







# Your Town Audit: Thornliebank

September 2016





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# Understanding Scottish Places Summary

This report presents a summary of the Your Town Audit (YTA) for Thornliebank, conducted by Scotland's Towns Partnership and EKOS. The detailed YTA Framework and Data Workbook are provided under separate cover.

The YTA was developed to provide a framework to measure and monitor the performance of Scotland's towns and town centres using a series of Key Performance Indicators. It provides a comprehensive audit of Thornliebank with data on up to 180 KPIs across seven themes – Locality, Accessibility, Local Services, Activities + Events, Development Capacity, Tourism, and Place + Quality Impressions.

The Understanding Scottish Places (USP) data platform provides a summary analysis for Thornliebank and identifies 9 comparator towns that have similar characteristics, with the most similar being Anstruther, Dalbeattie, Inverkeithing and New Stevenston<sup>1</sup>. The USP platform – <a href="www.usp.scot">www.usp.scot</a> – describes Thornliebank in the following general terms:

**Thornliebank's Interrelationships**: Thornliebank is an *'interdependent to dependent town'*, which means it has a good number of assets in relation to its population. There is some diversity of jobs; and residents largely travel shorter distances to work and study, although some travel longer distances. These towns attract people from neighbouring towns to access some of their assets and jobs.

**Thornliebank's Typology**: This type of medium-sized town is extremely mixed in terms of demographics. There are a particularly wide range of people, housing and activities. The number of older couples with no children is higher than average. There is a mix of professional and non-professional jobs, and part-time and self-employment are both important for a significant proportion of residents. Socioeconomic status is higher here than in other kinds of town and there is a mix of professionals and nonprofessionals, as well as those with higher and lower educational attainment

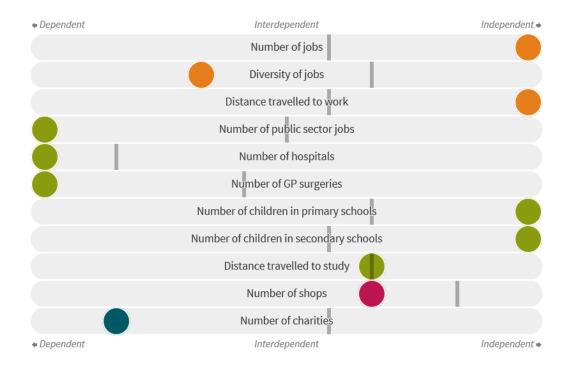
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<sup>1</sup> The other comparator towns are identified as Dunoon, West Calder, Lanark, Nairn and Kirriemuir.





# Inter-relationships o



Comparing Thornliebank to towns with similar USP typology and interrelationships shows that residents travel similar distances to study, there are a greater number of jobs in the settlement, and children in both Primary and Secondary schools. There is a lower level of diversity in jobs in the area as well as fewer GP surgeries and hospitals.

Building on the USP, this report presents the results of our detailed analysis of Thornliebank based around the Scottish Government's Town Centre Toolkit – an online resource available via the USP website which provides advice, guidance and case studies across three thematic areas: accessible, active and attractive.

# 2. Accessible Town Centre

Thornliebank is relatively small town in East Renfrewshire approximately 5 miles south of Glasgow city centre (on the boundary between the two local authority areas), with a population of around 7,700 people. The core retail area of Thornliebank is situated on Main Street, a B-class road leading into Thornliebank from Giffnock and Pollokshaws, with other retailers and service providers being distributed around the main town centre area.





There are two railway stations near Thornliebank; Thornliebank Rail Station which is located on Thornliebank Road, and Kennishead Station which is located on Boydstone Road, in Carnwadric, a neighbouring settlement. Neither stations have park and ride facilities, however, they do have bicycle parking stands and some shelters. Journeys into the centre of Glasgow will take roughly 15 minutes from both stations. Services

from these stations also help to connect the town to other settlements in East Renfrewshire, with journey times from Kennishead to Barrhead taking roughly 15 minutes, and 15/20 minutes from Thornliebank station to Clarkston and Busby. However, rail travel to Neilston from Thornliebank station involves a changeover in Glasgow Central Station, meaning a travel time of around 90 minutes.

into the centre of Glasgow.

off-street car parks.

