the projects starting within three years, but it is likely that SCDT will need to prioritise, and perhaps take projects forward over a longer timescale.

Some development projects will require planning permission from the local authority: this may influence their design and specification, whilst local and national planning policy may bring additional requirements.⁸²

The scale and nature of costs will vary considerably. Different projects have a different expenditure profile: some have significant up-front costs whilst other may be relatively low-cost to implement but commit SCDT to ongoing expenditure on maintenance and insurance.

Most if not all development projects can be grant funded: some potential sources are highlighted in the text, whilst Appendix 6 provides more details of some possible funders. Grant funding is unlikely to cover longer term costs, especially ongoing costs of insurance and maintenance; funding options for these are discussed in section 9.2.3.

Several projects will require insurance, and SCDT is likely to need several types of cover (e.g. public liability, employers liability): in practice it is unlikely to be cost effective to have separate insurance policies for each project and type of cover, rather SCDT is likely to have a single policy covering various projects and insurance types, perhaps with an additional policy for a particular item (e.g. the play-park) where this is more economic or where cover is not available from the main broker.

7.1 Safeguarding Amenity

This section covers the acquisition of land parcels beside the main road below and through the village for their protection, conservation and maintenance. Specific development projects on these parcels are discussed in succeeding sections.

7.1.1 Parcels

This project primarily covers the grass verges through the central part of the village and the village green, i.e. parcels #1, #2, #3 and #4 owned by George Wheeler Carmichael and parcels #6 and #7 owned by the Hunters.

It might also include two wooded strips: parcel #5 owned by George Wheeler Carmichael and parcel #9 owned by the Hunters, as well as parcel #11 owned by Scottish Borders Council, and parcel #12, the ownership of which is unknown.

7.1.2 Activities and costs

All but parcels #11 and #12 have been offered to the Trust, acquisition expenses would be confined to legal costs.

⁸² E.g. NPF4 requires that proposals that involve a significant change to existing or the creation of new public open spaces make provision for public art. This has been referenced previously with respect to the play-park, but would be relevant to other projects, notably at Skirling Mill field.

Acquiring some or all of the parcels to safeguard the amenity of the village brings no immediate development costs, but would incur longer term insurance and maintenance costs (e.g. tree safety surveys and remedial works).

Maintenance

It is understood that grass-cutting on the village green and along roadside verges is undertaken by Scottish Borders Council, along with maintenance of planters and shrubberies e.g. around the war memorial. There is no reason why this should change if SCDT took on ownership of these parcels but obviously there is no absolute guarantee that SBC will continue to deliver this work indefinitely.

It is understood that the war memorial itself is owned by SBC so unless SCDT were to take ownership, the responsibility for maintenance remains with the Council.

Tree safety

The village green and the adjacent parcel #7 hold a number of mature lime trees which will require regular inspection by a qualified arborist, perhaps every five years, and remedial work as appropriate to address and issues identified. These areas have been subject to recent inspection and remedial work.

Parcels #4 and #9 also include a range of trees, including a few mature specimens, which again will require regular inspection and remedial work as appropriate.

In all cases the roadside location adds complexity and cost, as do the plethora of overhead power lines and telephone lines: remedial work will require traffic management and a mobile elevated working platform.

Survey costs would likely be in the range £500-£1,000 per survey (e.g. every five years)

The cost of remedial works is entirely dependent on the extent of work needed. There has been recent, extensive work on some of the mature lime trees, which may reduce costs in future years, but this cannot be guaranteed.

The financial plan includes an estimated cost of £2,000 for remedial work in year 5, but actual costs may vary considerably.

Insurance

SCDT will require public liability insurance to cover any land it owns (or has management responsibility for), and employers liability insurance for volunteers, if this is not included in the public liability cover.⁸³

Various insurance providers are available, basic cover is likely to be in the range £100-£200 per year, depending on details and types of cover sought.

7.1.3 Funding

Grant funding is generally very difficult to secure for on-going maintenance, liability mitigation and insurance and in most cases these expenditures have to be met from a group's unrestricted funds (see 8.3)

There are a few exceptions:

- Sometimes the first year of costs can be included in the acquisition project;
- It is not unknown for charitable funding to cover the costs of tree survey and remedial work, however, this is usually where it can be presented as a one-off expenditure, i.e. in the context of a community group opening up new access to a woodland area, or as part of the clear up after a storm;

⁸³ SCDT may also seek other insurances: trustee liability, fidelity cover, etc.

- If remedial costs were particularly high and threatened community ownership or prevented public access there might be potential for grant funding e.g. from windfarm distributors.

7.2 Planting of Fruit Trees and Shrubs

This project was popular amongst respondents but there are some issues to be determined around the suitability and viability of possible sites and responsibility and resources for maintenance.

7.2.1 Parcel(s)

Planting of fruit trees and shrubs could take place at several of the parcels but the primary focus in the feasibility study was parcel #11; the rough roadside verge owned by Scottish Borders Council.

In the first instance SCDT should discuss the proposal with SBC, as it may be possible to take project this forward by agreement. Alternatively, SCDT could submit an Asset Transfer Request to SBC. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 gives eligible community bodies the right to request to buy, lease or to have other rights over land, and this latter option might be an appropriate route to community control, allowing SCDT to manage the site without taking ownership.

Other possible sites for amenity planting include the various grass verges through the village (parcels #1, #2, #3, #5, #7), the village green (parcel #6) and the drove roads leading to Gallows Knowe Wood (parcels #14 and #15). However, whilst it would be relatively easy to install additional planters, there is limited scope for extensive tree and shrub planting on the verges (where it might impinge on road safety) and on the village green (where there seems to be little appetite for additional work).

Planting on the land beside the drove roads could be taken forward with agreement of the landowners (the Hunters) without the need for acquisition. Planting at these sites is not included in the financial plan.

7.2.2 Activities and costs

Planting trees and shrubs and installing new planters is likely to be relatively low cost (and proportional to the scale of the project), especially if the work is undertaken by volunteers.

Establishing a formal, regular volunteer group is discussed in chapter 8 below: it is more likely that this would take place in the context of the acquisition and development of the Skirling Mill Field, whereas the limited amount of work required by this project could be delivered through ad hoc volunteer events.

Unit costs for ornamental plants vary hugely according to size of plant (larger trees/shrubs cost much more) and size of order (it is usually much cheaper to buy large numbers) as well as variance between species. Rather calculate a specific cost per plant it may be easier to agree a budget – say in the range £1,000 - £2,000 – and see what mix of plants can be achieved.

If the funding allows, it may be desirable to spread the planting over two years. The project budget should factor in an element of replacement planting to cover initial losses, although buying larger, high quality plants should limit this.

Maintenance should be deliverable by volunteers: there may be a need for watering in the initial years if drought conditions prevail, and there may be a need for weeding; again, employing larger plants reduces the need for this.

The site and the work of volunteers would have to be covered by SCDT insurances but this specific project should not add any appreciable amount to the premium.

7.2.3 Funding

This project might be included in a combined acquisition and development bid to windfarm distribution funds, but would not be eligible for SLF revenue funding.

It could also be designed as a standalone project, e.g. with funding from a small or local grant funder such as the Coop Local Community Fund.

7.3 Pavements

This section covers the development of new pavements alongside the A72, specifically at the Galalaw end of the village, where several respondents to the consultation commented on the lack of pavements and their associated safety concerns. Further work is needed, in conjunction with residents and the community council, to develop this project.

7.3.1 Parcels

This potential project does not involve any of the previously identified parcels; further work is needed to identify precisely where new pavements are needed. It is not clear that acquisition by SCDT is needed for a pavement project to go ahead: it wasn't necessary for previous projects in the village.

7.3.2 Activities and costs

Installing new pavements is expensive: in 2024 £75,000 was offered by SBC for ~240m⁸⁴ of pavement on the west side of the A72 in the middle of the village. This is equivalent to >£300 / linear metre; unit costs are anticipated to have risen since.

There may be a role for SCDT in the immediate short-term to canvas Galalaw residents to clarify preferred area(s) for pavements: this may be something that the SCDT co-ordinator can take forward within the remit of their current role.

7.3.3 Funding

Installing new pavements is usually undertaken by local authorities, who bear the costs. Other than co-ordinator or volunteer time, there should be no cost to SCDT and this project is not included in the financial plan.

7.4 Castlestanes Path

This sections covers the creation of a new section of path on the eastern side of the A72 at Castlestanes corner to facilitate a safer circular route through Gallows Knowe Wood from the village, for which two possible options were identified in the feasibility study:

- Option A involves creating a new pavement running for ~150m alongside the A72 and the D39 minor road.
- Option B involves creating a new path cutting through the northern tip of parcel #9 and running inside the field to join the Southern Drove Road.

7.4.1 Parcel

Both options involve parcel #9, although option A could be taken forward without community acquisition and option B only uses a very small portion (the northern tip) of this parcel and primarily

⁸⁴ This is length of the “gap” on the western side of the A72, it is unclear whether there were additional works included in the budget.

occupies a narrow (3-4m) strip of the adjacent field, so is dependent on landowner agreement to transfer this additional area of land.⁸⁵

7.4.2 Activities and costs

As per section 7.3 above, new pavement construction is generally the responsibility of (and funded by) the local authority, but it is unclear whether Scottish Borders Council would be willing to do so at this site, which is outside the main village envelope, and where a pavement already exists on the other side of the A72.

There are various possible specifications, with considerable variation in costs.

For option A:

The most expensive option would be a tarred path: 150m of tarred pavement at >£300/m would cost in excess of £45,000. However, this is likely to be the only option that SBC would support, and if they were willing then it could be funded from within Council budgets.

It would be cheaper to create non-tarred path but an unsurfaced path unlikely to be successful, as it would lay wet and muddy due to surface drainage from the woodland and field above. An unbound stone surface is possible but would probably still need a kerb and SBC is understood to be unwilling to support non-tarred pavements.

For option B:

Costs would be heavily dependent on the specification of the path, but assuming this is of a simple trench, membrane and unbound stone fill construction, approx. 800 – 1000mm wide, then ~145m of path plus stock fence, gates and (probably) finger posts, plus relocation of the water trough might cost in the region of £10,000, although volunteer involvement could reduce some costs significantly.

Item	#	Unit	Unit cost	Total
Path	145	m	30	4,350
Stock fence	140	m	15	2,100
Finger post	2	no	250	500
Gate	2	no	1,000	2,000
Move water trough	1	no	1,000	1,000
Total				9,950

Table 5: cost estimates for Option B⁸⁶

As both options involve a pedestrian crossing point there may be value in providing “caution pedestrians crossing” signage for road users.

If SBC is willing to support and fund a tarred path along the eastern side for the A72 then this should be the preferred option; if not then SCDT should pursue Option B, which in the first instance would require negotiation with the landowner with respect to access and potential land transfer.

7.4.3 Funding

SCDT would need to seek external funding to deliver Option B; this could be a standalone project or as part of a broader package of works.

⁸⁵ SCDT ownership is not strictly necessary but funders would be keen to ensure that the Trust had long-term control of the land on which a path was established.

⁸⁶ Cost estimates draw on the Paths for All Estimating Price Guide. <https://walkingscotland.org.uk/resource/path-projects-estimating-price-guide/> Walking Scotland (formerly Paths for All) has also published various guidance documents on the design and construction of path and recreation infrastructure. <https://walkingscotland.org.uk/resource-type/technical-path-advice-guidance/>

As the work is explicitly described as intended to improve the circular route from the village to Gallows Knowe Wood it may be worth considering whether extra signage or infrastructure (such as simple bench seats) is needed elsewhere on the route.

Potential funders include Awards for All Scotland, Community-Led Local Development funds and SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund.

7.5 Play-park

This section covers the installation of a play-park. There has already been considerable development work on this project, but concerns were raised about the proposed site during the consultation and the Trust recognises that further engagement and discussion is required before proceeding.

7.5.1 Parcel(s)

As outlined previously, parcel #3 has previously been earmarked as the potential location for the play-park. If parcel #3 proves not to be an appropriate site, then of the other parcels considered in this study, possible options include:

- The village green (parcel #6) has space but there was opposition to this in consultation.
- The Skirling Mill Field (parcel #10) and Gallows Knowe Wood (parcel #15) have space for a play-park but are too far from the village.

The choice of site will have an impact on costs if additional site preparation or access works are required.

7.5.2 Activities and costs

A design and quotation for a play-park at parcel #3 has been received from Sovereign Play Ltd (see section 4.2.2. above). The price was dependent on payment terms: the quotation for installation was £35,550, paid up front, but £44,546 for a longer term payment plan. There are likely to be some additional cost elements including site preparation and planning permission.

Once a decision on the site is made, it is anticipated that SCDT would seek quotes from other installers before progressing, and would also work with local residents to ensure that the scale and type of play items was appropriate for local needs. Overall costs are likely to be in the range £40,000 - £60,000.

