



# Re-Imagine Udny

Community Consultation Report 2024

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- Vikki Janetta for initiating and planning the project and securing funding from Aberdeen University and The Wood Foundation to make it happen.

Special thanks are due to the residents of Udny who took the time to respond to the survey, share their views and contribute to shaping their community's future.

Thank you also to the following groups and individuals who were consulted and who contributed their knowledge, experience and views to help shape our approach and the final questionnaire:

Brian McDougall, Formartine Youth Project, Friends of Pitmedden School (FOPS), Good Companions, Julie Main, Pitmedden Amenities Trust, Pitmedden Church, Pitmedden Tiny Tots, Pitmedden Udny Tarves SCIO (PUT), Udny Brownies, Udny Climate Action, Udny Community Council, Udny Green School, Udny Health Walk leaders, Udny Paths Group, and Wood RecyclAbility.

# Summary

The *Imagine Udny: Past, Present, Future* project was initiated by the Udny Community Trust to reassess the community's priorities five years on from the original Imagine Udny project. *Imagine Udny: Past, Present, Future* aimed to:

- evaluate progress made on the initiatives identified in the 2019 Community Action Plan and Spatial Plan;
- gather feedback from the community on these initiatives;
- gauge whether any new priorities had developed since the original consultation.

The consultation ran for four weeks in summer 2024 and received 86 responses, providing fresh insight into the community's current priorities and aspirations.



Key findings indicate that the need for a community café has been fulfilled by Cafe48 and The Medan Centre provides a valued, communal social space for meetings and gatherings. It goes some way to addressing the need for a community hub and complements other facilities in the parish. Pitmedden Village Hall has benefitted from refurbishment although accessibility and hall facilities present opportunities for ongoing improvement.

Enhancements have been made to the central village in Pitmedden, including new and improved paths and new planters. Parking facilities have been upgraded, through the resurfacing of The Medan Centre's car park. The village parks have seen improvements, although the need for play areas and outdoor equipment for children and young people remains a priority.

Across Udny, the aspiration for a better-connected active travel network has seen substantial progress, with new

and resurfaced paths, improved signage, and the linking of Pitmedden to the Formartine and Buchan Way by the new Oldcraig Path.

A minority of the original Imagine Udny projects—the creation of a Pitmedden Green and a Quarry Park, and the development of a new community school—have not yet been progressed, due to varying constraints.



The results highlight the community's ongoing interest in maintaining and further developing local amenities; enhancing public transport; tackling road safety; and improving facilities and opportunities for young people.

There is a desire for activities that cater for a wider range of people within the community; and strong support for initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, and the resilience and sustainability of the community.