15 mile radius around Thornliebank

August Falkirk

Oon Greenock

Dumbarton

Cun, bernauld

Clyde

Murshiel

Regional Park

East Kilbride

Carluke

Douglas

meaning a travel time of around 90 minutes.

There are approximately seven bus stops located throughout the town centre of

journey times of roughly 25-30 minutes, and to Eaglesham with a journey time of 35 minutes direct or 45 minutes if the service changes in Clarkston.

The M77 Motorway is around two miles west of the town and is easily accessible by road. This provide fast access to Ayrshire and beyond, as well as an alternative route

Thornliebank. Thornliebank has direct bus connections to Glasgow which take approximately 30 minutes. Bus services also connect the town with other settlements across East Renfrewshire including Clarkston, Busby and Newton Mearns with

There is a large number of on-street parking spaces in the town centre, (along Main Street), and others can be found in residential streets, there are, however, no public

The town centre provides access to some local services which, alongside a mix of retailers, includes a health centre, dentist, library, and a community hall. There is also 3G and 4G throughout the town and, although there is no town-wide WiFi, superfast broadband is available. There is a TSB Bank located in the town centre on Main Street, and there are also ATM's located outside of the bank, Post Office, and Spar convenience store.





# 3. Active Town Centre

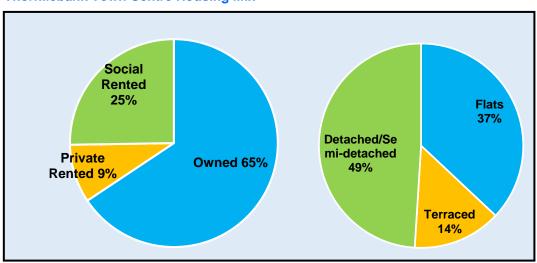
# 3.1 Population and Housing

Just over 200 people live within the town centre area in Thornliebank<sup>2</sup>, around 3% of the total settlement population. The population of the town centre increased by 2% in the decade towards 2011, and the population of the whole settlement increased by around 3% over this time. This compares with increases of 1% for East Renfrewshire and a 5% increase in Scotland over this ten year period. Most of the YTA audited towns have seen an increase in town centre living, averaging around 10%.

Housing in the town centre<sup>3</sup> is a mix of flats (37%) and semi-detached/detached properties (49%), typically with four bedrooms. Over half of properties (54%) are in council tax bands A, B and C. The streets surrounding Thornliebank town centre are almost wholly residential – a mix of older and newer detached/semi-detached properties and flats – this provides the town's retail and service businesses with a relatively large catchment population.

House prices in Thornliebank are relatively similar to those of other settlements in East Renfrewshire. The average purchase price of a town centre dwelling (£123,760) is lower than that of the town as a whole (£176,769)<sup>4</sup>. Prices in the town centre increased by 47% in the decade to 2013, and by 45% in the wider settlement. The housing stock in the town is largely privately owned (65% in the town centre; 74% in the wider town).





<sup>2</sup> Census 2011 output zones S00103050 and S00103055.

<sup>3</sup> For ease of accessing the most up to date data, this is datazones (2001) S01001773 and S01001780

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Statistics, 2013

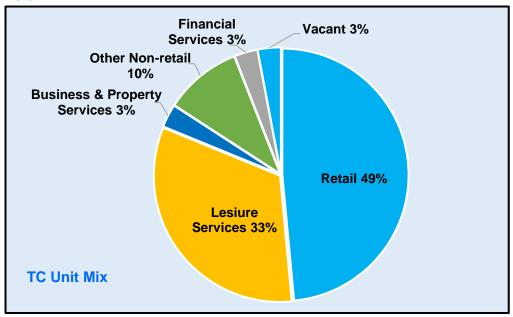




# 3.2 Employment

Just under half (47%) of the 4,091 jobs in Thornliebank are located in the town centre datazones. National statistics recorded 395 businesses in the settlement. The YTA street audit located 39 units in use within Thornliebank town centre – this was in line with the UPRN data provided by East Renfrewshire Council prior to the audit. Of these, 19 are retail businesses.

### 3.3 Retail



For a relatively small town centre, Thornliebank has a good range of shops and retail services. Most of the shops are located in a parade on Main Street, with others on Kennishead Road, both of these streets are located to the north of the town. As Thornliebank is a relatively small town, these retail units are within walking distance for most of the surrounding residents.