Ongoing costs include insurance (which may be available as an add-on to an existing policy, or provided through a specialist broker), and regular inspections and maintenance. The financial plan includes an annual estimated cost of £500 for insurance but this needs to be verified; seeking formal quotes and ensuring suitable cover will be an important part of the development process once the site and contents of the play-park are agreed.

7.5.3 Inspections

The supplier/installer of the play-park should provide a detailed maintenance schedule outlining what needs to be inspected and when. This might include weekly, monthly and annual inspections, with weekly and monthly inspections undertaken by trustees or other volunteers, and annual inspections by a third party.

Weekly inspections might focus on routine checks for vandalism, defects or missing parts and the basic condition of the equipment (including any perimeter fencing), whilst monthly inspections are rather more in-depth, identifying wear and tear, checking for loose fastenings or loose screws. Importantly, any issues noted must be systematically recorded and addressed.

The annual inspection should be carried out by a professional third party who will test all components and confirm compliance with British Standard EN 1176 requirements and provide a report detailing any necessary maintenance work.

It would be expected that any installation comes with a warranty so there should be limited costs with respect to inspections and maintenance for the first few years.

7.5.4 Funding

The play-park initiative would probably be taken forward as a standalone project, incorporating installation and any additional costs such as arboricultural work on the trees overhanging the site.

Potential funders include Awards for All, Community-Led Local Development Funds and SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund.⁸⁷ It is understood that the village hall holds £12,051 as play-park funds; one option might be to ring-fence some of these funds to cover insurance and long term maintenance.

7.6 Community Growing

The community consultation demonstrated some support for community growing but more work is needed to define the objectives and scale of any such project. Indicative costings for one possible option have been produced for illustrative purposes, but it must be stressed that no decisions about the type or location of a preferred project have been made by SCDT.

Further advice on developing a community growing project is available from Trellis⁸⁸ and Social Farms and Gardens.⁸⁹ Assistance and advice may also be available from the Biggar Community Market Garden⁹⁰ and Abundant Borders.⁹¹

7.6.1 Parcels

There are two main options given the areas of land discussed in the feasibility study: developing a community growing project from scratch as part of the wider development of the Skirling Mill field (parcel #10) or working with the existing growing site adjacent to the village (parcel #17).

7.6.2 Activities and costs

Setting up a community growing project at the Skirling Mill field (or elsewhere) would be considerably more expensive than taking on the existing growing site. Costs would depend on scale, with significant elements including:

- Ground clearance and preparation;
- Polytunnels and/or raised beds plus growing medium;
- Tools and equipment;
- Water supply;
- Welfare facilities.

There would also be ongoing expenditures on materials (seeds, compost, etc.), insurance and tool replacement as well as administrative and management costs.

Developing community growing at the existing growing site would almost certainly incur lower initial costs, although there would still be significant expenditure, whilst ongoing costs of insurance, administration and management would be similar.

⁸⁷ NB Funders will require quotes from multiple suppliers.

⁸⁸ <https://www.trellisscotland.org.uk/>

⁸⁹ <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>

⁹⁰ <https://www.biggarmarketgarden.org/>

⁹¹ <https://abundantborders.org.uk/>

One possible option is for SCDT to take over the existing site and business from the current occupier, Mike Thompson, who has kindly provided the following figures for income and expenditure:

- Equipment costs (tunnel, shed, rotavator, sundry trays and tools) ~£14,000
- Annual costs (rent, insurance, seeds, compost, fertiliser, other miscellaneous costs) ~£2,000
- Sales (primarily two local shops, local veg boxes and a farmer's market) ~£5,000

If SCDT were to take over the existing site it would need to acquire the equipment. The major items were part-funded by a grant from South of Scotland Enterprise (SOSE) so there is potential for grant clawback: SCDT and the current operator would need to discuss this with SOSE before proceeding with a transfer.

There would be some additional capital costs to make the site suitable for community use, notably the provision of a welfare unit with WC and handwashing facility. There is a wide range of options, including both chemical and compost toilets, with numerous second-hand and/or refurbished chemical units available. One constraint is that some units require mains electrical connection, but there is currently no power on site. There might also be a need to acquire additional tools to cater for volunteers.

For the purposes of the financial plan an initial capital cost of £20,000 has been estimated to cover the acquisition of the existing facilities and upgrading it for volunteer use, but there is a considerable margin for error with this figure, reflecting the uncertainty over possible grant clawback by SOSE and the range of welfare unit options.

Annual costs at current level of activity are in the region of £2,000; the rent would need to be agreed with the landowner and new insurance secured, but this figure has been retained for the financial plan. In the longer term there will be ongoing costs for replacement tools.

A sum of £2,500 a year has been allocated for administration and management: this would cover a few hours a week, predominantly over the months from April to October.

7.6.3 Funding

A community growing project at Skirling Mill Field could be packaged as a standalone project for funding purposes but would probably be best taken forward as part of a larger project (probably funded by the National Lottery Community Action) including development of the site for wildlife and recreation.

A community takeover of the existing growing site would have smaller, but still significant, initial capital costs which could be met by funding from various charitable trusts, as well as Awards for All, Community-Led Local Development Funds and SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund.

On the figures provided it appears that the ongoing costs: rent, insurance, seeds, compost, fertiliser, admin and management, etc., will be covered by sales revenue, with a small annual surplus.

7.6.4 Site development options

Whilst taking on the existing site and business appears in many ways to be a logical option, funders typically want to see community projects to deliver additional benefits. A few possible such developments have been sketched below; they are not included in the financial plan.

As noted above, the site has no electrical connection and there is also a somewhat limited water supply, with no wastewater connection. Providing such site servicing would be a considerable cost but would open up significant longer term development opportunities.

It may be possible to increase output, either by intensifying production, developing new products (e.g. soft fruit) or by expansion, subject to recruiting sufficient volunteer labour and identifying

additional markets; alternatively additional services could be provided, including training events, work with schools and advice and support for existing gardeners.

These developments would be facilitated by the engagement of a member of staff, probably on a seasonal, part-time contract basis, to lead and manage the development of the site, including recruiting and managing volunteers. All such site developments could be the subject of grant funding applications.

7.7 Community Composting

As with community growing, there was support for community composting in the consultation but more work needs to be done to define the scope and objectives of any such project, and to identify a suitable site. Indicative costings for a small composting project at the growing site are presented below for illustrative purposes, but it must be stressed that no decisions about the type or location of a preferred project have been made by SCDT.

Advice on community composting projects may be available from the organisations referenced above in the community growing section, and from other online information sources, such as Highland Community Composting.⁹²

7.7.1 Parcels

Again, there are two possible and potentially available sites from those discussed in the feasibility study: parcel #10 (Skirling Mill Field), and parcel #17 (the existing growing site), however, there is no road access to the Skirling Mill Field, which would severely constrain activity.

If SCDT were to take over or otherwise develop the existing growing site there would be obvious synergy with a community composting project at that site. There is currently no electrical supply at the growing site, which would limit the type of equipment that could be used.

7.7.2 Activities and costs

Community composting projects have the following basic cost elements:

- Containers or vessels for composting
- Tool and equipment such as shredders to prepare garden waste.
- Running costs (staff, fuel/electricity, insurance etc.).

Equipment costs vary according to size and type. Simple composting bins cost a few hundred pounds, with insulated vessels more expensive, whilst rotating vessels (using electricity, applying heat etc.) cost several thousands of pounds or more, depending on size. Similarly, running costs might be minimal for a small, volunteer-led, unpowered scheme, but very significant for one with staff and powered equipment.

Composting is regulated by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency and the Animal and Plant Health Agency; rules vary according to the scale of operation, the end-user (if the compost is used where it is made or elsewhere) and the material composted (whether animal by-products are included).

A small composting project at the community growing site utilising only garden waste could be set up for relatively little cost. The cheapest option is a single static heap but it is more efficient to use a three-bay system with adjacent wooden bins. When the first bin is filled the material is moved to the next bin, getting turned in the process, and new material is placed in the first bin: once that's full the material is moved up the line again.

⁹² <https://highlandcompost.scot/>

Bins can be purchased from a range of suppliers, or built on-site. For garden waste they can be left open, but should be lidded if food waste is included to deter pests (if animal by-products are included the composting system must be enclosed). A petrol-driven shredder would be necessary to reduce larger material to enable effective composting.

For the purposes of the financial plan a notional capital cost of £2,500 has been estimated to cover the purchase or construction of the bins, a reasonably-sized shredder and sundry tools. Ongoing annual costs for fuel, tool replacement etc., are estimated at £300.

Compost produced could either be used on-site (reducing input costs for the community growing project) or sold locally. The financial plan includes an estimated annual income of £500 from sales.

7.7.3 Funding

A community composting project at Skirling Mill Field could be packaged as a standalone project for funding purposes but as with community growing would probably be best taken forward as part of a larger site development project, probably funded by the National Lottery Community Action.

A composting initiative at the existing growing site could be funded as part of a larger project incorporating composting and community growing, with funding from those listed in section 7.6.3 above.

Ongoing costs should be covered by sales revenue and/or reduced input costs to the community growing project.

8 Skirling Mill Wildlife and Recreation Area

This section covers the acquisition of the Skirling Mill field for development as a wildlife and recreation area. As noted in section 4.5 above, this objective could encompass a wide range of different activities, including pond(s), woodland creation, planting of flowering and fruiting species, wildflower areas etc. Paths, benches and picnic tables could be installed, along with interpretation, a simple unserviced shelter and a compost toilet.

The precise details of what this project will entail, and how it will be implemented, are still to be discussed and agreed, and will to some extent be dependent on the outcome of a baseline survey of the site.

Subsequent to the baseline survey and further discussion and agreement on activities and timescales, it is recommended that a detailed management plan be drawn up, outlining preferred activities and operations, which will allow more accurate financial planning.

The proposals and costings below should therefore be regarded as indicative, to demonstrate what could happen, what might be involved, and how much it might cost, rather than presenting firm proposals.

8.1 Parcel

The Skirling Mill Field is parcel #10, currently owned by Candleberry Ltd, who have confirmed that they are willing to transfer the land to the Trust if legal fees are covered.

8.2 Activities and costs

8.2.1 Baseline survey

Prior to any development work SCDT should commission an environmental survey to establish a baseline and ascertain whether there are any important species or habitats already on-site that must be protected.

National Vegetation Classification surveys are based on identification of specific plant communities so must be carried out over the summer months (June-August/September).

It might be possible to find an appropriately skilled volunteer (e.g. from a local wildlife trust) willing to carry out this survey, otherwise there are numerous professional contractors across the country.

Survey costs vary according to the size of the site, the complexity of habitats, and whether the types and detail of survey required

For a small and fairly straightforward site such as the Skirling Mill field costs are likely to be the range £500-£1,000.

8.2.2 Management – development officer

The acquisition and development of Skirling Mill field as a wildlife and recreation area will require substantial management inputs, in developing the management plan, applying for and managing funding, implementing the plan (including engaging and managing contractors) and developing a volunteer group.

It is not impossible that this could be delivered by Trustees on a voluntary basis but there would be value in engaging⁹³ a development officer, on a part-time basis over 3 years, to deliver the tasks listed

⁹³ This could be as a direct employee or a self-employed contractor.

above and ensure that systems and structures were in place to allow effective voluntary management in subsequent years.

Employing a development officer has various advantages:

- creating local employment
- buying in skills and experience which aren't available within the Board or membership
- increasing the capacity of the Trust to deliver benefits and achieve outcomes and reducing the workload on a volunteer Board and membership
- representing SCDT to funders and regulators who may be reassured that the Trust has experienced and qualified staff in place
- as a tangible sign of community ownership and an effective link between site users and the community group.

Developing and leading the volunteer group will be a key part of the development officer's job description; this group will be critical in delivering the longer term maintenance and management of the Trust's property.

The financial plan includes an estimated cost of £15,000 per year for three years to cover remuneration and other on-costs. As with most of the cost elements below, funding for such a post could be sought as part of a comprehensive development package for the site, as discussed in section 8.3.

8.2.3 Access

At present there is no direct access to the site from the A72, and providing this could incur significant costs, depending on specification. Access is needed for site development and management and for pedestrian visitors.

There are various legal requirements when working on or adjacent to public roads, including:

- Improving or constructing a new access onto a classified (A, B or C) road requires planning permission.
- Any groundwork that constitutes development within 25m of a classified (A, B or C) road requires planning permission.
- In Scotland works carried out on or abutting a public road require permission under Section 56 of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.
- Contractors carrying out work within the Public Road must be accredited to work within the public road through the holding of a New Roads and Street Works Act 1984 accreditation.

If it is possible to negotiate intermittent vehicle access through neighbouring property for e.g. a digger to create a pond and to deliver materials such as stone for paths, this would obviate the need to create direct vehicle access, otherwise it will be necessary to culvert the stream and provide a hardstanding just inside the site. The financial plan does not include any costs for direct access.