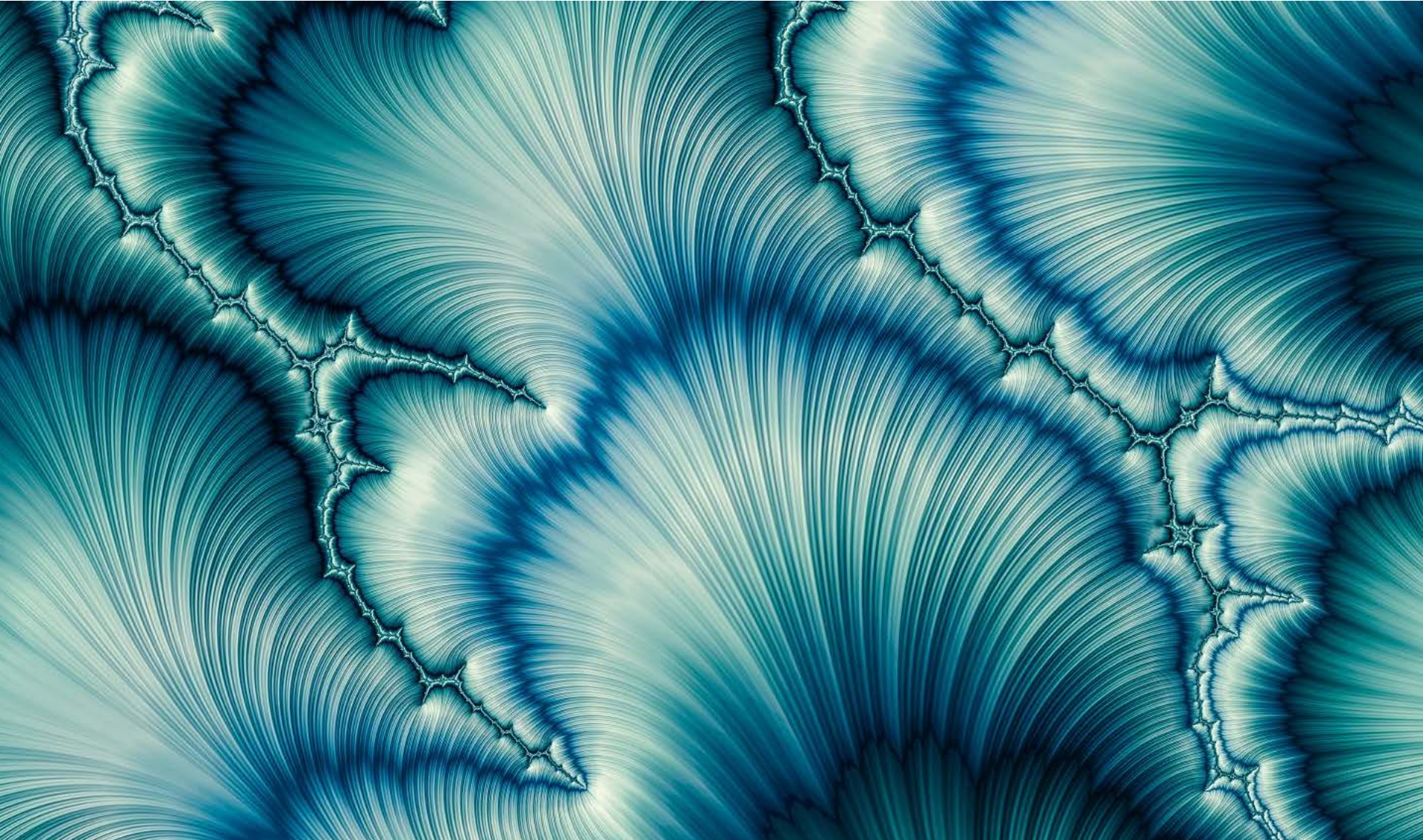
The need for ongoing collaboration between the Trust and other local groups is emphasised and the feedback underscores the importance of continued community engagement and the need for regular check-ins on future projects to ensure they are delivered in alignment with with the expectations and evolving needs of Udny's people.

This report provides an analysis of the survey results, discusses the implications for the community, and

suggests recommendations for the direction of future projects. It serves as a guide for Udny Community Trust and other community stakeholders to prioritise initiatives that foster social cohesion, enhance mental and physical health and wellbeing, and promote environmental sustainability and community resilience.



# Introduction



# The Past and Present

The original Imagine Udny project created a shared vision for the development of Udny through extensive community engagement. Imagine Udny was carried out with the support of Planning Aid Scotland (PAS) using their Charretteplus® programme for community planning.

The consultation involved landowners, Aberdeenshire Council representatives and Udny residents. The resultant [Community Action Plan](#) and [Spatial Report](#) identified key projects and initiatives. These documents can be found on Udny Community Trust's website, 'Projects' section.

Five years later, Udny Community Trust sought to review the progress of these projects and reassess the community's needs through the Imagine Udny: Past, Present, Future initiative. Details on the 'Past' and the 'Present' of key projects from the Community Action Plan can be found in the [Imagine Udny 2019 Update](#), summarised on the next page.



**Table 1: The ‘Past’ and the ‘Present’ of Imagine Udney**

2019 Priorities: ‘The Past’		Current Status: ‘The Present’
1	A community hub	The Medan Centre has been developed as a multigenerational, multipurpose community space by Udney Community Trust.
2	Updates to the central village in Pitmedden	Accessibility ramp at The Medan Centre; Resurfaced, wide paths in the village; Community bike storage & maintenance; Parking at The Medan Centre; New planters provided by the Trust and maintained by Pitmedden, Udney, Tarves (PUT).
3	A greater connected paths network	New paths between Milldale and Udney Green; from Pitmedden to Pitmedden Garden; between Pitmedden and Formartine United grounds; and the Oldcraig Path. New path signage and improved surfaces. Map of local walking paths.
4	Creation of a Pitmedden Green	Not started.
5	Development of a Quarry Park	Not possible as this is private land. Will not be included in future Imagine Udney updates.
6	Updates to the central parks	Old trees removed and new ones planted in Pitmedden Park; ongoing maintenance by Pitmedden Amenities Trust.
7	The repurposing of the village hall	Pitmedden Village Hall was refurbished and the space is well-utilised for meetings and classes by different groups.
8	A new community school	Not started.
9	The creation of Pitmedden gateways	No distinct gateways but improvements have been made through tree planting by PUT and Udney Climate Action (UCA).