There was only one vacant unit recorded during the audit of the town centre, the Arden Bar.

407 residents per town centre retail outlet

19 town centre retail units in use

1 vacant town centre unit



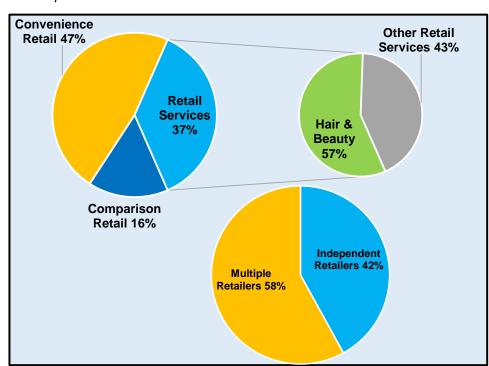


Most shops in Thornliebank town centre operate standard opening hours of around 9am to 5.30pm/6pm. However the Farmfoods supermarket on Main Street is open earlier and later (8am-8pm during the week and 9am-6pm on weekends), as is the One O One convenience store on Kennishead Road (9/10am-10pm), and the Spar convenience store on Main Street (6am-10pm during the week and 7/8am-10pm on weekends).

In line with other audited towns, retail forms the largest single town centre unit use and, at 49%, is higher than Neilston (45%) and Barrhead (46%).

The YTA analysis is based on the following retail definitions:

- Convenience Retail: primarily low cost goods that are typically bought out of habit or on impulse i.e. food, drink (alcohol and non-alcohol), news, tobacco, etc. – 9 convenience retailers were identified in Thornliebank town centre;
- Comparison Retail: all other retail purchases comprising goods bought at infrequent intervals where consumers will compare and contrast products and prices – 3 comparison retailers were identified in Thornliebank town centre; and
- Retail Services: services that consumers would expect to find in a town centre including hairdresser, beauty salon, repair of goods, hire of specialist clothing, health clinics, post office, travel agent, etc. 7 retail service operators were identified in Thornliebank town centre.





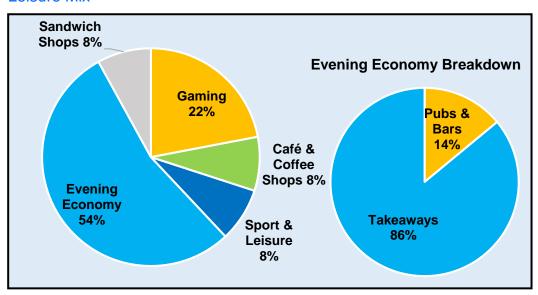


Just 42% of retailers in Thornliebank are independent – this is one of the lowest proportion scores of towns audited to date, between Newton Mearns (36%) and Clydebank (49%). However, it should be noted that the scores in these towns were affected by there being a shopping centre built in the town centre or these areas, which is not the case for Thornliebank. In comparison some of the other towns in East Renfrewshire have independent retail figures of 92% for Neilston, 87% Eaglesham and 68% for Clarkston.



# 4. Attractive Town Centre

## 4.1 Leisure Mix



In Thornliebank town centre, evening economy accounts for over half (54%) of all leisure service units.





The evening economy in the town is comprised of a pub and six takeaway food establishments. The pub in Thornliebank is the Rowallan Bar on Main Street, and some of the takeaways include: Cafe India (an Indian takeaway), Peking House (a Chinese takeaway) both of which are located in Main Street, and Peters Fish and Chicken Bar which is located on Carnwadric Road.



## 4.2 Leisure Facilities and Attractions

Leisure facilities located in Thornliebank include the Rouken Glen Golf Centre, and Eastwood Park Theatre and Leisure Centre. At Rouken Glen Golf Centre there is an 18-hole course as well as other facilities which include: a driving range, putting green, and catering facilities. The Eastwood Park Theatre is in the same building as the Leisure Centre, which has a 25 metre swimming pool, gym, sauna and steam room. As well as the 330 seat theatre there is a café and conference/event space.

Within the town centre area of Thornliebank is the Bowling Club.