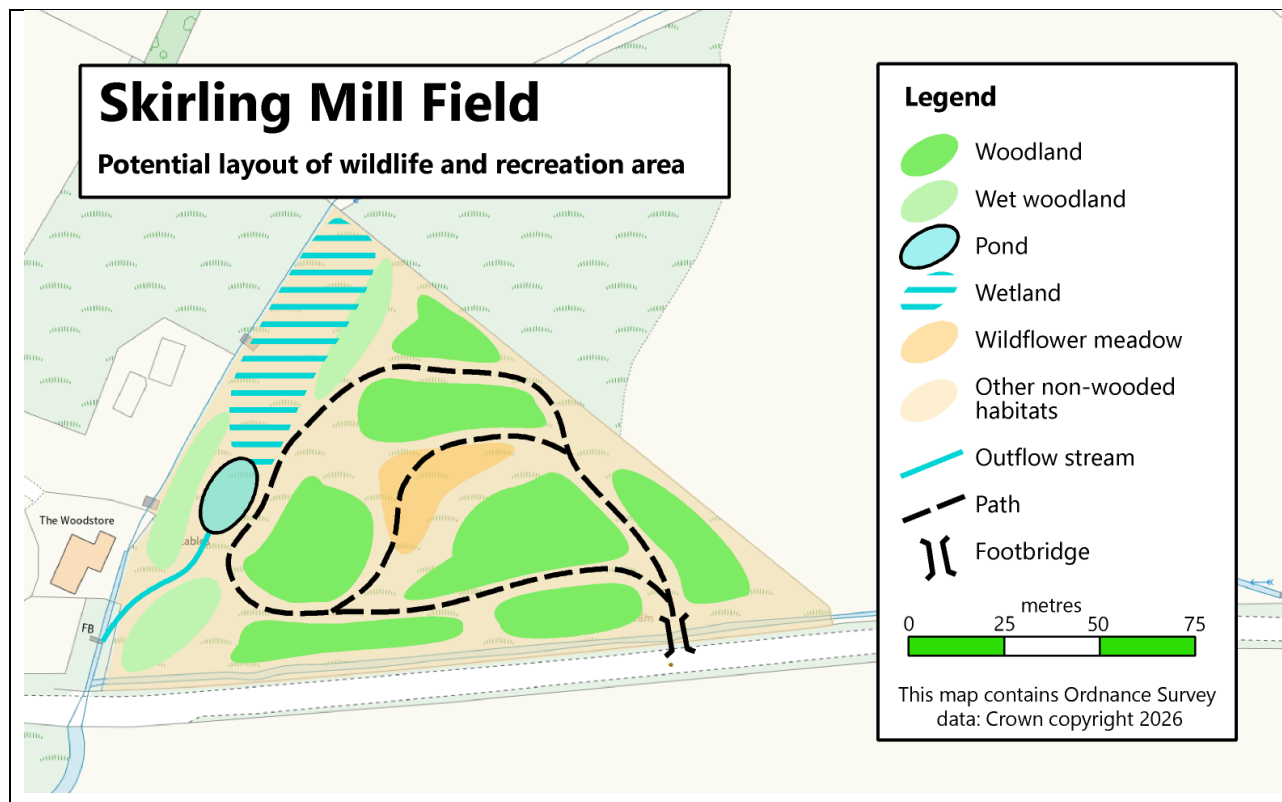
The location and specification of the access junction with the A72, including appropriate sightline and bell-mouth design requirements, would have to be agreed with Scottish Borders Council, but would likely be towards the eastern corner of the site (for better sightlines along the A72 and to increase the distance from dwellings at Skirling Mill).

No local car parking is available so if a vehicle access must be created for site development and management then SCDT might consider formalising it as a car-park, which might involve additional surfacing and maintenance costs.

If direct vehicle access is not needed then pedestrian access could be provided by installing a simple footbridge. Bridges vary considerably in design, type of construction material, abutment designs, loading requirements, ease of access, etc., so can be very difficult to price accurately. However for a straightforward timber bridge for pedestrians, costs are likely to be in the range £2,000-£4,000.

8.2.4 Habitat creation

Subject to the findings of the baseline survey, the field is likely to be developed as a mix of wetland, woodland and non-wooded habitats, although there have been no discussions or decisions made as the makeup or layout of these habitats: the map below is purely indicative for the purpose, the breakdown of habitats by area is shown in table 6 below.



Map 10: Skirling Mill wildlife and recreation area, indicative layout

Habitat	Area (ha)	%
Woodland	0.51	39%
Pond & wetland	0.14	11%
Other non-wooded habitats	0.64	50%
Total	1.29	

Table 6: Skirling Mill Field: indicative breakdown of habitats

8.2.5 Pond & wetland

The north-western portion of the field lays noticeably wetter than the rest, with rushes the dominant ground vegetation, so this is the obvious area for development of a pond and wetland area. Detailed site survey is needed to ascertain the optimum design and construction methods.

The map shows a single pond of $\sim 200\text{m}^2$ (0.02ha) with a wetland area of $\sim 1,100\text{m}^2$ (0.11ha); in practice the best environmental outcomes are likely to be from a complex of ponds with different areas and depths, set within a larger wetland area: this will increase the range of species attracted to the site, and provide habitats in all climate conditions. Note that the map shows an outflow but no inflow: ponds with an inflow stream are prone to rapid sedimentation.

More detailed advice on ponds is available from the Freshwater Habitats Trust,⁹⁴ who have developed a “Pond creation hub” with advice and resources,⁹⁵ including a pond creation toolkit. Additional advice may be available from Froglife,⁹⁶ the national wildlife conservation charity concerned with the conservation of the UK’s reptile and amphibian species and their associated habitats.

The most significant cost elements are excavation by digger (manual excavation by volunteers would be a very significant job) and liners if required. Disposal of spoil from excavation can be a significant task although in this case it can probably be used for landscaping (or mounds for tree planting) elsewhere on the site: spoil shouldn’t just be mounded up around the pond.

Diggers may be hired with or without a driver (if there is a locally qualified volunteer). Either way a detailed briefing will be needed as there’s more to pond creation than digging a hole in the ground. The pond in the map above has a geometric shape and a defined edge: in practice a more “natural” shape is required, and a broad and shallow “drawdown zone”⁹⁷ created around much of the pond.

A liner may not be needed if the water-table is high enough, but if it is required it can add considerable cost and complexity. Various materials are available including rubber and plastic compounds.⁹⁸ It is not usually necessary to “plant up” a new pond as suitable plants and animals will arrive on their own in a relatively short timescale. New ponds are however susceptible to colonisation by invasive species so it will be necessary to inspect regularly and remove these if found.

An optional feature might be a boardwalk/jetty along the south-eastern edge of the pond to facilitate pond dipping etc. Whilst the pond will only be shallow, it would be sensible to provide a lifebelt.

Costs are dependent on scale and design but could be £10,000 - £20,000 (or more).

Funding could be sought for the pond and wetland as a standalone project, but might be better as a broader development project for the Skirling Mill Field encompassing other aspects of habitat creation and recreation provision.

8.2.6 Woodland creation

Species choice is constrained by site conditions (exposure, soil fertility) with likely native species including willow (on wetter areas), common alder, birch, rowan, and aspen, with small quantities of oak, hazel, hawthorn, holly. Ash might once have been favoured but there is a general moratorium on planting due to concerns over Chalara.

If non-native species were considered then there are many other possible broadleaved and conifer species, but their use might restrict eligibility for the Forestry Grant Scheme. Scots pine would be possible but this is not an ideal site.

Ground preparation is usually necessary to provide weed-free and well drained sites for planting. This can be done by hand but is hard work in rank grassland, and is much easier with a digger creating small mounds (or spreading spoil from the pond excavation).

Young trees are likely to need voleguards to protect against stem browsing. Deer are present but it is unclear in what numbers. Deer guards are very expensive and unsightly, as well as being effectively single use plastics, but they do help when locating trees in long grass for maintenance and can encourage rapid early height gain.

Deer fencing the entire site would be expensive: a new perimeter deer fence would be ~500m @£20/m = £10,000, although cheaper with volunteer labour. It might be possible to save some

⁹⁴ <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/>

⁹⁵ <https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/advice-resources/pond-creation-hub/>

⁹⁶ <https://www.froglife.org/who-we-are/organisational-structure/froglife-scotland/>

⁹⁷ This is the area between seasonal high and low water marks

⁹⁸ For a comparison of liner materials see <https://turtleproductions.co.uk/epdm-vs-hdpe-pond-liners-commercial/>

money by upgrading the stock fence where possible (e.g. north-eastern boundary) but there would still be considerable expense and this does not guarantee that deer will be excluded.

It may be more cost effective to simply plant more trees to cover some losses, or perhaps plant some high value species in tubes or small exclosures using temporary fencing. If deer pressure is high it will impact some species more than others: alder is the least palatable species (other than Sitka spruce).

The indicative map shows ~0.1ha of “wet woodland” which would be predominantly willow with some alder and ~0.4ha of other woodland where a wider range of species could be employed.

If 0.5ha is planted at 3,000 stems/ha this equates to 1,500 trees and voleguards: this is a small enough scheme that it could be undertaken by a small group of volunteers.

Weeding will be essential for the first couple of years until trees are well established. This can be done chemically or manually. The site seems relatively fertile so trees are unlikely to need fertiliser.

Further advice is available from the Community Woodlands Association⁹⁹ which supports new and existing community woodland groups with all aspects of woodland design, creation and management

Grant aid for woodland creation is available through the Forestry Grant Scheme, administered by Scottish Forestry.¹⁰⁰ If using the “native broadleaves” planting option the species mix will need to confirm to specified NVC (National Vegetation Classification) models and meet other criteria e.g. with respect to minimum stocking density and seed source.¹⁰¹

Grant is competitive and successful schemes must meet threshold scores. The grant for planting native broadleaves is £2,070/ha plus £1,530 for maintenance over 5 years. Additional grants are available for capital items such as fencing, although it should be noted that these grants only cover a proportion of costs.

The financial plan assumes that tree planting will be by volunteers and does not include any costs for fencing or deer guards. Forestry Grant Scheme funding is based on 0.6ha of woodland creation, which includes 15% allowance for open ground.

8.2.7 Non-woodland habitats

The indicative map shows about half of the site as “non-woodland habitats”; this might include some areas left with the existing vegetation and others planted with flowering shrubs or managed as wildflower meadow.

The Royal Horticultural Society has produced advice on creating wildflower meadows,¹⁰² whilst further advice may be available from Plantlife,¹⁰³ the international conservation membership charity working to secure a world rich in wild plants and fungi.

8.2.8 Paths and recreation infrastructure

As with habitat creation, more development work is needed to determine the layout and specification of recreation infrastructure. Advice on developing recreation provision is available from Walking Scotland (formerly Paths for All).

The indicative map shows a path network extending to ~400m. Cost depends on specification which in turn depends on ground conditions and likely usage. It may be possible for some sections to be unsurfaced, with regular mowing delineating the route.

⁹⁹ <https://www.communitywoods.org/home>

¹⁰⁰ All woodland creation projects should be notified to Scottish Forestry who are required to make an EIA determination.

¹⁰¹ <https://www.ruralpayments.org/topics/all-schemes/forestry-grant-scheme/woodland-creation/native-broadleaves/>

¹⁰² <https://www.rhs.org.uk/lawns/creating-wildflower-meadows>

¹⁰³ <https://www.plantlife.org.uk/>

A formally constructed path of trench, membrane and unbound stone fill construction, approx. 800 – 1,000mm wide would cost ~£30/m = £12,000 although this could be reduced with the use of volunteers. Stone would almost certainly have to be imported, and this could be challenging without access from the A72. Very wet areas would need boardwalks and may be best avoided if possible.

Provision of simple bench seats at regular intervals along main paths can greatly enhance accessibility and inclusion, with very low cost (especially if produced by the local Men's Shed) and minimal maintenance requirements.

The extent and nature of any signage and interpretation has not been discussed and would be agreed during the planning process. The financial plan includes a single finger post, a simple threshold sign and one small interpretation board, and spreads these costs over two years

Item	#	Unit	Unit cost	Cost
Path	400	m	30	12,000
Finger posts	1	no	250	250
Bench seats	4	no	500	2,000
Threshold sign	1	no	750	750
Interpretation Board	1	no	1,500	1,500
Total				16,500

Table: Indicative path and recreation infrastructure costs.

8.2.9 Compost toilet

A compost toilet will be installed to cater for visitors and volunteers, with the precise location subject to planning. Various designs are available: the NatSol,¹⁰⁴ which has been installed at other community woodlands such as Evanton and Beechbrae, has been used for pricing purposes.

A Full Access Composter with wooden building is £9,225, the composter unit without building is £5,750. The financial plan allows £10,000.

8.2.10 Other recreation and amenity projects

A range of other infrastructure items could be installed to enhance the recreation and amenity value of the site, including a picnic area, with tables, barbeque pit, etc., and a simple roofed shelter for volunteers and visitors.

These could be incorporated in the initial plans for the site, or be added in the medium term, once there is greater understanding of footfall.

Another medium term option would be to develop Skirling Mill field as a venue for art installations & sculptures, including both ephemeral projects that use the natural resources and/or more permanent works.