# The Future

As the parish looks to the future, especially after the disruption of COVID-19, Udny Community Trust seeks to understand what the community of Udny wants for itself in the coming years. As such, the Trust designed a questionnaire to get the community's views on the original Imagine Udny projects and to see what their current priorities and aspirations are.

The survey was designed through a process of consultation and co-creation with local community groups and organisations, local representatives and other stakeholders. The survey was open for responses from 28 June to 23 July 2024, seeking opinions on Udny Community Trust, Cafe48 and The Medan Centre; the local path network; parks and green spaces; community facilities and amenities; public transport; schools; sustainability; and local activities.

Individuals who live, work, attend school, volunteer, or attend any of the groups or activities in Udny were invited to respond anonymously through online or paper versions of the survey which were made available in key locations throughout the parish.

The data and written feedback gathered from this survey, coupled with ongoing general and topic-specific community consultation will inform Udny Community Trust's future planning and development efforts. The Directors and staff of Udny Community Trust remain committed to ensuring that all our undertakings align with the community's evolving needs and aspirations.

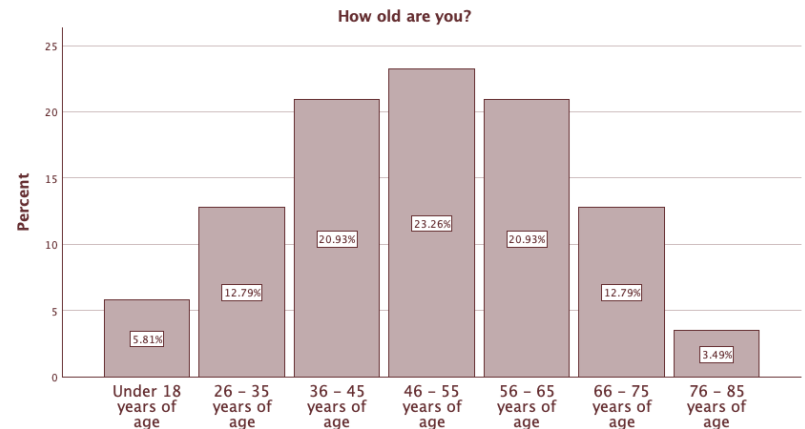
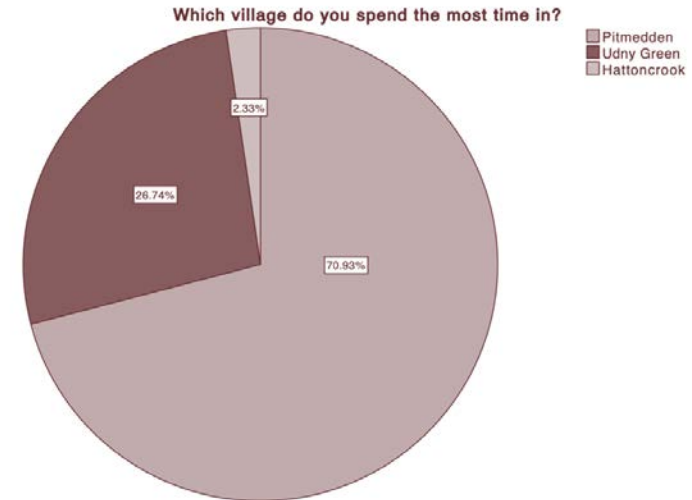
# Results



# Who took part

The survey received 86 anonymous responses. The only personal information gathered was the age range and primary location of the respondents. Most respondents were aged 55 or younger. Most respondents were from Pitmedden (71%), followed by Udny Green (27%) and Hattoncrook (2%).

This section contains a summary of the results from each section of the survey, followed by the key highlights from the data and the written comments.



# Cafe48 and The Medan Centre

## Summary

Respondents generally agreed that The Medan Centre satisfies many aspects of the desire for a community hub, providing accessible, communal social spaces. Cafe48 is valued as a community café. Suggestions for improvements include better communication of what's going on and doing more for young people in the community and those who work full time.



