



Anstruther Improvements Association  
Anster Community Development Project, 2021 - 2023  
Community Survey Report

Report and analysis by Sarah Bradley and Anstruther Improvements Association,  
January 2024



## Contents

- Background information.....2
- ACDP Survey results (Q1 - Q15).....2 - 8
- Discussion.....8

## Background information

Anstruther Improvements Association (AIA) organised a community survey to gather feedback on the three-year Anster Community Development Project (ACDP), 2021 - 2023. The ACDP aimed to provide opportunities for local people to take action, to strengthen connections and joint working, to highlight community assets and to provide opportunities for volunteering. The initiative also supported social, cultural and educational events and activities in the recently refurbished Dreel Halls, the historic community building managed by the AIA.

The overall aim of the AIA is to: *support a thriving and resilient community, helping to improve Anstruther for all*. The ACDP project built on existing initiatives like the annual Duck Race, Anster Nicht talks, Anster Cinema, Vintage Day, and supported the volunteer board of Trustees to manage the Dreel Halls. The project also provided resources to trial, support or develop new asset-based community-led projects including: Dreel Burn Project, Dreel Babies and Toddlers, Dreel Crafters, Dreel Shelled Wall Restoration, Dreelside Park Upgrade, Anstruther Skatepark Group, and opportunities for community volunteering.

Anster Community Development Project - Community Survey 2023 collected responses from the 4th - 25th October 2023. 70 survey responses were completed in an online survey, with paper copies also available in local community facilities. This response rate is considered healthy for a small community and indicative of the general views of the local community. The purpose of the survey was to capture community perceptions of the project, measure impact, and inform future planning and delivery of community activities. The survey responses also provide evaluation and feedback information for The National Lottery Community Fund, which provided funding for the ACDP.

## ACDP Survey Results

**Question 1** Collected email addresses of respondents.

**Question 2** Choose one of the following that you feel best describes you?

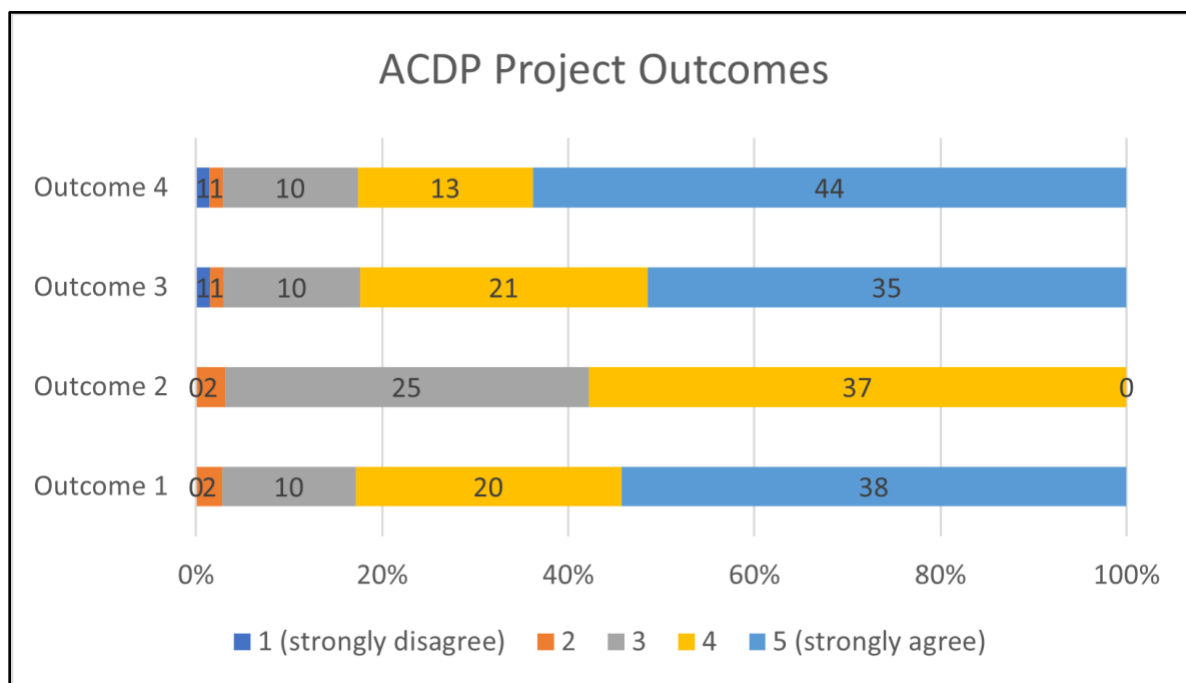
Response	Count
Member of the local community	44
AIA Member	17
Representative of community organisation	12
Representative of a local business	2