Costings for these elements are not included in the financial plan. They could be funded as part of the comprehensive site development project if it was intended to install them in the short-term, otherwise they would need to be funded as standalone project(s) in due course

8.2.11 Volunteer group

An effective volunteer group could greatly reduce both the initial and ongoing maintenance cost of some projects and greatly enhance the financial sustainability of the Trust. SCDT could establish and

¹⁰⁴ <https://natsol.co.uk/>

equip a regular volunteer group to undertake practical management tasks at Skirling Mill field and elsewhere, including:

- Tree planting and maintenance;
- Path maintenance (including control of pathside vegetation);
- Control of invasive species if required;
- Management and enhancement of non-woodland habitats;
- Surveys of woodland and non-woodland habitats.

The volunteer group could also take forward specific projects, such as the installation of benches and a woodland shelter.

Experience from other community woodland groups suggests that establishing standard dates (i.e. same time / day of the week or month) is an effective way of encouraging regular attendance and fostering camaraderie amongst volunteers. Some potential volunteers will prefer weekends and others midweek opportunities: it may take some experimentation to find the most convenient dates for the greatest number of volunteers.

SCDT would need to acquire appropriate tools and personal protective equipment for volunteers, ensure that appropriate insurances are held and risk assessments made and arrange for promotion of opportunities and management and training of volunteers.

The financial plan includes an initial cost of £3,000 for tools, PPE and training, with an on-going annual cost of £500. There are various funding options for volunteer development projects, including the Scottish Forestry Community Fund.

The financial plan also includes a further cost element of £250 for additional insurance cover for volunteers and the extra land. The extent of additional insurance costs will depend on the number of volunteers, the types of tasks covered (power tools are usually expensive) and the extent of new infrastructure on the site.

8.3 Funding

8.3.1 Acquisition and Baseline survey

The current owners have indicated their willingness to transfer the site to SCDT, as long as legal costs are covered. An application for legal costs for this and other sites could be made to the SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund; it would probably be sensible to include the costs of the initial baseline survey in this application.

The financial plan includes an estimate of £12,000 for legal costs.

8.3.2 Development works

Funding for the rest of the short-term development works and a development officer to manage the process would be most efficiently sought as a single, comprehensive application to the National Lottery Community Action fund, which can offer up to £250,000 over three years.

Exceptions to this might be the woodland creation works, for which funding is available through the Forestry Grants Scheme, and the establishment of the volunteer group, which could be funded by the Scottish Forestry Community Fund.

Individual elements of the development package could be supported by other funders, including Awards for All Scotland, SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund, Community-led Local Development funds and various charitable trusts but it may be better to “save” those options for other projects elsewhere in the village.

9 Development Plan Summary

This chapter summarises the development plan outlined in the previous two chapters, matching the areas for acquisition with projects to be taken forward, and outlining the funding plan where this has not already been covered.

9.1 Areas and Projects

Parcel	Use	Project(s)
1	Yes	Safeguarding amenity
2	Yes	Safeguarding amenity
3	Yes	Safeguarding amenity, play-park (maybe)
4	Yes	Safeguarding amenity
5	No	But parcel is part of package with #1-#4
6	Yes	Safeguarding amenity
7	Yes	Safeguarding amenity
8	No	No project identified
9	Yes	Castlestanes path
10	Yes	Wildlife and recreation area, possible site for other projects
11	Yes	Planting of fruiting and flowering trees and shrubs
12	No	No project identified
13	No	No project identified
14	No	No project identified (but possible amenity planting)
15	No	No project identified (but possible amenity planting)
16	No	Understood that site is not available
17	Yes?	Possible site for community growing and community composting

Table 8: development plan summary of projects and sites

Note that use of parcel #11 could be by arrangement with Scottish Border Council and use of parcel #17 by arrangement with current occupier.

9.2 Funding plan outline

9.2.1 Acquisition

It is understood that parcels #1-5, parcels #6-9 and parcel #10 would be gifted to SCDT but that the Trust would need to cover all legal fees. These could prove significant as the cost of this work generally reflects the number and complexity of the relevant titles, rather than the size of the parcel(s) of land to be transferred.

Funding for acquisition costs may be available from windfarm distribution funds, which might also support some potential development projects as part of the same grant award.

Funding to meet acquisition costs (including legal fees) is also available from the Scottish Land Fund (SLF), which has supported a great many community asset acquisitions across Scotland. SLF can also provide small amounts of revenue funding to cover some project management and initial costs such as insurance.

9.2.2 Development Projects

Most development projects will be grant-funded and essentially zero-sum (i.e. the grant funding covers the costs), at least in the short term. Where possible it is usually desirable to combine various elements into a single project for funding purposes, as long as the various components meet funders' objectives.

Most funders will only support a given organisation once at a time, so careful planning will be needed to match projects to funders once decisions have been made as to which projects are to be taken forward.

The largest projects, in cost terms, are the development of Skirling Mill Field, the play-park and community growing. Funding for most elements of the former could be sought from National Lottery Community Action fund, whilst funding for the play-park and community growing could come from various sources, including charitable trusts, Awards for All Scotland, SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund and Community-led Local Development funds.

There is a wide range of potential sources of grant funding, details of some of the most prominent are provided in Appendix 6. The funding environment is dynamic, with existing funds closing and new ones opening on a regular basis, so it is impossible to be certain what funding sources will be available in one or two years' time.

9.2.3 Income for management and maintenance

Covering the longer term management and maintenance costs of assets can often be more challenging for community groups than finding development funding to make the projects happen. Whilst grant funding for development projects may cover such costs for a year or two it is rarely available for the medium or long term.

Key recurring cost elements for SCDT arising from land ownership are likely to be annual insurance and regular tree safety surveys, plus any necessary remedial work. Some specific development projects, such as a play-park, will bring additional insurance, inspection and maintenance costs.

Community asset-owning groups have used a variety of ways to generate income.

Membership fees and donations

SCDT could establish an annual membership fee, or provide simple opportunities such as a donation button on a website for community members and others to donate to support ongoing management costs. A £5 annual membership would raise ~£300, £10 annually would raise £600.

Fundraising events

If SCDT were to take on ownership of the village green, it could institute an annual gala day, which would provide an excellent fundraising opportunity. Developing the use of the green (and the Skirling Mill Field) for additional events would also generate funds to help cover the Trust's general expenditures.¹⁰⁵

Business partnerships

Some community groups have established relationships with local businesses. These can take several forms:

- Direct funding from corporate social responsibility funds: many companies have a small grant fund for local charities and community groups and allow employees to decide where the funding goes.
- Free or discounted materials such as stone for paths, timber for construction, etc.

¹⁰⁵ It is understood that the Skirling Green Christian Aid Car Boot Sale is not charged for the use of the village green and it is anticipated that this arrangement would continue if SCDT acquire the green.

- Sponsorship of specific capital projects.
- Supply of volunteer labour.

Developing these relationships can take some time and it cannot be guaranteed that this approach will bear fruit, but if successful it could be a very important contribution to the long-term sustainability of the Trust.

Income generation from projects

The feasibility study identified several projects that had the potential to generate income streams to support SCDT's long term management costs, including tourism development and EV charging, but these were not supported in the community consultation.

Community growing and/or community composting (if taken forward) should generate a small surplus from sales which will help contribute to other organisational costs.

10 Financial Plan

Expenditure	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Land acquisition						
Legal fees	12,000					
Safeguarding amenity						
Insurance		150	150	150	150	150
Tree survey					750	
Remedial work						2,000
Amenity planting						
Plant costs		750	750			
Maintenance			50	50	50	
Castlestanes						
Option B				10,000		
Play-park						
Installation			50,000			
Insurance			500	500	500	500
Growing & composting						
Equipment, welfare, etc.		20,000				
Materials, rent, insurance		2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Admin & management		2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500
Composting set-up costs		2,500				
Composting on-going costs		300	300	300	300	300
Skirling Mill						
Baseline survey	750					
Development officer		15,000	15,000	15,000		
Pond/wetland		15,000				
Paths, bridge & recreation			8,000	11,500		
Compost toilet			10,000			
Woodland creation			3,000			
Volunteer group		3,000	500	500	500	500
Insurance (additional)		250	250	250	250	250
Total	12,750	61,450	93,000	42,750	7,000	8,200
Income						
Acquisition SSEN	12,750					
NL Community Action		30,250	34,750	26,750		
Growing/composting funding		22,500				
Play-park funding			50,500	500	500	500
Amenity planting funding		750	750			
Forestry Grant Scheme			1,426	184	184	184
SF Community Fund		3,000				
Castlestanes path funding				10,000		
Growing and compost sales		5,000	5,500	5,500	5,500	5,500
Membership & events		500	1,000	1,500	1,500	1,500
Total	12,750	62,000	93,926	44,434	7,684	7,684
Surplus/deficit	-	550	926	1,684	684	- 516
Cumulative surplus/deficit	-	550	1,476	3,160	3,844	3,328

Table 9: 5 year expenditure and income budget

Notes

Year 0 is land acquisition. Funding for acquisition (legal fees) and Skirling Mill baseline survey is from SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund.

Many items of expenditure are priced at the mid-point of the range estimated in the text. In practice quotes would be obtained for significant items of expenditure, and funding applications will be designed to cover these costs.

Funding for most elements of Skirling Mill Wildlife and Recreation area & development officer post is from National Lottery Community Action. Woodland creation is part-funded by the Forestry Grant Scheme and Volunteer group set-up is funded by the Scottish Forestry Community Fund.

Forestry Grant Scheme funding is based on 0.6ha of woodland creation (includes 15% open ground) which provides £1,426 in year 1 and then five years of management grant at £184.

Play-park, Amenity planting, Community growing/composting and Castlestanes path are presented as standalone projects with their own funding packages, from e.g. Awards for All Scotland, SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund, Community-led Local Development Funds, Charitable Trusts & other local funds, although it may be possible to incorporate some of these works in a larger funding bid to National Lottery Community Action.

Gross income from community growing is £5,000 per year, with an additional £500 from compost from year 2.

The “Membership & events” income figure is locally generated revenue from membership fees, fundraising events on the village green and hire of the green and/or Skirling Mill Field to others, starting at £500 in year 1 and growing to £1,500 by year 3.

10.1 Indicative income and expenditure projections for years 6-25

This section includes indicative longer-term financial projections for the projects itemised in table 9 and detailed in chapters 7 and 8.¹⁰⁶

Future costs are a combination of predictable, annual expenditures on items such as insurance and inspections and less frequent items such as repairs and remedial works which by their nature are have greater variability of costs. All costs are at current prices.

As noted previously, development projects can usually be grant-funded but such grants rarely cover ongoing costs which are typically met from a community group’s fundraising efforts and membership fees.

The financial plan estimates annual recurring costs (insurance, inspections, volunteer group) as in the region of £1,500, although there will considerable uncertainty about this figure until projects are more formally defined and quotes sought. It would be prudent for the Trust to seek to build up reserves to cover repair and replacement costs which will inevitably be incurred at some point in the future.

10.1.1 Safeguarding amenity

Acquiring parcels #1-#5 and #6-#7 incurs ongoing insurance and maintenance costs. Insurance cover is likely to be in the range £100-£200 per year, depending on details and types of cover sought.

Regular (i.e. every five years) tree inspections are likely to be in the range £500-£1,000 per survey. The cost of remedial works will reflect the extent of the work needed.

¹⁰⁶ Note there are no costs here for additional pavements in the village, which would be funded by SBC if taken forward.

The plan assumes that SBC will continue to cut the verges and maintain the war memorial, but if this changes then there may be additional costs to SCDT. Other maintenance work (e.g. planters) can be carried out by volunteers.

10.1.2 Planting of fruit trees and shrubs

Once the tree and shrubs have established successfully there shouldn't be any ongoing costs; any maintenance can be undertaken by volunteers, but again, once established there won't be a need for weeding or watering.

10.1.3 Castlestanes path

If a tarred path is created alongside the road the responsibility for maintenance will be with Scottish Borders Council. If a new path is created along the side of the field there will be a requirement for limited on-going maintenance work: repairing gates, topping up and re-levelling the path; but these tasks could be undertaken by volunteers.

In the long term some elements (e.g. gates, fence) will need replacement.

If parcel #9 is acquired there will be a need for regular tree surveys and potentially for remedial works, which could be bundled in with similar works at the village green.

10.1.4 Play-park

A play-park will incur regular on-going costs for insurance (estimated at £500 annually) and annual inspections. It is expected that the first few years will be covered by a warranty arrangement with the supplier but in the longer term SCDT will need to cover these costs. RoSPA provide an economical service for towns, small communities, schools and other organisations and undertake annual inspections at discounted rates. The cost to inspect up to 5 items of play equipment for schools and other organisations is currently £114.00 plus VAT (i.e. £136.80).¹⁰⁷

In the longer term there may be a need for repair or replacement of equipment.

10.1.5 Community growing and composting

Ongoing costs for the community growing and composting projects, including rent, insurance, tools, fuel, seeds and other materials as well as administration and management are estimated at £4,800, which should be covered by sales, which will generate a small surplus.