## Key results

- Most respondents felt that The Medan Centre (**81%**) and Café48 (**76%**) meet the expectations for a community hub and community café, respectively.
- There is support for a dedicated health & wellbeing space in The Medan Centre (**82%**).
- There is interest in showcasing local history and heritage at The Medan Centre (**53%**).
- Qualitative responses give further insights:
  - Activities for children are valued, as are opportunities to connect with local councillors
  - Current activities do not appeal to young people; we could do more for them
  - Facebook is heavily relied upon but is not used by everyone
  - Evening & weekend activities are wanted by people who can't attend daytime, weekday events

# Paths

## Summary

The initiative for a more connected paths network has been well-received, with many respondents using the paths for walking, cycling, and dog walking. There is a desire to ensure the path network is sustained through ongoing maintenance and improvements, including wheelchair accessibility.



## Key results

- The paths map is a valued resource (87%), although awareness of the map could be improved.
- There is general satisfaction with the new Oldcraig path (81%).
- Qualitative responses indicate interest in developments including:
  - Further signage and ongoing maintenance
  - Safe crossings where paths intersect with roads
  - Wheelchair-accessible routes between the villages
  - Dog poo bins on paths

# Parks

## Summary

There is a strong desire to improve the parks in Pitmedden with new play facilities and new equipment.



## Key results

- There is support for the development of new play facilities, particularly in Pitmedden Park and Pirate Park (**84%**)
- There is a desire for improvements to Pitmedden Park (**83%**) including all of the suggested options of a skate/bike park; more benches; outdoor gym equipment; more public bins; and a sheltered gazebo.

# Green spaces

## Summary

The community values the environmental improvements that have been made to Pitmedden and Hattoncrook and wants to see them looked after.

There is interest in involving local groups and schools in the continued maintenance of green spaces and planters.



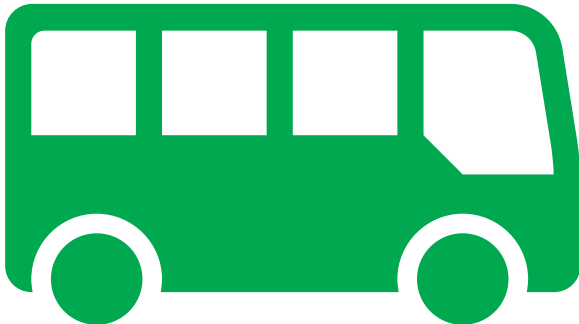
## Key results

- The planters are highly valued (**97%**) and there is a desire to ensure they are maintained on an ongoing basis.
- Some respondents indicated a willingness to help with weeding to maintain the planters (**43%**).
- Qualitative responses indicate support for:
  - More variety in public planters, including exotic species and community fruit & veg
  - Wildflowers around the village entrances
  - Planters in Hattoncrook and hanging baskets in Udny Green
  - More people in the community to get involved in the maintenance of public planters

# Public transport

## Summary

There is some dissatisfaction with current public transport services, with suggested improvements including more frequent services, additional stops, and lower costs. There is also interest in a community transport service.



## Key results

- Most respondents (**75%**) are not satisfied with public transport services in the parish.
- The top three perceived areas for improvement, in ranked order, are:
  - Increasing the frequency of services
  - Making services more affordable
  - Providing services to a greater number of destinations
- There is interest in a community transport initiative such as a community taxi or minibus (**51%**). There is also a willingness to pay for this service (**87%**).

# Facilities

## Summary

The community would like to see additional commercial premises in Pitmedden and spaces that cater to young people. Respondents also highlighted the need for more public bins; traffic-calming and pedestrian safety features on the village roads; and the development of community land by the Haddo Medical Centre.



## Key results

- There is a desire to see community land by the GP surgery used for indoor (**61%**) and outdoor (**44%**) sports facilities.
- More commercial premises are wanted in Pitmedden (**69%**) with the top three specifics being a pharmacy, pre-loved goods store and evening dining.
- There is support for more public bins (**80%**) and more frequent emptying of existing bins.
- People want more pedestrian crossings in the villages (**64%**).
- There is support for more social spaces for young people (**77%**) across the parish.
- Qualitative responses indicate a need for:
  - Evening activities, both social and health & wellbeing-focussed
  - More facilities for young people: sports and social
  - The operators of key community spaces working together to deliver value

# Schools

## Summary

There is a perceived need for improvement to the school facilities in Pitmedden. Key areas of focus include expansion of the school, improved classroom facilities and better parking.