\*NB people could select more than one response

**Questions 3 - 6** Respondents were asked how well they feel AIA project activities have delivered on each of the four project outcomes listed below by rating them from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

The AIA identified 4 key project outcomes for the Anster Community Development Project:

1. People feel more connected to their community and to each other
2. People feel supported to take action and make things happen
3. People have more opportunities for volunteering and feel supported to do so
4. People improve their quality of life therefore experience greater wellbeing



Respondents rated all outcomes largely positively, demonstrating that the project has met its outcomes. Outcome 2 (People feel supported to take action and make things happen) has the lowest score with no one selecting option 5, Outcome 4 (People improve their quality of life therefore experience greater wellbeing) has the highest score. The average score given is slightly higher from non-AIA members, though not a significant difference between AIA members and the wider community.

**Question 7.** Do you feel that the Anster Community Development Project initiatives have made a difference or impacted members of our local community? Yes/No

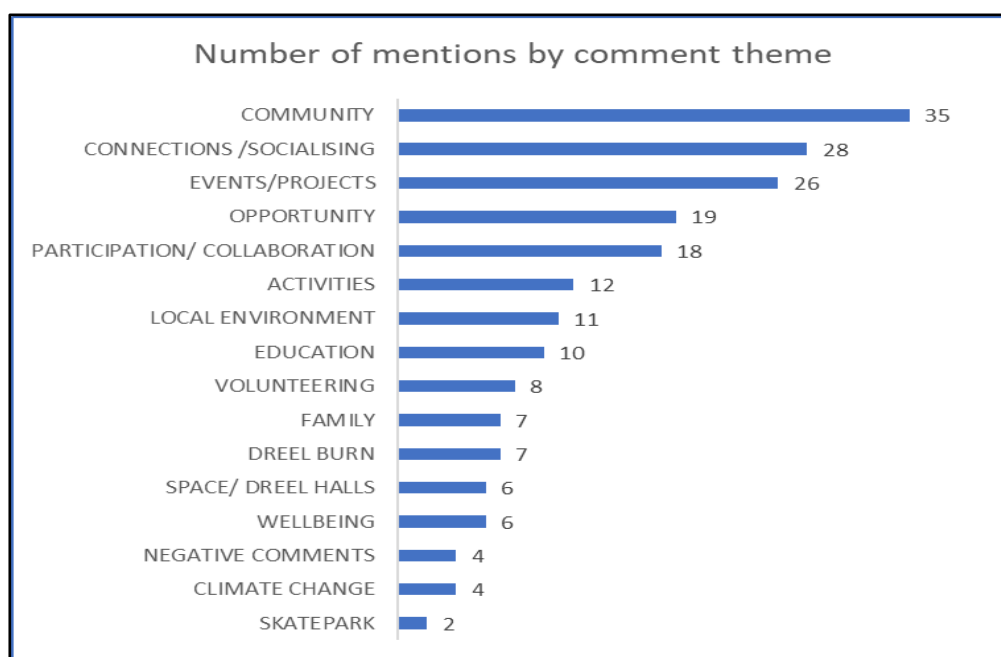
This question received an overwhelmingly positive response, 97% of people surveyed feel the three-year initiative has impacted the local community.

**Question 8.** If so, in what ways has it made a difference or impacted on individuals and the wider community? If you feel it has not made a difference, why not?