10.1.6 Skirling Mill Field

The acquisition and development of Skirling Mill Field will incur ongoing insurance costs, estimated at £250/year although the actual figure will be dependent on levels of activity and extent of infrastructure, and maintenance requirements. The financial plan also includes an on-going annual cost for the volunteer group of £500 for tools, PPE, etc.

Regular inspections of infrastructure by a trustee or other volunteer will be necessary to ensure any issues are addressed as soon as possible.

Once trees are established they will require little attention. Most maintenance tasks such as path repairs can be undertaken by volunteers.

If the pond requires a liner, choosing an EPDM (Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer) liner, whilst more expensive initially, can minimise long term costs. Some infrastructure items (bridges, etc) may require replacement in the long term.

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.rosaplaysafety.co.uk/playground-inspections/annual-playground-inspections/>

I I Analysis of Major Risks

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Withdrawal of sale offers	Low	Project cannot proceed	SCDT maintain good relationships with landowners, strong community support etc.
Funding bid for acquisition costs (legal fees) unsuccessful	Low	Project v unlikely to proceed	High quality application, strong community support
Funding bids for development projects unsuccessful	Low / Medium	Delays, projects unable to proceed	Good quality applications, flexibility, potential resubmission
Lack of community involvement / volunteers	Low	Delays in implementation, lack of community commitment or buy-in	Active communications and promotion of opportunities.
Lack of capacity within group / loss of key individuals	Low / Medium	Delays in implementation, management failures	Robust governance systems, wider networking and support. Keep it fun and interesting for trustees.
Unexpected high remedial works e.g. for mature trees	Low / Medium	Financial challenges for Trust	Good planning, including regular inspections and building sufficient reserves
Unexpected high repair and replacement costs for infrastructure	Low / Medium	Financial challenges for Trust	Good planning, including building sufficient reserves

Table 10: Major risks and mitigations

I2 Abbreviations

CAP	Community Action Plan	RoSPA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents
EPDM	Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer	SBC	Scottish Borders Council
EV	Electric Vehicle	SCDT	Skirling Community Development Trust
LDP	Local Development Plan	SCIO	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
LPID	Land Parcel Identifier	SIMD	Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation
NL	National Lottery	SF	Scottish Forestry
NPF	National Planning Framework	SLF	Scottish Land Fund
OS	Ordnance Survey	SOSE	South of Scotland Enterprise

Table 11: Abbreviations

Appendix I SCDT Trustee Biographies

Mark Bambridge Mark spent his career in the international oil and gas industry with BP, BG and Shell. An experienced Procurement/Supply Chain manager, he and his family spent time in Alaska, Azerbaijan, Trinidad, Australia and Aberdeen.

Dorota Donigiewicz (Chair) has worked in Financial services for the past 15 years and she moved to Skirling with her family in July 2024. She is a member of the Biggar Rugby Club, and enjoys singing with the Wednesdays, a local community choir.

Andrew Fraser is a retired public health physician, working as a Director of a series of Scottish public sector organisations including Government. He remains involved with several voluntary organisations supporting groups across Scotland. Married to Barbara, who began life close to the village, he has lived in Skirling for 7 years.

David Gass (Secretary) David runs his own business consultancy, and was previously a Senior Director for Scottish Enterprise, responsible for operations in the South of Scotland. He specialises in strategy development, business planning, and Board development, and he currently works across Scotland and internationally. David and his wife Jacque have lived in Skirling since 1997.

Isobel Hunter has many years of experience in investment from her time working in the Financial Sector in Edinburgh. She also has a deep knowledge of hospitality since moving to Skirling to create Skirling House, a bed and breakfast inn with her husband. Now retired she is involved with several local community groups.

Derek Jardine Derek grew up in the village of Roxburgh, a close-knit rural community much like Skirling. After moving to Edinburgh for university, he gained broad professional experience across hospitality, advertising, and sales before beginning a career in banking in 2012. He has remained in the sector ever since and currently serves as a Bank Manager in Motherwell. Alongside his professional role, Derek is an active member of the Skirling Hall Committee. He acts as an important link between the Trust and the Hall, helping to support collaboration and community engagement.

Mike Thompson (Treasurer) Mike has been a resident of Skirling for over 20 years. He is a retired Chartered Surveyor having spent 35 years as a rural property manager and has broad experience of agricultural, residential, forestry and commercial property. He currently runs a small market garden business located in the village.

Appendix 2 Historic sites in and around Skirling

Listed Buildings

LB13865	C	Galalaw farmhouse	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB13865
LB13864	C	Howes Brae farmhouse	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB13864
LB15159	B	War Memorial	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15159
LB15160	C	Kirkcroft	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15160
LB15158	C	Former U.F. church	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15158
LB15161	B	Leven cottage and Loanfoot	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15161
LB19720	C	Former school and school house	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB19720
LB15157	C	Small bridge at former school	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15157
LB15154	B	Churchyard entrance gate	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15154
LB15153	B	Skirling parish church	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15153
LB15155	B	Churchyard, minister's gate	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15155
LB15184	C	Cottages on E side of Skirling Green	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15184
LB15185	C	House on east side of Skirling Green	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15185
LB15186	C	Joiner's shop and store	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15186
LB15187	C	Firknowe farm	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15187
LB15188	B	Skirling House	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15188
LB15189	B	Sundials, in garden of Skirling House	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15189
LB15156	B	Manse	https://www.trove.scot/designation/LB15156

Other recorded historic sites

263500	Skirling, 2 Bank Cottages	https://www.trove.scot/place/263500
97981	Skirling, 1 Bank Cottages	https://www.trove.scot/place/97981
48626	Skirling, Smithy	https://www.trove.scot/place/48626
97988	Skirling, Rose Cottage	https://www.trove.scot/place/97988
263504	Skirling, Lauder Cottage	https://www.trove.scot/place/263504
263505	Skirling, Greenview	https://www.trove.scot/place/263505
97983	Skirling, The Green	https://www.trove.scot/place/97983
344221	House	https://www.trove.scot/place/344221
99106	Skirling House, Garden	https://www.trove.scot/place/99106
99104	Skirling Parish Church, Graveyard	https://www.trove.scot/place/99104
354208	Skirling Mill	https://www.trove.scot/place/354208
344212	Skirling House - carved stone	https://www.trove.scot/place/344212
344222	Howesbrae Farmhouse	https://www.trove.scot/place/344222
344219	Skirling Manse	https://www.trove.scot/place/344219

Appendix 3 SBC Local Development Plan Policies

Policy EP9: Conservation Areas

The Council will support development proposals within or adjacent to a Conservation Area which are located and designed to preserve or enhance the special architectural or historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area. This should accord with the scale, proportions, alignment, density, materials, and boundary treatment of nearby buildings, open spaces, vistas, gardens and landscapes. The Council may require applications for full, as opposed to Planning Permission in Principle Consent.

Conservation Area Consent, which is required for the demolition of an unlisted building within a Conservation Area, will only be considered in the context of appropriate proposals for redevelopment and will only be permitted where: a) the building is incapable of reasonably beneficial use by virtue of its location, physical form or state of disrepair, and b) the structural condition of the building is such that it cannot be adapted to accommodate alterations or extensions without material loss to its character, and c) the proposal will preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, either individually or as part of the townscape.

In cases a) to c) above, demolition will not be permitted to proceed until acceptable alternative treatment of the site has been approved and a contract for the replacement building or for an alternative means of treating the cleared site has been agreed. Design Statements will be required for all applications for alterations, extensions, or for demolition and replacement which should explain and illustrate the design principles and design concepts of the proposals.

Policy EPI 1: Protection of Greenspace

(a) Key Greenspaces

Key Greenspaces as identified on Proposal Maps will be protected from development that will result in their loss. Development that protects and enhances the quality of Key Greenspaces will be supported.

(B) Other Greenspaces

Greenspace within the Development Boundary of settlements will be protected from development where this can be justified by reference to any of the following: a) the environmental, social or economic value of the greenspace; b) the role that the greenspace plays in defining the landscape and townscape structure and identity of the settlement; c) the function that the greenspace serves.

In both cases development that would result in the loss of greenspace, including outdoor sports facilities, will only be permitted if it can be satisfactorily demonstrated that, based on consultation with user groups and advice from relevant agencies: d) there is social, economic and community justification for the loss of the open space; or e) the need for the development is judged to outweigh the need to retain the open space; and f) where appropriate, comparable open space or enhancement of existing open space may be provided and/or paid for by the developer at an alternative location within or immediately adjacent to the settlement where this will provide adequate and acceptable replacement for the open space lost as a result of the development. In some cases, recreational provision in the form of indoor sports facilities may be a suitable alternative provided it is equally accessible and is judged to compensate fully for the loss of the open space resource. Development that would result in the loss of functional open space where a quantifiable demand can be demonstrated must in addition be justified by reference to: g) the levels of existing provision and predicted requirements for the settlement; h) the extent to which current or predicted future demand can be met on a reduced area.

Appendix 4 Skirling Community Action Plan Priorities and Actions

Themes and Priorities		Actions	
1	Safe Skirling: traffic, pavements and roads		
1A	Traffic calming and speed restrictions	1A1	Support and continue work to develop village gateways and other traffic calming measures.
		1A2	Continue to lobby Council for additional measures: Dragon’s teeth, Roundels, Countdown signs for 40mph, advisory cycle lanes.
		1A3	Monitor effectiveness of existing speed reductions
		1A4	Lobby for uniform speed limit (20 or 30mph?) throughout the whole village.
1B	Village pavements and roads	1B1	Develop plans for pavements/safe routes from the top of the village down to the village hall and church
		1B2	Improve path out to Skirling Mill
		1B3	Improve road around the village green
2	Well connected Skirling: improving access		
2A	Develop and improve path links to Biggar and Broughton	2A1	Improve existing path to Broughton
		2A2	Research and develop safe all abilities path/ route into Biggar
2B	Better bus services/ community transport	2B1	Try to improve bus services in the area
		2B2	Explore with other communities the need for a community bus that could link a number of villages in the area to services and amenities in nearby towns.
2C	Improve access to health, education, childcare and other services	2C1	Document and represent issues raised by local residents
		2C2	Ongoing dialogue with service providers/local authorities/health boards to improve service delivery
		2C3	Lobby to maintain Broughton Primary School – increased teachers, wrap around childcare
		2C4	Encourage and support other childminders in the village once Katy retires!
2D	Improve broadband speed/mobile signal	2D1	Document current issues, weaknesses and gaps in existing provision and lobby for change.
2E	Partnership working with other communities in Upper Tweeddale and beyond	2E1	Support and continue to develop links with other neighbouring communities
		2E2	Make joint representation on service delivery and joint action on projects, and sharing ideas, information and resources.
3	Skirling Community Life		
3A	Village hall and church	3A1	Support ongoing plans for improvements to Village Hall and Church that will help with energy efficiency, community use, storage and parking.

3B	Play area and picnic area	3B1	Agree best site and most suitable design – building on the existing plans and funding efforts
		3B2	Work to develop the play and picnic area.
3C	Activities and events	3C1	Look at ideas raised in the CAP community survey, stakeholders' conversations and event - and the best way to take them forward.
3D	Local amenities and hospitality	3D1	Explore how other small communities have opened up and run small occasional shops/cafes/markets/pubs in their village halls, greens or churches
		3D2	Build on existing initiatives and resources (local produce at hall, links with Broughton Community Shop, individual skills and interest locally)
		3D3	Trial/pilot some experiments.
4	Environment and Heritage		
4A	Local path networks	4A1	Produce small map and information about local walks
		4A2	Improve existing paths e.g., to Broughton
		4A3	Investigate how paths/routes can be expanded to link to other paths networks and places e.g., in Biggar.
		4A4	Develop, sign and promote a circular walk for the village.
4B	Biodiversity and wildlife	4B1	Involve people in study, enjoyment and enhancement of local biodiversity and wildlife.
4C	Village enhancement	4C1	Continue programme of village enhancement
		4C2	Look at how planting can be linked to productive growing
		4C3	Look at how planting can help with the development of 'gateways' at village limits.
4D	Community growing	4D1	Explore how other communities have developed community gardens and orchards and productive growing in 'gap' sites.
		4D2	Identify and progress opportunities for community growing in Skirling.
4E	Promoting and enhancing local heritage	4E1	Continue to provide information, interpretation and signage of local heritage
		4E2	Explore how Tweedsmuir and others have been developing eco-museums.
5	Sustainable and Resilient Skirling		
5A	Flood prevention	5A1	Monitoring and maintaining Burn – and making improvements as required to reduce flooding risk.
5B	Recycling	5B1	Improve recycling facilities
		5B2	Look at ways of developing community composting.
5C	Reducing fossil fuel use	5C1	Support increased energy efficiency and renewable energy sources in houses, village hall and church
		5C2	Support use of Electric Vehicles
		5C3	Explore opportunities for community renewables.