## Key results

- More respondents would like to see improvements to the existing school rather than the development of a new school (**57%**).
- The top three areas of focus for improvements are:
  - Parking
  - Classroom facilities
  - Permanent expansion of the school



# Sustainability

## Summary

There is strong support for a range of sustainability initiatives, including the installation of electric vehicle charge points; helping locals to improve their home energy efficiency; and enhancing biodiversity.

Respondents feel it is important to continue having conversations about agriculture and land use when planning future projects.



## Key results

- **66%** would like to see electric vehicle charging points in the parish.
- Other initiatives, most strongly supported by respondents, are:
  - **91%** of respondents agree that improving home energy through energy saving and renewable energy and heating is important.
  - **90%** agree that improving access to cycling and walking is important.
  - **88%** agree that reducing consumption is important.
  - **73%** agree that improving biodiversity (plants, animals, fungi and microorganisms) in Udny is important.

# Activities

## Summary

The community is interested in more frequent Swap Shops and Repair Cafés, as well as designated dog walks and guided cycles. There is also support for more community activities outside of regular working hours. Activities that foster social connection are highly valued.



## Key results

- **50%** are interested in activities outside working hours. Qualitative comments support this and suggest interest in adult-focused activities in addition to the current family-friendly programme.
- **39%** support more frequent Repair Cafés
- **32%** are interested in designated dog walks
- **27%** are interested in guided cycles
- Most people (**94%**) who enjoy Udny Health Walks say the sense of community and friendship is the most important aspect for them.

*Note: 77% of respondents indicated support for an annual music festival in Pitmedden. The Trust understands that another group is working on this and therefore will not include this initiative in future plans.*

# Analysis



# Evaluation of findings

## Insights and reflections

The Imagine Udny: Past, Present, Future consultation highlights substantial progress on many key projects identified in the 2019 Community Action Plan. Major achievements, like The Medan Centre and Cafe48, have successfully created accessible social spaces and opportunities for togetherness, while the expansion of paths and parks has improved connectivity, accessibility, and outdoor engagement. There is a desire to see ongoing maintenance and enhancement of the path network and environmental features such as the new village planters and involving more members of the community in doing so.

The survey identifies emerging priorities, including facilities for young people, improved public transport, road safety, and enhancements to the public parks and Pitmedden School.

The feedback also highlights the importance of continued community engagement, effective communication and ongoing collaboration between community groups to ensure that future projects meet the evolving needs of Udny's residents.

Although the sample size of the survey was relatively small, rich and meaningful data was collected—particularly in the comments—from the 86 respondents. We continually strive to reach a wide section of the community through ongoing engagement and future initiatives will be co-created through ongoing community consultation and involvement.

# Looking ahead

*Imagine Udny: Past, Present, Future* identified both ongoing and emerging areas of focus for the community, setting a direction for the future endeavours of Udny Community Trust in helping the community of Udny to develop. In planning for the years ahead, the Trust aims to build on the success of existing initiatives while introducing new projects that align with the community's needs and aspirations, as highlighted in this consultation.

The issues that have been identified as ongoing or new priorities are detailed in the following pages and suggested opportunities in these areas are summarised in Table 2 (pages 28-29), with the aim of providing a helpful starting point for future projects.



# Issues brought forward

## Pitmedden School

Residents continue to prioritise the development of Pitmedden School, with a focus on expanding classroom facilities, improving parking solutions, and enhancing the overall learning environment. These improvements will help the school to continue serving the community's needs and providing a positive educational experience for local children.



## Parks and green spaces

Community members expressed a strong interest in enhancing Pitmedden Park and Pirate Park by improving play facilities and adding recreational features that cater to all age groups. The development of Pitmedden Green remains a key ambition and would provide additional opportunities for recreational activity and outdoor social connection.



# New priorities

## Health and wellbeing

There is interest in initiatives that promote both mental and physical health. There is support for the development of a space within The Medan Centre that is focused on health and wellbeing. This would facilitate opportunities for a wider range of wellness activities; from fitness classes to mental health support.

## Young people

The desire for more dedicated facilities and activities for young people emerged as a recurring theme. Potential initiatives include creating sports facilities and social spaces tailored to the interests of young people. Engaging the young people of Udny could help increase their involvement in local initiatives; help them to gain experience and develop skills; and foster a greater sense of belonging that would encourage them to remain in the community.

## Road safety

With concerns around road safety, particularly regarding speeding, there is a clear need for improved pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures throughout Udny. These improvements would make the roads safer for all community members, especially children and those with mobility challenges. Given the strong support for these measures, the Trust will support the community to explore feasible road safety enhancements.