A popular nearby attraction to Thornliebank is Rouken Glen Park, which is a 143 acre park. The park dates back to around 1530 and was gifted to the people of Glasgow in 1906, for them to use it as a place of leisure. Rouken Glen Park is open 24 hours a day, with the Pavilion Visitor Centre open from 9am-5pm in the summer months and 10am-4pm in winter, and the Walled Garden open Mon-Thurs 10am-6.45pm, Fri-Sun 10am-4.30pm in the summer and 10am-3pm in the winter. Other facilities include: a car park, disabled parking, 5-a-side football pitches and a café. There is also a recreation area in the park where there is a skate park, basketball court, and outdoor gym. Entry to the park is free of charge for all visitors.





# 4.3 Community Events

We did not identify any community events or festivals being run in Thornliebank, this is unlike most other towns audited to date, including those within city conurbations.

The development and delivery of community activities and events is a primary focus for most towns to celebrate local culture, build community spirit and support local businesses. Events are typically reliant on either a small group of local volunteers and activists and/or a BID type structure.

It should, however, be noted that the nearby Rouken Glen Park is hoping to attract more events such as music concerts, cultural events and outdoor theatre. In order to do so they have created a dedicated 'events area' in the park. One event which they hosted in the past was the 2013 Highland Games which attracted over 10,000 visitors.

# 4.4 Thornliebank & Woodfarm Community Council

Thornliebank & Woodfarm Community Council meets in the Thorntree Hall, on the first Tuesday of most months at 7.15pm, and there are approximately ten members. Meetings are open to the public and involve discussions about issues and topics regarding the local area.

## 4.5 Attractiveness Review

The YTA includes an independent review of place and quality impressions, with Thornliebank scoring in line with the averages concluded from across all the other towns audited to date.

Individual unit fronts and shop window displays were graded out of ten during the on-street audit, with a town centre average score of 7 for the condition of unit fronts in Eaglesham and 7.1 for quality of window display.

Business confidence in the town centre was gauged

7.1/10
Quality of shop window displays
7.0/10
Quality of building fronts

from a small sample of interviews undertaken with four independent traders. While representing only four businesses, they were not excessively worried about the future





or their business in Thornliebank town centre, and reported that there had been no real decline in trade/footfall in recent past.

At the time of the audit it was noted that the streets were relatively clear with little litter to be found, and not many weeds present. The streets were in good condition, with no major pot holes. Throughout the town centre area there are hanging baskets and flower boxes with colourful flowers in them, this helps to brighten up the area. There are also plenty of bins along Main Street for litter and a number of sodium street lighting with traditional columns.

# 5. YTA Summary and Key Points

The following are offered as final comments on the Your Town Audit of Thornliebank, within the framework of the Scottish Government's Town Centre Toolkit.

### 5.1 Accessible Town Centre

- Thornliebank is reasonably well connected with transport links and a range
  of services. Although car ownership in the area is high, public transport links
  are good with regular bus services taking about 30 minutes into the centre of
  Glasgow;
- There are two nearby train stations in Thornliebank: Thornliebank Rail Station and Kennishead Station;
- parking in Thornliebank town centre appears at least during the time when the audit was undertaken, a midweek daytime – to be adequate, however there is no off-street public car park; and
- Thornliebank has good 4G mobile coverage and access to superfast broadband.

### 5.2 Active Town Centre

- Thornliebank has a low level of independent retail businesses, and at 42% this is one of the lowest scores from towns audited to date;
- no vacant units retail were recorded during the audit of Thornliebank town centre, which is highly encouraging for its long-term survival, however there was one vacant unit found which was the Arden Bar; and





 we did not identify any community-focused activities or events – there may be an opportunity for the Community Council (or other local groups) to deliver an annual event to bring the community together.

### 5.3 Attractive Town Centre

- There is a registered bank in Thornliebank, as well as ATMs located outside two other businesses; one of which can be found outside of the Spar Convenience store, and one outside of the Post Office, both of which are on Main Street; and
- there are a number of leisure facilities near Thornliebank town centre including Rouken Glen Golf Centre, and the Eastwood Park Theatre and Leisure Centre; and
- a popular nearby attraction is Rouken Glen Park, which is open 24 hours a
  day and has a number of facilities and attractions including: a recreation
  area, a visitors pavilion and a walled garden.