Appendix 5 Community Consultation

A5.1 Questionnaire

Skirling Community Development Trust: Land Acquisition Report - Questionnaire

Skirling Community Development Trust is investigating the acquisition of various parcels of land in and around the village to help deliver the objectives of the Skirling Community Action Plan. We have commissioned a consultant to carry out a feasibility study: <https://skirlingvillage.co.uk/scdt/> and are now consulting residents to gather views on which projects we should pursue. Completed questionnaires should be returned to the Box at Village Hall or scanned/emailed to skirlingtrustcoordinator@gmail.com by 11 May 2026.

1) Do you support the acquisition of roadside verges and/or the village green to safeguard these areas for recreational, conservation and amenity purposes for the community and future generations?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

2) Do you support the planting of fruit trees and flowering shrubs to enhance the village?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

3) Do you consider there is a need for new pavement(s) anywhere in the village? If so, where?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

4) Do you support creating a new path to improve pedestrian safety near the Castlestones corner?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

5) Do you support the proposal to create a play-park on the verge by the telephone exchange?

Yes/No If yes is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

6) Do you support creating a new parking facility e.g. to cater for events on the village green?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

7) Do you support establishing charging points for electric vehicles?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

8) Do you support developing a community composting project?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

9) Do you support developing a community growing project?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Would you be interested in your own growing space?

Comments

10) If SCDT were to acquire the field at Skirling Mill, would you support the following activities?

Wildlife habitats (ponds, wetlands, woodland) Yes/No

Recreation and amenity (paths, seating, artworks) Yes/No

Tourist services (hardstandings, camping, glamping pods) Yes/No

Comments/other projects?

11) Do you support SCDT seeking to acquire Gallows Knowe Wood in the longer term to maintain and enhance the biodiversity and amenity value of the woodland?

Yes/No If yes, is priority: high/medium/low?

Comments

12) Would you be interested in joining a volunteer group? Tasks might include tree planting; path maintenance; management and enhancement of non-woodland habitats; environmental surveys.

Yes/No

Comments

13) Do you have any other comments on SCDT's plans?

14) Are you a member of SCDT?

Yes/No

Your details (optional – these will not be published with the survey results)

Name _____ Tel No _____

Address _____

Please return completed questionnaires to the Box at Village Hall or scanned/emailed to skirlingtrustcoordinator@gmail.com by 11 May 2026. Thank You!

A5.2 Full Responses

1) Do you support the acquisition of roadside verges and/or the village green to safeguard these areas for recreational, conservation and amenity purposes for the community and future generations?

Yes	40	75%
No	12	23%
Other	1	2%
No response	0	
Total	53	

Other:

- No to verges, yes to village green

High	18.5	46%
Medium	16.5	41%
Low	4	10%
Other	1	3%
No response	0	
Total	40	

Other:

- Medium(verges) Green (high)

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- The Village Green is an important Community Asset
- It will give the community some control over the future developments. The current situation leads to frustration and difficulty moving plans forward.
- Important to preserve the green spaces in the village
- HIGH - Verges - because the present owners in certain cases wish to transfer them with no strings attached
LOW - Village Green - not sure about necessity, urgency or conditions
- Nos 1, 3 & 4 are more important for footpaths and the repair of the bridge over the burn at the knoll. The village green should be made over to the village for use, as is the village hall, maintained by the community.
- The village green
- Obviously I should record an interest in this but I do believe that it is in the long term interest of the village to be able to protect key amenities like the green and verges etc.
- Yes - high the village green as it seems to be the hub/central area of the village and would be good for play-park and for future events. No to roadside verges as they have no value or use.
- If it's for parking otherwise no
- Great for future generations
- Any to make our beautiful village safer to move and pleasing to the villagers to enjoy
- Ongoing cost of maintenance tree cutting etc could be an issue
- But only if allowance is made for future liabilities i.e. the Trust shouldn't be paying anything to acquire them.
- But not for additional roadside footpaths
- Yes although careful planning needed regarding liability
- Very important to safeguard the green
- As long as we understand and cover for any liabilities or costs that come with this
- It makes sense to retain a level of village control over these important areas for the future.
- There should be safe and accessible walkways through the village.
- Maintenance needs to be the priority if it will incur ongoing costs. Currently volunteers are involved.
- But full costings for maintenance and insurance and therefore funding need to be obtained before final decision
- Ownership of village green would secure it for the long term and enable limited development - e.g. parking
- We support acquiring the village green for these purposes

Comment from respondent who said “No to verges, yes to village green”

- I would support getting the village green for the play-park

Comment from respondent who said “No”

- I strongly oppose the village green being used. I would not be in favour of the village green being used as a play-park or recreational space. I bought this house for its current views and I feel this would devalue the property. I STRONGLY oppose this. It will become a hangout!

2) Do you support the planting of fruit trees and flowering shrubs to enhance the village?

Yes	44	83%
No	9	17%
Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	53	

High	12.5	28%
Medium	18	41%
Low	10.5	24%
Other	0	0%
No response	3	7%
Total	44	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- Need to include maintenance in the financial equation.
- This would help to bring the community together.
- Tangible improvements low risk and good return need to link this with the village voluntary activity for the maintenance and development
- This would be very nice if enough people can be found to maintain them - especially fruit trees - need pruning and harvesting
- Would also like to see wildflowers
- In all probability a good idea but would need an accurate planting plan to comment properly.
- Important for wildlife and beauty of the village. bring residents together, improve mood etc
- Great for future generations yes
- What about top end of the village as well!!
- Fruiting trees would be a real asset for biodiversity and the community
- Only concern is care and upkeep
- This seems sensible thing that could be done easily and quickly in the autumn. A mix of native trees/shrubs and fruit trees would be great.
- Important to carefully consider where
- Flowering shrubs but not fruit trees because fallen fruit could cause a hazard or extra maintenance if near pathways.
- Yes in small numbers
- Would love apple trees
- Would make the village nicer

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- My thoughts are that planting trees shrubs etc will only exacerbate the flooding problem - leaves, brash etc getting into the water courses.
- This is nonsense

3) Do you consider there is a need for new pavement(s) anywhere in the village? If so, where?

Yes	24	45%
No	29	55%
Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	53	

High	12.5	50%
Medium	8.5	33%
Low	2	4%
Other	0	4%
No response	1	0%
Total	24	

Where are pavements needed?

- East Side near Goatfoot and Galalaw
- Cinderpaths (1) at the top of the village from Mon Abh to Burnside and (2) along the verge from Skirling Mill to Tintock.
- Pavement right up to top of village opposite Galalaw and reinstatement from tarred pavement at the bottom of the village green to Tintock
- Top of the village
- Might be tight but at the top end of the village next to Galalaw farm and opposite Skirling House. It would be nice if the whole village was connected. Walking on the road is not ideal anywhere in the village.
- There is an obvious ‘path of desire ‘ shown by consistent observable usage between the end of the existing path opposite Skirling House and Firknowe to Kirk Brae and beyond towards the Bus Stop and the Hall.
- Opposite side to the walkway to the village green - Biggar direction
- At the Galalaw end of the village: very dangerous for all the young parents etc
noticed no plans at this end of the village - for anything!!
- Where there is none currently - high
- Top end of village from Burnside to end
- Between existing paths near green. Either on front of old schoolhouse or along green at roadside?
- Skirling House to Castlestaines and either side of the church from the existing pavement to the hall at the north end of the village.
- Need to debate and decide - for the community council?
- Joining up the existing paths past the green

- As pavements have been built at great cost and are used by very few people if they were joined up it would make more sense and be safer
- Walkways suitable for wheelchairs and buggies is needed between skirling house, the village hall, and the war memorial.
- By the side of the green
- Yes medium/high Peebles end of the village where Brighthouse is either side of the road as residents have to walk on the road. Everywhere else is fine and would not want the village covered in tarmac.
- Nobody seems to use the ones THAT WE PUT IN
- No need

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- Bike lanes painted on the road would be good. Through the village and on the skirling straight.
- Urgently needing pavements from Brighthouse area for safe walking to the Green with 3 children
- I have no further need for pavements but would support them if required to increase accessibility for others.
- From the end of skirling mill path to church entrance - cinder path

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- Don't know
- I am happy to walk on the roadway where there is no pavement but anticipate that other residents will have a better idea of where these are needed.
- I think there are now good pathways for people to walk on. The green verges we have help to soak up water when it floods.
- NOT NEEDED
- There are enough pavements. I like the Green's grass verges

4) Do you support creating a new path to improve pedestrian safety near the Castlestones corner?

Yes	31	58%
No	21	40%
Other	0	0%
No response	1	2%
Total	53	

High	13	42%
Medium	14	45%
Low	4	13%
Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	31	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- It is quite dangerous crossing the road there
- This would make road crossing much safer at Castlestaines corner and involve cutting back over grown trees in that area
- But it depends on where and the impact of that.
- Would be a sensible idea for road safety, although the suggestion of routing a path through the field behind would not be agreed to.
- Anything to improve pedestrian safety is better
- Currently walkers going out of the village tend to keep to the right hand path right up to the bend which is dangerous to cross at that point. To cross to a new path on the left 25m away is safer.
- Would be a good idea to reduce the risks of crossing at the corner.
- Very unsafe crossing the road at Castlestaines
- In principle - preference fenced hard core path on the margin of the field
- A lot of people cross at this corner and it can be difficult to cross safely
- Only if the pavements through the village are joined up
- Should be considered as dangerous corner
- This is just from my perspective. Anticipate others will have greater need for this.
- A path on the left hand side walking to Biggar would be a huge help
- Very difficult to cross the road at times due to the speed of traffic and being able to see round the corner
- Would require significant clean-up and some maintenance but would be a positive feature
- A short path only. Possible signs for pedestrian crossing?

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- There is already a path here I think?
- Already a pavement there!
- No need

5) Do you support the proposal to create a play-park on the verge by the telephone exchange?

Yes	26	49%
No	25	47%
Other	2	4%
No response	0	0%
Total	53	

Other:

- Play-park yes, proposed location no
- Yes to a play-park however I feel there are better sites

High	11	42%
Medium	13.5	52%
Low	1.5	6%

Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	26	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- Are there any roadside safety considerations?
- The money is there - get started!
- Yes if the nearby residents are happy with the proposals.
- Seems small area but better than nothing. Good use of unused land.
- A play-park has been proposed for many years and superficially I have always thought I supported it but by observation I have started to question the likely usage, given the apparent lack of use of similar in Broughton and Blyth Bridge. Needs investigation to make a convincing case for it's worth.
- Cannot think of a better reason for that piece of land. Wish it had been around when my family was young
- Not the best place but good for our young families in Skirling. What happened to implied suggestion of getting a small part of the Skirling Green?
- I think a village can only survive by encouraging younger families to stay/move here. Having a low key play-park would help. However I am not sure the positioning is correct
- This has been ongoing for years. It would be good to get this off the ground. There are a lot of children in the village at the moment.
- Children - amenity and safety - is/should be an explicit village top priority.
- DO NOT want a play-park on the village green but fine with a small play-park by the telephone exchange
- If no play-park the area could be used for car parking for hall events
- This would be a great space for a play area and a huge plus for the village
- Only if the village as a whole wants the play-park
- This area was suggested previously as the only place for a small park. I'm aware there were some concerns about proximity to road. For locals it seems ideal small facility. SBC had agreed at the initial discussions to adopt it in relation to maintenance/inspections. Anticipate any H&S inspections are factored into plan.
- Only caveat not sure how much it will genuinely be used when everyone has gardens
- Been ongoing since our children were young, in their 40's now!

Comments from respondents who said “Yes” to a play-park but not at this location

- Support the establishment of a play-park, but given the proximity to the road where speed limits aren't observed (mainly) and heavy large trucks pass, very concerned about the environment for children. the availability of flat land away from the main road is clearly a problem, which may mean there will be no play-park.
- Living next to this area of land traffic is very fast often on the path coming around the corner and some have even been on the grass. Road outside suggested park needs fixed as well. Trees would need to be looked at, fence would need to be metal as wood would not last. BT would need access to the BT box. Being a conservation village I feel it is important to keep open green areas. Maintenance costs and safety risks? Noise and traffic and lack of parking already in this area due to hall etc. Cost of play-park? Not pleasant due to noise and speed of traffic. A park at church field or park on green would be more viable.

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- It is a dangerous place for a play-park and not easy to get to for families
- This area is not safe as big lorries sometimes come on to the grass and turn out of drives. And we also might get teenagers down from Biggar so not wise.
- The position proposed is extremely unsuitable for several reasons - too near the road through the village as speeding traffic is dangerous and diesel fumes from lorries unhealthy. Also too near residential property.
- Play-park at the hall garden
- The site is too close to the road, on a reduced visibility corner. Parking will be an issue at Carmichael Bank. Better to create the same area/size on the green - where communal activities already take place and has more space for parking etc.
- Think better placed to left of village hall. Preferred green spaces left as such. Would wish the wall to be repaired
- This area is dangerous and unhealthy for children from diesel fumes on an increasingly used road. Trees would have to be cut back. Unfair on adjacent houses.
- No I think this green space is needed for flooding. Other villages like Blythe Bridge have a play-park that is never in use.
- There is no need for a play-park. There is one in Biggar we don't need one!
- Nobody would use it!
- Too narrow/too close to traffic due to big lorries passing through.

