

What do Community Councils do?

Community Councils bring local people together to help make things happen and improve their local area.

They talk to West Dunbartonshire Council and other public organisations about issues affecting their area, such as:

- planning and licensing matters
- children's playparks
- busy roads
- street lighting
- public transport
- community safety and anti-social behaviour
- environmental issues such as allotments and clean ups

Community Councils were introduced through the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973. They have the right to be consulted on any planning applications in their areas and are also kept informed about licensing applications.

The local authority has a duty to consult Community Councils on how local services are delivered and on other issues affecting their neighbourhoods.

A Community Council can act as a campaigning body in raising awareness of specific local issues. It can help to co-ordinate other groups to achieve a stronger voice on issues.

Community Councils should be representative of the wider community and must be non-political in their activity. They can do a wide range of things including:

- responding to enquiries and problems raised by members of the public
- advising residents on how to support or object to planning applications
- highlighting issues to public service providers like Police and Council and attending meetings with public officials
- working to find out what are the areas of concern within the community (through surveys, social media and similar)
- communicating with local people in a variety of ways - newsletter, website, social media
- meeting with other Community Councils or other community groups
- responding to consultations on relevant subjects
- sending representatives to input into wider groupings
- contributing to local plans and developments
- arranging community events such as gala days, fetes, or clean up days
- monitoring crime levels in their areas and raising concerns.

In West Dunbartonshire, Community Councils are:

- given an annual support grant from the Council
- consulted on planning applications
- represented on the Community Alliance (the group which exists to involve the community in Community Planning and service delivery)

Community Council meetings usually take place monthly and members of the public are welcome to attend. Meetings are usually attended by West Dunbartonshire Councillors for the area, and a police officer.

All Community Councils have an 'open forum' where members of the public can ask questions and raise issues.