This question received 58 comments, some examples as below:

- *Broadening awareness of local priorities. Offering opportunities to make a positive impact on those priorities. Providing a route for individuals to support and influence change.*
- *Making communities.*
- *The project has helped local people to get projects, events or activities started or re-started after Covid, supporting people within the community to provide more for other members of the community. This makes us all more self-sufficient and independent. AIA's own programmed events and activities provide things to do locally and opportunities for people to connect with each other, but also to feel part of a wider cohesive community. This helps break down barriers and reduces feelings of loneliness, which I think have increased after Covid.*

- Given new members of the Community the opportunity to join in and volunteer with an organisation.
- Offered opportunities to socialise, to volunteer, to get to know people they might otherwise not have met, tried to improve the local environment. But there is still a wider community who do not engage.
- I feel more younger members of the local community should be encouraged to participate.
- It provides opportunities for people of all ages to get together and strengthens sense of belonging. It provides services which we would otherwise have to travel to access which is very welcome as Anstruther is not particularly well served by public transport. Projects like Dreel Burn raise awareness of climate change and increase awareness and knowledge of local environment.
- It helps make Anster feel like a community.
- people support and turn out for events and activities, which increases interaction between people in area...AIA offers various social activities to encourage people to "do" things and meet others in the community...this helps create a sense of community and cohesiveness as people mix, interact, and stay in tune with what is going on, and needed to be done, in the area.
- The Community development project also work in partnership with other local groups and the local authority to provide exciting and different opportunities that bring people together and benefit the community and its people.
- It has made a difference by facilitating a wide range of activities for local people to participate. It has given people the opportunity to socialise, learn new skills, learn about the place we live in. It has also given members of the community the opportunity to work together and create positive change.
- I feel anything that brings people together in a social context is highly valuable. My life is unquestionably enriched by AIA events.

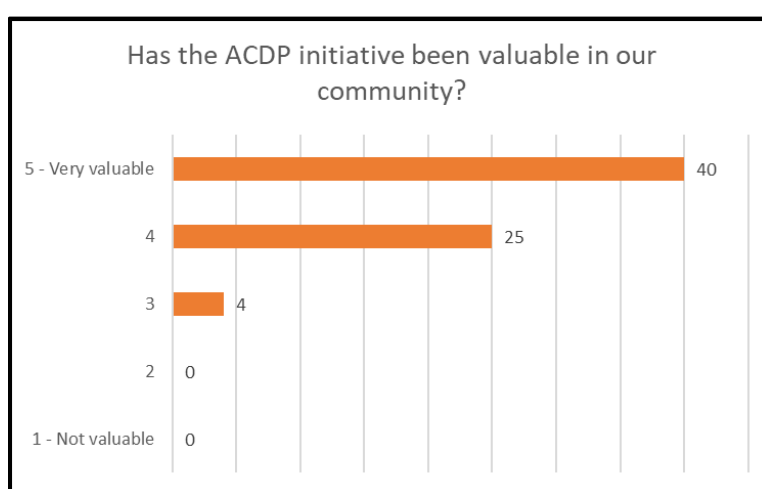


'Community' was by far the most commonly mentioned theme in terms of AIA's impact. One said simply that "making communities" was how ACDP was making a difference. Respondents

valued making social connections, and the events and projects that encouraged these to develop further. 'Opportunity' was also a frequently cited word, and people praised the chance to get involved with a wide range of people and projects with real impact. Participation (in terms of including different groups) was highlighted often, more specifically people mentioned family activities, and the Dreel Burn Project initiative, as having made a difference to the local community. The few less positive comments mentioned a need to do more with under-engaged groups such as young people, and ACDP support for the youth-led skate park project.

**Question 9.** Do you feel the Anster Community Development Project initiatives (projects, groups, activities and events) have been valuable and improved the quality of life and wellbeing in our community? (1. Not valuable 5. Very valuable)

This question was highly rated with all 69 respondents selecting options 3 and above, 40 people (58% of respondents) selected option 5. Very valuable.



**Question 10.** If yes, in what ways have they added value? What changes or improvements to wellbeing have you noticed in our community? If no, what would you suggest is needed to improve our initiatives?

This survey question received 51 responses. Some examples as below:

- *More opportunities and events in an area where rural isolation and access to services are limited*
- *It helps newcomers to the area integrate*
- *There is definitely a noticeable collaborative thread between the different community groups which has brought people together to strive towards a common goal.*

Those who rated neutral in Q9 (option 3. neither valuable nor not valuable) still shared positive comments:

- *The use of the Dreel halls, duck race & community engagement events has brought the community together on many occasions through different events for various groups of the community. I personally disagree with their involvement in the ASG.'*
- *(provided) 'more community events and talks'*
- *'Getting more people involved in community initiatives especially after covid'*



**Question 13.** We would also like to gather your ideas to identify future priorities for us to work towards, as you are the people who know our local community and organisation the best. Please select the FIVE top priorities you would like to see the AIA support.