6) Do you support creating a new parking facility e.g. to cater for events on the village green?

Yes	24	45%
No	28	53%
Other	0	0%
No response	1	2%
Total	53	

High	6	25%
Medium	9.5	40%
Low	4.5	19%
Other	0	0%
No response	4	17%
Total	24	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- It depends on what is feasible. Events clutter the road occasionally and slow down traffic which is good. Need feasibility study to extend layby at the church? To buy a section of the field below the church.
- Can't think where? but if possible much better for folks for lunch club etc
- If play-park goes ahead
- In front of telephone exchange
- It would reduce unsafe parking. Even just space for one or two vehicles would be a bonus.

- Needs to be done sympathetically around the Green
- Perhaps more formal temporary extra parking would be useful and links to hall use/hire. At the moment people just park on edge of green.
- Medium - parking can be a massive problem when events are on at the hall with people blocking driveways and parking on pavements etc however I do feel potential facilities for parking is limited too. There is only one event on the village green which is the car-boot sale.
- Depends on size. A limited area for 5-6 cars would be helpful. Any more might be an eyesore.
- Yes but only at parcel #8 not parcel #16
- Save the road from getting blocked
- Would save us from lots of mayhem at the car-boot sale

Comment from respondent who did not answer Yes/No question

- I realise it is not possible for everyone to travel by other means but feel like we should be encouraging sustainable travel. also a car park becomes a dead space when events are not on that could be better utilised.

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- Living on the green - I don't see a massive issue with parking. From an ecology pov I don't want more tarmac
- It would depend on where the proposed site is. There are few events which would justify this.
- For the few events held I think it's fine for cars to park on roadside. Acts as a traffic calming measure.
- How necessary is this ? – for all events that we have experienced in the last 30+ years cars have been able to park without any significant issue
- Only to be considered in the future if multiple events on the village green become the norm
- The green is the green for a reason.
- No unless events were frequent
- Keep green space as such
- Events are usually in the summer and cars could be parked on the village green or in the field opposite with owners' permission.
- Unnecessary and would spoil the natural environment
- Big events are very RARE
- Car parks ugly and not necessary. People can walk. they can park around the green.
- No, this will be using green space.
- Events are rare. occasional parking pressure is not a problem

7) Do you support establishing charging points for electric vehicles?

Yes	20	38%
No	31	58%
Other	1	2%
No response	1	2%
Total	53	

Other:

- Don't know

High	4	20%
Medium	10.5	53%
Low	5.5	28%
Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	20	

Comments from respondents who said "Yes"

- It is the future so the sooner the better
- Given the form of the village nearly all properties could have charging facilities so the likely users would be visitors. Additionally it's not clear that there is parking space suitable for public charging points.
- Yes only a couple in Biggar, hard to get a charge I presume?
- Location will have to be carefully considered. The layby is already busy. Perhaps at the hall?
- Yes. Could it be on a two-tier payment? People from x-mile locality could buy a card to pay xp/kwh - whereas those passing through could use it for the "commercial rate"? Would the village get any money for this?
- Yes - need to be clear about purpose for local people, visiting cars, visiting RV's/overnight stays
- Not sure where
- Can provide income
- Most charging points I've encountered have been discontinued by the companies that service them. Will this actually be serviced/maintained?
- As previous question (yes but only at parcel #8 not parcel #16)

Comment from respondent who said "Don't know"

- sorry this is something I don't know about

Comments from respondents who said "No"

- Yes and no to this question - not bothered. Need should be identified - has it been?
- There is limited parking now so would not be keen to restrict it further
- Residents in the village are more likely to have a charging point on their own property if required, Why would vehicles passing through be encouraged to use public ones?
- Unnecessary as who would benefit?
- I am not 100% on this. Villagers will have own charging but if there was one charging meter with fee coming to village- I don't know if that's even possible - it could be useful? I'm not convinced.
- Yes on folks own properties. no on the street. Risks destroying rural charm
- For whom? Owners in village should provide their own.

8) Do you support developing a community composting project?

Yes	39	74%
No	14	26%

Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	53	

High	6	15%
Medium	14.5	37%
Low	17.5	45%
Other	0	0%
No response	1	3%
Total	39	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- I support it but it remains to be seen how it would be maintained/who would look after it and what the usage would be
- As the Borders Council does not collect this is a good option
- Everyone was supplied with composting bins by SBC some years ago and in a rural area it's easy for each house to compost in their existing circumstances.
- Can't think how but **ues** great idea
- Food waste is one of the most pressing problems in the UK. obviously reducing waste in the home is very important. however larger community-sized facilities allow for "hot" composting which means that non-plant waste can be safely dealt with to provide useful materials. This seems the sort of thing the SBC should fund!
- Low cost high value in return - should attract support, hopefully uncontested. It is in the CAP.
- This would be great given that we have no green waste collection. Would there also be an opportunity to look at food waste composting at the same time?
- Seems to be the most consistently supported project
- Need to be sure of volunteers to work it
- Great idea
- Would support community engagement
- Good idea
- This would be helpful for green waste as we have no brown bins
- Would be a great thing

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- Not bothered so yes and no to this question. Likely to be a mess
- But if others want it that's fine

9) Do you support developing a community growing project?

Yes	31	58%
No	21	40%
Other	0	0%
No response	1	2%

Total	53	
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High	2	6%
Medium	9.5	31%
Low	16.5	53%
Other	0	0%
No response	3	10%
Total	31	

Would you be interested in your own growing space?

Yes	3	6%
No	24	45%
Other	1	2%
No response	25	47%
Total	53	

Other:

- yes but unfortunately I am disabled and cannot do much physically. But willing to help any other way

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- Is there is a real demand given that most properties have growing space ?
- Good for the community
- Yes there should be space for community growing space but these things need people to run them.
- Would enough people have time to spare, and are most people in Skirling fortunate enough to have their own garden? It would be nice to be able to work with/learn from other people.
- Community Growing project needs more work
- Would there be a conflict with Mikes growing area though? Would there be an opportunity to work together?
- No but would like the option for others
- Not at the moment but that could change.
- As I have a garden but there will be others able and willing to do it then fine
- Yes to site 17 where everything is kept already. Site 10 - no, think this piece of land would cause more problems - type of land, far away, traffic not hidden, not fair on residents at Skirling Mill, ruin landscape.
- We already have Mike Thompson's growing area but how long will Mike keep it going? Maybe this could be about supporting Mike and helping out
- Good idea
- Again would be great!

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- Not bothered - likely to be a mess unless well thought out out (c/f Tweedsmuir)

- I'm not against a community growing project but on a personal level I don't think I'd be part of it. Ten years ago I would have loved my own growing space but not now. I'm sure this would appeal to other residents.
- Again maintaining areas not convinced that this would happen as people become disinterested. Struggle to get people to water tubs
- No, most people grow in their gardens

10) If SCDT were to acquire the field at Skirling Mill, would you support the following activities?

Wildlife habitats (ponds, wetlands, woodland)

Yes	43	81%
No	10	19%
Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	53	

Recreation and amenity (paths, seating, artworks)

Yes	30	57%
No	21	40%
Other	0	0%
No response	2	4%
Total	53	

Tourist services (hardstandings, camping, glamping pods)

Yes	4	8%
No	47	89%
Other	0	0%
No response	2	4%
Total	53	

Comments

- Said "yes" to wildlife habitats BUT it's not worth the bother. It's a bog and wildlife would need to be managed and there is no access from the A72. Residents at Skirling mill would not be happy to access through development as it's a very narrow road.
- Keen that SCDT acquire the field rather than a developer.
- This is where you should put the play-park
- Lots of wildlife in this field. Be good to keep it that way and make it more accessible.
- This area has been shown to have a significant value as a wildlife habitat and as that enhances the village even if is not a dramatic space. Given issues of access and disturbance to wildlife camping etc would not be a good idea.
- Once again thank you for keeping me updated

- But where? This is Skirling Mill what about the other end of the village?
- I'd support wildlife habitats to maintain the lovely green environment of our village. Acquiring the field would prevent outsiders purchasing it to then develop it in ways that residents would feel are unsuitable.
- It is already good for wildlife
- This adjoins the conservation area but is outwith the boundary. Isn't this also a location of archeological importance? (Skirling castle?)
- It's a "maybe" for recreation and amenity (but you only get yes/no on this survey). This seems a good place for biodiversity projects - especially as it is so wet. paths/seating etc I would support if the people at Skirling Mill are happy. Maybe a biodiversity net gain funding opportunity?
- Answered "no" to the tourist services question as there is no facility to answer "Not Sure". Are there enough facilities for tourist services? what would "tourists" do in the village?
- Put "no" to tourist services as there box for "possibly". Ground source heating for small community hub on the Mill Housing
- Sorry but against the glamping pods completely
- Could incorporate the play-park with a more rustic design
- This field is fairly wet and could be a great wildlife and amenity asset. Tourist services, although would result in income, need a lot of infrastructure and ongoing maintenance.
- Views of Skirling Mill residents in particular
- I'm open to ideas of paths. An aire for 1 or 2 campers might be an income generating option but not sure it's for Skirling at this time.
- It has developed as a bit of a wildlife area already please don't ruin it.
- I think this piece of land should be left alone
- Combination of the two yes's
- The village is a quiet haven. Some of these ideas would open it up to people from other areas using the village as a recreational space.

11) Do you support SCDT seeking to acquire Gallows Knowe Wood in the longer term to maintain and enhance the biodiversity and amenity value of the woodland?

Yes	36	68%
No	14	26%
Other	0	0%
No response	3	6%
Total	53	

High	11	31%
Medium	17	47%
Low	8	22%
Other	0	0%
No response	0	0%
Total	36	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- I think it should be one of the main priorities as if it is not in the village ownership there is a possibility a private owner could take it who is not interested in its free access/community benefits
- More useful than skirling mill field. it would mean taking over the management of an existing project. Ok if funded?
- Keen that SCDT acquire the wood rather than an external developer
- If the owner wants to sell it.
- Given personal interest this would be with caveats on its retention to support wildlife.
- Anything with view for the younger generation yes
- Once again, acquiring Gallows Knowe Wood in the future keeping it as part of the village can only be positive decision to ensure outside developers don't acquire it. Costs maintaining the wood is an issue to consider.
- This does make sense as the area is regularly used by locals and people outwith the area.
- If we owned it could we cut the space out from the river area and sell them for xmas trees as they do at Leadburn? replace with native trees. I think this is one of the key things in Skirling that makes it a good place to live. the idea of it going to a developer for intensive forestry is awful. If we can we should own it and have a team of people willing to work (paid or volunteer) to maintain it.
- Need to walk before we can run. Necessity? Urgency? Conditions? Sustainable community support.
- Its already a well-used community asset so I can see the benefit of it being communally owned. Perhaps an informal camping area could be designed here rather than a formal one at Skirling Mill?
- Ongoing maintenance cost would be an issue
- Ideally community led- again fully understanding what's involved and any costs or liabilities
- It makes sense and a good village asset. To lose it from Skirling after such a long while would be a shame.
- Would not want to lose it as it is an asset to the village
- Great area for community to get involved in. So much potential for this area and improvement of paths Upkeep and wildlife etc
- Would secure an attractive/functional area for the long term

Comment from respondent who did not answer Yes/No question

- Really not sure. Again would need to know more about the financial and legal implications

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- It's nice the way it is. Money could be spent in other areas of the village
- No, nature is already healthy in this area
- Grand as it is

12) Would you be interested in joining a volunteer group? Tasks might include tree planting; path maintenance; management and enhancement of non-woodland habitats; environmental surveys.

Yes	26	49%
No	24	45%

Other	0	0%
No response	3	6%
Total	53	

Comments from respondents who said “Yes”

- Happy to help.
- Yes occasionally
- If my husband is around for the kids I'll help out with any task.
- I've been involved with litter picking since moving to Skirling. I'd be willing to be involved in future projects, health issues permitting.
- There would need to be recognition that we are not all retired so timing would be key.
- Happy to volunteer but not in a position to help organise just now.
- Yes - all of the above. Already do some volunteering.
- I don't have a huge amount of free time but I have a lot of practical outdoor skills (tool work, leading groups of volunteers, conservation management) pathwork, ecological survey work and habitat restoration.
- Would be good to see options for this
- I'm time challenged and couldn't really commit to a regular thing but would join in if possible.
- As a member of a GROUP
- Happy to help
- Would be good village activity

Comment from respondent who did not answer Yes/No question

- Would love to but am disabled and unwell to do any manual work

Comments from respondents who said “No”

- I'm too old
- If I were younger, but sadly only going one way....

13) Do you have any other comments on SCDT's plans?