## Community transport

The desired improvements to public transport are subject to limitations given the resource constraints of the local authority and third-party providers. There are indications of interest in developing a community-led transport service to complement the existing public transport network. This could provide an affordable and flexible transport option for residents, reducing reliance on private transportation. Additionally, reducing private car travel would have a positive environmental impact.

## Environmental initiatives

Sustainability remains a community-wide priority, with particular interest in introducing electric vehicle (EV) charging points, enhancing biodiversity, and expanding accessibility to walking and cycling paths. These initiatives would promote eco-friendly practices and connect residents with Udny's treasured natural environment.



**Table 2a: Opportunities for future projects**

<b>2024 action area</b>	<b>Future opportunities</b>
<b>1</b> A community hub	The parish has a well-connected and varied portfolio of community venues, but a need remains for a facility to fill the gaps not yet addressed, namely an indoor sports facility. A service site behind Haddo Medical Practice is a potential location.
<b>2</b> Pitmedden central village	Opportunities remain to enhance the central village by developing some of the features conceived in the Imagine Udney Spatial Masterplan.
<b>3</b> Paths network	The upgrades to the paths network are a huge success story from the original Imagine Udney Action Plan. Opportunities exist to promote the network, positioning Udney as a day-trip walking destination and boosting the local economy through increased visitor numbers.
<b>4</b> Creation of a Pitmedden Green	Not started. Further consultation is required to establish community support for this initiative. A defined green with boardwalk feature, as suggested in the Imagine Udney Spatial Masterplan would complement and enhance the paths network and Udney's appeal as a destination.
<b>5</b> Updates to the central parks	Opportunities remain to upgrade play areas around the village; replace the failing skatepark and install features such as a pavilion, public toilets, changing facilities, outdoor furniture and outdoor fitness equipment to broaden the park's appeal.
<b>6</b> Pitmedden Village Hall	Following refurbishments and a hands-on approach by the management committee, the Hall is well used and enjoyed by many. Opportunities remain to improve accessibility and upgrade Hall catering, changing and toilet facilities.
<b>7</b> Community school	While there is a preference to improve the existing school rather than develop a new school, an appraisal of the accommodation, facilities and environmental standards of the school would help establish the feasibility of upgrading the existing building to the standard required to meet the needs of a growing population.

**Table 2b: Opportunities for future projects (cont.)**

<b>2024 action area</b>	<b>Future opportunities</b>
<b>8</b> Creation of Pitmedden gateways	Further consultation is required to establish community support for a village gateways initiative. Opportunities exist to use local granite and showcase the history of Udney's quarries.
<b>9</b> Health and wellbeing provision	A community indoor sports facility (see Action Area 1, above) could potentially include spaces such as a small studio and consultation rooms to support a wider range of services supporting physical and mental health.
<b>10</b> Facilities for young people	The facilities envisioned above should be developed with input from Formartine Youth Project's Youth Committee, ensuring young people's voices are heard and their needs and wishes are included in project designs.
<b>11</b> Road safety	Since the 2024 consultation was conducted, 20mph limits have been introduced in Aberdeenshire villages. Further opportunities for traffic calming and management measures exist, as identified in the original Imagine Udney Community Action Plan,
<b>12</b> Community transport	Further consultation is required to assess the community's transport needs in detail. Research is required on existing community transport schemes to identify models that might be suitable.
<b>13</b> Environmental initiatives	Opportunities exist to enhance and develop several initiatives supporting environmental sustainability: EV charging points, home energy improvement, re-use initiatives to reduce consumption, local food production, expansion of active travel routes, biodiversity improvement.

# Conclusion

*Imagine Udny: Past, Present, Future* reaffirms that Udny is a community rooted in collaboration and forward-thinking. The significant achievements of recent years, from The Medan Centre and Cafe48 to the expanded paths network, demonstrate the impact of community-driven projects on enhancing social cohesion, well-being, and environmental stewardship. The project has provided valuable insights into the community's evolving needs and aspirations, particularly the desire for facilities for young people, enhanced road safety measures, and accessible health and wellness spaces and initiatives.

Reflecting upon these findings, Udny Community Trust is dedicated to supporting community development in the key action areas and exploring the opportunities identified.

**Let this report serve as a call to action for all community members, stakeholders, and partners to come together to continue building a bright and thriving future for Udny.**





## **Report prepared by Udny Community Trust Company Ltd.**

If you have any questions about this report or are interested in any projects undertaken by Udny Community Trust, please contact:

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