AIA Future Priorities	Count
Opportunities to connect with others	50
Opportunities to take action and make things happen in the community	50
Opportunities and support for volunteering	22
Improving community wellbeing and quality of life	49
Opportunities for arts and cultural development	50
Opportunities to engage in built heritage	19
Opportunities to improve knowledge or education	34
Providing community support for cost of living	20
Providing opportunities to improve biodiversity and respond to the climate emergency	41

Respondents could select their top 5 from 9 options for future ACDP priorities. 3 respondents didn't answer this question therefore 335 out of 350 possible 'points' were submitted.

Four priorities emerged as clear priorities for the community: connecting with others, taking action, arts/culture and community wellbeing. Providing cost of living support was not seen as a priority for this organisation. 'Opportunities and support for volunteering' and 'opportunities to engage in built heritage' also scored lower as a future priority, suggesting they are not seen as important to provide or potentially not understood in relation to the role of the AIA as a voluntary organisation that manages and maintains a historic building.

**Question 14.** Do you have any other suggestions for areas of work the AIA could develop (if resources available)?

This question received 24 responses, some examples as below:

- *I feel the emphasis of the AIA should continue to be on the cultural rather than worry about the cost of living and other issues which are really too big for a small group to undertake*
- *The work undertaken around the Dreeil Burn and park are a good model for practical interventions in the local area that can have a positive impact, both for those volunteering to undertake the work, and for those who benefit from the results. It would be interesting to see if the AIA could lead any local partnerships to improve other public areas within the town.*
- *opportunities to encourage sharing / collaboration between the many voluntary groups in Anstruther - perhaps an annual gathering of community groups / a civic day.*

Suggestions were made for wellbeing and dementia friendly groups, providing targeted groups (e.g. men), educational/skills development, supporting collaborative working with other organisations.

**Question 15.** What do you feel the AIA does best within our community?

48 people commented on this question

- *Being a visible and inspiring community organisation, that creates lots of fun opportunities to meet people, learn new things, and celebrate the local area.*
- *Provides catalyst for action and a forum for people to work together. Makes things happen*
- *Connecting within the community*
- *The AIA is a strong hub within the community and is a fabulous example of a largely volunteer organisation meeting local needs and making a difference to people in small but significant ways. It allows people to connect - with each other and with new and fulfilling experiences - which benefits them as individuals and the community as a whole.*
- *Enabling community action through provision of space, support and excellent cake!*
- *Provides opportunities for people to do things together, provides an excellent programme of talks and films, takes care of two historically important buildings, the Church of Saint Nicholas and the former Anstruther Wester Town Hall*
- *Connect people - with each other, within a community, with other resources*

## **Discussion**

The ACDP survey received a largely positive response from members of the local community, AIA members, community organisations and local businesses. ACDP has demonstrated impact within the community based on the 4 key outcomes set out at the beginning of the project and has very strong support to continue the community development initiative (99%). More targeted work could be focussed on Outcome 2 (People feel supported to take action and make things happen), sharing of information on how people can access support, the types of activities required and what support is available.

ACDP demonstrates social inclusion with accessible, intergenerational activities for new members of the community to engage and existing members of the community to connect with each other through a diverse programme of activities. The AIA currently provides activities at low cost, though this still may be a barrier to some members of the community and may not be inclusive to all. The AIA could consider externally funded places for some activities to support the costs associated with providing activities and to cover the essential running costs of Dreel Halls as a sustainable community facility.

The top four ranking priorities identified by the community for future work were 'opportunities to connect with others', 'opportunities to take action and make things happen in the community', 'opportunities for arts and cultural development', and 'Improving community wellbeing and quality of life'. Volunteering was not perceived as important in future priorities; this may indicate a lack of awareness in the wider community about the core work of the AIA as a local voluntary organisation and the key role volunteers play within leading the organisation.

The survey recorded the recurring themes of 'opportunity', 'connection', and 'bringing people together'.

Improvements suggested include reaching out to more members of the community through awareness raising and targeted initiatives for specific sections of the community.

---

For any further information or enquiries about this report please email [info@anstrutherimprovements.org](mailto:info@anstrutherimprovements.org)

*The AIA supports a thriving and resilient community, helping to improve Anstruther for all.*  
Anstruther Improvements Association is a registered SCIO under Scottish Charity Number SC016109