- Good luck!
- Suggest good communication of the options and how SCDT will decide the next steps
- Thank you for your hard work.
- Thank you for keeping me in touch with what's going on it makes me feel I am still part of the community. Anything that can be done for transport in and out to Biggar would be amazing. If I won the lottery I will purchase a bus. Just need a driver.
- NOT happy about NO plans for "Galalaw" end of the village - we always get forgotten about; the safety and look of this end of the village is important to us all!! and it should be to the whole village. Why are we forgotten about? what is wrong with the large green space in front of Burnside? For trees, car charge point etc. What about a path near Galalaw end; the overtaking and danger for kids, from vehicles etc, this is a must or do we need an accident to happen before anything is done?
- Having attended the AGM of the SCDT it became obvious that there is an immediate need to address problems that have been created relatively recently by jobs started within the village but not completed satisfactorily. Pavements need to be joined up so that crossing from one side to another doesn't create additional hazards for

pedestrians. There are no pavements alongside the village green or on the opposite side down towards the church. The lane from the war memorial to part way up to the ford has been totally ruined by logging lorries coming out of the village. Traffic calming strategies need to be reviewed as they are not working. Tourist services (to generate a steady income to fund facilities) is not an option I wish to see for the village if it is to remain a quiet green place in which to live.

Procuring grants etc to develop facilities means creating additional ongoing maintenance costs for years to come. Does the village need such facilities? I'm not against grants and "windfarm money" but feel that they are of more use to the upkeep of the village hall.

- Speed calming at Galalaw end
- In terms of making a small amount of money for ongoing costs (insurance / maintenance etc) are there options that we have not looked at? I wondered about coppicing the woodland if it's acquired. The ash die-back could be removed - we could plant hazel, poplar or sweet chestnut to replace it. ash could be used for firewood. we could coppice the replacement on a 7/10/15 year rotation and sell the wood. this would not be too costly and could make money and be good for wildlife. we could also cull some roe deer.....
- Thank you very much for all the hard work you have put in this year it is much appreciated.
- If there is little or no response from families with young children, I recommend we seek these views actively.
- Generally happy with the plans. I can see lots of opportunities for enhancing the village for people and biodiversity. Additional tree planting, reducing grass cutting (or converting to wildflower areas) Inns control along the burn (snowberry, monkeyflower) would also be beneficial. Anything that improves access around the village and to Broughton and Biggar are also a high priority for us.
- Things should be left as they are. No "Development".
- Important the community is engaged and involved.
- Well done for getting this all together and for such a comprehensive document.
- Nothing about heritage?
- While I have mentioned financial costings for the various projects if purchased or gifted, there is also the willingness and ability for people within the area, to take them forward by being on the committee or physically able to do tasks.
- No
- There aren't many villages like Skirling now and it would be a shame to spoil it with tarmac paths everywhere. yes a path at the top of the village as it seems dangerous to walk on the road however rest is fine. I support planting trees and flowers and a play-park however I do worry about the current site for the play-park as I do live next to it and see what goes on everyday due to speed etc. I think less is more. Gallows Knowe Wood and composting etc are great idea as it is improving what is already there. Site 10 I feel would be a waste. Site 2 and Site 12 across from my house often floods very badly so I would have to be very careful if tarmac paths put in. I would rather protect the character of the village as it is now than change it.
- PLEASE DON'T SPOIL THE RURAL CHARM OF SKIRLING. Carparks and charging points belong in town not conservation villages. Let's make the village more beautiful instead by increasing biodiversity and self-sufficiency.
- My property is on the village green and I would not wish for recreational spaces or play-parks to be put there. The picnic tables already attract coaches of people stopping and urinating there.
- Skirling is a designated conservation area

- Skirling must be preserved as a country village with the green and sheep grazing below the kirk. Skirling is a unique and charming village.
- To be honest some are but things like a play-park are silly for a small village. Again things like more paths/ev charging points - nobody would really use them.
- A lot of these are wasting money to be frank
- Funding if proposals to progress? Currently SBC mows the green. Would this continue?

14) Are you a member of SCDT?

Yes	27	51%
No	24	45%
Other	0	0%
No response	2	4%
Total	53	

Appendix 6 Potential funders for SCDT projects

There is a wide range of potential funders for SCDT's proposed projects. Some of the key funders are highlighted below.

This section notes some of the larger or more obvious funders but is not intended to provide comprehensive coverage of a dynamic funding environment. Some funds are on-going, others annual, with relatively limited application windows, so not all are open to new applications at time of writing.

Several community intermediary bodies, including the Development Trusts Association Scotland and the Community Woodlands Association, maintain funding webpages¹⁰⁸ and/or issue regular e-bulletins with funding news and updates.

Scottish Land Fund¹⁰⁹

The Scottish Land Fund (SLF) supports communities to become more resilient and sustainable through the ownership and management of land and land assets.

Stage 1 Technical assistance funding is available to help eligible community groups prepare to purchase an asset. These grants are normally between £2,500 and £30,000 and can fund specialist advice and/or professional fees including the preparation of feasibility studies and business plans, valuations and surveys as well as some costs towards community engagement.

Stage 2 grants can fund capital and some revenue costs associated with the acquisition of assets. The indicative minimum amount for stage 2 SLF acquisition grants is £5,000, and the maximum grant is £1,000,000. SLF will also fund reasonable professional, title mapping and legal fees associated with the purchase.

“Capital costs” means a grant towards the value of the land, land assets and buildings as determined by an independent open market valuation, which must be current, i.e. less than 6 months old. The purchase price may be higher than this. SLF can contribute up to 95% of the market value, so a minimum of 5% of the funding must come from other sources: this could include other funders, community shares, a negotiated discount on the valuation, or the community's own fundraising. Communities can usually also request a small amount of initial post-acquisition revenue funding.

SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund¹¹⁰

The SSE Clyde Borders Community Fund makes around £150,000 per year available for community and charitable projects. It can support projects which:

- enhance quality of life for local residents;
- contribute to vibrant, healthy, successful and sustainable communities;
- promote community spirit and encourage community activity.

Projects in the Upper Tweed, Tweedsmuir and Skirling community council areas can apply. Groups must be constituted and not for individual profit but are not required to be charities.

SSE Sustainable Development Fund¹¹¹

The SSE Sustainable Development Fund operates in addition to local community funds and supports strategic projects in the regions where SSE Renewables is operating. The fund, which is directed to projects that can achieve significant impact, is estimated to be worth over £57 million over the next 25 years.

¹⁰⁸ <https://www.communitywoods.org/current-funding-opportunities>

¹⁰⁹ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/scottish-land-fund>

¹¹⁰ <https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/community-fund-locations/great-britain/clyde-borders/>

¹¹¹ <https://www.sserenewables.com/communities/sustainable-development-fund/>

Ventient Nadara Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund¹¹²

The Ventient Nadara Glenkerie Wind Farm Community Fund supports community projects benefiting those living within 15km of the Glenkerie Wind Farm. Although priority is given to applications from communities within 10km of the wind farm (which includes Tweedsmuir, Broughton, Drumelzier and Coulter) other communities within the 15km radius are eligible to apply including Stobo, Biggar, Symington, Robertson, Lamington, Wiston and Skirling.

National Lottery Community Action¹¹³

The Community Action fund offers up to £250,000 for up to five years for projects that are open, inclusive and led by their community, and which will achieve at least two of the following outcomes:

- build positive relationships;
- support people's health or wellbeing;
- help people improve their access and connection to nature;
- make a positive difference to the environment.

Community Action can fund up to £50,000 of capital costs, and can support indirect project costs such as organisational overheads.

National Lottery Awards for All Scotland¹¹⁴

Awards for All Scotland supports community-led projects that:

- bring people together to build strong relationships in and across communities;
- improve the places and spaces that matter to communities;
- help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage;
- support people, communities and organisations facing more demands and challenges because of the cost-of-living crisis.

Awards for All Scotland offers funding from £300 to £20,000 and can support projects for up to 2 years. Funding can be to deliver a new or existing activity or to support an organisation to change and adapt to new and future challenges.

Scottish Borders Community-Led Local Development Funding¹¹⁵

The Community Led Local Development Fund is a rural development programme supporting projects that are shaped and delivered by local people. The fund is overseen by the Scottish Borders Local Action Group, a volunteer led partnership made up of representatives from the private, public and third sectors. The fund offers grants of up to £25,000 to help strengthen communities, grow the local economy and improve quality of life across the region.

Development Trusts Association Scotland¹¹⁶

The Development Trusts Association Scotland manages three funding programmes for member development trusts in Scotland — the Strengthening Communities Programme, the Recovery and Resilience Programme, and Green Shoots. Each is designed to support a different stage or need.

You must be a member of DTAS to apply, but membership does not guarantee funding. DTAS staff provide guidance, but all funding decisions are made by independent assessment panels based on each programme's criteria. Provisional membership of DTAS, for newly established development trusts, is £50/year. Full membership is £90/year.¹¹⁷

¹¹² <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/glenkerie>

¹¹³ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/community-action>

¹¹⁴ <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/programmes/national-lottery-awards-for-all-scotland>

¹¹⁵ <https://borderscommunityaction.org.uk/news/community-led-local-development-fund-2026-27-now-open/>

¹¹⁶ <https://dtascot.org.uk/funding-programmes/>

¹¹⁷ <https://dtascot.org.uk/become-a-member/>

Scottish Forestry Community Fund¹¹⁸

The Scottish Forestry Community Fund supports groups and organisations that encourage people to use woods more. Eligible projects include activities associated with woodland-based:

- school care clubs and play schemes;
- schemes that promote physical activity such as walking, safe routes to school, natural play and adventure play;
- volunteer group establishment and the induction of volunteers;
- volunteering facilitation focused on skills training, health improvement and community development;
- projects promoting Gaelic.

South of Scotland Enterprise¹¹⁹

SOSE has several grant and loan funds to help businesses and enterprising communities with business improvement or innovation. Proposals are assessed on a range of criteria, focusing on job creation, economic impact on the local area, innovation, business improvement, Net Zero and Fair Work opportunities.

Scottish Government Nature Restoration Fund¹²⁰

The Fund has two streams, Helping Nature, for grants of £25,000 to £250,000 and Transforming Nature for grants of £250,000 upwards, including development projects. It is currently closed for expressions of interest and applications.

Foundation Scotland¹²¹

Foundation Scotland administers a diverse range of funding programmes (primarily on behalf of private sector organisations) benefitting communities across Scotland. Some of these funds are available on a Scotland-wide basis, whilst others are aimed at specific geographical areas.

Walking Scotland (formerly Paths for all)

Walking Scotland's Ian Findlay Path Fund¹²² is currently closed to new applications, it is not yet known if there will be a replacement fund.

The Royal Countryside Fund¹²³

The Royal Countryside Fund seeks to empower rural communities to develop community-led solutions that increase their resilience and sustainability and contribute to a sustainable future for the countryside.

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation¹²⁴

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation aims to improve the quality of life for people and communities throughout the UK both now and in the future. It is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK and supports a wide range of work within the arts, children and young people, the environment and social change.

The Robertson Trust¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ <https://www.forestry.gov.scot/forests-people/communities/community-fund>

¹¹⁹ <https://www.southofscotlandenterprise.com/services>

¹²⁰ <https://www.nature.scot/funding-and-projects/scottish-government-nature-restoration-fund-nrf>

¹²¹ <https://www.foundationscotland.org.uk/apply-for-funding/funding-available>

¹²² <https://walkingscotland.org.uk/our-work/path-funding/>

¹²³ <https://www.royalcountrysidefund.org.uk/how-we-help/supporting-rural-communities/>

¹²⁴ <https://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/>

¹²⁵ <https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/>

The Robertson Trust funds and supports charitable organisations of all sizes who are committed to achieving positive change for individuals and communities across Scotland.

Other potential charitable funders include:

- **The Henry Smith Foundation** <https://henrysmith.foundation/>
- **The Dulverton Trust** <https://www.dulverton.org/>
- **The Mickel Fund** <http://www.mickelfund.org.uk/>
- **The Weir Charitable Trust** <https://weircharitabletrust.com/>
- **The Mushroom Trust** <https://mushroomtrust.com/>
- **The Matthew Good Foundation** <https://www.matthewgoodfoundation.org/amplify-fund-grants-for-good/>

SafeDeposits Scotland Community Fund¹²⁶

The SafeDeposits Scotland Community Fund will award grants up to £5,000 to organisations who commit to deliver a project that meets at least one of five criteria, namely:

- Sustainability and the environment
- Employability and career skills
- Social inclusion
- Technology and digital inclusion
- Improving the local community

Co-op Local Community Fund¹²⁷

The Co-op Local Community Fund supports projects in its members' communities that provide access to opportunities and resources to help people thrive in one of the following ways:

- enables people to access food
- creates opportunities for young people
- improves people's mental wellbeing
- promotes community cohesion
- builds sustainable futures

Several other retailers run small grant schemes, including:

Morrison Foundation <https://www.morrisonfoundation.com/grant-funding-request/>

ASDA Foundation <https://asdafoundation.org/our-grants/>

¹²⁶ <https://safedepositsscotland.com/community-fund>

¹²⁷ <https://causes.coop.co.uk/>